Youth in Development: Understanding the Contributions of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) to Nigeria’s National Development

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester on Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Development Policy and Management in the Faculty of Humanities

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Contents

List of Tables ................................................................................................................................. 8
List of Figures ................................................................................................................................. 9
List of Boxes ................................................................................................................................. 10
Abstract ........................................................................................................................................ 10
Declaration ..................................................................................................................................... 11
Copyright Statement ..................................................................................................................... 12
List of Acronyms ............................................................................................................................ 13
Acknowledgement .......................................................................................................................... 15

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction ............................................................................................................................... 16
1.2. Problem Statement and Research Context .............................................................................. 16
1.3. Aim of Study ............................................................................................................................. 19
1.4. Study Objectives ....................................................................................................................... 19
1.5. Relevant Literature and Theoretical Underpinnings of this Study ............................................. 20
   1.5.1. Definition of key concepts ................................................................................................. 23
       1.5.1.1. Youth ......................................................................................................................... 23
       1.5.1.2. National Development: ............................................................................................. 23
       1.5.1.3. Youth Development .................................................................................................. 23
       1.5.1.4. National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) Programme ...................................................... 24
1.6. A Brief Overview of the Research Design and Methodology .................................................. 24
1.7. Significance of the study .......................................................................................................... 25
1.8. Limitations of the study .......................................................................................................... 28
1.9. Thesis Structure ....................................................................................................................... 29
1.10. Conclusion .............................................................................................................................. 32

Chapter 2: Theories and Concepts of Development and Human Development

2.1. Introduction .............................................................................................................................. 33
2.2. Deconstruction Philosophy: A Theoretical Framework for Understanding Development Theory .................................................................................................................. 34
   2.2.1. The Historical Context of the Development Construct ..................................................... 36
   2.2.2. The Political Economy of Development and The making of the Third World .................. 38
   2.2.3. Development and Neoliberalism: The Impact of Integration on the Africa. 42
Chapter 3: Youth in Development (YID): Theories and Concepts

3.1. Introduction............................................................................................................ 58
3.2. Defining the Concept of Youth .............................................................................. 58
3.3. Theorizing Youth Research in Development: Constructions and Changing meanings in Academic Research ........................................................................... 61
   3.3.1. The Emergence of Youth in late-Modernity ................................................. 61
   3.3.2. The Sociology of Youth and the Intersections with Development Theory... 63
   3.3.3. Youth and Post-modern realities: Towards a Political Economy of Youth .. 65
3.4. Global Policy context of Youth in Development .................................................... 67
3.5. Regional Youth Policy: the State of the African Youth and implications for National Youth Development Programmes ........................................................................ 70
3.6. The Emergence and Institutionalization of National Youth Service (NYS) organizations in Africa .............................................................................................................. 74
3.7. Conclusion ............................................................................................................ 76

Chapter 4: Understanding the positioning of Nigerian youth in Development: A Contextual Analysis

4.1. Introduction............................................................................................................ 77
4.2. Youths in Nigeria’s State Building: A Historical Perspective .............................. 77
4.3. National Development Planning in Postcolonial Nigeria ...................................... 80
   4.3.1. First National Development Plan (1962-1968) ........................................... 81
   4.3.2.1. The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme and the Nigerian Youth: History and Rationale ................... 83
   4.3.2.2.1. Deployment Policy/State Deployment ............................................ 83
4.3.2.2.2. Posting Policy/Intra-State Deployment

4.3.2.2. The Youth Capability Development Programmes (YCDPs) of the NYSC Scheme

4.3.2.2.2.1. Youth Orientation and Induction Programme (YOIP)

4.3.2.2.2. Primary Assignment

4.3.2.2.3. Community Development Service (CDS) Programme

4.3.2.2.4. Passing Out/Certification

4.3.3. The Fourth National Development Plan (1981-1985) (4NDP)

4.3.4. Nigeria’s National development in a Neoliberal era (1986 –present)

4.3.5. Contemporary Positioning of Youth in Development in Nigeria

4.3.5.1. Youth Construction in Nigeria’s Constitution

4.3.5.2. Youth in Development: Programmes, Policies and Practice in Nigeria

4.4. Conclusion

Chapter 5: Research Design, Methodology and Methods

5.1. Introduction

5.2. Research Philosophy

5.2.1. Ontology: Social Constructionism

5.2.2. Epistemology: Poststructuralism

5.3. Research Design: Mixed Methods

5.4. Methodology: A Case Study Approach

5.5. Study Area

5.5.1. Study Sites

5.5.2. Study Sample

5.5.3. Methods of Data Collection

5.5.4. Qualitative Methods

5.5.4.1. Criteria of Inclusion of Key Informants

5.5.4.2. Criteria of Inclusion of Youth Respondents

5.5.5. Quantitative Methods

5.6. Methodological Challenges and Limitations

5.7. Methods of Data Analysis

5.7.1. Constructivist Narrative Analysis: Life Course Perspective
5.7.2. A ‘WorkAble’ Youth Capability Analytic framework for Nigeria

5.7.2.1. Themes and Concepts of the Analytic Framework

5.8. Researcher Reflexivity and Narrative Identity

5.9. Ethical Considerations

5.10. Conclusion

Chapter 6: Institutional (NYSC) Perspective on the construction and positioning of Youth in Development (YID)

6.1. Introduction

6.2. Understanding the NYSC Imperative: National identity question and the social constructions of youths

6.3. Policy awareness: Global vs Local

6.4. Institutional Perspective on Youth Social Constructions in Nigeria

6.5. The NYSC Practice and the art of Mainstreaming Youth capabilities in Nigeria

6.5.1. Mobilization and Youth Transition pathways

6.5.2. Capability Development Programmes and Youth: Navigating NYSC Pathway to Decent Work

6.5.2.1. Dilemmas in Youth Capability Deployment Practice

6.5.2.2. The NYSC’s Institutional Climate and Capacity Development Challenges

6.6. Conclusion

Chapter 7: Critical Perspectives on Youth Social Construction, Development and Positioning in Nigeria’s Political Economy of Development

7.1. Introduction

7.2. Gendered profile of youth respondents

7.3. Understanding the Meaning of Development

7.4. How youths construct their identity

7.4.1. Youth as an age related construction (ARC)

7.4.2. Youth as a capability-related construction (CRC)

7.4.2.1. Youth Power

7.4.2.2. Youth Agency

7.4.3. Youth as a transition-related construction (TRC)

7.5. Youth transition realities: The education to NYSC nexus

7.5.1. Youth experience in the education pathway
7.5.1.1. Youth Poverty ................................................................. 165
7.5.1.2. Access to support structure ........................................ 166
7.5.1.3. Inadequacies of the Nigerian education system ............... 167
7.5.1.4. Limitations to youth choices in the education pathway ...... 168
7.5.2. The NYSC Pathway: Youth Experiences ................................................................. 169
  7.5.2.1. National Integration .................................................... 169
  7.5.2.2. Capability and Skills Development .............................. 170
  7.5.2.3. Transitions to full employment ................................. 172
  7.5.2.4. Relevance to national development ............................ 173
7.6. Contextual conceptions of a Nigerian youth ................................................................. 175
  7.6.1. Technical skills ............................................................ 175
  7.6.2. Human capital investments .......................................... 175
  7.6.3. Enabling environment .................................................. 176
  7.6.4. Disconnects between youth policy and youth realities .......... 177
  7.6.5. General Youth Capability Development Recommendations .... 178
7.7. Mobilization and Deployment Scenarios of Youth Capabilities in Nigeria .......... 179
  7.7.1. Youth capabilities pool ................................................. 179
  7.7.2. National integration policy ............................................ 180
  7.7.3. Deployment of youth capabilities ..................................... 181
7.8. Conclusion ........................................................................ 183

Chapter 8: Conclusion and Recommendations

8.1. Introduction ........................................................................ 185
8.2. Youth Positioning in Development (Objective 1) ...................... 185
8.3. Social construction of youth in National development Discourse (Objective 2) .... 186
8.4. Youth Transition pathways (Objective 3) ............................... 187
8.5. NYSC deployment of youth capabilities for national development (Objective 4). 188
8.6. Re-imagining Youth Identities: A New Perspective of Human Development Discourse ........................................................................................................... 188
  8.6.1. Theoretical contributions towards advancing human development discourse and research 189
  8.6.2. Methodological contributions towards advancing human development ...... 190
  8.6.3. Practical Contributions of Youth Capability Analytic Framework in the NYSC practice context ........................................................................................................ 190
8.7. Recommended practice for developing and deploying youth capabilities in the NYSC

