THE UBUNTU PHILOSOPHY, AFRICAN DEMOCRATIC HERITAGE AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT
Sixty-two years after gaining Independence from the British colonial government with promises of socio-economic development by the founding fathers, Nigeria is faced with a Plethora of development challenges. Minority issues, religious conflicts, ethnic politics, resource control, youth unrest, and the related crisis of disintegration of the productive sector, food insecurity, social insecurity, deterioration of physical and social infrastructures, a drop in living standards and poverty for millions of Nigerians, and a general disenchantment with the political system are all symptoms of these larger problems. Some pertinent questions are, why is Nigeria still struggling to develop and failed to address the poor living standard of citizens. Why has leadership not able to meet the development challenges, and what are the measures that can ensure effective leadership? Therefore, the main objective of this paper is to analyze the country’s problems vis-à-vis the implementation of the Ubuntu philosophy and the African democratic heritage in governance and leadership that would ensure the country’s socioeconomic and political progress. The social development theory is adopted as a guide for the paper.

Keywords: Ubuntu Philosophy, African Democratic Heritage, Development and Social Development Theory.

INTRODUCTION
At the time of gaining Independence Sixty-two (62) years ago, the founding fathers envisioned and promised a prosperous and developed nation. That dream is still a mirage as the country is continually faced with a plethora of development challenges. The challenges include leadership, good governance, corruption and national integration to mention but a few. The above problems show up as the minority question, religious conflicts, ethnic politics, resource control, youth unrest, and the crisis of disintegration of the productive sector, food insecurity, social in-security, deterioration of the physical and social infrastructures, fall in living standards and poverty for
millions of Nigerians, and alienation of the vast majority of citizens from the political system (Ifeanacho, 2012).

The onus probandi lies with leadership, especially political leadership in the actualization of development goals in society. Leaders have a crucial role in determining the course, safety, and success of communities, civilizations, and countries. Therefore, leadership is crucial to the maintenance, development, and transformation of the human race. No country or culture ever finds itself in its current state by chance. They were directed there by someone (Munroe 2014).

Nigeria’s under development status is a function of bad leadership and the absence of good governance. This is the position of Chinua Achebe who succinctly placed the trouble of Nigeria on leadership. For Ake, (2001), Efemini,(2019), in examining the twin concepts of democracy and development, argued that development properly understood is impossible to realize in absence of democracy.

Though political elites would want to argue that the country is growing economically. But, Ake did not share such optimistic view of development as economic growth. Ake argued that economic growth is necessary but not sufficient to bring about development. In other words economic growth is important but on its own it cannot produce development. Ake’s major reason for holding this position is that a country can experience economic growth at the expense of the people. Social inequalities can be endemic in countries with high economic growth. The resources driving the economic growth can also be owned by a small or negligible percentage of the population.

Ake rather saw the possibility of development as a function of the political environment under which development policies are implemented. If the political environment is not conducive to development then we are never going to experience development. We can experience economic growth but never development (Ake 2001, Efemini 2019).

The right political environment that will produce sustainable development for Ake is a democratic one. Democracy to Ake is in the strictest sense about popular power. Democracy and democratization, the institutionalization of democratic principles as part of everyday culture in the Nigerian society is key to bring about development. Unfortunately, this not yet realized in Nigeria.

This paper argues that the leader we need in Nigeria to deal with our troubled and demanding times is not just someone with a clear vision, great academic and intellectual skills, persuasive oratory
and other communication skills, management skills, and the ability to keep people in line. The most important thing a true leader should and must have the moral force of a noble and stable character, and the ability to apply the Ubuntu philosophy.

**Conceptual and theoretical clarifications.**

**The Ubuntu Philosophy**

Balance between oneself and others, destruction and creation, good and evil, are all central to the Ubuntu concept. Conflict resolution is approached from a more nuanced perspective, one that rejects the simplistic duality of good vs. evil, black against white, and self versus other. Ubuntu's ultimate goal is to create a community in which everyone benefits. It promotes people working together for the greater benefit, as opposed to engaging in destructive rivalry. Puts the spotlight on the whole, not the parts (s). It captures the spirit of male and female companionship (Masina, 2000) in Johansen (2007).

