

Afroncentricism and Insecurity in Nigeria: Urgent need for Policy Review

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Abstract

Globally, insecurity remains a threat to humanity. Its presence anywhere is a concern to the world. Thus, as Big Brother, Nigeria has demonstrated her concerns for humanity and showed readiness to lead in the war against insecurity within African sub-region and beyond. Regrettably, such efforts are not employed internally in defense and protection of her citizens and territory even when faced with worse insecurity situations. The study Afroncentricism and insecurity in Nigeria: urgent need for policy review is therefore an attempt to x-ray Nigeria's foreign policy options amidst her growing internal insecurity. The study employed historical methods, relying on secondary data with Hegemonic Stability Theory as its analytical framework. The theory is anchored on the assumption that open or 'liberal' international economic order requires the existence of hegemon or dominant power which retains support in the field. Findings revealed that Nigeria's state is currently facing internal threats ranging from Boko Haram insurgency, banditry, herders-farmers crisis, cattle hustling to ethnic militias among others. It further revealed how Nigeria's frightening level of insecurity make its citizens to live in constant fear; which has grounded her socio-economic development, and dented her international image and credibility. The study concluded that insecurity in Nigeria has come to stay as the current administration lacks the political will to contend and acumen to proffer lasting solutions to the menace and recommended among others for Citizen Diplomacy rather than Afrocentrism as the policy is citizen-oriented in its approach, objectives, and outcome.

Keywords: Afroncentricism, Insecurity, Nigeria, Africa, Continent.

1. Introduction

African experiences have been filled with combating historical narratives which portray her as an inferior race. To the Western world, Africa is perceived as Dark Continent. This has made Africans not to have credible position among the so called civilized nations. This world view nullified the culture of Africans, and imposed Europe in the lead Africans including Diaspora blacks towards achieving civilization, development and cultural rebirth (Smedley, 1993; Adeleke, 2015). Thus, European invaders dictate political, social and economic trends in Africa as they fashion developmental terminologies such as development and underdevelopment. Regrettably, Africa is grouped as a developing or third world state and has battled several phases of European experimentations (Chukwuokolo, 2009).

Khor (2001) averred that reasons for changing perception and attitude towards globalization are many. Among important factors are lacks of tangible benefits to developing economies despite claims of export and income gains. More so, economic losses and social dislocation which are dominant features of developing states are fostered by historical antecedents between the metropole and satellite states which is worsened by global free market economy. This negative narrative has brought about changes in the perception and attitudes of most Africans by believing in the superiority of Europeans; that development of Africa can only be achieved by imitating the ways of these economic invaders; a thinking that is derived from modernization theory. Thus, Afrocentrism like dependency have always challenged the modernization theorist and perceptions. Corroborating this view, Asante (2003) argued that Afrocentrism must challenge Eurocentric views and dimensions on

Africa. This therefore invalidates the assertion that Africa is helpless in the hands of its external invaders. Africans therefore should have a rethink and make deliberate efforts to resist western marginalization and domination thereby repositioning Afrocentric ideology to challenge retrogressive strategies of the western and eastern blocs.

Also, it is vital to note that Blacks can develop a sense of self-actualization built on African people's interests so as to position Africa as a cradle of development and not a periphery. With this thinking, Africa can rewrite her history and positively advance its culture and belief thereby making Africa a subject and not an object that is used by the external actors to achieve their own national interests. The ideology of repositioning African continent to achieve its development by themselves informed Nigeria's option of Afrocentrism as her foreign policy options (Okoye, 2023). Thus, since independence, Nigeria has maintained a relatively stable foreign policy undermining administrative changes; with her foreign policy anchored on Equality of all States; Non-alignment; Multilateralism; Non-interference and Afrocentrism. Among the aforementioned foreign policy options, Afrocentrism is been held in high esteem (Akintola in Ezirim, 2010). To this extent, since independence, African was enjoyed centre-piece of Nigeria's foreign policy with emphasis on emancipation, development and unity within the continent.

Osuntokun (2007) posit that in his First Republic, Nigeria's foreign policy was founded on constructive Pan-Africanism, but was changed from constructive Pan-Africanism to concentricism. The concentric notion of Nigeria's foreign policy was formulated by Gambari where he observed that tensions and dynamics characterized Nigeria's external policy; resulting in reduction in Nigeria's oil revenue internationally (Ashaver, 2014). Gambari observed that reduction in Nigeria's oil revenues have exposed the country to economy difficulties in her relations with Western Europe and United States. For that reason, he argued that Nigeria's foreign policy should be centred on four concentric circles: national interest, West African interest, African interest and global interest (Gambari, 1989; 2017). Hence, the survival of Nigeria's foreign policy through its concentric circle have made it visible for the country to contribute immensely to African development. It is worthy to mention that the role of Nigeria at continental and regional levels have showcased her potentials, commitment and passion for African unity, development and stability.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Afrocentrism; a focus on African continent has served as one of the cardinal principle of Nigeria's foreign policy since independence. This principle has ensured that Nigeria played Big Brother roles in war against Apartheid, de-colonialization of Namibia and Zimbabwe, peace keeping missions in Sierra Leone and facilitation of continental development through her highly innovative Technical Aid Corps Scheme (TACS). The scheme fosters posting of experienced Nigerian professionals in engineering, health and legal fields to numerous African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries at Nigeria's expense (Tella, 2017; Confidence and Ogunnubi, 2017; Chukwudi, et al., 2021). More so, Abuja has demonstrated commitments to peace keeping efforts through ECOWAS framework within the sub-region. Thus, by 1999, it was estimated that Nigeria had expended more than 13 billion Dollars to maintain peace and stability within African continent (Bamali, 2007).

Regrettably, this commitment to African development has not been commensurate to its investment and development initiatives into the lives of Nigerians and her economy at large. Charity they say must begin at home! The prioritization of African matters with its financial consequences led to a national outcry over the manner that successive leadership had intervened in various trouble spots in Africa without any meaningful benefit for the country. Indeed, over the years, the domestic realities has been heavily eclipsed by commitments to Afrocentric foreign policy with a minimal benefit to Nigerian citizens which has no bearing on the country's economic and human security (Kia, et al., 2016; Osimen, et al., 2024). Consequently, this 'commitments' fail to resonate with aspirations of most Nigerians who are opposed to this continental adventurism. While Afrocentrism resonates well with Nigerian neo-patrimonial elites, majority of its citizens are against her continual Big Brother roles especially in the area of peacekeeping with worse instances of insecurity at home front (Omotuyi, 2021).

