

The Contagion of Misgovernance in Nigeria: Reflections on the Influence of Non-Administrative Criteria

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Abstract

Successive governments in Nigeria have failed to curtail the downward spiral of the sectors of her economy. The deepening socio-economic and political crises are assessed as occasioned by the dysfunctionality of the arms of government that jeopardizes essential service delivery to the detriment of the polity at whose behest they occupy the public offices. Despite the changes and institution of new administrative leadership through democratic processes, the quality of governance continues to dwindle. Poor policy formulation, implementing non-target-specific measures to deal with the malaises bedeviling the economy, and/or outright government inaction define the practical realities of Nigeria's sociopolitical landscape. These plausible facts have driven wedges between the elected representatives in government and the polity who bear the brunt of the leadership failures in all spheres. The study determined whether a contagion effect birthed by non-administrative criteria underlies the transcendently perpetual misgovernance pervading the sectors of Nigeria's economy. The study evaluates the influences of these criteria on the individuals, the potency of 'group' membership and sentiments, the contexts of leadership, and the implications for the trajectory of governance. With prioritization over the desired state of affairs in the country despite leadership changes and successive governments, these group memberships and sentiments remain inimically parallel to target-specific policy-making and de-emphasize national growth and development. The paper relies on the postulations of the social contagion theory of collective behavior and Riggs' assertions on non-administrative criteria in prismatic societies in assessing the misgovernance in Nigeria. A semi-structured Contagion in Leadership (CiL) e-questionnaire was designed to evaluate the influence of social contagion on the members of the arms of government and, consequently, on the quality of governance and service delivery in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. It was disseminated on two social media platforms - WhatsApp and Twitter, for a wider reach. Two hundred ten (210) responses were recorded across an age range of 18 and 65+ years, with a mean age of 42. Strategies for enhancing the quality of governance, including entrenching constitutionalism, and engendering the responsibility of political officeholders toward policy actions, are proffered.

Keywords: Misgovernance, State Failure, Social Contagion, Non-Administrative Criteria, Governance, National Development

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Introduction

Nation-states are categorized as strong states, weak states, failing states, and failed states and collapsed states, depending on the extent to which they portray the presence or lack of a continuum of government effectiveness (Ahmad, 2013). The strong states are on one extreme and can be described as strong and successful. These states are the yardsticks by which other states within the international community are measured as per the human development indices ranging through per capita incomes, life expectancies, minimum standards of quality of life, environmental sustainability, and others. The combination of the clearly-defined interdependent functions of the three arms of government within these stable states ensures constitutionalism, food and human security, political stability, societal equilibrium, and socio-economic development.

Brooks (2005) described the successful state as that which controls a defined territory and population, enters into diplomatic relations with other states, has the monopoly of legitimate violence within its territory, and ably delivers social goods and services to its citizens. Its success is in its ability to deliver and sustain a measure of the political good of security that provides a leeway for the provision of all other desirable political and socio-economic goods (Rotberg, 2004). The collapsed state, epitomized by states like Yemen and Somalia which rank first and second, respectively, on the 2022 Fragile States Index, is on the other extreme of the strong, successful states and describes the opposite of everything that the strong state is.

The failed states are those which are consumed by internal violence, are unable and have ceased to deliver positive political goods to their inhabitants. Their governments lack credibility, leading to concerns and questions about the legitimacy and continuity of the nation-state in the minds of its citizens (Rotberg, 2004). States that fit into this description are usually the Less Developed Countries (LDCs) in the Global South. In these countries, despite the presence of these institutions, and the in-built mechanisms designed to make the systems in which they exist more democratic, there is a fundamental disconnect between the citizens, their supposed representatives (Soto, 2014), and the system.

Nigeria: What State?

Democracy, a system of government in which all citizens are stakeholders, allows for the free participation of the governed in the governance processes either directly by voting or indirectly through elected representatives. The essence of these processes is to ensure that citizens have people to represent their interests and who are accountable to them on governance matters on the one hand while being responsible for the delivery of social goods and services on the other.

Nigeria's longest stint with democracy began in 1999 with the advent of her Fourth Republic. At the time, speculations were rife that the return to the democratic rule would afford the country limitless opportunities to regain her long-lost glory as the Giant of Africa. Prior to 1999, notable events within her political landscape included the death of her Head of State, General Sani Abacha, in 1998 (Rupert, 1998), General Abdulsalami Abubakar's ascension to the position of Head of State (Onishi, 1999), and the death of Chief MKO Abiola, the acclaimed winner of the June 1993 Presidential election, in custody (Akinbode, 2019). These events were expected to be foundational to the much-needed re-jigging of the political processes to provide a basis for the actualization of a handover to a democratically elected government (Onishi, 1999).

Nigeria's experiences with military rule and with democracy in the most recent years, now in the third decade that depicts her fourth republic, is yet to deliver on governance deliverables and achieve majority citizen satisfaction effectively. Conversely, her rankings on the human development indices are plummeting, with shrinking prospects for national growth and socio-economic development. The failures are mirrored in the dwindling foreign and domestic reserves, dearth of infrastructure, rising inflation [19.64% by July 2022] (Obiezu, 2022), and illiteracy [13.2 million out-of-school children – the highest in the world] (Obiezu, 2018). Nigeria is described as the poverty capital of the world, with an estimated 95.1 million people expected to live below the poverty line by 2022 (Vishwanath & Lain, 2022), and an actual 133 million people - 63 percent of the population - reported as multidimensionally poor by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in Nigeria (Ojekunle, 2022; Sami, 2022).