The African concept of Ubuntu, on the other hand, encompasses both the absence of conflict and the presence of "positive" peace. Ubuntu, a notion prevalent in a variety of African communities (Francis 2006 in Best (eds.) 2006), is a humanistic and comprehensive view of peace.

The Bantu languages of East Central and Southern Africa are the source of this term. Ubuntu is a cultural worldview that aims to capture and express the meaning and substance of what it is to be human, and it is not only an African notion (Francis 2006 in Best (eds.) 2006).

Ubuntu, which has gained widespread recognition as a result of South Africa's post-apartheid reconciliation efforts, may be understood in a variety of ways. Unlike Descartes's famous remark, which may be defined as "I think, therefore I am," Ubuntu could be described as "I am because you are." *I think therefore I am “I am a human being because I belong; because I share and because I participate”*.  

Desmond Tutu, the chairman of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, argues that the concept of Ubuntu can be applied to describe an individual's character. According to Tutu, someone who possesses Ubuntu is friendly and approachable, with a self-assurance that comes from knowing they are part of something bigger than themselves. When people are made to feel inferior in any way, that solidarity breaks down (Tschudi, 2006).
Ubuntu's core goal is to create a society that values mutual aid, self-improvement, and political engagement. By using the Ubuntu framework, the political elite, in particular, may establish Ubuntu as a way as a guiding principle for their administration. Most of the country's ills may be remedied, though, if its citizens adopt a more charitable, hospitable, friendly, caring, and sympathetic attitude toward one another. Peace, absence of unfair and unjust institutions and cultural practices, democratic involvement, respect for human rights growth, social progress, and fairness are at the heart of the Ubuntu ideology.

**African Democratic Heritage**

Two forms of democratic heritage are found in Africa. The first is the African traditional democratic heritage that is based on a wide range of consultations and consensus in determination of public issues and state policies. The second and complementary one is the colonial tutelage in institutional and constitutional democracy. This is characterized by period consultation (elections once in four, five or even six years), while substituting content for form or what Omelle (2005) referred to as virtual democracy. Unfortunately, and to the utter chagrin of our fore fathers, and at the period of the development and democratization process, contemporary African political elite opted for the latter and rejected the former. The chickens have now come home to roost, as we are now paying dearly for this choice of democratic system of governance made by African political elite – the pursuit of non-existing development with an allied contemporary African political elite would appear not to have confidence in themselves nor in their past institutions and processes (Nnadozie 2007, in Amtaika (eds.) 2007).

Over five decades of political independence, African political elite continue to flounder and suffer, from self-deceit and an inferiority complex. This is a complex that is nurtured by the European ideology of development and democratization, an ideology which portrays Western society as the ideal state of being and African society as thoroughly worsted and irredeemable and therefore needing drastic change. In this process our leaders have converted us into mimicries, while the west denigrates us. It was not only that the European assaulted our humanity and reduced our civilization to sub-human. They also attempted to erase our history, be little our culture and inculcate in us a deep sense of inferiority complex that still haunts us today like an albatross. Otherwise, how does one explain the Bretton Woods Institutions (The World Bank and the IMF)? The humiliation arose from our cultural disorientations, technological backwardness, our political ineptitude and inability to govern ourselves and the pathetic and sorry state of attempting to catch up in almost every sphere of life (Ihonvbere 1989 in Nnadozie 2017). Elaborating further on the
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general lackadaisical mind set and lacklustere attitude of our political elites, Ihonvbere (1989: 50) states;

Lacking confidence and self-respect, (African Leaders) cannot develop any sense of efficacy. So even with the best of intentions they are forever confused and perfunctory. More worrying still, our leaders suffer from self-contempt. This underlines their alienation from themselves and from us and it is manifested in their prickly impatience with their environment, their fondness for things foreign and distain for the local…)

