

Public Administration and National Security in Nigeria

Gabriel Izokpu Oikhala

Department of Public Administration

Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria

Email: oikhala.gabriel@oouagoiwoye.edu.ng; gabokala@yahoo.com

<https://doi.org/10.61090/aksujacog.2024.038>

Abstract

The paper assessed public administration issues and challenges to national security in Nigeria. This is to know how public administration can be strengthened to curb threats to national security in Nigeria. It is a theoretical paper hence, it relied on data obtained from relevant published textbooks, journals, newspapers, and conference papers. The data collected were analysed through the descriptive method. Using the structural functionalism theory, public administration was identified as a critical instrument of government to achieve its national security goal of Nigeria. It found that public administration has not been able to provide the expected national security in Nigeria. The unfriendly and paralysing situations of the political and socio-economic environment, the collapsing conditions of good governance, and the leadership crisis were found as issues and challenges facing public administration on national security in Nigeria. The paper concluded that public administration is what the government uses to maintain national security but could not provide the expected results due to issues of poor political environment and crisis of leadership. It recommended, among others, the redefinition of political structure and rebirth of leadership in Nigeria to promote a better and more friendly political environment that is conducive for public administration to discharge its function of national security in Nigeria.

Keywords: Public, Administration, Public Administration, Security, National Security.

Introduction

Public administration, as noted in every organised society, including Nigeria, turns laws and policies into concrete results. Therefore, public administration is all about serving the people and society. It is meant to ensure that laws or policies of government are well enforced to achieve the good order that is needed in every organised society. In this sense, policies relating to economics, agriculture, health, education, security, the environment, and other intrastromal policies are translated to tangible and appreciable results to meet the basic needs of the people and the progress of society. So, public administration as an activity involves law or policy-making, implementation or enforcement, and interpretation, as well as using the provisions of the laws to settle disputes for the peace and security of everyone. This presents public administration as the functional heart, soul, and body of government in keeping people and society together. Thus, it keeps the law, protects people and property, maintains peace and order, and promotes the socio-economic and political progress of a nation via each level of government adopted in any country. To put it in simple language, public administration is a slice of the wider field that is designed to serve: to look after people or care for people and society through the application of laws or policies made to control, direct, regulate, promote, maintain, and shape the society to achieve the safety needs and progress of the people. When laws or policies are made in any society, the intention, expectation, direction, benefit, consequence, or effect cannot be ascertained until they are enforced or implemented, which is a core function of public administration.

Viewing it from the foregoing, public administration is presented as a means to societal ends. Without a doubt, public administration is about service delivery and the provision of good governance for societal well-being. Observing the place of public administration within the context of the survival of people and society, Donham (1936) argued that the future of civilised government or the survival of

any society rests upon the capacity of public administration to discharge its functions. Beard (1941) also corroborated the latter by saying if the civilisation of our society breaks down, it means the breakdown of public administration.

Drawing from the foregoing and with the observance of the prevalent crime, economic threat, and political violence in Nigeria, the pace of peace and security across the land has been challenged (Okotoni, 2017). For instance, the Nigerian First Republic that lasted from 1963-1966 was characterised by tumultuous violent crises, which ended it (Mbaya, 2022). Apart from the unending destruction of lives and properties, which are witnessed almost daily from the terror attacks of Boko Haram, herdsmen, and criminalities of other banditries, this era continues to witness the most terrible kidnappings, assassinations, armed robberies, political violence, ritual killings, and Yahoo Plus, which Nwolise (2019:101) referred to as the spiritual dimension of Yahooping. This now involved grave hunting for human parts, ritual rape, ritual killings, and human parts harvesting, to threaten national security in Nigeria. All these have not allowed the efforts of the police, with the support of other security operatives to tame the uprising of security breakdowns across Nigeria. This paper, therefore, is aimed at exposing the issues and obstacles facing public administration in its drive towards maintaining national security in Nigeria. The paper provides information on how public administration will be empowered to effectively handle national security issues through its local security architecture in Nigeria. In addition, it gives reliable insight into the current state of insecurity, political environment, and public administration, as well as how it can be addressed to pave the way for effectively tackling threats to national security in Nigeria.

Methodology

Analytical theoretical methods were utilised to collect relevant data for the study. Data were collected from appropriate published textbooks, journals, newspapers, and other official records. Observation methods were also employed to complement the secondary data. Analysis of the data collected was done through descriptive methods. The paper is organised into six parts. The first part is the introduction provides a comprehensive background to the study. The methodology is the second part of the paper. Here, information is provided on how data were sourced, analysed, and organised. The third and fourth parts contain the theoretical framework that anchors the paper, while conceptual clarification treats the salient concepts used in the subject of discourse. The fifth part treats public administration issues and challenges to national security in Nigeria, while the sixth part is used to conclude the paper and make appropriate recommendations.

