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Executive's Bossiness Versus Legislative Oversight Functions: Implications for Effective Governance and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

Nebeife Chigozie Joseph, Ph.D

Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Federal University Wukari,- Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Existence of a healthy balance is essential for consolidating democracy, promoting good governance, and ensuring the rule of law in Nigeria. However, the struggle between the executive power and legislative oversight has remained a fundamental challenge for Nigeria's Fourth Republic. This paper examines the intricate dynamics between executive bossiness and legislative oversight functions within Nigeria's Fourth Republic, analyzing its profound implications for effective governance and democratic consolidation. Relying on the secondary sources of data and qualitative analysis anchored on the abstractions of Separation of Powers theory, the paper posits that a delicate equilibrium between these branches is crucial for effective and democratic consolidation, yet this balance is consistently challenged by the executive's tendency to exceed constitutional boundaries. Executive bossiness, manifesting in disregard for court orders, unilateral decision-making, and suppression of dissent, undermines the foundational principles of accountability and transparency. This behaviour directly clashes with the legislature's mandated oversight, which includes budget scrutiny, investigations, and the confirmation of executive appointments. This fosters the assumption that Nigeria's political culture is characterized by a strong executive tradition, which often impedes effective legislative oversight. This paper argues that the institutional capacity of the legislature in Nigeria appear to be deliberately weakened by the executive to prevent robust oversight. The implications of this power struggle are far-reaching, encompassing increased corruption, eroded public trust, and weakened democratic institutions. The paper recommends that achieving effective governance and democratic consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic requires a concerted effort to cultivate a political culture of accountability, respect for the rule of law, and a balanced distribution of power between the executive and legislature.

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INTRODUCTION

Executive-Legislative relations are central to democratic governance, particularly under a presidential system of government where the doctrine of separation of powers is in trend (Awotokun & Okotoni, 2020). Nigeria first adopted the presidential system of government under the 1979 Constitution on the return to democratic governance on October 1, 1979 after thirteen years of continuous military rule (Awotokun & Okotoni, 2020). Likewise, in 1999 Nigeria returned to democratic governance after two decades of militarized governance. The relationship between and among arms of government, particularly executive-legislature, is discussed within the context of democratic system of governance (Baba, 2019). This is because in other forms of government, the three arms of government are hardly separated. In non-democratic governments, executive and legislative functions and powers are mostly fused and interlocked. In other words, the powers of the arms of government, particularly the executive and legislature are mostly exercised by one institution, be it the king (in an absolute monarchy), the military ruler (in a military regime) or even members of the communist party (in a socialist regime) (Baba, 2019). This is not however, to suggest that all forms of democracies guarantee separation of executive and legislative functions and powers.

Thus, the principle of separation of powers is fundamental to the operation of modern democratic governance. It provides a framework in which the executive, legislative, and judicial arms of government function independently while maintaining mechanisms for mutual checks and balances (Venter, 2020; Joshua, 2024). In Nigeria's Fourth Republic, the dynamic between the

executive and legislative branches has often been characterized by tension, particularly in the exercise of legislative oversight over executive actions (Adibe, Onwughalu, & Atsiya, 2024). The executive arm, responsible for implementing laws and administering national affairs, has at times been accused of overreaching or displaying tendencies of bossiness—an assertion of dominance that undermines institutional accountability (Fagbadebo & Alabi, 2023; Olasupo, 2023). Conversely, the legislature, constitutionally empowered to perform oversight functions, is tasked with ensuring that executive actions conform to the law, promote transparency, and serve the public interest (Fagbadebo & Alabi, 2023).

The interplay between executive assertiveness and legislative scrutiny holds significant implications for governance and democratic consolidation in Nigeria. While executive decisiveness is critical for policy implementation and national coordination, unchecked authority can breed impunity and weaken democratic institutions (Brookings Institution, 2020). On the other hand, effective legislative oversight enhances accountability, fosters public trust, and promotes the rule of law. However, when oversight is perceived as antagonism or politicized, it can lead to gridlock, weaken intergovernmental collaboration, and stall national development (Usman, 2020; Vanguard News, 2020).

Instances such as the legislative probe into the management of COVID-19 intervention funds and the scrutiny of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) exemplify the frictions between these branches (Fagbadebo & Alabi, 2023). These episodes highlight the challenges of ensuring transparency and accountability in the face of executive resistance or non-compliance. This study interrogates the tensions between executive bossiness and legislative oversight functions within Nigeria's Fourth Republic, evaluating how these dynamics affect the quality of governance and the prospects for deepening democracy. By exploring key instances of conflict, institutional responses, and the broader implications for democratic accountability, the paper aims to contribute to the discourse on building stronger democratic institutions in Nigeria. Against this backdrop, this paper explores the complex relationship between executive dominance and legislative oversight roles in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, assessing their significant impact on effective governance and the deepening of democratic processes.

