

## **CULTURAL SECURITY AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA, 1960-2020**

**Nneka Sophie Amalu**

Department of History and International Studies  
University of Calabar, Calabar  
[amasophie001@gmail.com](mailto:amasophie001@gmail.com)

**Yisreal Ini-Obong Jack-Rabin**

Nigeria Police Force, Abuja  
[jackrabin@gmail.com](mailto:jackrabin@gmail.com)

**Mercy Kalu Udeh**

Department of Linguistics  
University of Calabar  
[Mercymichael@gmail.com](mailto:Mercymichael@gmail.com)

&

**Ufana, Matthew Paul**

Department of Political Science  
Benue State University, Makurdi  
[Ufanamatthewpaul@gmail.com](mailto:Ufanamatthewpaul@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

Culture is the very bedrock of a society, and in its entire dimension, is a fundamental component of national development. It is known generally as the total way of life of a people. The paper examines the role of cultural security in development in Nigeria. Using only secondary sources, it is emphasized here that cultural security plays an important role in development, cutting across the economic, political, social, environmental spheres. It brings about social cohesion, unity, peace and stability, progress and growth. It reduces poverty, provides employment opportunities and generates income *inter alia*. While the paper identified certain factors that militate against cultural security such as globalisation, conflict and violence, breakdown in cultural norms and values, lack of cultural intelligence, it reiterates the need to place culture

at the core of governance. It also calls for a deliberate and conscious efforts of government at all levels to plan and implement policies and programmes that are culture-centred and culture-sensitive in order to promote cultural security and in turn engender national development.

**Keywords:** Culture, Security, National, Development, Nigeria

### **Introduction**

Culture is unanimously defined and understood by many scholars as the totality of ways of life of a people which according to Eze (2014, p.141) is expressed in their history, language, art, philosophy, religion, politics, economics, music, food and dressing. It is the very bedrock of a society, and in its entire dimension, is a fundamental component of sustainable development. The United Nations Educational Scientific, Cultural Organisation (UNESCO 2013, p.2) asserts that “as a sector of activity, through tangible and intangible heritage, creative industries and various forms of artistic expressions, culture is a powerful contributor to economic, social, political and environmental development” (UNESCO 2010, p.2) The relationship between culture and development started to be defended by different experts in the 1970s although it was not until the 1980s or even the 1990s when the international bodies and development cooperation agencies started to promote studies and work to analyse how cultural factors could have an impact on the development processes (Marana 2010, p.4). Precisely, the inclusion of culture in development dates back to the World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-1997) which was launched in 1988. The key idea behind the Decade was to encourage policy makers and social actors at all levels to incorporate the principles of cultural diversity and values in their development policies (UNESCO, 1990). Also, the 1996 report of the World Commission on Culture and Development entitled “Our Creative Diversity” which identified culture as a development priority, was intended to show the important role of culture in development. More recently, are three resolutions that show the interconnectedness of culture and development. They include the Resolution of the United Nations General Assembly No.65/1 (Keeping the Promise: United to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals”, (2010), No.65/166 (2011) and No. 66/208 (2012) both on “Culture and Development” (UNESCO, 2013a). These resolutions clearly identify the position of

culture in the achievement of national development. Also, the 37<sup>th</sup> UNESCO General Conference adopted in November 2013, the Medium-Term Strategy for the period of 2014 and 2021 which for the culture sector focuses on the theme “*Building peace and sustainable development through heritage and diversity*” (UNESCO, 2013b). This general conference represented a key obligation for UNESCO member States for period under deliberation, with the aim of protecting, promoting and transmitting tradition and customs; as well as to foster originality and multiplicity of cultural expressions.