The NBS report stated further that this number of Nigerians is poor as a result of a lack of access to health and education and reduced living standards from unemployment and shocks (Sami,

2022). Hunger, illiteracy, intimidation, insecurity, ignorance of fundamental rights, and the weakness of governance institutions contribute to the docility of the people. They are exploited by successive political classes to reinforce the prevalent ethnoreligious and sociopolitical disharmony among the polity and consolidate their political positions attained through nepotism and other processes that undermine and contradict democratic ideals (Brooks, 2005; BBC, 2010; Kwaja, 2011; Uzun & Adegboyega, 2016).

Insecurity in Nigeria is on a constant rise. With its evolution into different forms, Nigeria is currently the sixth most terrorized nation in the world (Terrorism Index, 2022). On the 2022 Fragile States Index, she is the 16th most volatile nation (fragile States Index, 2022), and on the Business Insider Military and Defense list of the 25 Most Failed States on Earth, she is ranked 14th (Ingersoll & Jones, 2013). Reports show that insecurity was responsible for the loss of over 456,831 innocent lives in Nigeria in the decade preceding April 2019. Security agents from the army, police, and other agencies have also recorded casualties (Afolabi, 2022). The efforts of the Nigerian government to curtail the insecurity have not yielded the desired results (Obi, 2015; Afolabi, 2022).

These reports derive from the assessments of human rights abuses, corruption, unemployment, political instability, insecurity, poverty, available public infrastructure, records of school pull-outs, and drop in school attendance from insecurity (Ingersoll & Jones, 2013; Pegg, 2014; Afolabi, 2022; Bailey, 2022), comparisons between the overpopulation and the attendant unemployment, (Eromonsele, 2022; Bailey, 2022) and so forth within the state. Though there was a 0.06% decline in the youth unemployment rate from 19.67% in 2020 to 19.61% in 2021, there was a 0.07% increase in the overall unemployment rate from 9.71% to 9.79% within the same period (macrotrends.com, 2023; World Bank 2022).

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria, Africa's biggest economy, ranks 163rd on the Human Development Index for the second consecutive year (Bailey, 2022). The prevalence of these indices within Nigeria's political and socio-economic landscapes represent the manifest features of the failure of the democratic governments in Nigeria to checkmate the downward spiral of her economy and the deepening socio-economic and political crises. They keep Nigeria on the lowest rungs of the global rankings for human, infrastructural, and national development.

The Nigerian scenario may not have degenerated into the Yemeni or Somali abyss; however, the grim realities within her socio-economic and political spaces portend grave consequences for the country. They reflect the characteristics of failing, failed, and collapsed states, and are occasioned by poor policy formulation or implementation, poorly thought-out development strategies, and the implementation of non-target-specific measures. Despite the promises of change and development, choices made by the electorates based on campaign manifestoes, elections, and changes in government, the evidence of misgovernance usually emerges within the first few years of the governments in office and continues across successive governments.

Objective

The study is designed to:

- i) Determine whether a contagion effect underlies the actions and inactions of individuals and groups that make up the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary and how this effect evolves into a contagion of misgovernance in Nigeria;
- ii) Explain the role of Riggs' 'non-administrative criteria' within Nigeria's sociopolitical and socio-cultural landscapes in driving the contagion effect among the individuals, with the consequences of perennial misgovernance.

Conceptual Framework

Social Contagion

Gustave Le Bon developed the social contagion theory from his general and theoretical reflections on political and social opinions and the irrational, uncontrollable, or violent behavior of individuals exposed to the hypnotic influence of crowd behavior and anonymity (communicationtheory.org). He described social contagion as involving processes of 'suggestibility' whereby 'timid' people become brave from the inability to resist the *status quo* as a result of the impression of feeling outnumbered (Locher, 2002) within the group.

Robert Park and, later, Herbert Blumer explicitly evaluated the socio-psychological impact of crowd influence on individuals. Park's analysis was based on 'emergent' interaction and 'circular' reaction. Emergent interaction implies the extent to which individuals develop social behavior due to influences on their thoughts and behavior arising from their membership of the crowd and

the reinforcements by the group's mood. As every member of the group accepts their individual and group behavior as correct, a circular reaction which implies the contagion effect is attained. Park noted that 'emergent interaction' and 'circular reaction' must be differentiated from 'milling', which is a process through which crowds readily gather, usually aimlessly, and in periods of social instability (Locher, 2002).

Barash (2011) describes social contagion as a three-pronged subset of contagion that, in the first subset, includes all social phenomena and the potentiality of their spread across social networks as rumors, fads, and opinions until they become the norm. The second subset is the social contagion of products that attain popularity and acceptance via aggressive marketing, advertising, or word-of-mouth recommendations. The third is the social movements through which unpopular, marginalized causes and ideas may gain traction and gather strong popular support as individuals convince their followers.

The contagion effect is a non-instantaneous process that occurs under certain circumstances in which a crowd of people (sometimes powerful) is focused on the same event, object, or person (Locher, 2002). Social contagion manifests as the influence which can vary from persuasion to the enforcement of conformity through threats of sanctions and then to memetic spread (Barash, 2011). Fowler and Christakis (2010) explain this influence as culminating in the spread of cooperative behavior. They emphasize that peer effects and interpersonal influence are more prevalent where individuals are embedded in networks comprised of more than two people and characterized by clusters (Christakis & Fowler, 2012).