Theoretical Framework

The structural theory developed and supported by Taylor (1911), Weber (1922), and Fayol (1937) with others, is considered appropriate and adopted as the theoretical framework of this paper. In the field of public administration, this theory was very much influenced by scientific management (Atakpa, 2015) to improve the study and practice of public administration. Two major assumptions of the formal structural theory that relate to this paper are: first, securing society or administrative state is a clinical task of government, which public administration must be conscious of and second, that conflict is built into the particular ways societies (countries) are structured. Therefore, this theory looks at social problems such as political, economic depression, injustice, poverty, disease, exploitation, inequality, unemployment, policy summersault, hunger politics, and misgovernance, among others, as sources of public administration conflict in public security maintenance (Galtung, 1990:143).

In Nigeria, the application of this theory manifested in the 1999 constitution of Nigeria, which created three levels of government with their core functions. These are first-tier government (federal), second-tier government (state), and third-tier government (local) (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). Thus, public administration exists at these three tiers of government to translate the laws and policies of the various governments to achieve the basic needs of people and the survival of the entire Nigerian state. Besides, other structures like the police force, correctional centre, civil service commission, code

of conduct bureau, National Defence Council, police council, and police service commission, among others, constitute instruments for the practice and understanding of public administration in Nigeria.

However, the structural theory has been criticised for being impervious to political, material, or economic inequalities that are also public administration bottlenecks. It is the people that cause things to happen. If institutional structures trigger a crisis that affects public administration, it should be acknowledged that human factors cannot be overlooked. Also, some scholars have pointed at leadership and political crises as obstructing the proper functioning of public administration. However, this aspect was not focused on the theory (Onah, 2005). As far as this paper is concerned, notwithstanding the few observed criticisms of the structural theory, its appropriateness is emphasised. When the structure of government is not infiltrated with sentiments or personal interest; when laws or policies are not implemented or enforced with individual or few group interests; if public resources are utilised for the comfort of a selected few, where the public interest is not undermined; when hunger politics are not being played; when public security not politicised; when public administrators are not myopic; if the structure of government institutions is properly done or if the country's constitution is not inflicted with conflicts of inconsistencies or grievances in the governance process, then, there should be little or no crisis of misgovernance, starvation, inequality, abuse of power, injustice, bitter politics, bias, sentimentalism, nepotism, tribalism, dissatisfaction of the public, and other negative tendencies, which usually pave the ways for socio-economic ruins, political hostilities, an uncondusive environment, and hardship that are always tied to all sorts of disorder, odd menaces, and insecurity in the administrative state to weaken public administration and its local security apparatus, as in the case of Nigeria.

Conceptual Issues and Clarifications

The key concepts clarified in this part are those connected with the subject of discourse. They are clarified based on their issues in a manner that will help to understand each of their contributions to achieving the goals set for this paper.

Public

Just like other concepts in the field of public administration, scholars have no agreement on one definition of public. This is because the public is used in diverse ways with different meanings. For instance, public opinion, public goods, the Nigerian public, public affairs, public security, public awareness, public-in-public, and so forth are different aspects in which people can use the term public to bring different meanings (Oikhala, 2022). Any property or phenomenon whose ownership cannot be traced to a sole individual but to the entire society or some parts of the society is known as public (Azelama, 2016). To Mbaya (2022), the term 'public' before administration restricts its coverage to the public sector. In the same vein, Fadia & Fadia (2011) saw the word 'public' as governmental administration.

As it relates to this paper, the prefix public to administration tends to narrow administration to a specific fragment of the society that deals with societal issues. In this sense, it means the institution of government that carries out routine functions concerned with the general affairs of the state; a unit or certain group of the state. Adopted in this sense, the public implies that a single individual cannot claim ownership of something; such a thing belongs to the entire people of a state, part of the state, or locality, which the government maintains for the state and their citizens. For this paper, the citizens of a country are referred to as the public. Public administration is the governance of the public (Okotoni, 2017). Hence, public administration is meant to serve the public, and the relationship between administration and the public is known as the master-servant relationship. This is to encourage efficient and effective service delivery to the public to promote the safety and welfare of all and sundry. The leadership is often elected by the public to govern them. Also, the public can remove their leader if it is not representing their interests. This suggests that the leadership is meant to make use of all resources available to the government to serve and protect the public interest. Public interest here is being regarded as what the people cherish to make progress and live a better life, and this is central to national

security. What is the state of public security in Nigeria? If the public is not safe, it would mean a sign of the poor status of life with attending poverty and an unfriendly socio-economic political atmosphere, as in the case of Nigeria today.

