

# The Role of Public Administration in Security and Economic Sustainability in Nigeria

**Neebani, Emmanuel Nubari Bariyoneton**

*Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences,  
University of Africa, Toru-Orua, Bayelsa State*

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## Abstract

The role of public administration in promoting security and economic sustainability in Nigeria is fundamental to the country's development and stability. Effective public administration ensures the execution of policies that enhance national security by directing efforts across various government agencies, law enforcement, and community stakeholders. It fosters an environment where security problems such as insurgency, terrorism, and communal conflicts are addressed through strategic planning, resource management, and accountability machinery. Simultaneously, public administration offers a vital role in driving economic sustainability by framing and implementing good policies that encourage economic diversification, infrastructure development, and inclusive growth. It facilitates the efficient allocation of resources, promotes transparency, and combats corruption, thereby creating a conducive atmosphere for investment and innovation. The study concluded that Nigeria's complex socio-political landscape, a robust and responsive public administration system is indispensable for balancing security imperatives with economic objectives. By integrating security concerns with sustainable economic policies, public administration helps to build resilient communities, protect national assets, and ensure long-term prosperity. This integrative approach not only stabilizes the socio-economic environment but also enhances public trust in government institutions, ultimately contributing to the overall progress and sustainability of Nigeria. The study adopted the development theory as its theoretical framework. More so, the research adopted secondary means to collect the data and analyses the findings descriptively. The study recommended that government should provide enough research funding in public administration and adopt a comprehensive framework in security and economic sustainability policies in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** *Development; Economic Sustainability; Promoting; Public Administration; Security*

**Corresponding Author:** Neebani, Emmanuel Nubari Bariyoneton

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## **Background to the Study**

Public administration constitutes the backbone of governance and public policy implementation in modern states. It represents the institutional machinery through which government decisions are translated into concrete actions that affect citizens' welfare, national security, and economic development. Adebayo (2021) states that in Nigeria, public administration occupies a critical position due to the country's complex socio-political environment, diverse ethnic composition, and persistent security and economic challenges. Since independence, Nigeria has struggled with governance deficits manifested in weak institutions, corruption, policy inconsistency, and inadequate service delivery. These challenges have been further complicated by rising insecurity such as insurgency in the North-East, banditry and kidnapping in the North-West, militancy in the Niger Delta, and recurring communal conflicts across different regions. These security challenges have negatively affected economic activities, disrupted livelihoods, reduced foreign direct investment, and deepened poverty. Okoli and Orinya (2019) submit that economic sustainability, on the other hand, requires long-term planning, effective policy coordination, and prudent management of resources to ensure that present development does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Public administration provides the framework for achieving this goal through sound economic planning, fiscal discipline, transparency, and accountability. This paper therefore examines the role of public administration in promoting security and economic sustainability in Nigeria, arguing that effective administration is indispensable for national development and stability.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Despite Nigeria's vast human and natural resources, the country continues to face persistent security crises and economic instability. Ezeani (2018) states that insecurity has become widespread, resulting in loss of lives, displacement of persons, destruction of property, and disruption of economic activities. At the same time, the Nigerian economy faces challenges such as unemployment, poverty, inflation, weak industrial base, and overdependence on oil revenues. Transparency International (2022) posits that weakness of public administration due to poor policy implementation, corruption, lack of coordination among government agencies, and inadequate institutional capacity have undermined effective governance. Security policies are often not integrated with economic development strategies, leading to fragmented responses that fail to address root causes of insecurity such as poverty, inequality, and unemployment. The inability of public administration to effectively balance security imperatives with economic sustainability raises serious concerns about Nigeria's development trajectory. This study therefore seeks to interrogate the role of public administration in addressing these interconnected challenges.

## **Research Questions**

1. How does public administration contribute to the promotion of security in Nigeria?
2. In what ways does public administration enhance economic sustainability in Nigeria?

**Objectives of the Study:** The main objective of the paper will examine the role of public administration in promoting security and economic sustainability in Nigeria, while its specific

objectives will include:

1. To assess how public administration contributes to the promotion of national security in Nigeria.
2. To examine the role of public administration in fostering economic sustainability in Nigeria.

