The Role of Media in Enhancing National Security and Public Safety

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Abstract

Employing a document survey method and content analysis, which entail the rigorous search and analysis of existing information derived from different sources, this paper identifies the media sector as a crucial player in bolstering national security, serving as a communication bridge between the government and the public and providing a positive reference for personal security planning. The media institution—encompassing traditional outlets like newspapers and television, as well as social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and X-plays a key role in informing, educating, and raising awareness on security and safety issues, thereby fostering public vigilance and resilience. Through accurate reporting, the media can help dispel misinformation, prevent panic, and encourage informed public discourse on national security policies, actions, and operations. However, using a combination of the broken windows theory of Wilson & Kelling (1982) and varieties of media theories, such as Entman's Frames theory (1993) and Herman & Chomsky's Propaganda Model (1988), the paper posits that media actors can sometimes exacerbate already delicate security environments by developing, reporting, and presenting one-sided perspectives that hinder their role as watchdogs holding governments and other stakeholders accountable for security and safety measures and decisions. It recommends that the media balances transparency and human rights concerns with discretion to avoid compromising sensitive national security operations or inadvertently aiding adversaries of the public, state, and environment. The paper concludes that a responsible, collaborative relationship between the media and security agencies is essential to maintaining public trust, national stability, and societal development.

Keywords: Media, National Security, Public Awareness, Misinformation, Public Vigilance

Introduction

National security is a paramount concern for every country, encompassing the protection of its citizens, institutions, and interests from both internal and external threats. In the modern era, the media plays a critical role in shaping perceptions, disseminating information, and influencing public opinion, which directly impacts national security (Buzan, Waever, & De Wilde, 1998). The media's power to inform and educate the public makes it an essential partner in promoting a secure and stable society. National security is foundational to the stability of societies, where the media has a pivotal role in shaping public perception, disseminating critical information, and fostering an informed citizenry. From real-time news reporting to public awareness campaigns, media acts as an intermediary between law enforcement agencies and the public. By providing not only incident reporting but also trend predictions and guidance on public safety practices, media outlets contribute to collective security (Castells, 2007).

In recent years, media organizations have leveraged data analytics—using tools to analyse crime statistics, assess emergency response times, and gauge public reaction to incidents. This data-driven approach allows media to influence policy decisions, contribute to crime prevention, and enhance overall community safety (Adetula & Smah, 2002; Goldstein, 2014). This paper examines how different forms of media—traditional, digital, and social—utilise data to prevent crime, raise awareness, and improve community security. Through case studies and empirical data, it explores how timely and accurate information dissemination contributes to crime reduction and a heightened

sense of security within communities. Security is everyone's business because it impacts all aspects of life. According to Williams (2008), understanding world politics is impossible without acknowledging security's centrality. People across the globe are affected by security concerns in tangible ways, with the media perpetually covering incidents of violence, deprivation, displacement, and discrimination in the name of security. Security discourse saturates political speeches, opinion columns, and digital media, making it a pressing and often complex topic (Booth, 2007).

Security, as some analysts suggest, is a subjective and flexible concept, interpreted according to the values and priorities of each society (Baldwin, 1997). Most International Relations (IR) scholars define security in terms of alleviating threats to cherished values, making it inherently political, as Lasswell (1956) noted, determining "who gets what, when, and how" (Lodge, Page, & Balla, 2015). Consequently, security studies transcend intellectual pursuits, as they strive to address real-world concerns, blending analysis of the past with actionable insights for the future. This paper adopts this pragmatic perspective, examining security issues that directly impact real people and places (Booth, 2007).

The objectives of the paper are to: -
  (a) explain the role of media in enhancing national security and safety
  (b) Critical examine the relationship between media and national security issues
  (c) Make recommendations on best practices that enhance collaborative relationship between the media and national security operators

2. Methodological Sketch
This paper relies on data gathered through desk-based research, utilising a critical review and analysis of secondary sources. Documentary research—where data previously collected is analysed by researchers—forms the core of this approach, as it allows for the synthesis of existing information and comparative analysis over time (Bryman, 2016). Secondary data are chosen to enhance sample size and provide efficiency, as pre-existing data enables researchers to identify trends, draw parallels, and evaluate historical changes effectively (Smith, 2008). Secondary data sources are crucial for facilitating extensive research projects. They allow multiple research groups to collect, analyse, and compare data in coordinated efforts, thereby enriching findings across research settings (Johnston, 2017). Typical sources of secondary data include government departments, public service records, library archives, internet databases, and large-scale data sets like national censuses (Hakim, 2000). The reliability and accessibility of these resources support comprehensive analysis, enabling researchers to tackle complex questions efficiently and draw conclusions relevant to broader contexts (Heaton, 2004).