Thus, since the beginning of this nascent democracy in 1999, there have been calls from different quarters for the re-ordering of Nigerian external relations questioning the ideology behind the retention of Afrocentrism as Nigeria's foreign policy option. They argue that Afrocentrism lacks the standard requirement, which is reciprocity in diplomatic engagements (Akinterinwa, 2004; Adeniji, 2005; Saliu, 2006; Akinboye, 2013; Olu-Owolabi et al., 2021). More so, Akinboye (2013) frowns at lack of tangible gains for Nigeria's diplomatic overtures in Africa. Unfortunately, most African states that have benefitted from Nigeria's largess often turn around to show ingratitude to Nigerian government and its national resident in their country. An instance is recurring instances of Afro-phobic attacks on Nigerians and other African nationals in South Africa. Also, these countries which Nigeria has supported financially, diplomatically and strategically has become the butt of derision and envy to her nationals. Thus, some of these countries harbour or offer training facilities for terrorists, while others campaign openly against Nigeria's bid to occupy one of permanent seats of United Nations Security Council. From these instances, it has become clear that the age-long philosophical notion of Africa as center-piece of Nigeria's foreign policy has become moribund, mundane and anachronistic (Akinboye, 2013).

More so, though Nigeria's Armed Forces are perceived to be efficiently trained to withstand any form of challenges, the nation bleeds with insecurity at its peak. Ezinwa and Amugo (2021) contend that in the early hours of August 24, 2021, Nigerian Defence Academy, Afaka, Kaduna State was invaded by non-state actors who were disguised in military uniform. The attackers shot sporadically and killed two military officers and abducted an Army Major whose lifeless body was later dumped in a nearby forest. Presently, bandit, Boko Haram and various non-state actors and insurgency groups has taking control of Local Government Areas in North-eastern region and has committed havoc with the burning of schools, mosque, churches and Police Stations among others. In additions, herders-farmers conflict and bandits have driven farmers from the farmlands and hunters from the forest; a development that has worsened hunger and unemployment ratios and thereby reducing household income. Beyond the farmlands, inter-state movements either through the road or sea routes has become a death trap by the inhuman characters of these faceless terrorist groups.

Very recently, a Retired Army General, Late Major General Rabe Abubakar, former Director of Defence Information and his wife were kidnapped in Katsina State. The retired General's health worsened and later died in captivity. His corpse was returned to his family members and no reprisal attack or report of arrest has been made by either the government or any security wing. More so, on May 15th, 2026, armed men attacked three schools in Oriire Local Government Area, Oyo State and abducted about 39 school children with seven teachers. Online footage shows the beheading of one of the teachers; and till date, these children and teachers are still in captivity. These instances challenge the might of Nigeria Armed Forces, the principle of responsibility to protect and the Afrocentric policy of the Nigeria State. As it is been said in local parlance, a man whose house is on fire, does not have the moral grounds to extinguish fire from a neighbouring house. It is against this backdrop that this study attempts to appraise Afrocentrism as Nigeria's foreign policy option amidst protracted insecurity, unemployment and underdevelopment.

1.2. Aim and Objectives

The study examined Afrocentrism and insecurity in Nigeria: Urgent need for policy review. However, its specific objectives are to:

Investigate how Afrocentrism as guided Nigeria's foreign policy options amidst nagging insecurity situations at the home front.

Analyze the efforts of Nigeria in development of other African states at the expense of her unstable economy.

Interrogate the roles of Nigerian Armed Forces in peace keeping operations in Africa in spite of terrorist attacks in North-East and other parts of the country.

2. Theoretical Framework

The Hegemonic Stability Theory which is the most popular and influential theory in the subject of international political economy today was adopted for this study. The theory proposes that liberal international economic order requires the existence of hegemonic or dominant power which

retains wide support in the field. The theory remains central to the discipline and provides a powerful and intuitively attractive account to the rise and decline of international economic order over the past century.

The theory serves as a refinement of a common observation in post-war international relations. It is worthy to note that US dominance or ‘hegemony’ was the linchpin of the successful capitalist economy after 1945. Thus, in the 1940s, not only did United States possess unrivalled power and prestige but was purposeful. After intervening in two destructive wars in three decades, US remodeled the structure of international political and economic relations in a manner consistent with its liberal ideals and interests. The main legacy of U S post-war power and purpose was Bretton Wood’s international monetary system and GATT-based multilateral trade regime (America Economic Review, 1986). In early 1970s, however, these monetary and trade regimes appeared to be threatened by growing economic conflict between major industrial countries and associated relatives leading to US economic decline. More so, comparisons with Britain’s precipitous decline as the leading power of the nineteenth century and the apparently disastrous consequences for the world economic system in the interwar period were rife in the literature; leading to renewed attention to the idea that open and stable world economy was causally related to the existence of hegemony, defined as a relative preponderance of power.

Kindleberger, who is one of the major proponents of the theory posit that for stability in global economy, there has to only one nation that will function as a stabilizer. At the risk of oversimplification, two main versions of the theory exist. They are neo-liberal and neo-realist. For neo-liberal, the ideas of international public goods play a central role. Thus, in an international system where power is well dispersed amongst states, provision of international collective goods such as financial assistance in a crisis or well-established rules on international trade is difficult. Individual states have an incentive to free-ride rather than to bear the costs of public goods alone as without international government, only a hegemonic state can provide collective goods. The hegemon will provide such goods because its size ensures that associated costs of provision are less than economic benefits that accrue to it (Berkeley, 1973). Kindleberger argued that in an effort to examining international monetary history in interwar period, stability of world economy became a focal point. Kindleberger was concerned with who would provide management functions in a potentially unstable system, particularly a long-term flow of international liquidity and short-term emergency liquidity in a major international financial crisis. He argued that the problem was less with the establishment of a system than its ongoing management, and hence was pessimistic about the consequences of hegemonic decline, particularly during periods of economic decline (Berkeley, 1973).