Tsvetkova and Macy (2015) aver that human behavior spreads through social contact. They argue that prosocial behavior confers a benefit to others that outweighs any personal cost in the same way that antisocial behavior imposes a cost on others. This cost outweighs any personal benefit and has the potential to trigger chain reactions reaching far beyond the original victims. Loftin (1989), cited in Tsvetkova and Macy (2015), noted that criminologists and scholars of deviance argue, based on observational data, that antisocial behavior is contagious. Further empirical evidence based on the field tests on the Broken Windows theory shows that the contagion of antisocial behavior is more potent with non-violent crime (Wilson & Kelling, 1982 in Tsvetlova & Macy, 2015).

Bond *et al.* (2012) noted the potency of influence in determining the tendency to vote in an election. General theories of social and interpersonal influence, as a mechanism of contagion, focus on the process of influence rather than its underlying causes. The theories describe social influence as part of a more complex mechanism focusing on the underlying causes that trigger social influence and enable the spread of social contagion (Axelrod, 1997).

There are two main types of influence - social and interpersonal. Interpersonal influence accounts for the ability of high-status, impressive individuals regarded as popular alters to dictate the behavior of their friends. Social influence accounts for the ability of groups to put social pressure on an individual. The impact of social influence on behavior changes is cumulative with the number of alters who join in the behavior. Social influence can be defined as the ability of another person or group to affect cognitive or behavioral change within an individual (French & Raven, 1959). Tsvetkova and Macy (2015) noted that antisocial contagion had been studied in relation to monetary incentives. Falk and Fischbacher (2002) found that people are more likely to steal if they know that other members of their group steal. Jordan *et al.* (2013), in a 20-person prisoner-dilemma game, found that defection is contagious. Influence is also often triggered by other mechanisms of social contagions, such as social identity.

Turner, Hogg, Oakes, & Reicher (1988) show that, as social categories become more salient, individuals assume social identities that mark them as members of certain groups, placing them at odds with members of other groups (particularly when they belong to only one group at a time). In these conditions, social influence is highly relevant. The social identities create perceptions of similarity between the individuals and their in-group members, leading them to expect levels of agreement between themselves and the in-group on all stimuli. A socially contagious phenomenon adopted by the rest of the group but not by single individuals constitutes a new stimulus that violates this assumption. It creates cognitive dissonance. In-group members similar to the individual and in the same setting tend to behave similarly (Turner *et al.*, 1988). However, a behavior difference may arise between the inter-groups and individuals concerning contagion adoption in the given situation.

To deal with emergent cognitive dissonance, Turner *et al.* (1988) suggest that individuals ignore the cognitive dissonance and maintain the status quo; attribute the disagreement to perceived

relevant differences between self and others; attribute the disagreement to perceived relevant differences in the stimulus situation; or engage in mutual social influence with the in-group members, to produce an agreement. The fourth option entails that the in-group members agree among themselves and adopt the contagious phenomenon, which explains how misgovernance in Nigeria is perpetuated. Social identity, therefore, acts as a mechanism for the spread of social contagion (Turner *et al.*, 1988).

Gladwell's 'The Tipping Point' describes the contagion effect as a social epidemic that spreads through the minds of the public in the same way that an epidemic spreads (Benson & Gresham, 2007). Social epidemics are governed by three main principles: the messenger (the Law of the Few), the content of the message (the Stickiness Factor), and the specifics of the social environment (the Power of Context) (Gladwell, 2000). The principle underlying the Law of the Few holds that the spread of ideas, beliefs, or behaviors among members of a defined social group is brought about through the efforts of a relatively small number of members of the group. They are those who provide the message (Mavens), those who spread the message (Connectors), and those who persuade others to act on the message (Salesmen) (Gladwell, 2000) and facilitate the successful and rapid spread of information, knowledge or behaviors throughout and among social networks.

From this premise, it is assumed that a latent contagion effect arising from memberships of 'groups' within the government's executive, legislature, and judicial components, underlies the actions or inactions of elected representatives and appointed officials. This contagion effect is perceived as driven by relationships that challenge the functionality of these individuals, resonating through acts of dereliction of duty and the intangibility of ensuing policies and initiatives. Further, the implications of the contagion effect for the steady decline of governance are evaluated vis-à-vis the threats to socio-political stability, national growth, and socio-economic development in Nigeria and the relationship between the citizenry and their representatives (Soto, 2014).

Research Methodology

The paper adopts a mixed-method approach. A three-part semi-structured Contagion in Leadership (CiL) e-questionnaire was developed based on the objectives and assumptions of the paper. The first part elicited the respondents' biodata. The second part was the structured aspect

with a 3-point Likert scale. The third part was the unstructured, open-ended option that allowed the respondents to comment freely and proffer different perspectives and alternatives for improving the misgovernance in Nigeria.

The e-questionnaire was disseminated to individuals, private sector workers, academia, legal practitioners, civil and public servants, university students, family, and other corporate groups and their members across two social media platforms – WhatsApp and Twitter. Respondents were aged 18 years and above and literate. This was to ensure that they are individuals who are qualified to vote and are able to understand the sociopolitical contexts which the study was intended to evaluate. Only 210 responses were recorded. These were analyzed, and the results were subsequently presented and discussed.

