Regime Change and Policy Discontinuity: Implications for Agricultural Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study reviews the effects of regime change and policy disproportionateness on agricultural development in Nigeria. Since independence, consecutive military and civilian administrations have introduced several agricultural policies and projects aimed at promoting food security, employment generation, poverty reduction, and national development. These projects include the National Accelerated Food Production Project (NAFPP), Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs), Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Green Revolution (GR), National Fadama Development Project (NFDP), National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA), and the Anchor Borrowers' Project (ABP). In spite of, these visions, the agricultural sector has persisted to suffer low output and hindered sustainable growth owing to frequent policy inconsistency, poor execution procedure, corruption, poor funding, and political disruption. The study adopted a qualitative research approach using historical and descriptive research designs, while data were obtained from secondary sources such as textbooks, journals, government publications, and policy documents. Data was analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Findings reveal that consequent governments in Nigeria in most cases neglect existing policies and introduce new project that align with their political ambition rather than maintaining long-term national development path. This pattern has directly or indirectly affected agricultural output, food sufficiency, rural development, and economic growth. The study concludes that sustainable agricultural development in Nigeria hinges largely on policy consistency, effective execution, institutional coordination, stakeholder partaking in the process, and sufficient funding of the agricultural areas. The paper recommends the formation of strong legal and institutional frameworks for the continuity of policies across the board for all regimes and promote long-term national development.

Keywords: *Regime Change, Policy Disproportionateness, Agricultural Development, National Development, Nigeria.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The *idea* of *state*, *regime*, and *government* are essential*al* to comprehending the effectiveness of political authority and public policy. While the state represents the most enduring political configuration and arrangement, regimes define the regulation, norms, and institutional framework through which power is carried out, and governments constitute the temporary holders of political office (Fishman, 1990). Although governments may abruptly change, regimes may to exhibit greater durability, shaping the understanding and priorities of administration within the state. Even so, when regime change happens-especially in the form of handing over from military to civilian rule and vice vasa it often brings critical paradigm shifts in policy direction and institutional mission. Worldwide, governance has incrementally underscored citizen playing roles, accountability, and policy understanding. In Africa, this has been followed by crucial political changes since independence, including movements from one-party systems to multiparty system of politics and periodic reversals to oligarchy rule. Nigeria typifies this pattern, having witnessed alternating phases of military and civilian regimes since 1960. Each regime has introduced distinct policy vision and mission statement aimed at promoting national development. Thus, these policies have often beset with discontinuity, resulting in unparallel development outcomes. A critical area affected by this state of affairs is the agricultural area, which remains integral to Nigeria’s economy in terms of employment, food security, and rural means of livelihood. In spite of its basic necessity, agricultural development in Nigeria has been undermined by persistent policy disproportionateness arising from regime disproportionateness. Consequent administration replaces existing policies with new policies that reflect their own political manifestoes rather than merging past policy with the ongoing administration. For example, the *Operation Feed the Nation (OFN)* project introduced by the military administration of General Olusegun Obasanjo (1976-1979) was terminated by the civilian government of Alhaji Shehu Shagari, which came up with the idea of *Green Revolution* project. While both policies sought to improve agricultural productiveness, the abrupt policy shift disrupted continuity, slacked the institutional leaning, and resulted in ineffective utilization of assets.

This points to a critical development problem: the absence of maintained policy direction capable of overlapping regime frontiers. incessant policy alteration not only hamper the long-term planning but also erode stakeholder confidence, discourage investment, and limit the effectiveness of development initiatives. Admittedly, Nigeria’s agricultural sector has baffled to achieve its full potential in spite of enormous policy initiatives. The bottleneck, therefore, seen not solely in the behaviours of the regime-whether civilian or authoritarian-but in the paucity of consistency and continuity in policy execution. As Jong (2012) postulated that, sustained political will to policies over time is more central for development than the specific type of political regime under which they are formulated. Against this backdrop, this concept paper examines the relationship between regime change and policy disproportionateness in Nigeria, with a particular interest on their consequences for agricultural development. Particularly, it requires to: (i) analyse how regime changes impact on policy formulation and execution in Nigeria; (ii) examines the intensity to which policy disproportionateness affects agricultural development outcomes; and (iii) highlight the need for institutional mechanisms that improve continuity and coherence in policy processes across consequents tenures. The paper put forward that realising sustainable agricultural development in Nigeria needs not only sound policy patterns but also a firm and hmonised organisational structures of previous and current regime that ensures continuity beyond regime changes. The rest of the paper is structured as follows.

2. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

2.1 Regime Change

Regime change is a multifaceted concept that use at both local and international stages. It broadly entails to the taking over from one administration to another of a political system, government, or leadership spectrum, which may transpire through constitutional means such as periodic elections or through extra-constitutional means including overthrowing of government by way of coup or revolutions (Jong, 2012; Huntington, 1991). While in civilian systems of government institutionalize regime change through periodic elections, many third world countries-especially in Africa-have in the history experienced regime transition through political anxiety and military take over. In Nigeria, regime change has reached diverse forms since independence in 1960, including transitions from civilian to military rule, intra-military successions, and, more recently, democratic-to-democratic transitions under civilian governance. From 1960 to the present Fourth Republic, Nigeria has witnessed myriad changes in leadership, reflecting both institutional unpredictability and emerging political structures. These changes have dramatically influenced policy framework and governance outcomes. According to Jong (2012), countries attributed by decent political environments tend to realise higher levels of economic growth than those experiencing incessant regime changes, primarily because stability ensure policy continuity and institutional development.

Historically, regime change within sound democracies, such as the United States, is largely procedural and plausibly foreseeable, happening through electoral mechanisms that ensure continuity in governance. In opposition to, regime changes in many African countries have often been sudden and accompanied by different intensity of political imbalance, sometimes including riot or social unrest (Economic Intelligence Unit, 2014). After all, regime change is not naturally negative; it can serve as avenue for leadership renewal, good governance, and accountability when conducted through democratic processes (Umar and Tafida, 2015). As Magee and Dorcee (2015) argue, democratic electoral systems enhance transparency and empower electorate to influence leadership selection, thereby resulting as instruments of political changes. Additionally, the extent and efficiency of governance result under any regime are basically shaped by the underlying political system-whether civilian, authoritarian, communist, or otherwise. These systems determine how authority is exercised, how decisions are made, and how policies are implemented. Admittedly, the performance of any regime depends not only on leadership but also on institutional characteristics and the guiding political principles (Hartman, 2017).

2.2 Policy Inconsistencies

Policy inconsistency simply means to the deficiency of continuity, cohesion, and stability in public policy direction and execution in a time. It often appears in the incessant alteration, negligence, or sudden changes of policies by inheriting government. Boven and Hart (2016) postulated that policy inconsistency or disproportionateness as a form of governance inability arising from deliberate weaknesses such as ineffective institutional capacity, corruption, insufficiency of infrastructure, and erroneous decision-making procedure. In the Nigerian context, policy inconsistency disproportionateness is a every day problems in governance that has seriously hindered development modalities. Many policies are terminated before realising their predetermined goals and objectives, often due to sudden regime transition in political leadership or shifting priorities. This problem is underscored by weak accountability modalities, limited stakeholder participation, and insufficient policy evaluation undertaking. As McConnell (2015) put forward, policy failure frequently results from disagreement among communities' beneficiaries, unrealistic policy formulation, and paucity of sustained political will to execute public policy. Furthermore, policy inconsistency or disproportionateness in Nigeria is often followed by political inclination rather than national interest. Wogu, Sholarin, and Chidozie (2015) opines that successive government more often introduce new policies to build political affiliation or secure legitimacy, rather than building on existing public policy. This approach leads to vicious cycle of repetition of tasks, wastage of knowledge, and disruption of institutional memory. In sectors such as agriculture, these discontinuities have disrupted long-term planning, reduced investment, and weakened productiveness.

2.3 Public Policy and National Development

Public policy constitutes a deliberate decision considered as action plans by government to overcome societal challenges and promote the welfare of countrymen (Stone and Ladi, 2015). Policies are basically adopted to provide public goods, control economic and social activities, and ensure distribution of national assets. According to Carter and Palmer (2015), countrymen generally see public policies as a means to enhance their well-being through access to services, economic opportunities, and reduced socio-economic burdens. However, as Abubakar and Abubakar (2014) look at, public policies may produce both has negative and positive outcomes, which hinges on the effectiveness of their formulation and execution. National development, conversely, is a broad and multidimensional idea that comprises economic growth, social prosperity, and institutional breakthrough. It involves improving the quality of life of countrymen through increased productivity, equitable distribution of national cake, and access to essential services such as education, healthcare, and social amenities (Emeh, 2013; Adebayo, 2015). Development is not merely economic boom but also includes structural and institutional correctiness that enhance human capabilities and societal well-being (Todaro, as cited in Ihenacho, 2014).