8.7.1. Recommendations for policy makers

8.7.2. Recommendations for NYSC organization

8.8. Further work

8.9. Final Words

References

Appendix A: Official Approvals for Research

Appendix B: (Instruments of Data Collection Instruments and Fieldwork Materials)

Appendix C: Coded Data and Respondent Information

Table A: Codes for Nigeria’s Geo-Political Zones

Table B: Detailed Demographic Profile of All Youth Respondents who participated in Qualitative SSI’s and FGD

Table C: Detailed Demographic Profile of Youth Respondents who participated in Quantitative SQ

Word Count: 62, 968
List of Tables

Table 2a: Thematic Constructions of the Global Human Development Approach… 48
Table 2b: Youth in the Millennium Development Goals……………………………… 49
Table 3.1: Meaning of Youth: A global, Regional and Local Nigerian Perspective… 60
Table 3.2: Sociological Perspectives of the Global hegemony of Youth in Development Theory…………………………………………………………………….. 64
Table 3.3: Youth in the Global Human Development Agenda……………………… 69
Table 3.4: Regional Policies that Inform Youth Development in Africa…………………. 71
Table 3.5: Regional Youth Policy Context in Selected African Countries……………….. 73
Table 4.1: The NYSC Mandate and Strategies for Youth and National Development in Nigeria……………………………………………………………………………… 85
Table 4.2: Nigeria’s Development Realities in Comparison with Selected Countries…………………………………………………………………………………………. 100
Table 4.3: Budgetary Allocation towards Human Capital Development (2012-2015)………………………………………………………………………………………… 101
Table 4.4: National Youth Development Index……………………………………………… 102
Table 5.1: Mixed Methods Approach data showing the sample size of all Methods in the Study………………………………………………………………………………………… 111
Table 5.2: Interview Matrix for Key Informants………………………………………….. 113
Table 5.3: Qualitative Interview Matrix for Youth Respondent Group………………….. 114
Table 6.1: Level of Policy Awareness on the Guiding Policy, Frameworks and Programmes of the NYSC scheme……………………………………………………….. 128
Table 6.2: Differential Meanings of youth social Constructions by NYSC Officials…130
Table 6.3: Findings on the Institutional Capacity of the NYSC to Youth Development for National Development…………………………………………………………. 144
Table 6.4: Institutional Performance of the NYSC………………………………………… 145
Table 6.5: Critical areas needed to Improve Institutional Performance………………….. 146
Table 7.1: Gendered Distribution of Youth Participants………………………………… 150
Table 7.2: Thematic Domains through Which Youths Construct their Identity………155
Table 7.3: Age Distribution of Youth Participants………………………………………… 156
Table 7.4: Deployment Capability Possibility Based on Deployment ………………….182
List of Figures

Figure 1: Conceptual and Theoretical Framework of Research .............................................. 22

Figure 2.1: Operationalising the CA adapted from Clark (2005), Alkire and Deneulin (2009) and Chiappero-Martinetti and Sabadash (2014) ......................................................... 54

Figure 2.2: A Holistic Understanding of the Human Development Paradigm inclusive of youth .................................................................................................................. 56

Figure 4.1: The Camp Organizational Chart of the NYSC ......................................................... 88

Figure 5.1: Study Area of Research ......................................................................................... 110

Figure 5.2: Constructivist Research Perspectives for a Mixed Methods Youth Research ................. 116

Figure 5.3: Analytic Framework of Research ........................................................................ 118

Figure 6.1: Mobilization and Youth Transition Pathway to National Service ................................ 136

Figure 6.2: Youth Transition pathways ................................................................................. 138

Figure 7.1: Youths and how they perceive Identity .................................................................. 154

Figure 7.2: Reasons on how youth perceive Identity .............................................................. 154

Figure 7.3: Educational Status of Youth Respondents ............................................................. 159

Figure 7.4: Perception on how youths envision their capacities in Nigeria's Development Agenda .................................................................................................................. 161

Figure 7.5: Marital Status of Youth Respondents .................................................................. 164

Figure 7.6: Primary Stakeholders for Youth's Educational Development .................................. 166

Figure 7.7: Youth Perspectives on skill acquisition in the NYSC pathway ................................ 171

Figure 7.8: Perception on the relevance of the NYSC to youth and National development in Nigeria .................................................................................................................. 173

Figure 7.9: Recommended Intervention for youth capability enhancement in Nigeria .............. 178

Figure 7.10: Youth Capabilities pool that fit the Current GDP (2010-2013) activity sectors .......... 180

Figure 7.11: National Integration criteria fit ........................................................................... 181

Figure 7.12: Deployment and the reality of mainstreaming of youth capabilities for national development ......................................................................................................... 182

Figure 8.1: Contributions of the Analytic Framework to the Deployment Practice of the NYSC .......................................................... 192
List of Boxes

Box 7.1: Youth Understanding of Development……………………………………151

Box 7.2. Collated Perspectives on how youth constitute their identity as a CRC……160
Abstract

Abstract of thesis submitted by Dereck Osadere Arubayi for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy and titled *Youth in Development: Understanding the contributions of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) to Nigeria’s National Development.*

Despite theoretical and policy advancements in global human and gendered approaches to development, youth in mainstream development policy discourse remains subsumed. The ratification of global best practice models of human development in Nigeria, without contextualizing the probable dividends of youth capability strength in shaping national development realities, will present challenges that are likely to threaten the sustainable future of the country. Perhaps if this is sustained, this thesis argues that the capabilities of Nigerian youths will continue to remain trapped or mismatched in areas that they fail to contribute positively to Nigeria’s national development. In this regard, this thesis evaluated the extent to which youth capabilities are enhanced in the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) for national development in Nigeria.

Firstly, this thesis contributes conceptually to understanding, broadly, the social constructions of youth in mainstream policy discourse and their positioning in both global and national development practice in Nigeria. It also critically examines through literature how western epistemological interpretations of development theorizing are reproduced in youth discourse. Succinctly, the theoretical contribution of youth in development explains how development-underdevelopment dualism in mainstream development reproduces similar youth-adult dualisms in conceptualizing how youths are recognized, represented and constituted within policy discourses. Based on this, the theoretical gaps that this thesis bridges, operationalizes the Sen’s capability approach (SCA) through the utilization of Narayan-Parker’s empowerment framework in order to contextualize how the intersections of youth agency and structural contributions of the NYSC could aid the effective utilization of youth capabilities for national development in Nigeria. Secondly, this thesis contributes methodologically to development practice as it adapts a mixed-method approach (MMA) to researching youth lives, especially from a developing country’s context. The application of a qualitative dominant mixed method approach (qual-MMA), suggests how through social constructivist ontology and through poststructuralist epistemology, the understanding of how youths socially construct their identity and the roles they play in national development becomes clearer. Thirdly, the germane and empirical contribution of this thesis especially to mainstream development theorizing is that, youth voices captured through narratives and quantitative data helped explore the experiences of Nigerian youth’s transition pathways from education to the NYSC pathway. This further allowed for critical examination of how youths are: absorbed through mobilization into the NYSC; developed through the activities in the scheme; deployed and utilized in addressing national development challenges in Nigeria.