CONCEPTUAL FRAME OF REFERENCE

Executive Bossiness

The concept of *executive bossiness* refers to a leadership style or organizational behaviour where individuals in executive or managerial positions exert undue dominance, control, or authoritarian influence over subordinates, often in ways that hinder collaboration, innovation, and employee morale. While sometimes conflated with strong leadership or assertiveness, executive bossiness is typically characterized by an overbearing approach that undermines participatory decision-making and servant leadership ideals. Executive bossiness can be defined as the tendency of top-level executives or managers to make unilateral decisions, issue rigid directives, and exhibit controlling behavior toward subordinates (Alvarez & Svejenova, 2005). This may manifest through micromanagement, intolerance of dissent, lack of empathy, and an emphasis on hierarchy over teamwork.

Executive bossiness refers to a leadership disposition where individuals in executive or managerial roles exhibit excessive control, domineering behavior, and an authoritarian approach in their interactions with subordinates (Kao, 2005). This behavior often extends beyond assertiveness or strategic leadership into a realm where the executive prioritizes command and obedience over collaboration, dialogue, and shared decision-making. Thus, scholarly literature has explored this concept from various angles. According to Kellerman (2004), executive bossiness can be seen as a manifestation of "bad leadership," particularly under her category of "rigid leadership," where leaders are inflexible, unwilling to adapt, and often disregard the input of others. Such rigidity tends to alienate employees and disrupt the organizational climate.

Goleman (2000), in his work on emotional intelligence and leadership styles, highlights that coercive leadership a form closely aligned with executive bossiness may produce short-term compliance but typically damages morale and engagement in the long run. The coercive style, Goleman argues, relies heavily on the phrase "Do what I tell you," which mirrors the tone of executive bossiness, especially when leaders prioritize authority over emotional intelligence. Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009) also touch on the issue indirectly in their discussion of meaningful work and ethical leadership. They suggest that when executives misuse their positions by overriding others' autonomy and undermining participatory practices, the workplace becomes disempowering, resulting in disconnection and diminished purpose among employees.

Legislative Oversight

The concept of legislative oversight refers to the process by which legislative bodies monitor, review, and supervise the actions and policies of the executive branch. It serves as a critical mechanism in democratic governance, ensuring accountability, transparency, and the rule of law. Legislative oversight refers to proper monitoring, reviewing and controlling of activities of government agencies or ministries to enhance good governance. According to Ndoma-Egba (2012), legislative oversight is the power of the legislature to review, monitor and supervise government agencies, programmes, activities, and policy implementation strategies of the executive arm of government. This is to ensure the operation of a responsive transparent and accountable government committed to good governance (Ndoma-Egba 2012; (Agunyai & Olawoyin, 2019). The legislature, according to Nwagwu (2014), has the power of

oversight over the execution and administration of laws by the executive. The essence of oversight, in the view of Onuoha (2009), is no other thing than to ensure good governance and accountability. The legislature exercises this power largely through its legislative committee system (Ehigiamusoe and Umar 2013).

According to Aberbach (1990), legislative oversight is the review and evaluation of the actions of executive agencies to ensure consistency with legislative intent and to promote efficiency and effectiveness in public administration. He emphasizes that oversight is not merely about control but also about improving governance and informing future legislation. A critical look at all these definitional exploration shows that the legislative arm of government exists to make laws, represents the people, carry out oversights on the executive and approve or ratify appointees of the executive. Most often, in the course of the performance of these assigned responsibilities, legislators collude with the members of the executive to indulge in unethical practices. The consequence is the non-implementation of public policy in manners that would ensure good governance. Abuse of legislative process and privileges as well as dereliction in the discharge of executive mandates characterize the operation of the presidential system in Nigeria thereby undermining good governance.

Effective Governance

Governance connotes representation of the people through the adequate and effective provision of services, respect for the rule of law, accountability to the people and participation (UNICEF, 2002). It is the process through which the political system achieves such values as accountability, participation, openness (or transparency) and respect for the rule of law and due bureaucratic process (Inokoba and Kumokor 2012). Therefore, effective governance refers to the manner in which authority is exercised for the management of a country's economic, social, and administrative resources (Keping, 2018; Scholar, 2019). It encompasses the systems, institutions, and processes through which decisions are made, implemented, and monitored (Bobuin et al., 2024). In practice, effective governance involves ensuring that the actions of government and institutions are transparent, accountable, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of the people.

The importance of effective governance has been emphasized globally, especially in light of the challenges posed by corruption, insecurity, economic instability, and public distrust in institutions. According to the World Bank (2024), effective governance is crucial for achieving development outcomes, especially in low and middle-income countries where institutional weaknesses often hamper progress. The Bank identifies key elements such as government effectiveness, regulatory quality, and control of corruption as critical indicators of governance performance. Fatile and Adejuwon (2016) also see effective governance as a tool for promoting the sustainability of democracy. This includes an enduring capacity for the separation of powers and independence of the branches of government, the exercise of power in accordance with the rule of law. Effective governance has to do with the performance results of public policy (Rotberg 2014; Graaf and Paanakker 2015). The performance and the procedure adopted to arrive at such decision on service delivery constitute effective governance.

