
EXECUTIVE SUPERIORITY IN NIGERIA AND ITS PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS IN THE FUNCTIONALITY OF OTHER ARMS OF GOVERNMENT

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ABSTRACT: *This is a research on the Executive superiority in Nigeria and its psychological impacts in the functionality of other arms of government. The three arms of government being the Executive, the Legislature, and the Judiciary were identified, and their statutory functions briefly examined. The superiority conducts characteristics of the Executive were highlighted. Again, the superiority personality dispositions of the Executive vis-à-vis other arms of government were x-rayed. This was followed by the psychological impacts of the Executive's superiority conducts on other arms of the government. Recommendations were proffered for the Executive to strictly comply with and adhere to the Constitution, as well as the rule of law in Nigeria, which it (the Executive) has not been doing.*

KEYWORDS: **Executive Superiority, Nigeria, Psychological Impacts, Functionality, Arms of Government**

INTRODUCTION

What is today the sovereignty of Nigeria could be traced down to the 1914 amalgamation by Sir. Lord Lugard. The amalgamation was caused by certain historical forces of colonialism based on economic expedience of the colonial masters. Prior to the union, Nigerian politics or primordial societies were already in commercial contacts.

The importance of the Rivers Niger and Benue, as the arteries of the socio-economic channels of the earlier communications, cannot be overemphasized. Precisely, the colonial masters derived the name Nigeria from the River Niger, meaning 'people living by the River Niger flood plain. This implied that, before the coming of the colonialists, early Nigeria tribal polities were already socializing among themselves devoid of tribal divide or tribal sentiments.

But from the period of the amalgamation to 1960, major historical elements were introduced by the colonial masters. Following this, in 1939, the Southern protectorate was partitioned into the eastern and western regions. Sequel to that was the Richards Constitution of 1940. The 1940 Constitution regionalized Nigeria into Northern, Eastern and Western Regions. Following the McPherson's Constitution of 1951, the formation of political parties became based on regional blocks. It was, at this juncture, that early shots of ethnic politics commenced in Nigeria.

The three major ethnic sections became Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo.

However, in 1954, the federal system of government was introduced by the colonial masters. This system, introduced in 1954, according to K.W.J. Post and Michael Vickers, was to prevent one region from dominating the others. According to the aforementioned authors, this is only in theory, and not in practice. However, following the attainment of Independence on October 1, 1960, the Federal Government of Nigeria made frantic move to reduce political tension, so as to promote national integration. One of the steps taken was the movement of the power base from the regions to the center. It is pertinent to state that, in the bid, to douse ethnic tensions, subsequent governments that came and left, formulated policies of state creation, and today, there are thirty-six (36) states in Nigeria.

Having stated the obvious about the genesis of Nigeria ethnic politics and its inherent political catastrophes, one can deduct, therefore, that the present political quagmire in Nigeria is the result of long-time ethnic sentimentalisms, climaxed by the chauvinism of Nigerian leaders. Without doubt, the quest for leadership and ethnic superiority, following the independence opened the floodgate for the military intervention in the Nigerian political arena, followed immediately by the three years of the Nigerian Civil War. And

we are still being confronted by the problem of attainment of democratizing the Nigerian government.

It is a truism to state that law and order are the two basic elements for a true democracy, whereby there is a separation of powers as enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution. It is as clear as fate that as Nigeria was a child of colonialism that only became independent from her colonial masters. The colonial masters, without doubt, laid for her the foundation for democratic elective culture for good governance, and to protect the rule of law and order, through the executive arm of government.

The Executive is an arm of government that initiates all policies of government and enforces all the laws of the state. Executive superiority is a trait or complex whereby high-level leaders believe that they are superior than others, especially those in the other arms of government. When a leader or head of an executive arm of government shows poor judgement or behaves in a way that contravenes the law or social norm, it devastates the entire reputation of the nation by way of executive misconducts.

Superiority complex is a behavior that suggests that a person believes that they are, somehow, superior to others. Leaders at the very high-level or the executive arm of government, with this complex, often have exaggerated opinions of themselves.