However, most international relations scholars following Kindleberger’s lead saw provision of liberal rules which fosters openness as core hegemonic task. The emphasis upon rules rather than crisis management led them to be more optimistic than Kindleberger on the possibility of post-hegemonic systemic openness. Collective action were more acute in the establishment phase rather than once international regimes were up and running. Keohane argued that hegemony was more important for the establishment of regimes than for their maintenance, allowing the possibility of regime-based cooperation ‘after hegemony’. On the other hand, neo-realist version of hegemonic stability is less dependent upon the idea of international public goods, though some realists employ similar language. Neo-realists hold that states have different policy preferences that depend upon their relative position in global market. A hegemonic state is most likely to favour an open world economy, as opposed to medium-sized states. This makes free trade most likely when a hegemon is able to provide carrots and sticks to other states to adopt liberal trade policies (Krasner, 1970). More so, neo-realist version of the theory is exploitative in nature. Although it may result in significant benefits for other, hegemon structure the system for its own benefit. Thus, hegemon uses its power to enforce other states’ compliance with prevailing rules. Accordingly, realists tend to be pessimistic about the prospects for post-hegemonic cooperation. Thus, hegemonic decline is greeted with a declining inability to enforce compliance by others, and a declining hegemonic interest in a system operating more to the benefit of others. Hence, after hegemony, world economic closure is likely, as in the interwar period.

The structural focus is a prevailing discourse in theory of hegemonic stability as its outcome,

openness and stability of the international economic system, results from the distribution of power among states. It is worthy to note that states are assumed to be rational actors, and domestic policies are products of systemic factors. Perhaps surprisingly, security factors rarely play vital roles in the analysis. On the other hand, realists did not see the Cold War security structure as significantly affecting economic relations within Western alliance (Gilpin, 1975). Thus, Keohane and Nye (1977) argued that it's unjustifiable to focus on the political economy of industrialized countries without continually taking into account the politics of international security. In applicability, the peace, security and stability of Africa has remained cardinal in the foreign policy option of Nigeria.

Hegemonic Stability Theory remains central to the study of post-war international relations. It helps to explain why a large state such as Nigeria would prefer Afrocentrism as a foreign policy option in the African region. More so, the theory is suggestive as it is viewed as a starting point for understanding inter-relatedness between the structure of international political system and the stability and openness of world economy. Hegemonic Stability Theory have been highly influential both in academic literatures and in more popular accounts of world economic order. This theory is therefore apt and justifies its adoption for the study.

3. Methodology

Secondary methods of data collection were employed by this study. Secondary sources such as newspapers, news magazines, textbooks, internet sources and academic journals were relied on for this study. The qualitative method was employed for analysis as the study is historical in outlook.

3.1. Conceptual Review

3.1.1. Afrocentrism

Afrocentrism means African centeredness. It is an attempt to put Africa's records and narrative straight; place the continent within historical framework and demand their contributions in all spheres including the area of global civilization to be reflected in global history. Afrocentric movements is a series of activities by concerned Africa and Afro-American Scholars (AAS) or educators that are directed to ensuring that African heritage, history and contribution to world civilization and scholarship are reflected in the curricula on every level of academic instruction (Onyewuenyi, 1993). Advocates of Afrocentrism demand for a reconstruction of the whole panorama of human history in its account of the origin of mankind, philosophy, science, medicine, agriculture and architecture.

It had been argued that Eurocentrism had destroyed African culture, dehumanized the consciousness of blacks and subverted their economic and cultural developments. It represents a potent threat to cultural, social, economic and political developments of black race. However, in order to combat Eurocentrism, a framework of reference where phenomena will be viewed from the perspective of African person and which will be appropriate to the centrality of African nationals become imperative (Asante, 1991). Afrocentrism is a theoretical and methodological framework which enables examining and interpreting issues from an African-centered point of view. Scholars of Afrocentrism had capitalized on three major objectives which are to establish the antiquity of history and civilization in Africa; affirm Egyptian influence of civilization on ancient Greece as well as Africa's superiority over European civilization and proclaim universality of African worldview (Bernal, 2001).

Proponents of Afrocentrism, like Marcus Garvey among others substituted Eurocentric perspectives for Afrocentric theory thereby presenting Africa as the originator of world civilization. They presented Egypt as epicenter of philosophy and mathematics. They clarified that Greek scholars studied in ancient Egypt before they returned to shape their western civilization. This therefore means that the Greek who are the originator of western civilization were taught and mentored in Egypt (Walker, 2001; Shavit, 2001; Adeleke, 2015). In addition, on theoretical bases Shavit (2001) described the ancient Egyptian and Greek teacher student relationship as Afrocentric-Greek theory. The logic of this theory is that since Greece is the fountain of western culture and civilization, and it is observed that Greek culture was influenced by Egypt, it is therefore argued that western civilization is a product of Africans (Shavit, 2001). This is more evidently the reason that justified Africans psychological rebirth and mental re-examination of their abilities and capabilities so as to restore their

fallen egos and reclaim their status in the modern world.

Wright (2007) argued that Afrocentric construction of African identity did not separate the continental Africa from Diaspora blacks because of shared history and culture; but rather posit that both are confronted by similar challenges such as political domination, cultural alienation, economic marginalization, poverty and neocolonialism among others. Both of them have common interests and have in one way or the other cooperated in achieving the said interests (Asante, 1999; Holloway, 2005). More so, as perceived by Marcus Garvey; one of the proponents of Afrocentrism, African development is in a constant and consistent search for self-improvement. However, before the era of colonialism, African people, like all other human beings, have constantly and consistently improved their lives and life chances as they were inventive and innovative in many ways (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018).

Asante and Abarry (1996), captured African scholarship is hinged on imagination, invention, cultural dynamism, political engineering as well as religious and economic sophistication. Africans are pictured as active and independent domesticators of plants and animals. More so, they improved their technologies from stone to iron tools as well as migrated in search for better environments that enhanced life chances. They formed socio-political systems: lineages, kingdoms, states and nations of different sizes and complexities. Just like other human beings, Africans even meditated on the meaning of life itself, on their origins, as well as on what being human meant. Thus, the impact of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, language, environment, heritage, unity, capacities and ultimately in themselves. It makes them to see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and to identify with that which is furthest removed from themselves and identify with other people's languages rather than their own. It makes them identify with that which is decadent and reactionary as well as those forces which would stop their own springs of life. Also, it plants serious doubts about the moral rightness of struggle as possibilities of triumph are seen as remote and a ridiculous dream. The intended results are despair, despondency and a collective death-wish (Ngugi wa Thiong'o, 1986).