This thesis suggests that dominant social constructions based on age and transition patterns, undermine the impact/effective functioning of youth capabilities for addressing national development challenges. It concludes that limited support structures during the youth educational pathways and lack of opportunity structures while youths are in the NYSC pathways continue to limit the functioning of their capabilities in sectors of national development needs. It recommends a need to rethink the current deployment strategy of the NYSC so that youth capabilities fit the national development narrative.
Declaration

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# List of Acronyms

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AEO</td>
<td>African Economic Outlook</td>
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<tr>
<td>AfDB</td>
<td>African Development Bank</td>
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<td>AfDF</td>
<td>African Development Forum</td>
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<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<td>AYC</td>
<td>African Youth Charter</td>
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<td>AYP</td>
<td>African Youth Policy</td>
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<td>CSWYE</td>
<td>Community Service Women and Youth Employment Scheme</td>
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<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussion</td>
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<td>FMYD</td>
<td>Federal Ministry of Youth Development</td>
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<td>FRN</td>
<td>Federal Republic of Nigeria</td>
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<td>GDI</td>
<td>Gender Development Index</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GEM</td>
<td>Gender Empowerment Measure</td>
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<td>GGGI</td>
<td>Global Gender Gap Index</td>
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<td>GPI</td>
<td>Gender Parity Index</td>
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<td>GYDI</td>
<td>Global Youth Development Index</td>
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<td>HDA</td>
<td>Human Development Approach</td>
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<td>HDI</td>
<td>Human Development Index</td>
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<td>HDR</td>
<td>Human Development Report</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>MYD</td>
<td>Ministries Youth Development</td>
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<td>MPI</td>
<td>Multi-dimensional Poverty Index</td>
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<td>NAPs</td>
<td>National Action Plans</td>
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<td>NAPEP</td>
<td>National Poverty Eradication Programme</td>
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<td>NDHS</td>
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<td>NDPs</td>
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<td>NEEDS</td>
<td>National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy</td>
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<td>NEPAD</td>
<td>The New Partnership for Africa’s Development</td>
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<td>NEPEP</td>
<td>National Enterprise Development Programme</td>
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<td>NESG</td>
<td>Nigerian Economic Summit Group</td>
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<td>NHDR</td>
<td>Nigerian Human Development Report</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
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<td>NPC</td>
<td>National Planning Commission</td>
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<td>NYCP</td>
<td>National Youth Council and Parliament</td>
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<td>NYDI</td>
<td>Nigerian Youth Development Index</td>
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<td>NYSC</td>
<td>National Youth Service Corps</td>
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<td>PRB</td>
<td>Population Reference Bureau</td>
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<td>Qual-MMR</td>
<td>Qualitative Dominant Mixed Methods Research</td>
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<td>SAP</td>
<td>Structural Adjustment Programme</td>
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<td>Sen’s Capability Approach</td>
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<td>SSA</td>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
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<td>SURE-P</td>
<td>Subsidy Reinvestment Programme</td>
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<td>NBS</td>
<td>National Bureau of Statistics</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs</td>
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<td>UNECA</td>
<td>United Nations Economic Commission for Africa</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
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<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<td>UNMDP</td>
<td>United Nations Millennium Development Project</td>
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<td>Youth Employment and Social Support Operation</td>
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

The main purpose of this thesis is to contribute to ongoing debates in mainstream approaches to human development through narrative perspectives about Nigerian youth. With critical insights on how the deconstructions of development theories has broadly focused on human as well as gendered reconstructions of development, this study highlights why youth remain a marginal social category within neoliberal Nigerian development discourse. Arguing through social constructivist ontology and poststructuralist deconstructionist lens, this thesis seeks to understand the positioning and disconnections between youth capabilities and available opportunity and support structures across their transition pathways and within the Nigerian development space. In this light, the reimagining of Sen’s capability approach (Sen, 1999; Alkire and Deneulin, 2009) within Narayan-Parker’s (2002, 2005) Empowerment Framework, and through a life-course perspective, will uncover how mainstream neoliberal approaches to development have been reproduced in National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme in Nigeria. Through a qualitative dominant mixed-method approach (Qual-MMA), constructivist narrative approach (CNA), and simple descriptive statistics (SDP) the analysis of documents and narrative perspectives will provide narrative accounts about youth experiences as understood from both NYSC officials and Youth Respondents. This will help deconstruct critiques that explain the disconnections between both youth capability programmes and the NYSC youth deployment strategy for Nigeria’s development. Against this backdrop, this chapter will provide a parsimonious overview research problem; the overall aim and objectives of the study; the relevant literature and theoretical underpinnings of the research; an overview of the research design and methodology; the significance and contribution of the study; as well as the limitations.

1.2. Problem Statement and Research Context

Since the UN first decade of development (1960-1970), theoretical deconstructions of development discourse has created premises for the reconstruction of the human development paradigm and gendered approaches to emerge. With these paradigmatic reconstructions, contemporary neoliberal development theorizing engenders discourses of inclusion, participation, and empowerment (Cornwall, 2010; Pieterse, 2010). Regardless of these strides, and until recently, development theorizing and policy practice remained trapped in vertical dichotomous debates as it strove to balance
between development realities (e.g. developed and developing) and gender inequalities (e.g. male and female). Indeed, based on these narrow focus of human and gendered abstractions that ignore the specificities and transient horizontal realities across human life-course (infancy, childhood, youth, adulthood, aged), recent studies (e.g. Ismail et al, 2009; Wardany, 2012; Arah, 2013; Sukarieh and Tannock, 2015) have shown that children and youth are the most vulnerable to development policy frameworks.

As can be seen from Ismail et al (2009) youth research in Africa, while issues of youth vulnerabilities reveal socio-economic impediments connected to unemployment, education, and poverty on the one hand, the realities of youth exclusion remain underpinned by weaknesses in development policy frameworks that narrowly focus on problems associated with power relations concerning the position of young people in decision making processes. Premised on these findings, and coupled with precarious episodes of youth-led North African uprisings, protests, and occupy movements, are situated within Sub-Saharan African (SSA) in general and the Nigerian context in particular, then it becomes conceivable to understand the renewed attention about ‘youth’ and ‘youth policies’ by governments, policymakers, civil society organizations and economists (Tadros, 2012; Honwana, 2012; Arah, 2013).

Although it may appear that this renewed initiative in contemporary youth discourse has created a premise to challenge ‘unspoken assumptions’ in mainstream development discourse (Lintelo 2012a, 2012b), negative and historical construction of youth as a period of ‘storm’ (vulnerability) and ‘stress’ (problems) continue to blur chances of improving the state of youth development globally (Lerner et al., 2005). Nevertheless, in challenging these negative perspectives and deficit models that framed youth either as being ‘at risk’ (i.e. vulnerable) or ‘a dangerous class’ (Kelly, 2000: 2003; Standing, 2011), several authors (Arah, 2013) contend that with the reconstruction of the positive youth development (PYD) framework since the 1990s, the contemporary mandate of the global youth development agenda seeks to ensure that youth capabilities are central to national development planning and policy making processes (UNESCO, 2004; UNFPA 2008, 2010; Sibereisen and Learner, 2007).

From the global perspective, this ‘new positive development movement’ which often aligns with global development policy best practices, critically challenges neoliberal assumptions by stressing the need for increased investments for ‘youth in international development policy’ and ‘for national development’ purposes (UNESCO, 2004;
Gribble, 2010; Pereznieto and Harding, 2013a, 2013b). Also, for SSA, this positive imperative now emphasizes the need for Africa’s to realize it potentials through the enhancement of youth capabilities for national development (UNECA, 2012). Furthermore, as can be seen in Nigerian youth research, which stress that unless the negative identity constructions of youth are reconstructed in a positive light (Akanji, 2011), and until the government and power brokers realize the dividends Nigerian ‘youth bulge’ – which in Nigeria stands at 70 percent of its entire population (Nigeria: Next Generation Report [NNGR], 2010; Bloom et al, 2010; NBS, 2011) the prospect of Nigeria fulfilling its potential as the ‘giant’ of Africa would continue to remain a farfetched reality (Adebanwi and Obadare, 2010).

Situating the foregoing within the Nigerian youth development perspectives, it is widely recognised that Nigerian youth capabilities are limited by lack of economic opportunities, unemployment, an inept educational system and a lack of institutional capacity to sustain human development interventions (Okafor, 2011; NESG, 2014 Report). However, the resonating reality of harnessing the existing youth potentials in the national development of Nigeria has proved uniquely daunting as youth voices are often not considered in the design of national development policies. In this light, the Nigeria Youth Service Corps (NYSC) – a product of federal military government of the Gowon’s Regime, which was established as a post-civil war intervention in 1973 became institutionalized under decree No.24, with the purpose of promoting national unity and to foster common socio-cultural ties among the youths of Nigeria (NYSC, 1999). Indeed, four decades after its establishment, the NYSC has snowballed into an operational vehicle for harnessing the collective capabilities of Nigerian youths for Nigeria’s national development drive through its youth deployment strategy into key sectors of the economy (Obadare, 2010; Raimi and Alao, 2011). A major concern however with the recent Federal Government approved NYSC deployment strategy into only four key sectors of the economy (agriculture, education health and rural infrastructure development) would potentially leave a significant proportion of youths as a development ‘mis-match’ with far-reaching implications including a missed opportunity for diversified youth capacity development (FMYD, 2013a; NYSC, 2014).