ARMS OF GOVERNMENT

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is the supreme law that specifies the government of the nation; the distribution of powers to the different organs or arms of government within the country, and the fundamental rights of her citizens. The constitution specifies how the nation or state should be governed, while also assigning powers to the different organs of government (i.e., the executive, the legislature and the judiciary).

The constitution consists of the fundamental rights of all the people of a country. The arms of government are divisions of governmental powers into organs in a modern political system. They are:

- The Executive
- The Legislature and

- The Judiciary.

The Executive: This is the arm of government that is concerned, primarily, with the administration of the state. It has the mandate to ensure that laws made by the legislature are properly executed by its members.

The Legislative: The legislature is primarily tasked with law making within the country or state. The legislature ensures that laws are made and reviewed from time to time, and that the nation or state, is governed in a manner that guarantees respect for laws, rules and orders within the society.

The Judiciary: This arm of government is saddled, chiefly, with the interpretation of laws within the nation or state. Laws, after they are made, may be ambiguous, thereby occasionally resulting in disputes between the executive and legislative arms of government. The judicial arm of government ensures proper interpretation of laws in contestation as well as amicable resolution of any arising disputes.

FUNCTIONS OF THE ARMS OF GOVERNMENT

Functions of the Executive: The executive arm of government is headed by the President at the federal level, and the Governor and Chairman, at the state and local government levels, respectively. They are empowered by the law or constitution to carry out the following functions:

- (i) ensure security of lives and properties of citizens in a country, state or Council.
- (ii) initiate and forward bills and propositions to ensure proper governance in the country to the legislature (or parliament) to deliberate and act upon.
- (iii) provide quality healthcare, education, roads, power, employment, finance, transportation systems, etc., through his ministers, commissioners and supervisory councilors.
- (iv) ensure protection of the territorial integrity as well as maintenance of law and order in the country, state and Council, through the national security agencies (i.e., the police, army, navy, air force etc.).
- (v) prepare and execute annual budgets.

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- (vi) approve laws passed by the legislature into the constitution.
 - (vii) nominate and appoint cabinet members.
 - (viii) empowered to call for national referendum in the interest of peace, security and good governance in the country. A referendum refers to a process that allows citizens to vote on a specific piece of legislation.
 - (ix) appoint judges in conjunction with the Judicial Service Commission.
 - (x) enter into treaties with other nations, subject to ratification by the legislature. A treaty is a formal written agreement between two or more countries, in view of promoting common causes.
- iii. ensure compliance with the laws and protection of the fundamental human rights of the citizens.
 - iv. check abuse of power by the executive and legislative arms of government.
 - v. protect and uphold the supremacy of the constitution of the country.
 - vi. adjudicate and ensure amicable resolutions of conflicts among the various peoples of the country.

Functions of the Legislature: The legislature is a group of elected persons (or representatives) who make laws for the peace, stability and progress of a country, state or Council. They perform the following functions in a democratic society:

- (i) make laws for good governance, peace and stability in a country, state or Council.
- (ii) Susu (1993) noted that the legislature carries out investigations on various issues of public interest; empowered to summon any public officer, including the President, Governor or Chairman, for questioning on any matter relating to the peace, security and proper governance of the country, state or Council.
- (iii) scrutinize and approve the annual budgets; carry out oversight on projects, programs and activities of the executive arm of government.
- (iv) approve nominations for appointments by the President, Governor or Chairman.
- (v) initiate impeachment processes against public officers that contravene the constitution and laws of the country.

Functions of the Judiciary: The judiciary is tasked with enforcing the laws in the courts. They also perform other functions as follows:

- i. act as the backbone and last line of defense for the nation's laws and constitution.
- ii. interpretation of laws; serves as last resort in events of electoral contestations; overlapping roles of the

EXECUTIVE SUPERIORITY CONDUCTS IN NIGERIA.

Executive superiority is a behavior that suggests that the executive arm of government believes that they are superior to the other arms of government. It is a belief that suggests superior abilities, roles, relevance and achievements by the executive arm of government over the other two arms of government (i.e., legislature and judiciary).