Convenience and snowballing sampling methods were utilized to reach respondents. Convenience sampling was applied to the WhatsApp groups, whose members filled out the e-questionnaire at their own instance and convenience (Frey, 2018). The snowballing technique was applied to individuals who assisted the authors with identifying, informing, and coopting other willing participants to fill out the e-questionnaire.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical conduct was maintained by ensuring that, as part of the introduction, participants were informed of their rights to participate, refuse to participate, and stop participating in the research at any point. Respondents were not under any compulsion to fill out the e-questionnaires. To ensure confidentiality, no aspect of the e-questionnaire elicited any form of identification from the participants.

Results and Discussions

Progressive Decline in Governance

From the findings, 77.1% of respondents agree that the quality of governance in Nigeria has been on a steady decline since 1999, when there was a return to democracy from military rule. 74.3% disagree that Nigeria's current governance structure can afford Nigerians the minimum standards of social service deliverables. 46.7% of the respondents averred that governance during the Obasanjo administration, the first civilian government in Nigeria's fourth republic, was better

than the subsequent Yar'adua administration. Similarly, 65.7% adjudged the Obasanjo government as better than the Goodluck Jonathan administration, which came to power after the death of Yar'adua in 2009. 88.6% rated the Goodluck administration higher in performance than the Buhari government in the essential service delivery department.

One respondent stated, '*The Nigerian government is performing way below expectations, and until punishments are served to the greedy and corrupt politicians, I do not think there is hope for Nigerian politics. The future of this country lies in the hands of the young.*'

The Buhari government is described by 86.3% of the respondents as the worst government in Nigeria and the world over due to experiences of 'the worst acts of bad governance' within the years (2015 – 2022) that it has been in power.

A respondent stated, '*we are currently experiencing the worst acts of governance by the worst government ever in Nigeria.*' Another averred that '*This Buhari government will go down as the worst government the world has ever had. Quite unfortunate!*'

Cabals and Muddled Separation of Powers

On the functionality of the arms of government, which 88.6% of the respondents agree is central to good governance, 86.7% noted a progressive decline in the commitment of the Fourth Republic's National Assembly to represent the desires of the Nigerian populace since 1999 effectively. 79% agree that the National Assembly does not checkmate the powers of the executive, and 74.3% aver that the judiciary needs to efficiently adjudicate on the relationship between the executive and the legislative. 92.4% hold that governance in Nigeria evidences the legislative and the judiciary's failures in checkmating the executive's powers. A respondent decried the dearth of mechanisms for each arm to checkmate each other, '*It is unfortunate that separation of powers in this country is a mirage.*'

71.4% assess bad governance as no longer a perception, but a reality consequent on the dwindling performance of the consecutive legislative and executive arms and the complicity of the judicial component, since 1999. The respondents describe the reality of bad governance as embedded in the bad leadership that characterizes Nigeria and for which the country is noted even outside its shores. This situation is worsened by the complicity of the three arms of

government, which engenders endemic misgovernance and raises doubts about the possibilities of positive change.

A respondent stated, *'bad governance embedded in bad leadership characterizes Nigeria and her identity even outside the shores of the country. This is made worse by the complicity and what looks like a conspiracy between the three arms of government.'* *'Since 1999, see all the scandals from the house of reps to the senate to the governors, yet everything are swept under the carpet.'*

86.6% aver that the executive has become too powerful and dictatorial. The civil service, which should provide a balance in the governance structure as a part of the executive arm, is negatively impacted and no longer upholds its core characteristics of merit, political neutrality, and impartiality. On this, a respondent reiterated that *'the executive arm in Nigeria has become too powerful and dictatorial.'*

69.6% hold that the civil service in Nigeria is affected by ingrained partisanship whereby the activities of the civil servants are influenced by party and cabal loyalties that reflect the divisional politics at political party levels.

Poor Policies and Sectoral Incoherence

79.5% of the respondents hold that the laws and policies made by the legislators are not target-specific, 63.8% stated that the bills passed since the onset of Nigeria's Fourth Republic in 1999 have not been proactive and targeted at resolving the key issues that threaten national stability, growth, and development. 75.4% note that these gaps contribute to the dysfunctionality of sectors of the economy and negatively impact the quality of governance in the country.

'Nothing works in this country.' *'Till now, the power sector is worse, bad schools, and people die daily in the hospitals that have become like roadside chemists. Nobody is accountable; they use our money for committees and others for themselves, not for the welfare of the people.'* *'There is still hope that real change will come.'*

Bad Politicking, Lack of Commitment, and Distrust of Politicians

On the commitment of elected political officeholders to good governance in Nigeria, 97.1% noted that these elected officials rarely fulfill campaign promises made to the electorate at the height of the quests for the offices. 98.1% agree that there is a difference between the behavior of politicians before they are voted in and when they get into power; that, averred by 84.8%, perpetuates bad governance in Nigeria from one administration to the next. Respondents describe the non-fulfillment of electoral promises by leaders and politicians as a pervasive political culture that thrives on the dearth of political ideologies, a lack of commitment to core party values, and an absence of checks and discipline mechanisms on members within political parties, and the menace of cross-carpeting. These are assessed as enabling bad governance in Nigeria and requiring God's divine intervention if the country must be salvaged.