Nigeria became a member of the UNESCO on the 14 November, 1960 and since then, present and past governments and stakeholders have however made determined efforts to place culture at the heart of governance. Moses (2021) Nigeria has a rich cultural heritage which is widely varied, culture is one area which they have a lot to showcase to the rest of the world, developing the Nigerian culture is a collective responsibility which has been supported by both the civilian and military governments, this is why it has been given consideration in the Nigerian constitution. They recognised the need to promote unity within this cultural diversity as the Nigerian constitution recognizes culture as the necessary instrument for national integration, unity and development. In line with this, Shabani (2014, p.200) asserts that since the recognition of the role of culture in national development, there is a growing commitment of stakeholders at all levels with regard to the preservation, promotion and management of positive aspects of cultural heritage in all its forms. He further noted that it is the recognition that this commitment will help to strengthen the national ownership of development issues and to ensure that development policies take into account the cultural heritage and values of a given population or country (Shabani 2014, p.200). Because as Nana Addo (in Awaah, 2014, p.3) posits, “what defines a nation are its arts, culture, custom and traditions. The arts show us here we stand and the point to where we might be going. They provide a mirror to collective and individualistic goals. The collective memory of any society is of vital importance in preserving cultural identities, in bridging the past and present and in shaping the future”. Arts has undoubtedly been Nigeria’s most important assets, for it is through her fine sculptures, whether in wood, ivory or bronze and terracotta or stone that Nigeria’s culture first became internationally recognised and famous (Babawale 2012, p.257). However, the other

aspects of its culture-music, dance, languages, festivals, and folklore and family systems have also put the nation on the cultural map of the world. Nigeria's cultural resources have always been of international significance. However, the problem in recent times is that some of these cultures are declining, deteriorating and becoming outdated, and therefore cannot play the expected role in the nation's development. There is an urgent need to protect, preserve and promote them, hence, cultural security.

Carborneau, Jacobs and Keller (2021) remark that cultural security is an escapable condition for the fair and sustained development of both minorities and majorities in today's societies characterized by deep diversity. In a multi-cultural society like Nigeria, cultural security becomes necessary and an indispensable vehicle for the attainment of growth and development. It is within this backdrop this paper examining the role of cultural security in Nigeria's development since Independence.

### **Cultural security: A conceptual analysis**

Olagbemi (2014, p. 79) states that cultural security differs from the traditional form of security and slides easily to reflect a more encompassing soft end of security where the absence of threats does not only suffice but more importantly, the intentional process put in place to practically promote and preserve cultures within viable environment to grow and develop, barring the stagnancy that may be considered and also regulating changes that could pose significant threat.

For Babawale cultural security is a commitment to further strengthen our collective resolve to protect and preserve our works of art, heritage materials, traditional spirituality and belief systems as well as our values and general ways of life. (2012, p. 256) He further noted that cultural security entails a positive sense of security that cannot be achieved through the absence of threats alone, but with an expectation to actively ensure and promote pre-conditions in which a culture can safely grow and develop of its own accord (2012, p.256). Cultural security by Ochalla-Ayayo (2002) is "a culturally safe and secure environment is one where our people feel safe and draw strength in their identity, culture and community. In line with the above definition, Khimulu noted

that this is so, because cultural security recognises the legitimate cultural rights, values and expectations of diverse groups of people.(2014, p24) Since culture itself is distinguishable among different ethnic variations regarding heritage, beliefs and behaviour, consequently, cultural security speaks to the obligations of those in governance to ensure that there are policies and practices in place, so that all relations with local communities effectively meet cultural needs.

Given the multiplicity in definitions, cultural security in this the paper simply means protecting, preserving, promoting and transmitting important aspects of our culture from one generation to another generation.

### **Challenges of cultural Security in Nigeria**

Some of the challenges threatening cultural security are as outlined as follows:

**Lack of Cultural Intelligence:** According to Olagbemi(2014, p.84) “cultural Intelligence defined as analysed social, political, economic and other demographic information that provides understanding of a people or nation’s history, institutions, psychology, beliefs (such as religion), and behaviours.” Professors Christopher and Soon Ang in their work *Cultural Intelligence* in 2003 defined cultural Intelligence as the ability to adapt to new cultural settings (Mindtools, 2022). It provides understanding of not only how other groups but act why (Coles, 2006). Lack of cultural intelligence is one of the factors affecting cultural security in Nigeria. Many Nigerians are not culturally intelligent. They are not fully aware of their own culture as well as the culture of others and in essence may find it difficult interacting with peoples of diverse cultures in their schools, workplaces, organisations, neighbourhoods, etc.