Nwabueze (1982) noted the presidential system of government, as is being practiced in Nigeria, is predicated on intricate power relations among the three branches of government. This is epitomized by the principles of separation of powers and the doctrine of checks and balances. Sections 4, 5 and 6 of Part II of the 1999 Constitution vests the powers of lawmaking, law execution and law adjudication on the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government, respectively. The personnel of each branch are distinct, and in particular, those of the legislature and executive, derive their positions from independent electoral mandates. This is why it is possible to have a 'divided government', which Elgie (2001) defined as 'the absence of simultaneous, same-party majorities in the executive and legislative branches of government.

Dunmoye (2003) opined that legislative-executive relations in Nigeria, especially under the presidential system, have been characterized by acrimony, mutual suspicion, intimidation, and sometimes, blackmail. The US Embassy-Lagos (2000) identified three tendencies towards

encroachment of the powers of one branch of government by the other. These are:

- (i) Aggrandizement - which is explained as a tendency of one branch to exercise the powers constitutionally assigned to another.
- (ii) Impairment - which entails a situation whereby one branch reduces the capability of the other to discharge its constitutional responsibilities.
- (iii) Evasion – captures the situation whereby one branch avoids the review or oversight of the other.

Egwu (2007) holds the view that between 1999 and 2007, the following dominant trends characterized the relationship between the legislature and the executive.

- An overbearing executive that takes undue advantage of its enormous resources, as well as, its relatively more endowed human resource base.
- Executive recklessness that translates into deliberate efforts to control the legislature, through a mix of carrot and stick approach, resulting in high turnover rates in the leadership of the legislature.
- Weak resource base and lack of financial independence on the part of the legislature and judiciary.
- Fragility in legislative capacity to execute oversight functions, and lack of corresponding influence over budgetary matters on the part of the legislature.
- Tendency to resort to blackmail through the undue invocation of the impeachment clause.

However, superiority complex could actually be low self-esteem or inferiority complex, attempting to hide itself.

According to a Psychologist, Alfred Adler, superiority complex, in his first description of the trait in the early 20th century, is a personality defense mechanism or a feeling of inadequacy that most people struggle with. He submitted that people with traits of superiority complex exhibit frequent boastful attitudes towards people around them. He also noted that, those boastful attitudes, were mere cover-ups for feelings of failure or shortcomings.

Superiority complex is an exaggerated sense of self-worth. It hides real feelings of mediocrity. In Adler's theory of individual psychology, superiority and inferiority complexes are interwoven. Adler advanced yet further to posit that a person who acted superior to others, and who held others as less worthy, was, in actuality, hiding a feeling of inferiority.

Freud, another Psychologist, thought that superiority complex was actually a way for individuals to compensate, or overly compensate, for areas where they are lacking or failing. He thought that it could be motivating or a way that people could cope with failure.

The executive arm of the Nigerian government is responsible for the implementation and maintenance of law and order. It is also responsible for the day-to-day management of state affairs; among other responsibilities. It is headed by the President, Governor and Chairman at the Federal, State and Local Council levels, respectively.

Nigeria, today, is a country that seems to be in perpetual crisis primarily due to lack of adherence to the rule of law by the various branches of government, and as a result of rampant corruption, especially in the executive arm of government.

According to Sagay (2005) our leaders are irresponsible and self-centered. The result of the impunity and rascality, coupled with executive superiority conducts, by some officials of the executive arm of government, result in the undermining of the rule of law. The bitter truth remains that, there is no way discipline and accountability could be restored in the country, when the executive, which is entrusted with the enforcement of law and order, continues to set precedents that leave so much to be desired, and unworthy of emulation.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EXECUTIVE SUPERIORITY CONDUCTS

- (i) It could be recalled that the Nigerian Court, at a time in the past, granted Mazi Nnamdi Kanu and Col. Sambo Dasuki (rtd) bails, but the Executive arm of government, headed by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, vehemently refused them bail. This occurrence is a clear demonstration of superiority over the Judiciary by the

- Executive arm of government, and a flagrant disregard for the rule of law.
- (ii) Sometime in the past, the Nigerian Senate summoned, and also called for the resignation of the then Secretary of the Government of the Federation on account of his alleged involvement in the misappropriation of large sums of money meant for the resettlement and wellbeing of thousands of displaced persons in the North East region of Nigeria, occasioned by the Boko Haram insurgency; till date the matter is still pending, and the public officer in question, has refused to honour the summon by the Senate. This is another classical display of executive superiority conduct over the legislature, and a substantial failure on the part of the executive arm of government in its duty of enforcement of the rule of law, as it behooved on the President to ensure that public officers, especially members of his cabinet, respect the supremacy of the constitution.
- (iii) Similarly, in the recent past, the Federal Minister of Finance, was reported to have visited the House of Representatives, and requested the legislature to decrease the powers of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor, alleging that the CBN Governor was making it difficult for the ministry of finance and the executive arm of government, to implement their economic agenda.