Respondents stated thus, *'Bad governance in Nigeria has turned into culture....'*; *'I wonder if any Nigerian politician, leader, or president is fulfilling their electoral promises. May the Lord help us.'* Another noted, *'This country..... May God help us flush out the many bad eggs.'* Others noted, *'What we have as political parties are a joke. They are just a group of people interested in meeting their own needs.'* *'These politicians are just a bunch of self-serving people that do not care about this country as long as they benefit wherever they go.'*

'Our political parties are a sham. No ideologies, nothing! How can there be when the politicians need to stay in more than one long enough to grow them like in the developed countries.'

'One of the best things INEC did was to reduce the number of registered parties, though that has mostly stayed the same in our politics. The electoral fraud is still there, and they (politicians) still keep moving around the available ones as they please.'

The INEC (Independent National Electoral Commission) is Nigeria's electoral management body created by the 1999 Constitution for organizing and managing elections and other related matters. The ruling political class is perceived, by 91.5%, to be running the electoral system in Nigeria as a business venture aimed solely at the achievement of their motives, thereby treating governance as perfunctory. Respondent stated, *'the Nigerian political structure has not delivered to the common development of the country. The power players have hijacked the system and have been manipulating it to their advantage.'*

4.3% hold that those in governments only work together for themselves, not even for their immediate constituencies. One respondent noted, *'we need good legislators to represent the citizenry in all ramifications.'* 95.2% of the respondents perceive that the elected representatives function more as cliques within the National Assembly that are more loyal to the 'group' than to the good of the entire country. 73.4% aver that these relationships between colleagues within the legislative and executive prevent some members from performing optimally. 94.3% decry the effects of these cliques, averring that the poor governance in Nigeria is driven by primordial ethnoreligious inclinations, and money and cabal politics among those in power, to the neglect of core socio-political priorities. 90.2% of the respondents suggest that these sentiments and the presence of cabals in the corridors of power simultaneously affect the output of elected leaders and the quality of governance. Consequently, the seething divisiveness among the polity is deepened, heightening the distrust, volatility, and propensities for instability in Nigeria's sociopolitical landscape.

'Nigeria is in a state of national emergency. The divisiveness among the people is massive.'

'The way this country is.....let us just go our separate ways.'

'In this country, it is better and safer to be loyal to cliques (sic) than to do things the right way.'

'There are so many cabals everywhere, in the National Assembly, in the executive, in the civil service, in the smallest government offices, as long as there is something to gain in terms of power, control, or connections. One has to be careful, even the researchers.'

Umoh (2016) highlighted the inevitability of cliques as a function of informality within human organizations. These cliques can portend risks to productivity when they resort to the pursuit of goals that are parallel to those of the organizations whose ideals they had hitherto sworn to protect.

Remediation Prospects

90.5% hold that the non-activation of the recall clauses contributes to Nigeria's persistent culture of misgovernance. 91.2% suggest that the dearth of punitive remedial measures for these governance lapses in Nigeria must be revisited to ensure the enactment and implementation of stringent penalties to checkmate poor governance. 86.7% stated that banning non-performing and

corrupt elected members of the legislative and the executive from holding elective or appointive public offices in the future can also checkmate the contagion effects and the attendant misgovernance. 90.2% doubted that there would ever be punitive laws to create a conducive environment for good governance. 80% note that the legislative arm of the government will never enact laws that might affect them negatively.

Comments by respondents to this effect included that, *‘Elected leaders should be held accountable and there should be measures to sanction non-performance and corruption otherwise, it will be eroding the total trust, ethics, and values of the people.’*

‘Stringent penalties that are applied to all (like the death penalty for corruption in China) can checkmate poor governance, but the legislative will never make laws that might affect them negatively.’

‘In this country, no lawmaker will initiate or support any law that can turn around and bring the downfall or that of his clique.’

Discussion

This study sought to establish the presence of contagion effects as the latent factors underlying the diminishing outputs of the legislative, executive, and judiciary in Nigeria. These factors contribute to the perennial character of bad governance pervading Nigeria's political, social, and economic spaces and rob her citizens of the most basic governance deliverables. The findings are discussed relatively and within the context of Riggs' non-administrative criteria.

Ineffective Political Parties and Bad Politicking

The findings proved that a common feature among most elected politicians in Nigeria is the tendency to renege on campaign promises while also metamorphosing into individuals who are non-committal to fulfilling their primary responsibilities to their constituencies (Brooks, 2005; Peterside, 2022). Political parties in Nigeria need more enduring attachment to ideals, philosophies, or ideologies (Peterside, 2022). Rather than be driven by matters of national importance, they provide platforms for politicians to vacillate between opinions and convictions based on personal and group interests that mirror religious, ethnic, and other primordially partisan interests (Umoh, 2016; Peterside, 2022).

Despite the assertion that the Obasanjo administration fared better than the Yar'adua/Jonathan governments and the current Buhari administration, the Obasanjo administration was not without its peculiar hitches. In the course of the administration, there was a build-up of agitations for and against a third-term agenda that was being orchestrated to perpetuate him to remain in power (Adegbamigbe, 2006; Aziken, 2013). This was to be further strengthened through a constitutional amendment to facilitate the 'evolution' of the country into a one-party state, a position which Obasanjo averred will ensure that, like in other countries where the system is practiced, Nigeria also enjoys political and governmental continuity (Adegbamigbe, 2006).