3. Theorising National Security and Public Safety
National security and public safety are complex concepts interpreted through various, often conflicting perspectives. This paper highlights selected theoretical approaches which were used to deepen the understanding of these concepts. The broken windows theory and selected national security-based media theories were used to provide the theoretical basis for understanding the issues inherent therein.

(a) Broken Windows Theory
The broken windows theory, introduced in 1982 by social scientists James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling, posits that visible signs of disorder, such as a single broken window, signal that an area is uncared for, encouraging further vandalism and crime (Wilson & Kelling, 1982). The theory argues that disorder escalates levels of fear among residents, leading them to disengage from community activities and reduce informal social control, which weakens the neighbourhood's collective efficacy (Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999). Research has shown mixed results regarding the theory's effectiveness in crime reduction; however, it continues to influence policing strategies that emphasise order maintenance and community involvement (Harcourt, 2001).

(b)   Media Theories and National Security
A number of media theories exist that links to our perception of national security concerns. For example, the framing theory, agenda-setting, McQuail's mass communication theory, Herman and Chomsky'spropaganda model and Castells's network society theory all shade important light on the role of the media and national security. Furthermore, the interplay between media and national security is a critical area of study, especially in the digital age where information dissemination and security threats are deeply intertwined. The theory of media and national security examines how media influences public perception, policy decisions, and the operational aspects of national security. A brief on each of them follows hereunder.

(I)   Robert M Entman's Framing Theory (1993). The Framing theory explains how media selects, emphasises, and interprets aspects of reality to shape public perception. In the context of national security, the media's framing of security issues significantly influences how the public and policymakers perceive threats and prioritize responses. For instance, framing terrorism as an existential threat can justify stricter surveillance policies, while framing it as a localized issue may limit public concern. In national security, framing can also impact operational strategies. Norris et al. (2003) highlight how the framing of the "War on Terror" shaped global security policies, fostering international cooperation and justifying military interventions. However, framing sensitive security issues requires caution, as biased or sensationalist frames can escalate public fear and hinder diplomatic efforts.

(ii)   Agenda-Setting Theory. The Agenda-Setting Theory, proposed by McCombs and Shaw (1972), asserts that the media significantly influences public priorities by determining which issues are highlighted in the news. Regarding national security, the media's focus on particular threats, such as cyberattacks or terrorism, directs public and governmental attention to these issues, often leading to increased funding and policy initiatives. This theory underscores the symbiotic relationship between media and national security

agencies. Governments may strategically release information to align the media's agenda with security objectives, as demonstrated during the Gulf War (Bennett & Paletz, 1994). However, overemphasis on specific security threats can overshadow other critical issues, leading to imbalanced policy-making.

(iii)   The media plays a dual role in national security, acting as both a disseminator of information and a tool for public mobilisation. According to McQuail's Mass Communication Theory (2010), media serves as a channel for state propaganda, ensuring public support during national emergencies. Governments often leverage media to foster national unity and disseminate security-related information, emphasizing its utility in countering misinformation during crises.

(iv)   The media's reporting on national security can lead to a "security-media nexus," where information disclosure may unintentionally compromise security operations, creating media and security dilemmas. Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model (1988) suggests that media, while independent, often aligns with state interests due to economic and political pressures. However, excessive censorship risks eroding democratic values, a concern highlighted by Bennett and Paletz (1994) in their exploration of media and national security.

(v)   Also, the advent of digital media has intensified cybersecurity threats. Social media platforms have been identified as vectors for spreading propaganda, hacking, and espionage, posing new challenges to national security (Singer & Friedman, 2014). Theories of digital communication, such as Castells' Network Society (1996), argue that the decentralisation of information networks has amplified both the reach and vulnerability of state security mechanisms, creating operational tensions.