Still on the realities of youth ‘mis-match’ in the Nigerian political space, while numerous research have focused on discourses of human capital development like capability utilisation, maximization capability for national development needs, they have often
ignored perspectives on how youths are socially constructed. Positioning this argument within the Nigerian context, it can be revealed from the national youth policy perspective, that there are inconsistencies between the national meaning of a youth – i.e. a person between age 18 and 35 years and the institutional NYSC meaning of a youth – i.e. a person between age 18 and 30 (NYSC, 1999; NYSC ACT, 2004; FMYD, 2009). Debatably, with the reality that meaning of youth in the Nigerian context defiles homogeneity the foregoing plausibly raises questions about youth social constructions. Indeed while it is easier to play the blame game and suggest that the contemporary precarious state of the Nigeria youth are merely underpinned by neglect and fluctuating budgetary allocations over the years (Odion, 2010; CLEEN Foundation, 2011; NPC, 2011), it is also plausible that within development planning contexts, policy makers and the government, ignore these discrepancies and nuanced contributions of youth social constructions in the implementation of policies geared towards national development.

Within this context, an evaluation of how Nigerian youths construct themselves may prove crucial in defining future youth development agendas. While other studies on the role of the NYSC have viewed it from the aspect of how it provides youth labour mobility (Ojo, 1980) and ethno-religious unity (Otwin 1989; Nwosu, 1996) through doctrines of national service, effective citizenship, patriotism, and sustainable development (Elberly, 1992; Obadare, 2010; Raimi and Alao, 2011), a key weakness in literature is that these studies failed to provide critical narratives about how the NYSC deployment strategy impacts on youth capabilities for national development. This study therefore seeks to critically evaluate the role of the NYSC and its deployment strategy through narrative accounts on youth, in order to understand the extent to which it helps develop and positions youth capabilities within the broader national development agenda.

1.3. Aim of Study
The overall study aim of this research is to evaluate the extent to which youth capabilities are enhanced in the NYSC for National Development in Nigeria.

1.4. Study Objectives
The following objectives of this study are to:

1. Critically examine mainstream development literature in order to understand the construction and positioning of youth on a global and local Nigerian context.
2. Provide a conceptual grounding on how Nigerian youths socially construct their identity and the roles they play in national development.

3. Explore the experiences of Nigerian youth’s transition pathways from education to the NYSC.

4. Examine the NYSC deployment realities of youth capabilities for national development in Nigeria.

1.5. Relevant Literature and Theoretical Underpinnings of this Study

To achieve the highlighted research objectives of this study, literature on conceptual discourses of youth constructions as well as deconstructionist’s perspectives on development theory and the institutional responsibilities of the NYSC will be extensively explored. A ‘WorkAble’ approach to Amartya Sen’s Capability Approach (SCA) (Sen, 1999; Alkire and Deneulin, 2009; Chiappero-Martinetti and Sabadash, 2014) through a life-course perspective (Lutz, et al, 2004; Green, 2008; Holmes et al, 2012) was adapted to provide an understanding of how ‘youth in development’ discourses have primarily been excluded under mainstream development theorizing. Emerging from this is a nuanced narrative that would help describe the positioning of youths and their underlying realities in policy development and practice within the Nigerian context.

Consequently, theoretical discussions on the Human Capital Theory (HCT) (Schultz, 1961, 1971; Becker, 1962; 1993) will highlight limitations on how investment in capability development initiatives like education, health, social wellbeing, and infrastructural development practices are too narrow to capture the contemporary complexities of ‘youth precarity’ (Standing, 2011). Drawing on recent youth research (e.g. Selvam, 2008; Chiappero-Martinetti and Sabadash, 2014) that integrate the HCT and SCA, the growing consensus now suggests strategies that could improve the current youth livelihoods through strategically aligning youth capabilities with available opportunity structures (Selvam, 2008; Holmes et al, 2012; Ortiz, 2012; Owen, 2013). In this light, this study advances Narayan-Parker’s (2002: 2005) empowerment framework (NEF) by reconstructing it within the NYSC context in order to understand how youth capabilities (i.e. individual and collective existing skills), youth capability development (training from the NYSC) and deployment strategy of the NYSC could mutually and effectively help address some of the socio-economic and geo-political challenges in Nigeria.
Given the foregoing, this thesis adapts a number of capability development models (e.g. Sen, 1999, 2004; Narayan-Parker, 2002, 2005; Chiappero-Martinetti and Sabadash, 2014) in the examination of youth capability development and deployment within the NYSC practice context. Indeed, ‘beyond’ the youth capital investment rhetoric (Sanusi, 2012), a critical analysis of the four cardinal youth capability development strategies of the NYSC (i.e. orientation, industrial placements, community development service, and official certification) and its deployment strategy will create a narrative account that will describe the extent to which youth capabilities are developed, deployed, positioned and/or disconnected from available opportunity structures that may be critical to addressing Nigeria’s national development needs. In summary, Figure 1 below provides the theoretical and literature domains that will be covered in this study.
Youth in Development: the NYSC’s Contribution to Nigeria’s National Development

Social Constructivist Ontology and Poststructuralist Deconstruction
Philosophical Lenses

Deconstructions of Development

- Sen’s Capability Approach
- Human and Gendered approaches to Development

Deconstructions of Youth

- Life Course Perspective
- Marginalized or Dependent Other

Gap in Development Theory
Concept of development from a global perspective narrowly focuses on debates on dualities between development realities (Developed/Developing) and genders (Male/Female). This ignores realities through life course.

Gap on Youth Deconstructions
Youth in development theorizing and policy practice constructs youth based on deficit and problematic ontologies. Dualities are reproduced between human and gendered realities (e.g., youth vs. Adulthood).

Case: National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Nigeria

Youth Capability

Youth Capability Development

Youth Deployment

Areas of National Development Needs
- Agriculture
- Infrastructure
- Education
- Health
- Other

National Development

Figure 1: conceptual and theoretical framework of study
1.5.1. Definition of key concepts
For the purpose of clarity, the key concepts (e.g. youth, youth development, national development, NYSC) utilized across the body of this thesis are defined in the subsection below.

1.5.1.1. Youth
Although a Nigerian youth can be defined as persons between ages 18-35, the target youth group for this study are young Nigerian graduates, eligible to participate in the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme (i.e. persons between ages 18-30).

1.5.1.2. National Development:
The FMYD (2008) report contends that in order to build competencies and fill the gaps, it is necessary to add some form of value to the youth. Development as the report argues, ‘builds a bridge between today and tomorrow’ and ‘focuses on building abilities necessary to facilitate youth development’ (ibid, 2008:p3). Aside theoretical deconstructions of development as economic growth, modernization, dependency, structural adjustments programmes, human development etc. (Cornwall and Eade, 2010; Hooper, 2012) in mainstream development literature, for the purpose of this thesis, national development refers to national integration. It captures, how through the NYSC programme, young Nigerian graduates are mobilized and brought together – regardless of ethnic background, religious beliefs, country/state of study, for the purpose of ‘national building’ and development.

1.5.1.3. Youth Development
In the historical context of national development in Nigeria, ‘youth development’ entailed “the development of youths for the promotion and strengthening of national unity through inter-state youth activities and services for self-reliance” in such a way that youth are “gainfully and positively occupied at all times” (FRN, 1981:313). However in contemporary national youth policy context in Nigeria’s democratic regime (1999 till date), ‘youth development’ can be defined as:

the process in which all youth are supported, encouraged and given opportunities to be involved in realizing their economic, political and social aspiration, dreams, rights etc… it is a process that enables them build skills and competencies that allow them to function and contribute in their daily lives… youth development is therefore a combination of all the people, places, supports, opportunities and services that young people need to be happy, healthy and successful.

FMYD (2009: 2)
For the evaluation of the extent to which youth capabilities are enhanced (i.e. youth development) through the NYSC for national development, the philosophical underpinnings of youth development build on the notion of development as freedoms (Sen, 1999; Deneulin and McGregor, 2010).

