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On behalf of the Editorial Board, thank you for the interest in Ayika.

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EDITORIAL POLICY

AYIKA: JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENT AND POLITICS IN AFRICA is a journal that provides an avenue to scholars, researchers, policy analysts, think tank groups, as well as the civil society community to ventilate the various ramifications of the relations between environment and politics and development in Africa. The causal relationship between the environment and politics and vice versa has grown such that the scientific and political communities have fundamentally and unprecedentedly come to agreement as to the cause(s) of environmental problems. Hence, there is a growing recognition of government as the consumer of scientific findings on the environment such as that this journal portends. This point, in many respect, led to the inauguration of this journal. It is as a consequence of addressing environmental governance issues from the global level right to the local and municipal levels across the world and with special interest on Africa's landscape that **AYIKA: JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENT AND POLITICS IN AFRICA** was established.

Coupled with an ever-growing number of environmental movements and the broadening scope of environmental protection and environmental security advocacy and activism, the journal garners relevance. That is, a meaningful venture therefore to critically periscope the environment-politics nexus that this journal represents is because it appreciates the environment's complex realities in our modern world. The necessity of this journal too stems from many cases of resource-rich nations in Africa that have largely failed to translate their endowments into mass wealth and development, and thereby give rise to what scholars have tagged "resource curse" and/or affliction, to entrench sustainable environment in the continent.

Hitherto in the African continent, there has been recognised absence of much intellectual, academic and advocacy platforms upon which to discuss issues of environment-politics linkages in the continent in tandem with the

rest of the world. While many existing academic mediums treat issues on the relationship between environment and politics as part of larger themes on *Ayika: Journal of Environment and Politics in Africa* Vol. 1, No 1, 2019 vi geography, agricultural science and the sciences generally, regrettably those in the humanities and social sciences have not fared better on this. It is for the reason of providing a platform for intellectuals in the humanities and social sciences alongside those in all other spheres of academic research that the Editorial Team purposefully pursued to ground **AYIKA: JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENT AND POLITICS IN AFRICA**.

Vision/Mission Statement

The vision and mission statements of **AYIKA: JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENT AND POLITICS IN AFRICA** revolves around “*Ayika*”- a Yoruba word that refers to the environment. The linkage that the environment has to Africa’s socio-political development is no more under contestation. In fact, such a linkage is now established such that every discourse – be it an academic discussion and every other form of dialogue – notes the relationship between the environment and development in general. Thus, existing and emerging environmental problems are ever more political and now require political solutions more than ever. Whereas, the nature of the African continent is such that environmental problems are increasing and rising steadily and by the day, and in many cases, the negations are as a result of existing poor public infrastructure, disjointed socio-structural arrangements, lack of good policies and abysmal governmental investments in the continent’s environment sector. Therefore, **AYIKA: JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENT AND POLITICS IN AFRICA** sets ultimately as its vision/mission statement the pursuit to bridge the gap of Africa’s underdevelopment emanating from her “*Ayika*”. This is given that new environmental problems such as climate change continues to impact on the daily lives of the African man and woman, yet mitigation and adaptation policies and strategies are chiefly

nascent, ineffectual and in most cases poor. This journal, therefore, will aid to illuminate the views of scholars that argue that new environmental realities deemed developmental problems - as is the actual case in Africa - flow from political culture and politics that places very little emphasis on thorough and concrete conceptualisation of the environment-politics nexus for the continent's development.

Scope of the Journal

“Ayika” means environment in Yoruba language of Nigeria. Hence, AYIKA: JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENT AND POLITICS IN AFRICA is established to treat issues of environment in ways that will provide sound policy and socio-economic and political perspectives from scholars within and outside the African continent. Papers to feature in this journal may speak to the global dimension of environmental issues, but must have profound bearing on the African connection in terms of abating tremendously the environmental inducing underdevelopment variables in the continent. By implication, the journal will provide, and be, an avenue to proffer practical policy and political insights to Africa's most pressing and strategic environmental issues.

Aim of the Journal

AYIKA: JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENT AND POLITICS IN AFRICA is an environment politics journal in Africa that so much focuses on the African continent. It covers theoretical, policy, programmatic and other overarching dimensions and dynamics of environmental politics, governance and diplomacy in Africa. As a result of this, original review articles and every other kind of intellectual manuscript from academic fields cum disciplines such as philosophy, geography, international relations, economics, political science, sociology, psychology and related scholarly areas will be published in the journal.

House Style

The journal is based on universal standards of presentation of papers for academic journal publication. That is, papers should be segmented and should begin with an Abstract. The Abstract should not exceed 300 words and should be in italics. The author(s) are at liberty to segment the body of *Ayika: Journal of Environment and Politics in Africa* Vol. 1, No 1, 2019 viii their papers according to a preference. Paper length will differ with every other publication based on the Editorial Team's designation. The Harvard and APA referencing styles are preferable amongst other referencing techniques. Author(s) will be provided with an email address where their paper(s) should be sent to every quarterly and the sending frame for papers should be in Word Format.

Issues

This journal is published two times annually. Meaning that, each issue will be published once within six months of the year. The journal will be committed to global best practices in academic journal publication. There will be double blind review for every article submitted to this journal. Furthermore, the journal will be abstracted and indexed in the most authoritative databases in the globe such as EBSCO, ProQuest, J-Gate and Sabinet and accredited by IBSS and Scopus.

EDITORIAL NOTE ON THIS SPECIAL VOLUME ON GENDER, PEACE AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

The place of peace in every society cannot be neglected. Peace is the condition on which every other human effort at nation building and national development are built. Any society that undermines the conditions for sustainable peace and security naturally creates fertile grounds for the rise of conflict, violence, insecurity and war. Unfortunately, when the flame of violence or conflict is ignited, the impact on the society is generally multi-dimensional and very problematic to manage. Both gender suffers from the heavy negative effect but it tends to weigh more on the female gender. Consequently, scholars of repute from different parts of the Nigerian state have outlined a number of studies that discusses the changing dynamics of these problem.

The first article titled the “Socio-Demographic Determinant of Culture of Peace among Market Women in Ife Central Local Government Area of Osun State” used quantitative data to reveal that the deep rooted socio-cultural and demographic factors of the society directly affects the quest to enthrone sustainable culture of peace in the market places. The second article interrogates the “Rights of Women in The Urhobo Family System”. The study used historical and documentary evidence to account for the age long culture of gender violence and how the push and pull effects of poverty, bad government as well as challenges of surviving in contemporary Nigeria has sustained the suffering of women in Urhobo society. The third article titled “Political Violence in Nigeria: Interrogating Press Involvement as Victim, Vector and Extinguisher” presents the role

of the press as major actor in the political history of Nigeria. It documents clearly how media actors have paid the ultimate price with their lives in the quest to strengthen Nigerian democracy and reduce the culture of violence that manifest before, during and after elections in the country.

The fourth article titled “The Executive in Nigeria: Focus on the Waning Public Trust” in the Buhari’s APC Government presents the multiple contemporary forms of problems and insecurity as well as nation building crisis that the Buhari administration has promoted due to their poor culture of governance. The article captures the reality of collapsing public trust in the different regions of the country on how the current administration has failed in protecting lives and properties within the country. The fifth article engaged in a historical review of “Ethno-Religious Violence as The Gathering Storm to Nigeria-Biafra War Up to 1967”. It documents the strong grips of ethnicity on the Nigerian societal building history and how the forces of ethnicity were negatively manipulated to launch the country into a dangerous Biafra-Nigeria Civil War from 1967-1970. It called for non-military strategies of promoting inter-ethnic peace and sustainable national integration within the country. The last article discussed the problem of health insecurity and how weak motivation and reward system in the Nigerian state has promoted mass medical migration. The article titled “Medical Migrations, Covid-19, and the Health Implications in Nigeria beyond the Pandemic” reveals that during the covid 19 pandemic, the health workers were the frontline victims that were easily infected, traumatized and killed by the pandemic.

Finally, these collection of articles speaks directly to the realities of contemporary Nigerian nation building challenges and how they could be managed. I therefore invite scholars, social analysts, researchers and policy makers to take time and go through the detailed study presented in this articles.

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SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DETERMINANT OF CULTURE OF PEACE AMONG MARKET WOMEN IN IFE CENTRAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OSUN STATE

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Abstract

This study focused on the socio-demographic determinants of the culture of peace amongst market women in Ife Central Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey type was adopted for the study. This involved collection of information that described the socio-demographic factors that influence culture of peace among market women in Osun State. The population consisted of market women in Ife central local government area of Osun State. All market women were purposively sampled while, 100 respondents were purposively selected from Odo Ogbe market in Ife central local government area. The study found that socio demographic factors significantly influence culture of peace in Ife central local government area of Osun state. Based on these findings, it was recommended that adult literacy should be encouraged among market women-women for personal growth and development.

Key Words: *Women, peace, market, trade, Odo Ogbe*

Introduction

Since time immemorial, women have been known to perform roles in homes, churches or mosques, communities, governments at all levels and indeed in the entire society. Women are seen as models in Nigerian society for character training and transformation. Women are the role models in any family setting and they have specific roles with which they impact positively in their homes. It has often been said that when you educate a woman you educate a society, this is so true giving the fact that women are always helpful in nation building and this cannot be over emphasised (Amaechi, 2018). They have been in charge of the market from the indigenous times till the present. Women play prominent roles in the market solely because they engaged in trade (Olutayo, 2014). That is, the economic empowerment of any given family rest to a large extent on women, therefore, trading for some of them is a crucial part of their existence. In the Yoruba society, women predominated the trading and commercial activities and constituted a vast majority of marketers at any given time and place (Soetan, 2001).

The market is a very important and vital institution in any country. A market is the gathering of people for the sale and purchase of goods, commodities and services as the case may be in exchange for money. The market is where trading takes place and it is very important for this is what sustains the society. Market activities are very important because without it the society would not grow or develop. This is because the market is the outlet through which farmers sell their farm products, thus making food available to the urban population. This reflects the fact that without food, the health of the population is at risk. Furthermore, it reduces the unemployment problem because there are no white collar jobs as the few vacancies are occupied by a

rather low percentage in the society. In the present African society, government workers do trade to make ends meet. The market initially was a place for the old and illiterates, but today both the young and even university graduates own stalls in the market (Olutayo, 2014). This can be seen to be the result of the economic downturn being witnessed in the few past decades.

It should be noted that most markets in African society are of the informal type with the women being, perhaps, the most important stakeholders. Since the pre-colonial period, women, even though under the indirect control of their male counterparts, are the ‘market-women’ responsible both for buying and selling. It is hardly an accepted norm that men sell their products themselves, neither are ‘responsible’ men expected to purchase their needs from the market. To date, these are still common practices as women, in a way, dominate activities at the informal market place. The (informal) market creates an avenue for trade to take place, which is, buying and selling activities, where one can get things at a cheaper and affordable rate compared to items sold at supermarkets and one gets varieties whereby you can select fresh and neat items according to your taste. It is also a place through which the women and men making a living and profits to cater for their family especially their children since they are the ones that are in charge of their upkeep. Socially, it is also a place of interaction where different people all over the place both from far or near meet and can help one another and ensure that the needs of co-traders are met, their welfare taken care of. and their interests promoted. It is a place where information concerning prices, governmental policies or decisions is disseminated. In addition, it is an institution that fosters unity among

members and creates an avenue whereby people can tolerate and accommodate one another (Olutayo, 2014). Consequently, these women are important stakeholders in the management of conflict within the market space.

In the same vein, women the world over play important roles in preservation of culture and nurturing of peace (Ochieng, 2019; Ani, Ogbonna & Ojatorotu, 2018; Ani & Opara 2017). Peace, the pristine aspiration of humanity seems to have evaded the contemporary age (Okoro, 2013) Peace is a concept of societal friendship and harmony, in the absence of hostility and violence. In a social sense, peace is commonly used to mean a lack of conflict (such as war) and freedom from fear of violence between individuals or groups. When conflict is overt amongst women most especially in the market, they may externalize it by direct and indirect insults, and resolve the issue by involving outsiders. According to Nilesan (2004), the first of the three phases is an outburst of hostility, usually in the form of insults, ridicule, or, more seriously, imprecations and curses. The second phase brings an audience of friends and supporters for both sides. Resolution, the third phase, results from mediation by neutral parties, during which responsibility for the conflict is fairly apportioned between the sides (DeChurch and Marks 200).

Throughout history, leaders have used peace making and diplomacy to establish a certain type of behavioural restraint that has resulted in the establishment of regional peace or economic growth through various forms of agreements or peace measures. For instance, In the African informal market, the “Iya-Oja” of a market or a head of a particular association is the elected representative of all the retailers

selling the same goods. There will be one elected representative each for the yam sellers, pepper, for cassava sellers and so on. Her chief task is to protect the sectional interests of the retailers she represents. If she should fail to do so or take advantage of her position for her own benefit, she will be removed. In a situation where there is limited space for market place, thus limited or restricted number of regular traders, she ensures that retailers have a fair share of space and supplies. She is also called to ensure the highest selling price possible or act as a guarantor for retailers. The elected representative also arbitrates in disputes between traders belonging to her own group or represents them in agreements and disputes with other market traders or a wholesaler thereby fostering the culture of peace among market women.

According to the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, the United Nations defines a culture of peace as a set of values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations (UNESCO, 2010). In creating a culture of peace, values, attitudes, knowledge and actions needs to be established at all levels of human relationships, starting with one's relationship to oneself, and extending to the family and wider community. Peace culture is a deliberate living in peace or formation of peaceful habit; and an honest attempt to live in peace with others. It entails positive behaviour management, striving to live a friendly, caring and sharing life with others while avoiding offensive behaviour. This implies that violent attitudes like fighting; cheating ought to be avoided while

neatness, politeness, cheerfulness and consideration for others are necessary.

Nwoye (2007) analysis of women and peace in traditional Africa on several case studies carried out between the mid-1990s - 2001 in six African countries. The countries were Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Namibia, Somali, and Tanzania, undertaken within the framework of the United Nations' Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Women and Culture of Peace Programme. The results revealed the invaluable contribution of women in traditional conflict resolution and peace-building practices in Africa south of the Sahara (Ibok & Ogar, 2018)

Interestingly, research has shown that women have played and continue to play crucial roles in peace building. For instance, after the 1991 violent conflict in (Wajir), Kenya leading to more than 1,200 deaths, Wajir women as a part of their peace building efforts established the Wajir Peace and Development Committee (WPDC). The committee played an instrumental role to ensure some level of peace in Kenya (Tongerren, 2013). In addition, during the post-apartheid period in South Africa, local women who in the face of their devastating poverty, violence and trauma, strived to earn menial income to develop their devastated communities and build peace. (Noma, Aker & Freeman, 2012) established the Harambe Women's Forum. Furthermore, after the 1994 genocide, Rwandese women contributed as part of their peace building commitment, thereby providing shelter for orphans, caring for the genocide survivors and building homes for some ex-combatants who were re-integrated into the society (Mzvondiwa, 2007). Additionally, Liberia

women as part of their peace building dedications also embarked on a three-month long ‘Mass Action for Peace’ campaign that advocated for a ceasefire. They also held hostage parties at the Liberian Peace Talks in the Eastern Region of Ghana (Akosombo), by barricading the entrance to the venue of the talks. The aim of the women was to prevent parties from walking away when the talks got heated, thus delaying the attainment a negotiated settlement (Alaga, 2010). As a follow up to the above assertions, following the electoral protest in Guinea Bissau in 2004, where the national army was deployed to clamp down on protesters, local women’s groups launched an advocacy campaign that led to subsequent dialogue between the stakeholders involved in the conflict to ensure peace (Issifu, 2015).

In Nigeria, the Egba women of South West Nigeria revolted in 1940s and recently the End SARS protest which was headed by women for injustice perpetrated according to reports by the Nigeria army at Lekki toll gate-Lagos in 2020. These case studies on women’s contribution to a culture of peace in Africa were initiated and undertaken as part of the UNESCO Culture of Peace Project, more specifically by the Women and the Culture of Peace Programme which had a special focus on Africa (Muñoz, 2003).

Statement of the problem

Women have always been at the centre of peace processes across different pre-colonial African societies most especially in the heterogeneous informal market. Their peace status in these societies can be perceived in their cultural, economic and socio-political roles as well as their contributions to the overall well-being of various communities in the market. There appears to be, strife, lawlessness,

dispute and all sorts of indicators of violence among marketers because of the inability of the government or policy makers to understand its role in eradicating the problems associated with violence and failure to relate peacefully with one another in the market. Literature on market women have shown that women have greater input in maintaining conflict (Olutayo, 2014). However, studies on the factors contributing to the culture of peace exhibited in the market is still minimal hence leaving a gap which formed the focus of this study.

Research Objectives

The study investigated the socio-demographic factors as determinant of culture of peace among market women in Ife central local government area of Osun State, Nigeria. Specifically, It:

1. Investigated the perception of market women on culture of peace;
2. Examined the socio-demographic factors determining the culture of peace exhibited by market women.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the perception of market women on culture of peace?
2. What are the contributions of these socio-demographic factors to culture of peace exhibited by market women?

Methodology

The descriptive survey type was adopted for the study. This involved collection of information that described the socio-demographic factors that influence culture of peace among market women in Osun State. The population consisted of market women in Ife central local government area of Osun State. All market women were purposively sampled while, 100 respondents were purposively selected from Odo Ogbe market in Ife central local government area. The use of Odo ogbe market as a case study was due to the new structured and organized system of the market. A self-developed data collection instrument titled “Questionnaire on Socio-demographic Factors as Determinant of Culture of Peace among Market Women” (QSFDCPMW) was used in obtaining data for the study.

The questionnaire had two sections. Section A consisted of the socio-demographic information such as name of school, respondent’s sex, class and type of school. Section B had items on Culture of Peace. These items were on a 4-point scale of SA– Strongly Agreed, A– Agreed, D – Disagree and SD – Strongly disagree. Face and content validity of the instruments were established by experts in peace education. The reliability of the instrument was established through test retest method. This involved administration of the instrument to a group within an interval of two weeks who were not included in the study. The two sets of scores were correlated and a reliability coefficient of 0.86 was established using Cronbach alpha. One hundred copies of the instrument were administered and received by the researcher. The Univar ate and bivariate statistical analysis tools were used for the study using Statistical Package for the Social

Sciences (SPSS). Data collected were analyzed using both descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation and inferential statistics of regression analysis. 2.5 was used as criterion mean for the descriptive analysis while 0.05 was used as p-value for the inferential analysis.

Result

Research question 1: What is the perception of market women on culture of peace?

Table 1: Summary of Mean and Standard deviation on perception of market women on culture of peace.

S/N	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Peace cannot be maintained if there is injustice and disparity in the market	3.44	.625
2	Encouraging democratic decision making at all levels in the market as well as in the local government promotes peace	3.40	.739
3	Maintaining peace is the responsibility of both the customers and the market women	3.39	.510
4	Peace is rejected when the marketplace is permeated by violence and stigmatization	3.39	.567
5	Absence of peace makes our struggles and day-to-day interactions with customers difficult	3.33	.551
6	As a market woman, I value peace and behave peacefully in the market	3.29	.478
7	Culture of peace is about tolerating and respecting the view of the customers by the market women	3.29	.808
8	Peace is primarily concerned with the creation and maintenance of a just order in the marketplace and the greatest factor	3.27	.723

	facilitating the marketplace towards high level of performance		
9	A peaceful culture teaches qualities such as empathy, compassion and respect	3.16	.884
10	I commit to non-violent language and behavior and use calm voice with my customers even when I am upset	3.15	.702
11	I am at peace with other market women	3.04	.618
12	Market women should make sure that all customers are responded to and treated equally regardless of their financial status	2.97	.797
13	A literate market woman exhibits good communication skills and attitudes than an illiterate market woman	2.89	.942
14	The market women provide effective dialogue and communication with the customers at all times	2.83	.805
15	Diversity of culture, language, religion and ethnicity causes conflict	2.61	1.109
Average grand mean and standard deviation		3.16	.724

As displayed in table 1, the mean of all the items rose above the criterion mean of 2.5. By implication, majority of the respondents perceived that Peace cannot be maintained if there is injustice and disparity in the market with mean and standard deviation of (3.44, 0.625), encouraging democratic decision making at all levels in the market as well as in the local government promotes peace with mean and standard deviation (3.40, 0.739), maintaining peace is the responsibility of both the customers and the market women with mean and standard deviation (3.39, 0.510), Absence of peace makes our struggles and day-to-day interactions with customers difficult with mean and standard deviation (3.39, 0.560) has the greatest mean and standard deviation. While exhibiting good communication skills

and attitudes than an illiterate market woman with mean and standard deviation (2.89, 0.942), providing effective dialogue and communication with the customers at all times with mean and standard deviation (2.83, 0.805) and diversity of culture, language, religion and ethnicity causes conflict with mean and standard deviation (2.61, 1.109) has the least mean and standard deviation. In addition, the average grand mean and standard deviation rose above the criterion mean of 2.5, by implication, market women perceived culture of peace positively in ife central local government area.

Research question 2: Do socio-demographic factors influence the culture of peace exhibited by market women?

Table 2: Summary of linear Regression on socio-demographic factors influence on culture of peace.