According to Nnadozie, 2017, nothing is inherently working or inferior with the African culture or African traditional institutions and practices including our traditional democratic and developmental processes and institutions. Africa has contributed more than its share to world civilization. Thus, as noted earlier, it is not by happenstance that Africa is credited with the cradle of civilization. Democracy, as a form of governance is not static or a peculiar trait traceable to a particular culture of people. Though there are certain attestable and demonstrable variables common to every democratic mode of governance, varieties of democracy exist all adopted to serve and solve the needs of different cultures and peoples. Africa is no different. There is nothing inherently superior with liberal democracy, which makes it unavoidably necessary or inevitable for adoption by African countries. The unwholesome practice of liberal democratization and development process by African leaders has entrenched the Western grip on the economies of African States. In the process, our people are alienated and our development stunted and stalled, resulting in endemic poverty, mass unemployment, illiteracy, environmental degradation and general disenchantment by our people (Nnadozie, 2017).

This situation can only be revised when Africa’s democratization and development is conceived from, and anchored in the socio-cultural life of Africa. Democracy is not an artifact that can be introduced and perpetuated independent of context, as argued by Mamdani (1985) in a work of scholarship and foreign assistance. “(Quoted in Gana, 2005: 274 cited in Nnadozie 2017). The fear of the unsustainability of alien democratization and development process has also prompted Nyang Nnyong’O (1995) to raise two rhetorical but related questions, namely “can African society as they are today sustain democracy?” and whether “democracy is necessary for development” (quoted in Gana Ibid, in Nnadozie 2017). The answer to the former is of course, in the affirmative, for Africa
even as it is today, can not only democratize, but also sustain it as Africa was undergoing its own democratization process before the advent of colonialism. The second questions answer is on the affirmative because democracy is a means of enabling the people garner development dividends.

It is not only that democracy is vital for development to blossom, but also that democracy and development do not occur in a vacuum. Both, as of necessity, take place within the context of culture if they were to live up to their essence. However, this has not been the case in African as Ake (2001.15) stated, culture, like the institutional framework, has been largely ignored as if it, too had no serious implications for the success of development strategies. “But that has been a costly error.” Therefore, the cultural framework of any society determines whether or not development would take place and in what direction it would occur. One can assert without fear of contradiction that any culture would resist foreign incursion into its domain. African culture, cannot be an exception, African culture has always resisted and indeed threatened any project that fails to come to terms with it, even as it is acted upon and altered (Ake 2001).

African resistance to Western notions of development and democratization has given rise to the impression that Africans, especially rural dwellers, are by virtue of being themselves, enemies of progress, including their own progress. Consequently, Africans are castigated for being bound to tradition, for being too conservative, too irrational, not enterprising, superstitious and that, in fact, “it is their own peculiar characteristics that sustain their underdevelopment” (Ake 2001:15). The resistance also gave rise to the pressure on Africans to modernize their culture, to make way for progress. The more the resistance, the more the agents and protagonist of western development agenda treat Africans with disdain and even hostility. Rather than accommodate African culture as something to come to terms with or even to build on positively, western development consultants and their African cohorts look down on African culture. This had not helped the situation as it makes the people and their culture the problems, rather than the means through which development and democratization are achieved. Due to this negative view of African culture, Western development agencies and consultants can neither accommodate nor accept the people on their own terms. The Western point of departure in its democratization and development agenda for Africa takes off on the promise of “not what is but what ought to be”. Their notion of development and democratization of the continent focuses on the possibility of Africa “becoming what it is not and probably can never be “(Ake 2001:15-16). This is the danger we have faced in Africa since coming into contact with the West (Nnodozie 2017).
A conceptualization of development and democratization, that took off on the above mindset cannot be expected to be conducive to enter development or democratization. Development and democratization are premised on a firm and consummate confidence and calls for a leadership that is visionary, determined, selfless and focused. Poor, visionless, inept, and selfish leadership is largely to blame for Africa's current state of underdevelopment and stalled democratic initiatives (Achebe 1998). While other continents like the Americas and Asia have experienced historical traumas like colonialism and foreign dominance, it is clear that it was not until their leaderships rejected foreign concepts of development and democratization that these regions were able to throw off the yoke of dominance and exploitation and leap into first- and middle-class industrialized societies. Thereafter, they undertook a re-conceptualization of development and democratization processes and strategies to factor in their indigenous traditional methods and ways of life (Nnadozie 2010). Myopic and inept leadership has therefore contributed immensely to lack of progress in Africa’s development and democratization efforts.