Scholars such as Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013) focus on development is significantly about empowering individuals to access their full potential. It is all encompassing process that integrates economic, social, political, and cultural dimensions. Similarly, Sapru (2012) strike a nexus between development and modernization, highlighting the transition from traditional systems to more technologically advanced and efficient structures. International organizations such as the United Nations Development Project (UNDP, 2014) define national development as a process involving both quantitative growth and qualitative improvements in living standards. Achieving this requires coherent policy frameworks, strategic planning, and strong institutional capacity (Kryeministri and Premijera, 2016). Effective governance plays a crucial role in ensuring that development efforts are sustainable, inclusive, and responsive to societal needs. Despite its abundant human and natural assets, Nigeria continues to face significant development challenges. Issues such as corruption, unemployment, poverty, and weak institutional frameworks have constrained progress (Campbell, 2016). These challenges are reflected in persistent macroeconomic instability, low productiveness, inadequate infrastructure, and rising public debt (Ewetan and Urhie, 2014). Consequently, achieving meaningful national development in Nigeria depends on sustained policy execution, institutional strengthening, and strategic investment in key sectors such as agriculture.

2.4 Conceptual Framework and Theoretical Foundations

Given the exploratory nature of this concept paper, the conceptual and theoretical explanations are presented in an intertwined and concise manner to address the relationships among regime change, policy disproportionateness, and agricultural development in Nigeria. Regime change can simply be defined as the changes of political leadership or governance, either through elections or extra-constitutional means such as military take-over (Huntington, 1991; Jong, 2012). In Nigeria, transitions between military and democratic regimes, as well as internally motivated-democratic changes, have dramatically shaped governance priorities and policy directions. These transitions often introduce new political agendas, which influence the continuity of public policies. A key hallmark of regime change is policy discontinuity, defined as the policy inconsistency, abandonment, or modification of policies from administrations to administrations (Bovens and 't Hart, 2016). Fundamentally, successive governments abadon existing policies with new public policy to build political identity or legitimacy, rather than consolidating previous efforts. Wogu, Sholarin, and Chidozie (2015) indicated that such practices in Nigeria are often driven by political considerations rather than long-term developmental goals. This tendency undermines policy stability and weakens institutional memory.

Policy disproportionateness has direct bearings on agricultural development, which includes improvements in productiveness, food security, rural means of livelihoods, and sectoral investment (Todaro & Smith, 2015). Incessant policy shows disrupt long-term planning, hinders investment, and reduce the effectiveness of development projects, thereby restraining the growth of the agricultural areas. Theoretically, this nexus is best explained through an bringing together of institutional and political economy approaches. Institutional theory elaborates that strong and firm organisation promote policy continuity by constraining unilateral decisions, whereas infirm institutions make public policies susceptible to regime change (North, 1990). In Nigeria, institutional failure has contributed to theory policy discontinuity. To corroborate this, political economy theory explains how political interests and power think tank influence policy decisions. Governments may consider short-term political objectives over long-term development, leading to policy shifts (Todaro & Smith, 2015). This highlights the reasons why regime changes in Nigeria often result in irregular policy execution, especially in critical sectors such as agriculture.