**Conflict, violence and other crimes:** Conflict and violence are affecting cultural security. Viejo-Rose and Sorensen (2015) assert that studies have begun to reveal the multifaceted and profound ways that cultural heritage is affected by armed conflicts: it is looted, damaged and destroyed either as a result of deliberate targeting or as part of the general violence. Most of the heritage sites and monuments have been destroyed by constant conflict and violence across Nigeria especially in

the northern part of Nigeria where insurgency and banditry has been on the increase. In line with this, Babawale (2012, p.258) states that “the cultural and artistic achievements of the Nigerian peoples of various fields of human endeavour including science and technology are attested by widespread cultural sites, which are increasingly becoming object of systematic plunder, destruction and illicit trade, aided by greed, ignorance and prolonged neglect.”

**Globalisation:** Globalisation is the increased interconnectedness or under-dependence of different societies around the world. All forms of development imply some degree of modernisation, which can only be destabilising for people in traditional societies (Awaah, 2014, p.7). Eze (2014, p.140) rightly pointed out that;

the current phase of globalization has further alienated the people from their roots as a result of the impact of information and communication technology. Through the globalized media, people all over the world are being made to look the same, profess the same faith, speak the same language, wear the same type of dress, enjoy the same type of music, and eat the same type of food.

Consequently, as we deliberately do away with some crucial part of our culture, that is becoming globalised, we instinctively do away with some essential aspect of our culture.

**Deteriorating use of Nigerian languages:** language is central to human endeavours and can be an effective tool for national development. The primacy of English language leaves us without doubt that the importance of indigenous languages has been undermined, neglected, and relegated to a point of near dormancy. (Amalu 2015, p.38) These days’ people prefer to use English in any gathering, even in traditional gatherings than using their mother tongue. Even in Nigerian Schools Abiodogun and Adebule (2014, p.175) decried that “unfortunately, acceptance of English language as medium of instruction in nearly childhood classes is denying us as a nation the opportunity of introducing our culture and ways of life to the young ones using the mother tongue”. Hence, a when younger generations who will be leaders

of tomorrow are ignorant or not well knowledgeable in their way of life, it will in turn affect future development potentials of the nation.

**Collapse of moral values and norms:** The Nigerian culture with its high moral standard is gradually collapsing and affecting individuals in contributing to nation building. In other words, the moral way of life of Nigerians is one that was very admirable. Some of the cherished moral values in Nigerian societies such as hospitality, politeness, kindness, generosity, honesty are far declining. At the moment, there has been a breakdown in these moral values and norms in Nigeria as various crimes, dishonesty, greed and ignorance have become prevalent in the society. Ariche and Awurumibe maintains that Nigeria needs good governance to shun crimes and be law abiding (2017).

#### **Cultural security and development in Nigeria**

Culture and development are two words which have not always gone together, or been worked upon within the same context. In recent years however, we come across new elements, instruments and ideas which place increasing emphasis on this pair of concepts (Marana 2010, p.3). Culture and national development are inextricably linked and that cannot be overemphasized. On its own part, development is very comprehensive and means an all round and balanced development in different facets of the nation. The growing importance of culture in our governance structure is largely attributable to its crucial connection to national development. In line with this, Awaah (2014, p.11) posits that “matters bordering on culture, have gained prominence in the eyes of development partners because it has dawned on the world that no economy will fully develop without injecting cultural considerations into development”. Also, in confirmation, Kofi Anyidoho in a presentation entitled “Culture: the Human Factor in African Development”, argued that the principal and recurrent failure of development planning in Africa lies in its lack of organic relationship with our cultural heritage (Awaah, 2014). In showing the interrelatedness of culture and national development, Kiakia asserts that “culture is central to development because: culture can be a tool for strengthening social cohesion; cultural diversity is a factor in human security/peace and stability; and cultural industries are based on

synergies created among the various sectors of government (finance, trade, environment, tourism, communication, education)”(2014, p. 41).