In other words, measurement of effective governance entails both the means and the ends (Bevir 2010). According to Graaf and Paanakker (2015, p.636), to interpret good governance, it was necessary to consider the 'procedural values such as integrity, and associated values such as transparency, equality, lawfulness, and honesty'. Crucial to the enforcement of effective governance is the legislative institution through its oversight mechanisms. Primarily, legislative activities are designed to ensure monitoring of the implementation of public policy in a manner that would produce the intended outcomes of effective service delivery to the people. Thus, the legislature represents the cardinal institution of effective governance. In this study, effective governance represents the extent of participation of the people in government, transparent and accountability of public office holders, effective and equitable distribution of resources, and promotion of the rule of law in a country.

Democratic Consolidation

Democratic consolidation refers to the process by which a new democracy matures and becomes stable, resilient, and unlikely to revert to authoritarianism. It involves the deepening and institutionalization of democratic norms, values, practices, and institutions in a political system (Foa & Mounk, 2022; Zhong, 2024). Consolidation goes beyond the mere holding of periodic elections; it encompasses a broad commitment to democratic governance by political elites, institutions, and citizens alike.

Achieving democratic consolidation therefore calls for the enthronement of democracy as a system of organizing both the society and government and thereafter creates concomitant institutions, culture, ethics, support system and the 'will' that are crucial in making it stable, efficient and responsive (Oni, 2014: Oni et al., 2017). It is important to mention that the process of democratic consolidation requires nurturing democratic values and ethos, principles and institutions in a sense that prevents a reversal to an authoritarian regime (Oni et al., 2017). According to Durotoye (2015), democratic consolidation is a journey and not a destination. It is a process not an event. It implies that the people of a particular country are imbibing and displaying a democratic culture that propels democracy and makes democracy continuously irreversible (Durotoye, 2015).

A consolidated democracy is characterized by the rule of law, political pluralism, respect for civil liberties and human rights, effective participation, and civilian control over the military. It also requires strong institutions such as an independent judiciary, free media, vibrant civil society, and accountable leadership. According to Linz and Stepan (1996), democracy is consolidated when

it becomes "the only game in town," meaning that all significant political actors accept the democratic rules of the game and the institutions that uphold them.

Theoretical Perspective- Separation of Powers Theory

The doctrine of separation of powers has evolved through the ideas of key thinkers, beginning with Aristotle, who identified the functions of government as deliberative, executive, and judicial, though he did not formalize the theory. In the 17th century, English philosopher John Locke (1632–1704), advanced the concept by advocating for a clear division between legislative and executive powers to prevent tyranny, though he did not view the judiciary as an independent branch. The most significant development came from French philosopher Baron de Montesquieu (1689–1755) in his 1748 work *The Spirit of the Laws*. Montesquieu argued for a full separation of legislative, executive, and judicial powers, believing that liberty depended on each branch operating independently while being able to check the others. His ideas profoundly influenced the structure of modern democracies, especially the United States Constitution, making him the foremost figure in the development of the modern theory of separation of powers.

Separation of power theory is grounded on several basic assumptions that help explain how each organs of the government function independently and had the constitutional backing to checkmate each other. These assumptions provide a framework for understanding why executive exercises bossiness and how such actions not only impact effective governance, but also have the potential to impede democratic consolidation. Government functions are distinct and can be separated: The theory assumes that the core functions of government—making laws (legislative), executing laws (executive), and interpreting laws (judiciary)—are inherently distinct and can be carried out independently. Although in practice there is often overlap, especially in parliamentary systems, the theory posits that a clear division is both possible and desirable for effective governance.

Another assumption is that for government institutions to check each other's excesses, they must operate independently. If one branch has control or significant influence over another, it undermines accountability. It assumes that all three branches derive their powers from the constitution and are bound by its provisions. This implies respect for the rule of law, legal frameworks, and due process. In applying the separation of powers theory to the tension between the executive's "bossiness" and the legislative oversight functions in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, specific examples can help illustrate how this balance plays out in practice. The executive branch, particularly the president, has significant power in making appointments to key positions, such as ministers, ambassadors, and heads of government agencies. While the Nigerian Constitution grants the president the authority to appoint, the appointments require confirmation by the Senate (the upper chamber of the National Assembly). However, the president's "bossiness" is evident in situations where the executive can push through appointments despite challenges from the legislature, especially when the political alignment between the president and the legislature is strong. This limits the legislative power to veto such appointments. A notable example occurred in 2017, when the Senate rejected the appointment of Ibrahim Magu as the Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) due to concerns about his integrity (Adebayo, 2017; Owolabi, 2021; Onwunyi & Akama, 2024). This act of legislative oversight was a direct challenge to the executive, despite political pressure and support for Magu from the president.

The president holds significant sway over the national budget, with the executive preparing and presenting it to the National Assembly. The legislature reviews the budget, but the executive can sometimes dominate the process. For instance, there have been instances where the executive has bypassed legislative recommendations in budgetary matters. The 2018 budget, which faced delays due to disagreements between the National Assembly and the executive over appropriations, highlights how the executive may push through its agenda even when it conflicts with legislative oversight (Odaudu, Mikhelova & Onuoha, 2025).