Administration

Administration as used in this paper is central to the act of serving the public. It is a common process to manage public affairs and look after people. Somehow, it is difficult to clarify administration in one meaning. This is because both the traditional and modern scholars of administration are not in agreement on whether administration is an art, a science, or a craft. Hence, a lot of them have ruled out the idea of it being a pure science on the ground that it is the unempirical nature of its findings. Others have linked administration art in the sense that administrators are just like painters and composers finding their moods and personalities in their work (Azelama, 2016). To Anyawu (2010), scientific knowledge is a proven idea. This is key because it is based on what anyone can see, touch, taste, or hear, which has no place for personal opinions, preferences, speculations, and prejudices as in the case of administration in practice. As noted in Nwanchukwu (1999), science is characterised by precision and predictability with a scientific rule that works all the time. It is rigid, while the rules it uses are classified as laws. According to him, even though administration uses scientific data, rules, or theories, it should not be regarded as science. From the clarification so far, it is observed that administration shares traits with science. It was also noted that administrative problems are rarely identical. This gap makes a stereotype of its solution almost impossible. Hence, a variety of administrative solutions exist for dealing with specific administrative problems. Even with the mixture of the foregoing nuances, administration cannot be referred to as an art. This is because art deals with sensation while administrators attempt to solve problems or address issues. Yet, there is no doubt that these problems or issues often share common traits—imaginative and intuitive ways of solving them. Noting the foregoing, if administration is neither a science nor an art, a more comfortable and workable term to bridge the gap should be crafted. This clarification is necessary to pinpoint the fact that in administration, there is no precise method that works best in all situations.

As observed by Adebayo (2001), administration is the organisation and direction of persons to achieve a specified end. In this case, administration is presented as a means to an end. This also clarifies administration as a means, which affects every sphere of life. It makes laws and policies and implements them; it provides leadership in every organised society like Nigeria; it provides leadership to the levels and arms of government; it makes a variety of decisions and carries them out; and it exists in any human enterprise, be it public or private, to translate the organisational objectives into concrete and expected results. A good administrator is expected to devise an approach that is deemed more suitable for addressing administrative issues or problems. This has also justified the analytical theoretical nature adopted in this paper. In a specific term, administration is used to refer to the cooperative efforts between two or more people to achieve a defined goal. The term administration is multi-dimensional. Drawing from the proceeding, administration is the arrangement and directing of persons to accomplish a specified goal. All of these were not in contrast with Shafritz et al. (2013), who found that administration is the most obvious part of government in action, that is, the executive, the operative, and the most visible side of government.

In the opinion of Nwizu (2016), administration is the process of getting things done by planning, organising, controlling, directing, and coordinating human and other resources to achieve organisational goals. This implies that administration is about getting done through an established institution or organisation. What this connotes is that administration does not happen in a vacuum but in an organisation. The art of setting goals in an organised society is one thing. Another thing is to get goals achieved through the necessary structure. In the case of Nigeria, security is a core goal to be maintained. The question that is central to this paper is whether there is security in Nigeria with the rising incidences of different violent crimes here and there across the country.

Public Administration

Public administration is the bedrock of societal stability (Azelama, 2016). This is because it ensures the establishment and maintenance of institutional processes and the machinery through which the routine functions of the society or state are carried out. Public administration aims at the efficient utilisation of the resources at the disposal of public administrators, for achieving societal goals. Of course, this is doable through the elimination of waste, effective use of human and material resources and provision and protection of the welfare and interests of public officials and the general public. So, relying on the fact that public administration is used to turn misfortune into good fortune, it is used to mean exactly what the government does, has done, or is doing; it then involves only government services to the people. It therefore means all actions of government that come after political campaign promises to reposition the government for better service delivery in making the country safe for better living conditions of the people. Shafritz et al. (2013) viewed public administration as a law in action. Here, it is fundamentally concerned with the enforcement of public law. Also, looking at it from this perspective, it is seen as a regulation of human behaviour, activities, and industries. It thus involves the government telling people and businesses what they are permitted to do and not to do in an environment. Hence, what is not permitted should not be breached by everybody except the law provided otherwise.

From the extant literature, the A-to-Z concerns of public administration are to effectively and efficiently apply all laws of the land to provide and maintain sustainable socio-economic progress, political stability, and cultural values for better comfort of the people and progress of every country. In other words, Nigeria will be good when public administration is functionally efficient, reliable, and committed to serving the people. All of these supported Wilson (1887) that public administration is the systematic application of law. In doing this, special attention is not just paid to improving all human and societal aspects with relation to the availability and affordability of food, shelter, health, education, and security; but also, attention is paid to building sustainable conditions for having a society that is fully rich and flourishing in socio-economic, political, cultural, and technological development and prosperity. However, it is doubtful how the development of people and a country would be feasible without a reduction in insecurity. To rely on the motive of this paper, it is wondered if public administration is on course to promote socio-economic and cultural fortunes with tolerable security in Nigeria with such alarming threats of kidnapping, genocide killings, and other related criminal activities of Boko haram and herdsmen; politically related killings, communal clashes, ethnoreligious bigots, policy summersaults of government, and hunger politics presently suffocating Nigeria. For better emphasis, the insecurity dilemma being experienced in Nigeria today in the face of public administration no longer gives Nigerians freedom to engage in their lawful businesses; people are afraid to go to worship places because of violent criminals. What should be done for this ugly development to be remedied in Nigeria, for public administration to be efficient and effective?