## **Conceptual Clarifications**

### **Public Administration**

Public administration refers to the structured system of government institutions, processes, and personnel responsible for translating public policies into actionable programs and services. It encompasses ministries, departments, agencies, local governments, and public service institutions that collectively ensure governance continuity and effective policy execution. Wilson (1887) states that beyond routine administration, public administration functions as the operational machinery of the state, coordinating human, financial, and material resources to achieve collective societal goals. Peters (2021) submits that in contemporary governance, public administration extends beyond bureaucratic efficiency to include policy coordination, regulatory oversight, service delivery, and citizen engagement. Effective public administration is characterized by professionalism, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, and efficiency, which are critical for managing complex governance challenges in developing states such as Nigeria. Ezeani (2018) states that weak administrative capacity often results in poor policy implementation, corruption, and erosion of public trust. World Bank (2022) asserts that strong public administration enhances state capacity and promotes sustainable development outcomes by ensuring policy coherence and inter-agency collaboration. In Nigeria, the effectiveness of public administration directly affects the management of security and economic policies, making it a central pillar for national stability and development.

### **Security**

According to Buzan (1991) security refers to the protection of lives, property, territorial integrity, and societal values from internal and external threats. Consequently, UNDP (1994) argues that traditional security perspectives focused largely on military defense and state survival, but contemporary thinking has expanded to include human security, which emphasizes economic well-being, social stability, and freedom from fear and want. In Nigeria, security challenges are multidimensional and deeply intertwined with governance and development deficits. Onuoha (2020) states that issues such as insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, militancy, and communal conflicts continue to threaten national cohesion and economic productivity. These challenges demonstrate that security cannot be achieved solely through military responses but requires effective public administration, institutional coordination, and socio-economic interventions. Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpan-Robaro (2019) argue that poor governance, unemployment, poverty, and social exclusion exacerbate insecurity. Thus, security in Nigeria is closely linked to development and administrative effectiveness. Public administration plays a critical role in coordinating security agencies, managing intelligence frameworks, allocating resources, and ensuring accountability in the security sector.

### **Economic Sustainability**

UNEP (2020) declares that economic sustainability refers to the capacity of an economy to achieve long-term growth and stability without undermining social equity or exhausting natural resources. It involves prudent resource management, economic diversification, fiscal discipline, employment generation, and resilience against economic shocks. Sustainable economies are those capable of adapting to changing internal and global conditions while maintaining productivity and social welfare. World Bank (2023) states that Nigeria's economy faces significant sustainability challenges due to overdependence on oil revenues, exposure to global price volatility, high unemployment, and infrastructural decay. Ojo (2021) argues that achieving economic sustainability in Nigeria requires diversification into agriculture, manufacturing, technology, and services, supported by effective public administration. Obadan (2019) submits that public administration is central to economic sustainability through policy formulation, public financial management, regulatory reforms, and anti-corruption initiatives. World Bank (2021) declares that weak administrative institutions undermine economic policies and discourage investment, while strong institutions promote inclusive growth and long-term stability.

### **Promoting**

Promoting implies deliberate, systematic, and strategic actions aimed at advancing or enhancing specific policy goals. Dye (2017) states that in public administration, promoting security and economic sustainability involves policy formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, as well as mobilizing stakeholders and ensuring accountability in governance processes. Hill and Hupe (2021) state that promotion is not a passive administrative function but a proactive governance responsibility requiring leadership, institutional capacity, and adaptive policy mechanisms. Governments promote security by strengthening institutions, funding security agencies, encouraging community participation, and addressing socio-economic root causes of conflict. Similarly, economic sustainability is promoted through investment incentives, regulatory reforms, and social protection programs. Andrews (2020) submits that in Nigeria, weak monitoring and political interference often undermine promotional efforts. Effective public administration is therefore essential for translating policy intentions into tangible outcomes in security and economic sustainability.