With each cycle of elections since 1999, the confidence of the polity that campaign promises will be kept or that constituency projects will be delivered has dwindled (Peterside, 2022). Now, these promises constitute creative lies and propaganda that thrive on the numerous gaping holes in the corruption-thinned political accountability fabric of the nation (Brook, 2005). In fact, the country barely has any political accountability mechanism (Peterside, 2022).

Budget Scandals

Since Nigeria's return to democracy, her National Assembly has been fraught with a slew of scandals. A few are highlighted here to illustrate the potency of social contagion effects in determining human behavior. In 2005, there was a bribe-for-budget scandal in which the principal accused was Senator Adolphus Wabara, who was senate president at the time. He was charged alongside five other lawmakers for demanding a bribe from the then Minister of Education, Prof. Fabian Osuji, to facilitate the passage of the 2005 budget of the ministry (Aziken, 2013). As part of the investigation, this case went to court, and in 2010, the accused were acquitted on all nine counts based on 'being frivolous, baseless, and lacking in merit' (Ige, 2010). When the scandal broke, Mallam Nasir el-Rufai, described the National Assembly as an axis of corruption (Aziken, 2013). Paradoxically, el-Rufai has been the incumbent Governor of Kaduna State since 2015, in the current Buhari-led administration, which came to power in 2015 and has been described as the most corrupt, ethnocentrically driven government that Nigeria has ever experienced. Under Buhari, Nigeria has been engulfed by corruption which drains billions of dollars from her economy yearly (Jega, 2022). Also, her ranking on the Corruption Index released by Transparency International has continued to deteriorate (Ibrahim, 2022).

Before 2015, the annual budgetary allocations to the National Assembly were N150 billion. Between 2015 and 2020, the allocations were kept between N120 billion and N125 billion. In 2021, President Buhari raised the National Assembly allocation to N128 billion. However, in passing it into law, the lawmakers increased it to N134 billion, and the president did not react (Iroanusi, 2022). In 2022, the N134 billion National Assembly budgetary allocation underwent an upward review by the National Assembly to include an additional over N500 million before it was passed. For the incoming year, 2023, the president has unrealistically proposed N169 billion for lawmakers. The allocation, which is the highest ever made to the legislature in the history of the country, is comical. It disregards the nation's dwindling economy and rising debt portfolio, the growing imperative of reducing governance costs, and the federal government's plans to finance the 2023 budget through borrowing (Iroanusi, 2022). Additionally, there are complaints of zero transparency concerning the budgets of the National Assembly, yet except for 2021, when the Ahmad Lawan-led assembly published the details of its budgetary allocation in an attempt at transparency, the details of the National Assembly budgetary allocations have been shrouded in secrecy (Iroanusi, 2022).

In 2015, the media was awash with news of the protracted crises between two groups in the Senate (the Upper House of the National Assembly) which sought to secure the senate's leadership. There were allegations, counter-allegations, and controversies surrounding the emergence of Saraki as President of the Senate, and Senator Ike Ekweremadu as Deputy President, through illegal alterations and amendments made to the Standing Rules. The filing of reports and the institution of court processes did not yield any results (Abubakar, Mudashir & Bamgboye, 2016). The non-obedience or enforcement of judicial decisions arises from the perception of the Nigerian judicial system as sluggish. This sluggishness is assessed as a deterrent to actualizing and establishing a functional criminal justice system (Aziken, 2013).

In 2016, a budget padding scandal broke when a former chairman of the Appropriation Committee in the lower house (the House of Representatives) opened a Pandora's box about the plethora of corrupt activities of legislators (Ogundipe, 2016). They were intent on attracting more out of the budget allocation of N100 billion to themselves under the guise of controversial constituency projects (Olakunle, 2016).

Sectoral Ineptitude

With the lack of attention to key sectors of the economy by the legislative, the executive, and the judiciary, the deleterious impacts of their dysfunctionality continue unabated. Cases of insecurity are rising and constantly evolving into newer, more violent strains of the menace. Attacks by bandits, Fulani herders, and other armed groups are on the rise, yet nothing tangible has been done to ameliorate the problems. In several instances of arrests, the criminal cases are not conclusively prosecuted. Despite the risks to the public, nobody is punished for the lapses. At different times in the history of insecurity and terrorist acts, which began in Nigeria in 2009, Nigerians of Northern extraction have either been implicated, indicted for their roles in the unyielding menace, or have openly declared knowledge of terrorism financiers. To date, none of these individuals has been named or effectively prosecuted. They continue to vie for and hold key elective and appointive political posts within Nigeria's political landscape (Onochie, 2017; Maza, Koldaş & Aksit, 2020; Onyedinefu, 2022; Njoku, Olumide, Akhaine, Ogune & Iremeka, 2022).

The experience with the power supply sector in Nigeria has been that of motion without movement. The government's failures to revive the power sector have led to the near-collapse of the manufacturing sector, mainly run by the organized private sector, with the small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) being the most hit (Akanbi, 2022). A series of committees, experience with privatization and commercialization, un-bundling, and the introduction of the National Integrated Power Project (NIPP) rather than enhance management and efficiency escalated the corruption to the extent that a House of Representatives committee that tried to probe it became embroiled (Akanbi, 2022).

Probes by the House of Representatives Committee into government spending in the power sector from 2000 to 2007, and the Elumelu House Probe Committee indicted 21 persons and 36 companies of subversion of government policy on due process; however, they were not followed up to the prosecution stage (SERAP Report, 2017).