In terms of applicability to this paper, the theoretical explanatory framework is therefore, built on understanding the dynamic relationship between broken windows' practices and national security perspectives in the media reportage of incidents and consequences, which on the one hand, suggest that consistent coverage of small-scale security concerns, such as local crimes or

cyber vulnerabilities, can create a culture of accountability and vigilance. By highlighting early warning signs and promoting proactive measures, media can help mitigate risks before they escalate into significant threats. For instance, local media's focus on community-level security issues can mobilize citizens to engage in preventative measures, fostering collaboration between the public and law enforcement. This approach aligns with the broader objective of maintaining social order and reducing opportunities for criminal activities. On the other hand, media coverage of national security incidents raises ethical questions. The principle of "public's right to know" often conflicts with operational secrecy, which may lead unintentionally to incidents manipulation by agencies. For example, Entman's Framing Theory explains how media 'frames' can shape public opinion and policy priorities, sometimes escalating public fear or misinformation. In this instance, the theory of media and national security underscores the need for intricate balance between transparency and security. While media can bolster national security through public information dissemination and countering propaganda, it also presents risks when operational details are exposed or manipulated. Understanding this dynamic is crucial for policymakers, media practitioners, and security agencies in the fight against insecurity in Nigeria or elsewhere.

4. Security and its Multidimensional Structure

Security lacks a universally accepted definition and thus remains an interdisciplinary and dynamic field without a standardised knowledge or skill structure (Jore, 2019). However, this should not imply that security lacks definable boundaries or structured knowledge; the presence of numerous agencies, departments, and regulatory bodies dedicated to security highligts its significance and organisational coherence.

According to Werthes, Heaven, and Vollnhals (1995), contemporary security frameworks increasingly focus on "human security," a concept broadened by the *Human Development Report* of 1994. This report emphasised the need to centre political discourse on individual well-being, introducing seven dimensions of human security: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security (UNDP, 1994). The human security paradigm has since influenced numerous policy frameworks and security strategies worldwide, underscoring that human development and security are interconnected (Smah & Smah, 2023; Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy, 2007). Barry Buzan (1991) expanded on the traditional concept of national security by identifying five core dimensions:

(i) **Military Security**: Protecting state sovereignty and physical integrity.

(ii) **Political Security**: Preserving political stability and institutional integrity.

(iii) **Economic Security**: Safeguarding critical industries and economic resilience.

(iv) **Societal Security**: Ensuring societal harmony and cohesion, often against internal threats.

(v) **Environmental Security**: Addressing ecological threats that could destabilise the nation.

Each dimension underscores the multifaceted nature of security, reflecting the various risks nations face in a globalised world (Buzan, Wæver, & De Wilde, 1998).

5. Nigeria's National Security Strategy

In the National Security Strategy- NSS2014 (see NSA, 2014) Nigeria defined its policy national security response, to encompass, among other things:

i. The national security interest (i.e. preservation of national sovereignty, territorial integrity and constitutional order, country's stability and economic, social and cultural development, etc.)

ii. Geostrategic environment, national security threats (global, transnational organised crimes, crude oil theft/illegal bunkering, border, climate change, communal and ethno-religious conflicts, pastoralists/farmers conflict, politics and federalist structure/performance, governance, poverty, kidnapping,

proliferation of small arms and light weapons, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, illegal migration, economic and financial crimes, information technology and cybersecurity, etc.)

iii. National security strategies, which encompass national defence, counter-terrorism, soft approach to counter-terrorism, Niger Delta security, Internal security, political security, economic security, food security, social security, gender security, cultural security, traditional institutions, environmental security, education security, health security, science, technology and innovation, space technology, external security, foreign policy, information technology and cybersecurity, labour security, transportation and aviation security, maritime security, nuclear security strategy, drug law enforcement strategy, strategic communications, youth security, crisis management, critical national assets and infrastructure

iv. Ensuring sustainability of national security strategy by focusing on risk management and culture of preparedness

This strategy exemplifies an integrated approach, recognising the intersections of security with socio-economic development, political stability, and environmental sustainability (NSA, 2014). Such multidimensional frameworks highlight the growing trend among nations to adopt comprehensive, interdisciplinary approaches to security. The intersection of media and national security has been a focal point of academic inquiry, highlighting how media influences public perception, shapes policy debates, and aids in addressing security threats. Media serves as a conduit for disseminating information, mobilizing public opinion, and fostering transparency. However, it also poses challenges, including the potential for misinformation and the compromise of sensitive security operations. This review synthesizes scholarly perspectives on the role of media in enhancing national security, with attention to its benefits, challenges, and ethical implications.