### **Development**

Development is a multidimensional process involving improvements in economic growth, social welfare, institutional capacity, and quality of life. Todaro and Smith (2020) argue that development transcends mere income growth to include access to education, healthcare, security, political participation, and social justice. Sen (1999) conceptualizes development as the expansion of human capabilities and freedoms, emphasizing empowerment and choice. In Nigeria, development outcomes are closely linked to security stability and governance effectiveness. UNDP (2022) declares that persistent insecurity and weak institutions have constrained development efforts despite abundant natural and human resources. Development theory highlights the importance of state capacity and effective public administration in coordinating development initiatives and ensuring equitable resource distribution. Thus, sustainable development requires integrating security, economic

sustainability, and social inclusion into a coherent policy framework. Sachs (2021) posits that public administration plays a critical role in aligning development planning with security and economic policies, thereby ensuring long-term national progress.

### **Nigeria's Security Landscape: An Overview**

Nigeria's security environment has deteriorated significantly over the past two decades, presenting a complex mix of traditional and non-traditional threats. The scenario had made the country to confront a complex and evolving security environment that combines insurgency, organized criminality, communal conflict, and emerging technological threats. Nigeria faces a range of security threat which includes:

1. **Terrorism (Boko Haram/ISWAP)** in the Northeast: Foucher (2024) laments that the Islamist insurgency in the Northeast originally led by Boko Haram and later split into competing factions such as ISWAP remains a persistent source of violence, displacement, and humanitarian crises despite sustained military pressure.
2. **Banditry and cattle rustling** in the Northwest. UNIDIR (2024) states that loosely organized bandit gangs have transformed into violent criminal networks that carry out cattle rustling, large-scale kidnappings, and extortion, severely disrupting rural economies and displacing communities.
3. **Kidnapping** for ransom. National Bureau of Statistics (2024) states that kidnapping for ransom has proliferated across regions and now represents a mass security challenge with substantial social and economic costs; national surveys estimate millions of incidents in recent reporting periods, signaling a sharp uptick in everyday criminality and threats to mobility and business.
4. **Militancy and oil theft:** International Crisis Group (2024) declares that in the Niger Delta, militant groups and criminal networks targeting oil infrastructure have persisted in attacks, vandalism, and oil theft actions that reduce government revenues, raise production costs, and undermine investor confidence in the hydrocarbon sector.
5. **Communal clashes and separatist tensions** in the Southeast: Global Initiative / GI-TOC. (2024) submit that the Southeast has seen a resurgence of separatist-linked violence and “sit-at-home” campaigns associated with groups like IPOB and its offshoots; these actions have produced deadly incidents, economic paralysis in affected areas, and complex legal and political responses.

These challenges impose substantial economic costs, displace populations, and weaken investor confidence.

### **The Role of Public Administration in Security Management**

#### **a. Policy Formulation and Implementation**

Public administrators craft and execute national security policies through ministries such as Defence, Interior, and Police Affairs. Dye (2017) presents public administrators as human resource that are responsible for formulating and implementing national security policies through institutions such as the Ministries of Defence, Interior, and Police Affairs. These policies provide strategic direction for addressing internal and external threats and ensuring public safety.

### **b. Coordination of Security Agencies**

Institutions like the National Security Adviser (NSA) facilitate interagency cooperation. Peters (2021) submits that, the efficient and effective interplay of this function enhances inter-agency collaboration, intelligence sharing, reduces duplication of efforts, and improves operational efficiency. This means that fragmented security governance often undermines counter-terrorism and crime-prevention efforts in Nigeria.

### **c. Intelligence Management**

Public agencies gather, analyze, and share intelligence to prevent crime and conflict. Onuoha, (2020) Public administration also plays a vital role in intelligence management, including data collection, analysis, and dissemination to prevent crime and conflict.

### **d. Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution**

Local governments engage in grassroots conflict mediation and community policing initiatives. UNDP (2022) declares that at the grassroots level, local governments contribute to peacebuilding and conflict resolution through community policing, mediation, and early-warning mechanisms.

### **e. Regulatory Frameworks**

Public administration enforces laws governing firearms, border control, and movement of goods and persons. This means that regulatory frameworks governing firearms, borders, and migration are enforced through administrative institutions. Finally, security governance succeeds when public administration is proactive, accountable, and community-oriented. Without effective administration, security institutions remain reactive and ineffective.