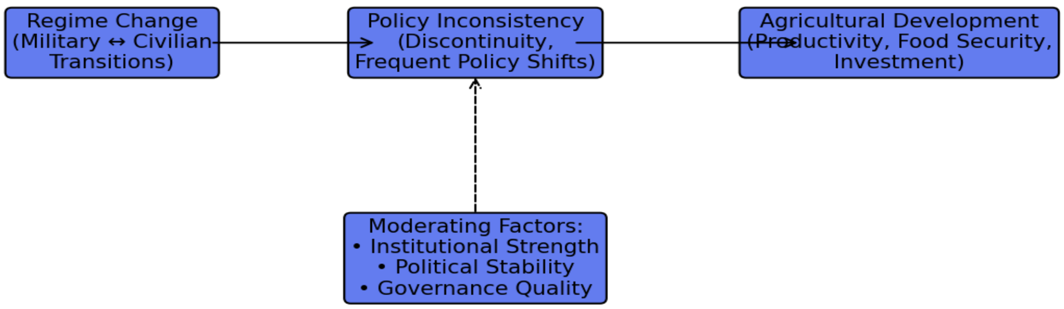

Figure 1. Conceptual framework

Based on these perspectives as demonstrated in Figure 1, the study conceptualizes a relationship in which regime change influences agricultural development indirectly through policy fluctuation, while institutional quality and governance effectiveness moderate this relationship. Where institutions are strong, policy continuity is maintained in spite regime changes; where institutions are poor, policy instability becomes more plausibly noticeable, that negatively affects development outcomes.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative research approach using both historical and descriptive research designs. The historical design was considered useful by the researchers to examine the emergence of agricultural policies across distinct political regimes in Nigeria from independence in the 1960 to the present dispensation of 2026. The descriptive design was employed to analyze the correlation between regime change, policy fluctuation, and agricultural development in Nigeria. The choice of this approach is based on the significance of the study, which focuses on analysing past and present public policies, statement of intention, and institutional practices in the agricultural sector. The study also explores how successive administrations introduced, changed, or abandoned agricultural policies and the implications of such actions on national development.

3.2 Sources of Data

The study depends mainly on secondary sources of data. Relevant data were obtained from textbooks, academic journals, conference papers, government publications, policy documents, newspapers, official reports, and publications from both domestic and international organizations. Important sources consulted include documents from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Bank reports, and other scholarly materials related to agricultural policies, regime change, and national development in Nigeria.

3.3 Method of Data Analysis

The study employed qualitative content analysis in analyzing the data collected from secondary sources. Relevant literature and policy documents were critically examined to identify major trends, patterns, and relationships between regime change and policy disproportionateness in Nigeria's agricultural sector. The analysis specifically focused on various agricultural projects introduced by successive administrations, including the National Accelerated Food Production Project (NAFPP), Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs), Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Green Revolution (GR), National Fadama Development Project (NFDP), National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA), and the Anchor Borrowers' Project (ABP). Through content analysis, the study assessed the level of policy continuity, execution challenges, funding patterns, stakeholder participation, and the overall impact of these policies on agricultural and national development.

3.4 Justification of the Methodology

The qualitative historical approach is considered appropriate for this study because it provides a detailed understanding of political and policy developments over time. Since the research examines policy changes across different regimes and their effects on agricultural development, the methodology allows for an in-depth evaluation of government actions, institutional performance, and policy outcomes. Furthermore, the use of secondary data is suitable because the study depends largely on documented evidence, policy records, and scholarly analyses relating to agricultural development and regime transitions in Nigeria. The methodology therefore provides a reliable basis for understanding how policy disproportionateness has affected agricultural growth and national development.

4. AGRICULTURAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

In the agricultural sector, policy execution plays a crucial role in economic growth and development. Agriculture is fundamental to human survival, providing food, raw materials, and employment. It also drives broader economic development. Agricultural policies, therefore, serve as essential tools for promoting growth, while policy changes may involve gradual adjustments or the introduction of new strategies (Food and Agricultural Organization, 2004; Bennett and Howlett, 1992). After independence, Nigeria introduced new agricultural policies aimed at promoting more balanced growth within the sector. The exploitative colonial policies were replaced with an export-oriented approach, which resulted in regional specialization: The Western Region focused on cocoa production, the Northern Region on groundnuts, and the Eastern Region on oil palm (Ayoola, 2001).