1.5.1.4. National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) Programme
The NYSC was established in 1973 as a post-civil-war strategy in Nigeria, with a view to promote the development of common ties among the youths of Nigeria and the promotion of national unity. Despite the fact that the NYSC was established in Nigeria’s military regime as a strategy to ensure reconstruction, rehabilitation, and reconciliation of Nigeria’s post-war economy, it remains relevant and an apex youth organization in Nigeria’s democratic era, that enforces the policies of national development through the mobilization, deployment, and development of youth capabilities (NYSC, 1999, 2008; Bodley-Bond and Cronin, 2013). As the joint second longest standing national youth programme in sub-Saharan Africa, the relevance of the NSYC scheme cannot be overemphasized as it stands a critical platform that links educated Nigerian youths to places of employment (Bodley-Bond and Cronin, 2013). Further analysis of the NYSC practice context is provided in chapter 4, section 4.3.2.1).

1.6. A Brief Overview of the Research Design and Methodology
This research builds on cross-disciplinary methodological considerations and approaches to contemporary social research. The methodological boundaries of this study are positioned between development policy and management research (Sumner and Tribe, 2008; Laws et al, 2013), and underpinnings of a mixed methods youth research (Helve, 2005; Delgado, 2006). Methodological choices however largely drew on the modalities of ‘researching young people’s lives’ (Puuronen, 2005; Morch, 2005; and Heath et al 2009). In conducting a youth research of this nature, this study draws on suggestions from several scholars (e.g. Sumner and Tribe, 2008; Lincoln, Lynham and Guba, 2011; Creswell, 2013) that research design and methodological decisions are often shaped the researcher’s ontological and epistemological stances, choice of theoretical/conceptual framework, choice of methodology, choice of methods of data collection, as well as choice of analysis techniques. The next few paragraphs would highlight the methodological choices made for this study.

Cognizant of the importance of ‘positionality’ in doing a youth research of this nature, the philosophical underpinnings of this study as highlighted in section 1.5 above draws
on social constructivist ontology and poststructuralist deconstructionist epistemology (see also Figure 1). The overarching research design for this study is informed by a qualitative dominant mixed methods approach (Qual-MMA) as suggested by Johnson et al. (2007:124). Methodologically, this study adopts a single-case study approach with the NYSC being the case. Indeed, in choosing from the different kinds of case study designs (Stake, 2005; Tucker, 2012) the methodological justification of this study is aligned with the underpinnings of an instrumental case, that strives to either understand theoretical lapses in literature or analyse a social problem. Subsequently, with the choice of a single and instrumental case, the study area of this research which is Nigeria comprised of two case sites (Lagos and Abuja). The choice of these sites was down to issues of logistics associated with: negotiating access with the NYSC; access to stakeholder groups, security concerns in Nigeria; ethical approval. Across these two study sites, two stakeholder groups were involved in this study: (1) NYSC officials or Key informants; and (2) NYSC youth corps members.

Sources of data were both primary and secondary. For primary sources, both qualitative methods (i.e. interviews with both youth respondents and key informants, and a focus group discussion with youth respondents) and quantitative methods (i.e. questionnaire surveys for youth respondents) were utilized in the collection of data from stakeholder groups. Furthermore, policy documents collected from both the NYSC and Federal Ministry of Youth Development were secondary data sources. Lastly, in juxtaposing narrative perspectives from youth respondents and key informants with findings from key documents, this study adopted a constructivist narrative approach (Esin et al., 2013).

1.7. Significance of the study
In an apparent response to the youth-led Arab spring, which according to several scholars (e.g. Wardany, 2012; Tadros, 2012) was down to the failure of government to embrace a public policy for youth, the Nigerian government like most other governments in Africa are focused on improving social safety nets for young people through improved investment in youth capacity development for national development (Gribble, 2010; Sanusi, 2012; FMYD, 2013a; NPC, 2009). For Nigeria, the need to renegotiate youth’s position and take into cognisance their demographic, socio-economic and political contributions to national development of the country, is a step towards peace, security and inclusive growth on a national level. Perhaps if the Nigerian...
government fail to recognize and capitalize on the growing youth bulge, the opportunity cost of neglect could signal disaster Nigeria in particular and Africa and the world at large (Nigerian Human Development Report [NHDR], 2006; Bloom et al, 2010; Iwilade, 2013). As the NNGR (2010:12) aptly observed:

Nigeria stands on the threshold of the greatest transformation in its history. Over the next 20 years, the fundamental nature of its society could alter beyond recognition. In the best case, Nigeria will enjoy a substantial boost to its development, becoming an economic engine not only for the region, but also for the whole of Africa. If the worst happens, it will see a deepening cycle of economic underperformance, social unrest, and even conflict. The choice between success and failure rests on Nigeria’s ability to harness the power of its single greatest asset: not oil, but youth.

The above statement underscores the overarching significance of this study. It proposes plausible consequences of youth neglect and offers a basis to critique national development plans and policy making practices that have failed to take into cognisance the capabilities and collective agency of the Nigerian youth. The World Bank (2014) suggests that the regional demographic hegemony that Nigeria enjoys that represents 47 percent of West Africa’s population is due to the fact that the country has a youthful population. In the same way, Iweala (2013) argues that the country’s reputation and prospects of addressing the security and regional development challenges in the SSA is down to its demographic power, spearheaded by youth.

Arguably, the impact the Nigerian economy has on the development of the African continent as Adebanwi and Obadare (2010) argued, explains the cliché ‘as Nigeria goes, so goes Africa’. Perhaps, if this argument is understood within the context of the above statement by the NNGR (2010), especially if Nigeria fails to harness the capabilities of its youth, then the imminent catastrophe that awaits Nigeria will reproduce the cliché ‘as youth goes, so goes Nigeria’. Arguably, the consequences of youth neglect as Odion (2010) argued, may not only lead to an increasing brain-drain phenomenon, it will exacerbate issues of insecurity, ethno-religious conflicts, youth restiveness, rebellion and insurgency that may eventually implode the Nigerian social order (Adefisuka, 2010). Therefore, with a critical exploration of how human development and capability development interventions (Ul Haq, 1995; Sen 1999, 2004; Alkire and Deneulin, 2009), are constructed within the NYSC context, this thesis offers narrative insights to emerging debates that seek to answer, how and to what
extent can the NYSC, given the socio-economic and security challenges of the Nigerian state, fulfil its promise of youth development for national development.

This research therefore seeks to reinforce on-going debate on the need to re-position youth within the triad of research, policy and practice (Giroux, 2009; Chisholm et al, 2011; Furlong, 2013) so that they don’t only ‘become’ but also ‘belong’ to the theoretical, socio-economic and political centre of gravity in national development planning, especially in the Nigerian context (Oviawe, 2010; Odion, 2010; Sanusi, 2012; FMYD, 2013a). Arguably, in attempts to avert the reality of capability gaps and capability traps, and calm the growing ‘anxiety’, ‘anomie’, ‘alienation’ and ‘anger’ that youth (CLEEN, 2011; Standing, 2011), this study advocates for better ways that the NYSC can minimize youth capability mismatches through a more nuanced deployment perspective that takes into cognizance the changing national development treads in Nigeria.

In examining the state of the Nigerian youth, the Nigerian Economic Summit Group NESG (2012: 108) highlighted the importance of youth capability development and deployment when they suggested that ‘…by 2025, Nigeria would be the largest youth supplier of global workforce’. Similarly, akin with imperative to mainstream positive youth capabilities as part of the development solution in Nigeria (NHDR, 2009; Oviawe, 2010; Iwilade, 2013), this research compliments the NESG (2012) arguments that ‘it is impossible to discuss development in isolation of youth’, because they constitute approximately 70 percent of Nigeria’s population. Despite these truths that youth are demographic majority in Nigeria (Akanji, 2011; Ortiz, 2012), and regardless the roles that Nigerian youths played, both in shaping the country’s social historical past and renegotiating modern Nigeria (Falola and Heaton, 2008; Adebanwi and Obadare, 2010), youth in Nigeria’s national development as highlighted by both NNGR (2010) and NESG (2012), remain a marginalized category.

Herein lays the academic significance of this study which focuses on a critical evaluation of the activities and deployment strategy of the NYSC scheme in order to understand the implications on youth development for national development in Nigeria. Indeed, at

1 Capability gaps is the disconnects between existing youth capabilities and the capabilities required for effective functioning in spaces of national development needs.