## **The Role of Public Administration in Economic Sustainability**

### **a. Economic Planning and Policy Design**

Agencies such as the Ministry of Finance, Budget Office, and National Planning Commission develop economic frameworks. World Bank (2023) states that economic planning and policy design are achieved through institutions such as the Ministry of Finance, Budget Office, and National Planning Commission that develop frameworks that guide fiscal discipline, growth, and development priorities. Effective planning ensures alignment between national development plans and available resources.

### **b. Resource Management**

Proper allocation of resources through budgeting enhances sustainability. Ojo (2021) submits that public administration ensures efficient resource management through budgeting, public financial management systems, and accountability mechanisms such as the Treasury Single Account (TSA) and Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS). This role of public administration has been credited with reducing leakages and improving fiscal transparency in Nigeria.

### **c. Infrastructure Development**

Public administration drives improvements in transportation, energy, water, and ICT.

Infrastructure development in transportation, energy, water, and ICT is largely driven by administrative coordination and regulatory oversight.

**d. Diversification Policies**

Administrative bodies promote agriculture, manufacturing, and the digital economy. Obadan (2019) states that public administration promotes economic diversification by implementing policies that support agriculture, manufacturing, and the digital economy, thereby reducing dependence on oil revenues.

**e. Public Sector Reforms**

Reforms such as IPPIS, TSA, and anti-corruption campaigns strengthen fiscal discipline. Public sector reforms and anti-corruption campaigns which are implemented by public administrators strengthen investor confidence and long-term economic resilience. Thus, sustainable economic growth is unattainable without strong administrative institutions capable of policy consistency and effective implementation.

<b>Public Administration Function</b>	<b>Security Role</b>	<b>Economic Sustainability Role</b>
<b>Policy Formulation</b>	National security strategies	Economic policies and frameworks
<b>Resource Allocation</b>	Defense and policing budgets	Sectoral allocation for growth
<b>Coordination</b>	Interagency security collaboration	Inter-ministerial economic harmonization
<b>Regulation</b>	Enforcement of security laws	Market regulations, fiscal rules
<b>Service Delivery</b>	Safety, policing, justice	Education, health, infrastructure

**Relationship Between Public Administration, Security, and Sustainability**

The relationship between public administration, security, and sustainability is inherently interconnected and mutually reinforcing in the context of national development. Ezeani (2018) states that public administration serves as the institutional engine through which policies are articulated, coordinated, and implemented to address complex societal challenges, including threats to security and the pursuit of sustainable development outcomes. Rothstein and Teorell, (2019) assert that effective public administrative systems provide the structural foundation that enables governments to design and enforce security strategies, allocate resources efficiently, and coordinate interagency actions to mitigate risks such as insurgency, communal violence, and criminality. World Bank (2022) highlights that robust governance structures in public administration directly influence national security outcomes by facilitating policy coherence, coordinated intelligence sharing, and crisis response mechanisms, thus ensuring the safety and stability required for sustainable socio-economic activities.

Security, in turn, is both a precondition and outcome of sustainable development. Without a secure environment, economic activities are disrupted, investment confidence declines, and social services such as education and healthcare are undermined, all of which weaken institutional capacity and long-term sustainability. Onuoha (2020) demonstrates that governance deficits such as corruption, fragmentation, and poor coordination within public administration can compound security challenges, limiting the state's ability to deliver essential services and weakening public trust. Conversely, UNDP (2022) states that sustainable development enhances security by addressing root causes such as poverty, inequality, and unemployment, which are often drivers of insecurity. For instance, sustainability frameworks emphasize inclusive economic growth, resilient infrastructure, and social equity as central pillars for both stability and long-term prosperity.

Ojo (2021) posits that public administration acts as a bridge between security and sustainability: it enables the implementation of policies that not only protect citizens but also promote equitable socio-economic progress. Effective administrative governance fosters trust and legitimacy, improves service delivery, and ensures that security strategies are harmonized with broader development goals. World Bank (2023) submits that this integrated approach demonstrates that neither security nor sustainability can be achieved in isolation; rather, they require coherent, accountable, and well-resourced public institutions capable of navigating the complexities of modern governance. Peters (2021) declares that the relationship between these three domains reflects a virtuous **cycle** wherein effective public administration promotes security, security underpins sustainability, and sustainable socio-economic development reinforces stability.

