

Democratic Governance and Nigeria's National Security: An Alternative Narrative of Southern Kaduna

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Abstract—This study examines the relationship between democratic governance and national security in Nigeria, with a specific focus on Southern Kaduna as a critical case study. While dominant narratives often frame insecurity in the region through ethno-religious conflict and criminality, this paper advances an alternative perspective that situates the crisis within the broader challenges of democratic deficits, governance failures, and structural inequalities. Drawing on qualitative analysis, the study interrogates how weak institutional capacity, politicization of identity, uneven resource distribution, and limited state presence have undermined citizens' trust and exacerbated insecurity. Since the returned of Nigeria to civil democratic rule in 1999, there has been numerous cases of security threat in many parts of the country. This is worrisome because theoretically, democratic governance should engender security, development, and harmony. However, experience with democratic governance in Nigeria; with reference to Southern Kaduna has been on the contrary. This paper attempts a critical analysis of the security situation of the Southern Kaduna under the democratic dispensation. Given the seemingly irreducible place of insecurity in Southern Kaduna, this paper argues that the core factor responsible for the insecurity in Southern Kaduna is bad leadership. Based on its analysis, the paper concludes that the security of Southern Kaduna and the nation at large will continue to be threatened so long as the political leaders remain selfish, greedy, corrupt, and as long as political thuggery and inequality continue to exist.

Index Terms—Democratic Governance, National Security, Democracy and Good Governance

I. INTRODUCTION

Security is a major prerequisite for any nation seeking to achieve meaningful development. Governments all over the world strive to ensure that their citizens are secure enough to pursue their lawful businesses without let or hindrance, and that foreign investors feel

sufficiently convinced about the safety of their investments in their host countries. For over three decades, Nigeria has been experiencing instability in governance. Democratic rule has been truncated several times by military leaders and, as a result, the economy has been going down a precipice with its attendant consequences. Therefore, the standard of living of the populace has been worsening by the day, unemployment is rampant, poverty grinding, social amenities and services poorly provided and morality is at its lowest ebb, while societal values have been bastardised.

Furthermore, as the social contract theory assumed, state evolved out of general confusion and the need for safety, security, order, stability, and the guarantee of a good life. It must be noted that all that government does is to ensure security, because even education, health services, and infrastructure such as water and light all fits into security. The defence architecture with the armed forces and all that we have there all together work towards guaranteeing security. That is to say, where governance is designed and run properly, we could say with large measure of certainty that governance will engender security. If the state fails in governing; there is a tendency of experiencing breakdown of law and order.

Democratic governance with its ideal of elective representation, freedom of choice of leaders, rule of law, freedom of expression, accountability among others, has become the most acceptable system of government all over the world. In respect to the Nigerian Fourth Republic, Mijah asserts that;

The transition in 1998-1999 to civil democratic rule was greeted with popular enthusiasm and optimism. The relative cordiality that characterized the process of the formation of political parties and the relative ease with which such parties were registered was a clear demonstration of the optimism and commitment

of Nigeria's political class and the state elite to democracy project in Nigeria. Among the generality of the people of Nigeria, the transition was a welcome development, not only because it signaled the eventual termination of authoritarian military rule, but more so because it was perceived as the dawn of an era of great optimism and the realization of the dream of a good life (Mijah, 2009, p.30).

Ironically, democratic governance in Nigeria has been a different thing when compared to what is obtainable in other parts of the world. Though it is the responsibility of the state to protect and defend its citizens from both internal and external threats and to also ensure rule of law, but the Nigerian State under democratic government has demonstrated in many instances by becoming too weak to guarantee security and too strong to allow liberty.

Today, Kaduna State has become a flashpoint, especially the southern part of the state. The zone has experienced different kinds of crises in this democratic dispensation; as a result of social and political tension. The security challenges confronting Southern Kaduna (which comprises Zango Kataf, Jema'a, Jaba, Kajuru and Chikun Local Government Areas) is not restricted to mere crises alone, but encompasses other serious ongoing criminal activities such as kidnapping and robbery. Basically, democratic consolidation can be best measured in terms of good governance, which dwells on improving the society's productive capacity, peoples' welfare, enhancing their freedoms; which are the measures of national security. But on the contrary, the security of Southern Kaduna continues to deteriorate day-by-day, and the security threats in this part of the state is becoming very alarming. This has become a problem and several questions are raised on the impact of democratic governance on the security of the Southern Kaduna, which is the focus of this paper.