2 Capability traps is the mis-deployment of youth capabilities that are ‘forced’ to function in spaces of national development needs.
an epoch in the development landscape of Nigeria, and with an institution like the NYSC scheme which has the capacity to mobilize an average of approximately 250000 young Nigerian graduates from across the nation and world at large, capturing the narratives about youth, and how they interpret their NYSC and deployment experiences, will offer critical insights towards improving youth capacity development concerns (FMYD, 2013a). In other words, a critical evaluation of the NYSC will therefore help understand how despite the 4 cardinal capability development programmes and deployment strategies, there still exist narratives of capability mismatches due to limited opportunity and employment structures that prolongs transitions from education to work.

Furthermore, driven by the need to ‘restructure and realign the NYSC Scheme with the Federal Government’s transformation agenda’ (FMYD, 2013a, FMYD, 2013b), this research comes in as a timely response in order to examine how the NYSC manages its current deployment strategy within the context of security and national development challenges. With this, a critical evaluation of both the NYSC’s YCD strategies and its deployment strategy which this study provides, will offer narrative insights as to how into improve the service delivery in fulfil the promise of youth development in Nigeria. Therefore, a key contribution of this research to the capability approach is the introduction of ‘youth deployment’ – a strategy for linking youth capabilities and youth capability development.

1.8. Limitations of the study
Since the etymological inception of the geographical entity called Nigeria, debates and determinants of national building and development while some research (e.g. Obierchere, 1982; Momah, 2013) focus on and have faulted the antecedent of the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates in 1914, other debates have focused on issues around negotiating a collective Nigerian identity and understanding the dilemmas associated with the ‘problem of belonging’ (Omoniyi et al, 2009; Akanji, 2011). With specific reference to this ‘forceful marriage’ of 1914 in which proponents argue, occurred without consultation of ethno-religious groups, debates on nation building continue to reinforce the issue of an unresolved national identity question (Mustapha, 1997; Abutudu, 2010). These debates have inherently informed strategies and programmes (e.g. NYSC) and influenced research on ‘nation-building’ that seek to unravel and address the cultural limitations that impede the process of effective nation-
building and development in post-independent Nigeria (Bray and Cooper, 1979; Marenin, 1979; Olutola, 1979; Momah, 2013). In this regard, the issues of ethnoreligious, regional differences and antecedents leading to the 30month Nigerian civil war (1967-1970) that also provided a rationale for the establishment of the NYSC as a post-war strategy – aimed at promoting the ethos of unity, national consciousness and integration of diverse Nigerian ethnicities, was considered relevant to addressing the national identity question (Olutola, 1979; Soyinka, 1996; Abutudu, 2010).

Although the ethno-relativist and class perspectives have dominated mainstream national development discourse in Nigeria; this research restricts itself to understanding the formation of a collective national identity (Omoniyi et al, 2009) in which youths are central, by focusing on how the NYSC that conceptualizes the positioning of youth in national development. The rationale as to why this study doesn’t focus on an ethno-relative and class perspectives, is due to the fact that these two viewpoints negate the essence of 4 cardinal programmes of the NYSC – which seek to eliminate cultural barriers/differences that impede inter-ethnic/fait integration for national development and the deployment strategy – which aims to young Nigerian graduates are not mobilized to their states of origin (NYSC, 1999, 2004, 2011).

1.9. Thesis Structure
A brief summary of how chapters will be written is essential in providing a guide for readers. The thesis contains of 9 chapters and an appendix.

**Chapter 1** has discussed the overall contextual background to this study. It introduced the central research aim and objectives that guide this study. In brief, it presented the literature and theoretical scope of the study as well as the methodological underpinnings that guide this study.

**Chapter 2** provides a historical critical deconstruction of mainstream development theories and concepts that explain the extent of human development theoretical advancement. With the aim of identifying critical gaps in mainstream development literature, this chapter suggests how theories of development justify discourses of becoming (e.g. modernization theory) and belonging (e.g. Dependency Theories, Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), Neoliberalism). This in turn explains how the global south is socially constructed and integrated into the global political economy. In extending the analysis to people-centred approaches to development, this chapter builds on the Sen’s Capability Approach (SCA) by highlighting how youths remain a
‘marginalized other’ category in the global human development research, policy and practice (RPP). This chapter concludes that despite advancements in development theorising with mantra of equality, inclusion and participation, contemporary position of ‘youth in development’ (YID) remains subsumed under mainstream discourses of development.

Chapter 3 continues the review of literature by drawing theories from youth studies in order to understand youth’s social constructions and their interpretations on a global, regional, and local Nigerian context level. In this context, this chapter draws on the sociology of youth in attempts in attempts to understand the extent to which development’s epistemology which is constructed through binary logics (e.g. development versus underdevelopment) reproduces similar a ‘youth binary logic’ (e.g. youth versus adult dualisms). These theoretical discussions inform the contemporary advancement of a political economy of youth that have informed global, regional and national positioning of youth in development processes. Also, with a brief overview of how national youth service (NYS) programmes emerged as a moral equivalent of war in Africa at large, this chapter sets the context for unveiling the reality of how youths are positioned in development in Nigeria.

Chapter 4 introduces the political economy of youth in development in the Nigerian context. From colonial times to contemporary Nigerian development experience, this chapter examined the constructions, positioning, and practicalities of the ways in which youth have been framed through historical development episodes in the Nigerian context. By Examining Nigeria’s National development plans (NDPs), policy documents and intents by the Nigerian government, this chapter sets the analytic backdrop in which youths are constructed and positioned either as a problem/solution of development. In specific terms, it highlights the youth capability development criteria for inclusion in the NYSC scheme as well as interventions that link youth capabilities to areas of national development needs. This chapter would answer my first objective of this study.

Chapter 5 provided the overarching methodological design of the study. It first explains the philosophical positions of this study by highlighting the choices of, and rationale behind why this study utilized a Qualitative-Dominant Mixed Method Research Approach (QUAL-MMA). This chapter also provides perspectives on the practicalities involved in utilizing a case study methodology. Given that this study
adopts a QUAL-MMA, this chapter critically discusses the intricacies of data collection, through qualitative – interviews, focus group discussions, and documents, and quantitative methods – questionnaire surveys. Two stakeholder groups (i.e. NYSC youth corps members and NYSC officials respectively) were involved in this study. Similarly, as a method of data analysis, this chapter highlights why a constructivist narrative approach was important in capturing the narratives about youth in Nigeria’s development discourse. In line with the importance of researcher reflexivity or positionality while conducting a social research, this chapter explains how my narrative identity, first as a Nigerian youth, a young academic, and an ex-youth corps member of the NYSC programme, explained fieldwork realities of negotiating access and abiding by the ethics of youth research while on the field. In this regard, this chapter presented some of the ethical considerations and dilemmas that were involved in this study.

Chapter 6 presents the findings and discussions from Nigeria. Presentation of data was in two parts. Firstly narratives from key informants were used to corroborate findings from document analysis. The next part of this chapter reflected both on the narrative accounts of youth respondents as well as their descriptive realities. For the narrative perspectives from youth, while focused group discussions provided a collective narrative from youth perspectives, semi-structured interviews will present individual narratives as to their experience in the NYSC. Based on the demographic realities of youth in Nigeria, the quantitative questionnaire surveys provided narrative insights through simple descriptive statistics that will help provide a nuance picture about the deployment phenomenon and youth capability realities of youth NYSC experiences. It should be noted that all findings in this chapter were aligned in such a way that they answered the aim and objectives study. Precisely, while chapter 5 highlighted the policy context in which youths are constructed, this chapter captured more of youth capability and deployment experiences of the NYSC programme. Also, the narrative account of NYSC officials helped to explain the extent to which the NYSC had the capacity to absorb, develop and deploy youth capabilities to places of national development needs.

Chapter 7 provides an analytic discussion based on four broad analytic themes which included focused on: (1) Youth Constructions, (2) Youth Capabilities, (3) Youth Capability Development experience, and (4) Deployment realities of corps members within national development context. Indeed, the overarching analysis of youth NYSC experiences helped explain the extent to which the NYSC youth capability and deployment is/is not effective in addressing national development challenges. It
provided deeper insights into the state of capability gaps, traps and disconnects within the Nigerian National Development Space.

Chapter 8 presents the conclusions to this study. It provides a summarized backdrop of all findings and how it has addressed the aim and objectives of study. It also offers suggestions and recommendations on future direction of the NYSC in improving its youth capability development interventions and its deployment strategy. Furthermore, this chapter clearly states the practical contributions of this work as it offers new directions in doing youth research in a developing countries context.