With few exceptions, African countries have been unfortunate with their leadership. The "pious materialistic wooliness and self-oriented pedestrianism" of modern African leaders and the lack of intellectual rigor in their political and economic philosophy are fundamental causes of this tragedy (Achebe 1998:8). African political elites have internalized the western negative image of them and their people, including the superiority of western culture and ways of life. African leaders neither trust, nor have confidence in, themselves or their own people. They are firmly convinced that all that is required is to catch up with the industrialized western world. In practice, this for them simply means maintaining good and subservient relations with the west, mimicking or imitating them and doing whatever they demand of us in order to attract the so-called foreign investment and resource flow from them. Development can definitely not come to African under this premise. As Ake (2001.16) summed up, development “is not for people who do not know who they are and where they are coming from, for such people are unlikely to know where they are going” (Ake 2001.16, cited in Nnadozie 2017).

**Development**

According to Utavwe (2017), the term development has a fundamental conceptual misunderstanding among scholars, especially in reference to a peoples’ or a nation’s development. The question, “what is development?” to Utavwe (2017) no doubt is a philosophical question. However, philosophical question of this nature makes both epistemological and metaphysical
claims. And so philosophical question in respect of development is naturally a search for the essence of development. Consequently, raising the question of development was necessary because it provides both conceptual and pragmatic grounds that enable one to do a better job of doing justice to the omnibus issues of development, confronting Africa today (Utavwe 2017).

The need for a theoretical analysis of the concept of development is not a recent preoccupation; rather it has been the focal point of academic interest for a long time. As far back as 1946, when the world was not as enamored of the term as it is today, ‘Development’ was recognized as one of the 50 words most frequently used by historians (Ibanga 1999:2 cited in Utavwe 2017). But today, in different aspects of human endeavor, the term development stands out as a primary icon. The wide currency of the term notwithstanding, most people subscribe to the commonsense concept of development, which is that it:

implies not only a change in time but, also change which has direction;
development frequently implies advancement or improvement over some more primitive status (McGurk 1975:28 cited in Utavwe 2017).

In a more elaborate concept, development implies “a sequence of continuous changes eventuating in some outcome” (Nagel 1975:15). A developmental shift, therefore, is not an isolated occurrence. It has to be a step in a chain that begins in the past and winds its way through history to the present and the future (Ibanga 1999:2). Thus, there is no such thing as an accidental developmental shift; rather, it must arise from discernible capabilities that already exist in a robust environment.

Notice, however that development has been understood variously by various people at various points in time. In virtually all conceptions of the form of development, however, there are some common indices or features that can be said to be shared by virtually any conception of development. This includes the fact that development denotes usually, though not necessarily always, “a rise in the standard of living of a people” (Uroh 1998:2). This rise could be in various, but usually complementary forms. We can therefore talk of political development, economic development, religious development and social development (Utavwe 2017).

Until recently, however, development has been identified with economic and industrial growth. There is now, however, a broadened concept of development which puts man at the very center of the development effort. Kwame Gyekye, for instance, dismisses a narrow conception of
development, measured solely in economic terms, as both inadequate and unwarranted. He insists that:

For the human society, development is to be seen in terms of adequate response to the environment in all its complexities to the existential conditions in which human beings live, move and have their being. Thus, as regards human society, development is a behavioral concept, which can express itself politically, socially, economically, culturally, morally, psychologically, etc. (Gyekwe 1996:16-17 cited in Utavwe 2017).

**Development Challenges in Nigeria:**
Generally, Nigeria is a potentially great country but is currently trapped. When you imagine the imagery of a trap and you will appreciate where the country is. No matter how powerful an animal is, it must fight to remove the trap to gain freedom (Efemini 2019).

More than 70% of Nigeria's population lives in extreme poverty, while the country's elite and government act as if nothing is wrong. There is a lot of potential for great, all-encompassing growth and development in Nigeria because of the country's plethora of people and material resources (FRN, 2004 cited in Ene 2017). However, attention has been directed onto these bequests because of the issue.