Culture is one of the cores of development and sustenance of communities. Without culture, there will be no society; hence no society can progress without it. Kimanuka (2016) states that culture “is the identity where common values, attitudes, preference, knowledge are attributed to the behaviour in a particular social group and has a positive influence on development of the country.” He further noted that that “identity expresses through culture is a necessity or human development it creates the fundamental building blocks in our personality and in the ties that link us to communicate and nations”. It is pertinent to note that the quality of our lives depends to a great extent, on how we exploit culture to our advantage. Staying connected with the unique character of our cultural heritage is fundamental or our unity by providing a sense of whom we are. Irrespective of its place in the human development index, there is an inherent value of culture to a society which is clear to everyone and which makes it a precondition for any development. “Literature by scholars has shown that economic growth will take more than an infusion of investment capital, more than an import of the latest technology, even more than dependable political and economic institutions.

Culture is a potent vehicle for development, with community-wide social, economic and environmental implications. Peoples’ daily life, personalities, expenditure patterns, values related to environmental stewardship and our relations with the natural milieu are principally influenced by their cultures. If development is taken as the improvement of our standard of living, then actions geared towards development must be culture-based or culture-centred. Interventions that are receptive to the cultural milieu and the particularities of a place, and advance a human-centred approach to development, are largely efficient, and expected to yield sustainable, all-encompassing and unbiased outcomes. According to Grant, Inglehart and LeBlang (1996, p.608) “both societal level and individual-level, evidence suggests that a society’s economic and political institutions are not the only factors determining economic development, cultural factors do.”

However, the present state of Nigeria’s cultural security is becoming worrisome as the nation is gradually losing its cultural richness (the music, dance, arts, languages, festivals, marriage



ceremonies, folklore and family system). Nigeria is a nation with over 250 ethnic groups brought together by accident of history has unique cultural features and traditions that give identity, self respect, pride to the people and whose common values and institutions represent our collective national heritage. It would be assumed that such cultural diversity should be employed for national unity and development given the potentials of culture in relations to development. Rather, this diversity has plunged the country into so many security challenges. In line with this, Amalu, Demson and Jack-Rabin (2021, p.293) remarked that “currently in Nigeria. The security situation has become very porous. She “contends with organized crimes, drug-trafficking, youth restiveness, militancy, banditry, kidnapping, sporadic shooting, mass labour strikes, agitation for resource control, religious and ethnic conflict, herdsmen-farmers conflict, religious extremism, and terrorism in ways unprecedented (Amalu, Jack-Rabin, Abdullahi and Adetu (2022, p.68). However, while all aspects of our culture are not beneficial to us, the positive aspects of nation’s cultural richness are gradually going into extinction and experiencing modification, decline and deterioration. The traits and mannerisms of many Nigerians especially the younger generation (who are the leaders of tomorrow) concerning culture and cultural activities are gradually changing and they are rather becoming vehicles for foreign culture rather than their own indigenous culture. These changes therefore will not permit culture to play its role in bringing the much development in the nation.

Economically, Kuada, (2020) noted that cultural attributes such as belief in the importance of individual effort, trust, commitment (i.e. outside close family relations), autonomy, ethic of hard work, and thrift are important for enterprise development and economic growth. Culture reduces poverty, provides employment opportunities and generates income. UNESCO (2010, p.5) stated that “cultural goods and services often need low capital investment by building on materials and skills available within the community. The successes of micro-credit enterprises that benefit women have been especially valuable.” Furthermore, on cultural tourism, heritage, especially UNESCO heritage sites produces revenues from visits, sale of local crafts, music, and cultural products generating employment for communities (2010, p.5). On the political sphere, culture plays a natural part in development strategy that is concerned about human rights. A society with a well-

built cultural structure, will promote rights, and norms and values in society. It is important for nation building and for peace and conflict resolution as mutual appreciation of diversity among cultures creates positive and constructive engagement. When there is peace and stability, development will thrive. It creates a sense of belonging and uniqueness that prevents oppression by other cultures.