This paper is segmented into five sections. The first section dwells on the introductory aspect of the paper, while the second section clarifies the key concepts. The third section captures the theoretical framework, and then the fourth section is the main thrust of the work; which interrogates the impact of democratic governance on the security architecture of the Southern Kaduna. The last section of the paper therefore concludes and recommends.

II. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Democracy: the concept of democracy has no single definition, but one of the most popular definitions is that of Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865), where he defined it as "government of the people, for the people and by the people." Appadorai (1975, p.137), sees it as "a system of government under which the people exercise the government power either directly or through representatives periodically elected by themselves." Robert Dahl (cited in Ogbu & Ladan, 2005, p.2), pointed out that "democracy requires not only extensive political competition and participation, but also substantial levels of civil liberties and pluralism that enable people to form and express their political preferences in a meaningful way."

Governance: United Nations Commission on human rights sees governance as the process whereby public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resource and guarantee the realization of human rights. Governance accomplishes this in a manner essentially free of abuse and corruption, and with due respect and regards for the rule of law. The true test of good governance is the degree to which it delivers on the promise of human rights. The key question is the institutions of governance effectively guaranteeing the right to health, adequate housing, sufficient food, quality education, fair justice, and personal security (HRD 2003:1). In the same manner, UNDP (1999) holds that governance is all about effective and transparent leadership that produces results which together transform the socio-economic conditions of a nation. The objective of good governance is human development with equity and social justice, development of capacities that gives priority to the poor, advances women, sustains the environment and creates needed opportunities for employment and other livelihoods.

National Security: according to Stolberg (2012), it is believed that the concept of national security is directly related to the notions of both security and nation or state, and their relationship to each other, but Wolfers (1952:481) made it clear that the idea of national security "may not mean the same thing to different people." Fitz-Gerald (2008:5), affirmed the same view on differing definitions of national security in the contemporary period when she stated that "national security differs from country to country, and indeed from institution to institution."

The 1996 definition propagated by the National Defence College of India accretes the elements of national power: "National security is an appropriate and aggressive blend of political resilience and maturity, human resources, economic structure and capacity, technological competence, industrial base and availability of natural resources and finally the military might" (Joseph, 2001: 44). Harold Brown, U.S. Secretary of Defence from 1977 to 1981 in the Carter administration, enlarged the definition of national security by including elements such as economic and environmental security. In essence, national security then is the ability to preserve the nation's physical integrity and territory; to maintain its economic relations with the rest of the world on reasonable terms; to preserve its nature, institution, and governance from disruption from outside; and to control its borders (Huntington, 2001:64).

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper is anchored on the "Social Contract Theory." This theory treats the state as a product of the mutual agreement of men; created with a definite purpose to serve certain social needs. According to this theory, the state is not a natural institution, but an artificial device or instrument invented by men for their mutual benefit; intended to serve the interests of all individuals or all sections of society. It regards the state as the product of the will of society; hence, it is an expression of 'common will'. The exponents of this theory include Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau. In his major work, *Leviathan* (1651), Hobbes argues that the sovereign's power should be unlimited, because the state is originated in a so-called social contract, whereby individuals accept a common superior power to protect themselves from their own brutish instincts and to make possible the satisfaction of certain human desires. John Locke in 17th-century, accepted much of Hobbes's social-contract theory but argued that sovereignty resided in the people for whom governments were trustees and that such governments could be legitimately overthrown if they failed to discharge their functions to the people. The ideals and rhetoric of Locke later contributed to the establishment of the United States through their expression in the Declaration of Independence and *The Federalist*, two major documents of the American Revolution. Important

contributions to republican and democratic ideals were also made by Jean Jacques Rousseau, who expressed ideas similar to those of Locke, and the Baron de Montesquieu, who proposed a separation of governmental powers in pre-revolutionary.

The political theories of Locke and the early Americans, constituting the attitude generally known as liberalism, were further refined by the 19th-century British philosopher John Stuart Mill.