THE TREND AND MANIFESTATIONS OF EXECUTIVE BOSSINESS IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC

Since the return to civilian rule in 1999, Nigeria's Fourth Republic has witnessed a recurring pattern where the executive arm of government often seeks to dominate or exert undue influence over the legislative and, sometimes, the judicial arms. Executive bossiness refers to the executive's tendency to overreach its constitutional limits, manipulate state institutions, undermine the legislature's oversight role, and sometimes disregard judicial pronouncements. This trend has evolved across different administrations and has posed serious challenges to the consolidation of Nigeria's democratic governance.

One major trend is the executive's attempt to control or weaken the independence of the legislature. For instance, during President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration (1999–2007), the frequent leadership changes within the National Assembly, particularly the Senate, were widely interpreted as orchestrated by the executive to install loyalists (Fagbadebo, 2023). Between 1999 and 2007, the Nigerian Senate had five different Senate Presidents, most of whom were removed due to executive interference when they began asserting legislative independence.

Another manifestation is the executive's manipulation of security agencies and anti-corruption bodies to intimidate political opponents and dissenting legislators. Under President Muhammadu Buhari's administration (2015–2023), critics pointed out how agencies like the Department of State Services (DSS) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) were allegedly used to harass legislators who opposed executive policies (Ojo, 2022). A notable example was the controversy surrounding the

attempted removal of the then-Senate President Bukola Saraki, where security agencies blocked the National Assembly complex, a move seen as executive high-handedness (Ayitogoa & Busari, 2018).

Budgetary matters have also been a focal point of executive bossiness. There have been repeated instances where the executive delayed budget submissions, implemented budgets without full legislative approval, or accused the legislature of "padding" the budget, thus discrediting their constitutional role. The friction over the 2016 and 2017 budgets during Buhari's tenure highlighted how the executive often viewed legislative scrutiny as an obstacle rather than a constitutional necessity (Murana, 2023).

Another significant trend is the issuance of executive orders that bypass legislative approval. While executive orders can be legitimate administrative tools, in Nigeria, their increasing use to set major policy directions without legislative input has raised concerns about executive overreach. For instance, Executive Order 10 of 2020, which sought to enforce financial autonomy for state legislatures and judiciaries, was criticized by many state governors and legislators as an unconstitutional expansion of federal executive powers (Nkannebe, 2020).

Furthermore, executive bossiness is evident in the appointment process. Successive presidents have often nominated individuals for key positions without due consultation with the legislature or have refused to act when the legislature rejected their nominees. A striking example is the prolonged controversy over the appointment of Ibrahim Magu as the acting Chairman of the EFCC, despite his repeated rejection by the Senate (Adebayo, 2017; Owolabi, 2021; Onwunyi & Akama, 2024). This not only undermined the Senate's constitutional role but also signaled executive defiance of legislative authority.

The trend has also manifested in the executive's response to legislative oversight functions. Investigative hearings and probes into government ministries, departments, and agencies are frequently met with hostility or non-compliance. During the 2020 probe into the mismanagement of funds at the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), the then-Minister of Niger Delta Affairs, Godswill Akpabio, made controversial statements about the lawmakers, suggesting they were complicit in contract scandals themselves (Elumoye et al., 2021). Such episodes reflect a broader pattern where the executive seeks to delegitimize the oversight role of the legislature.

THE TRAJECTORY OF LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT FUNCTIONS IN NIGERIA FOURTH REPUBLIC

Advanced democracies together with transitional democracies rely on the Legislature as their foundational democratic structure because it creates laws through direct popular support while managing public funds and examining lower governmental bodies to enhance accountability. Their role as representatives makes them keep a sacred position by speaking for multiple constituencies. The legislature maintains authority over people sovereignty through its established responsibilities (Yusuf and Ojoduwa, 2022). The oversight function represents a constitutional mandate of the legislature to track governmental activities through executive monitoring and control activities which ensure transparency along with governmental responsibility. Flawless implementation of programs and policies requires the legislature to guarantee their original purpose (Yusuf and Ojoduwa, 2022).

Through legitimate oversight the executive branch receives control mechanisms that prevent their misuse of power and reduces governance waste (Nwagwu, 2014). The legislative oversight process enables the legislative body to monitor executive government functions (Obiora, 2020). The Nigerian Constitution from 1999 gives the National Assembly powers of oversight to achieve transparency and accountability in the public sector (Ochojila, 2025). Sections 88 together with Section 89 allow the legislature to conduct investigations into executive activities along with other government entities while enabling the ability to call in witnesses with warrants to compel attendance. Through these constitutional provisions the government establishes preventions against power abuses to maintain both legislative purposes and public well-being (Okanya 2022).