More so, development is partly a struggle to end dependency and a re-humanizing process after longer years of inhumanity. Thus, Africans are facing various processes of alienation and dispossessions. Consequently, the idea of development for Africans is struggle for restoration of denied ontological density. There is the existence of ideas of 'zone of being' and 'zone of non-being'. This therefore explains African idea of development as part of long-standing struggles to rise from 'zone of non-being' to 'zone of being'. The zone of non-being is a colonially invented space to which African people were forced to inhabit which is characterized by depravity and suffering (Fanon 1968; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). Inevitably, African leaders so much relied on post-1945 developmental promise to the extent that they strongly believed that de-colonization would not only result in taking over of the colonially crafted state, but would achieve full sovereignty, which could foster their independence and developmental trajectories. A development that will reduce inequality gap between economies of ex-colonies and those of erstwhile colonial powers, while improving socio-economic conditions of the formerly colonized states. Sadly, many years after colonization, the promise land of development remain an illusion (Grosfoguel and Cervantes-Rodriguez, 2002).

It is noteworthy to state that Eurocentrism has made Africa to lose focus and continue to have substandard developmental indexes in virtually all aspects of its socio-economic sectors. The external factors have actually hindered African development. History proved that before colonialism, Africa had their developmental policies and programmes. However, in-between the era of colonialism to neocolonialism, African states have been pursuing shadow. The Europeans have set a standard and rules that must be met by both them and Africans. These rules are easily met by them because the rules were set according to their standard and benefits. The introduction of western democracy, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Washington consensus, trade liberalization, globalization, deregulation and privatization tendencies has widened the gap between Europe and Africa. Thus, African states were put under the same rules with Europe without considering the existing gaps (Xavier, 2019). However, in order to continue with their socio-economic, political and cultural dominance and to prove that Eurocentrism supersedes Afrocentrism, African political elites are used as tools against Africans. This has led to the production of egocentric, corrupt minded and nepotistic

political elites who have enjoined the western world to continue undermining the development of Africa in all ramifications.

Afrocentrism intends to restore psychological re-examination and mental emancipation of African citizens to enable them regain their consciousness on how to develop Africa without relying on western countries. Moses (1998) argued that Afrocentrism seeks to include African contributions to the world and challenge Western historical perception of European pre-eminence in art, culture, science, religion and philosophy. Corroborating this fact, Onyewuenyi (1993) opined that Afrocentrism demand for the reconstruction and rewriting of the whole panorama of human history so as to ensure that African contributions to world civilization and scholarship are reflected in the curricula at every academic level. Afrocentrism focuses on retracing the steps of Africans on dependency syndrome which has been ravaging the development of African continent. It centres on making Africans look inward to ascertain what is best for her nationals. However, what is viewed to be the best must be designed by Africans to suit her uniqueness. This underscores the fact that Europe copied African civilization and refashioned it as it suited them. Today, they claim that civilization emanated from Europe because Africans abandoned their model and adopted European developmental models which its impact has damaged the Black race till date. Regrettably, the colonial and neo-colonial era which was dominated by western colonial masters has virtually made African states to be mono-economy based with dependence on production and exportation of raw materials to the development and industrialization of Europe.

Morasso (2019) argued that the mono-productive structure and peripheral international insertion destined for the exportation of raw materials, as well as conditions of underdevelopment are not reversed in spite of economic growth; a situation that undermine the foundations of Afrocentrism. Thus, Africa has been fighting to birth new economic ideas and development alternatives suitable for their growth and development as such has always been denied by Western world (Amin, 1990). It is therefore obvious that the west brought globalization so as to marginalize Africa; denying them of the prospects to auto-centred development (Jinadu, 2008). Regrettably, just like colonialism, globalization balkanize Africa politically, economically and culturally as well as other sphere of influence thereby weakening the abilities of African countries to act collectively so as to defend their common interests. This underscores the urgent need for collective action at Africa continental and Diaspora levels to deepen consolidate and move the state capacity building forward so as to address her challenges collectively (Jinadu, 2010). To achieve development therefore, Africa needs collective approach. This involves pursuing development through common interest perspective, with human capacity development aimed at restoring human dignity, promote progressive social and political values as well as defend African personality. Also, there is need to develop the potentials of Africa nationals by integrating her citizens in the development process, so as to build collective capacity and act as stakeholders that is interested in shaping international norms (African Union, 2006).

Okpalike (2014) opined that priority has to be given to liberation of African mindset as only a developed mind can evolve, initiate, advance, maintain and sustain development. This will enhance the philosophy of African education and re-construct the converted African mentality. Getye, (2021) argued that Africans are envisaged as people who cannot help themselves. The Europeans see and believe that without them, Africa will remain impoverished. This entails that, to Eurocentric, nothing good comes from Africa. Messay (2004) refuted such ideas and argued that epidemic diseases, violence, terrorism, natural disasters and despotic rulers are peculiar to Africa and equally not Africans nature. He stated further that canonization of western science as the sole solution to African predicaments is devaluing African systems of thought. African beliefs are scrutinized according to scientific criteria of the west and declared unfit while those of the west are internationally accepted. Furthermore, in most cases, Western media broadcast ills and portray Africa as the only continent with endemic challenges. They show the world that all African countries are economically impoverished and viewed the continent to be poverty personified. Africa is portrayed as a desert, non-fertile land and slum with its citizens viewed as criminals, violent, cruel, nasty, lazy, greed, selfish, dependents, inferior, rebellion, dishonest, inhuman and immoral (Nothias, 2016; Getye 2021).