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Sig.
Regression	531.639	9	59.071	2.178	.423 ^a	.179	.097	.031 ^b
Residual	2441.111	90	27.123					
Total	2972.750	99						

a. Dependent Variable: culture

As displayed in table 2, there is a significant relationship between socio-demographic factors and culture of peace among market women. ($F_{9,99}=2.178, p<0.05$). By implication socio-demographic factors influences culture of peace among market women. In addition, R square indicated that age, marital status, educational qualifications, literacy level, number of years in business, goods sold, profits made, religion and ethnicity jointly accounted 17.9% of

culture of peace exhibited by market women while the remaining 82.1% jointly accounted for other factors not included in this study.

Research question 3: What are the contributions of these socio-demographic factors to culture of peace exhibited by market women?

Table 3: contributions of these socio-demographic factors to culture of peace exhibited by market women.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	44.851	3.967		11.307	.000
Age	.671	.943	.142	.711	.479
Marital status	1.629	1.220	.156	1.336	.185
Educational qualifications	1.183	.850	.180	1.392	.167
Literacy level	-1.345	.555	-.317	-2.422	.017
Number of years in business	-1.307	.843	-.273	-1.551	.124
Goods sold	-.521	.596	-.097	-.874	.385
Profits made per month	-.659	.868	-.079	-.760	.449
Religion	-.127	1.200	-.011	-.105	.916
Ethnicity	4.317	1.658	.257	2.603	.011

Dependent Variable: culture

Predictors: (Constant), age, marital status, educational qualifications, literacy level, number of years in business, goods sold, profits made, religion and ethnicity

As displayed in table 3, the contribution of each socio demographic factors of market women are age ($\beta = 0.671$, $p > 0.05$), marital status ($\beta = 1.629$, $p > 0.05$), educational status ($\beta = 1.183$, $p > 0.05$), literacy level ($\beta = 1.345$, $p < 0.05$), number of years in business ($\beta = 1.307$, $p > 0.124$), goods sold ($\beta = 0.521$, $p > 0.05$), profits made ($\beta = 0.657$, $p > 0.05$), religion ($\beta = 0.127$, $p > 0.05$) and ethnicity ($\beta = 4.3177$, $p < 0.11$). By implication, ethnicity and literacy level of market women has a significant influence on culture of peace while other factors such as age, marital status, educational qualifications, number of years in business, goods sold, profits made and religion do not significantly influenced culture of peace exhibited by market women in Ife central local government area of Osun state.

Discussion of findings

The study investigated socio demographic determinants of culture of peace among market women. Based on the findings of the study, it was discovered that market women in Ife central local government has positive perception of culture of peace.

In the same vein, socio demographic factors such as age, marital status, educational qualifications, literacy level, number of years in business, goods sold, profits made, religion and ethnicity jointly influence the culture of peace exhibited by market women.

Subsequently, it was discovered that literacy level and ethnicity contributed significantly to the culture of peace exhibited by market women in Ife central local government area of Osun.state.

Conclusion

The study, going by the findings therefore concluded that socio demographic factors significantly influence culture of peace in Ife central local government area of Osun state. Based on these findings, it was thus recommended that adult literacy should be encouraged among market women-women should be encouraged to improve their capacity by attending classes for personal growth and development. Also, xenophobic attitude should be campaigned against in the market in other to improve culture of peace among market women in Ife central local government area of Osun state. Regular seminars on how to further imbibe the culture of peace among and between ethnic groups can be introduced by the local government for peaceful co-existence among market people in Nigeria.

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RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN THE URHOB0 FAMILY SYSTEM: A CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Women and the girl child has never occupied a significant place or position, within the Urhobo family system. Culture and tradition have not been kind to the Urhobo woman as a daughter or a wife. In the Urhobo family system, women are conditioned to think that they are lesser creatures than the men. In Urhobo land, women are brought up to take all the short comings of a man without complaining and this makes the lot of women to be lamentable. Traditionally, in the Urhobo family system, women and men alike have accepted the fact that men have rights and women do not because of the patriarchal structure of the system. Male behavior has been considered the norm and women have been viewed to some degree as inferior. Men are supposed to be the bread winners of their families, while the women compliment their efforts. However, in Urhobo land the reverse is the case; apart from few educated men who care for their families, the women in rural areas are the ones who bear the burden. Many Urhobo men, once they lose their jobs or when they are over fifty years, they abandon their first obligation of caring for their family, and their wives take over. Women in Urhobo societies are believed to be their husband's property and it is unethical for them to acquire too much, especially in landed properties. This belief is, being

themselves properties of their husbands, they could not own properties. In cases, where she owned landed properties before marriage, all such are automatically transferred to her husband after marriage. The husband owns her and all her properties. Those who escape this kind of human rights violation are the highly educated females. The purpose of this paper therefore is to highlight some of the abuses of women's rights in the Urhobo family system and how this abuses can be brought to a halt. The method adopted in carrying out this research, include: historical and phenomenological. The historical method has been used to gather secondary data about Urhobo people from books, articles and newspaper clippings. The phenomenological approach involved collecting primary data through oral interviews and participant observations. Using phenomenological approach, this researcher examined the data with a view to providing an explanation to them. Government and human right activists should enlist the cooperation of community leaders, traditional leaders and women in their efforts to alter or eradicate all harmful cultural practices. Community based education can also be implemented to increase public awareness of the negative consequences of all obnoxious practices towards the Urhobo woman or girl-child.

Keywords: Rights, Culture, Women, Family System, Urhobo

Introduction

While tradition and culture can be commended for upholding the fabric of many African societies, they also in many cases violate human rights, especially women's rights. Practices such as early marriages, forced marriage, female genital mutilations, widow inheritance, wife assault, denial of education to girls, preference for sons and discriminatory treatment of women is rampant in many

African countries and they are simply classified as cultural and traditional. Many of these practices have their roots in social constructions of gender that promotes patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity (Hingston et al, 2019)

Although cultural traditions have rights of expression, it should be within a human right of expression, it should be within a human rights framework and certainly not at the expense of women. When it promotes violence, discrimination and oppression, it should be condemned. Kimani (2007) notes that in a 2006 study by the South African institute of security studies, it was found out that “the subservient status of women, particularly rural women, in many African countries is deeply rooted in tradition (Ani & Uwizeyimana, 2021). This results in women being subjected to violence by men. Urhobo like any other society has its own share of cultures and traditions that violates the rights of women. The oppression of women in the Urhobo family system is at the Centre of inquiry here. Although not a new debate, it should be kept on going for meaningful changes to be effected. It also explores the ways women are treated in the Urhobo family system and attempt to break down barriers by identifying how societal influence have led to the status quo. This article provides a voice for those Urhobo women denied of their human rights. As Baxter (2003) points out, space must be allocated to those female voices which have been silenced or marginalized. This paper, therefore, evaluates women in traditional belief and practices in the Urhobo family system, the concept of human rights, the plight of women in Urhobo land, some cultural practices infringing on the rights of women in the Urhobo family system, abuse

of women's right in the Urhobo family system and concludes with the quest for women's rights in the Urhobo family system.

Conceptual Clarifications

- i. Rights:** Rights, as used in this context, refers to "Human Rights". These are alienable rights which are the exclusive right of individuals in the society (Akintola, 2014). They are popularly known citizens' rights and freedom. As such, the Constitution of most countries indicate the processes and measures through which these rights would be protected or violated. In the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in the Article Three, Section 33 to 45, provisions are made for the fundamental Human Rights. These include: freedom to life; right to dignity of human person; right to personal liberty, right to fair hearing; right to private and family life, right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; right to freedom of expression; right to peaceful assembly and association; right to freedom of movement; right to freedom from discrimination; right to acquire and own immovable property anywhere in Nigeria; restriction on and derogation from fundamental rights (1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Volume 86: No 27)
- ii. Women:** The plural form of "woman". An adult female human.
- iii. Family:** Sociologists define family as group of persons related to one another by blood or marriage (Aina, 2008). The concept of family is universal; in order words family is found in all societies. The family is the fundamental, instrumental foundation of the larger social structure, in that all other institutions depends on its constitution. (Aina, 2008).

- iv. **System:** The word “system” has various meanings, but for the purpose of this write up, it means: the rules or people that control a country or an organization, especially when they seem to be unfair because you cannot change them. (Hornby,2006).
- v. **Contextual:** The word “contextual” is an abridged form of contextualize or contextualization. It means: to consider something in relation to the situation in which it happens or exists. It means to be connected with a particular context(Hornby, 2006).

URHOBOS AS A PEOPLE

The Urhobo people are aborigine of Delta Central within the state, the largest ethnic group. They spread over ten (10) out of the twenty five (25) Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Delta State, namely: Ethiope East, Ethiope West, Okpe, Ughelli South, Ughelli North, Sapele, Udu, Uvwie, part of Patani and Warri South in Delta South Senatorial District. The people live in nucleated settlements. Some of these are large urban centers such as Warri, Effurun, Sapele and Ughelli which are of considerable commercial, industrial, educational and administrative importance. There are also a number of medium sized industrial towns such as kokori, Okpara-In-land, Orerokpe, Avwraka, Agbarha-Otor and Oghara. The Urhobos occupy a contiguous territory bounded by latitudes 5° 15' and 6° North and Longitudes 5° 40' and 6° 25' East (Aweto and Igben, 2011). They have twenty four polities namely: Agbarha – Ame (Agbassa), Agbarho- Otor, Agbarho, Agbon, Arhavwarien, Avwraka, Ephron-Otoh, Ewu, Ewreni, Idjerhe, Mosogar, Oghara, Ogor, Okere (Urhobo), Okparabe, Okpe, Olomu, Orogun, Udu, Ughelli, Ughelle- Urhie, Ughievwen, Ughwerun and Uvwie.

WOMEN IN TRADITIONAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES IN THE URHOBO FAMILY SYSTEM

According to Asah (2004), culture and tradition have not been kind to the Urhobo Woman as a daughter or a wife. At birth, the community anxiously awaits and shouts for joy, if the newly born is a boy, most especially if there were only females in the family. The child is treated as the first child. The male child is given names which depicts the joy of the family. Names like Enamiroro (this is what I have been thinking) Okpako (Senior Child), Kesiena (now I have it), Ovie (king) and Omovwiroro (Child of Wisdom). Meanwhile, a female child is also given names to depict her position. Names like omotejovwo, (girls are still human beings), Edirin (Patience), Ufuoma (Peace) and Omote (girl child).

In the Urhobo family system, female children are conditioned to think that they are lesser creatures than the male (Asah, 2004). In some cases, even parents imbibe into the females that they are worthless than the boys. In later years, when married, husbands also send the message that they are inferior to man. After marriage, they come to their father's house as visitors and before marriage, they live with their mothers.

This is an indirect way of keeping female children under supervision, to ensure that they maintain their virginity till marriage. The male child is raised to view girls and women as inferior, exploitable creatures. The women are seen as vulnerable and easily dominated.

Throughout history, women have been labelled physically weaker than men, more emotional, less able to learn and dependent (Isiramen, 2014). According to Asah (2004), in Urhobo land, women

are brought up to take all the short comings of a man without complaining. If she complains, she gets deaf ears from her parents and her husband's relatives. She is told that she is a woman and should not try, to be a man. A serious complaint from a woman is discussed and settled lightly over a bottle of ogogoro (local gin). It is obvious in Urhobo land that descent is patrilineal and male children are preferred to female children as heirs. The birth of a female child is welcomed with mix feeling as compared to the birth of a male child. The girl child continues to live a life of non-acceptance right from birth. The lot women and girls is lamentable according to Asah. Some even hold a strong belief that a female child once married, forfeits her inheritance right. Such is the lot of women in Urhobo land.

In the history of mankind, men have repeatedly inflicted injuries on women; they have established a direct tyranny over her. According to Burke (1972), traditionally, women and men alike have accepted the fact that men have rights and women do not. According to Asah (2004), a woman was driven from her matrimonial home, just because she refused to clean up after her husband vomited. The man vomited after getting himself drunk; and the relations felt the woman erred by refusing to clean up and give the husband a proper bath. She returned to her husband's house after proper sacrifice was carried out to appease her husband's ancestors.

According to Avwunu (2015), traditionally, it is believed among the Urhobo people that women are second class citizens, the least desired sex since they cannot foster the family name. When married, they are

considered as properties in their matrimonial homes, thus losing their identity both at home and in their matrimony. As part of a man's wealth, women can be seen but not heard, they have no voice in the home. They are expected to bear children, care for them, and add to the man's labour force and to help in their children's upbringing. They are not part of the decision making body in the family and the community because they are deemed to have nothing to contribute to the family welfare and development.

Among the Orogun people of Delta State in Nigeria, a married woman is not allowed to use another woman's wrapper to tie, even if that woman is her own sister. Moreso, it is considered a sacrilege for another man to see the nakedness of a married woman even when it is not done intentionally. If a man mistakenly walks into an Urhobo woman that is naked, it is expected of that woman to tell her husband when he returns.

Traditionally, the man may die, if he eats the food prepared by that woman in case she refused to confess, that another man saw her nakedness. In practice, these aforementioned beliefs are held from family to family and community to community. The eldest male child of every family is the supreme head of every member of that family. He represents everyone in all matters that has to do with the smooth running of the home. Thus, male child preference is not treated with levity because a man who had only female children is best considered as not having any at all.

Consequently, no known woman however old should stand to speak on behalf of the family in Urhobo gathering whether at the family or community level. However, they are allowed to manage their own affairs at the women level (Eghweya), which is strictly for women only. They may be consulted if and when necessary but they cannot represent or present their own opinion in person. At the matrimonial home, the woman is expected to reverence all her in-laws irrespective of their age. She is not to regard herself before her matrimonial family members. In this way she treats them all as her senior with full privilege accorded them. She is thus seen as being respectful, a good wife who should enjoy the family support in times of trouble, as it is often said that is not only the husband that she is married to. The Urhobo woman has no right to property and inheritance in her father's house as well as in her matrimonial home. This is because, she is regarded as being part of the husband's property, hence at the husband's demise, she is shared alongside with other properties that the man had. Her inheritance therefore, comes from that which belongs to her children. Any woman who had no issue in the marriage is not considered for anything.

The Concept of Human Rights

Human rights is the right of an individual to liberty and justice (Aina, 2008). The concept of fundamental human rights has been a topical and controversial issue through history (Kehinde, 2016). Notwithstanding the controversy on the meaning and scope of the concept, it is agreed universally that certain rights are basic to the existence of mankind. Without these basic rights, "life", to use the word of Thomas Hobbes would be "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and

short” (Kehinde, 2016). These basic rights include the right to life, right to worship, freedom of movement, right to dignity of the people, freedom of association and freedom of expression etc.

The first attempt to give universal recognition to Fundamental Human Rights was on December 10, 1948 when the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted what is now known as Universal Declaration of human rights. The 30 articles of the declaration asserted the civil and political, economic, social and cultural rights of all people (Kehinde, 2016)

This declaration has been the major source for the entrenchment of human rights in the constitutions of many emergent states. Other declaration by the United Nations pertaining to the concept of human rights, include: the international covenant on civil and political rights; Conventions Against Torture and other cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

In 30 articles, the Magna Carta on Human Rights sets forth the basic rights and freedoms to which all men and women are entitled, without any discrimination.

They include:-

- the right to life, liberty and security of person;
- freedom from slavery and servitude;
- freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;
- equality before the law and entitlement to equal protection under it;

- freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention;
- the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty;
- Inviolability of the home and secrecy of correspondence;
- freedom of movement and residence;
- the right to seek in other countries asylum from prosecution;
- the right to a nationality;
- the right to marry and found a family;
- the right to own property;
- freedom of thought, conscience and religion;
- freedom of opinion and expression;
- freedom of peaceful assembled association;
- the right to vote and participate in government;
- the right to social security;
- the right to work and to form and join trade unions;
- the right to adequate standard of living;
- the right to Education;
- the right to participate in the cultural life of the community.

The General Assembly of the United Nation in proclaiming the universal declaration of human right as “a common standard of achievement for all people and all nations” called on them to promote the rights and freedom it set forth (Findlay,2016). The universal declaration of Human Rights has been translated into all the main languages of the world and has been profoundly influential world-wide (Findlay, 2016). It is frequently quoted or referred to in United Nations resolutions and many national legislations. Legal systems, world-wide have incorporated its values and language. The constitutions of many countries including most newly independent

ones, reflect its influence. The Human Right programme that has developed in the United Nations is to a large extent, conceived within the framework of the Universal Declaration and, in fact, the programme as a whole promotes its observance and implementation.

Nevertheless, it is obvious that many countries of the world pay mere lip service to the observance of human rights. The mass media reports on a daily basis the increasing violation of civil liberties by governments. Tyranny and oppression reigns supreme in many countries as the basic rules of human rights have long been thrown overboard in many of these countries (Kehinde, 2016)

A vivid example was the continuation of the obnoxious apartheid Policy in the racist enclave of South Africa where blacks were daily massacred and even extra judicially executed. This despicable practice continued till 1990, despite the pronouncement of the United Nations that apartheid policy is a crime against humanity. In the face of escalating violations of human rights all over the world, the role of Amnesty international as a watchdog against state abuse of human rights becomes even more inevitable (Kehinde, 2016)

The Plight of Women in the Urhobo Family System

This section seeks to identify why the Urhobo woman suffers most. There are many factors that intensify the suffering of the Urhobo Woman. Men are in control of affairs both at the domestic front and in the society. Women, like children, are to be seen and not heard. Some men even treat their wives like slaves especially those in the rural setting. Imagine a situation where a woman will be the one to

fend for the family. Most women in Urhobo land do both their job and that of their husband's. They do not only feed their homes, but they also cloth and train their children in schools. Urhobo Women are subjected to a lot of hardships by their husbands. Unlike the Itsekiri women, the Ibo women and the Benin Women, the Urhobo woman is subjected to harsh conditions of life. Considering the kind of sufferings Urhobo Women go through, an Ibo woman in 1989, said she will never give her daughter to an Urhobo man in marriage. Most Urhobo Women work like elephants, but eat like ants.

Urhobo women have always been humiliated by both husband and in-laws. Men are never seen to be at fault. As a patriarchal society, it is not considered to include women in the distribution of inheritance. That is why, whenever a woman loses her husband, the male relations quickly come around to confiscate the property of their brother or son. The plight of women in Urhobo land is so deploring. Most men don't treat their wives with dignity. Many a woman in Urhobo land, endure marriage rather than enjoy marriage. Most men, especially the polygamists live like sloths. They believe that, if one wife does not bring food for them, another one will give him food because of sex. An Urhobo woman can be denied sex for one year by her husband for no reason. Some men have even turned their wives into punching bags and some women have died as a result of frustration.

Some Cultural Practices Infringing On The Rights Of Women In The Urhobo Family System.

Culture and tradition have not been kind to the Urhobo woman as a daughter or as wife. In Urhobo land, inheritance and rights are the

problems plaguing girls and wives when a father or a husband dies (Asah, 2004). When a man dies, a diviner is called to ascertain the cause of his death, while in that of a woman, it is believed that her sins and wicked actions caught up with her. So it is seen that a man never dies a natural death. In most cases, the first accused culprits when a man dies are the wife, mother, sister, aunt, or daughter. Culturally, when an Urhobo man dies, the first male child automatically inherits the father's properties and position, even when there are elderly females. In some cases, the son also inherits the wives including his mother. If the women refuse to be inherited by the eldest son, the family must return the bride price and vacate the family compound immediately after which she can remarry. In Urhobo land, women are brought up to take all the short comings of man without complaining. If she complains, she gets deaf ears from her parents and her husband's relatives.

The law of inheritances in Urhobo traditional religion is patrilineal, restricting the willing of properties to males and in most cases the female is totally abandoned especially in landed properties. Erinoshio (1977), says that women are inhibited by restrictions imposed by tradition and culture. They are placed at a disadvantage of no importance or significance; property was passed from father to son, but not to wife or daughter. In the history of mankind, men have repeatedly inflicted injuries on Women, by having established a direct tyranny over her. Traditionally, Women and men alike have accepted the fact that men have rights and women do not. Male behavior has been considered the norm and women have been viewed to some degree as inferior (Asah, 2004). For example, the males can

have as many women friends as they can, but as for the females, when they are seen with male friends, the assumption is that they are flirting. These attitudes are part of the stereotypes that shape the thinking about women and women's behavior. Ultimately, they help determine women status in the society.

Women in Urhobo societies are believed to be their husband's property and it is unethical for them to acquire too much, especially in landed property. The belief is that being themselves properties of their husbands, they could not own property. In cases, where she owned landed properties before marriage, all such are automatically transferred to her husband after marriage. The husband owns her and all her properties. Those who escape this kind of human rights violation are the highly educated females. Traditional structures place women in a position of dependence on the men and they are obliged to fulfill certain roles as subordinates.

In the Urhobo family system, the question of inheritance remains gross denial of the female's rights to inheritance in an age long tradition that has defied modern realities. When a man dies, while the wife wallows in deep sense of loss, the spouse' relations are engrossed in the sharing of his property. Where the wife is stubborn over the property, force is applied to evacuate them (Edewor, 2001). The family of the deceased is not bothered if the property was jointly acquired by the couple. Often, women are alone in their grief and words remain their only weapon in a male dominated society. According to Akintude (2002) as cited by Asah, the rites widows observe, vary from place to place. Men hardly undergo any rites

when their wives die. A man may be free to have sexual intercourse with another woman that same night as a way of consoling him. He is forbidden from shedding tears, whereas some of the rites women are made to undergo are dehumanizing when their husband dies.