The Nigerian legislature encounters constant disability because its autonomy and separation powers remain feeble thus creating barriers to its oversight activities. Nwagwu (2012) researched the oversight function of the legislative body and its role in delivering good governance to democratic systems within Nigerian borders. The evaluation functions have experienced numerous instances of failure according to the study results. The legislature currently misuses the oversight authority primarily to extract money from Ministries Departments and Agencies (MDAs). The legislature needs to receive additional support from the government to perform its watchdog duties without becoming a hunting dog (Yusuf and Ojoduwa, 2022). Stapenhurst and Olaore (2016) showed the legislature holds constitutional oversight power while the instrument is available through both chambers but political unwillingness results in legislative ineffectiveness. Various sources confirm that the executive has made changes to accept legislative recommendations (Izah, 2013; Bolarinwa, 2015; Yusuf and Ojoduwa, 2022).

The National Assembly of the Fourth Republic experienced multiple barriers when attempting to deliver effective oversight duties during its first couple of years. Executive pressures alongside congressional disputes together with significant legislative personnel changes blocked the creation of an effective oversight system. Throughout this time the legislature encountered multiple situations where executive influence led to problematic oversight conditions because it prioritized compliance instead of autonomy (Fashagba 2009; Stapenhurst et al 2016). Executive and legislative entities focused their efforts between specific years on strengthening oversight systems' mechanisms. Specialized committees inside the National Assembly achieved better executive activity and public expenditure monitoring by focusing their scrutiny on these areas more specifically. The committees carried out public hearing

sessions and investigative panels and budgetary authorization procedures to supervise ministries departments and agencies also known as (MDAs) (Ochojila, 2025).

Several control mechanisms were established but corruption together with oversight power misuse to acquire personal benefits continued to weaken these systems (Stapenhurst, Jacobs, & Olaore, 2016). The legislative body improved its oversight function throughout recent time periods. The system proved unsuccessful in improving budget performance alongside minimizing corruption throughout the country (Yusuf and Ojoduwa, 2022). Aluku (2015) argues that ineffective oversight from the legislature throughout the security sector of Nigeria leads to governmental funding deficits. Various factors impacting this weakness include bad electoral procedures in combination with constitution 1999 difficulties and professionals with limited expertise in legislative work. Yusuf (2020) executed an empirical investigation about democracy regulation and legislature activities in Nigeria. The study shows that Nigerian legislative oversight functions are experiencing positive developments. Several allegations exist about the legislative branch's involvement in corrupt activities while performing its duties. The study recommended that establishing checkmate mechanisms in the legislature would help reduce corruption in their activities. To promote democracy within the country the executive branch needs to officially accept both resolutions and recommendations made by the institution (Yusuf and Ojoduwa, 2022).

The oversight functions of the legislature in Nigeria serve as oversight duties against executive government excesses and wastefulness in governance that represent key elements of democratic institutions. The great duties mandated by the constitution should correspond with high levels of public responsibility since this stands as a fundamental characteristic of contemporary democratic systems. This paper emphasizes the legislative oversight role in the examination along with the supervision of executive actions as well as organizational activities of state authorities (Fatile & Adejuwon, 2023). The Nigerian legislature fails to deliver transparent governance systems which provide beneficial governance to citizens according to Nigerian expectations. Research shows that governmental oversight duties have been weakened severely and legislators use them as tools to investigate executive departments. The legislature requires independence from executive control because such interferences lead to governance problems when legislators lose focus on their legislative duties (Fatile & Adejuwon, 2023).

CHALLENGES TO EFFECTIVE LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT FUNCTIONS IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC

Modern democracies have identified the legislative branch as one of their fundamental institutions because it functions as the political representative body. Experts agree that the government branch executes legislative work in addition to representing the people while exercising oversight responsibilities (Edigheji, 2006). The Nigerian legislative body maintains an essential oversight role since 1999 within the Fourth Republic to enforce executive responsibility and enhance governance standards. Several obstacles have interfered with the successful execution of these supervisory activities (Olaogun et al, 2025). Many obstacles confront the Nigerian legislature when it must execute its oversight functions. Every informant shares similar viewpoints about underfunding as this theme repeatedly appears in their answers. A substantial financial budget is necessary for effective oversight operations but bureaucracy receives excessive budgetary reliance from MDAs. The operational success of oversight function depends entirely on funding allocation. The legislature holds either too small or too big funding in the eyes of different interviewees according to Yusuf and Ojoduwa (2022).

An extensive financial budget is needed for the legislature to function adequately. The substantial workload of the legislature includes substantial funding requirements for public hearing organization which demands between three to five million naira. Research results demonstrate excessive MDAs dependency by the legislature to implement oversight functions starting with oversight inspections and public parliamentary inquiries. The inadequate resources within NASS budgeting appear to be a reason for their limited performance. The ongoing banning issue persists without resolution in both two chambers, according to Yusuf and Ojoduwa (2022).

According to Hamalai (2014) the legislature encounters multiple such challenges when fulfilling its oversight responsibilities. Through historical influence the Nigerian executive maintains control over the legislative branch by disrupting its oversight authority. Interference from executive organs damages both the individual legislative power and the constitutional division of government branches. The executive's mastery over legislative leadership combined with its operational authority over legislative functions has caused system instability and diminished legislative oversight operations. During the period from 1999 to 2003 the Senate underwent continuous leadership transitions which resulted in three different presidents because of executive manipulation of legislative processes (Iyanunioluwa&Gbadeyan, 2021).