4.1 National Accelerated Food Production Project (NAFPP)

This agricultural extension project was pioneered in 1972 by the Federal Department of Agriculture led by the military administration under General Yakubu Gowon. Its central objective was to promote rapid increase in the production of staple crops such as maize, cassava, rice, and wheat, particularly through subsistence farmers in the Northern states. The project was later intended took to other parts of the country after guinea pig phase implemented in Anambra, Imo, Ondo, Oyo, Ogun, Benue, Plateau, and Kano States. The project was divided into three ccategories: the mini-kit phase, the production-kit phase, and the mass adoption phase. Yet, various challenges were identified. For examples, farmers were demanded to finance the latter two stages themselves, which reduced many from participating. Additionally, only farmers organized into cooperative societies benefited from credit facilities and farm inputs, thereby excluding those who were not part of such groups. Another major challenge was the unexpected withdrawal of federal funding following the introduction of a new public policy, Operation Feed the Nation. Also, were conducted on few farmers' fields by extension and research workers, still these did not accurately reflect real farming or outcomes of the technology. Overall, the project was blamed for limited farmer pparticipations in its design and execution, as farmers' views largely ttaken for granted during policy creation (Iwuchukwu and Igbokwe, 2012).

4.2 Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs)

The Agricultural Development Project (ADP), formerly called the Integrated Agricultural Development Projects (IADP), was first introduced in 1974 as testing schemes in few states in the North East (Funtua), North West (Gusau), and North Central (Gombe). The projects recorded crucial success and positive colorful output, which led to its augmenting in 1989 to cover all the then nineteen states of the federation. The project was seen as a collaborative gesture involving a triple partnership among the Federal Government, State Governments, and the World Bank (Amalu, 1998). Over period of time, it has developed into the principal agricultural and rural development projects operating across Nigerian states today. The project is largely focused on small-scale farmers, who are deemed as the pivotal actors in boosting food supply. It also includes a feedback loopholes that promotes bottom-top decision-making. This approach enables farmers and their households to share their practical experiences and observations on improving technology, motivates, intervene, and related support services. The main goal of the project is to address the dwindling in agricultural product and ensure local food supply through essential financial support from the World Bank. The ADPs were created to provide extension services, provide technical inputs, and build rural infrastructure for farmers and rural population. Though, during execution, several obstacles were faced. One major constraint was poor funding, largely due to the recess oil prices in 1982, which also hindered the recruitment of compeents personnel and the procurement of crucial materials and logistics needed for effective take-off. Therefore, project execution became slow (Ayoola, 2001). In addition, the project placed strong emphasis on modern, high-input technologies such as sole cropping, while many farmers practiced mixed or relay cropping. Other challenges included high labour mobility, limited involvement of input supply agencies, poor funding support, policy complexities, and difficulties in technology transfer.

4.3 Operation Feed the Nation (OFN)

This project was introduced on 21st May 1976 during the military dispensation of General Olusegun Obasanjo. Its main goal was to improve food sufficiency across the country and promote the participation of all countrymen, regardless of their professional background. The notion was that every person, no matter what their field of their profession, should be able to produce enough food for personal consumption. As part of the initiative, all usable land in urban, peri-urban, and rural areas was expected to be cultivated. The government supported this move by supplying agricultural inputs and subsidies to its institutions.

However, Iwuchukwu and Igbokwe (2012) mentioned several reasons for the project's failure. Farming was carried out on any available land without considering its suitability for agriculture. Many participants had little or no farming experience and were not given proper training or guidance in farm management. Most practiced monocropping instead of mixed or relay cropping and depended heavily on hired labour, which led to high production costs and low yields per land area. In addition, government institutions and officials were prioritized over small-scale farmers in the distribution of inputs. This led to an oversupply of food in markets and reduced demand, as many people were producing a significant portion of what they consumed themselves. The project also faced serious challenges from widespread livestock diseases, particularly poultry diseases and a new cattle-related infection, which caused high mortality due to poor quarantine measures and inadequate vaccination practices.

4.4 Green Revolution (GR)

The Green Revolution (GR) project introduced during the Second Republic under President Shehu Shagari in April 1980 was intended to increase the production of food and raw materials to improve food security and self-sufficiency in staple foods. It also sought to enhance the production of livestock and fish to satisfy both local and export needs, as well as to expand the country's foreign exchange earnings through the production and processing of export crops. To ensure the success of the project, the federal government provided inputs such as agrochemicals, improved seeds and seedlings, irrigation facilities, machinery for mechanization, credit support, and favourable marketing and pricing agricultural produce. Though, according to Akinbamowo (2013), the project failed to meet its goals of improving food supply due to poor in implementing most of its projects. In addition, there was little or no effective monitoring and evaluation of the projects, despite the large amounts of money invested.