Socially, culture builds social cohesion, mobilizing communities around its care and management. According to the European Commission (EU, 2022) supporting the role of culture is a vital aspect of building social cohesion. On an individual basis, cultural events such as festivals and ceremonies enhance dialogue and communication. Culture safeguards distinctive cultural forms and processes of their production contribute to strengthen the social-capital of a community and create a sense of stewardship and trust in public institutions (UNESCO, 2010, p.6). Culture strengthens the resilience and unity of communities during disasters, conflicts and crises as the people possess innovative and creative idea to manage such situations. In line with this, the European Commission (2022) remarked the “culture is essential for avoiding conflicts and for conflict resolution. It is an ideal means of communicating across language barriers, empowering people and facilitating social cohesion, including among refugees, migrants and host populations. It prevents marginalisation of people based on their cultural identity, socio-economic status, age and other factors.” In relations to the environment, culture provides clean and safe water and food for consumption, preserves the natural resources, and enables the people manage environmental issues such as depleting water resources, shrinking forests covers, and disappearing species using accumulated traditional knowledge and positive practices embedded in local cultures that value a balance between natural and human worlds (UNESCO 2010, p.7) overtime.

### **Conclusion**

The paper examined the interrelatedness of cultural security and national development in Nigeria. It is seen that cultural security plays an important role in development because it brings about social cohesion, unity, peace and stability, progress and growth. Given the prospects of culture for national development, Nigerians should understand that their culture is relevant in the nation’s progress. Our history, cultural norms

and values, and institutions should continue to exercise a deep influence on nation's future and play a vital role in governance at all levels. Ensuring that culture remains at the heart of development policies and programmes makes an essential investment in the world's future and a pre-condition to successful globalisation processes that take into account the principles of cultural uniqueness and diversity. Though certain factors have been identified as factors militating against cultural security in enhancing development, placing culture at the core of governance must be our immediate priority and there should be deliberate and conscious efforts of everyone and the government (national, state and local levels) to make and implement policies and programmes that are culture-centred and culture-sensitive.

Nigerians and most especially the youths (who are the leaders of tomorrow) should take ownership of our cultural heritage; they should take part in cultural activities that contribute to the restoration and preservation of cultural heritage. They should serve as custodians and ambassadors of their culture even in the Diaspora.

Government should establish or strengthen programmes to educate young people about their cultural heritage and that of other societies in the world. Government agencies that were saddled with the responsibility of promotion and preservation of culture should carry out their mandate effectively. When people lose their culture, they live under the shadows of other people's identity and culture. Also, government should invest in culture and make culture-based policies and carry out culture-based projects in order to strengthen culture.

Embracing our diversity in Nigeria is important and we need learn to appreciate our cultural differences and carry out practicable acts of 'unity in diversity' rather than a passive acceptance of the fact that diversity exists. The cultural difference cuts out uniformity and replication and boredom, and when showcased to the admiration of audience all over the world, it boosts our international image.