Linking this theory to the subject matter, one of the most fundamental issues that makes people in the state of nature to surrender their natural rights to a single authority is for the authority to guarantee their safety. The reason is; in the state of nature no one was safe, because even the strong is also vulnerable to nature such as illness that can make him powerless, in which the weak can come together and squeeze life out of him. However, surrendering their natural rights to an authority does not only make the authority stronger than everyone but to use such power to protect its people. Where such authority fails to guarantee security to its people, it means something is wrong with its governance, because it has failed in playing its role based on the contract she entered into with her citizens. The people of Southern Kaduna have entered such contract with the Nigerian government; as an act of governance, it is therefore expected of the government to guarantee security to them. It is on this note that the social contract theory fits into this work.

IV. THE IMPACT OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE ON THE SECURITY ARCHITECTURE OF THE SOUTHERN KADUNA

As stated earlier, government is the shorthand notation of all of what the state is. As the social contract theory assumed, state evolved out of general confusion and the need for safety, security, order, stability, and the guarantee of a good life. It must be noted that all that government does is to ensure security, because even education, health services, and infrastructure such as water and light all fits into security. The Nigerian defence architecture with the armed forces and all other security agencies that we have all work together towards guaranteeing security. So, where governance is designed and run properly, we could say with large measure of certainty that governance will engender security. If the state fails in governing; there is a tendency of experiencing breakdown of law and order.

In other words, there is a nexus between democratic governance and national security, where the latter fails; the former suffers.

Ideally, a democratic government supposed to be the most legitimate form of government because it is the government that is formed by the majority of people through electoral processes. Such government speaks more of the striking contract between the state and its people, which means the people expect more from that government. So why is the Nigerian democratic government always in question? Why the persistent of insurgent activities? Why electoral violence before, during and after elections? Does it mean that the government cannot bring a lasting solution to the continual clashes between herders and farmers in different parts of the country? What about kidnapping and armed robbery? Does it mean the state cannot control her borders from the influx of illicit arms? What about the numerical strength of our security personnel and their effectiveness in internal security operations? All these fundamental questions are some of the issues challenging our government's way of governance.

Kaduna State has suffered and is still suffering from insecurity, most especially the southern part of the state. Chikun and Kajuru Local Government Areas have witnessed serious ethno-religious crises, and Kaura has experienced ethnic crises. The Atyap-Fulani crisis that is even older than the Nigerian independence always come and goes. The ongoing crisis is not between Atyap and Fulani in Kajuru Local Government Area alone, but also in Chikun and Kaura Local Government Areas. To make the matter worst, the crisis is not taking place within the metropolis alone; but including almost all the environs of these local governments and none of their roads is safe. For some years now, kidnapping, robbery, and assassination in Kaduna are more recorded in these parts of the state. The issue of insecurity in Southern Kaduna has not only been of Kaduna State concern but has also attracted the attention of the federal government and the international community. The way and manner in which the government is handling issue of security in Southern Kaduna, has questioned the practice of true democratic governance in Nigeria. Starting with the state government, the Kaduna State government has been found wanting in guaranteeing security to its people. For instance, the reoccurrence of ethno-religious crises in Southern Kaduna has affected

the socio-economic development and the security architecture of the area negatively.

Economic activities in the affected areas have dropped drastically; banks such as Guarantee Trust Bank (GTB) have closed down their branches in places like Kajuru, and other banks that has already purchased lands and were ready to open their branches in those towns have suspended their coming. Not quite long, Union Bank in Kaura Local Government almost closed her branch as a result of insecurity and the low economic activities in that area. The number of traders that trades within these localities has also reduced. So many social activities do not take place again, and even those that intend studying around this axis are scared of coming due to the recurring crises and other security challenges. Time without numbers, top state government officials are being accused of fueling the crises out of greed, power tussle, fear of marginalization, among other interests instead of working towards addressing these challenges.

To further show how wanting Kaduna State is, for the past six months of the ongoing Atyap-Fulani crises in Zango Kataf, Kajuru and Kaura Local Government Areas, the State Executive Governor has not visited any of the affected areas not to even talk of providing any serious succor to the victims. The affected villages are empty and all the inhabitants are now inside the towns because of the absence of security agents in the villages. The government always feeds the media with issues of peace talk without serious measures taken. The government is expected to prevent conflict and where it fails, she should then not hesitate in tackling the issue after the outbreak of the conflict. It is very wrong for the government to always delay and is only concern in the period of reconstruction after the damage has been done.