4.5 Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI)

The Directorate was established in Nigeria in January 1986 during the administration of General Ibrahim Babangida. It was a locally adapted version of the Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA) project, which was implemented across several Sub-Saharan African countries with support from the World Bank, African Development Bank, and the United Nations Development Project (UNDP). The programmes aimed to enhance the living standards and overall quality of life of rural inhabitants by improving key sectors such as nutrition, housing, healthcare, employment, transportation infrastructure, water supply, and industrial development. It also encouraged participation of rural communities and the effective use of locally available assets. Though, like many government projects, the Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) did not to achieve its intended goals. This was largely on account of the poor standard of social amenities projects executed, as well as issues of corruption, mismanagement, and diversion of funds. As a result, its overall impact remained minimal. Supporting this view, Idachaba (1989) noted that the project was criticized for lacking clear focus and adequate accountability in its execution.

4.6 National Fadama Development Project (NFDP)

The first National Fadama Development Project (NFDP-1) was launched in 1992 along with the World Bank. The project covered twelve states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe, Imo, Kaduna, Kebbi, Lagos, Niger, Ogun, Oyo, Taraba including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The project was designed to improve flooded plains of the Savannah, this led to the irrigation pumps shallow tube well for Small Scale Irrigation Farming System (SSIFS) (Agber, Iortima, and Imbur, 2013, p. 248). The First phase of NFDP was relatively a success and this led to the second and third phases that is, Fadama two and three which is currently on going. The project also adopted Community Driven Approach (CDD), and stakeholders were allowed to participate extensively. According to Iwuchukwu and Igbokwe, (2012) the project also emphasizes poverty reduction, private sector leadership and beneficiary involvement. The obstacles associated with the project was because unskilled handling of water application through irrigation degrades and rob the soil of its productive capacity (Omonijo et al., 2014).

4.7 National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS)

The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) was introduced in answer to the requirements and goals of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Its principal components include poverty reduction, job creation, wealth generation, and value reorientation. NEEDS also provided support to key sectors such as agriculture, industry, small and medium-scale enterprises, as well as the oil and gas sector. The strategy set specific performance targets that the government aimed to achieve by 2007. These included an annual agricultural GDP growth rate of 6 percent, the generation of about US$3 billion yearly from agricultural exports, and achieving 95 percent self-sufficiency in food production. Through NEEDS, farmers were to benefit from improved irrigation systems, modern machinery, and better crop varieties, all aimed at increasing agricultural productiveness and reducing poverty, especially since a large proportion of Nigeria's poor population is engaged in agriculture (Iwuchukwu and Igbokwe, 2012). From this perspective, successful execution of the project was expected to significantly reduce poverty and enhance agricultural output. In addition, the Federal Government encouraged state governments to adopt similar frameworks known as the State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (SEEDS). This was intended to promote integrated rural development and reduce rural–urban migration.

Unlike earlier agricultural reforms, NEEDS was entirely different in its consultative approach, deep seated scope, improved harmonization, problem-solving skills, and performance-driven focus. It also strengthened communication between federal and state governments by encouraging shared ownership, sustainability, and coordinated execution of development policies. The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) was introduced as a response to the requirements and objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Its key aspects include poverty reduction, job creation, wealth generation, and value reorientation. NEEDS also provided help to key sectors such as agriculture, industry, small and medium-scale enterprises, as well as the oil and gas sector. The strategy set specific performance targets that the government aimed to achieve by 2007. These included an annual agricultural GDP growth rate of 6 percent, the generation of about US$3 billion yearly from agricultural exports, and achieving 95 percent self-sufficiency in food production. Through

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4.8 Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA)

Under President Goodluck Jonathan (2009-2015), the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) was introduced, led by Minister Akinwumi Adesina. This policy continued the Vision 20:2020 goals and introduced reforms aimed at transforming agriculture into a business-oriented sector. Key initiatives included direct distribution of fertilizers to farmers, provision of improved seeds to smallholders, use of mobile phones to facilitate communication with farmers, and strengthening agricultural value chains through local processing of raw produce. The project also focused on improving storage facilities and reducing post-harvest losses, including the development of infrastructure such as perishable goods sheds at airports. Additionally, the Youth Empowerment in Agriculture Project was launched to encourage youth participation in agriculture. The Buhari administration, which began in 2015, took office during an economic downturn caused by falling oil prices and reduced oil production due to unrest in the Niger Delta. The resulting recession highlighted Nigeria's heavy dependence on oil exports and the urgent need to diversify the economy by revitalizing agriculture, which had previously been the backbone of the economy before oil discovery in the 1970s (World Bank Indicators, 2014). The administration's agenda emphasized reducing reliance on oil and strengthening agriculture as a key driver of economic growth (APC, 2014).