Corruption among lawmakers creates major hurdles for proper oversight functions. The focus of legislators on personal matters results in reduced constitutional performance which damages their ability to properly oversee activities. The selfish tendencies of lawmakers cause them to abandon their responsibilities to examine executive choices and public budget use (Aliyu, Amoge, & Ayodele, 2018). A deficient regulatory framework designed to supervise calms down operational efficiency levels. Inconsistent oversight activities develop when oversight procedures remain neither specific nor definite. . The struggles between executive and legislative branches result in governance problems through oversight dismissal or its transformation into political weapons that

impair management effectiveness. The primary function of addressing accountability suffers delays because of these conflicts while budget approvals and other essential legislative work is delayed (Murana, 2021). The political commitment among legislative officers strongly influences how well their oversight functions operate. The sincere dedication of legislators directly affects how well they perform oversight tasks because limited commitment allows political motives to replace proper monitoring operations.

Public disengagement weakens oversight processes because it decreases the level of public demand for proper legislative performance. An unengaged and unaware public creates minimal pressure on legislators which lets inefficiencies along with corruption grow without restraint according to Iyanunioluwa and Gbadeyan (2021). To conduct effective oversight properly designed systems for monitoring and assessing government projects as well as expenditures must be in place. The lack of independent oversight organizations along with total reliance on executive-provided information results in biased reporting that produces oversight failures. Placing independent oversight bodies with assessment abilities becomes essential to build accountability (PLAC, n.d.).

The Fourth Republic of Nigeria depends upon an effective presence of legislative oversight to guarantee executive accountability and advance good governance systems. A solution to these issues requires implementing various methods that combine legislative institution reforms with training programs for members of parliament and stronger public involvement systems. Nigeria can establish transparent and accountable governance by implementing these proposed measures according to Olaogun et al (2025). The existing issues create problems that hinder democratic stability. The NASS stands as one of the democratic institutions intended to improve political effectiveness. These challenges reduce their performance output which leads to a negative impact on democratic governance. The provision of financial resources stands as an essential factor for oversight operations. The process of conducting investigative hearings consumes an enormous financial budget. When surrounded by multiple restrictions the legislative body would not execute proper oversight responsibilities. Total independence is a fundamental requirement for an institution which function as democratic representation of society (Yusuf and Ojoduwa, 2022).

Strained executive-legislative relations: Implications for Effective Governance and democratic consolidation in Nigeria

Victor and Muhammad (2020) explained that executive serves as a dominant governmental branch responsible to execute both official state laws and state policies. Nigeria considers the executive branch as its primary governance instrument which possesses supreme power for executive leadership and other public policies to benefit the general population. A state without an executive branch creates challenges for governing effectively according to the previously explained definitions. Many distinct names exist throughout the world to describe the institution known as 'Legislature' (Okpe & Taya, 2018). National Assembly serves as the name of legislature in Nigeria while other countries might refer to it differently. The legislative body in America, named "Congress" differs from the "Parliament" institution in British politics (Heywood 2007; Lafenwa2009). The legislature stands as a vital institute that facilitates democratic government operations per Ewuim et al. (2014) alongside Obidimma and Obidimma (2015).

According to Bernick and Bernick (2008) the state legislature has the responsibility to represent the societal collective will through its enforcement and articulation function. Murana and Bakare (2019), state that representation through parliament represents the vital political institution. A constitutionally established element of public law governs the National Assembly and state legislative bodies in Nigeria. Since 1999 the legislature received its constitutional establishment. Through its abilities to monitor the government the institution maintains control authority (Okpe & Taya, 2018). Abdulwahab (2022) studies the interplay between executives and legislators at sub-national Nigeria through an analysis of Kwara and Osun States during the period from 2007 through 2019. The selection process for principal officers within state legislative assemblies depended heavily upon governing party mechanisms operated by state governors throughout Kwara and Osun between 2007 and 2019. The legislature's independence suffered erosion along with essential checks and balances for proper governance because of executive control.

The study by Utibe et al. (2024) shows that oversight powers within the legislature to monitor executive activities have been seriously damaged by political patronage executive dominance together with internal legislative weaknesses. Various obstacles create weak executive oversight which sustains corruption and damages democratic responsibility of public officials. According to Tobi et al. (2021) the legislature successfully executes its oversight powers occasionally yet internal operational difficulties obstruct its general performance achievement. The legislature faces internal problems because of corruption along with insufficient funding of committees and outside interventions from individuals and groups. The book reports that such conflicts produce budget delays and funding misuse along with systemic governance difficulties. Internal tensions create multiple problems for democratic institutions by damaging checks and balances and reducing the delivery of good services to the citizens. The executive branch utilized the Quarantine Act of 1929 to expand its powers which resulted in direct interferences with constitutional emergency oversight provisions that needed legislative oversight according to Oni and Dele-Dada (2022).