Security

The term 'security' has no one-best-fit definition. Some thinkers clarified it as freedom from all threats or risks (Nwolise, 2019; Oikhala, 2020); others term it as the activities involved in bringing confidence and happiness to people. According to Pumphrey (2012), security is about the avoidance of harm. Relying on the foregoing, security entails both activities and actions taken to guarantee the safety of lives and properties of citizens as well as their environment. Here, security is concerned with the maintenance of law and order and the promotion and protection of human rights, among others. Emphasising the value of security, Adejare (2004:177) said it means freedom from physical danger, molestation of any type, and the psychological condition of externally induced fear and anxiety. This presents security as a right upon which the exercise of all other rights is hinged. It is also revealed that the paucity of security makes rights to life mere talking drums. Hence, there will be no gainsaying that a country that lacks security cannot survive. This would suggest a complete failure of public administration.

As noted in Oikhala (2021), security is an integral part of public administration. As the action side of government, public administration is saddled with the responsibility of providing security and welfare in Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). In doing this, the Nigerian police force is recognised under Section 214 of the 1999 Constitution as the lead agency to superintend, maintain, and guarantee internal security in Nigeria, while Section 217 of the same Constitution provides for the Armed Forces, which consist of the Army, Air Force, and Navy, to provide external security for the Nigerian State. Other ministries and extra-ministerial agencies, including allied security, were established to render the total services that are needed for the public interest of Nigerians for uninterrupted public welfare and safety of Nigerian citizens. Besides, under Section 153 of the same Constitution, the police council, police service commission, and national security council were further recognised as critical bodies to contribute to national security policy to achieve values (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). The thought of this paper is that public administration was, by this token, structured to provide services for adequate security in Nigeria.

Drawing from the foregoing, the formal structure for public administration to optimally provide infrastructural, environmental, health, educational, technological, socio-economic, cultural, and political services to maintain a threat-free Nigeria appears sacrosanct. People should be at liberty or have the confidence to freely go about every lawful business with ease and without fear of molestation or harm. When people are not living under the atmosphere of threat, when people can go out and come in without threat, when people are confident that no harm will befall them or their property from any angle at any time, when people trust public administrators as serving their interest, when political or administrative decisions are being taken for public interest, when structures of government are properly used, when distribution of public goods and allocation of public resources are fairly done and equitably managed, when government and the governed are doing things in accordance with the rule of law, when government leaders are not known for cutting corners or encouraging lopsided law enforcement, when polices are being made and enforced for the interest and welfare of citizens, when citizens are made to sleep with their eyes close, when public resources are not used for the interest of those in authorities, when individual freedom, and rights are not being violated or ignored, Oikhala (2019) posited that security is feasible in any society.

However, the present state of insecurity in Nigeria is yet to justify the workings of public administration in the country. Security in any part of the world is the work in progress of public administration. It is difficult to give credence to public administration when Nigeria is soaked with threats from different criminals. If public administration is responsible for providing protective services and maintaining peace and order, yet lives and properties are not safe, it speaks volumes. It is in line with this that Mbaya (2022) noted that Nigeria, from 2009-2022 has witnessed the highest era of insecurity and breach of peace. There is a need to remark that the current level of insecurity in Nigeria is now worse than before. The insecurity situation in Nigeria today is not only the most traumatic and distressful; it has been the most lawless period with no value for human lives.

The effects of the state of security threats have led to the waste of several lives and properties. The kidnapping and killing in Nigeria have become so bad to the extent that most of the cases are no longer reported while people are being killed daily, and many responsible youths who cannot engage in crime are leaving the country for their safety (Nwolise, 2019; Otuchikere, 2024; Oyewo et al., 2024). The pertinent question that is being raised is, what is the purpose of public administration when it cannot protect the country and its people?