The Buhari government continued with the Agricultural Transformation Agenda inherited from the previous administration, refined it into a more value-chain oriented system that connected farmers to marketers, and retailers. It also maintained fertilizer subsidy policies, ensuring direct delivery to farmers through mobile phone accessories. The new Minister of Agriculture took covenant of continuity with previous public policies while upgrading seed quality, fertilizer distribution, research financing, and export promotion (Ogbeh, 2016). A major breakthrough under this administration was the Youth Empowerment in Agriculture Project (YEAP), launched in November 2015. The project aimed to empower 30,000 youths across six geopolitical selected value chains such as rice, poultry, maize, cassava, soybean, and others, including non-crop activities like carpentry and maintenance services. The objectives were to enhance youth involvement and productiveness in agriculture. The administration also introduced a school feeding project inspire, aiming to improve child nutrition and stimulate local agricultural production. This policy of school feeding was borrowed in Brazil, project one of the largest globally, serves millions of school children daily, supported by multiple levels of government and private sector involvement (FMARD, 2016).

Furthermore, the Buhari administration considered measures to improve rice production and reduce import dependency theory on foreign rice, including restricting rice imports and launching the Central Bank of Nigeria's Anchor Borrowers' Project in 2015. This project provided financial support to smallholder farmers at low interest rates to encourage local production and strengthen connection with agro-processors. It was structured around out grower schemes, farmer training, extension services, and risk management strategies (FMARD, 2016). Overall, Nigeria's agricultural policy direction under successive administrations shows a pattern of continuity with gradual modifications. While there has been an increased focus on smallholder farmers, value chains, and youth involvement, impediments such as poor funding, infirm execution, and low budgetary allocation have undermine the sector. Agricultural financing has incessantly remained below the 10 percent yardstick propossed by the African Union, making sustainable agricultural development difficult to be realized.

Table 1: Proportion of National Budget allocated to Agriculture, 2011-2017

Year	National Budget	Agriculture	Percentage
2011	N4.07 trillion	N81.2 billion	1.81
2012	N4.69 trillion	N78.9 billion	1.66
2013	N4.92 trillion	N81.4 billion	1.77
2014	N4.6 trillion	N66.6 billion	1.47
2015	N4.493 trillion	N7 billion	0.9
2016	N6.07 trillion	N29.8 billion	1.26
2017	N7.24 trillion	N92.0 billion	1.8

Author's compilation
Source: NBS (2018)

Several projects formed the foundation of the agricultural policies under the administrations of Jonathan and Buhari.

4.9 Anchor Borrowers' Project (ABP)

Announced by the Central Bank of Nigeria, the ABP was drated to boost agricultural productivity by creating avenue for the access to credit for farmers. Its ushers in the opportunities to access loans of up to ₦250,000 at an interest rate of about 9% to empower the procurement of farm implements. The project also connects farmers with processors, ensuring a ready market for their products. Additionally, a ₦1 trillion agricultural funding initiative was sketched out to extend loans to millions of farmers at affordable and accessible rates, further strengthening domestic production of key commodities like rice and wheat.

5. EFFECTS OF POLICY DISPROPORTIONATENESS ON AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Policy disproportionateness has since time immemorial being a major setback for agricultural development in Nigeria, the effectiveness of numerous policy interventions over time. Its effects are far-reaching and have incrementally damaged the sector's capacity to accomplish sustainable growth and food security. First, frequent jettison and negligence of agricultural projects disrupt continuity and erode long-term planning efforts. Subsequent administrations often deem its necessary to start new public policy on agriculture without consolidating existing ones, leading to mutilation in policy execution. This pattern inhibits institutional memory and restricts the cumulative impact of development efforts. Secondly, policy disproportionateness results in a sheer wastage of public assets. Financial assets, infrastructure, and human capital invested in terminated projects are often lost, reducing overall efficiency in public spending. This inefficiency is particularly harmful to the societal resource-constrained environment where sustained investment is critical for agricultural reforms,