A report by the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), titled, *'From Darkness to Darkness: How Nigerians are Paying the Price for Corruption in the Electricity*

Sector,' revealed how corruption, impunity, and other social challenges were factors in the alleged squander of N11 trillion meant to provide regular electricity supply under the governments of former presidents Olusegun Obasanjo, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua and Goodluck Jonathan (SERAP Report, 2017). The estimated financial losses from corruption in the electricity sector from 1999, when Nigeria transitioned to democracy, to 2017 is over Eleven Trillion Naira (N11,000,000,000,000 Naira) and are expected to rise above Twenty Trillion Naira (N20,000,000,000,000 Naira) within this ensuing decade. These amounts represent government investment, public funding, private equity, and social investments or divestments in the sector amidst dwindling fortune and recurrent revenue shortfalls (SERAP Report, 2017).

This dearth of sectoral vibrancy and performance, facilitated by the lack of commitment to transparency and accountability by the legislative and the executive, constitutes the bane on which a 'japa syndrome' has taken over the youth and professional populations in the country. 'Japa' is the term that describes the decision of individuals and families to completely relocate from Nigeria to other more developed countries in the West that rank highly on the global Human Development Index (HDI) in search of better conditions and quality of living standards. This phenomenon and the rise in suicide rates have characterized Nigerian society within these most recent years in which governance commitments and efforts are almost non-existent.

Lopsided Constitutionalism

Chapter 5, Part 1, Section 69 of the Nigerian constitution prescribes the procedure for the recall of non-performing and errant members of the National Assembly. The procedure, as mentioned in the constitution, to remove a non-performing member of the executive like the president, a vote of no confidence must be passed by two-thirds of the National Assembly. Numerous instances of ineptitude and inappropriate behavior among elected officials have been recorded since the onset of the fourth republic; yet, the clause has not been invoked to checkmate any untoward behavior. In a widely publicized instance, it was invoked in 2018 to recall Senator Dino Melaye, representing Kogi West Senatorial district at the time. However, it was evident that the initiation of the process was borne primarily out of the need to settle scores between him and aggrieved individuals on whose toes he had stepped within the political arena and not for reasons of lack of administrative performance, incompetence, and dissatisfaction with the quality of essential service delivery to his constituency.

These instances provide a referential exposé on the effect that contagion can have in encouraging the spread of antisocial, non-violent criminal behavior among individuals (Fowler & Christakis, 2010; Christakis & Fowler, 2012; Wilson & Kelling, 1982 in Tsvetlova and Macy, 2015), particularly in relation to monetary incentives (Tsvetkova & Macy, 2015). The prospects of financial gain have shown sufficiency in propelling public officials to attain cognitive dissonance that allows them to act inappropriately, even to the extent of 'stealing', particularly if it is an 'in-house thing' (Falk & Fischbacher, 2002). From the foregoing, there is a potency of social and interpersonal influence on the actions of those involved. This can only be paralleled if individuals choose to exist as lone rangers, which is not the case in the scenarios.

Non-Administrative Criteria as Misgovernance Contagion Drivers

The 'overlapping' characteristic of Riggs' model implies the extent to which what is described as 'administrative' is actually determined by non-administrative criteria: political, economic, social, religious, and other factors. As such, what is defined as economic is influenced by non-economic considerations, the political by non-political, and so on. Within this characteristic is the '*Sala*', which describes the administrative office in the prismatic society. The '*Sala*' administrative office is characterized by strictly administrative criteria on the one hand, while on the other, it recognizes and reflects numerous non-administrative considerations (Riggs, 1961). In Nigeria, the issue is not a dearth of institutions but rather a scenario in which conflicts arise from the presence of numerous institutions handling the same or similar responsibilities due to a need for more clarity. There are also issues of lackluster adherence to prescribed rules, regulations, and procedures and enforcement of punitive or corrective measures, except where there is a witch-hunt.

These non-administrative criteria determine the trajectories and the functionality of the administrative criteria. They allow rationality to be consciously and effectively ignored and redefine 'codes of conduct' in ways that allow the character and behavior of the '*Sala*' to be influenced by selective recruitment, allocation of benefits, unofficial income, and other types of corruption (Riggs, 1961). The '*Sala*' (political and administrative agencies) operate as '*clects*' (a derivative of clan and sects) where informal primary groups, such as the family, religion, and others, continue to influence, rise to importance over and control the formal secondary type

associations (Riggs, 1961; Sharma *et al.*, 2011). The ‘*Sala*’ and ‘*clects*’ in Nigeria’s socio-political landscapes are described as cabals (Amuwo, 1996; Agande, 2016), run exactly as described by Riggs, and effectively managed through cronyism and nepotism. They either expand or contract in response to the dominant value (religion, ethnicity, old school or family tie, colleagues, or membership of the legislative or executive) at play within the group in question in particular scenarios.

Riggs’ formalism explains how, in principle, the constitution, laws and regulations, organizational charts, and statistics include laws that provide for political structures like elections, parliament, cabinet, and the practices and facts of government and society. In practice, a high degree of incongruence allows scenarios in which the parliament is unable to control the government to thrive (Riggs, 1961). This leads to a relative indifference of the population and the ruling group to the conduct of elections and leadership determination procedures since the processes that underlie these events are either designed by or emasculated by stronger undercurrents dictated by the interests of a few than by those of the majority. Also, the behavior of public officials may not correspond to legal statutes even where there is an insistence on some of the laws prescribing conduct (Riggs, 1961).

