



Theoretical Issues in Nigeria's Democracy and National Security

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Abstract. Nigeria's democratic journey has been marked by numerous challenges, raising concerns about the efficacy of its democratic system in ensuring national security. This paper examines the theoretical issues underlying Nigeria's democracy and national security, highlighting the complexities and contradictions that have hindered the country's progress. The liberal democratic theory, which emphasizes individual rights, free markets, and good governance, has been the dominant framework guiding Nigeria's democratic experiment. However, this theory has limitations in addressing Nigeria's security challenges, particularly in the context of deep-seated ethnic and regional divisions. The securitization theory, which posits that security is a socially constructed concept, offers valuable insights into Nigeria's security landscape. The paper explores how various groups and interests have securitized issues like terrorism, kidnapping, and communal conflicts, often to the detriment of human security and democratic governance. Furthermore, the paper analyzes the impact of ethnic and regional politics, corruption, and weak institutions on Nigeria's democratic consolidation and national security. These factors have undermined the state's capacity to provide security and deliver public goods, creating an environment conducive to insecurity and instability. The paper concludes that Nigeria's democracy and national security are intertwined, and that addressing the theoretical issues underlying these concepts is crucial for ensuring the country's stability and prosperity. It argues that a more nuanced understanding of the complex relationships between democracy, security, and development is necessary to overcome the challenges facing Nigeria and to build a more secure and democratic polity.

Keywords: Democracy, Liberal Theory, Securitization, Regional Politics and Corruption.

1. Introduction

Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, has been grappling with numerous security challenges,

including terrorism, kidnapping, and communal conflicts (Akinola, 2018). These challenges have raised concerns about the efficacy of Nigeria's democratic system in ensuring national security. Since its transition to democracy in 1999, Nigeria has made significant strides in consolidating its democratic institutions and promoting economic development. However, the country still faces significant security challenges that have undermined its democratic progress and hindered its economic growth. The Boko Haram insurgency, which began in 2009, has resulted in the loss of thousands of lives and the displacement of millions of people (Adebanwi, 2017). The conflict has also had a devastating impact on Nigeria's economy, with estimates suggesting that it has cost the country over \$9 billion in lost revenue (Oyewole, 2019). The security challenges facing Nigeria are complex and multifaceted, and they require a nuanced understanding of the theoretical issues underlying the country's democracy and national security. This paper examines the theoretical issues underlying Nigeria's democracy and national security, highlighting the complexities and contradictions that have hindered the country's progress. The paper argues that Nigeria's democracy and national security are intertwined, and that addressing the theoretical issues underlying these concepts is crucial for ensuring the country's stability and prosperity.

2. Liberal Democratic Theory and Nigeria's Democracy

The liberal democratic theory, which emphasizes individual rights, free markets, and good governance, has been the dominant framework guiding Nigeria's democratic experiment (Diamond, 2015). This theory posits that democracy is the best form of government for ensuring individual freedom, promoting economic development, and maintaining national security. However, this theory has limitations in addressing Nigeria's security challenges, particularly in the context of deep-seated ethnic and regional divisions. Nigeria's democratic system has been characterized by weak institutions, corruption, and ethnic and regional

politics (Adebanwi, 2017). These factors have undermined the state's capacity to provide security and deliver public goods, creating an environment conducive to insecurity and instability. Furthermore, the liberal democratic theory's emphasis on individual rights has been criticized for neglecting the collective rights and interests of Nigeria's diverse ethnic and regional groups (Nwankwo, 2019). Nigeria's adoption of liberal democratic theory has been marked by challenges. The theory emphasizes individual rights, free markets, and good governance, but Nigeria's diverse ethnic and regional groups often prioritize collective interests over individual rights (Adebanwi, 2017). This has led to tensions and conflicts, undermining democratic consolidation. One of the key challenges facing Nigeria's democracy is the tension between individual rights and collective interests. The liberal democratic theory prioritizes individual rights, but Nigeria's diverse ethnic and regional groups often prioritize their own interests over national interests (Suberu, 2018). This has led to conflicts and tensions, undermining democratic governance.

Another challenge facing Nigeria's democracy is the weakness of institutions. The country's institutions are often weak and ineffective, failing to hold leaders accountable for their actions (Adeoye, 2019). This has led to corruption and abuse of power, undermining democratic governance. The liberal democratic theory also emphasizes the importance of free markets and economic development. However, Nigeria's economy is heavily dependent on oil, making it vulnerable to fluctuations in global oil has significant implications for the country's economy and democracy (Oyewole, 2019).