National Security

The concept of national security can be widely interpreted to mean many related situations or things by different people. For this paper, the issue of national security is so germane to the rise and fall of every country (see Udoms & Atakpa, 2021). This is so because, as noted in Nanchin (2014), the viability of a nation starts with the citizen's well-being politically, socially, economically, and culturally, at which national security is termed the key determinant. Therefore, simply every organised

society is meant to be security-conscious for lasting progress. According to the erstwhile United Nations Secretary-General, Koffi Annan, there can be no development without security. Following the purpose of this paper, national security would mean the capacity, competence, ability, or wisdom of a country to protect the citizens and their properties; and defend its integrity, interest, environment, territory, and its sovereign power. This will help to maintain environmental, social, political, economic, and cultural safety and stability. It is with all of these that public administration will be able to control, direct, and regulate the nation's human and material resources for better management of its affairs.

The above is supported by Imobighe (2003) who posited that national security implies freedom from threat or elimination of threat for not only the physical existence of a country but also the ability of public administration to protect the entire country. It connotes that people are living in peace, and to a very large extent, they are living in a tolerable atmosphere of harmony. It also means that the condition of peace and elements of good order are not breached. According to Oikhala (2022), national security is the protection of national interests and values. Beyond safety from both internal and external threats, national security is on course when public administration can maintain peace and tranquillity in a country. This happens when people are not struggling with poverty, bad governance, hunger politics, injustice, or suffering from socio-economic depression, the monster of unemployment, starvation, inequality, and servitude, which are all direct effects of a lack of political leadership and inefficient public administration.

Considering the dreadful protracted monster of poverty, hardship, injustice, hunger politics, unemployment, and underemployment that have been traced to be the result of bad governance coupled with the attendant deteriorating insecurity, which has turned many people into national rouges, hire-killers, assassins, kidnappers, political thugs, terrorists, dupes, armed robbers, cheats, prostitutes, secret cult members, and other violent criminals in Nigeria.

Public Administration Issues and Challenges of National Security in Nigeria

This part is devoted to analysing the issues and challenges of public administration on national security in Nigeria.

Public Administration Issues and National Security in Nigeria

As earlier noted, the security function is central to public administration. But this paper, when discussing public administration and national security, gives an insight into how public administration is influenced by its environment, which consists of political and administrative structures, the constitution, and government leadership. Public administration is seen as a science of managing national security, and the police are functionally created and placed under the exclusive function of the federal government. National security implies that public administration renders adequate protective service that is good enough to limit opportunities for criminals to threaten lives and properties in Nigeria. In this sense, the Nigerian populace is to be at liberty to go about transacting their legitimate businesses, including the freedom to go to places of worship. So, in the absence of security, no right-thinking person or person of sound mind can successfully engage either in public or private business.

From the above, of course, it would mean that if public administration reneges in its national security function to allow a situation of insecurity to linger, a dangerous scenario in which hardship, hunger, poor quality of life, fear, starvation, socio-economic depression, and political hostility will be unavoidable. Hence, it is at this stage that more opportunities for wrongdoings will be created for crimes and criminals of different kinds to envelop the country with more crimes. This is corroborated by Oikhala (2019), who cited the erstwhile Secretary General of the United Nations, Dr Koffi Annan, that a country that is not secure cannot develop. Therefore, national security issues ought not to be treated with levity by public administration as the government in action (Wilson, 1887).

Relating the foregoing analysis to the state of national security in Nigeria at the moment with the workings of public administration, it was revealed in this paper that irrespective of the slogan that security is a business of everybody, high value on the security of Nigeria was placed at topmost priority in the country's governing process. Hence, the police as an integral part of public administration that is

responsible for providing national security services has gone through phases of administrative reforms and structural re-alignments. According to the Network on Police Reform in Nigeria (2015), presidential police reforms were carried out in 2006 by the Olusegun Obasanjo administration to enhance national security in Nigeria. Again, in 2008, the Umaru Musa YarAdua Administration also carried out another reform to reposition the police to provide better security services. In addition, the Goodluck Jonathan Administration in 2012 conducted further police reform to improve internal security in the country. Furthermore, the Muhammadu Buhari Administration held the Nigeria Police Summit in 2015 to also improve the national security service delivery in Nigeria (Arase, 2016). It was equally noted that each police leadership has been adopting different administrative techniques to enhance better security, which has led to the paradigm shift to a proactive model of policing to complement the reactive method in Nigeria (Nigeria Police Watch, 2015).

Even with the security structure and conscious efforts of government and each relevant agency towards having stable security in Nigeria, the various parts of Nigeria are still being disturbed with terrible security threats that make the entire country highly unsafe as Nigerians are being forced to live in an atmosphere of fear of crimes and criminals (Otuchikere, 2024). With this ugly development of criminal siege in Nigeria with different kinds of notorious activities that have been observed to be on a daily increase, threats to national security in Nigeria is increasing (Oyewo et al., 2024). In connection with this, the Punch Newspaper of July 7, 2021, reported that:

“Anarchy is gathering momentum in the country. There are many reasons to be fearful. Terrorists, gangsters, and bandits are fiercely charging at the soul of the Nigerian state. Bandits have conquered the North-West, Boko Haram is penetrating the North-East, and South-West communities are confronted by a rising wave of killings and kidnappings by Fulani herdsmen, making the highways unsafe for travelling”.