Southern Kaduna has been a flash point within the state, and many people view the zone as a mini-nation, where different ethnic groups are found; involving in diverse activities. What attracts so many people to reside in this part of the state includes the endowment of natural resources, fertile land, good topography, braveness of its youths in terms of defence, among others. But there are indications that such features that are supposed to be elements of strength has turned to be of weakness, because of the selfish interests of some top government officials. For example, questions are repeatedly asked on how the youths that are involved in kidnapping, robbery and crises in

Southern Kaduna procure the weapons they use, and why they are hardly being caught. In instances where they are caught, their cases will just fade away and they will return to the community.

The truth remains that, the politicians capitalize on the bravery of the Southern Kaduna and recruit some of their youths as thugs to help them rig elections, assassinate their political opponents, and to carry out other dirty and illegal assignments for them. It is in this line that Abdulkadir (2015) (cited in Abdullahi, 2017, p.222) observed that, “joblessness and poverty have built a reserve army of the unemployed that is ‘frequently’ and without any difficulty recruited by politicians to execute violence.” As they recruit them, they also arm them. This is one of the greatest factors that pave way for the proliferation of small arms and light weapons within Southern part of Kaduna and also makes them available in the hands of the youths.

Furthermore, some of these youths are known for illegal activities such kidnapping and robbery but they walk freely on the streets especially in Chikun, because they are always covered. Even if arrested they still come out free because they serve as the water that politicians who are the fishes need to survive. Once the water is drained, the fishes will die. This is so because the politicians rely on them to rig and win elections; not minding whatever the weapons given to them will be used for after elections. Just as opined by Hamalai, Egwu and Omotola;

In many third world countries, elections are reduced to warfare in which the winner is the one who amasses the most potent instruments of violence. This notion of zero-sum competition underlying electoral completion or what has been popularized as “do or die” mentality undermines election as a contest of ideas based on clearly defined rules (Hamalai, Egwu & Omotola, 2016, p.150).

There has been reoccurrence of election irregularities due to power tussle, because the minorities see the coming of democracy as a channel where their voice could be heard and as a means of liberating themselves from marginalization. While on the other hand, the majorities see it as an opportunity to use their population to continue subduing and marginalizing the minorities. Democracy that is supposed to be a medium where justice, liberty, choice and healthy competition prevail, but reverse is the case in Nigeria. Therefore, where justice, liberty and choice cannot be guaranteed, there is high tendency of experiencing

security threats, because people can device other means to get justice, liberation and also means to livelihood. The fear of marginalization among ethno-religious groups under democracy has continued fueling sentiment; bigotry, injustice, greed, to mention but a few, which in turn leads to the tearing down of laws and order in most communities in Southern Kaduna

In curtailing crimes in Nigeria, especially in rural areas where the number of security agencies is limited or their performance is poor, societies rely on their local vigilante groups. Amnesty International (2002:1) maintained that “the poor performance of the Nigerian police in effectively tackling crime and the sense of mistrust which they inspire among Nigerians have facilitated the creation of armed vigilante groups at local and state level, with the tacit, and sometimes explicit, endorsement from some state governments and state houses of assembly and wide popular support.”

The vigilante groups play diverse security roles which include arresting and handing over criminals to the police for detention, sometimes punishing the offenders, night patrol, curtailing the activities of cultists and drug abusers, among others. In line with the above, Alemika and Chukwuma added that;

The services of informal policing groups are used in order to protect the neighbourhood from criminal attacks; to provide speedy safety and security services which the formal police are unable to offer, and because they are closer to the people than the formal police (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2004:33).

Therefore, instead of the Kaduna State Government to engage the brave but jobless youths of the Southern Kaduna in providing security under the umbrella of vigilante groups, the state is busy relying solidly on the formal security agents that are limited in number. Local governments such as Chikun has a strong vigilante group that some people even rely on them for safety than the formal police, but they lack motivation from the government. Although the state government took a giant step in the first quarter of 2016 by establishing a state vigilante group known as “Kaduna State Vigilance Service (KADVS)”, but the activities of the group were limited by the state government due to some controversies. However, the government has not done much in motivating the local vigilante groups such as considering them on the government pay roll, empowering them, providing them with mobility, and

so on. If to say the state government will motivate them, they would be of great help in assisting the police and other law enforcement agencies to curb crime in Southern Kaduna.