1.10. Conclusion
This chapter has presented the contextual backdrop to understanding the current state of youth in development in Nigeria. It has projected the aim and objectives of study that informed the literature (Chapters 2 and 3) and analytic chapters (Chapters 5, 6 and 7). Through a conceptual and theoretical framework the theoretical scope and study scope for this study was established (Figure 1), an overarching methodology was this study was developed (Chapter 4). This inherently unveiled the methodological choices and approaches to data collection that from the adoption of a qualitative-dominant mixed methods approach, to a case study approach in which the case was Nigeria and the case sites were Lagos and Abuja. Also a constructivist narrative analytic approach was also underscored as the lens through which narratives about youth in development across different historical episodes in Nigeria would be explored. Overall, this chapter presented the clear structure through a brief chapter summary as highlighted in section 1.8. To this end, the next chapter would look at relevant literature that will guide the analytic parts of this study.
2.1. Introduction
The meaning of Development since its etymological inception has been a source of theoretical controversy, dialogues and consensuses. Arguably, the changing positions of development doctrines through deconstructionist perspective, has reproduced an ‘amoeba-like’ vacuum that is continually been filed with metaphors, doctrines, and interwoven buzzwords like poverty reduction, social protection, inclusive growth, participation, sustainability, gender equality, empowerment of marginalized groups etc. (Esteva, 1985, 2010; Kabeer, 2005; Rist, 2007; Cornwall, 2010). Accordingly, the reconstructions of development through buzzwords that explains the changing positions in discourse have over the years emanated from critiques that sought to challenge the hegemony of development epistemology and policy processes involved in ‘making the third world’ (Escobar, 1995: 2000; Sachs, 2010).

From a poststructuralist premise, several authors (Escobar, 1992; Fraser, 2009) have critically explored the interconnected practices that revolve around rationality, redistribution, recognition and representations of worlds and research subjects. Cornwall and Eade (2010) argues that poststructuralism unveils how contemporary meanings of development has become a pile of ‘buzzwords’ and ‘fuzzwords’ that are propagated in the global north. The commodification of development discourse from the global north to the global south, has not only created a schizophrenic agenda (Feiring, 2000), but has also reduced the practice of development to a biz – propagated by governments of the global north and development buzz – spread by the academia, rock stars, celebrities, and NGOs (Collier, 2008). As a ‘White Man’s Burden’, Easterly (2006, 2007) suggested that development has long replaced colonialism as a doctrine in the global south. The focus of this so-called ‘development’ project is to improve the livelihood of the ‘bottom billions’ (Collier, 2008).

Building on the argument above, this chapter reviews relevant literature on development theory and youth studies. The chapter synthesizes discussions on the constructions and deconstruction process of development theory while identifying the missing ‘youth in development’ paradigm. Accordingly, Derrida’s deconstruction philosophy set the philosophical backdrop for understanding the ‘construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction’ (Demmitt, 1999) of mainstream development
theories, its subjects – i.e. human, gender, children, youth, adults and aged – and how these subjects, particularly youth, are included/excluded as well as positioned in development theory (Zehfuss, 2002; Cornwall and Eade 2010; Pieterse, 2010; Gabriel, 2013).

2.2. Deconstruction Philosophy: A Theoretical Framework for Understanding Development Theory

To build on theoretically deconstructed parts of western ideological dualisms in development discourse, this research utilises ‘Deconstruction’ as the main philosophical framework for understanding how the position of ‘youths’ are constructed, negotiated, renegotiated and reproduced (Derrida, 1981; Culler, 1983; Fraser and Naples, 2004; Brett, 2009; Gabriel, 2013) within the local Nigerian development discourse. Elliot (2009) opines:

To deconstruct ideas [particularly ideas associated with development and youth in development discourse respectively]… is to reconstruct and resituate meaning within broader structures and processes… it is an attempt to recover – to put back into words-excluded narratives and alternative histories which have been repressed… The application of deconstructive techniques… has been successfully deployed to reconstruct and resituate the narratives of people – oppressed women [in this case Nigerian youth]… and subalterns of various kinds – excluded by mainstream political hierarchies and institutional frameworks.

(Elliot, 2009: 116: with emphasis)

Although Destruktion was originally postulated by Martin Heidegger (1889-1979), Derrida (1988) ‘Deconstruction Philosophy’ remains the most cited (Schwandt, 2007). In poststructuralist thought, the term ‘deconstruction’ underpins ‘radical hermeneutics’ or the practice of ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ that moves beyond binary oppositions in metaphysical thought (Schwandt, 2007). The binary opposite of development – underdevelopment – is often laden with problematic constructs like: being primitive and backward (Baran, 1952; Munck, 1999; Sachs, 2010); corrupt and lacking institutional capabilities to address developmental challenges (Cowen and Shenton, 1996; Pritchett et al, 2013); poverty stricken (Cornwall and Brooks, 2005). Within feminists understanding of development, the deconstruction of women unveils chauvinistic ideologies of how they are often viewed as the ‘weaker half’ (Stoper and Johnson, 1977) presumed to assume subaltern positions (Spivak, 1988) to be ‘marginalized’ (Murthy et al, 2008; Chibba, 2009), ‘poor’ (Fukuda-Parr, 1999; Institute of Development Studies [IDS], 2001) and belong to a socially ‘excluded’ group (Goldenberg, 2007), and the ‘other’
(Bleijenbergh et al., 2013). An evaluation of the intersectional realities of youth within the context of gendered deconstructions of development theory provides an understanding of how youths are also considered to be a ‘disconnected’ (MacDonald and Marsh, 2005) ‘underclass of socially excluded’ group (MacDonald, 1997); a ‘dangerous class’ who are always ‘at risk’ or ‘a risk’ to be managed (Kelly, 2003; Standing, 2011); or more, as ‘agents of destruction’ (Luqman, 2010).

Whilst development theorising as a western metaphysical thought is often presented in terms of ‘binary opposites’ (e.g. development versus underdevelopment; global north versus global south; west versus rest; man versus woman; genders versus other marginalized groups and so on), in reality, they are not mutually exclusive (Derrida, 1981; Culler, 1983; Zehfuss, 2002; Esteva, 2010; Pieterse, 2010; Hooper, 2012). Hence, deconstruction for this research emerges as a philosophical standpoint informed by social constructivist ontology and poststructuralist epistemology (Culler, 1983; Zehfuss, 2002; Gabriel, 2013). As an intellectual strategy and mode of understanding socio-political and cultural constructions of development subjects, ‘deconstruction’ for this research captures ‘othering’ within development discourse that focuses on issues of power relations and hegemonic struggles that, restrict or facilitate the power of the global south to negotiate national development policy frameworks. Development deconstruction challenges patriarchal constructions of identities in society and reinforces the need to redistribute resources while recognizing the contributions of groups to development and representing them based on their agency and abilities to navigate multiple systems of oppression (Fraser, 1996; Chowdhry, 1995; Smyth, 2010; Walby et al., 2012). While advancements in development and human development theorizing has ensured that marginalized and socially excluded groups (e.g. women) are increasingly included in the discourse, little attention has been paid to the ‘marginalized others’ – children and youth (Ansell, 2005; World Development Report [WDR], 2006).