Similarly, Nwolise (2019:101) documented the deteriorating condition of threats to national security in Nigeria when he said:

“Maybe our leaders, in their fighting and struggling over sharing national resources, have not noticed the great malaise Nigeria is currently facing. Nigerian youths have revolted against society after decades of neglect. Those of them who could not stay here anymore left for abroad, and hundreds have died in the deserts of Morocco in trying to cross to Spain. Many have walked into slavery. Thousands of them who chose to remain in Nigeria have taken to kidnapping, armed robbery, yahoo-yahoo, yahoo plus (spiritual dimension of yahoo-yahoo), ritual killing, ritual rape, grave hunting for human parts, cults and cult wars, cattle rustling, political thuggery, militancy, political assassination, terrorism, and insurgency.”

The acuity of the current threat to national security in Nigeria and the corresponding urgency for viable means to curb it was noted in Odekunle (2014:34-35) that:

"Figuratively, blood has been flowing on the streets of many of our viable cities, specifically Jos, Kaduna, Kano, and Maiduguri, that have been transformed into battle zones with battle-ready soldiers and citizens living in fear of unpredictable but likely eventualities of mayhem”.

It is from the above assertions that Oikhala (2022) contended that may have probably made Professors Femi Odekunle and Etannibi Alemika unanimously agree that Nigeria has faced serious insecurity over

time. Hence, it should no longer be an issue for scholars to debate. What then is needed now is to exert intellectual energies to find out what should be done to make public administration effective and efficient in tackling the ravaging crimes and criminalities that have been thumping Nigeria.

Challenges of Public Administration on National Security in Nigeria

Previous studies on what has been the challenge of public administration to achieve its security and governance functions in Nigeria have fingered poverty, policy somersault, corruption, environmental degradation, societal decay and loss of human values, the problem of internal security structure, unprofessional characters of some security operatives, injustice and human rights violation, constitutional inconsistencies, unattractive conditions of service of the Nigeria police as the lead agency for Nigeria internal security network, inadequate manpower and funding, porous border, poor training and security equipment and others (Oikhala, 2020; Nwolise, 2019; Makinde, 2017; Onah, 2005; Egugbo, Oikhala, and Osungboye, 2019). Even though this paper is not arguing against the above factors, it can also not be contested that the above factors have some fundamental causes. It is in this sense that all of them were accepted as secondary factors in this paper. This is supported by Oikhala (2019) that in every event, there is a cause. So, drawing from the massive waste of lives and properties across Nigeria daily, it should not be out of place to blame anyone else than the political structure, political environment, and its leadership.

Related to the foregoing is the fact that Nigeria adopted the federal presidential system of government in 1979. With this form of government, the president is the accounting officer of the Federation of Nigeria. This is supported by Section 130(1) of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria that the President is the Head of State, Chief Executive of the Federation, and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federation. With this, the president is the political leadership who has the power to influence policy or do anything capable of making Nigeria less attractive to crimes and criminalities, which have flooded the country. It falls on the oversight functions of leadership to make resources available and allow competent hands and dedicated professionals that would adequately enact laws, enforce laws, and provide people-orientated policies that will eliminate poverty or hardship-induced policies to eschew the desperation of socioeconomic or political activities to be engaged by the people. So, if a government under the watch of political leadership is unable to provide safety services to Nigeria, who is to blame?

This paper is of the view that the weaknesses of public administration in addressing insecurity in Nigeria are a mere weakness of the leadership. The worst leader that a country could have is one that cannot influence and harvest the available resources of its country to make the country safe and habitable to citizens.

From the inception of modern governance, public administration has existed and operated in an organised political environment under the watch of leadership. This makes public administration involved in governance right from the activities of political determination of what the government should do, to the activities of administrative means in translating the political determination to a concrete result for the government. This presents public administration as the working for every political milieu, which is created, directed, controlled, influenced, and allowed by the agenda, vision, and mission of political gladiators in power who form and run the government.

In a situation where government policies appear to inflict poverty, hunger, starvation, unemployment, and disorder on Nigerians in a democratic government, how will the agency responsible for national security deliver its function of maintaining national security? Similarly, when Nigerians are struggling to survive at all costs, how will peace and order be maintained by the security administrators of Nigeria? Worse still is a situation where political leaders are bent on cutting corners by using any means to grab political power. How will they govern in line with the provisions of the Constitution? In other words, when the conduct of an election is compromised against the will of the people, how will peaceful order and security be maintained? When politicians hire thugs and arm them to capture political powers by all means, how will national peace be achieved by security

administrators? In addition, when political officeholders are using public resources for their gain against public interest and the masses are impoverished through bad governance, how will restiveness, hostility, and lawlessness be abated? Furthermore, if the law enforcement agencies that are supposed to maintain law and order are alleged for instigating and promoting public disorder, how will they be effective in the discharge of their national security function in Nigeria? When citizens are comfortable in suffering and smiling by giving support to political officeholders who are not working for the interest of the masses, how will the people subscribe to peace and security? In all of these, how realistic or what magic of security measures would public security administrators adopt to curb and restore national security in Nigeria?