The potentialities of achieving sustainable development in Africa are embodied in the African ways of life which embraces the modes and forms of communication, construction of reality,

identity, morality, values and attitudes. It requires building on the useful past to achieve high level of life so as to meet societal needs. It demands harnessing cultural abilities and complementary responsibilities to respond to problems confronting our social existence. Afrocentrism offers opportunity for cultural freedom and confidence by remolding African perspectives. It recognizes her cultural diversities and appreciates its values; promotes creative attitudes and discipline that enhance quality, creativity and initiative that are fundamental for sustainable development. It instils credible value system that can inspire self-confidence and cultural identity which are molding blocks for achieving sustainability. It provides conditions for harnessing adequate knowledge, to learn from our experience and that of the west such as valuable principles of creativity and insight from the west and not just to copy consumption and dependency pattern. Afrocentrism portrays the principle of cooperation, respect of human dignity and regional integration. It advances that Africans can develop communally to attain individual and collective liberation in their quest for sustainable development (Mazuri, 1990; Kinyanjui, 1993; Asante, 1988).

The above shows that Afrocentrism is not isolationism. It entails thinking and acting African. It believes in changing the narrative of Africa to better. It creates an enabling environment where Africans can emulate from the good policies and programmes from the west and make them African, rooted in African culture and beliefs. This ideology enables Africans to adopt a kind of democracy and economic developmental strategies that is built and developed on African culture. Asante (2017) thus argued that Afrocentrism is consciousness of the off-centeredness of Africans as a result of alien military, cultural, and social intrusions that have dislocated African people and basically taking them from their own physical and spiritual terms.

3.1.2. Insecurity in Nigeria

The concept of security traces its origin from Social Contract Theory as espoused by Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau. According to these theorists, citizens freely gave up their rights to the state; with an expectation of a guaranteed security. The theory flows from the assertion that only the instrumentality of the state has capacity to provide citizens' defense and security. This implied that only the state's power is capable of providing adequate security (Ogundiya and Titus, 2024). As a concept therefore, security is a state of being safe or the absence of fear, anxiety, danger, poverty and oppression. It is the preservation of core values and the absence of threats to these values. Imobighe (1990) views security as freedom from threats and a nation's capacity to defend and develop itself as well as promote its values. For Zabadi (2005), security is a state of being in which people or things are not exposed to the dangers of physical or moral aggression, accident, theft or decline. This view is associated with the survival of the state and the preservation of its citizens. In other words, the state has the responsibility to protect its people and territory. There are numerous perspectives on security and insecurity. More so, as it is common with most Social Science concepts, security and insecurity have been defined differently depending on the scholar's perspectives and orientations.

Accordingly, since the end of the Cold War, numerous attempts have been made to redefine security from a state-centric perspective to a more comprehensive perspective; with a view of prioritizing human security, which includes aspects of national security, human rights and national development. This argument also broaden the definition of security from the level of state-centric to individuals and communities as well as from military to non-military matters at its core (Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013; Krahmann, 2003). Thus, security simply refers to specific techniques for preventing, reducing, or resolving violent conflict and attacks posed by external forces, non-state actors or socio-political and economic factors (Stan, 2004).

Holistically, security refers to entirety of policies, laws and other practical measures used to maintain peace, stability and overall well-being of a country and its citizens (Shinkaiye, 2004). It implies protection from danger as well as defense and maintenance of basic values. Francis (2006) asserts that security is about human survival and existence thus, when the security of a nation is jeopardized, compromised or threatened, such a nation is said to experience insecurity. Beland (2005) posit that insecurity refers to a lack of security, protection, safety and existence of threat, risk and uncertainties. It is a feeling of worry or tension brought on by a lack of security. Human insecurity is undoubtedly the most physical form of insecurity and it manifests itself in diverse forms including

economic and social unrest.

Achumba, et al., (2013) contend that insecurity occurs when someone is exposed to or threatened by fear which could either be internal or external and could be real or perceived. True or real threat refers to situations in which someone is at risk of harm or injury. Second, insecurity is described as the situation or state of affairs whereby a citizen is afraid or threatened with a bad emotion in anticipation of disaster. Thus, insecurity can be viewed as disruptions of peace and security whether cultural, religious, ethnic and linguistic, civic, social, economic, or political leading to recurrent conflicts and indiscriminate damage of lives and property. It is worthy to mention that insecurity can take different forms and characteristics which may differ from one state to another. In Nigeria dimensions of insecurity includes herder-farmer conflict, banditry and kidnapping, ethnic-militia, terrorism, cultism, religious and ethnic crisis, poverty and food crisis among others. Muro (2017) argued that varieties of theoretical explanations have been made in an effort to explaining the phenomenon of insecurity especially in Nigeria. However, it is vital to state that though majority of these theoretical explanations are historical or political in nature, others are psychological, sociological, or cultural, while others are economic.

With a population of approximately 200 million people divided into 350 different ethnic groups and a GDP of approximately 377 US billion, Nigeria is recognized as Giant of Africa (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2021). According to GDP, it is the most populated and richest country in the continent. Nigeria is undeniably endowed with a wealth of natural and mineral resources. Unfortunately, the country is not only a giant in terms of population, resources and economic prowess; but in its complexities of crises, instability and negativisms. The country is also troubled by political unrest, poverty and socio-economic inequalities. For instance, after gaining independence in 1960, the country has consistently ranked last in the world in terms of progress due to increasing rate of instability (Falola, 2001).

Consequently, a lot of contributory factors can be highlighted for their grave insecurity situation which as well poses serious threat to her socio-economic and political developments (Ali, 2013; Jega, 2002; Lewis, 2002; Ezeoba, 2011; Salawu, 2010). Tella (2015) assert that these factors include unemployment, poverty, corruption and poor leadership. On the other hand, Nweze (2004) highlighted a number of issues contributing to insecurity in Nigeria. These factors include ethnic and religious diversities, unemployment, poverty, militancy, socio-economic inequalities, trafficking in small arms and ammunition, poor governance, demographic challenges and the challenge of national identity. He asserted that these factors which are endogenous and exogenous impinges Nigeria socio-economic trajectory. Thus, the roots of insecurity in Nigeria are numerous and intertwined. In this context, contemporary security challenges in Nigeria are terrorism, corruption, political and ethno-religious conflicts, unemployment and poverty, kidnapping and banditry among others.