A widow with young children or with female children is treated as if the deceased has no children. The family elder's lots are improved at the expense of the children's welfare. This is done as if the wife is incapable of managing the late husband's estate. Women pass through hardship and harrowing experience at the death of their husbands. In matters of sex, the traditional men in Urhobo land have an upper hand. A woman cannot desire sex and invite the husband. The husband has the right to her body when and how he desires. Asah (2004) spoke with twenty old and young women combined in her family compound about sex; not one of them has ever experienced an orgasm, but they all said their husband enjoyed sex with them. They had sex when invited by their husbands and were abandoned as soon as they were pregnant. A man is free to desire any woman he wants, but the wives do not have such freedom. This is one of the degradation and deprivation that women or wives go through. Asah (2004) also discovered that some women she interviewed have not had sex with their husband for over a year. These women at times have to lobby and beg for it by cooking delicious meals for the man. The man has the sole prerogative to invite them. They shy away from sex discussions but men openly discuss their conquests and their next victim.

The head of a fish, the gizzard of a chicken and the sweetest parts (liver, kidney, heart) of any bush meat are given to the husbands. Some of the women have lost their homes and others fined for eating these parts. As a child, Asah wondered why her mother gave her father so much meat and fish in a big clay pot of soup while they ate little or no fish and meat and at times, they scrambled for the remains of their father's food. This is the lot of girls and wives in Urhobo land. Women in Urhobo land have little or no rights and none in terms of inheritance. Their right to happiness and comfortable living is determined by the male folks and society. Urhobo women have been brought up to think that they are lesser creatures than the males; sometimes even parents make female children feel worthless than the males. Men should therefore, apply the golden rule "do unto others as you would want them to do to you"

Women have overwhelmingly been the ones who have suffered most. They are the ones who have borne the brunt of indignities, insults, sexual harassment and lack of respect at the hands of men. Moreover, the Urhobos frown at older women getting married to the younger men, but see it as a right for an older man to marry a younger woman, even as young as their daughter. At times also, girls are given out in marriage to settle family debts (Asah, 2004).

The Quest for Women's Rights in the Urhobo Family System

Civil rights reform came as a result of many years of oppression suffered by African- American people. Women's Right reform came about after many years of economic deprivation and physical abuse. Children's rights has been examined and reformed as a result of the

child abuse that exist in our society. Our society has developed in a positive way because somebody was persecuted (Hunter, 1995). Women and children account for two thirds of the world's population, yet they are voiceless in the society and therefore vulnerable (Ojo, 2017). The notion of human's rights, that all humans beings have inherent rights that cannot be abridged or denied, has evolved historically from a traditional religious emphasis on collective entitlements, earned by having performed certain obligations, to a modern recognition of individual rights, grounded in the humanity of the individual person (Formicola, 2011).

Today, as a result of parallel and sometimes intersecting political and religious endeavours, the concept of human rights includes: civil, political, social, economic, developmental, and spiritual rights, that is, an aggregate of freedoms that reflect a broad contemporary commitment to social justice and the right of conscience (Formicola, 2011). Christianity, in contrast to other religions, emphasize both a legalistic and relational approach to rights (Witte and Johan, 1966). This is the result of its seminal theological beliefs; the notion that individuals are created in the image and likeness of God, that they possess a spiritual nature embodied in the immortal soul, and that they are destined to seek their own salvation (Witte and Johan, 1966).

Christianity, has therefore understood that humans have certain natural, collective obligations to God and others, but that they also have certain personal obligations and rights because they possess a soul (Formicola, 2011). This belief has generated the justification and pursuit of those rights necessary within the state or temporal world

to achieve one's salvation. Christian religious institutions, because of their basic belief in the value of the human being as a creature created in the image and likeness of God, have played the most significant roles in the advancement of human rights in the world. Interestingly, with various governments, they have worked to monitor repression, to educate government and media about human rights violations and social and injustice, to lobby and bring pressure to bear on social and public institutions, and to use their resources to transform society.

Translating the universal rights of women and international laws and connecting them with local ideas and values involves challenging arguments regarding cultural norms, ethical sensibilities and gendered ideas of communities. More importantly, translating women's human rights into local ideas and national values needs a progression and legitimacy. Simply put, situating the rights frameworks within the local contexts need to be gradual and is also expected to fit into the system of cultural meanings in order to be embraced and recognized by the local communities. In the light of this, culture is an important element that can be used as a legitimate tool in advocating for women's rights.

During an African widow's summit, Human Rights activists and political leaders in Nigeria were unanimous in their call for a concerted action towards abolishing all known forms of cultural and traditional practices being meted out against women and the actualization of the full rights and privileges of widows in Nigeria (Yusuf, 2017). They spoke at the African Widows' Summit in Commemoration of Second International Widows Day pioneered by

Felix king foundation at the Best Western Hotel in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. Among Activists that attended the event include; Dr. Joe Okei- Odumakin, Founder, Women Arise Initiative; Dr. Mohammed Aliu Momoh, an international finance and business leader and Hajia Yusuf, Convener, Bring Back Our Girls Campaign.

Presenting a paper entitled “Confronting Inequality to Promote Change”, Okei-Odumakin (2017), drew the attention of all and sundry to the plight of widows and other obnoxious practices faced by women in the society by calling for a change of attitude and interpersonal relationship that is cordial; a readiness by individual and the society to confront all such practices until a positive change becomes visible to all. She attributed the successes recorded in the continued scourge and maltreatment of women to insensitivity and the silence of the oppressed which is the victory of the oppressors. She adds that the society demand equity and justice for mutual relationship as a panacea to protecting the vulnerable ones (Okei-Odumakin, 2017).

Citing a number of cases of deprivation in which her organization has intervened in the past, Okei – Odumakin, then called on women to brace up to the challenge by speaking out whenever and wherever such incidence occur and to always stand for their right most especially at the demise of their husband.

Also speaking on the paper, entitled “Girl Child Education: Panacea for Potential Growth”, Yusuf (2017) blamed the scourge of maltreatment of women and the vulnerable in our society on

ignorance, saying that spreading education to the poor and the vulnerable will go a long way in preparing them for the right task of effectively fighting for their rights if and when the situation arises. She decried the continuous relegation of women in Nigeria that often translate into denied rights of inheritance, lack of access to basic education and other amenities. She called on the male folks to invest in the education of women and the girl child as a way of securing the future even as they hold their wives in confidence with the aim of empowering them to make decisions at some critical points as joint heirs and partners in progress.

From the foregoing, as a people, if the Urhobos should deny the poor and the vulnerable their own human dignity and capacity for freedom and choice, it causes the denial of both our collective and individual dignity at all levels within the family system. More so, it negates the norm of the society and breaches biblical ethics on caring for one another as enshrined in every society. The denial of the vulnerable groups in the society suggests a deviation from the norm, from biblical admonitions; the onus then rest on all to take seriously the responsibility of caring and protecting these groups we can refer to as weak. It behooves the people of the Urhobo ethnicity to not only support Women, but take it upon themselves as a duty to fight for them whenever they encounter where they are being maltreated.

Meanwhile, wife of Edo State Deputy Governor, Mrs. Mary Ann Shaibu (2020) has lauded the Supreme Court for upholding the right of a female child to inherit properties of their biological father. In her reaction to the Supreme Court judgment, Mrs. Shaibu in a statement

said, “This judgment has indeed restored the pride of place of female children which has been rendered voiceless in the society” (2020). Several customary laws in Nigeria disentitle women from partaking in the sharing of their biological father’s properties and this has led to several psychological traumas for the Nigerian Girl child, giving them a sense of deprivation and rejection.

Shaibu, (2020) described this as a breach of section 42 (1) and (2) of the Nigerian constitution which is the supreme law of the land. She argued that most of the customary laws that are anti-female are in conflicts with the nation’s law. She assured women that their heavens were now open and at liberty to aspire to the highest height of their dream. Although there is a tendency to portray culture as stubbornly resistant, it is not static and is subjected to change (Hingston and Asuelime, 2019). Community involvement according to Ibahwo (2000) offers the best prospects for a culturally sensitive solution to resolving the conflict between national human rights and cultural traditions. As noted by Hersh (1998), efforts to change harmful traditions are most effective when they originate within the culture that practices them. Involving the community can yield positive results as seen in the case of redressing female genital mutilation (FGM) in Kenya and Uganda. With the involvement of the community, it was decided that cutting of the genitalia be prohibited and the other harmless rites retained such as the teaching of customary norms and sexual reproductive health (Hingston and Asuelime, 2019). Girls in Kenya even received a certificate after undergoing the traditional rites. In Uganda, this initiative was even supported by men. This experiences show that community

involvement is important and it should be explored in addressing other culture based human rights violation (Hingston and Asuelime, 2019).

Conclusion

This study has revealed the historical challenges of women within the Urhobo society. Thus, Government and human rights activists should therefore enlist the cooperation of community leaders, traditional leaders, religious and the victims in their efforts to alter or eradicate all harmful practices. Community conversations is useful in this respect as it brings the people in the community together to discuss and dialogue about issues affecting their lives and to find a way forward. The involvement of religious and traditional leaders is vital as they are influential enough to convince their people to abstain from or alter harmful traditional practices.

Community based education can also be implemented to increase public awareness of the negative consequences of these practices and the need for change. Many community achievements have been initiated and supported by women themselves. Feminist post structuralism recognizes the importance of agencies and recognizes that oppressed groups (African Women) are not permanently trapped into silence, victimhood or knee jerk refusal by dominant discursive practices (Baxter, 2003). The use of feminist post structuralism, can give a voice to Urhobo Women violated by harmful tradition and bring to light the ambiguities and complexities involved.

It is important that while confronting those traditions which violates girls and women in the Urhobo family system, respect should be shown for our culture and positive practices should be commended. This will help to pave the way for peaceful deliberations and change within our communities in Urhobo land. Although community involvement is vital, government intervention is also necessary and laws condemning harmful practices must be implemented and enforced. Culture and traditions are not static and can be altered or phased out. With the right approach, the fight against harmful traditional obnoxious practices that condone gender based violence against women and oppression of women can yield positive results and Urhobo women can enjoy their heritage rather than be violated by it.

Recommendations

In view of the prevailing circumstances, it has become imperative to make the following recommendations. The crises which women in Urhobo land go through calls for proper attention from both the church and the society. A special platform should be created at all levels in Urhobo land where men can be enlightened on the need and importance of caring for their women. People should volunteer to defend and provide free legal services and advice for the protection of women against unwholesome traditionally practices that had helped in dehumanizing the female gender in Urhobo land.

The church in Urhobo land should fight for the personal freedom and betterment of women who suffer, using the weapons of persuasion, education, and legislation. The church should objectively react to all

the issues of violation of women's right in the Urhobo family system, in a way that will convince all that she is serious, and that it is not serving as a politically sponsored agency. Church wide organizations such as the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Christian Council of Churches (CCN), the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), among others, must team to fight evil practices, particularly among Christian men in Urhobo land.

Moreover, the church in Urhobo land, must as a matter of urgency embark on systematic/ aggressive discipleship for her members about how to balance spirituality with socio-cultural reality. The need to disciple members on practical Christian living, how to become good husbands and stewards of influence, resources etc cannot be over-emphasized. Church pastors, and all other Christian leaders, must join hands together to fight for the protection of women's rights as well as to ensure redress when citizen's rights are violated. The time to wake up and be alert to that responsibility is now.

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POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA: INTERROGATING PRESS INVOLVEMENT AS VICTIM, VECTOR AND EXTINGUISHER

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Abstract

Violence is among the topics of topmost global concern. Violence is multifaceted and hydra-headed in contemporary times. It has assumed some worrisome dimensions in countries and continents of the world. No country or continent is free from violence and no country or continent has a monopoly of violence. Political violence is a variant of violence that relates to politics. Many factors are responsible for the increasing political violence in the world, particularly in Nigeria. The press as the fourth estate of the realm has been entangled in politics and political violence in Nigeria. The Nigerian press has, from the colonial era till date, featured prominently as victim, vector and extinguisher of political violence in the country. This article is an attempt to examine how the press has played these tripartite roles in the endemic political violence in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Politics, violence, press, victim & Nigeria*

Introduction

One of the glaring unfortunate indices of Nigeria's chequered political history is the country's consistent failure to achieve political stability. Political violence is a recurrent decimal in Nigeria's political system. Failed elections with the attendant dashed hopes of good governance are regular triggers for political violence in Nigeria. From the closing stages of the colonial era to the contemporary times, Nigeria has been unable to conduct a truly free and fair election. Many commentators and analysts believe that the June 12, 1993 presidential election supposedly won by the late M.K.O Abiola was free and fair, but that election was not without obvious deficiencies and irregularities. While some elections in Nigeria might be considered relatively or marginally free and fair, no such election in Nigeria can be conveniently and conclusively adjudged to be free and fair. Political violence in Nigeria has also been blamed on other factors, in addition to failed elections. The other factors include corruption, ethnicity, bad governance, misinformation, poverty, thuggery and unemployment (Ani, Anyika & Uwizeyimana, 2019).

The endemic political violence in Nigeria has adverse consequences for the lives and properties of Nigerians and for the country's fortunes and reputation on the home front and in the comity of nations. The perennial political violence in Nigeria has often left in its trails wanton destruction of lives and properties. The situation has attracted the attention and anger of many international organizations, bodies and countries. In the build up to the 2020 off course governorship elections in Edo and Ondo States, the United States of America and the United Kingdom announced visa bans on some

Nigerian politicians who allegedly masterminded political violence in recent elections, and their intentions to impose visa bans on any politician who would precipitated political violence before, during and after the gubernatorial elections in Edo and Ondo States. These drastic measures taken by the US and the UK seemed to have resulted in the relative credibility and success of the elections in the two states.

The press has been involved in politics in Nigeria as the *fourth estate of the realm*. The involvement of the press in political violence in Nigeria is not in doubt. It is, therefore, imperative to interrogate the involvement of the press in political violence in Nigeria as victim, vector and extinguisher.

Conceptual Clarifications

The world has been experiencing seemingly unending and mounting turbulent times. This makes violence a disturbing topic in global discourses. Violence is a broad and multi-faceted topic. It is hardly exhaustible in a single article, chapter or book. The world's battle with and against increasingly divergent forms of violence has made violence an interesting and worrisome topic.

The World Health Organization defines violence as the “intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation” (WHO, 2002, p.5). The World Health Organization categorized violence into three. These are

(1) self-directed violence, (2) interpersonal violence and (3) collective violence.

- (1) Self-directed violence is divided into suicidal behaviour and self-abuse. The subdivision of suicidal behaviour comprises suicidal thoughts, attempted suicide and complete suicide. Self-abuse includes acts like self-mutilation and excessive self-denials and starvation.
- (2) Interpersonal violence can be subdivided into family and intimate partner violence and community violence. The family and intimate partner category refers to the form of violence between family members and intimate partners. This type of violence mostly takes place in the home. This type of violence includes abuse of the elderly, wife battery and child abuse. Community violence, on the other hand, is the form of violence between people who are not related. Such persons may or may not know each other and this type of violence mostly takes place outside the home. This type of violence includes rape/sexual assault and youth violence.
- (3) Collective violence: WHO (2002) subdivided collective violence into social, political and economic violence. Each of these forms of collective violence clearly suggests the intentions and motives of the perpetrators of the violence. Examples of collective violence include political violence, war, terrorism, militancy and state violence.

But for clarity and proper conceptualization, it is necessary to zero in on political violence which is the crux of this chapter. Various authorities, scholars and commentators have attempted to

conceptualize political violence. Such attempts are understandably related but somewhat different based on people's involvement in and experience of political violence. Iruonagbe, Imahonopi, and Ahmadu (2013) state that violence becomes political when it is intended to disrupt the immediate and future political process. The authors note that political violence may involve a process of perpetuating an existing government in power and eliminating perceived opponents or it could be a response to frustrating circumstances and an inability of those in government to fulfill the campaign promises to the people.

The foregoing clearly depicts some of the obvious intendments and end products of political violence. But there is more precision in Anifowose's (1982) description of political violence, cited in Iruonagbe, Imahonopi, and Ahmadu (2013, p.12), as the use of threat or physical act carried out by an individual or group of individuals within a political system against another individual or individuals, and/or property, with the intent to cause injury or death to persons and/or damage or destruction to property; and whose objective or choice of targets or victims, surrounding circumstances, implementation and effects have political significance which tends to modify the behaviour of others in the existing arrangement of a power structure that has some consequences for the political system.

A common form of political violence in Nigeria is electoral violence. It is common experience in Nigeria in every election season. All the facets of the electoral process in Nigeria are bedeviled by malpractices that breed political violence. The components of the electoral process in which fraudulent practices are perpetrated by Nigerian politicians include the suffrage, registration of voters,

delineation of electoral constituencies, right to contest elections, electoral competition between or among rival political parties, electoral umpire charged with conduct and supervision of elections, selection of candidates, voting method, conduct of elections, determination of results, trial and determination of electoral disputes, electoral malpractices and their consequences (Nwabueze, 1993; Adagba, 2007; Ezirim & Mba, 2013).

Every form of violence has its aims and objectives which distinguish it from other forms of violence. According to National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (2014, p.7):

Electoral violence can be distinguished from other types of political violence by its goal – to influence electoral conduct of voters, contestants, officials and other actors and/or to affect the electoral outcome. It can take place during any part of the electoral cycle. Electoral violence involves any use of force with the intent to cause harm or the threat to use force to harm persons or property involved in the electoral process

Electoral violence has also been described as a sub-category of political violence the aim of which is to influence upcoming elections or to challenge the results of recently concluded elections (Goldsmith, 2015; Hoglund, 2009; Laakso, 2007; Demarest & Langer, 2019).

Timothy Sisk's definition of electoral-related violence, cited in Verjee, Kwaja and Onubogu (2018), as acts or threats of coercion, intimidation, or physical harm perpetrated to affect an electoral process or that arise in the context of electoral competition vividly

captures the various angles of electoral violence in Nigeria. As Sisk explains, when perpetrated to affect an electoral process, violence may be employed to influence the process of elections – such as efforts to delay, disrupt, or derail a poll – and to influence the outcome; the determining of winners in competitive races for political office.

Electoral violence accounts for most of the cases of political violence that have been witnessed in Nigeria from the colonial period (Ani & Uwizeyimana, 2022). The use of armed thugs to steal votes, vandalize properties, frighten, maim and assassinate political opponents and their supporters is a notorious practice in Nigerian politics (Anyika & Ani, 2022). The trend is that many Nigerian politicians parade and brag about their thugs in whom they seem to repose more confidence than the official security personnel assigned to guard them.

Overview of Relationship between Mass Media and Politics

The mass media and politics are related in many ways. Politics permeates every facet of human life and activity. This explains why Aristotle in his *Politics* described man as a political animal. Numerous political leaders across the globe have acknowledged the relevance of the mass media in politics and in the survival of the human society. In his letter to Edward Carrington in 1787, the then President of the United States of America, Thomas Jefferson, stated: “were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.” Jefferson’s assertion underscores the perceived indispensability of the mass media in

politics and in society at large. The mass media played major role in the fall of President Zuma of South Africa (**Maseng, Koosentse & Ani 2018**). Coxall, Robins and Leach (2003, p.156) observe, in this direction, that “the communication of political information is an important process in the political system, and the mass media play a central role in this activity;” noting that “the mass media provide most of the electorate with a framework for understanding past, present and future events.” The mass media play crucial roles in every society, notwithstanding the level of development and style of leadership of that society. Harold Lasswell (1969) identified three functions performed by the mass media these three key functions are surveillance of the world to report on-going events, interpretation of the meaning of events, and socialization of individuals into their cultural settings. Olayiwola (1991, p.33) added that “another attribute of the media is the deliberate manipulation of the political process.” This is indicative of the perceived influence of the mass media on political systems and processes

In contemporary politics and media practice, mass media and politics have mutually beneficial and disruptive relationships. It is believed in many quarters that media and politics are now so intertwined that they are hardly separable. This growing relationship and interplay of politics and mass media is captured in McNair’s (2002) claim that to a greater extent now than ever before, the media are politics and politics is the media. In the same vein, Gjyljije (2014) avers that Political communication in modern societies cannot be achieved entirely and successfully in the absence of the active role of the mass media. Gjyljije believes that politics needs media to convey its messages and daily activities to the public and the media becomes

part of the political communication as the sender of the message, the intermediary as well as the ‘shaper’ of public opinion on the political realm.

The aim of political parties around the world is to control political power. They try to market their ideologies, manifestoes, candidates, activities and programmes to the electorate through effective persuasive communication. Mohl (2010) observes in this direction that politicians and parties, the government and the opposition communicate publicly every day with one another with the aid of instrumentalize the media, to apply their programs, interests and power goals. Such goals cannot be achieved without proper integration of the media in the process. Consequently, Balle (2011, p. 63) argues that considered as an art and practice of the government, politics is inseparably an action and conviction; an act on the course of events to influence the life of citizens; and at the same time, an attempt to convince every citizen with the purpose of substantiating the decision taken and achieve their highest possible efficiency. In this respect, communication is necessary for politics.