## **Challenges Affecting Public Administration in Nigeria**

### **1. Corruption and Weak Accountability**

- i. Corruption remains deeply entrenched across public institutions, diverting resources away from public goods and undermining trust in government. Nigeria ranked poorly in the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, and anti-graft agencies report ongoing systemic challenges.
- ii. Weak accountability allows fiscal leakages, 'ghost workers,' and inflated contract costs to persist, affecting service delivery and public investment outcomes.

### **2. Poor Institutional Capacity and Workforce Competence**

- i. Many public institutions lack adequate human and technical capacity, undermining policy implementation and responsiveness to complex public needs.
- ii. Skill gaps and inadequate professional development hinder the adoption of modern administrative and digital governance practices.

### **3. Political Interference and Policy Instability**

- i. Political appointments and partisan influence compromise meritocracy, weaken institutional autonomy, and skew resource allocation.
- ii. Frequent shifts in policy direction with each administration disrupt continuity in major public programs and deter long-term planning.

#### **4. Inadequate Funding and Resource Constraints**

- i. Chronic underfunding hampers the capacity of critical agencies, particularly in security, health, and education, limiting effective service delivery.
- ii. Budget releases often lag approved allocations, further weakening implementation capacity at national and subnational levels.

#### **5. Bureaucratic Inefficiency and Red Tape**

- i. Slow administrative processes and cumbersome procedures delay policy implementation and frustrate both officials and citizens.
- ii. Overlapping functions among ministries and agencies contribute to duplication, poor coordination, and resource waste.

#### **6. Security Challenges as an Administrative Burden**

- i. Persistent insecurity—from insurgency and banditry to kidnappings strains public administration and diverts resources to emergency responses. Recent government emergency declarations and deployments illustrate the severity of the threat.

#### **7. Fragmented Public Trust and Citizen Engagement**

- i. Declining trust in state institutions, driven by governance deficits, weak accountability, and poor service delivery, reduces citizen cooperation and compliance with public initiatives.

### **Strategies for Enhancing Security through Public Administration**

#### **Strengthen Intelligence Coordination**

Enhance inter-agency intelligence sharing and real-time data integration to anticipate and respond to security threats more effectively.

#### **Expand and Institutionalize Community Policing**

Prioritize localized community policing partnerships to foster trust and improve grassroots crime reporting and prevention.

#### **Modernize Security Infrastructure and Technology**

Invest in digital surveillance, automated border systems, and communication networks to support rapid response and deterrence.

#### **Enhance Border Security and Management**

Improve border control through better deployment of multi-agency units, bilateral cooperation with neighbors, and strategic infrastructure upgrades at crossing points.

#### **Strengthen Civil–Military Collaboration in Internal Security**

Coordinate defense, police, and civilian support services strategically under clear legal frameworks to manage insurgency and banditry effectively.

### **Strategies for Promoting Economic Sustainability through Public Administration Diversification Beyond Oil and Extractives**

Support sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, and technology through targeted incentives, credit access expansion, and value-chain growth. Recent reforms to expand formal credit support underline this approach.

### **Strengthening Anti-Corruption Institutions and Enforcement**

Build capacity and independence of agencies like EFCC and ICPC, alongside legislative reforms to insulate them from undue political influence.

### **Investing in Human Capital and Skills Development**

Prioritize education, vocational training, and digital upskilling to build a more adaptive workforce capable of driving sustainable economic transformation.

### **Enhancing Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)**

Leverage PPP models to finance infrastructure, service delivery, and technology investments, while strengthening transparency and contract monitoring mechanisms.

### **Improving Fiscal Transparency and Budget Efficiency**

Adopt open budgeting platforms, robust audit systems, and performance-linked financing to improve public spending outcomes and investor confidence.