Contemporarily, terrorism is bedrock of insecurity in Nigeria. It is the most debatable source of insecurity. The upsurge of terrorist activities in Nigeria poses a security challenge as the country is noted to be one of the worst places to live on earth. For instance, it was reported that Boko Haram (terrorism) attacks have the second highest fatalities globally. More so, Nigeria is ranked third, in Global Terrorism Index, (2021), behind Afghanistan and Iraq and is currently ranked as the 14th most fragile state in the world; ninth in Africa (Igwe, 2020). In terms of terrorist impact, Nigeria is indisputably known to have one of the most notorious and deadliest terrorist groups in the world. In 2019, Nigeria experienced 411 terrorist attacks; killing 1,245 people and injuring 452 (Global Terrorist Index, 2021). Since 2009, Nigeria has lost incredible number of lives and incalculable property in Northern region due to Boko Haram attacks. From 2011 to 2021, terrorists killed a total of 58,562 people in seven northern states of Borno (34,534), Zamfara (5,155), Kaduna (4,900), Adamawa (4,086), Benue (3,636), Yobe (3,123), and Plateau (3,128) (Global Terrorist Index, 2021). North-East states have the highest number of casualties as the targeted strikes by Boko Haram terrorists in northern Nigeria have had dire effects on several business owners; in addition to making life difficult for Nigerians. Boko Haram's unannounced bombings and attacks have increased, causing tensions and a pervasive sense of terror throughout the country.

Furthermore, millions has been rendered homeless and more have been turned to refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) in their own land. It is obvious that the activities of terrorists have

had serious humanitarian effects in the region. Sadly, Nigeria is ranked as one of the state with the highest terrorist attacks in Africa. For instance, according to the ACAPS Report (2021), in Northwest, armed bandits' crises have displaced over 309,000 people. Other figures show that Zamfara state has 69,000 Internally Displaced People (IDPs), Kaduna has 71,000, Katsina has 61,000, Sokoto has 45,000, and Niger has 3,000 (UNHCR, 2020; ACAPS, 2020); while over 60,000 people who had been forced to flee Sokoto, Katsina, and Zamfara into Maradi, Republic of Niger (ACAPS, 2021).

Similarly, unknown gunmen and armed bandits have continued to wreak havoc across the country by carrying out countless kidnappings, abductions and massacres. In the six Northwestern states alone, armed bandits reportedly killed about 1,100 people in 2018, 2,200 in 2019, and 1,600 in the middle of 2020. Again, it was reported that over 1,126 persons were killed by armed bandits in the region towards the end of 2020 (ICG, 2020; Amnesty International, 2020; American Security Projects, 2021). The spate of killings, assaults, abductions by terrorist and the widening ungoverned space in the country warrants the conclusion that Nigeria approximates to a failed state.

Secondly, corruption is another pandemic that has infected the nation. Every corrupt-ridden state is prone to insecurity in all dimensions. More so, highly ranked corrupt states are mostly amenable to social injustices which in turn promotes violent responses from the socially and economically deprived citizens. This is the situation Nigeria has found itself in the past three decades especially after the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programme in (SAP) 1986. It is claimed that African leaders from post-independence, privatized the state for the purposes of oppression and cruelty, clientelism, primitive accumulation and all other forms of social inequity. African leaders, rather than using state resources to promote development, used them to frighten citizens, resulting in a detachment from the public realm and personal gain (Adeola, 2007). Selfish impulses, primal parochialism, ethnic struggle and cleavages, political brigandage, clientelism, and privatized state apparatuses characterized Africa's ruling elites; all of which are the outcome of corruption. In both the military and democratic eras, Nigeria's ruling elites have been found to be dependent, parasitic and corrupt (Ali, 2013).

It was estimated that about \$582 billion US dollars was stolen from Nigeria between 1960 and 2021 (Ojo, 2019). No wonder, former Prime Minister of United Kingdom, David Cameron aptly described Nigeria in 2016 as a fantastically corrupt country. From the power sector alone, about ₦11 trillion is said to have been stolen or diverted since 1999; in addition to ₦1.1 trillion that was stolen between 2011 and 2015 (Ojo, 2019). Nigerians are ridiculed for their extreme poverty and depravity as a result of the extravagant wealth of important members of the ruling class, which is a complex and contradictory scenario for the nation (Ajodo, et al., 1999). This illegitimate acquisition of wealth has culminated in extraordinary wealth, as well as indebtedness and the emptying of the country's national treasury by the political leaders (Ewalefoh, 2021). The current state of insecurity in Nigeria is largely the outcome of poor governance, which is associated with corruption in the political and bureaucratic circles. Thus, corruption has given violent conflicts a new dimension that has significant implications for national security. It has been viewed as an impediment to Nigeria's growth as it weakens the country's social fabric (Ewalefoh, 2021).

Globally, Nigeria is viewed as one of the most corrupt nations. For instance, 2021 Transparency International perception index indicated that Nigeria scored 24 per cent as against 25 per cent that was scored in 2020 making the country to be ranked 154 out of 180 most corrupt countries. Thus, corruption is a major source of insecurity which impinged government's counter-terrorism efforts. Recently, it was alleged that security agencies are unable to mount counter-insurgency campaign in the country against the threat posed by terrorists due to corruption, weak policy and lack of training as well as substandard equipment. Thus, due to misappropriation of public funds, corruption remains one of the triggers of insecurity. It is important to note that Nigeria's insecurity is linked to leadership failure to provide democratic dividends and maintain the welfare of its citizens. More so, military personnel are alleged to have diverted funds earmarked to fight insecurity to private pockets. Indeed, Nigerian military budget appears to have several questionable expenditure items. As a result, funds allocated are most times not judiciously utilized. Thus, much of these allocated funds, are alleged to have vanished as a consequence of bribery, payments to ghost soldiers and non-bid contracts that result in exaggerated spending. In some cases, political office

holders in sensitive positions have misappropriated or diverted security votes to private pockets, either alone or in collaboration with service-chiefs. A typical example was Dasuki-Gate scandal in which funds allocated for military ammunitions amounting to about \$2.1 billion USD were diverted and used to pay party loyalists during political campaigns (Ogundiya and Titus, 2024).