Media plays a critical role in raising awareness about national security threats, including terrorism, cyberattacks, and public health crises. Research by Norris et al. (2003) highlights the media's capacity to educate citizens on potential risks and safety measures. The dissemination of accurate and timely information can enhance public preparedness and foster a culture of vigilance. During crises, such as terrorist attacks or natural disasters, media outlets provide real-time updates, helping authorities to communicate effectively with the public (Quarantelli, 1996). Studies have shown that media coverage of security threats can influence public behavior, such as increasing compliance with evacuation orders or adopting cybersecurity practices (Palen et al., 2010).

Media has been instrumental in countering extremist narratives and supporting counterterrorism strategies. Social media platforms, in particular, offer a space to challenge misinformation and propaganda disseminated by terrorist organizations (Conway et al., 2017). The use of strategic communication campaigns, involving partnerships between governments and media organizations, has proven effective in de-radicalizing individuals and promoting alternative narratives (Briggs & Feve, 2013). However, scholars caution against the over-sensationalization of terrorism by media, which can amplify fear and inadvertently serve the agenda of extremist groups (Altheide, 2006). Ethical guidelines and responsible reporting practices are crucial to balancing the need for public awareness with the risk of sensationalism.

In the digital age, media plays a pivotal role in promoting cybersecurity awareness. Educational campaigns on cyber hygiene and the risks of cyberattacks are frequently disseminated through traditional and digital media channels. Research by Bada et al. (2019) emphasizes the importance of media-driven awareness programs in reducing vulnerabilities to cyber threats. Nevertheless, the rapid spread of misinformation and fake news on digital platforms poses a significant challenge to cybersecurity efforts. Studies indicate that misinformation campaigns can undermine trust in institutions and create

societal divisions, potentially exacerbating national security risks (Tucker et al., 2018). Social media, in particular, offers real-time engagement with at-risk populations, enabling the swift distribution of counter-narratives. Research by Conway et al. (2017) demonstrates the potential of digital platforms in neutralizing propaganda efforts by extremist groups, such as ISIS. Successful campaigns often involve collaboration between governments, civil society, and media organizations to ensure culturally relevant and impactful messaging.

Media platforms, especially social media, have become valuable tools for intelligence gathering in counterterrorism operations. Real-time monitoring of online activity can reveal patterns, networks, and emerging threats. Studies by Weimann (2015) underscore the role of social media in providing critical insights into the strategies and communications of terrorist organizations.

Media plays a pivotal role in crisis communication during terrorist incidents, providing real-time updates and essential information to the public. Effective crisis communication can help manage panic, coordinate emergency responses, and dispel rumors (Palen et al., 2010). Research emphasizes the importance of maintaining a balance between transparency and operational security, ensuring that media coverage does not compromise counterterrorism operations. Collaboration between media outlets, law enforcement agencies, and policymakers is crucial for effective counterterrorism communication. Joint efforts can ensure the responsible reporting of terrorist incidents and the amplification of counter-narratives. Studies by Fisher et al. (2019) advocate for media guidelines that prioritize accuracy, avoid sensationalism, and focus on community resilience. Additionally, public-private partnerships with social media companies have proven effective in curbing the spread of extremist content. Initiatives such as the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT) demonstrate the potential of collaborative approaches in enhancing online safety and combating terrorism.

6. Materials and Discussion

The materials and discussions in this paper cover the intricacies of national security in Nigeria, which encompasses diverse internal and external challenges. The section discusses various security issues, from the traditional defence of territorial integrity to the rise of non-traditional threats like insurgency, banditry, and militancy.

Nature of National Security

National security in Nigeria is influenced by numerous socio-political, economic, and geographical factors, which define its multifaceted nature. It includes traditional security concerns, such as military defence and safeguarding territorial integrity, along with non-traditional threats like terrorism, organised crime, and cyber threats (Onuoha, 2012; Akinbi, 2015).