The legislative authority received decreased influence under this approach and resulted in reduced democratic accountability. Umar and Ubandawaki (2020) investigated executive and legislative interactions under President Muhammadu Buhari from 2015 through 2019. Executive-Legislative disputes reached intense proportions throughout this time frame because both branches repeatedly clashed about budget control and official nominations and laws enforcement activities. The resulting complications from these

conflicts hindered government procedures and prevented proper implementation of policies. Umar and Ubandawaki (2020) explain the existence of these challenges through political party dynamics coupled with lack of mutual trust alongside constitutional ambiguities.

According to Okpe and Othman (2020) the Fourth Republic of Nigeria has faced continuous executive vs legislative struggles that create difficulties for good governance systems. The research uses qualitative description to study how branch tension affects political stability and produces delays in bill processing and budget allocations and reduces public services. Okpe and Othman (2020) argue that these adversarial interactions often stem from constitutional ambiguities, political interference, and a lack of mutual respect between the branches. The period from 1999 to 2019 Chiemeriwo and Christiana (2021) researched the key factors which limited effective governance through executive-legislative conflicts in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. The separation of powers system in Nigeria suffers because unclear constitutional language together with duplicated responsibilities and conflicting political interests naturally creates repeated confrontations between branches which usually causes delayed policy execution and reduced institutional quality. The Fourth Republic parliament effectively safeguards democracy through its oversight activities in Nigeria. During 2006 the Nigerian legislature officially dismissed presidential efforts to amend the Constitution for expanded presidential terms which President Obasanjo sought. Multiple academic experts agree with this standpoint (Yusuf and Ojoduwa, 2022).

Since the restoration of the Fourth Republic in 1999 according to Okpe & Othman (2020) the pattern of executive-legislative relations in Nigeria has developed intense conflicts and basic crises. The relationship between these institutions has led to numerous cases which negatively impacted Nigeria's delivery of good governance to its citizens. Evacuation of major problems within the political system led to unstable national conditions alongside bill postponement and delayed budget passages. The study reached its conclusion based on existing evidence that better democracy and good governance require executive and legislative support of separation of power principles (Okpe & Othman, 2020). Throughout the period from 1999 to 2019 Chiemeriwo and Christiana (2021) researched the key factors which limited effective governance through executive-legislative conflicts in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. The separation of powers system in Nigeria suffers because unclear constitutional language together with duplicated responsibilities and conflicting political interests naturally creates repeated confrontations between branches which usually causes delayed policy execution and reduced institutional quality.

The Fourth Republic parliament effectively safeguards democracy through its oversight activities in Nigeria. During 2006 the Nigerian legislature officially dismissed presidential efforts to amend the Constitution for expanded presidential terms which President Obasanjo sought. Multiple academic experts agree with this standpoint (Yusuf and Ojoduwa, 2022). The president selected the chairman in an acting capacity without the Senate's consent, and he held the position for more than four years before being suspended on a number of charges. According to scholarly evaluations, the National Assembly's investigative and public hearing procedures have improved (Hamalai, 2014; Abah & Obiajulu, 2017; Yusuf and Ojoduwa, 2022), greatly advancing democracy in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

However, disagreements between the legislature and the executive branch can cause delays in the formulation and application of policies. For example, disagreements over budget approvals have the potential to halt development initiatives and interfere with vital public services. According to Murana (2021), these disputes have caused protracted delays in budget passing, which has a negative impact on development and government. Continued conflict between these branches jeopardizes democratic consolidation, erodes public confidence in democratic institutions, and challenges the checks and balances premise. According to Momodu and Ika (2012), these conflicts represent significant threats to both national development and participatory democracy.

The legislature's primary duties of representation, oversight, and legislation are jeopardized by these tense relationships. Partisan and political interests frequently take precedence over national issues, resulting in inadequate monitoring of presidential activities and ineffectual legislation. According to Onimisi, Osasona, and Chukwuma (2024), this kind of dysfunction impairs the legislature's capacity to carry out its mandate, which in turn influences the results of government.

Budgetary conflicts can also lead to behaviours such as "budget padding," in which lawmakers divert from executive priorities by putting projects into the national budget for their own or their constituency's benefit (Gana, 2023). This drives up public spending and takes funds away from important development initiatives. Additionally, Murana (2021) emphasized that these fiscal disputes make governance inefficiencies worse.

In Nigeria's Fourth Republic, there is strong evidence that disputes between the legislative and executive branches, which are frequently based on corruption, have hampered good governance (Fatile & Adejuwon, 2016). Bribery, misappropriation of cash from constituency projects, theft of security votes, denial of local government funding, and financial inducement for committee appointments and budget approvals are some examples of corruption (Igbakpa & Ejumudo, 2023). Such behavior erodes democratic values and public accountability. There are indications that Nigeria has yet to fully achieve the behavioral, attitudinal, and constitutional stability conditions for democratic consolidation outlined by Linz and Stepan (1996) (Abdulai & Crawford, 2010). Effective governance and intergovernmental relations have been undermined by executive-legislative conflict, which is frequently characterized by animosity and rivalry (Gana, 2023; Lafenwa & Oluwalogbon, 2014). The three components of Linz and Stephan's definition are (a) behavioural, implying that there are no separatist threats or fears of revolution; (b) attitudinal, indicating that the

majority of people are committed to implementing political change through democratic principles; and (c) constitutional, indicating that the constitution serves as the basis for resolving disputes. Nigeria's absence of these three components indicates that the country has not yet achieved democratic consolidation (Abdulai and Crawford, 2010).