Thirdly, civil disobedience prompted by socio-economic injustice is posing another threat to Nigeria's national security. Thus, separatist agitations or groups have engaged in insurgency and violent confrontations with the state's security forces since the 1967 civil war (Falola, 2001). Also, as a result of proliferation of weaponry, many non-state actors gained access to weapons, thereby worsening Nigeria's security situations as most weapons that are smuggled into Nigeria aid criminals to perpetrate different forms of crimes. It is therefore arguable to mention that the widespread poverty which is being experienced in post-civil-war era increased most citizen's criminal tendencies owing to ease to illegally obtained ammunitions from the war. It is obvious that the end of the war resulted in several social, economic, and political problems; all of which became a serious concern to the nation's nascent economy and her security architecture. For example, weapon proliferation birthed crime as theft was replaced with armed robbery. Thus, with the return of democracy in 1999, insurgency in Niger Delta and terrorism in Northern region, which was later used as a springboard by Boko Haram and armed bandits became a notorious foe to socio-economic development in Nigeria (Ogundiya and Titus, 2024).

Eme (2011) have argued that Nigeria have experienced violent confrontations, political thuggery, assassinations and arson since the 1960s as a result of political violence that was engineered by electoral politics. Thus, political campaigns are marked by uncertainties and a violent quest for dominance among politicians. Political gladiators' desire and determination to win elections or hold onto power in spite of its implications is a major trigger to political violence in Nigeria. These occurrences regularly result in fatalities, property damages and economic woes among other things. (Eme (2011) further posit that ethno-religious conflict develops in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country like Nigeria when members of one ethnic or religious group have a hostile relationship with members of the other ethnic or religious group. Thus, mistrust among the two major religious groups (Islam and Christianity) and numerous ethnic groups' have birthed hostility leading to incessant conflicts. For example, Zango-Kataf, Yoruba- Hausa/Fulani, Ife-Modakeke, Aguleri-Umuleri, Tiv-Junkun, Ijaw-Ilaje, Ijaw-Itsekiri, Urhobo-Itsekiri, and Ijaw-Urhobo disputes and religious riots in Kaduna state are among the ethno-religious conflicts.

More so, poverty and unemployment are a twin trigger of insecurity in Nigeria. Statistics from NBS (2021) shows Nigeria as current the headquarters of poverty in the world. Thus, due to high rate of youth unemployment and poverty in Nigeria, violent crimes have surged uncontrollably. One may argue that the incapacity of previous governments to handle issues like poverty, unemployment and unfair income distribution across ethnic groups is one of the primary drivers of insecurity which hampered her socio-economic development. Theoretically, this indicates that there are more people who are willing to kill for a small payoff because of poverty and unemployment. According to National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2021), Nigeria's unemployment rate is 35.1%, with Northern region having the highest incidence of youth unemployment at 55.4%. Unemployment is frustrating and has the potential of degenerating into serious insecurity problems. Corroborating this fact, Sanikpege and Wonah, (2023) asserted that the emergence of Boko Haram and other criminal activities like abduction and kidnapping in Lake Chad region are birthed by poverty and unemployment.

In addition, various criminal gangs, including armed bandits, militants, sea pirates, and terrorist groups (Boko Haram and ISWAP) among others, continue to pose a serious threat to national security. In reality, every succeeding administration has made a lot of attempts to nib the menace to the bud. For instance, Nigerian Senate and States Houses of Assembly reviewed and approved Kidnapping Prohibition Law and Nigerian Terrorism Act (2011), both of which criminalize kidnapping and imposed various forms of punishment, including life imprisonment and death as penalties to defaulters. However, undermining these deliberate efforts, kidnappings occur more frequently. Statistics prove that over 3,312 people, including 373 women and 574 children, were abducted between January and December 2020 across 36 states of the nation, including Abuja-FC

(WANEP, 2022). Recently, on May 15th, 2026, about 39 pupils and teachers were abducted from three schools in the Orire Local Government Area, Oyo State. Media footages showed that one of the teachers was unlive while others are still in kidnappers den during the period of this study.

Similarly, kidnapping of students from Government Secondary Schools in Kagara, Niger State, and Jangebe, Zamfara State, on February 17 and February 26, 2021; Kankara and Mahuta schools, Katsina State on December 11 and 19, 2020 respectively by alleged armed bandits, has raised issues about the efficiency of the nation's security system to combat crime (Olowolagba, 2021; Punch, 2021). Also, between December 11, 2020 and February 26, 2021, 730 secondary school students were abducted from schools in Katsina, Niger, and Zamfara States according to WANEP NEWS (Jobarteh and Olere, 2022). Additionally, National Early Warning System (NEWS) of the WANEP recorded 120 kidnapping incidents between January and February 2021, totaling about 1,181 abducted persons (including 362 children and 103 females). In 2021, there were more kidnappings than in the 90 occurrences between January and February of 2020, when 467 people (including 51 women and 38 children) were kidnapped (Jobarteh and Olere, 2022). This indicates that kidnapping has become more common in the impacted areas with catastrophic socio-economic consequences for the unemployed youths, making them easy target for numerous criminal groups. As a result, rising youth unemployment continue to force young people to consider abduction as potential business opportunities. Thus, rights to education for young people in the aforementioned areas are significantly threatened by insecurity as many communities have been compelled to keep their children home from school. As a result, there is a decrease in teacher turnover with an increase in number of students who miss classes in the affected areas. An instance of abduction has therefore exposed kids to radicalization, violence and sexual exploitation thereby making them victims of defilement and early marriages. This therefore places children at risk of unplanned pregnancies and diseases as well as violates a child's right to education.

4. Empirical Review

Okoye (2023) examined Afrocentrism as an ideology that will enhance and boost African development in all ramifications. It asserted that Africa is the cradle of civilization and clears the air that African states had never lacked developmental plans and strategies. However, it advocated for an African development style that is Afrocentric and not Western bias. Afrocentrism anchored on the eradication of European order that places Africa as a peripheral continent. It explains Afrocentrism as not against emulating the western styles of modern development but it is of the view that such adopted style should be converted to suit African setting. These ideology projects Africa as a superior race as against the inferior narrative envisaged by international community that Africa need to be free from dependency syndrome. Ex-post-facto research design was used to collect relevant data from secondary sources. Findings showed that Africa is seen as an inferior continent that cannot help itself and does not have good developmental plans. The study recommends that Afrocentrism ideology should address the egocentric and corrupt nature of the African political elites. It should enhance enthroning African brotherhood against ethnicity and fight against rules, norms, cultures and dominant hierarchies that affect citizens from engaging in developmental processes. Obnoxious cultural practices that affect development and progress in the African setting should be totally eradicated.