Haven said that, the insecurity of Southern Kaduna under democratic government cannot be understood if our analysis is only tailored towards the state governance, because Southern Kaduna is only a subset of Kaduna State, and Kaduna State is another subset of the larger Nigerian State. It is however worthy of note that none of subsets exist in isolation from the others. Also, most of the time, there is a way by which security challenges in one subset could affect security architecture in the other subsets. Even though the case of Southern Kaduna is widely known, but we cannot begin to put in context, the security of this zone without putting it in the wider context of the Nigerian society and how the federal government under democratic dispensation handles security issues.

Today, there is high level of unemployment in Nigeria especially among youths. Meaning the population that is active, bustling with energy idling. We are not deliberately channeling that energy in the productive direction. The failure of the economy to absorb labour is the failure of policy. The government has not only failed in terms of economic policy but even in the educational sector. For instance, the kinds of instruction learning which goes on in public schools hardly prepare young people for employment. To that extent, we begin to see that government policy as is counterproductive, and is laying the foundation for long term insecurity, because it is widening the gap between the have and have not. That is why today we are experiencing criminal activities such as kidnapping, robbery among others in different parts of the country.

In the case of Southern Kaduna, the governments at the apex and the security agents have been accused by quite a number of Southern Kaduna tribes for not helping the zone in overcoming her security challenges. For instance, it was presented in the House of Lords of the United Kingdom in July 2018 that, the people of Kaduna and other northern Christian minority have lost confidence in the Military and even said they would no longer rely on the Military for protection.

Politically, one of the obstacles to democratic consolidation and the security of Nigeria is the fact that political parties have no focus, in the sense that

you hardly see a political party with effective plan and roadmap it set to achieve, because if party members cannot get something for themselves you will see them jumping from one party to another.

This means they don't have the interest of the nation at heart. This leads to political thuggery and all forms of political violence which affects the security of the entire nation. This is contrary to a true democratic consolidation, because the foundation of democratic consolidation starts from the good and practicable manifesto of the political parties; with diehard members that are always prepared to deliver.

Broadly speaking, there has been an increasing widening gap of inequality under democratic government in Nigeria. It becomes very worrisome whereby the rich get richer at the expense of the poor that get poorer. The widening gap of inequality in the country continue to erode the hope of the masses; educational qualification is becoming irrelevant, merit has been substituted by favouritism and sentiment, there is no regards for rule of law, no rewards for honesty and hard work, no severe punishment for bribery and corruption because it has been indirectly institutionalized. The lapses in Nigerian governance have made most citizens to either consider leaving the country or stay back but to use "queer ladder" to climb to the top. For instance, the Queer Ladder Theory assumed that organized crime is an instrumental behaviour; it is a means to an end, and is an instrument of social climbing and/or socio-economic advancement (Mallory, 2007; Okoli & Orinya, 2013). In other words, inequality in Nigeria is another factor that lured some people into criminal activities, which is affecting the security architecture of the country.

V. CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the fundamental realities that cannot be ignored is the fact that there is a significant relationship between democratic governance and national security. In other words, the way a state governs determines the nature of its national security. This paper made an attempt by interrogating the impact of democratic governance on national security, using Southern Kaduna as a case study. However, the work holds that Nigerian government is too weak in guaranteeing security to its people. Relying on the careful analysis of secondary data and personal observation, this paper concludes that the security of Southern Kaduna and

the nation at large will continue to be threatened in as much as the political leaders remain selfish, greedy, corrupt, and as long as political thuggery and inequality continue to exist.

Therefore, in order to address or minimize the problem of insecurity in Southern Kaduna and Nigeria at large, the following remedies are recommended:

- i. The major attributes of democratic governance which includes choice, participation, accountability, and rule of law should be uphold. Through this, the issue of corruption, election rigging, among others would be minimized.
- ii. Government and judicial authorities should carry out prosecutions of persons implicated in criminal activities; those prosecuted should include both the sponsors and the executors. This will serve as deterrent to others.
- iii. There should be a robust funding, special training and provision of equipment for all the security agencies and vigilante groups in places like Southern Kaduna. This will serve as motivation to them.
- iv. The high level of unemployment among the youths and inequality in the country should be addressed by the democratic governments. This will strengthen our democratic governance and reduce the level of crime in the country.

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