## References

- Abiodogun, B. & Adebule, O. (2014). Contributions of mother tongue education in early Childhood education. *European Scientific Journal, Special edition*, pp. 172-178.
- Amalu, N. (2015). Repositioning indigenous languages for national development. *Calabar Studies in Languages: Special festschrift edition in honour of Prof. Imeyen Akpan Noah*. 19(1), pp.38-52.
- Amalu, N. Demson, E. & Jack- Rabin, Y. (2021). The role of diaspora in peacebuilding: the case of Nigeria. *Social Sciences, Humanities and Education Journal (SHE Journal)* 2 (3), 287-299
- Amalu, N., Jack-Rabin, Y., Abdullahi, Y. & Adetu, M.(2022). Security sector reform: the role of the government, 1999-2019. *Pinisi Journal of Art, Humanity and Social Studies* 2 (1), 67-74.
- Ariche, C.K and Awurumibe, D.(2017)Capital Punishment and its Implications for the Nigerian Society. *International Journal of Integrative Humanism*,.8(1) pp.78-87
- Awaah, F. (2014). “Women and youth in Kenya in the promotion of cultural security and development” *Women, Youth, Culture and Development in Africa*, edited by Peter Okebukola, Institute for African Culture and International Understanding, Abeokuta.
- Babawale, T. (2012). “Promoting cultural security and international understanding in a globalising world through partnerships and collaboration”, *Human Security in Africa through Partnerships and Cooperation*, edited by Olusegun Obasanjo, AkinMabogunje & Peter Okebukola, Centre for Human Security, Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library, Abeokuta, 2012.
- Coles, J. (2006). Incorporating cultural intelligence into Joint Doctrine. Joint Information Operations Centre.
- European Commission (2022) .Cohesion and Wellbeing.  
<https://culture.ec.europa.eu/policies/selected-themes/cohesion-and-well-being>. retrieved on the 20th of May. 2022.

- Eze, D. (2014). Nigeria and the crisis of cultural identity in the era of globalization. *Journal of African Studies and Development*, Vol. 6(8), pp. 140-147.
- Granto, J., Inglehart, R.& LeBlang D. (1996). The effect of cultural values on economic development: Theory, hypothesis and some empirical tests. *American Journal of Political Science*, 40(3). pp. 607-631.
- <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/cultural-intelligence.htm>
- Kiakia, M.(2014). “Women and youth in cultural security and development in Sierra Leone.” *Women, Youth, Culture and Development in Africa*, edited by Peter Okebukola, Institute for African Culture and International Understanding, Abeokuta.
- Khimulu, M. (2014). “Women and youth in Kenya in the promotion of cultural security and development”, *Women, Youth, Culture and Development in Africa*, edited by Peter Okebukola, Institute for African Culture and International Understanding, Abeokuta, 2014.
- Kimanuka, O. (2016) Why is culture vital in a nation’s development? *The News Time*, Rwanda.
- Kuada, J. (2020). Culture and Economic Development in Africa – Opportunities and Challenges. *African Journal of Religion, Philosophy and Culture (AJRPC)*. Volume 1, Number 1, 83-99.
- Maraña, M. (2010). Culture and Development: Evolution and prospects. UNESCO Etxea Working Papers. N° 1, UNESCO Center of the Basque Country, Spain.
- Moses, F. (2018). The legacies of FESTAC 77 and culture development in Nigeria. *afribary*.  
retrieved from <https://afribary.com/works/the-legacies-of-festac-77-and-culture-development-in-nigeria-5030> on 20/4/2022.
- Ochallo- Ayayo (2012). Culture as a lived experience. Population Studies and Research Institute, University of Nairobi, 2002.
- Olagbemi, I. (2014). Youth, cultural security and development in Nigeria: A Time to trust my generation. *Women, Youth, Culture*

*and Development in Africa*, edited by Peter Okebukola, Institute for African Culture and International Understanding, Abeokuta.

Shabani, J. (2014). Higher education and the promotion of partnership to foster cultural security and development in Africa. *Women, Youth, Culture and Development in Africa*, edited by Peter Okebukola, Institute for African Culture and International Understanding, Abeokuta, 2014.

UNESCO (2010). The power of culture for development. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000189382> Retrieved 12/07/21

UNESCO(1990).18 World Decade for Cultural Development. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0008/000852/08529eb.pdf,1990>. Retrieved on 12/07/21

UNESCO (2013B). 37 C/4: Medium-Term Strategy (2014-2021). <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002200/220031e.pdf> Retrieved on 13/07/21

Viejo-Rose, D., Sørensen, M.L.S. (2015). Cultural Heritage and Armed Conflict: New Questions for an Old Relationship. In: Waterton, E., Watson, S. (Eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Heritage Research*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137293565\\_18](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137293565_18)