Since Nigeria's independence in 1960, the country's elite—who had been trained by colonial rulers—has failed miserably at managing the country's people and material resources. Instead, they embraced modernization as a necessary step toward progress and embraced with unbounded zeal the import of western ideas, institutions, technology, and policies. It was because of this that it was unable to establish a strong, self-sufficient economy among its own people. For this reason, the transition from colonialism to independence was not economically rational, since the remnants of the colonial economy were simply carried over into the post-colonial political age (Ifeanacho 2012).

The colonial tactics resulted in a Nigerian state structure that ultimately served imperialism and the many metropolitan interests dependent on the maintenance of imperialism (Ekekwe 1986:26). The elite of Nigeria inherited this rigid state structure and have done little to change it. As a result, they stopped thinking about how to generate excess funds and instead focused on hoarding wealth
through governmental apparatus. The irony is that this ethnically focused, narrow-minded, and particularistic leadership has been entrenched (Nnoli 1979). Democracy and progress are unlikely to be engineered by such a governing elite. As such, it must make every effort to strengthen its economic foundation. This was recognized by Ake, who said (in 1981:145):

So we have indigenous leaders who are in political offices but with little economic base. This contradiction between economic and political power becomes a source of further interesting development as the rulers try to use the only tool they have, political power to create an economic base in order to consolidate their economic power.

The particular impact of using political office to extract economic excess is to inflame the political system while economically marginalizing the civil society. Since independence, these factors have kept Nigeria in a state of underdevelopment. We now examine some concrete causes for Nigeria's development difficulties:

**Leadership and Good Governance**

Leadership is a major obstacle to progress in Nigeria, as noted by Achebe (1998) and Dike (2011). They said that most self-proclaimed leaders are clueless about the fact that being in charge means taking on personal accountability for certain matters. Poor leadership has also led to ineffective procedures for overseeing government employees and agencies. Politics is therefore seen as a "do or die" endeavor, while ethical politics are pushed to the background. Due to the lack of accountability and openness in Nigeria's public relations management, the country's leadership has been criticized (Gberevbie, Shodipo and Ovisogie 2013 cited in Akande and Abasilim 2015).

**Corruption**

Kalau (2021) argues that corruption is a worldwide problem, but that Nigeria bears the brunt of it. According to Kalau (2021), corruption permeates every level of Nigerian society. Nigeria has reaped huge profits from oil sales over the years, but much of that cash has been lost to the country's pervasive culture of graft. One may say that Nigeria is a prosperous country that survives on oil since it is the oil behemoth that runs on the grease of politics. A major obstacle, though, is that oil revenues are not trickling down to the general populace. The highest-ranking public officials are filthy rich because they can safely rely on the myth that taxpayer funds belong to no one. The national news is replete with stories of public officials using stolen money to purchase multimillion-dollar homes and stockpile assets in offshore banks (Kalau 2021).
It should come as no surprise to close observers and followers of Nigerian events that the Editorial Board of the Guardian, 7th February 2022, captioned Nigeria's worsening corruption index oriented on the ranking by the global anti-corruption coalition, Transparency International (TI) of Nigeria as a country in which corruption phenomenon is worsening.

High levels of economic and social instability across the polity are undeniable indicators that things are not as they should be. Indeed, corruption has been blamed for governments' continual unwillingness to reduce expenditures, prevent needless expenditure, and prioritize programs that benefit the largest number of people. As a consequence, the nation is in a terrible position generally (The Guardian 2022).

Recent results from Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2021 show that Nigeria is the second most corrupt country in West Africa. The nation's score of 24 out of 100 points is a decline of five spots from the previous year's index. She fell from a 2020 index level of 149 to her present position of 154 out of 180 nations. That our nation has fallen in the CPI rankings for the second year in a row is quite unhealthy. From a 2019 score of 26, Nigeria declined to a 2021 score of 24. This comes despite President Muhammadu Buhari making the battle against corruption a central tenet of his presidency (The Guardian 2022).