1. Internal Security Threats

A number of internal security threat sources are worthy of mention to contextualise our discussion. They include the following:

Boko Haram Insurgency

Boko Haram, founded in 2002 by Mohammed Yusuf, began as a religious movement but transformed into a violent insurgency after Yusuf's death in 2009. The group's stated aim was to establish an Islamic state in northern Nigeria. Boko Haram's operations have severely impacted Nigeria, including the notable 2011 attack on the United Nations headquarters in Abuja, which claimed 23 lives and injured over 75 people, leading the U.S. to designate Boko Haram as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO) in 2013 (Pham, 2012; Campbell & Harwood, 2018). The group's 2014 abduction of 276 schoolgirls from Chibok drew international attention through the #BringBackOurGirls campaign. By 2014, Boko Haram controlled significant territories in northeastern Nigeria and later pledged allegiance to ISIS, rebranding as the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) (Zenn, 2021). By 2020, Boko Haram's insurgency had led to over 350,000 deaths, with 35,000 resulting from direct combat, while indirect causes such as hunger and disease caused further casualties (UNDP, 2021). The World Bank estimated that the economic toll of

Boko Haram's activities exceeded $9 billion by 2017, affecting agriculture and infrastructure (World Bank, 2018). Despite efforts by the Nigerian government and international partners, Boko Haram remains active and continues its asymmetric attacks (Adesoji, 2011).

Banditry and Kidnapping
Banditry has emerged as a major security concern, especially in the northwest and central regions of Nigeria, with significant consequences for rural communities. Initially manifesting as cattle rustling, banditry escalated over the years, fuelled by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (Adebayo, 2019). Between 2018 and 2021, widespread attacks in Zamfara, Katsina, and Kaduna led to hundreds of deaths and mass displacement, with high-profile incidents like the 2020 Kankara school abduction bringing international attention (Ibrahim & Mukhtar, 2021). Despite intensified military efforts, banditry remains a complex issue driven by weak governance and economic inequalities (Olaniyan & Yahaya, 2016).

Militancy in the Niger Delta
Militancy in the Niger Delta stems from grievances over environmental degradation, marginalisation, and the region's underdevelopment despite its oil wealth. Early movements, like the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) led by Ken Saro-Wiwa, advocated against environmental damage by oil companies, particularly Shell. This movement marked the beginning of organised resistance (Saro-Wiwa, 1995). In the mid-2000s, militant groups like the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) emerged, launching attacks that significantly disrupted Nigeria's oil production and economy (Peel, 2010). In 2009, Nigeria introduced the Amnesty Program, which reduced large-scale violence by offering disarmament, training, and reintegration to militants (Idemudia, 2009). However, low-level insurgency persisted, driven by unresolved environmental and developmental grievances. Groups like the Niger Delta Avengers

(NDA) in 2015-2016 revived attacks, severely impacting oil output (Obi & Rustad, 2011). While large-scale militancy has decreased, the Niger Delta remains volatile with challenges related to piracy, oil theft, and occasional militant attacks.

2.   External Security Dimensions
The following issues exemplify sources of insecurity external to Nigeria. For example:
(a) Porous Borders
Nigeria's porous borders stretch over 4,000 km, neighbouring Niger, Chad, Cameroon, and Benin. This extensive and poorly controlled expanse has facilitated transnational crime, arms trafficking, and the movement of insurgents and militants into Nigeria, complicating its national security efforts. The Boko Haram insurgency, for instance, has exploited these unguarded borders, particularly with Niger and Chad, to conduct cross-border operations since 2009. Border insecurity also contributes to illegal trade in arms, drugs, and human trafficking. This unrestricted movement fuels internal threats, especially in the northern regions, where terrorism and banditry thrive (Onuoha, 2013; Eze, 2019). Additionally, the Lake Chad Basin crisis exacerbates instability, allowing extremist groups like Boko Haram and ISWAP to infiltrate Nigeria and carry out attacks (Adeniran, 2021). The inflow of migrants and refugees from conflicts in Chad, Niger, and Cameroon places a further strain on Nigeria's resources, especially as refugee camps sometimes become recruitment grounds for extremist groups. Farmer-herder conflicts have also intensified due to unchecked herder movement across borders, leading to violent clashes, particularly in the Middle Belt region. The farmer-herder crisis has worsened since 2014, fuelled by factors like climate change, desertification, and population pressure, all pushing herders southward (Abass, 2012). Despite Nigeria's establishment of the Nigeria Immigration Service Border Patrol Corps in 2010 and joint patrols with neighboring countries, issues like corruption, inadequate resources, and insufficient infrastructure have limited these initiatives' effectiveness (Aghedo & Osumah, 2012).