Ogundiya and Titus (2024) examined nature of contemporary insecurity in Nigeria. The paper adopted qualitative methodology, as data were gathered using documentary sources. The study employed political economy approach using game theoretic modeling as theoretical framework. The paper argued that Nigerian state is currently facing internal security threats ranging from separatist agitations, ethnic militias, terrorism, cattle rustling, kidnapping, banditry, and armed robbery among others. It further stressed that Nigeria's frighteningly level of insecurity makes its citizens live in constant fear; a development that impaired her socio-economic development which dents international image of the country. Thus, in order to address Nigeria's insecurity woes, the paper recommended that National Assembly should legislate workable to restore peace in Nigeria. Also, to facilitate effective governance, which is necessary for upholding peace and stability in the country, the National Assembly must employ legislative powers which is a derivative of the constitution to improve

responsiveness, transparency and accountability.

Olabode (2024) argued that scholars have identified insecurity in Nigeria as one of the major reasons for her continual underdevelopment. This paper analyzes the effects of insecurity on socio-economic development of Nigeria; with the aim of proffering policy solutions so as to address the nations stunted her development. The paper adopted conflict theory propounded by Karl Marx as its theoretical framework to interrogate the causes and effects of insecurity on various aspects of Nigerian socio-economic system. The study employed qualitative research methods to critically assess the relationship between insecurity and socio-economic development. The study employed secondary data, using in-depth explanatory analysis that produces results with understanding, meanings and views and identified severe unemployment, endemic poverty, ethno-religious conflicts, corruption, deprivation, inequalities and small arms and light weapons proliferation as the major causes of unending insecurity challenges in Nigeria. These factors have led to population displacement, social dislocation, depression and trauma among the people leading to declining health situation, worsening school attendance, food insecurity and lack of foreign investment. The study recommended that governments at all levels should implement policies that will ensure serious reductions in unemployment rate, poverty and general inequality, by creating an enabling environment that will encourage entrepreneurs and small-scale industries to thrive; revamp the country's entire security architecture, strengthen border security, tackle proliferation of firearms and improve the legal system, among many others.

5. Discussion of Findings

The following are the findings of this study. Firstly, Africa is seen as an inferior continent that cannot help itself and does not have good developmental plans. Does this concern justifies Nigerian foreign policy option for Africa as her centre piece or confirms her huge financial and military commitment to development and security in Africa? The truism in this assertion remains a puzzle and gap for another scholarly discourse. However, what is certain is that Nigeria's foreign policy option had remained focused on Africa to the neglect of her nationals who are poverty-stricken with a higher unemployment ration and dwelling amidst unbearable security challenges.

Secondly, the study found out that Nigerian state is currently facing internal threats ranging from armed banditry, Boko Haram, farmer-herders conflict, cattle rustling to kidnapping for ransom among others. It further stressed that Nigeria's frightening level of insecurity makes its citizens live in constant fear. Thus, Nigeria's socio-economic development has been impacted by these menaces thereby denting her international image and credibility.

Finally, the study revealed that heightened insecurity have brought the economy of the nation to a comatose. Presently, the state survives on borrowing, with over dependence on imports, no exports except for crude, lack of foreign investment, decline in local productivity, high human security and food challenges and a depreciating currency; leading to a stunted growth and development. It can be asserted that there is a relationship between insecurity and socio-economic development. Thus, Nigerian economy is bedeviled with severe unemployment, endemic poverty, ethno-religious conflicts, corruption, deprivation, social inequalities and unending insecurity among others. However, in spite of these unresolved and unaddressed internal challenges, the nation continue to arrogate itself as a "Big Brother" to other African States as well as prioritizing Africa as her centre-piece in his foreign policy option.

6. Conclusion

As Big Brother, Nigeria have tailored her foreign policy options to African continent. This responsibility ensured that Nigeria played cardinal roles in war against Apartheid in South Africa, decolonization of Namibia and Zimbabwe, peace keeping missions in Sierra Leone and Libya and continental development through its innovative Technical Aid Corps Scheme (TACS); by facilitating posting of experienced Nigerian professionals in engineering, health and legal fields to numerous African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries at her expense. Regrettably, amidst these patriotic roles, Nigerian economy dwindles; with her citizenry facing worse instances of insecurity. Bandits and Boko Haram has taken control of certain segments of Nigerian territory while farmers and other villagers are forced to pay heavy fines to assess their farm lands or face death sentences in the

kidnappers den.

More so, schools has turned from a safe haven where the future is molded, to an assembling spot where children are carted away at will by kidnappers thereby forcing parents, teachers and children to live in perpetual fear of the unknown. Education which ought to be a right, has turned into a luxury good which only children from well-to-do homes can enjoy. As we speak, insecurity has come to stay as the current administration lacks the political will to contend with, and acumen to proffer lasting solutions to the menace. On the other hand, Nigerian Army: the acclaimed most potent ground forces in Africa, watch bandits commit havoc like a toothless bull dog. What an irony! Nigeria today faces what Mtshali likened to Nightfall in Soweto. Yet, she continue to arrogate herself as Big Brother Africa, with her Armed Forces found where ever there is conflict in Africa under the guise of peace keeping like Gandoki; an ancient war lord that was resident in Northern Nigeria, who was always found wherever there was a war or feast. Appraising from the above practical developments, this study advocate for an urgent need for policy review as a man whose house is on fire, does not have the moral ground to extinguish same from a neighbouring household.

7. Recommendations

The following are the recommendations or suggestions of this study.

Citizen Diplomacy rather than Afrocentrism should form the focus of nation's foreign policy. Citizen diplomacy is citizen-oriented in its approach, objective, and outcome. It seeks to prioritize yearnings and aspirations of Nigerian citizens over any other sub-regional or continental considerations. It should be noted that while the former is inward-looking, the latter is externally focused, with preference to Africa's affairs.

Since insecurity is of global concern and a threat to humanity, the war against the menace should top the nation's priorities. Thus, as a matter of urgency, Nigerian Constitution should be re-drafted with ethnicity and regionalism rescinded for national identity. This therefore implies that security is a national issue and deliberate measures should be unanimously taken to nib it to the bud.

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