In conclusion, liberal democratic theory provides a foundation for Nigeria's democracy, but the country's unique context and challenges require adaptations to the theory. Nigeria's leaders must prioritize collective interests, strengthen institutions, and promote economic development to ensure the success of democracy in the country.

3. Securitization Theory and Nigeria's Security Landscape

The securitization theory posits that security is a socially constructed concept (Buzan, 1991). In Nigeria, various groups have securitized issues like terrorism, kidnapping, and communal conflicts, often prioritizing state security over human security (Oyewole, 2019). This has led to militarization and undermined democratic governance. The securitization of security issues has had significant implications for Nigeria's security landscape. For

instance, the military's response to Boko Haram has been criticized for prioritizing state security over human security, leading to human rights abuses (Adebanwi, 2017). Similarly, the government's response to communal conflicts has often been securitized, leading to violence and displacement (Suberu, 2018). The securitization of security issues has also led to the militarization of Nigeria's security landscape. The military has played a dominant role in addressing security challenges, often undermined democratic governance and human security (Akinola, 2018).

The securitization of security issues has also had significant implications for human security in Nigeria. The prioritization of state security over human security has led to human rights abuses and undermined the protection of civilians (Nwankwo, 2019). For instance, the military's response to Boko Haram has led to the displacement of millions of people, exacerbating humanitarian crises. The securitization of security issues has also had significant implications for Nigeria's democracy. The prioritization of state security over human security has undermined democratic governance and accountability (Oyewole, 2019). For instance, the government's response to security challenges has often been characterized by emergency measures, undermining democratic institutions and processes. In sum, the securitization of security issues has had significant implications for Nigeria's security landscape. The prioritization of state security over human security has undermined democratic governance and human security, highlighting the need for a more nuanced approach to security.

4. Ethnic and Regional Politics and National Security

Nigeria's ethnic and regional politics have contributed significantly to the country's security challenges. The country's diverse ethnic and regional groups often prioritize their own interests over national interests, creating tensions and conflicts that undermine national security (Suberu, 2018). Nigeria has over 250 ethnic groups, each with their own unique culture, language, and identity. The three major ethnic groups - Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo - have historically dominated the country's politics, leading to tensions and conflicts with other ethnic groups (Adebanwi, 2017). The country's regional politics have also contributed to security challenges. The north-south divide has been a major source of tension, with the north often feeling marginalized and the south feeling dominated (Oyewole, 2019).

The ethnic and regional tensions have had significant implications for national security. For instance, the Boko Haram insurgency in the north has been fueled by ethnic and regional tensions, while the communal conflicts in the Middle Belt have been exacerbated by ethnic and regional politics (Akinola, 2018).

The country's ethnic and regional politics have also undermined the effectiveness of security institutions. The military and police have often been accused of ethnic and regional bias, undermining their ability to address security challenges (Nwankwo, 2019). The consequences of ethnic and regional politics on national security have been severe. The country has experienced a rise in ethnic and regional militias, leading to increased violence and instability (Suberu, 2018).

The country's economy has also been affected, with the insecurity undermining investment and economic growth (Adeoye, 2019). Addressing the challenge of ethnic and regional politics requires a nuanced approach. The government must prioritize national interests over ethnic and regional interests, promoting a sense of national identity and unity (Oyewole, 2019). The government must also address the root causes of ethnic and regional tensions, promoting economic development and addressing issues of marginalization and exclusion (Akinola, 2018).

5. Corruption and Weak Institutions

Corruption and weak institutions have been major challenges to Nigeria's democracy and national security. Corruption has undermined the state's capacity to provide security and deliver public goods, creating an environment conducive to insecurity and instability (Adeoye, 2019). Corruption in Nigeria takes many forms, including embezzlement, bribery, and nepotism. The country's oil sector has been particularly prone to corruption, with billions of dollars in oil revenues being siphoned off by corrupt officials (Nwankwo, 2018). Corruption has had a devastating impact on Nigeria's economy and security. It has undermined the government's ability to provide basic services, including security, healthcare, and education (Adebanwi, 2017). Corruption has also contributed to insecurity in Nigeria. The lack of effective governance and the prevalence of corruption have created an environment in which criminal groups and terrorists can thrive (Oyewole, 2019). Nigeria's institutions are often weak and ineffective, failing to hold leaders accountable for their actions. The country's judiciary, legislature, and law enforcement agencies have been criticized for their lack of

independence and effectiveness (Suberu, 2018). The weakness of Nigeria's institutions has had significant consequences for the country's security and democracy. It has undermined the rule of law, creating an environment in which impunity and corruption thrive (Akinola, 2018). Addressing corruption and weak institutions requires a comprehensive approach. The government must strengthen institutions, promote transparency and accountability, and ensure that leaders are held accountable for their actions (Nwankwo, 2019). The government must also promote economic development and reduce poverty, addressing the root causes of corruption and insecurity (Adeoye, 2019).