(b) Economic Security Challenges

Economic security is critical to Nigeria's stability, where high unemployment, poverty, and inflation exacerbate security issues. The country's over-dependence on oil exposes it to price shocks, as seen in the 2016 recession triggered by a global oil price drop. This dependency, which accounts for over 90% of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings, undermines sustainable economic growth, contributing to rising unemployment and economic hardship (Ekpo & Umoh, 2018). The recent removal of fuel subsidies in 2023 increased fuel prices, which spurred a high cost of living and led to protests. These economic strains have underscored the relationship between economic policies and national security, as poverty and economic insecurity increase crime and unrest. Moreover, food insecurity worsens due to inflation, desertification, and insecurity in farming areas, heightening the risk of political instability and violence (NBS, 2020; Ajakaiye & Fakiyesi, 2009).

(c) Human Security Challenges

Human security in Nigeria encompasses the safety and well-being of citizens, impacted by issues like poverty, food insecurity, and public health challenges. With over 40% of Nigerians living below the poverty line, economic hardship propels crime and extremism, creating a vicious cycle of insecurity (UNDP, 2021). Food security is further threatened by climate change, land degradation, and insurgent activities that disrupt agricultural productivity, especially in the northeast (FAO, 2020). Health security also remains a priority, as inadequate healthcare infrastructure and outbreaks of diseases, like cholera and COVID-19, have strained public health resources. Efforts to improve human security must address these interconnected threats through socio-economic reforms and improved governance (Olanrewaju, 2022).

7. Strategising and Positioning the Media in National Security

The media plays a crucial role in shaping public perception and reporting on national security. They provide transparency, accountability, and real-time information, crucial for an informed citizenry. However, Nigerian journalists face considerable risks, with multiple instances of harassment, intimidation, and even fatal attacks by both state and non-state actors (CPJ, 2020). The prevalence of fake news also complicates the media's role, often fuelling misinformation and social unrest (Orji, 2021). Journalists covering security issues must exercise diligence and ethical standards, balancing transparency with responsible reporting. Supporting media integrity involves addressing environmental challenges, including providing adequate personal protective equipment (PPE), fair wages, and access to modern tools, which are necessary to resist corruption, such as the "brown envelope syndrome" (Smah & Ichi, 2009).

8. Conclusion/Recommendation

The literature underscores the multifaceted role of media in enhancing national security, encompassing public awareness, counterterrorism efforts, and cybersecurity. The integration of Broken Windows Theory and intelligence-led approaches highlights media's potential to foster preventative measures and data-driven strategies. While media offers significant benefits in promoting security, it also presents challenges that require careful navigation. Future research should explore the integration of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, in media practices to further strengthen national security. Additionally, fostering collaboration between media organizations, policymakers, and civil society can enhance the media's contribution to a secure and informed society.

Responses to the myriad challenges facing the country today will undoubtedly be scrutinised by future generations. What will those who endure the current national crises say about those actions? A lasting legacy can only be written in gold if we confront these challenges with a commitment to understanding, professionalism, and the requisite skill sets, steering clear of the blame game that has long hindered our progress. This blame game has become one of the most significant obstacles to addressing the pressing issues of national development, diverting attention from proactive solutions (Nwankwo,

2021). We must shift our collective focus away from perpetually holding past leaders accountable for mistakes made during their tenures when they are no longer able to respond. Instead, let us embody the change we wish to see in our nation. As Abraham Lincoln wisely stated, "If we must solve today's challenges well, we cannot use the methods of yesterday," for the scope and dynamics of our problems have evolved significantly (Lincoln, 1862).

To create a sustainable future, we need to embrace innovative strategies and collaborative efforts that reflect our current realities rather than cling to outdated practices. A commitment to collective responsibility, transparency, and accountability will be pivotal in steering Nigeria toward a more prosperous and secure future (Ogunleye & Agboola, 2020). Let us prioritise dialogue, inclusivity, and the empowerment of all citizens to foster resilience against future challenges, thereby ensuring that we leave behind a legacy of progress and unity.

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