The close relationship between mass media and politics throws up a resultant relationship between party politics and media politics. This presupposes that politics is no longer played only in and among political parties but also in and through the mass media. Attempts have been made by writers and commentators to relate media politics to party politics, and to also differentiate one from the other. Zaller (1999) explains that the major characteristic of party politics is that politicians compete as members of organized teams. The writer further states that the defining feature of media politics is that

politicians seek to gain office, and to conduct politics while in office, through communication to the citizens via the mass media.

In a nutshell, the mass media are involved in political activities and maneuvers and politics is involved in mass media practices, malpractices and manipulations. But Fuga (2014) observes that it is unknown whether it is politics that uses and subjugates the media or it is the media industry that uses and consumes politicians. Fuga (2014), however, concludes that there is a more mutual process of interests that are rationalized in an instrumental manner rather than the domination of one actor versus another.

The story of the relationship between the mass media and politics is not different in Nigeria. In fact, politics is at the foundation of Nigerian journalism. Politics is also the propeller and, unfortunately, the problem of Nigerian journalism. Oso (2012, p.10) writes that there has been a lot of emphasis on the role of the press in Nigerian politics from the colonial days when politics and journalism were more or less fused together, noting that it has been difficult to separate them. The relationship between mass media and politics in Nigeria is deep and fundamental. Golding and Elliot (1979 p.31) paint a vivid verbal picture of the relationship between the mass media and politics in Nigeria and their seeming inseparability:

Nigerian journalism was thus created by anti-colonial protests, baptized in the waters of nationalist propaganda, and matured in party politics. The separation of politics and journalism has remained incomplete and the dual allegiances of journalists to professional and political goals have created conflicts

whose resolution in daily practice underpins much of contemporary Nigerian journalism.

The mass media and politics in Nigeria have a long and far-reaching relationship. They have featured prominently in each other's successes and failures. There is no end in sight to the double-edged relationship between the mass media and politics in Nigeria.

Historical Perspectives of Political Violence in Nigeria

In the pre-colonial era, the various ethnic nationalities that constitute the present day Nigeria existed as separate geographical, cultural and political entities. With the advent of colonialism, efforts were made by the British colonial masters to fuse the disparate entities to form a united entity majorly for administrative convenience. This lopsided arrangement birthed the much-storied amalgamation of the northern and the southern protectorates of Nigeria in 1914 by the then Governor-General of Nigeria, Lord Fredrick Lugard. Nigeria began to exist as one political entity with all the inherent disparities, inequities, inequalities and peculiarities of the constituting units rearing their centrifugal heads. The 1914 amalgamation of the northern and the southern protectorates to form what is today known as Nigeria can be perceived as the foundation of the rancorous political relationships among the different ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. This is because the constituting units were unequally yoked without proper consideration of their differences and peculiarities. The hasty marriage of the hitherto politically divergent entities created a charged atmosphere for suffocating scramble for political

breath and survival of not the fittest, as it were, but the most loyal stooge.

A new angle was added to Nigeria's political development when the Clifford Constitution of 1922 introduced the elective principle into the Nigerian politics which made provision for voting only in Lagos and Calabar. Notwithstanding the restrictiveness of the principle, elections were devoid of violence. However, many writers, analysts and commentators trace the origin of electoral violence in Nigerian politics to the manipulation of elections along ethnic lines by the colonial masters (Abah & Nwokwu, 2015; Nnoli, 1980). "Colonial manipulations of elections led to the poisoning of relations between the north and the south with the resultant effect of a consequent increase in social distance between members of their populations" (Nnoli, 1980, cited in Abah & Nwokwu, 2015, p.36).

As the nascent Nigeria attempted to brace up to the challenge of the hollow togetherness and political oneness foisted on the composing units by the 1914 amalgamation and the new political culture of elective principle introduced by the Clifford Constitution of 1922, the Richards Constitution of 1946 appeared to make matters worse by splitting the country into north, south and west, engendering fierce struggle for power among the three entities that were just beginning to co-exist as one political entity. The unfortunate inconsistencies in later colonial constitutions, most of which were designed and implemented without proper local consultations and contributions, set the stage for political unrest and violence in Nigeria.

The ethnic colorations and dimensions of political violence in Nigeria became apparent in 1952 when Nnamdi Azikiwe was

defeated in the Western Regional House of Assembly and he swiftly returned to the East and displaced Chief Eyo Ita to become the Premier of the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroun, later known as the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC). There were also cases of electoral violence with ethnic slants in the 1959 general elections resulting in huge loss of lives and destruction of properties. Citing Osaghe (1998), Abah and Nwoku (2015, p.36) note:

However, scholars are in agreement that the real political violence emerged in 1964 federal elections. Nigeria at independence in 1960 opted for parliamentary system of government similar to that of the British political system. Incidentally, the first post independence elections organized by the Prime Minister, Tafawa Balewa/President, Nnamdi Azikiwe in 1964 and 1965 were alleged to be characterized by widespread complaints of fraud, violence and intimidation.

The regional elections of 1964 and 1965 were marred by massive rigging and widespread violence that claimed over 200 lives (Anifowose, 1983; HRW, 2007). The sad developments prompted the military to intervene in Nigerian politics and hold sway for the initial period between 1966 and 1979. The first military intervention in politics in Nigeria took place in January 1966. The coup was led by Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu ostensibly to stop the looming anarchy in the country.

The military regime of General Olusegun Obasanjo handed over power in 1979 to civilian administration led by Alhaji Shehu Shagari. Unfortunately, the Shagari-led could not demonstrate sufficient capacity to govern the country. Ihonvbere (1991, p.25) captures Shagari government's lapses and the resultant return of military to politics in Nigeria:

The civilian administration was plagued with political intolerance, election malpractices, massive corruption, general mismanagement, the neglect of the basic needs of the majority, violence, the erosion of the autonomy of the judiciary, and general economic decay and dislocation. Inflation, prostitution, unemployment, hunger, and destitution reached unparalleled levels as politicians reveled in squander and opulence. This was enough excuse for the military to strike again on New Year's Eve of 1983.

All the elections conducted since the return of democratic rule in Nigeria in 1999 have been characterized by widespread fraud, irregularities, manipulations and violence. The 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019 elections were all marred by violence and malpractices.

Causes and Curses of Political Violence in Nigeria

Many factors are responsible for the endemic political violence in Nigeria. Politics is perceived as the quickest means of amassing wealth in Nigeria, through corrupt practices. The key intention of most politicians aspiring to occupy public offices in Nigeria is to get opportunities to loot the treasuries of the states, local government

areas, ministries, and the country. This inordinate quest for wealth acquisition and power among Nigerian politicians' casts politics as a do-or-die affair in Nigeria. With this unfortunate political trend, Nigerian politicians exhibit the propensity to kill, maim opponents and the electorate and vandalize public and private properties, especially in the build-up to, during and after elections. This results in unpopular candidates occupying public office by hook or by crook to the detriment of the country.

The money politics in Nigeria equally contributes to political violence in the country. Some Nigerian "money bags" either wangle political positions for themselves or buy political positions for their underwhelming political stooges. In the former case, they loot the public treasuries with impunity and in the latter case, they impose themselves as godfathers. Godfatherism is a factor that has contributed immensely to political violence in Nigeria. In some cases, violence results from the conflicts between godfathers and their godsons.

Ethnicity and tribalism are also to blame for political violence in Nigeria. From the colonial times till date, many cases of political violence in Nigeria resulted from the activities and actions of members of the ethnic nationalities or tribes who felt that candidates of their extractions were rigged out of elections or that their tribes or ethnic groups are marginalized in the national politics and resource allocation. Ethnicity and tribalism in Nigerian politics is responsible for the uneven development and distribution of amenities in the country. Many Nigerian politicians are, at best, ethnic, tribal and

religious bigots. The occupation of public offices by such bigots causes and fuels political violence in the country.

Electorate malpractices and irregularities also cause political violence in Nigeria. Elections in Nigeria since the colonial period lacked transparency, fairness and freeness which are the essential ingredients of democratic electoral process. Elections in the country had, rather, been characterized by:

- (i) Manipulation of the decisions and activities at the various levels of the electoral process by the governments and politicians;
- (ii) Corruption of officials and electorate;
- (iii) Violence during campaigns, polling and collation;
- (iv) Rigging through the stuffing, snatching and destruction of ballot boxes and falsification of results, and
- (v) Ineffective electoral dispute resolution mechanisms (Iruonagbe, Imahonopi, & Ahmadu, 2013)

There are many factors that are responsible for electoral violence in Nigeria. National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (2014) rightly states that the underlying causes of electoral violence, and in fact, political violence, are often rooted in social, political and economic deficiencies including but not limited to: a lack of information; polarization and divergent preferences; cultural, religious, tribal and ethnic clefts; scarcity of resources and ongoing dispute over resources; large-scale inequalities; history of civil conflict or war; and weak security and rule of law institutions. This is a vivid depiction of the situation in Nigeria.

Similarly, Verjee, Kwaja and Onubogu (2018, p.1) opine that “social and economic inequalities, ethnic and religious divisions, and structural weaknesses, such as corruption and weak state capacity, remain prevalent across Nigeria and contribute to the risk of electoral violence.” The authors further state that “other important factors contributing to electoral violence have evolved since 2015, including changing forms of insecurity and prominence of disputes within, rather than between, the political parties.” These factors have continued to cause violence in the political processes in Nigeria. They occur in different forms and at the different stages of the electoral processes.

The various forms of electoral violence that have characterized elections in Nigeria for decades take place at three stages namely, pre-election stage, election stage and post-election stage. In the build-up to virtually every election in Nigeria, violence is visited on the electorate and opponents. Such violence activities are usually carried out by unpopular candidates or candidates who have lost their credibility and feel that violence is the only means available to them for winning such elections. The pre-election violence is often a prelude to and a gauge of the magnitude of the anticipated much heavier violence during and in the aftermath of the elections. Ugiagbe (2009) states that these three stages of electoral violence in Nigeria have the physical and the psychological dimensions and range from acts of assault, arson, ballot box snatching and stuffing to kidnapping and assassinations.

Political violence in any political system has innumerable adverse consequences. It results in destruction of lives and properties,

disaffection, ethnic rivalry, mediocrity in leadership, among others. The underdevelopment in many countries of the world is caused by political instability resulting from political violence.

Electoral violence subverts basic standards for democratic elections. Violence against candidates, activists, journalists, voters, election officials and observers can reduce voters' choice and suppress the vote. Violence can be used to intimidate individuals and communities to vote against their will for a candidate. Assassination of a candidate can even change electoral outcomes (National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, 2014, p.6).

No meaningful progress can be achieved in a political environment that is bedeviled by political violence. This is, indeed, the bane of national development in Nigeria. National development in Nigeria has suffered serious setbacks orchestrated by political violence and the attendant political instability.

Press and Political Violence in Nigeria: Victim, Vector or Extinguisher?

The press is popularly referred to as the “fourth estate of the realm.” This nickname presupposes that the press is the fourth organ of government, after the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. Section 22 of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (as amended) provides that “the press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this Chapter (Chapter 2) and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people.” This provision

indicates the constitutional recognition of the relevance of the press in the Nigerian political system.

The mass media play big roles in every society. Such roles include information dissemination, surveillance and correlation of the environment, status conferral and watchdog role. The press particularly plays important roles in politics. Olayiwola (1991) writes the press has always been involved in politics, formation of public opinion, perception of images of candidates vying for political offices, the definition of social reality and social norms, the education, information, enlightenment and entertainment of the public and also in the presentation and clarification of issues, values, goals and changes in culture and society, the world over.

The press exerts both negative and positive influences on political systems. In other words, the Nigerian press, just like the press in other countries, can cause, fuel and/or quell political violence and instability. The way and manner the press reports political events, actions and activities can trigger political tension and unrest. The assertion that “some kinds of communication on some kinds of issues, brought to the attention of some kinds of people under some kinds of conditions have some kinds of effects” (Berelson, 1948) holds sway in any analysis of political reporting in Nigeria. The agenda set by the mass media on any political event or issue, to a large extent, determine the people’s perception and reaction to that event or issue. Some political crises in Nigeria had been partly blamed on biased media coverage, reportage or innuendos. Meadow (2009, p.237) explains that:

The media play two crucial roles with respect to election violence. First, they provide evidence-or at least the external implication-that an election is illegitimate or being contested domestically, regardless of the fairness of the election or its certification by independent election commissions and election monitoring organizations. Interpretative frames may imply that the election has not been-free and fair|| and has been rigged through voter intimidation or vote-counting fraud. Second, by showing compatriots being hurt or killed, the media serve to inform the domestic audience of the risks and dangers of participating in or protesting the election. While graphic images of violence may incite further protests, such protests more often dissipate in response to the risks, especially when the media also cover suppression of protests (like those in Tiananmen Square or more recently in Iran) and officials use the media to threaten violence against protesters.

The press in Nigeria developed along political and ethnic lines. The Nigerian press has been neck-deep in the country's politics. Most media outfits in Nigeria from the colonial periods till date are founded, owned and controlled by career politicians. The idiosyncrasies of such politicians determine and colour the editorial policies of their media organizations. The media organizations in Nigeria are often drawn into political battles, overtly or covertly, through the political influences of their owners. The pattern of media ownership in Nigeria, which is currently dominated by private ownership, makes the mass media to be irresistibly involved in

politics. By this trend, the aphorism that “he who pays the piper calls the tune” holds sway.

It should also be noted that the government-owned media in Nigeria are at best the political tools of the government in power. All government-owned media in Nigeria, whether at the federal or state level are merely used to propagate party ideology and manifestoes and to attempt to perpetuate the ruling party in power by singing the unwarranted and unjustifiable praises of such party or its candidates, without freedom to criticize the government no matter how constructive.

The foregoing indicates that the Nigerian press has played important parts in politics in the country from the colonial era but not without obvious daunting challenges. Olayiwola (1991) further explains that during the period of nationalism, the Nigerian press served as political recruiters and mobilizers. The party papers served as vehicles for changing political consciousness, and through them the ideas of nationalism were propagated. The press generally recruited people to political movements and they contributed to party organization. The press also encouraged the penetration of political activities into the then provinces.

The Nigerian press has acted as the vector or cause of political violence in Nigeria through its biased political reporting and ethno-religious leanings. It has been noted that the Nigerian press developed along political party and ethnic lines. The press in Nigeria has failed to extricate itself from the vice grip of ethnicity and political control. “The mass media sometimes instigate conflict through biased reporting, deliberate distortions, criminal partisanship

and unprofessionalism compounded by influences of tribalism” (Iruonagbe, Imahonopi, & Ahmadu, 2013, p.13).

These political and ethnic biases in mass media reporting is mostly noticed in Nigeria in the build-up to, during and immediately after national elections. “Electoral violence reporting is particularly sensitive to political biases in the news media” in Nigeria (Demarest & Langer (2019, p.85).

The ethnic and tribal connections of the press also encourage political violence along ethnic and tribal lines in Nigeria. Adebani, (2016), cited in Demarest and Langer (2019, p.86) regrets that “the Nigerian press renders itself totally captive to ethno-regional and ethno-religious passions and calculations.” This has, in fact, triggered and fueled political violence in Nigeria. Ojo (2013) concludes that “the mass media are no doubt a political resource. In a plural and deeply divided society like Nigeria, its role is even more imperative in achieving national cohesion, integration, and stability. The nag, however, in Nigeria is that the mass media – both publicly and privately owned – are more or less ethnic jingoists.”

The press has also been a victim of political violence in Nigeria. Whether a media organization is involved in politics or remains neutral, its reports on political activities and events are continuously scrutinized by political parties and their supporters. The press and journalists in Nigeria do not only suffer politically motivated attacks because they are involved in politics, they also suffer such attacks for their refusal to break their political neutrality, which is professional and ethical, to become partisan. In Nigeria, media organizations owned by politicians are part of the political weapons of their

proprietors for winning elections and exerting political influence. Journalists in such private media organizations do not enjoy the freedom to write unbiased political stories.

Beyond the challenges of the private media organizations in Nigeria, the publicly owned media in Nigeria are not completely free from unhealthy political control and interferences. The public media organizations in Nigeria are the mouthpiece of the government in power. No journalist in such public media organizations can openly criticize the government, no matter how constructive the criticism maybe, without huge penalties. It is, in fact, the government in power that appoints and changes the leadership of the public media organizations at will. The directors, managing directors and other key leaders of the public media organizations are appointed by the government. Some of such appointments are given to political cohorts who are not even journalists. The influence of government on public media organizations in Nigeria is overwhelming, distorting and destabilizing. With such overwhelming influence, the government uses public media organizations to attack perceived or suspected enemies of government, thereby engendering and heightening political violence and instability.

According to Abati (2006), cited in Iruonagbe, Imahonopi, and Ahmadu (2013, p.13):

In the emergent power equations and in the face of the gross violation of national interest by successive governments, the media is drawn into a competition for power. Suppressing, gagging and intimidating the media and the rest of the civil society have proven to be a necessary condition for the achievement of this

agenda. Restrictive laws and anti-media mechanisms have proven to be most convenient, the general purpose of which has been direct assault on press freedom.

Journalists have always been easy targets of political violence in Nigeria. They have suffered as victims of political violence in the country for what they or their media organizations did or failed or refused to do. The journalists in Nigeria appear to be the endangered species. Politicians in the country are generally uneasy in the presence of journalists. There have been numerous cases of beating, maiming, kidnapping, imprisonment and dismissal of journalists as a result of political violence in Nigeria. There have also been cases of destruction of media houses and equipment as a result of political violence.

The case of Jones Abiri easily comes to mind. Abiri is the publisher of *Weekly Source* – a local tabloid circulated in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. Officials of the Department for Security Service (DSS) arrested Abiri in July 2016 and detained him for over two years without any charge, after he published an article on 10 July 2016 about oil blocks and politics in Nigeria. He was released on 15 August 2018, after a Magistrate Court struck out the charges leveled against him. But eight months after his release, the DSS re-arrested and charged him with cybercrime, terrorism, petroleum production and sabotage (Amnesty International, 2019)

Journalists were variously attacked and assaulted during the November 2019 Governorship and National Assembly elections in Kogi and Bayelsa States. During the election in Kogi State, a reporter with *The Cable* online newspaper, Chinedu Asadu, reported that police officers seized his cell phone for

15 minutes for attempting to take photos of a politician giving money to women waiting to cast their votes. Asadu claimed that he left the polling place after collecting his phone because another police officer made threatening comments, and he feared the officer would harm him (Amnesty International, 2019).

Similarly, Committee to Protect Journalists (2019) reported that during the November 2019 elections in Bayelsa State, four unidentified individuals wielding canes and bottles intercepted Adejumor Kabir, a reporter with the *Premium Times* newspaper, while he was traveling to the main office of Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission. The attackers forced Kabir's driver to leave, and drove Kabir to an isolated area in Opolo, in Yenagoa, the state capital, where they interrogated him for two hours. After questioning and accusing him of manipulating election results, they released him.

Journalists were equally attacked during the 2019 general elections in Nigeria. Committee to Protect journalists reports that Nonso Isiguzo, a news editor with the privately owned Nigeria Info radio station, he was traveling on election day between polling stations to cover the March 9 gubernatorial and state assembly elections in the Ahoada West local government area in Rivers State when armed men, some wearing camouflage uniforms, stopped their Nigeria Info-branded car, told Isiguzo and his driver, Sunday Isiitu, to get out, and took their car keys. Shortly afterwards, a second car carrying five others whom Isiguzo identified as journalists with accredited press tags was also stopped at the same point on the road. The men released Isiguzo, Isiitu, and the other journalists after holding them on the side of the road for

two hours. After that experience, Isiguzo did not continue reporting the elections in the area.

Political violence has even claimed the lives of many journalists in Nigeria. **Rhodes** (2009) writes that Bayo Ohu, assistant news editor and political reporter for the Lagos, Nigeria-based *The Guardian* murdered on Sunday, September 20, 2009. According to eyewitnesses and local reports, five gunmen and one female ringleader shot Ohu repeatedly in his doorway while his **Rhodes** states that, according to local reports, Ohu's assassination may have been linked to his reporting on a rerun of council elections in Ekiti State.

Conclusion

The press has featured prominently in political violence in Nigeria as victim, victor and extinguisher. The way and manner the press reports political issues and events in some cases trigger and fuel political violence. The press can cause or escalate political violence through lopsided reports and sensationalism. The press in Nigeria has been the victim of political violence on numerous occasions across the years. This has manifested in the harassment of journalists, imprisonment of journalists, murdering of journalists, burning of media houses and destruction of media equipment, among other ways. It is worthy of note that the Nigerian press has quelled political violence in the country on a number of occasions through balanced reporting on political issues. The ability of the mainstream media to deescalate or quell political violence, however, appears to be fast diminishing with the increasing ubiquity, intrusiveness and seeming intractability of the social media.