6. The Impact of Globalization on Nigeria's Democracy and National Security

Globalization has had a significant impact on Nigeria's democracy and national security. On the one hand, globalization has brought opportunities for economic development, democratization, and access to global markets (Adebanwi, 2017). However, globalization has also posed challenges to Nigeria's democracy and national security. The country has faced increased exposure to global security threats, including terrorism and cybercrime (Oyewole, 2019). Increased economic opportunities: Globalization has opened up new markets and opportunities for Nigeria's economy, promoting economic growth and development (Adeoye, 2019). Democratization: Globalization has promoted democratic values and principles, contributing to Nigeria's transition to democracy (Nwankwo, 2018). Access to global markets: Globalization has provided Nigeria with access to global markets, promoting trade and investment (Suberu, 2018).

Security threats: Globalization has exposed Nigeria to global security threats, including terrorism and cybercrime (Akinola, 2018). **Economic dependence:** Globalization has made Nigeria's economy vulnerable to fluctuations in global markets, exacerbating economic instability (Adebanwi, 2017). **Cultural homogenization:** Globalization has led to the spread of Western culture, threatening Nigeria's cultural identity (Oyewole, 2019).

6.1 Impact on National Security

Increased security threats: Globalization has increased Nigeria's exposure to global security threats, including terrorism and cybercrime (Akinola, 2018). **Weakened state capacity:** Globalization has weakened Nigeria's state capacity, making it difficult for the government to address security challenges (Nwankwo, 2018).

Increased inequality: Globalization has exacerbated inequality in Nigeria, creating social and economic tensions that undermine national security (Suberu, 2018). Globalization has had a complex impact on Nigeria's democracy and national security. While it has brought opportunities for economic development and democratization, it has also posed significant challenges to the country's security and stability. To address these challenges, Nigeria must develop a comprehensive strategy that promotes economic development, strengthens institutions, and addresses security threats.

7. The Role of Civil Society in Promoting Democracy and National Security

Civil society plays a crucial role in promoting democracy and national security in Nigeria. Civil society organizations (CSOs) have been at the forefront of advocating for democratic reforms, promoting transparency and accountability, and addressing security challenges (Adebanwi, 2017).

7.1 Promoting Democracy

Advocacy and Activism: CSOs have been instrumental in advocating for democratic reforms, including electoral reform, constitutional review, and anti-corruption efforts (Nwankwo, 2018). **Civic Education:** CSOs have promoted civic education, empowering citizens with the knowledge and skills to participate in democratic processes (Oyewole, 2019). **Monitoring and Evaluation:** CSOs have monitored government activities, promoting transparency and accountability (Suberu, 2018).

7.2 Promoting National Security

Conflict Resolution: CSOs have played a key role in resolving conflicts and promoting peace in Nigeria (Akinola, 2018). **Security Sector Reform:** CSOs have advocated for security sector reform, promoting professionalism and accountability in the security services (Adeoye, 2019). **Community Engagement:** CSOs have engaged with communities, promoting social cohesion and addressing security challenges (Nwankwo, 2019).

8. Challenges and Opportunities

Funding and Capacity: CSOs face funding and capacity challenges, limiting their effectiveness (Adebanwi, 2017). **Government Relations:** CSOs often face challenges in their relations with government, including restrictions on their activities (Oyewole, 2019).

Collaboration and Coordination: CSOs need to collaborate and coordinate their efforts to maximize their impact (Suberu, 2018). Civil society plays a vital role in promoting democracy and national security in Nigeria. To maximize their impact, CSOs must address their challenges and opportunities, including funding and capacity constraints, government relations, and collaboration and coordination.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

Nigeria's democracy and national security are intertwined, and addressing the theoretical issues underlying these concepts is crucial for ensuring the country's stability and prosperity. The liberal democratic theory, which has guided Nigeria's democratic experiment, has limitations in addressing the country's security challenges. The securitization theory offers valuable insights into Nigeria's security landscape, highlighting the need for a more nuanced understanding of security. Addressing ethnic and regional politics, corruption, and weak institutions is crucial for building a more secure and democratic polity.

The paper recommends that Nigeria's democratic institutions be strengthened to ensure that they are effective in addressing security challenges and promoting democratic governance. Efforts need to be made to address ethnic and regional politics, which have undermined national security and democratic governance. Nigeria's security approach needs to prioritize human security, rather than just state security. Corruption needs to be addressed, as it has undermined the state's capacity to provide security and deliver public goods.

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