TI's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) is a global index of corruption. The worst-ranked nation receives a score of zero, while the top-ranked receives a score of one hundred. During the presentation of the study, the organization's representative in Nigeria said that corruption is the primary cause of poverty in Nigeria. Despite the government of Nigeria's claims that it is combating corruption, many public projects are plagued by corrupt practices because those in authority still expect to be bribed in exchange for their services (The Guardian 2022).

This is a terrible indictment on the continent's "giant," the nation once known as Giant of Africa. Corruption comes in various shapes and sizes. Corruption has been defined as any of the following behaviors: bribery, extortion, unlawful use of public property for private use, overcharging or undercharging customers, paying for products or services that were never delivered, paying for retired people who never worked, etc. Buying products at inflated prices, fraud and embezzlement, misuse of cash and assets, and judicial rulings awarding damages in excess of injuries caused can constitute corruption (The Guardian 2022).
Corruption is now a limiting factor in Nigeria's ability to develop and prosper sustainably. Corruption threatens the unity of Nigeria and might lead to its breakup.

**Poor Human Development**

The quality of a country's or company's human resources may sometimes determine its fate. Most of Nigeria's economic woes are attributable to the country's poor economic and human development. Quite a few years have passed before anybody bothered to address this issue. Indirectly, the difficulties in the economy may be traced back to the state of education in the nation. If the country stays at its current level of underdevelopment, the situation will remain dire (Kalau 2021). The present strike by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASSU) over the Federal Government negligence of financing the universities throughout the nation typically contributes to the human development issue in the country.

As a result of the government's refusal to negotiate with ASSU, execute the agreement it made with the union, and address the problems in a satisfactory manner, impoverished Nigerian children have been kept at home while the children of the country's officials have attended private schools. Education inequality is a snowball effect that keeps on giving rise to additional inequality (Tolu-Kolawole 2022).

The right to education is both a fundamental human right and an enabling right. A person's ability to claim and defend their rights depends on their level of education, and without it, they would be unable to lead fulfilling lives. The right to an education is foundational to the achievement of all other human rights. A citizen's rights and the government's responsibilities toward them may be better understood with the help of education (Tolu-Kolawole 2022).

**Unemployment**

As a result of the pervasive nature of the country's joblessness, many Nigerians feel dissatisfied with life. We seem to be circling the drain. High unemployment is a direct result of the economic downturn, making for a precarious financial condition. Our current cycle must be broken (Kalau 2021).

The 2019 unemployment rate in Nigeria was 23.1%, while the underdevelopment rate was 16.6%, according to figures by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). In addition, 32.5% unemployment is projected for Nigeria in the year 2021. In 2022, this number is expected to rise much higher,
which might have dire consequences if the country’s economic problems aren’t resolved soon. (Kalu 2021; NBS 2021).

Insecurity, Crime and Terrorism

Security, in any society, is regarded as a basic human right of an individual, as a result of which adequate protection of the individual amounts to a fundamental obligation of the State. Security, from the perspective of human or societal protection, is defined as “the activities involved in protecting a country, building or person against attack, danger, etc.” (Oxford Dictionary, 2000). In other words, it means “protection against attack from without or subversion from within (Encarta, 2009) (cited in Opadere and Adekogbe 2017).

Discussing Security in Nigeria readily brings to mind the challenge posed by the Niger Delta Militants (Oshio, 2009) the prevalent insurgency of the Boko Haram Islamic fundamentalists and herdsmen saga which have been categorized as a dimension of terrorism (Dimowo and Chima, 2011). Terrorism however, is described as “politically motivated violence by clandestine groups or individuals against civilians or non-combatant personnel” (Wilcox, 2008). The United States Department of State is said to have adopted a definition which describes terrorism as “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience” (Wilcox 2008). Nonetheless, it must be stressed that no one definition of terrorism has been accepted by the international community. Bombings, killings, hijackings, hostage-taking, and other kinds of terrorism are all clearly used by terrorists to coerce governments into altering their policies or leaders or ceding territory. This account is all-encompassing of the Nigerian perspective on insecurity, which poses a serious danger to the country’s continued existence. The State must ensure the public’s safety as a whole. But the Nigerian government has failed disastrously to ensure enough safety (Opadere and Adekogbe 2017).