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THE EXECUTIVE IN NIGERIA: FOCUS ON THE WANING PUBLIC TRUST IN THE BUHARI'S APC GOVERNMENT

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Abstract

A study of the executive in Nigeria, especially at the instance of the post 2019 presidential election where the Buhari-led All Progressives Congress (hereinafter APC) government transited to another four-year term is justified in that it contributes to an understanding of the character of the government in power. This is because the executive remains a superstructure that reflects the character of the society in which it operates. However, in Africa and Nigeria in particular, the executive does not reflect their respective societies. They are rather superimpositions on their societies they intend to transform. Recalling APC's change mantra that enabled the party to win the 2015 presidential election vis-à-vis the in-between elections character and conduct of the Buhari-led APC Government; the change mantra was at best a smoke-screen that concealed the realities of the government. Thus, rather than the proclaimed change, it was a perpetuation of deeds similar to past governments in Nigeria. Little wonder, the party replaced the change mantra with 'The Next Level Mantra'. This paper, relying on Public Trust and Confidence Theories as its theoretical handle, makes an assessment of public trust and confidence on the executive under President Buhari. The paper is dependent on secondary sources of information. The paper concludes that public trust and confidence of Nigerians on the Buhari led executive has greatly waned. This

conclusion is hinged on account that public institutions in Nigeria such as the INEC, the EFCC, security agencies and the judiciary has been observed as being most subservient to the ruling APC government vis-à-vis previous governments. The paper recommends that the Buhari/APC Government revert to the visions of the 2015 Change Mantra that enabled the party to clinch the 2015 presidential victory.

Keywords: *Nigeria, Executive, Public Trust, Confidence, APC, PDP, Government*

In political and social science, hardly any other term has been carried to market as often as crisis: crisis of the welfare state, of political parties, and of parliament; performance crisis; governance, structural, rationality, legitimation, integration, and motivation crises; the Euro crisis; crisis in the Middle East; crisis of dictatorships; and, over and over again, crisis of democracy (Merkel 2018, p.1).

Introduction

The executive is the organ of government charged with the sacred responsibility of law and policy implementation in any democracy. It is usually an embodiment of all institutions that enables the government in carrying out the day-to-day activities of governance in a state. According to Haywood (2007, p.357), the executive is the irreducible core of government. Political systems can operate without constitutions, assemblies, judiciaries and even parties, but they cannot survive without an executive branch to formulate government policy and ensure that it is implemented...political executives and particularly chief executives, are certainly the face of politics with

which the general public is most familiar. This is because the executive is the source of political leadership.

As an organ, it is comprised of such institutions as the various security formations, anti-graft agencies, among others. The executive stands out as a colossus vis-à-vis the other arms of government in impacting on the lives of ordinary citizens.

Despite this enviable position, the executive has attracted enormous scrutiny over the years. The Trilateral Commission on ‘*The Crisis of Democracy*’ in 1975, for example, noted with dismay that “dissatisfaction with, and lack of confidence in the functioning of the institutions of democratic government have thus now become widespread...” (Crozier, Huntington, & Watanuki, 1975, p.158-59). Ever since, even as Merkel’s (2018) epigraph noted above, scholarship has echoed and re-echoed the lack of public trust and confidence, dissatisfaction and disillusionment with the central institutions of representative democracy (the executive, electoral umpires, political parties, the judiciary, among others) in both developed and developing countries (Miller, 1974; Niemi, Mueller, & Smith, 1989; Dogan, 1994; Dalton, 1996, 1999; Nye, 1997a&b; Nye & Zelikow, 1997; Norris, 1999; McGrath, 2017).

Political trust and confidence on the executive, as implied here, is the overwhelming concerns for trends—is public trust on the executive waning or not? Whereas public trust is necessary for government to succeed without coercion, a modicum of erosion in public trust and confidence in the actions of a government is healthy for a fledgling

democracy (Chanley, Rudolph & Rahn, 2000). However, the dilemma is that most African states are democratic-autocracies that never see erosion of public trust on government as healthy but an expendable opposition.

In Nigeria, public confidence in the executive has become highly waned. Recalling that Nigeria's Fourth Republic commenced in May 29, 1999 with the People's Democratic Party (hereinafter PDP) saddled with the responsibility of governance. However, at the 2015 presidential elections, the PDP after sixteen years lost power to a rival political party, the All Progressives Congress (hereafter APC). The APC came with much fanfare with momentous support from the Nigerian people, especially the party's populist slogan—the "Change Mantra" which attracted Nigerians to the party. However, while APC's adoption of populism¹ indeed endeared Nigerians to the party, it undermined the anti-democracy properties of populism: challenges on external checks on unrestrained state power, undermines human rights, curtails checks and balances, limits debates, dissent and political pluralism, among others. Thus, while populism greatly helped the President Buhari-led APC to power, has it helped the government to govern differently in Nigeria? Or instead it helped the government in strengthening democratic-autocracy?

The in-between election conducts and happenstances of the President Buhari government has caused waning public trust and confidence in the APC government. For example, under the APC public institutions such as the Independent Electoral Commission (hereinafter INEC), the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (hereinafter

EFCC), security agencies and even the judiciary has been cajoled by the executive to be subservient to do the biddings of the ruling APC government. However, the subservience of these institutions to the APC government is condemnable as it is beyond the normal because the very issues (cases of corruption, disobedience of court rulings, extra-judicial use of security agencies, judicial interference, etcetera) that were the alleged ‘sins’ of the PDP’s misadventure for sixteen years in power, are as well perpetrated by the Buhari-led APC government.

This paper assesses the causes of the deep erosion of public trust and confidence in the executive under the APC government in Nigeria. It is structured as follows. Following this introduction, the paper in Section II considers Theories of Public Trust and Confidence as its theoretical handle. Section III examines the causes of the waning public trust and confidence on the APC government. Section IV concludes the paper.

Theories of Public Trust and Confidence

Theories of trust and confidence in public institutions are commonly associated with Allport (1961), Cattell (1965), Newton (1999), among others. Scholarship into the study of the central institutions of representative democracy--the executive, the legislature and the judiciary--are worried by a sceptre that has hunted these institutions—the challenge of waning or eroding public confidence and trust. Though this challenge is not sui generis to any particular country; especially as it is evident elsewhere, it is most evident in

developing countries. Thus, what explains the unabating wane in public trust and confidence in the aforementioned institutions?

The search for causes has led scholarship to identify a number of explanatory models: (a) the “*Social-Psychological Model*” which is centred around individual characteristics (Easton, 1965; Gamson, 1968; Gabriel, 1995), (b) the “*Social and Cultural Model*” which is centred on the cultural environment of individuals, group and communities (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985; Coleman, 1990; Almond & Verba, 1963) and (c) the “*Institutional Performance Model*” which explains governmental performance (Newton, 1999).

In analysing these models, academicism has since located the challenge as a purely political and governmental one (Newton, & Norris, 1999). This identification, therefore, excludes the earlier two models and instead concentrate on the “*Institutional Performance Model*” as the explanatory model in discerning the erosion of public trust and confidence on public institutions such as the executive, legislature, judiciary, among others.

The “*Institutional Performance Model*” identifies the actual performance of government as the basis of understanding citizens’ trust in government. The model asserts that:

because all citizens are exposed to government actions, confidence in political institutions is likely to be randomly distributed among various personality types and different cultural and social types, government

institutions that perform well are likely to elicit the confidence of citizens; those that perform badly or ineffectively generate feelings of distrust and low confidence. The general public...recognises whether government or political institutions are performing well or poorly and reacts accordingly. (Newton & Norris, 1999, p.7)

Newton and Norris (1999) have exposed that governments that perform poorly receives waning public trust and confidence and vice versa. Thus, if governments receive erosion in trust and confidence, the remedy lies in lowering public expectations of performance by governments promising less or in improving government performance. Thus, trust in a government is the product of the set government's performance. While this point is well established, political institutions in most Third World countries are weak and which explains the huge unsatisfactory governmental performance in making and implementing policies (Newton & Norris, 1999).

In the light of this model, what is the extent of trust and confidence on the President Buhari-led APC government in Nigeria? Undoubtedly, there is dissatisfaction on Nigeria's executive under President Buhari who rose to power on a thunderous "Change Mantra" in 2015, but gradually being eroded by reasons of government policies, actions or government responses to happenstances. Rather than lowering the unmet expectations and hopes of Nigerians on account of the "Change Mantra" in 2015, the Buhari-led APC government made further promises with its "*The*

Next Level” agenda which of course negates the notions of the Institutional Performance Model.

The Waning President Buhari-led APC Executive in Nigeria

The sixteen years of PDP rule under the different presidents variously impacted on Nigerians. On account of the PDP’s long years in power, massive voter apathy and disillusion with the political process in Nigeria became ripe. Thus, there was clamour for change. Then the APC came around with the “Change Mantra” in 2015 general elections. It indeed did the expected in raising hopes of Nigerians for change in manner of governance. However, what is discernible is that the dividends of democracy as provided by the Buhari-led APC government in Nigeria are not commensurate with the high expectations Nigerians had on the President Buhari Government in 2015. Thus, trust and confidence on the ruling APC government is waning (Okolo, & Karimo, 2017). The danger herein is that no democracy survives for long without citizens’ support (Miller, 1974). This section examines the causes of erosion of trust and confidence on the President Buhari-led APC Government in Nigeria.

a. Unparalleled Engagement in Populism

Due to the unbridled use of populism by the APC, a brief discourse on populism may suffice here. Populism is an approach that thrives to appeal to ordinary people who feel that their concerns are disregarded by established elite groups (Mudde, & Kaltwasser, 2017; Eatwell, & Goodwin, 2018). Populism from an ideological perspective is “an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure

people' versus the corrupt elite, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the general will of the people" (Mudde, 2004, p.543). Populism is not dependent on a given programme but instead structured around a technique which raises the people against others: against government, elites, rulers, political party, amongst others. It, thus, essentially subsists as a pretext to organise politics in a democratic manner (Pelinka, 2008). If populism is a pretext, it simply amounts to lying in politics which centres on the question of morality in governance (Coady, 2008). Scholarship is polarised on populism. Plato justify populism on the grounds that it is for the benefit of the citizens, whereas Kant (1949, p.349) and Montaigne (1991, p.35) condemn populism as an accursed vice. As hitherto asked above, has populism helped the APC to govern Nigeria differently?

The "Change Mantra" of the ruling APC government in Nigeria in 2015 secured electoral victory on account of its unparalleled deployment of populism. President Muhammadu Buhari is widely reported in different fora for his populist statements; in both local and foreign audiences. In the Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIAs), Chatham House, London, President Buhari on 21 February, 2015 made, among others, the following statement as reproduced verbatim here:

What is the difference between me and those who elected us to represent them? Absolutely nothing. Why should Nigerian president not fly with other Nigerian public? Why do I need to embark on a foreign trip as a president with huge crowd with public funds? Why do I need to go for foreign medical trip if we cannot make our hospitals functional? Why do we need to send

children to school abroad if we cannot develop our universities to compete with foreign ones? (Buhari, 2015a, p.3)

The President Buhari led APC government is into its second tenure, yet the government is guilty of most of the populist promises as mentioned above and has not given a thought to revisit these populist statements towards actualising them. For example, a major promise on health that it will **ensure that no Nigerian will have a reason to go outside of the country for medical treatment has not been achieved, let alone kept by even the president. Another** populist promise was to reduce the presidential air fleet if elected into power as a means of saving the Nigerian economy of avoidable waste. The administration has partially fulfilled this promise.

b. Contraction of the Democratic Space

Pro-democratic struggles in form of contentious politics are a global phenomenon today (Meckstroth, 2015). In Nigeria, the birth of the Fourth Republic in 1999 was greeted with expectations of upholding the sanctity of fundamental human rights, what Nigerians referred to as the dividends of democracy. This expectation was on account of the relief following Nigerians traumatising years under military dictatorship. However, against this expectation, the democratic space in Nigeria has continued to shrink with an unbridled high handedness in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

Opposition parties under the sixteen years of PDP administration clamoured for democratic space and to a large extent got the space widened. For example, opposition groups protested in various cities

in Nigeria without police harassment on a number of incidents such as the demonstrations that marked the removal of fuel subsidy under President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan in 2012 (Lakemfa, 2015). This democratic space continued with President Goodluck Jonathan reportedly saying he was the most abused president in Nigeria's history. He noted, however, with certain caveats that: first it was healthy for Nigeria's fledgling democracy and second that Nigerians would only cherish it when it is eventually denied. This trend culminated in, for the first time, an opposition party unseating an incumbent president in Nigeria's political history.

The enthronement of the opposition APC government was expected to completely open-up the democratic space. This expectation was subsumed in the fact that President Buhari was a beneficiary of a widened civic space in the past. Hitherto, General Buhari and his deputy, Dr. Chuba Okadigbo, both leaders of the now defunct All Nigeria Peoples' Party (ANPP), undertook a protest in Kano in 2003 during which they suffered police teargas attack. Dr. Okadigbo died from complications arising from the teargas he suffered. General Buhari contacted Mr. Femi Falana (SAN) to help him seek redress in court on pro-bono. The court ruled in his favour stating that staging of protests do not need police permit but instead police protection with a 48 hours' notice as a precondition (Yesufu, 2019). As beneficiary of such court ruling, Gen. Buhari ought to be a promoter of the right to protest and to even widen it further. Sadly, the court ruling Gen. Muhammadu Buhari got has remained a far-cry under Muhammadu Buhari as president as evidenced below.

First, the right to protest under the APC government is grossly contracted. Protests from religious groups like Shiite Moslems, ethnic groups like the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOD) are presently branded as terrorist groups and proscribed in Nigeria; civil society groups like the Bring-Back-Our-Girls Movement and its membership including Dr. (Mrs.) Oby Ezekwesili, Aisha Yesufu, among others, are either attending to regular and frequent DSS invitations for questioning or are constantly met with stern police brutality during harmless protest sessions. Several Nigerians with the likes of Mr. Omoyele Sowore, the founder of *Sahara Reporters*, are under one form of detention or the other for phantom charges including a call to a revolution. However, reminiscing into the recent past brought to daylight the fervent call to a revolution Gen. Buhari made to Nigerians, following his defeat in the 2011 presidential election to the PDP, especially to emulate and prepare for Egypt's 2011 kind of revolution that claimed over 800 lives (Falana, 2019). Ironically, Nigerians Mr. Sowore calling for a revolution under President Buhari are cajoled into detention.

Second, the APC in its opposition days preceding the 2015 presidential election deployed, propagated and benefited from the space provided by the social media. In power, the APC government had introduced the draconian "Social Media Bill" to gag the freedom of speech enjoyed by Nigerians through the various social media platforms. There is widespread anger among Nigerians in opposition to the bill. For instance, Rev. Matthew Hassan Kukah said:

I have consistently tried to create levels of differentiation between democracy and dictatorship,

especially dictatorships of the military variant as we have had in our country. I have argued that Nigeria is still very far away from the goal posts of what could be called a democratic society. In my view, the environment does not as yet look anything democratic because the actors are largely strangers to the ethos and what is more, too many of them are tied to the old order, not to talk of the fact that the presence of General-presidents suggest that we are still in the thrall of militarism. Democracy thrives on debate, consensus building, negotiation, persuasion, argumentation, rule of law, process, and inclusion... The recent outrage by the Minister of Information, Mr. Lai Mohammed, over public reaction to the Social Media Bill, is illustrative of the point I am making that not all who call themselves democrats appreciate the enormous burden that goes with the claim today. The Minister has used some rather harsh and divisive words that suggest some contempt for the voices and views of those whose labours and sacrifices brought him and his government to where they are. His language is disrespectful, appalling and illustrative of the highhandedness that suggests that we are not in a democracy. The language is as intolerant as it is alienating. The Minister says that no amount of threat, blackmail etc. will dissuade the government from going ahead with the social media bill because it is borne out of patriotism. Really? (Kukah, 2019, para:1-5)

Third, an irony in most of these happenstances is their occurrence under Yemi Osinbajo, who is fortunately for the APC government a professor of law, a pastor and a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), who ordinarily ought to be the protector of human rights and the legal

eye of the APC administration. However, under the APC watch, the vice president, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo as acting president in 2017 mandated the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) to forcibly dispatch protesters from the Unity Fountain, Abuja—a place unanimously agreed to as a civic space. The police would have been instead instructed to prevent the protest from degenerating into chaos. It is gathered that the police are not anti-people in their actions during protest sessions when there are no orders from above to act in brutality (Yesufu, 2019). Oftentimes, the police escort protesters and even clandestinely act in solidarity with protesters. Whereas, the contraction of the democratic space under the APC may be excused on the grounds that “democratic practice is invariably a convenient product comprising some ingredients of both dictatorship and democracy” (Osabu-Kle, 2008, p.4), does it mean that the whole arsenals of law the vice president possesses are in comatose because he is in government?

This conscious contraction of the democratic space under President Buhari self-negates his personal description of himself at Chatham House, London, when he said:

Permit me to close this discussion on a personal note. I have heard and read references to me as a former dictator in many respected British newspapers including the well-regarded *The Economist*. Let me say without sounding defensive that dictatorship goes with military rule, though some might be less dictatorial than others. I take responsibility for whatever happened under my watch. I cannot change the past. But I can change the present and the future. So, before you is a former military ruler and a converted democrat who is

ready to operate under democratic norms and is subjecting himself to the rigours of democratic elections for the fourth time. (Buhari, 2015a, p.6)

c. Unpeopled Economic Policies

Though started in his first tenure, the second tenure of President Buhari has consolidated on previous unpopular policies some of which are traceable to Muhammadu Buhari as a former military head of state from 1983-1985. From the Single Treasury Account (STA), the ₦50 Stamp Duty Tax, removal of fuel subsidy which, as opposition party, the APC protested against in the PDP era, increase in the pump price of fuel, closure of land borders preventing specifically the importation of foreign rice, to the recent increase in Value Added Tax (VAT) rate from 5% to 7.5% to fund both the 2020 Appropriation Bill and the 30% minimum wage, the Finance Bill, among others, remain not only unpopular but has continued to inflict untold hardship on Nigerians.

These financial developments, especially the just passed Finance Bill (comprising of the Companies Income Tax, Value Added Tax, Customs and Excise Tariff, Capital Gains Tax Act, Petroleum Profit Tax, Personal Income Tax, and Stamp Duties Act) by the rubber stamp 9th National Assembly, have elicited mixed reactions (Akhigbe, & Ajibola, 2019). The 9th National Assembly is split along party affiliations with the APC in support whereas the opposition led by the PDP opposed it. The Executive Chairman of the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) and the Minister for Budget and Planning, in an address before the Senate Committee on Finance on the Federal Government 2019-2021 Medium Term Expenditure

Framework, stressed the need for an increment of VAT rate 5% to 6.5%-7.5%. They cited, amongst other reasons, the dwindling global oil price, and the weakness of the naira vis-à-vis the U.S. dollar, etc., accounts for the need for VAT rate increase. Thus, VAT (a general consumption tax imposed on a wide range of goods and services) is essentially a money machine (Keen, & Lockwood, 2010). However, VAT rate increment has attracted several criticisms.

First, its alleged adverse impacts on distributional equity, especially in Third World countries as Nigeria (Alavuotunki, Haapanen & Pirttila, 2019). Itriago (2011, p.1) stated that ‘tax policy in developing countries has been heavily influenced by the IMF and national elites. This has had a negative impact in many cases, with a focus on indirect regressive taxation like VAT, and extensive tax incentives for companies’. Second, the consequences of VAT rate increase on Nigeria’s economy especially “its reductive effects on consumers’ disposable income can lead to a contraction in general economic activities...the minimum wage of public servants will be increased...the increase in VAT rate will simply deplete the value of the increased minimum wage” (Maiye, & Isiadinso, 2019, p.3). Third, VAT rate increment is interpreted as bad timing because it is inconsistent with economic realities. To this, Oyedele (2019, para: 6) stresses that VAT increase will lead to higher inflation, interest rate hike, more unemployment and generally make people poorer...Trying to expand the VAT net while also increasing VAT rate at the same time is a faulty tax strategy. Nigeria can make twice as much from VAT at current rate by reforming the law, expanding

the net and ensuring robust administration rather than by increasing rate.

Against the backdrop of the Finance Bill (inclusive of VAT rate increase), requisite government authorities must explore other means of expanding the tax net by other legal measures, albeit an accountable and transparent VAT fund regime in place to stimulate taxpayers.

d. Obsession with National Security

The APC has been obsessed with insecurity concerns prior to and upon assumption of Nigeria's presidency. It may be recalled that the APC promised to handle insecurity in Nigeria; especially in North/East where Boko Haram terror, has had an unimpressive impact. President Buhari promised to **ensure that under his watch, no force, external or internal, occupy even an inch of Nigerian soil**. Recalling further, the APC as an opposition party derided the then ruling PDP government under President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan for seeking support from neighbouring republics of Niger, Chad, Mali and Cameroun to battle Boko Haram terror. For the APC, the PDP security strategy amounted to belittling Nigeria as a major power in sub-Saharan Africa. The APC promised to decimate Boko Haram with utmost expediency if voted into power.

However, the APC took a similar strategy like PDP in seeking international support from neighbouring African states when it assumed office. President Buhari's first foreign visits were trips to seek sister countries in alliance against Boko Haram insurgency. The

APC government is into its second tenure, yet insecurity pervades North/East. This of course has far reaching implications. For example, huge budgetary allocations have constantly been made to the defence sector; however, without commensurate gains in peace and security in North/East. There is also insecurity in other parts of Nigeria with kidnapping gaining unprecedented ascendancy; a scenario which has made road journeys unattractive.

e. Abysmal Budget Performance

Budget execution under the APC since 2015 when it took over power in Nigeria has remained abysmal. From June 2015 to November, 2018, the President Buhari Government had a total income of ₦11.99 trillion, while it spent ₦16.98 trillion; representing a deficit of ₦4.99 trillion (BudgIT, 2019).