In a portrayal of cause-effect relationships, the consequence of these pressures from particularistic obligations imposed on public officials is that the risks of diminished governance increase. It begins with the institution of an uncommitted ruling class needing more vision, dreams, and responsibility to the sovereign obligations they owe the people (Mukoro, 2005). Finally, political policies that need to be clearly designed and well-adjusted to the capabilities of the administrative system and laws that are not clearly interpreted and adapted to practical realities (Sharma *et al.*, 2011) are created and implemented.

At the core of these anomalies undermining efficient governance in Nigeria is the fact that politicking and political offices have attained statuses of full-time jobs in the Nigerian socio-political landscape. Nigeria has one of the highest global costings, if not the most expensively run legislatures. The lawmakers are among the highest paid in the world, earning millions of Naira monthly as allowances besides their salaries (Iroanusi, 2022). The positions within the executive also come with mouthwatering perks of office. This trend is central to the doggedness with which political offices are pursued and attained, incumbency is protected, and the

perpetuation of individuals through 'serial recycling processes' between and within the legislative and the executive is perpetrated. Measures must be adopted to change this position by making the National Assembly and all other elective political offices across her three levels of government unattractive.

The dovetail of these characteristics enables an appreciation of the spread of contagion, first among the individuals, then within the groups. As it subsequently achieves a memetic spread, it defines the (mis)governance trajectories and the contexts within which 'development' in Nigeria is described.

Recommendations - Moving Forward

A convolution of issues requires a delicate unpacking if the current trajectory of misgovernance needs to be truncated. The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 describes the pertinence of strong institutions in achieving peaceful, inclusive societies with access to justiciable, enduring development in any clime. The case in Nigeria is not the non-existence of these institutions but the fact that the extent of their strength, capacity, and functionality in eliciting transparency, accountability, and other closely related virtues that allow them to follow through on their designated responsibilities, is undermined by several factors. Modalities for strengthening the institutions should include considering the contextual values constituting the socio-culture, which Riggs describes as formidable in engendering endemic constitutional and institutional dysfunctionality within prismatic societies.

Lessons from the Indian and Swiss federations and legislative practice in Sweden are worthy of replication in the Nigerian scenario. Members of the law-making bodies do not hold the positions as permanent appointments; instead, they are either rotational, subject to their assessment as worthy members of society, or open to any eligible nominated voter aged 18 and above. Furthermore, the responsibilities do not attract untoward allowances or rewards that are draining the taxpayers' monies and government funds besides the basic pay. Instead, they are conducted as civic responsibilities for the good of all.

There is a heightened political awareness among the polity, driven by the realities and the outcomes of the misgovernance. However, this does not diminish the necessity of more

pervasive political education to enable the polity consolidate their ownership of the sociopolitical and governance processes. As elicited from the questionnaire responses, the desire of the populace is for legislatures and executives that are imperatively representative of the aspirations of the citizenry, and a judiciary that protects their interests in all ramifications, and at all levels. Expectations are that leaders and would-be leaders are selfless in their approach to governance, and committed to their pre-election promises.

Another aspect is the desire for constitutional and institutional functionality devoid of Riggs 'formalism'. Mechanisms for checkmating the misgovernance contagion in Nigeria must engage non-perfunctory measures, be well-structured to encourage accountability of elected and appointed leaders to the electorate and curtail and sanction non-performance and corruption. The performance of legislature and executive members should be assessed, and their qualifications continue to be determined by the assessment outcomes. Relatedly, the constitutional provisions on which legislators rely to metamorphose into 'life' members of the NASS should be revisited, and the positions should be tenured as it is for the elected executives. Provisions must be enacted to deter the same groups of politicians from being 'serially recycled' across elective political and appointive positions at all the government levels. These provisions should also establish age, health, and tenure limits for designated positions, deter executive members from transiting into the legislature and vice versa, and curb the practice of previous political officeholders remaining lifelong beneficiaries of the nation's scarce resources.

Conclusion

Central to this study is the potency of contagion in facilitating non-violent crimes and how these crimes have redefined the quality of life of Nigeria's teeming population since the return to democracy in 1999. Riggs (1961) describes non-administrative criteria as phenomena that are not administrative in character but constitute unofficial considerations that may be economic, social, political, cultural, and so on or that may overlap. They are those factors with the capacity to impose particularistic obligations on public officials. They interfere with goal attainment by diverting officials from using their labor to accomplish an organization's presumed policies or goals (Riggs, 1961). These factors are inherent within the socio-cultural environment of the members of the legislative and executive arms of government in Nigeria. The non-administrative

criteria constitute distractions with far-reaching consequences, particularly in the context of governance that should improve the quality of life of Nigerians.

Riggs' descriptions of the 'Sala', 'clects', formalism, and overlapping features of the prismatic societies portray characteristics of non-violent criminality that combine to enable the perpetuity of the misgovernance within Nigeria's socio-political landscape. They are the contradictions at the core of the systemic failure of governance in the nation that continually negate efforts to eradicate the recurrence of bad leadership and other factors that undermine efficiency in governance.

Implications

The findings of this study enable an appreciation of the factors underlying the persistence of conditions that allow bad governance to thrive in Nigeria. They expose the potentials of these non-administrative criteria in determining the efficacy and functionality of governance institutions on the macro scale by first evaluating their influence on the behavior of the individuals as key players in the governance equation at the micro level.

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