Gbolahan (2022) echoed these sentiments, noting that Nigeria is experiencing an unprecedented wave of diverse but overlapping security issues, from abduction to extremist insurgencies, which have touched almost every part of the nation. The extent of the insecurity poses a challenge to the social fabric of Nigeria: "with every assault, human lives are lost or permanently harmed."
The prosperity and progress of countries depend, in large part, on their level of national security. This is due to the fact that countries with stable governments are more likely to entice global investment while also providing local investors with a more relaxed environment in which to run their businesses. Safety is the bedrock for any significant progress to be made and maintained. In the last decade and a half, Nigeria has been rocked by an unparalleled succession of agitations, including kidnappings, abductions, armed robberies, bombings, and devastation of all kinds and sizes (Gbolahan 2022).

According to the Global Peace Index 2019, Nigeria is the sixteenth most violent nation in the world (GPI). Even though its fundamental score increased from 2.87 to 2.98 in 2019, it remained in the same place (148 out of 163) as in the previous year. The study assesses the condition of peace based on three metric domains: the prevalence of internal and international conflict, the amount of militarization, and the level of societal safety and security (Vanguard 2019).

**Ethnicity**
Integration is a further obstacle on the path of fostering national unity and growth rather than irredentism. There has been a complete failure to accomplish the goal of national integration. The argument over rotating and zoning political seats, religious conflicts, ethnic politics, resource control, youth unrest, and the need for a sovereign national convention are all manifestations of the integration issue Yima (2010) Ifeanacho (2012). Together, these factors have contributed to the collapse of Nigeria's productive sector, the rise of food insecurity and social unrest, the decline of the country's physical and social infrastructures, and the general decline in the quality of life for the great majority of Nigerians.

According to Ene (2017), ethnicity is the bane of democracy and development in Nigeria. The merging in 1914 of Northern and the Southern Protectorates by the British overlords did not consider culture, language, religion or even choice of the people to live together or not. Mustapha (2000) in Ene (2017) submits that the merger was to facilitate the maximum exploitation of the vast natural and human resources of the land. It was principally economic for them to have larger cheap labour sources for their markets. According to Uke (2007), this resulted in a merger without merging. From the unset of the amalgamation, there has been a psychological fear of political and economic domination among the various ethnic groups Elaigwu (1985) in Ene (2017). See Rakoy (1992), Nnoli (1995), Odinukeze (2014), Bello (2013) Nwabueze 1999 for more on ethnicity and challenges of development in Nigeria.
Conclusion
Nigeria is a great country; no doubt, it has the resources and potentials to be among the richest countries of the world. Unfortunately, the dreams of achieving this greatness is continually challenged by a myriad of issues, ranging from lack of effective leadership, poor governance, corruption, to mention but a few. These challenges are manifest in the lack of development and concomitant problems of national integration, ethnic and religious conflicts, crime, poverty and increasing level of social inequality.

Such a sad story so clearly illustrates Nigeria's awful state of affairs under weak leadership. Without recommitting to the basics of good and successful leadership, the present difficulties will not be resolved. Successful and efficient leadership is essential if Nigeria is to achieve its potential. Unfortunately, morally weak leaders have had an impact on Nigeria. Instead of working to strengthen their country, these leaders are breaking the law and committing atrocities against their people. A worrying effect of Nigeria's character issue in leadership has been to foster a culture of mistrust.

This study therefore recommends that;

1. In order to address the aforementioned challenges and put the country on the path of development, leaders must accept and actively attempt to alter their methods, shifting from a corrupt and compromised mentality to one based on conviction and character;
2. Leadership is a group phenomenon, leadership emerged from the society and therefore both the lead and leader must perform its functions based on the national interest rather than personal aggrandizement;
3. Follow-up to 2 above, leadership selection process be transparent and affair and citizens should elect leaders based on conscience rather than being compromised.
4. Africa, indeed Nigeria’s democratization and development process be conceived from, and anchored in the socio-cultural life of Africa and not solely from without.
5. Finally, Nigerian leaders must have Ubuntu.

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