Hitherto, members of the APC in the 7th National Assembly initiated impeachment proceedings against President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan for reasons of unsatisfactory budget performance. Following his strained relations with the 7th National Assembly, President Jonathan consciously avoided the National Assembly in the fall of his administration to avoid a planned embarrassment from the opposition dominated National Assembly and instead often delegated his Minister of Finance, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala to make annual budget presentations in the National Assembly.

Under the ruling APC government with APC controlled 8th National Assembly, the budget performance of President Buhari has not fared any better. In fact, analysis of Nigeria's budgets from 1999-2020

indicate that the PDP sixteen years in power had a total budget sum of ₦41.21 trillion whereas APC’s six years (2015-2020) has already attracted a budget sum of ₦46.295 trillion as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: PDP/APC Respective Budgets in the Fourth Republic, 1999-2020

PDP		APC	
<u>Year</u>	<u>Budget Sum</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Budget Sum</u>
1999	₦299 billion	2015	₦4. 425 trillion
2000	₦702 billion	2016	₦6. 06 trillion
2001	₦894 billion	2017	₦7. 44 trillion
2002	₦1, 06 trillion	2018	₦9. 12 trillion
2003	₦1.45 trillion	2019	₦8. 92 trillion
2004	₦1.19 trillion	2020	₦10.33 trillion (Proposed)
2005	₦1.06 trillion	Total	<u>₦46. 295 trillion</u>
2006	₦1.88 trillion		
2007	₦2.39 billion		
2008	₦2.74 trillion		
2009	₦3.05 trillion		
2010	₦4, 04 trillion		
2011	₦4. 07 trillion		
2012	₦4. 09 trillion		
2013	₦4. 99 trillion		
2014	₦4. 96 trillion		
Total	<u>₦41.21 trillion</u>		

Source: Budget Office, NBS

If in six years, the APC has this huge budget sum, how will the APC government explain its budget performance? What executed projects by the administration is in tandem with the total budget sum?

f. Politicisation of the Anti-corruption Crusade

Anti-corruption was and remained as a key manifesto in President Buhari's government. At the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, London, General Muhammadu Buhari said:

... on corruption, there will be no confusion as to where I stand. Corruption will have no place and the corrupt will not be appointed into my administration. First and foremost, we will plug the holes in the budgetary process. Revenue producing entities such as the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and Customs and Excise will have one set of books only. Their revenues will be publicly disclosed and regularly audited. The institutions of state dedicated to fighting corruption will be given independence and prosecutorial authority without political interference. But I must emphasise that any war waged on corruption should not be misconstrued as settling old scores or a witch hunt. I'm running for president to lead Nigeria to prosperity and not adversity. (Buhari, 2015a, p.5)

The international community was convinced or was rather gullible by this promise and therefore worked to assist in enthroning Muhammadu Buhari as president in 2015. However, in governance the antecedents of President Buhari's administration in fighting corruption is rather Janus faced. The President Buhari government has politicised this key element that endeared him and his party to Nigerians and beyond. The politicised nature of the government's anti-corruption crusade is easily discerned in most corruption cases

and as it is being shadily handled by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (hereinafter EFCC).

There is link in corruption, legislative oversight and the executive-legislative relations. Budget padding as either committed by those in the executive and the legislature has remained a regular reoccurring decimal; with the executive barking more than it could bite those found culpable of budget padding (Agunyai, & Olawoyin, 2019). President Buhari said above that his anti-corruption crusade would not be to settle old scores yet it is of public knowledge that the continued detention of Lt. Col. Sambo Dasuki against several court rulings directing his release has fallen on deaf eyes because it is a means of settling old scores. Again, it is no secret that politicians with proven cases of financial misconduct by the EFCC see in the APC a safe haven to run to for shelter as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Anti-corruption Crusade under President Buhari’ Watch

Personality	Allegation	Destination
Danjuma Goje	Allegedly mismanaged N25 billion state fund.	Senate
Stella Oduah	Accused of diversion of N3.5 billion.	Senate
Orji Uzor Kalu (Abia State)	Mismanaged N7.65 billion state fund.	Senate
Rochas Okorochoa (Imo State)	Mismanaged state funds.	Senate
Gabriel Suswan	Mismanaged N3.1billion state funds	Senate
Ike Ekweremadu	Money laundering and other illicit dealings.	Senate
Ibrahim Shekarau	N950 million Goodluck Jonathan campaign fund	Senate

Ifeanyi Uba	N43 billion subsidy fraud	Senate
Theodore Orji	N27 billion state funds	Senate
Abdul Aziz Yari	Questionable payment of N10 billion from the London-Paris refund; N35 billion spent on IDPs; Mismanagement of N151, 190, 477, 572.02 ecological and stabilisation fund.	Senate
Ibikunle Amosun	Stockpiling 1, 000 AK47 and 4 million bullets	Senate
Godswill Akpabio	Mismanaging N100 billion state funds	Senate, now Minister of ND Affairs
Chimaroke Nnamani	Mismanaging N5.3 billion state funds	Senate
Dino Melaye	Accused of illegal possession of arms, Gun running and sponsoring of hoodlums in Kogi State.	Senate

Source: Author's Compilation

Other instances may further suffice this point, especially when corruption cases are exposed within the APC but oftentimes treated with kid gloves. Here, a number of incidents readily comes to mind. First, the former Secretary of the Government of the Federation, Babachir David Lawal, with proven corruption case has been handled by the EFCC with levity. Hitherto, the issuance of a letter by the president dismissing the report of a committee that indicted Babachir David Lawal of corruption compelled Senator Shehu Sani to adjudge the anticorruption fight thus: "When it comes to fighting corruption in the National Assembly and the Judiciary and in the larger Nigerian sectors, the President uses insecticide, but when it comes to fighting

corruption within the Presidency, they use deodorants” (Baiyewu, 2017, para:3).

Second, the former Minister of Finance, Mrs. Kemi Adeosun with proven case of certificate forgery of National Youth Service Corps (hereinafter NYSC) was escorted to leave the shores of Nigeria by the Department of State Services (DSS) while the EFCC looked away. Third, under President Buhari’s watch, the EFCC goes after every former PDP governor (e.g. Ayo Fayose, Ekiti State) whereas no former APC governor such as Rauf Aregbesola, now Minister for Internal Affairs, is being investigated. Does it mean all of APC’s former governors are not corrupt? Fourth, a couple of celebrated EFCC cases suddenly get out of the public radar. For example, Ayodele Fayose, the erstwhile governor of Ekiti State who was an ardent critic of the Buhari administration was, even prior to his departure as governor, placed under EFCC watch; with instructions to authorities in charge of borders, seaports and airports to watch out for Ayodele Fayose in an attempt to leave the shores of Nigeria. Surprisingly, Ayodele Peter Fayose presented himself to the EFCC on the day of his formal handover of power in Ekiti State. Despite the fanfare preceding his arrest, Ayodele Peter Fayose spent a couple of days in EFCC’s custody and was released to go pending further investigations. However, little progress rather than conviction is achieved on Ayodele Fayose’s case with the EFCC.

Fifth, there is a repulsive membership policy in the APC. It is noticed that the broom, as the key symbol of the APC, sweeps away any prospective member of whatever political, economic and financial

crimes once he or she becomes a member of the party. The celebrated case of former governor of Akwa Ibom State, Godswill Akpabio who was under EFCC investigation cross carpeted to the APC, remains a case of reference. Of course, after a few consultations with the powers that be in the APC and Aso Rock Villa, Godswill Akpabio was admitted into the APC. Godswill Akpabio's membership into the APC, of course, raised a couple of ripples in Nigeria. First, there was public outcry against it urging the EFCC to probe him. However, no further investigation ensued. Second, following Godswill Akpabio's loss in the senatorial election bid, he has since been rewarded with a ministerial post as the Minister of Niger Delta Affairs. It is obvious then that the ruling APC government grants amnesty from prosecution those who are either in the party, or in President Buhari's government. Such is political corruption and it undermines public trust and confidence on any government (Morris, & Klesner, 2010).

g. Collapse of Electoral Jurisprudence in Nigeria

Electoral jurisprudence in Nigeria is in shambles if not in comatose especially in the Fourth Republic. Recalling that, late President Umaru Yar'Adua admitted shortly after his presidential election victory that the electoral process which brought him to power after all was flawed. Intending to have credible elections henceforth in the country, he instituted the Mohammed U'wais Panel. President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan equally set-up the Panel on Election Violence and Civil Disturbances (the Ahmed Lemu Panel). Though set-up by various PDP governments the far-reaching recommendations of both panels on electoral reform were jettisoned by both the PDP and the APC. The Buhari-led APC federal

government equally ignored the recommendations of the Ken Nnamani Electoral Reforms Committee instituted on its own volition. The behaviour of both parties are disdainful of far-reaching electoral reforms, which of course, is an indication of a desire of the continuation of the status-quo that permits electoral manipulations.

Furthermore, President Muhammadu Buhari equally withheld his assent to four versions of the bill to amend the Electoral Act that were presented to him by the 8th National Assembly in 2018. And just before the 2019 presidential elections, President Buhari again withheld his assent to yet another bill intending to amend the Electoral Act. In each of these refusals to assent, the president cited proximity to the next elections and the short time at the disposal of the INEC to implement reforms; reasons or excuses Nigerians found laughable. The enormity of the actions of the president is that a reformed Electoral Act would have codified important improvements such as capping the nomination fees of political parties, extension of the Electoral Act to local government elections, ensuring the registration of voters, public accessibility to election results, adoption of electronic means of the release of election results, among others.

Worse still, election petition tribunals and the Supreme Court at the start of the Fourth Republic have remained loyal friends to the party in power. It is simply indicative of the lack of the independence of the judiciary in Nigeria and a demonstration of being subservient to the presidency who holds the veto power to make judicial appointments, transfers, discipline, promotions and remunerations. This veto power at the domain of President Buhari was exercised just

before the commencement of the 2019 presidential election, when the Chief Justice of Nigeria (hereinafter CJN), Justice Walter Onnoghen was removed from office citing cases of impropriety committed by the CJN. For whatever reasons proffered, the Nigerian public was suspicious that the timing was wrong as it was just a couple weeks to the 2019 general elections and may have been orchestrated for a purpose.

Political events unfolding after the 2019 presidential election; especially the composition of election petition tribunals, it became obvious that the removal of Justice Walter Onnoghen and subsequent appointment of Mohammed Bello, who is of the same ethnic and religious extraction with president Buhari, as the new CJN was purposively done to validate the election of President Buhari both at the tribunal and at the Supreme Court.

The above scenarios indeed played out when the presidential election petition tribunal and the Supreme Court both validated the electoral victory of President Buhari thereby brushing aside the weighty allegations bordering on certificate discrepancies against the president—issues that are set to dictate the future of elections in Nigeria. The PDP presidential candidate, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar had approached the tribunal on three counts. First, the issue of non-qualification of Buhari to run for the election *ab initio* on account of Buhari's no submission of a secondary certificate. The tribunal chairman Justice Mohammed Lawal Garba ruled that Buhari's certificate from the Nigerian military is higher than the Secondary School certificate stated as a minimum academic requirement for the

election by the constitution and so Mr. Buhari is not only qualified, he is eminently qualified to contest the election. Second, the PDP identified discrepancies in Mr. Buhari's names on the certificates presented for the election. The tribunal asserted that the discrepancies in Buhari's name on his school certificates as presented by Atiku Abubakar are irrelevant in the determination of the case because *whether it is Muhammadu with a 'U' or Mohammed Buhari with an 'O', they all refer to and identify the second respondent, Mr. Buhari.* And third, on the subject of attachment of requisite certificates to INEC Form CF001, the lead judge of the presidential election petition tribunal states that *"a candidate is not required under the Electoral Act to attach his certificate to his form CF001 before a candidate is adjudged to have the requisite qualification to contest the election"* (Egbas, 2019, para:12).

Apparently unsatisfied, the PDP and Alhaji Atiku Abubakar approached the Supreme Court to overturn the judgment at the tribunal. In its response to Atiku's appeal, the Supreme Court led by Chief Justice Tank Muhammed ruled that "we have examined all the briefs and the exhibits for over two weeks and we agree that there is no merit in this appeal". The apex court promised that it will make public the reasons for their verdict on a later date. This promise is unconvincing. It took the apex court two weeks to examine the exhibits as tendered by the PDP and their presidential flagbearer but it was not enough time for the Supreme Court to equally avail the PDP, Atiku Abubakar, the Nigerian voters and the international community the reasons for the verdict. Reservations have since been expressed on the actions of the Supreme Court in Nigeria. Oluwole

(2019, para:4) for example said the nation's electoral process is still far from perfect, although we can appreciate the fact that there has been a remarkable improvement since 1999. Several reforms of the various aspects of the procedure had put an appreciable degree of credibility on the process. There is no doubt that the hazardous elements that characterise Nigeria's general elections are still here, howbeit in curtailed measures.

Such evaluations are not out of place because what is clear from these developments is that under the APC presidency a new trend has long unfolded; a scenario where the judiciary is so harassed, suppressed and repressed by the executive under the President Buhari administration that Lady Justice's blindfold is apparently transparent, enabling her to see to the direction of the APC government in giving judgments.

h. Disdain for Foreign Election Observer Missions

General Muhammadu Buhari was impressive in his address in Chatham House, London, when he appreciated and welcomed the foreign interests shown in the 2015 presidential election. According to General Buhari:

...the global interest in Nigeria's landmark election is not misplaced at all and indeed should be commended, for this is an election that has serious import for the world. I urge the international community to continue to focus on Nigeria at this very critical moment. Given increasing global linkages, it is in our collective interests that the postponed elections should hold on the rescheduled dates; that they should be free and fair; that

their outcomes should be respected by all parties; and that any form of extension, under whichever guise, is unconstitutional and will not be tolerated. (Buhari, 2015a, p.2)

Interesting as the above epigraph sounds and which served as a platform for which the APC rose to the tumultuous victory it got in 2015. On 1 April, 2015, during his acceptance speech, President Buhari said:

I give special thanks to President Obama and his timely intervention and support for peaceful and credible elections in Nigeria and for sending Secretary John Kerry and other United States officials. The European Union – especially the United Kingdom, France, Germany and other nations that were actively involved in ensuring the success of this election are equally appreciated... The U.S support before, during and after the 2015 elections was vital to Nigeria's stability and I will never forget the role they played in the stability of Nigeria. (Buhari, 2015b, para:15)

Curiously, what form of intervention was performed by the Obama administration to merit these special thanks from President Buhari? However, in the 2019 presidential elections, President Buhari and his APC are no more friends with the international community that it saw as a worthy friend in 2015. A number of events leading up to the 2019 presidential elections and the positions the international community took on these matters such as the postponement of the 2019 presidential election, the sack of the CJN, Justice Walter Onnoghen, among others, has made the APC to see the international community

as either pro-PDP, or meddling in the internal affairs of Nigeria. The following couple of reactions from the APC suffice this point further.

First, Nasir el-Rufai, the executive governor of Kaduna State was most agitated and unimpressed with comments made by international election observers. He threatened foreign observers on Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) thus: “as Nigerians, we must understand that these guys can sit pretty in their countries and say things but when crisis breaks, we are here. We are the victims; our wives and children are the victims...We are waiting for the person that will come and intervene. They will go back in body bags, because nobody will come to Nigeria and tell us how to run our country. We’ve got that independence and we are trying to run our country as decently as possible (Adelani, et al, 2019, para:8)

Yekini Nabena, Deputy National Publicity Secretary of the APC equally accused foreign election observer comments as interference saying “Nigeria is a sovereign nation and such actions by these western countries negate the principles of international law which outlaw’s interference in the domestic affairs of a sovereign nation by another country” (Adelani, et al, 2019, para:14).

Second, Steven Chukwu, the Director of Publicity, Nigerian Democratic Forum (NDF) accused the U.S., the U.K and the European Union of a plan to impose Alhaji Atiku Abubarkar, the PDP’s presidential candidate on the people of Nigeria through undemocratic means. According to the NDF “the driving force for their support of Atiku Abubakar is worrisome and calls for any

Nigerian that desires to still have a country after the elections to stand up against the re-colonisation of Nigeria” (Godwin, 2019, para:12).

Third and finally, the APC hierarchy accused the international community of desperation to impose Alhaji Atiku Abubakar as Nigeria’s president because President Buhari’s anticorruption fight is adversely impacting on the economies of these foreign countries. According to Steven Chukwu, the Director of Publicity for the Nigerian Democratic Forum (NDF) there is:

...anecdotal evidence that the High Street shops in the UK suffered a slump in December of that year simply because looters in Nigeria were unable to patronise the stores as they were unable to steal money to spend in that country, many of the shops have since folded up. Almost four years later, other sectors of all the meddling countries have taken hits from not having cash injection bankrolled with stolen funds from Nigeria. Their situation became desperate because other African countries are beginning to follow in the examples of President Buhari, which means another four years of his leadership style will leave the US, UK and EU in dire economic situations while Africa would have made progress in truly being liberated (Godwin, 2019, para:13).

i. Blindness to the Federal Character Principle

Obviously, being conversant with the huge heterogeneity of the Nigerian federation, the 1977 Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) considered the inclusion of the Federal Character Principle² in the 1979 Constitution as a strategy for peace, equity and stability. The CDC (1977) asserts then that:

There had in the past been inter-ethnic rivalry to secure the domination of government by one ethnic group or combination of ethnic groups to the exclusion of others. It is therefore essential to have some provisions to ensure that the predominance of persons from a few ethnic or other sectional groups is avoided in the composition of government or the appointment or election of persons to high offices in the state.

Arising from the above need, Section 14(3) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria states that:

The composition of the Government of the Federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity, and also to command national loyalty thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic of other sectional groups in that government or in any of its agencies.

Furthermore, in pursuant of the above objective, Section 4(1b) of the Federal Character Commission Act CAP F7 LFN 2004 stated that the Federal Character Commission (FCC) must monitor, promote and enforce compliance with the federal character principle by ensuring that each region of the country is fairly represented at all levels of government (Adamolekun, et al, 1991; Okeke, 2019).

However, under the President Buhari administration, the political map of Nigeria is erroneously monolithically a federation with homogenous religion, ethnic and cultural underpinnings. Political,

economic, security, and judicial appointments under the President Buhari administration is blind to all sections of Nigeria. It is no secret that majority of appointments in President Buhari administration are either persons from the North geopolitical zone or Muslims. Furthermore, against public outcry appointments have remained skewed against the South geopolitical zone since 2015 when the administration took office. President Buhari's appointments have not demonstrated his memorable inaugural quote, "I belong to everybody and I belong to nobody" (Buhari, 2015b).

Some Nigerians see nothing amiss in this trend and instead argue that in as much as these persons can deliver the expected results. But does it mean persons of other geopolitical groups cannot deliver? Recalling at the commencement of the President Buhari administration in 2015, two senior advisers to the president, Malam Garba Shehu (Senior Special Assistant, Media and Publicity) and Mr. Femi Adesina (Special Adviser on Media and Publicity) both retorted that more appointments were still coming to correct the observed imbalance in appointments. Obviously, to placate restive Nigerians, the presidency in November of 2017 published a list of appointees with seventy-five appointees from the North and eighty-two from the South (Ogunniran, 2018). Nigerians were unsatisfied with Buhari's list of appointees arguing instead that:

the list is an affront on the sensibility of Nigerians as all the key positions are from the North: The major security offices-Chief of Army Staff, National Security Adviser, State Chief of Protocol, Chief of Air Staff, Chief of Defence. The main economic offices-

Accountant General, Deputy Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria, Group Managing Director, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, Comptroller Generals of Customs and Immigration. Other core offices such as Chairman of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Inspector General of Police, Attorney General of the Federation etc. Summarily, there has never been such brazen abuse of the principle as witnessed in this administration (Ogunniran, 2018, para:10).

The Buhari administration is in its second tenure of four years each and the lopsidedness in appointments has not been balanced.

j. Militarisation of Elections

President Muhammadu Buhari, in his reaction to the 1983 presidential election of the defunct Second Republic, was widely quoted in saying the shameless rigging and the widespread pervasion of the electoral process could not, in all honesty, have been said to have produced a government of the people, by the people. What we had through the manipulated results both at federal and state (even local governments) levels, were governments imposed on the people by the scandalous use of a mixture of political thuggery and widescale bribery. (Olagunju, et al, 1993, p.6)

President Buhari's Chatham House, London, speech equally promised to deliver quality elections while guaranteeing basic human rights. According to him:

While you cannot have representative democracy without elections, it is equally important to look at the quality of the elections and to remember that mere elections do not make democracy. It is globally agreed that democracy is not an event, but a journey. And that the destination of that journey is democratic consolidation--that state where democracy has become so rooted and so routine and widely accepted by all actors. With this important destination in mind, it is clear that though many African countries now hold regular elections, very few of them have consolidated the practice of democracy. (Buhari, 2015a, p.3)

Whereas the above two statements credited to President Buhari are sacrosanct in the democratic life of any democracy, the question would then be if there is anything differently done in the conduct of elections by the INEC under the President Buhari Government? The answer is an emphatic No. Elections mostly in opposition states are conducted under a highly militarised atmosphere; especially in opposition neighbourhoods, states (Rivers and Ekiti States) and where security agencies openly assault opposition candidates (Birch, & Muchlinski, 2017; Vergee, Kwaja, & Onubogu, 2018). For example, the last governorship election in Ekiti State, Nigeria, is a case in point. Mr. Ayodele Peter Fayose, then sitting governor of Ekiti State was denied of his security aids days to the governorship election. The governor raised alarm and stated, against his fundamental human right of free movement, how he was held incommunicado, if not hostage while the election lasted. The governor went ahead to show on national televisions in Nigeria photo clips of how he was brutalised by security agencies.