In Nigeria, the Finance Minister should not under any circumstance or guise attempt to exert superiority over the CBN Governor, and should allow the apex bank to continue to perform its mandate of control of monetary policies in the country, as it obtains in other developed economies, including the United States of America; without an attempt to exert undue external influence.

SUPERIORITY CONDUCTS PERSONALITY OF EXECUTIVE

- i. High self-evaluation and esteem by public officers in the executive arm of government.
- ii. Boastful claims of superior ability and knowledge, condescending attitude

- iii. Unwillingness to seek, consult, collaborate with and / or adhere to recommendations from public officers from the other arms of government.
- iv. Underlying feeling of low-esteem and inferiority complex.
- v. Flagrant disregard of law and order, lack of respect for the rule of law and constitutional provisions.
- vi. Abuse of public trust and engagement in corruption, et al.

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF EXECUTIVE SUPERIORITY IN NIGERIA

- I. Fragile legislative and judicial institutions; resource misapplication and endemic corruption.
- II. Promotion of arbitrariness and gross ineffectiveness in governance.
- III. Widespread amotivation, apathy and alienation.
- IV. Intimidation, arrogance and excessiveness in leadership.
- V. Capitulation by pursuits of low-order needs by citizens, erosion of cumulative national esteem; and brain drain.
- VI. Emergence of government of minority groups.
- VII. Creeping political and national development.

CONCLUSION

The traumatic journey of Nigeria to an enduring democracy is still far from being reached. The three arms of government should have clear insights into the basic principles underlying the achievement of national goals. Hence democracy is the reign of reason, governance of tolerance and dialogue; a way of life, which ultimately provides a vent for national development.

Nigerian, therefore, should evolve a true and enduring democratic system – such that would respond to the peculiarities and aspirations of the people of Nigeria, in order to once again, renew the Nigerian faith in the maxim “Unity in Diversity”, and restore trust, security, law and order, justice and fairness, dignity of labour, exchange of views and ideas in an atmosphere

devoid of bitterness, rancour, hatred, bigotry and fanaticism. All hands, of both the leaders and the governed, should be on deck.

In all truthfulness, Nigerian leaders must devise pure administrative machinery that is all embracing to attain the national educational objectives of building a nation of bright minds, and of equal opportunities for all citizens, and one where the all citizens have equal right and privilege to aspire to any public office, irrespective of their state of origin, ethnicity or religion.

It is time enough for Nigerian leaders to acknowledge the depth and saliency of the facts, as well as, the boundless benefits inherent in the practice of true democracy, and to, conscientiously, appreciate that democracy is a system of government that is based on a set of strong and progressive ideologies and ideals; as exemplified by the rule of law, within the national governance institutions.

The rule of law represents a nation's life, unity, direction, growth, development and advancement, in line with her aspirations; and any nation where the operation of the rule of law is absent, exists only as an illusion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With every sense of honesty and patriotism, heads of executive arms of government, at all levels, in Nigeria must ensure absolute adherence to the Constitution, and the rule of law, without exception, to forestall further disintegration of the country; enhance public trust, accountability, and the maintenance of law and order.

Deliberate and concerted efforts must be given to the strengthening of national institutions; institutionalization of democratic norms; rewards for outstanding public service and accountability; respect for the rule of law, as well as, the prosecution and execution of punitive measures against public officers who breach public trust, to serve as deterrence to others.

The Federal Government's economic team headed by the Finance Minister should restrain itself to its constitutional mandate of initiation and administration of fiscal policies. The independence of the CBN should be respected and guarded.

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