### **Promoting Inclusive Growth through Social Investment Programs**

Expand targeted social investment schemes to support vulnerable populations, promote youth employment, and stimulate local enterprise growth.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper employed Development Theory propounded by Walt W. Rostow (1960) as its theoretical framework. Often cited in political science and public administration literature. The theory proposed the Stages of Economic Growth, which views development as a linear process through stages from traditional society to high mass consumption. Rostow, is widely regarded as a classical propounded of modernization-oriented development theory. This arises from the reason that development theory emphasizes the role of the state and its institutions in driving socio-economic transformation. Scholars within this tradition argue that development does not occur automatically through market forces alone but requires deliberate state intervention through effective institutions and policies. Development theorists such as Rodney (1972) and Todaro and Smith (2020) posit that strong public institutions are essential for coordinating resources, managing conflicts, and promoting inclusive growth. In the Nigerian context, public administration serves as the primary mechanism through which development goals are articulated and implemented. Through effective administration, the state can integrate security policies with economic development strategies, ensuring that both objectives reinforce each other.

## **Methodology**

The study adopted a qualitative research design based on secondary data sources. Data were obtained from textbooks, academic journals, government reports, and publications from international organizations. The data were analyzed descriptively to provide insights into the role of public administration in promoting security and economic sustainability in Nigeria.

## **Discussion and Analysis**

This paper is anchored in Development Theory, which argues that state institutions particularly public administration is central to a country's socio-economic transformation and long-term development outcomes. Development theory emphasizes that governance systems, public policy implementation, and institutional capacity are critical for achieving national development goals, including security and economic sustainability. In the context of Nigeria's complex development challenges, this theoretical framework underscores how the effectiveness of public administrative systems determines the extent to which development outcomes are realized.

The first research question—how public administration contributes to the promotion of security in Nigeria—aligns with the study's first specific objective of assessing this contribution. According to development theory, security is not merely the absence of conflict but a foundation for development, enabling stable environments where economic and social activities can thrive. Public administration contributes to security through the design and implementation of policies that strengthen institutional responses to insurgency, banditry, and communal violence. Administrative coordination ensures that security agencies operate within coherent frameworks, resources are allocated efficiently, and community-based approaches (e.g., community policing) are institutionalized. Ogunwa (2025) declares that on governance and socio-economic development emphasize that weak institutional arrangements and governance disequilibrium can exacerbate instability and undermine security.

The second research question in what ways public administration enhances economic sustainability in Nigeria corresponds with the objective of examining the public administrative role in sustainable economic outcomes. From the lens of development theory, economic sustainability requires effective public policies, strong regulatory frameworks, strategic planning, and the capacity to implement development plans. Public administration influences economic sustainability by ensuring that development policies are executed, markets are regulated, fiscal management is prudent, and investment frameworks are in place to support growth sectors. Okolie and Ikenga (2025) emphasize that public administration and sustainable development in Nigeria highlight that administrative performance impacts socio-economic indicators such as employment, infrastructural development, and living standards.

Udo, Daniel and Willie (2024) argue that public administration policies and their effects on the Nigerian economy shows that administrative decisions such as policy consistency, fiscal discipline, and public sector reforms can significantly shape economic trajectories. This

argument collectively affirms that when public administration is effective, both security and economic sustainability are more achievable. Conversely, gaps in governance, limited institutional capacity, and policy discontinuities impede development efforts, reinforcing why robust administration is crucial for national development.

Finally, in the lens of development theory, the research questions offer a coherent framework for analyzing how public administration functions as a driver of both national security and economic sustainability in Nigeria. Thus, linking administrative practices to development outcomes, the paper illuminates the institutional dynamics that either facilitate or constrain sustainable development.

### **Conclusion**

The study concludes that public administration is indispensable to promoting security and economic sustainability in Nigeria. Effective administration enables policy coordination, strengthens institutions, and integrates security imperatives with economic objectives. Without a robust public administration system, efforts to address insecurity and achieve sustainable development are likely to remain ineffective.

### **Recommendations**

1. Government should increase funding for research and capacity-building in public administration.
2. Public administration institutions should adopt integrated frameworks that link security policies with economic sustainability strategies.
3. Transparency and accountability mechanisms should be strengthened to enhance public trust and governance effectiveness.

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