While security functions are central to public administration, it should be reiterated that the success and failure of public administration in its national security function rests squarely on the political environment. According to Oikhala (2020), the political environment of public administration has to do with the people and their values, available processes, structure, and instruments. As Dibia (2014:2) puts it, “public administration takes place within a political environment.” So, the reality of a particular political environment is a determinant of public administration concerning managing issues of national security in Nigeria. Of utmost importance is the driver of the political environment. As stated in Section 130(2) of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria as amended, the President shall be the Head of State, the Chief Executive of the Federation, and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. With this, public administration in this paper is limited to systematically putting into effect the particular rule, action, intent, desire, and objective of government as directed by the political leadership. The message here is that the success of public security administrators as a means to achieving the security needs of Nigeria is subject to the influence and interest of political leadership. In other words, it will be strange for public security administrations to work against the desire and expectation of political leadership. It follows that if political leadership is somehow involved in policies that stimulate economic disorder, hardship, hunger, poverty, and public disorder with radical agitation to end bad governance and good governance, public security administrators may become handicapped in maintaining national security.

It is from the foregoing that the paper is of the view that the value of leadership is very central and indispensable in public administration towards the maintenance of national security. History has rarely favoured a nation that is prone to leadership crises to be free from security threats. This is so because leadership is the sole authority of the political structure and environment that influence the action and inaction of public administration. Therefore, public administration successfully discharges its function of national security in the absence of a leadership that screams for good governance in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper assessed public administration and the challenges of national security in Nigeria. The structural functionalism theory was adopted as a theoretical framework and it was found that public administration is a critical instrument used by the government to achieve its national security goal for Nigeria. Hence, public administration is dependent on the nature of leadership and the environment of an organised state. It was also found that national security has not been given sufficient attention to make Nigeria safe. This situation is often compounded by the repeated claims of the government that the security situation in Nigeria is under control, 'no cause for alarm and no stone will be left unturned to bring the criminals to book'. This government's assertions seem contrary to the observable reality of the apparent helplessness of the public security administrators in Nigeria that is now known to the helpless citizens and the potential victims.

This is as a result of the unfriendly and paralysing situations of the political and socio-economic environment under the direction and control of political leadership. The paper concludes that national security cannot be achieved in Nigeria without a functional political leadership that drives and

influences the country's political environment for the public administration to discharge its security function.

Based on the reality of threats to the national security situation in Nigeria today, the government, the public, and public security administrators are to wake up from their sleep to cooperatively work for a conducive political environment that will accommodate socio-economic order, public peace, and public interest, which will be friendly with public security administrators to cope in curbing the lingering threats to national security.

In all, there should be a general awareness that national security is not sustained through unfriendly or repressive policies and coercion by law enforcement agencies, but about good leadership and good governance. Therefore, Nigerians should always hold their political leaders accountable for security threats and withdraw support from overambitious political aspirants who employ odd means to grab political power and leaders who work against public interest and good governance.