It has been demonstrated that intergovernmental interactions serve as the binding agent that maintains all governmental levels cooperating to carry out directives and provide valuable contributions toward the achievement of preset goals. However, the executive-legislative relationship and their mutual hostility have also threatened the government's ability to function smoothly in recent years. Despite their claims to be carrying out their constitutionally mandated responsibilities, the government and legislature have persisted in using their authority (Gana, 2023). As a result, the relationship has remained unpleasant, adversarial, and at its lowest point. Lafenwa and Oluwalogbon (2014) state that "hide and seek" or "cat and mouse" games, conflict, cooperation, animosity, and collusion in the use of political power are characteristics of most presidential democratic systems. This is the case even in cases where the ruling party is overrepresented in the nonpartisan legislature. This is especially evident in the 8th and 9th National Assemblies, whose journey began in 2015 when both legislative chambers sought to assert their valued independence in choosing leaders, thereby undermining the much-discussed party supremacy and power to force leaders on the legislature (Gana, 2023).

Executive domination, patronage networks, and internal inefficiencies undermine legislative monitoring notwithstanding constitutional support (Utibe et al., 2024). Internal corruption, inadequate budget, and outside intervention continue to be barriers, even though the legislature occasionally exhibits effective monitoring (Tobi et al., 2021).According to Murana (2023), these disputes impede service delivery, postpone budget approvals, and embezzle money. Executives have circumvented legislative input in times of crisis, as seen by the Quarantine Act of 1929, which was used to get around supervision (Oni & Dele-Dada, 2022).Tensions over appointments and budgets led to delays in governance under President Buhari (2015–2019) (Umar &Ubandawaki, 2020). Political dynamics and constitutional ambiguities were the main causes of these problems. Political gain frequently takes precedence over governance in the power struggle between branches, undermining accountability and the rule of law (Jombo et al., 2023; Jombo & Fagbadebo, 2023).

These antagonistic interactions, which are based on rivalry and mistrust, hinder the execution of policies and public service, according to Garuba and Salawu (2020) and Okpe & Othman (2020). According to Okpe & Othman (2020), this tension has caused political instability and delayed governance since 1999. Jombo (2022) went on to say that animosity between branches impedes governance and budgetary procedures, promoting lawlessness and impunity. Chiemeriwo and Christiana (2021) found that the main reasons of executive-legislative conflicts in Nigeria are political rivalry, constitutional ambiguity, and overlapping functions. For democratic consolidation, Diamond (2008) underlined the need of harmonious inter-branch relations. This balance has been hampered in Nigeria, nevertheless, by the struggle for domination, with executive overreach frequently displacing legislative authority (Suberu, 2013; Omotola, 2014; Aiyede, 2005).

Executive manipulation through coercion and selective funding exacerbates this imbalance by restricting legislative independence (Fagbadebo, 2019). Because of military control, Nigeria's political culture encourages executive supremacy, undermining the function of the legislature (Elaigwu, 2017). This dynamic erodes the rule of law, fuels corruption, and erodes public confidence in democracy (Adejumobi, 2000).Maintaining the rule of law, encouraging good governance, and strengthening democracy all depend on a healthy balance between the several parts of government (Diamond, 2008). However, the struggle between legislative supervision and executive power has continued to be a major barrier to the advancement of democracy in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive bossiness, manifesting in disregard for court orders, unilateral decision-making, and suppression of dissent, undermines the foundational principles of accountability and transparency. This behaviour directly clashes with the legislature's mandated oversight, which includes budget scrutiny, investigations, and the confirmation of executive appointments. This fosters the assumption that Nigeria's political culture is characterized by a strong executive tradition, which often impedes effective legislative oversight. This paper argues that the institutional capacity of the legislature in Nigeria appears to be deliberately weakened by the executive to prevent robust oversight. The implications of this power struggle are far-reaching, encompassing increased corruption, eroded public trust, and weakened democratic institutions.

In summary, for the legislature to perform its responsibility of oversight of the executive and other Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) effectively, the institution should be independent, most especially with regards to finance. The degree of the separation of powers in the Nigerian government also should be increased to enhance check and balance. Similarly, improving research in the National Assembly (NASS) and its staff should also be given priority. Thus, by creating awareness, training, and re-training to the members of the NASS in the country (Yusuf and Ojoduwa, 2022).

To achieve democratic consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, there must be a deliberate effort to recalibrate the balance of power. This involves strengthening the institutional capacity of the legislature, ensuring the independence of the judiciary, and

promoting a political culture that values accountability and respect for constitutional boundaries. Only through such reforms can Nigeria achieve sustainable governance and a truly democratic society.

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