Additionally, inconsistent policies contribute to restricts execution and monitoring system. incessant changes in policy direction hinder the establishment of stable monitoring and evaluation systems, making it difficult to assess policy performance and ensure accountability (Bovens and 't Hart, 2016). Another major effect is the persistence of weak institutional capacity and corruption. Policy discontinuity often reflects broader institutional bottleneck, including poor governance structures and limited enforcement capacity. These conditions can cause opportunities for mismanagement and corruption, further undermining policy effectiveness. More so, policy disproportionateness worsens the problem of poor funding in the agricultural sector. Frequent shifts in priorities lead to irregular budget allocations and underfunding of ongoing projects, which impedes effective execution and reduces impact (NBS, 2018).

The lack of policy stability has also contributed to weak rural infrastructure and limited market affordability, as colossal amount of infrastructure remaining uncompleted or poorly maintained due to discontinuity. This ultimately restricts farmers' ability to access markets, obtain inputs, and improve productiveness. Moreover, inconsistent policies discourage active participation of farmers and other relevant stakeholders. When policies are increasingly altered, stakeholders lose confidence in government policies, resulting in low acceptance rates and reduced engagement (Iwuchukwu and Igbokwe, 2012). This scenario immensely has contributed to an ageing farming population and reduced new idea in agricultural system. Finally, the flagrant effect of these attitudes is reflected in reduced agricultural productiveness and food insecurity. In spite of enormous policy relevant to agriculture, Nigeria continues to baffles with low productiveness and increasing food import dependency theory. These outcomes have broader socio-economic repercussions, including abject poverty, unemployment, and slow economic growth.

6. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This study reveals that regime change is a critical driver of policy disproportionateness in Nigeria. Different administration over the years incessantly put forward new policies while abandoning or modifying those of their predecessors, leading to instability in policy execution. The findings indicate that many agricultural policies are politicized and influenced by short-term interests rather than long-term national development objectives. The study further establishes that structural challenges-such as poor funding, corruption, slacked institutional frameworks, and poor infrastructure-compound the problem of policy disproportionateness. Although numerous agricultural projects have been introduced with the aim of enhancing food production and economic growth, their overall impact has remained limited due to policy inconsistency and ineffective execution mechanisms.

7. CONCLUSION

Regime change and policy disproportionateness remain strategic obstacles to agricultural and national development in Nigeria. The continuous cycle of policy negligence and reformulation which slowed down continuity, weakens institutions, and disrupts long-term development planning. While successive governments have introduced various agricultural policies to address food security, poverty, and economic diversification, these concerted efforts have largely been constrained by poor execution, poor funding, and political interference. Achieving sustainable agricultural development in Nigeria requires a stable policy environment that transcends political changes. Without further efforts to ensure continuity, strengthen institutions, and upgrade governance, the agricultural sector will continue to underperform despite its strategic importance to national development.

8. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the challenges of policy disproportionateness and enhance agricultural development, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Ensure policy continuity different administrations over the years. Governments should standardize modalities that guarantee the sustainability of viable policies beyond political chages.
2. Subordination of individual interest to national interest in policy formulation. Agricultural policies should be formulate based on long-term developmental goals rather than partisan considerations.
3. Provide sufficient budgetary allocation to agriculture.
   Nigeria should exceed the African Union's recommended 10% allocation to agriculture to ensure funding for sectoral development.
4. Strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems which is the hhallmarks of sustainability. . strong frameworks should be established to track policy execution.
5. Promote stakeholder engagement. Farmers, private sector actors, and civil society organizations should be actively participating in policy formulation and execution.
6. incentives such as access to soft loan, training, and technology to attract young people into the sector.
7. Strengthen anti-corruption policies. Transparent systems and strict enforcement mechanisms should be implemented
8. Establish legal framework for key policies. Important agricultural policies should be corroborated by legislation to protect them from sudden discontinuation.
9. Adopt long-term development planning frameworks and to abide by it. Agricultural policies should be guided by orgarnised, long-term national development blueprints that ensure sustainability ongoing.

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