Political watchers in Nigeria say the brazen display of brutality by security agencies is rather a display of partisanship where corrupt politicians have possibly infiltrated their ranks (Badmus, 2017). The enormity of such partisanship by security forces is that in the 2019 general elections, 626 Nigerians lost their lives whereas 106 Nigerians died in the 2015 general elections (Sanni, 2019). The ratio of deaths, which is skewed against the 2019 general elections, is worrisome in that the 2019 general elections were conducted under the APC as a government with a solemn promise to do things differently.

More so, the INEC characteristically, has ever remained partisan to the ruling government and party. The ruling APC government by dint of recent electioneering processes in state elections has become a beneficiary of INEC's glaring inconsistencies. For example, INEC declared the governorship election in Osun State as inconclusive, while it had hitherto declared election in Lokoja/Kogi Federal Constituency conclusive on similar circumstances. Expectedly, these inconsistencies have elicited reactions. First, the Kogi State chairman of the Nigerian Union of Journalists, Mr. Momoh Jimoh Adiza, wondered the criteria the INEC adopted in declaring the Osun State election inconclusive whereas declaring the Lokoja/Kogi Federal Constituency election conclusive. According to him, the candidate of the All Progressives Congress, Haruna Isa polled 26,860 votes, as against that of the People's Democratic Party, Abubakar Bashir who secured 14, 845 votes; even as 19,960 votes were cancelled in 17 polling units and the difference between the duo was around 12,000. Since Nigeria is not a banana republic, there is need for the laws of the country to be implemented to the latter, not minding whose ox is

gored; there's need for INEC to be firm in handling electoral matters with a view to consolidating on the nation's democracy. (Obahopo, 2018, para:5-6)

Second, Idris Miliki Abdul, the Executive Director for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution, asked the INEC to explain the glaring inconsistencies in declaring the Osun State governorship election inconclusive and that of the Lokoja/Kogi Federal Constituency conclusive. He requested that:

There's need to make reference to the just concluded bye-election of Lokoja/Kogi Federal Constituency conducted on the 11 August, 2018 and relating it to the pronouncement of INEC in respect of Osun State governorship election held on 22 September, 2018. If INEC could declare that election inconclusive as a result of cancelled votes, in which the cancelled votes outnumber the difference between the two leading political parties as provided for in both INEC guidelines and the electoral law in Nigeria, on what basis was the result of the bye-election declared conclusive by the same INEC in Kogi State. (Obahopo, 2019, para:9)

The ruling APC government choose not to interfere but rather allowed the INEC to remain independent as its name falsely connotes because the APC remains the beneficiary of these lopsided happenstances.

Conclusion

This paper was primarily concerned with public trust and confidence in one of the central institutions of representative democracy—the executive. It asks specifically: Is public trust and confidence on Nigeria’s executive under President Muhammadu Buhari waning or not? The paper concludes on the following standpoints:

- a. That the executive in Nigeria under President Muhammadu Buhari is waning—that the fanfare, euphoria and expectations resulting from the “Change Mantra” in 2015 has since eroded. The change in the APC’s campaign slogan to the “Next Level” has not rekindled fresh hopes in Nigerians like the predecessor, the “Change Mantra”. The paper highlighted the avoidable actions and policies the President Buhari Government have done that has instigated the decline in public trust and confidence in the government.
- b. Arising from the unmet expectations, the change Nigerians wanted was not change in initials of Nigeria’s president from Goodluck Ebele Jonathan (GEJ) to General Muhammadu Buhari (GMB) or President Muhammadu Buhari (PMB) but instead change in the manner of governance; a complete departure from the way governance has been carried out in Nigeria in the Fourth Republic. If public trust and confidence on the President Buhari-led federal executive is faltering, eroding and waning, it means that the capacity of the government to meet peoples’ expectations and aspirations is stagnating whereas the demands on the government are ever growing in Nigeria.

- c. The prevailing militarisation of elections, lopsided electoral jurisprudence, among others, is an indication that election Eldorado and indeed democratisation is still a far-cry in Nigeria.
- d. Like any other political party in Nigeria, the APC has equally been engaged in unwholesome electoral misconducts—voting buying, hate speeches, foreign observer intimidation; those same issues the “Change Mantra” promised to do differently.

Notes

1. According to Freedom House (in Repucci, 2018, p.5) “populism is a mystically unified ‘nation’ against corrupt ‘elites’ and external enemies, and claims for a charismatic leader the power to voice the will of the nation. It is therefore fundamentally illiberal, rejecting diversity of identity and of opinion within society and discarding basic principles of modern constitutional thinking: that democracy requires constraints on the will of the majority and checks on the decisions of the executive”.
2. Federal Character principle is used as a synonym for "representative bureaucracy" and "quota system" in the civil service and the military.

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ETHNO-RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE AS THE GATHERING STORM TO NIGERIA-BIAFRA WAR UP TO 1967: A CAUSAL ANALYSIS AND PROPOSALS

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Abstract

Nigeria with over 250 ethnic groups, distributed among the two major religions of Christianity and Islam was engulfed in a catalogue of ethnic and religious resentments up to 1967 which eventually culminated in a thirty month Nigeria –Biafra war (1967-1970). This paper examines the manifestation of ethnic tension and resentments and sectarian violence in Nigeria up to 1967, their causes and proposals for new management strategies for the control of this social phenomenon, which is fast becoming a permanent feature of the Nigerian social map is proffered. The paper relied on qualitative research methodology sustained by ubiquitous secondary sources.

Key Words: *Ethnicity, Religion, Violence, Nigeria-Biafra War.*

Introduction

The gathering storm to Nigeria-Biafra war cannot be traced back to a single focal point but rather was a consequence of a combination or confluence of historical events and forces. The historical causes of the Nigeria-Biafra War can only be fully understood in the context of several processes that include political, economic, social and sectarian relationship among Nigerian peoples and societies.

An understanding of colonialism in the Nigerian context is imperative to fully comprehend the causes of the Nigeria-Biafra War as well as the challenges that faced the economy and government. The fact that such seemingly historically disparate ethnic groups coalesced and formed one nation illustrates the prodigious impact that colonialism had on the continent, region and country in particular. (Okigbo, 2011:12) The events that led to the war and contributed to its legacy have roots in Nigeria's historical conditions. The British pitted Nigeria's various ethnic groups against one another with the amalgamation of northern and southern parts of the territory in 1914. (Korieh,2012:14) The general argument in most literature on Nigeria's nation is that the nation was a product of coercive integration of varied and heterogeneous cultural groups who, prior to the amalgamation of 1914, had lived as separate and independent groups. To administer the different areas, British administrators fostered a divide and rule system pitching the north against the south; thus two distinctly different systems evolved in the two areas.

The division facilitated administrative convenience as the North, unlike the South, was centrally administered before the colonial intrusion. (Oyeniyi,2016:120) For G.N Uzoigwe, the new society was politically and administratively divided because the 1914 amalgamation confirmed the idea of two 'Nigeria's', thus making nonsense of the very essence of amalgamation. (Uzoigwe,2016:22) The amalgamation of the two different areas saddled post-colonial Nigeria with a difficult problem of building a nation out of the component nationalities. Consequently, the relationship between the North and the South since amalgamation has been contentious.

(Anyanwu, 2016:41) Though Nigeria existed as a 'latent' community before the imposition of imperial rule, she became 'manifest' only with the legal order that came with colonialism. (Dudley,11973:24) For Micheal Crowder, the North and south, though united, continued in their separatist tradition. (Crowder,1968:202)

The misgivings between the North and the South manifested more prominently during the constitutional conference of 1950. Although the three regions agreed on regional autonomy, they differed on the rate of regional representation at the national assembly. While delegates from the East and the West demanded for equal representation, delegates from the Northern Region demanded a 50-50 representation ratio between it and the other two regions in the south combined. Demand by the northern delegates was born out of fear of potential domination by the more advanced south. As Mallam Sani Dingyadi, a spokesperson for the North stated,

The North has a different religion and different standards of education; so the North must stand alone by itself. Therefore, in any matter of importance one would find the East, West, and Lagos... On one side leaving the North on the other side. Therefore, I do not think it is fair and cannot tolerate it that equal representation should be given to each region. What we would recommend is at least one-half representing for the North and one-half for what I call the south. (Anyanwu,2016:45)

Historically, identities have played a significant role in the Nigerian political process during the colonial period and in the post-colonial era

up to 1967. During the colonial period, the administrators allowed the emergence and aggravation of an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ syndrome, where Muslims were pitted against Christians, Northerners against the Southerners, Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo against each other, and so on. (Okpanchi 2010) Therefore, the differentiating outcomes of colonialism became the forerunner of the ethnic and religious resentment among the different regions, and then this became an important factor in the stimulation of identity awareness so as to efficiently ‘divide and rule’. However, the paper opines that internal factors are more determinant than the external ones in the gathering storm that led to Nigeria-Biafra War of 1967-1970.

Violence

Violence as a concept encompasses a number of connotations. According to Echoes, violence connotes “... an encounter with life threatening forces that affects millions of people in their communities and in the global economy”.(Echoes:2004) Dzurgba (2006:31) defines violence as the exercise or use of force that causes damage, injury, or abuse to people, property, principle or anything of value.¹⁰ He went further to say that value is associated with the attitude of aggression, hostility, cruelty, brutality, harassment, threat, force, etc. and these violent tendencies are nurtured in words and actions. Dame Deaux and Wrightsman (1963) defines violence as “any behavior directed towards harming human being”. Violence is considered as any behavior in which an organism intentionally seeks out to harm any other organisms. Intention to inflict harm, be it physical harm or verbal affront, is therefore an important element in identifying violence.

Deducing from the above, violence can be defined simply as a behavior that is executed with the intention of hurting other people either directly or indirectly and which is capable of inflicting physical and emotional pains on the affected person (Ani, 2012). The working definition recapitulate the fact that violence causes physical damage, injury ,pains (both physical, emotional and psychological) and destruction to human kind and when this happens, the person violence is directed upon suffers serious and emotional pains.

Conceptual Clarifications

Ethnicity as used in this paper refers to differentiation of groups of people who have shared cultural meanings, memories and descent, produced through social interaction. Nnoli (1978:5) defines ethnicity as a social phenomenon associated with the identity of members of the largest possible competing communal groups (ethnic groups), seeking to protect and advance their interest in a political system. Ethnicity is a situation when an ethnic group sees itself as ‘we’ and sees others as ‘they’ and psychologically consider themselves as pitched in a perpetual battle of survival against all these others. Ethnicity is a social phenomenon that is manifested in interactions among individuals of different ethnic groups within a political system where language and culture are the most prominent attributes. Many scholars agree that Nigeria comprise over 250 ethnic groups. Subsequently, it may seem like many people embrace ethnic diversity, tolerance and respect for the diverse groups. Rather than promote harmony and dynamism as product of diversity, the reverse was the case since the period of colonialism to independence up to 1967 which invariably became one of the gathering storm that led to the war.

Religion, a derivative of Latin ‘relegere (to unite or link) and religio (relationship, bond) (Sani2007:12)’ has no general or widely accepted definitions. Morreal and Tamara (2013), observed that there is no scholarly consensus over what precisely constitute religion. Malver and page (2013) defines religion as a relationship not merely between man and man but also between man and the higher powers. It therefore means a link or a relationship between man and a being that exists which is greater than man. Man and religion are inseparable in all human cultures. Emile Durkheim (1991:5) sees religion in the same vein as a unified system of practices relative to things separate and taboo (forbidden) which unite in one moral community... all those who adhere to it. African Traditional Religion(ATR), Christianity, and Islamic religion are the three main religion in Nigeria and they share the characteristics of the aforementioned definitions. In Nigeria, the adherents of Christians and Muslims are influenced by fanaticism and the inability to recognize and accommodate views and opinions of others is therefore one of the major sources of religious resentments.

Ethnic Tension

At the end of colonial rule in 1960, Nigeria was a conglomeration of various ethnic nationalities whose loyalties lay with their various ethnic groups. The country was carved into three Region-North, West, and East- With three dominant ethnic groups-the Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo, respectively. Thus political consciousness developed along ethnic lines. Nigeria’s independence in 1960 marked the beginning of attempts to build a strong, united, and prosperous nation in Africa’s most populous pluralistic country. Yet the tension arising from the conflicting interests and aspirations of the country’s diverse ethnic

groups intensified. The British had made little effort to unite the different ethnic groups in a collective consciousness during the colonial period. Its indirect rule system of administering Nigeria under-cut any chances of promoting social solidarity among various ethnicities. Worse still was that the forced amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates of Nigeria in 1914 was not successful in narrowing the entrenched historical, cultural, and religious differences in the country. Due to the mistrust and fear of domination and deprivation that dominated Nigeria's politics during the colonial period, it was only a matter of time before the country's fragile unity would be tested. That test came at independence. (Anyanwu, 2016:40)

After its independence from Great Britain in 1960, Nigeria began to experience political crisis associated with ethnicism and managerial malfeasance. (Obiezu, 2012:190) The pluralistic structure of post-colonial Nigeria and the inherently suspicious relation between ethnic groups led to perpetual disagreement and enhanced ethnic tension. The new political elites relied on ethnocentric systems of loyalty, making national integration difficult. This structure also posed challenges at the regional level- for instance, during the western regions political crisis, when contending political interest's sought to establish or expand their support bases. These competing interest clearly affected the stability of the nation and its constituent parts. (Korieh, 2012:4) One of the greatest obstacles to the nationhood was the wide spread mistrust that existed among Nigeria's different ethnic groups and that manifested itself in the crisis of 1966. The failed British imperial policy that amalgamated Nigeria's multiple nationalities and sub

nationalities into a single nation is seen as the genesis of Nigeria's post-colonial problems. British imperial design succeeded in Nigeria as long as British rule welded different groups together with an iron hand, but it began to collapse soon after Britain disengaged from Nigeria in 1960. (Korieh, 2012:4-5)

Post- colonial Nigeria as demonstrated earlier inherited a colonial arrangement in which three regions were created along ethnicities with three dominant groups: Igbo in the East, Hausa-Fulani in the North, and Yoruba in the west. Before independence in 1960, and in the years following it fear of domination and deprivation had shaped inter-regional autonomy established by the Macpherson constitution in 1951. (Anyanwu, 2016:46) Northern leaders feared that a Yoruba and Igbo alliance from the south could swamp them, threatening their ways of life and their political dominance. The Northern People's Congress leader, Sir Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, expressed these fears thus, "A sudden grouping of the eastern and western parties might take power and so endanger the north; this would of course be utterly disastrous" (Schwartz, 2009:13-14). Bello's fear was not without justification and Northerners for their part resented the condescending attitude of Southerners. Some Southerners regarded Northerners as backward, un-educated and un-sophisticated and Northerners felt Southerners were no more than ill-mannered infidels. (Siollun, 2009:13-14)

The northerners preferred Europeans to their countrymen from the south, and the people they disliked most were the Igbo. (Waugh & Cronje, 1969:20) This was reflected quite clearly in the preoccupation shown by most members of the Northern Legislature. For instance,

during a debate in the House of Assembly in Kaduna in March 1964, the regional government was asked to revoke forthwith all certificates of occupancy from the lands of Igbo residents in the region. Another member wanted the number of the Igbo working in the post offices reduced; 'There are too many of them in the north...I think they were just too dangerous to the region'. (Waugh & Cronje, 1969:20) Others protested about the allocation to Igbo of government contracts, market stalls and land.

One representative simply called for all Igbo to be sent back to the East; 'We do not want to have another trouble leading to bloodshed as we hear happening in other places'. (Waugh & Cronje, 1969:20) The Northern Region Premier, Sir Ahmadu Bello replied to the debate by reassuring the House that it was his most earnest desire that every post in the region, however small, is to be filled by a Northerner, and the minister of land and survey, Alhaji Ibrahim Musa Gashash, said he would do all he could to see that members' demands about Igbo land holdings were met: 'How to do this, when to do it, all this should not be disclosed. In due course you will all see what will happen' (Waugh & Cronje, 1969:20) According to Chinua Achebe,

The denial of merit is a form of social injustice that can hurt not only the individuals directly concerned but ultimately the entire society. The motive for the original denial may be tribal discrimination, but it may also come from sexism, from political, religious, or some other partisan consideration, or form of corruption and bribery. It is unnecessary to examine these various motives separately, it is sufficient to state that whenever merit is set aside by prejudice of

whatever origin, individual citizens as well as the nation itself are victimized. (Achebe, 2012:78)

The inability to resolve the disagreements between the Federal governments, headed by Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu Gowon, and the Eastern Region, headed by Lieutenant Colonel Emeka Ojukwu, compelled the latter to secede from Nigeria by proclaiming the independent Republic of Biafra on May 30, 1967. By 30 May 1967, when Biafra seceded, not only was Nigeria neither happy nor harmonious, but it had for the five previous years stumbled from crisis, and had three times already come to the verge of disintegration. In each case, although the immediate spark had been political, the fundamental cause had been the tribal hostility embedded in this enormous and artificial nation. For Nigeria had never been more than an amalgam of people welded together in the interest and for the benefit of European power. (Anyanwu, 2016:40) Swiftly, the federal government declared a war designed to keep the country together. A civil war ensued, lasting from July 6, to January 15, 1970.

The animosity, confusion, ill-feeling and violence brought about the pogrom directed against mainly Igbo that was planned and executed by their compatriots. Other factors include the murders of the Prime Minister and the Premiers of Northern and western Regions during the ill-fated January 15, 1966 abortive coup and the inability of the military head of state, Major General Aguiyi Ironsi to bring the coup plotters to justice. It is true that Ironsi did not bring the coup leaders to justice, but the reason was because the terms of their struggle granted them amnesty. (Nnabuike,2015:170-180)

The estimated fifty thousand civilians—men, women, young, and unborn children, and several hundred army and police officers who were Nigerians of Igbo extraction were massacred in the melee. (Nnabuike, 2015:170-180) This massacre failed to assuage the deep-seated bitterness in the minds of the assailants. The plan to exterminate the Easterners and the west Niger Igbo kinsmen culminated in the July 29, 1966 counter coup. The dethronement of the military head of state, Aguiyi Ironsi, and the military governor of western region, were fallouts of the second coup. The success of the counter coup and the murder of the supreme commander, who was an Igbo man, did not placate the North and the west who continued the hostility against their fellow citizens. As a result, an estimated two million Easterners who survived the pogrom in their various places of abode raced homeward to the East whole or maimed. (Silloun, 2009:135-136)

It was in this situation that Igbo people throughout the country embarked on a massive exodus from the North. Those who were lucky to come home alive came back with little money and properties while others came back with nothing because of the urgency and precarious condition with which they left their abode.

The mass killing of Igbo in many northern and western cities, following the July 1966 counter coup, was a demonstration of long-held plots to emasculate the ethnic group. Mobs (assisted in many cases by Northern soldiers) massacred tens of thousands of Igbo residents in the Northern region. The resentment of Igbo that had simmered beneath the surface for years was released in a violent burst of volcanic rage and extreme blood loss. The massacres were too

widespread and intense to have been spontaneous. Some civilian agent provocateurs were active, assisted by some of the less disciplined Northern soldiers. (Miners, 2009:136) A Northern Corporal gave a plausibly simple rationale for the pogroms ``Igbo(s) killed our leaders in January they were taking all the top jobs, we had to get rid of them. Now we have only got northerners in this barracks; all the southerners have run away.’’ (Silloun, 2009:135-136)

The result was the vengeful killings of Igbo civilians and soldiers particularly in the North between May and October 1966 that international observers were convinced reached genocidal proportions. (Forsyth, 1969:48) The coup and counter-coup as well as the major massacre of July 29, September 29, and October 29 in 1966 completely destroyed the military’s esprit de corps. The fact that the northern and southern protectorates were never effectively united has tended to perpetuate the sharp cultural differences between the peoples of the north and the south. The struggle for dominion eventually was reduced to a contest between the Igbo and the North. This led to ‘pogroms’ or ethnic cleansings against the Igbo. (Uzoigwe, 2016:21)

The ad hoc constitutional conference which convened in Lagos on September 12, 1966, was interrupted by a second wave of massacres of the Igbo which swept the North. From the 28th to the 29th of September in the northern towns of Markurdi, Gboko, Zaria, Gombe, Jos, Sokoto and Kaduna. Igbo men, women and children were surprised and murdered and others were slaughtered at their places of work or in the market places. At the Kano international Airport, the Igbo waiting to be airlifted to the Eastern Region were surrounded by

armed northern soldiers and civilians and killed. Those who took trains ran into ambushes of northern soldiers and civilians who looted their belongings and maimed thousands. (Uzoigwe, 2016:26)

These disturbances were directed principally against the Igbo very many of whom were indiscriminately killed even in churches and hospitals. For instance, on 29 September 1966-`Black Thursday`- mob violence broke out against Igbo shopkeepers and civil servants in the North, resulting in as many as 50,000 deaths and two million refugees. (Stremlau, 2015:53) These pogroms resulted in the deaths of thousands of Igbo men, women and children, as well as in the maiming of thousands more.