References

- Adebayo, A. (2001). *Principles and practice of public Administration in Nigeria*. Spectrum Books Ltd.
- Adejare, O. (2004). *Democracy: Life, liberty, property, in Nigeria (Special Edition)*. Difamo Books.
- Anyanwu, A. (2000). *Research methodology in business and social sciences*. Canun Publisher Ltd.
- Arase, S. E. (2016). IG tasks policemen on professional best Practices. *New Telegraph Friday, April, 15*.
- Atakpa, O. E. (2015). Scientific management theory and its relevance in contemporary public administration scenario. *AKSU Journal of Social and Management Sciences (AJSMS)* 1(1), 58 – 68.
- Azelama, J. U. (2016). *An introduction to political science for public administration students in Nigeria*. Ever Blessed Publishers.
- Beard, C. (1941). *Public policy control and general welfare*. Rinehart and Co. Inc.
- Dawodu, C. A. (2007). *The Nigeria police and the challenges of democratic consolidation*. Makaanand Publications.
- Dibie, R. A. (2014). *Public administration theory, analysis and application*. Babcock University Press.
- Donham, W. B. (1936). The theory and practice of administration, *Business Review* 14(2), 106-115.
- Egugbo, C. C., Oikhala, G. I. & Osungboye, B. M. (2019). Governance, migration trends and security challenges in Nigeria, *Ilorin Journal of Administration and Development (IJAD)*, 5(1): 55-65.
- Fadia, B. L. & Fadia, K. (2011). *Public administration: Administrative Theories and concept*. Sahitya Bhawan Publications.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (199). *The constitution*. Government Press.
- Fayol, H. (1937). *General and industrial management*. Pitman Publishing Company.
- Galtung, J. (1990). Cultural violence. *Journal of Peace Research*, 27(3), 12-20.
- Henry, N. (2010). *Public administration and public affairs*. Prentice Hall.
- Imobighe, T. A. (2003). *Nigeria's defence and national security linkages: A framework of analysis*. Heinemann Educational Books (Nig) Plc.
- Makinde, J. (2017). Policy somersault, poverty of policy implementation and corruption: Obstacle to development in Nigeria: An inaugural lecture, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.
- Mbaya, P. Y. (2022). Reinventing Public Administration for Sustainable Development in Nigeria. Being a text of Lead paper presented at the 2nd International Conference Organised by the Association of Nigeria Public Administrators on July 24-27 at the Public Service Institute of Nigeria, Abuja, Nigeria.
- Nanchin, J. V. S. (2014). Religion and the promotion of national security: The Christian perspective. In I. B. Bello-Imam (eds.), *National security and development in contemporary Nigeria*. Ibadan: Designed and Printed by College Press. pp. 65-76.
- Nigeria Police Watch (2015). Security: IGP Abba and his eight points policing agenda: Caterer nabbed for smuggling marijuana to prisoners. *Wednesday, March, 25*.
- Nwanchukwu, C. B. (1999). *Contemporary public administration*. Chitolynn Publication.
- Nwizu, G. C. (2016). What is good administration? Lesson for Nigeria. 25th Inaugural Lecture, Abia State University, Uturu. Uturu: Abia State University Press.
- Nwolise, O. B. C. (2019). *Bullet kills the terrorist and insurgent, but not his idea: imperative of developing comprehensive dosage of non-kinetic measures in Nigeria's counter-terrorism, counter-insurgency efforts in the North East*. Gold Press Limited.
- Oikhala, G. I. (2019) Internal security architecture management and quest for state police in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: A critical perspective. *Review of Public Administration and Management*, 8(15), 39-49.
- Oikhala, G.I. (2020). Internal security and national development in Nigeria: Challenges of manpower in Nigeria police, *Kampala International University Journal of Humanities*, 5(2), 7-17.

- Oikhala, G. I (2021). The imperative of community policing in Nigeria. *International Journal of Public Administration, Finance, and Law*, 20, 130-151.
- Oikhala, G.I. (2022). Public service and efficiency challenge in Nigeria, *Romanian Journal of Public Affairs*, 4, 53-76.
- Oikhala, G.I. (2022). Survival strategies of internal security in Nigeria: The Amotekun option. *Journal of Administrative Science*, 19(1), 99-135.
- Oikhala, G. I. (2022). Police and Governance for Sustainable Development in Nigeria, *Romanian Journal of Public Affairs*, 5, 39-68.
- Onah, R. C. (2005). *Public administration*. Great AP Express Publishers Ltd.
- Okotoni, M. O. (2017). Governance crisis and state failure in Nigeria: Are we all guilty? *Inaugural Lecture Series 299, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife*.
- Otuchikere, C. (2024). Niger residents fleeing bandits attack drown. *The Punch Newspaper Thursday, June 6*.
- Oyewo, D., Sanusi, A. & Oloniniran, G. (2024). Kidnapping epidemic: Most abductions in Abuja, others not reported – victims’ families. *The Punch Newspaper, Tuesday, January, 23*.
- Pumphrey, C. W. (2012). *The energy and security nexus: A strategic dilemma*. The United States of America: Strategic Studies Institute Book.
- Rotimi, K. (2014). *The police in a federal state: The Nigerian experience*. College Press.
- The Punch Editorial Board (2021). Anarchy is gathering momentum, *The Punch Newspaper, Wednesday, July 7*.
- Shafritz, J., Russell, E. W. & Borick, C. (2013). *Introducing public administration*. 9th Edition. Longman Pearson Press.
- Taylor, F. (1911). *Principles of scientific management*. Harper and Brothers.
- Udoms, B. E. & Atakpa, O. E. (2021). Governance deficit, national security and the development of Nigeria: Endsars protest perspective. *AKSU Journal of Administration and Corporate Governance (AKSUJACOG)* 1(1), 1-21.
- Weber, M (1922). The theory of bureaucracy. In M. Shafritz & A. Hyde (eds.), *Classics of public administration*. Moore Publishing Company. pp.25-38.
- Wilson, W. (1887). *The study of administration*. Macmillan and Company