This massacre, more than any other event, severed the psychological ties that bound the Igbo to the concept of "one Nigeria," and gave Ojukwu a popular mandate to seek secession. Lt Col. Yakubu Gowon in a broadcast to the people of the North in September said `` I receive complaints daily up till now that Easterners, living in the North are being killed and molested and their property looted. It appears that it is going beyond reason and is now at a point of recklessness and irresponsibility". (New Nigeria Newspaper,1966, September 30) The *Daily Times* of 28 September 1966 wrote: ` There are many mad and lunatic- fringe men roaming about today, acting on their own, without any authority or instruction from either the army authorities or any civil organization. (Daily Times Newspaper, 1966, September 28) Chinua Achebe avers,

What terrified me about the massacre in Nigeria was this: If it was only a question of rioting in the streets and so on, that would be bad enough, but it could be explained. It happens everywhere in the world. But in this particular case a detailed plan for mass killing was implemented by the government- the army, -the police- the very people who were to protect life and property. Not a single person had been punished for these crimes. It was not just human nature, a case of somebody hating his neighbor and chopping off his head. It was something far more devastating, because it was a premeditated plan that involved careful coordination, awaiting only the right spark. (Achebe, 2014:82-83)

The killings resulted in the secession of the Eastern Region and its invasion by Nigeria. Fearing that Biafra's independence would be fatal to Nigeria's existence because other powerful groups might follow the Igbo example, the federal government declared war on Biafra, accusing the Igbo of breaking the socio-political compact. The Igbo leadership dismissed the fear as essentially bogus because no other Nigerian group was being ethnically cleansed. (Uzoigwe, 2016:26)

Religious Resentment

In Nigeria, the difference in social identities was already in existence before the imposition of imperial rule, thus making the nation of Nigeria as a creation of the British so extremely misleading. First, the religion of Islam and the Hausa language were already creating a common political culture and way of life for much of the area that became Northern Nigeria. (Dudley,1973:22-23) In the North, the greater uniformity brought about by Islam and the Fulani conquest of

the 19th century meant that Islamic law specifically, the Sharia law prevailed. In the south, where cultural discontinuities still persisted, it was easier to impose a legal system which derived from the principles of English common Laws, principles and practices. The net effect was thus the creation of a hierarchy of law; a three-tiered system with customary Law at the bottom, Islamic law, and English common law at the top but such that, given the area, where the principles of a lower tier were found to be inconsistent with those of a higher tier, the latter prevailed. (Waugh & Cronje, 1969:19)

The largest ethnic group in the north of the country were the Muslim, traditional and socially conservative, Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups. The south was dominated by two competing ethnic groups. Hemmed in between them were approximately another 250 disparate ethnicities. The difference between them were accentuated by religion. The south of the country is predominantly Christian and the north predominantly Muslims. The general outlook of the people in the north and south is as different as to give them practically nothing in common and to make physical confrontation between them a virtual certainty. There is difference between a Muslim northerner and a Christian southerner, with their diametrically opposed religions, language, food, manners, dress and culture. The cultural differences between the ethnic groups made it virtually impossible for Nigerians to have any commonality of purpose. (Waugh & Cronje, 1969:19)

Lugard promised to interfere as little as possible with Northern traditional authority mainly because of short of administrative officers

and fund, and in particular that he would respect their Moslem religion and way of life. (Waugh & Cronje, 1969:19)

Christian missionaries were restricted to the pagan areas of the North. The effect of all this was to stop the clock. Emirs, who before the advent of British rule had had to keep the demands they made on their subjects within the bounds of public tolerance, became tyrants when their positions were made secure by the armed strength of the colonial forces. They no longer needed the consent of those they governed, and any threat to their status quo was interpreted by them as a threat to Islam, the Moslem way of life, which Lugard had promised to respect. (Waugh & Cronje, 1969:19-20) In this way no outside influence was allowed to impinge on the growing stagnation of their parochial domains. As late as 1958 the Members of the British Willink Commission remarked that;

the Northern region has remained behind the protective wall of the colonial government as an Islamic society, singularly unaffected by change in the rest of the world; Islamic law of the Maliki school is administered, purdah is observed by women, and western innovations are in some quarters regarded with disfavor. As most fatal effects of this policy were on education, which for a long time had remained exclusively in the hands of the missionaries, whose activities were restricted in the North. Thus while the south was comparatively well provided with schools, the Moslem North had practically none until World War II. Much of the clerical and technical staff required in Northern Nigeria had therefore to be imported from other regions, and the presence of these foreign clerks gave rise to

`friction' which became acute when southerners were appointed to senior civil service post formerly occupied exclusively by the British. (Waugh & Cronje, 1969:19-20)

Thus, religion may also have played a part in the increasing hostility. Muslims had since independence controlled the government. The new Supreme Military Council (SMC) after the January coup was now dominated by Christians. Aguiyi-Ironsi, and three of the four military governors were Catholics (Fajuyi, Ejoor and Ojukwu). Lt-colonel Kastina toured the Northern region in an attempt to dampen wild speculations that Aguiyi-Ironsi had banned Muslim from pilgrimages to Mecca. (Silloun, 2009:84)

Proposals for Management of Ethno-Religious Resentments/ Crises in Nigeria

According to Omorogbe and Omohan (2005:557), only two major strategies of conflict management are often adopted by governments in Nigeria to tackle the problem of ethno-religious conflicts each time they occur which are coercive and judicial methods. Because of the military nature of coercive method of intervention associated with rape, beatings, shootings, it has not been successful as a mechanism (Ani & Chukwu, 2014). In the same vein, the judicial method of conflict management in Nigeria failed to resolve the problem consequent of lack of cooperation of parties to the conflict, non-implementation of white paper or recommendations submitted to the government by the panel of inquiry among others. (Omorogbe & Omohan, 2005:557)

Invariably, to manage ethno-religious conflicts aside adopting judicial and coercive methods, government at all levels must encourage, in their domains, effective and functional platforms for ethno-religious leaders so that through them it would be possible to establish a network for conflict prevention and management. This proposal is necessary because in Nigeria, the various political, religious, traditional and ethnic leaders in most areas of conflict hardly sit together to discuss the causes of ethno-religious violence and how to prevent future conflicts. What this means is that Nigeria, with a bad history of Ethno-religious conflicts, leaders hardly met to build bridges of understanding that could lead to the establishment of mutual confidence that could sustain a multi-ethnic society. Thus, as discussed in the earlier section of this paper, rather than being part or initiators of the solution, they often become part of the conflicts, which they are supposed to resolve.

Conclusion

Placing the social and sectarian variables at the center of analysis of the causes of the Nigeria-Biafra war, as demonstrated in this chapter, provides a much more comprehensive understanding of its complex causes, which made the declaration of Biafra irresistible, federal response predictable, and war unavoidable. It is generally accepted that the inefficacy of politicians in Nigeria at the points of good governance, national consolidation and economic development has caused social disintegration. This together with political cleavages which has stimulated ethnic and religious resentments culminated in the Nigeria-Biafra of 1967-1970.

The nation-state model is in danger in Nigeria, as in many other so-called nation –state. The majority of modern states consist of different groups and usually one of them tries to rule the system while provoking the objections of others. Consequently, in Nigeria, the ethnic and religious groups compete for dominance and weakens the basis of any achieved unity. This is seen as the inevitable character of heterogeneous nation-states. (Anderson,2010:290). Since ethno religious conflicts are inevitable in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society like Nigeria, the paper suggests the following mechanisms of conflict management: establishment of functional and effective platform for ethno-religious resentment/insurgence; establishment of functional and effective platform for ethno-religious leaders where grievances can be discussed before they escalate into ethno-religious crises/war; involvement of the civil society which will intervene in some critical areas of ethno-religious conflict; government should resolve to be pluralistic, representative, and just in dealing with ethno-religious issues; and above all, the government should strive to reduce poverty among the Nigerian citizens.

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MEDICAL MIGRATIONS, COVID-19, AND THE HEALTH IMPLICATIONS IN NIGERIA BEYOND THE PANDEMIC

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Abstract

Medical migrations from Nigeria occasioned by the need for medical professionals abroad due to the loss of frontline workers to the Covid-19 pandemic brings to the fore again some pertinent issues. These issues include the challenges of brain drain, global treasure hunt, imminent African health disaster(s), opportunities or threats to mention a few. No doubt one of the most hit sectors during the Covid-19 pandemic is the health sector. Frontline workers helplessly watched their patients die just as a lot of them paid the supreme price in the line of duty. As the situation eased, there arose the need for some badly affected countries to replace some of their lost medical practitioners. This replacement becomes necessary on the one hand to manage the re-surfing waves of the pandemic and on the other hand to re-stabilize their medical sector for a sustainable health industry. In response, the spate of medical migrations from Nigeria is on the increase. This paper attempts an evaluation of the implications of these migrations on the immediate management of the Covid-19 pandemic and the long-term effect(s) on the Nigerian health system. I try to look beyond the basic submissions that each individual has the right to seek better opportunities anywhere since successive administrations have relegated the health sector. I contend that Africa (specifically Nigeria) faces a challenge of survival if our best brains do not find the continent a place worthy of their sacrifices.

Keywords: *Covid-19, Medical Migration, Health Sector, Medical Challenges Nigeria*

Introduction

Migration of Nigerian professionals to other climes is a saddening occurrence that several sectors in the country face. It's been tagged 'brain drain' and has been depriving us of some of our best brains and hands. From the health sector to the education sector, to technology, to technical and even economic sectors, some of our best are outside the country and several others are on the verge of leaving. Just as established professionals are leaving, potential professionals in persons of prospective doctoral candidates are equally leaving no thanks to scholarships offered to these promising generations. In all, the country is at a loss. On the one hand, losing these professionals deprives the citizens of the benefits services they would have offered. Meanwhile, the lack of these services is detrimental to every sector in the *being* of the country. On the other hand, the loss of these professionals is a loss to the country on the cost of training them.

A little illustration will drive home these points. The health sector is one of the most important sectors in any country. A healthy citizenry depicts the health of the family, the health of the economic sector, the health of the educational sector, the health of the agricultural sector, the health of country to put it in one word. The potentialities of a healthy country are numerous and essential. But when the health sector is in crises (as seen in Nigeria), then the country is in crises as evident in Nigeria. A sick teacher cannot teach and a sick student cannot learn; a sick farmer cannot farm and a hungry citizenry cannot

be productive; an unproductive country cannot meet its need which places it at a precipice. Beyond these physical losses there is also the financial loss to the country. The cost of training a medical doctor is one of the cheapest in the world (the stats on this will be analysed in a later section of the paper). The quality of the doctors (though dropping) is still good enough when compared. This good quality is mostly due to the fact that medical schools are stringent in admitting the best candidates because of the delicacy of the profession. Sadly, after training our best at the least cost we let them off for others to benefit.

Reasons for wanting to leave include: lack of conducive working environment; lack of appropriate equipment for practice; terrible welfare and remuneration packages; lack of relevant incentives for personal and professional development. On the contrary, the immigrating country is providing the environment, equipment, and good remuneration. The exchange rate makes the pay enormous when converted thereby enticing others take the next trip out. To discuss these issues this paper is divided into three parts. The first part attempts an overview of the impact of the COVID-19 on the medical profession, the second part examines some studies on medical migration in Nigeria and the third part analyses the implications of these migrations for both the country's health sector and finance used for training emigrating healthcare workers.

COVID-19 and First Responders

Health-care providers are vital resources for every country. Their health and safety are crucial not only for continuous and safe patient care, but also for control of any outbreak (Liu, *et al*, 2020). One of

the most affected groups during the COVID-19 pandemic was the healthcare workers. They were the front liners, the first responders, the ones who were looked upon for succor from the beginning till date of the pandemic. From the ambulance drivers to the EMT, to the lab technicians, the pharmacists, the nurses, the medical students, the doctors, consultants and other staffs in the health sector, everyone was stretched beyond limits during the peak of the pandemic. They put in their best to manage the situation while seeking ways to prevent others from getting infected and joining the patient lists. Sadly, they equally get infected and join the fatality list.

Razu *et al* (2021) rightly note that although social distancing is the most effective way to contain the outspread of this virus, this is not easy to implement for healthcare professionals who require direct contact with COVID-19 patients and puts them under a high risk of being infected themselves. Thus while we were all keeping the two meters gap our healthcare professionals could not. According to Alshamrani *et al* (2021), Healthcare Workers (HCWs) being at the frontline of treating patients with confirmed COVID-19 are at higher risk of exposure than the general population. The global average health worker infection rate has been estimated to be 10% (Adeniyi *et al*, 2021). Bandyopadhyay *et al* (2020) equally write that as of 8 May 2020, a total of 152 888 HCWs had been reported to have been infected with COVID-19 with a total of 1413 deaths. Covid 19 created multiple forms of negative effect on the economy trade, education and other sectors of the Nigerian economy (Odi, Ani & Ojatorotu, 2021; Uwizeyimana, Anyika,& Ani, 2021).

The greater threat of having infected HCWs is that their infection is not limited to them. Infected HCWs represent a risk for their families, their fellow HCWs, and hospitalized patients (Alshamrani et al, 2021). The risk of exposure risk of introducing infection to others, long working hours, and perceived stigma from family members and society can be manifested with a number of psychological morbidities including poor sleep quality, stress, post-traumatic stress symptoms, anxiety, and depression. HCWs at the heart of the unparalleled crisis of COVID-19, face challenges treating patients with COVID-19: reducing the spread of infection; developing suitable short-term strategies; and formulating long-term plans. HCWs must also continue to successfully treat non-COVID patients and maintain personal responsibilities, including taking care of their families and themselves (Shreffler, Petrey, and Huecke, 2020).

Doctors and nurses have been spotted weeping in the hospital lobby over the adverse situation they had to face and the pain of watching patients die. They are feeling helpless to save the COVID-19 patients (Shrestha and Kunwar, 2020). The situation is that of losing someone whom you have put so much efforts in helping (even at the detriment to your own health). They experience emotional exhaustion, which may lead to medical errors, lack of empathy in treating patients, lower productivity, and higher turnover rates. The ability of HCWs to adequately cope with stressors is important for their patients, their families, and themselves (Shreffler, Petrey, and Huecke, 2020).

Medical Migrations in Nigeria

The exodus of professionals from Nigeria in search for greener pastures is not a new phenomenon. Challenges during military era

and economic woes of the country motivate several professionals to leave the country in search for security and better opportunities. Healthcare workers are one of the most emigrated professionals from Nigeria. The neglect of the health sector by successive administrations (both military and civilian) has brought untold hardship to practitioners in the sector. Lack of adequate funding has reduced Nigeria from being a choice destination for effective healthcare by non-Nigerians to Nigerians being one of the highest clients of medical tourism. Nigerians now spend millions of dollars annually to different parts of the world in search for healthcare. The unfortunate Nigerians who cannot afford medical trips abroad are left to scramble for the little available resources. This puts untold hardship on the few healthcare workers who struggle to serve the multitude with little resources. In the end, these HCWs who do not have facilities to work with, who are not enough or well remunerated seek the next available opportunity to leave the country.

Medical migration was initially a passive driven by economic, professional, social or political considerations on the part of the migrant, but it is now largely due to over-reliance on imported skilled labour by developed countries (Monye *et al*, 2021). A World Health Organisation (WHO) report (2017) estimates that from 2010–2016, an average of 600 GPs emigrates annually from Nigeria; nearly 50% of emigration was to Europe, followed by North America and Africa... In 2016, letters of verification, a proxy for intention to emigrate, were processed for 13% of the nurses and midwives registered that year. Okafor and Chimereze (2020) cite an estimate that 12, 579 nurses trained in Nigeria or 12% of the total number of nurses in the country, had emigrated as at the year 2000. The top

destinations for emigrant nurses and midwives were the United States of America, Canada, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, Australia, and Ghana. While decrying this spate of emigration Ihua and Nsofor succinctly state that:

Unfortunately, it is this workforce that we so direly need that we lose to these countries, as our medical workforce to population ratio is much lower than the recommended standard. In many instances it is our best and brightest hands that we lose as the application process in these countries is usually very competitive. Interestingly, some of these emigrated professionals end up treating the elite of our society who seek medical attention abroad, because they do not believe they can get the care needed for their recuperation locally in Nigeria. In all of this it is the average Nigerian who bears the brunt of the ailing healthcare system in Nigeria, as he lacks the resources to travel abroad for medical care (Ihua and Nsofor, 2019).

If it is bad enough that we are losing some of our best brains and professional health workers to more developed countries where working conditions and remuneration are better, then it should be more worrisome that a greater proportion of the next generation of medical professionals already have the intention of leaving upon completion of their training. In a study carried out by Adebayo and Akinyemi (2021) at one of the foremost institutions where healthcare workers are trained, the University College Hospital (UCH) of the University of Ibadan they realised that: more than half of the respondents (who were residents) had emigration intentions and about a third of those with emigration intentions had made various

attempts at emigrating ranging from taking tests of English language to writing licensing exams. The most depressing part of this fact of emigration of healthcare workers for me is that beyond the effect of this emigration on our manpower, there is the financial loss because we train these professionals for other country's benefit. This is the focus of our concluding section.

COVID-19, Medical Migrations and the Costs

The COVID-10 pandemic affected more developed countries than developing ones. This has no doubt depleted the number of healthcare workers in the developed countries (**Etodike, Ekeghalu, & Ani, 2021**). Another point to be pointed out here is that due to the effects of the pandemic the economy of these developed countries was badly hit hence there is lesser fund to train the needed manpower. Coupled with the reduction in resources is the immediacy of need of these medical professionals. The best bet is to tap from already available manpower in developing countries that were already willing to leave for better conditions.

The recent open interview of doctors in Nigeria by agents claimed to be from Saudi Arabia is a clear indication of this challenge. Also, during the pandemic the *Punch Newspaper* reported that some 58 doctors were stopped at the airport from leaving the country for the United Kingdom. This follows an earlier reported concern that the United States government had asked medical professionals seeking to work in America to apply for a work visa at the nearest US embassies as part of measures to strengthen the health system to contain the coronavirus pandemic in America.

These incidents point to the fact that there is a global increase in the need for healthcare workers. Bidwell *et al.* (2013) had earlier noted that both developed and developing countries have a pressing shortage of nurses and doctors, and quite unfortunately, staff shortages, the lack of specialist training in low-and-middle-income (LMIC) countries and the economic downturn in the West have remained some of the reasons for the migration of doctors who are sourced from the most developing countries to the more developed countries. Unmitigated, rising infection and mortality rates in HCWs will paralyse a country's response to COVID-19, and it is bound to have a significant, long-term impact on healthcare delivery, particularly in health systems already grappling with workforce shortage due to lack of trained personnel, skilled labour migration and geographical maldistribution, even prior to pandemic times (Bandyopadhyay et al, 2020). The International Council of Nurses (ICN) also report that Nurses accounted for 60% of the health professional workforce around the world and due to the effects of the pandemic there is the projection for the need of about 10 million nurses by 2030 and there could be a gap of close to 14 million nurses in the future. Our nurses are gladly seeking such future.

Another important point that is less emphasized in the analysis of medical migration is the cost of training. Medical education around the world is an expensive venture. It requires a student who is committed financially, and who is willing to invest his or her time and energy in order to successfully complete their medical education. It costs a society a lot of money to have such highly skilled staff. This applies more in Nigeria where Teaching hospitals are funded by government, and the tuition fees for medical students at federal

universities is low compared with the cost at private universities or in other countries (Ihua and Nsofor, 2019).

The unit cost of training a doctor working in the British National Health Service (NHS) was estimated in a 2012 study commissioned by the UK Department for Health (DH) as £269,527 for a Foundation Officer 1 and £564,112 for a Consultant. These costs are not borne solely by the NHS, but also by the doctors and their families as school fees and loans. It is obvious therefore to understand why these societies are willing to accept qualified medical professionals from developing countries, because of the huge cost-savings to them (Ihua and Nsofor, 2019).

To train a medical doctor in Nigeria, government subsidizes the training to the tune of N3, 860,100. Countries that African doctors emigrate to do not provide medical school training to doctors who successfully pass licensing examinations. As such, these countries essentially make savings on training of medical doctors. Estimates of these savings are as follows: “at least \$621m for Australia, \$384m for Canada, \$2.7bn for the United Kingdom, and \$846m for the United States; \$4.55bn in total (Ihua and Nsofor, 2019). In other words we are losing our money while training these doctors and losing them after training them. This fact calls for greater reasoning on the part of the state, scholars, healthcare workers.

Conclusion

My intention in this paper is to broaden our scope of reason on the issue of emigration of healthcare workers. It is sad to observe that, unlike the United States, United Kingdom and other forward thinking

stets, the Nigerian state does not perceive the danger ahead. There is the triple problem of an ineffective health sector, COVID-19 pandemic on the health sector and the emigration of Nigerian health professionals. The global call for Universal Health Coverage which allows individuals have access to the care they need without suffering financial hardships is not effective just as government is not providing policy and financial resources badly need of the health sector. Now more than ever, as noted by the American Medical Association, it's important for health systems and health care organizations to create and ensure an infrastructure and resources to support physicians, nurses and care team members.

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