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3 The construction, representation of youth in mainstream development and poverty discourses, reinforces aphorism that constructs youth as a marginal category (UNDP, 2010, UNESCO, 2010). Also, gendered deconstructions of mainstream development since the 1970s, have critically challenged the homogenous categorizations of human development interventions by creating a distinct women-specific paradigm with unique philosophies, epistemological positioning’s, and methodologies that seek for increased recognition, redistribution, and representation (Ansell, 2005; Fraser, 2009). Indeed, with mainstream development arguments that reinforce vertical development realities (e.g. between human and gender, developed and developing, etc.), the horizontal life-course realities have been blurred. Thus in advancing human development discourse, this study argues that after the deconstruction of the human development agenda that includes gendered approaches, youth in development remain a ‘marginalized other’. Youths are considered a marginal category because they have received little attention in

2.2.1. The Historical Context of the Development Construct

The foundation of contemporary development of any society is shaped by historical, socio-economic and political antecedents. Research have shown that the historical context through which ‘colonialism’ for instance was operationalized in the global south, was laden with ‘extractive institutions’ that sustained development inequalities and dichotomous realities between prosperous (global north) and poor (global south) nations (Nunn, 2009; Acemoglu and Robison, 2010; Woolcock et al., 2011). Havel (1985) notes that the epistemological hegemony of global powers in creating dichotomies was often reinforced through ‘ideological gloves’ of dominant western discourses. Nisbet (1980) contends that the epistemological constructions of development within the context of social change and history, drew on scientific and biological metaphors, religious beliefs, socio-cultural, political as well as economic ideological struggles which can often be traced back to western philosophies. The implication is that for development to have fulfilled its mandate as an intellectual strategy for ‘progress’ ‘evolutionism’ or ‘enlightenment’ in the global south, the theoretical landscape of development needed to be reconstructed within the premise of western philosophies. As an ideological metaphoric replacement for colonial enslavement, the development discourse persistently entrapped the global south in a web of false promises and subjection (Havel, 1985; Pieterse, 2010).

Etymological debates surrounding the development concept have been critically examined by several poststructuralist scholars (Esteva, 2010; Pieterse, 2010) who point to the biological scientists (Wolff, 1795; Darwin, 1859) in suggesting that between the 16th and 19th century, development theory was underpinned by the evolution theory. The intellectual construction of development which continued in the 18th Century with European enlightenment movement utilized colonial education as a strategy to promote ‘conscientization’ in the developing south (Freire, 2000; Payne and Phillips, 2010; Sachs, mainstream development discourse from academic research, policy, practice and programmatic interventions since the first decade of development (Ansell, 2005; Maira and Soep, 2005).
Within this context, development was seen as a linear path towards societal progress or maturity. Esteva (2010) observe that:

The transfer of the biological metaphor to the social sphere occurred in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. [Precisely] from 1768 the word *Entwicklung* was used to elude the gradual process of social change. [Indeed, whenever reference was made to] transformation of some political situations, [development was described] as [a] natural process… Historical development was a continuation of natural development… Development became the central category of Marx’s work: revealed as a historical process that unfolds with the same necessary character of natural laws. Both Hegelian concept of history and Darwinist concept of evolution were interwoven in development, reinforced with the scientific aura of Marx. [However] when the metaphor returned to the vernacular, it acquired a violent colonizing power.

(Esteva, 2010:4; [With Emphasis])

The practicality of the agenda to ‘enlighten’ the global south and bring it to conformity with existing practices of the global north introduced traps of ‘institutional mimicry’ underpinned by colonialism (Pritchett et al., 2013). As captured in the philosophy of orientalism⁴ (Said, 1979), the making of the global south through historical narratives and imposition of dominant discourses (e.g. science, capitalism, industrialization, and imperialism) on the orient, gave the westerner ‘positional superiority’ over development theorizing (Hooper, 2012). To this extent, the problematic reconstruction process of development meanings in the developing south – especially in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) was established through mercantilist capitalism (Biccum, 2002) and a need to conform with the requirements of ‘economic development’ prescribed by the north (Escobar, 1992; Fine, 2013). This entanglement in a quandary of ‘one-worldism’ or globalisation wherein the complex realities of ‘others’ in the global south was overgeneralized has given rise to discontents in the implementation process of the development agenda (Pieterse, 2000; Biccum, 2002; Stiglitz, 2002). Pieterse (2000: 134) contends that the language of development and global politics invited the use of singular modernity rather than modernities, capitalism rather than capitalisms and, industrialization rather than different types of industrializations. The reality of this overgeneralising language in pre-

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⁴ According to Said (1979:7) Orientalism is a systematic discourse by which Europe was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively. Under the general heading of knowledge of the orient, and within the umbrella of western hegemony over the orient during the period from the 18th century, there emerged a complex orient suitable for study in the academy, for display in the museum, for reconstruction in the colonial office, for theoretical illustrations in anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial, and historical theses of mankind and the universe, for instances of economic and sociological theories of development, revolution, cultural-personality, national or religious character.
modern youth literature for instance suggests that within the context of development history, the social category ‘youth’ never existed (Aries, 1962; France, 2007). However, Jones (2009) suggests that until the 17th century the construction of youth was scientifically represented and based on metaphors of ‘biological destiny’ or ‘maturity’. No age-related demarcations existed between childhood and adulthood because youths were absorbed into the adult world at early ages (Jones, 2009; Clarke, 2010). Accordingly, the concept of ‘youth’ as a social category was either subsumed under the construct of childhood or adulthood and only gained traction as a product of industrialization during the ‘enlightenment’ era (France, 2009).

By the 1900s the positioning of youth in historical African context revealed strategies in which the colonizers envisioned youths as colonial subjects and propagators of doctrines of development through western education. However, this enlightenment or ‘De-Africanization’ was limited and controlled through the prejudices of the ‘white teacher’ (Ohaegbulam, 1990). A direct consequence of ‘De-Africanization’ was a growing resistance to hegemonic colonial doctrines through subtle but ‘radical nationalist’ youth-led movements (Adu Boahen, 1990; Ohaegbulam, 1990; Falola, 2009) that eventually led to the independence of most African states by the second half of the 20th century (UNECA, 2011a).

2.2.2. The Political Economy of Development and The making of the Third World

The political economy of development is a compendium of scientific, normative and practical discourses (Gamble, 1995) that explains the behaviour of people in conformity to philosophical propositions of economic growth and practices regulating the creation of wealth and the strategic interactions between ‘rationality’ and ‘self-interests’ (Anderson, 2000). Within this context, the works of Adam Smith’s ‘The Wealth of Nations’ and the ‘Theory of Moral Sentiments’ (Smith, 1761, 1778) provides a vantage point of analysis. Smith (1778) asserts that the pursuit of ethical interpretations of development theory constructed the homoeconomicus5 as the ‘moral’ beings and primary agents of development. Arguably the theoretical insights of Adam Smith resonates with the political economy of alienation in which capitalism creates a class of ‘alienated’, ‘powerless’ ‘isolated’ and ‘self-estranged’ groups, through the commoditization of their capabilities as pieces of industrial raw material and mere adjuncts in the

5 Homoeconomicus in mainstream development theorizing is a synonymous representation of the biological metaphor of human beings as ‘homo Sapiens’.
capitalist web (Marx, 1992: 409-413; Payne and Phillips, 2010). Consequently, development was constructed in economic terms by ascribing economic identity to homoeconomicus and homopoliticus elites at the expense of gendered identities (Hardin, 2008). The ensuing intensification of the match towards global hegemony by nations of the global north allowed elitist networks of homoeconomicus bourgeoisies to further accelerate the impoverishment of the south (Rodney, 1973; Pieterse, 2000; Zehfuss, 2002; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2010; Payne and Phillips, 2010) masked by the rhetoric of the ‘invincible hand’ of the market economy (Sen, 1977; Lux, 1990; Santino and Regilme, 2014). Santino and Regilme (2014:286-287) opines:

When the homoeconomicus gains so much market freedom, these liberties accumulate too much political power trans-generationally, thereby creating unjust comparative advantages, and thus motivate other human individuals to benefit unjustly from the fruits of their generational past. This, unfortunately, occurs most especially in postcolonial societies, which are also struggling democracies, whose political economies’ rules of the game are dictated by the seemingly undefeatable transnational capitalist overlords located at the core as supported by neoliberal global capitalist structures and its agents. This being the case, a truly democratic state must be able to... empower the disempowered individuals who find themselves amidst minimal initial endowments that are absolutely inadequate for them to compete in the so-called market. It is only then that the homoeconomicus becomes the homopoliticus.

Development partnerships provided a basis for reinforcing the ideals of economic Darwinism (Hardin, 2008) until such a time when it was propagated through wars and impositions of capitalist ideologies (Pieterse, 2010). In this regard, the process of development through the colonialism-capitalism nexus laid the foundation for aid transfer from the north to the south (Ziai, 2009a). The resultant politics of aid transfer and its concomitant preconditions perpetuated underdevelopment by limiting the freedom of countries in the global south to define the context of their own development (Ziai, 2011). The invention of underdevelopment became a justification for re-colonizing Africa and the global south in a Darwinian web of global capitalism (Esteva and Prakash, 1997; Esteva, 2010; Hooper, 2012). The net effect of imposed development realities is an increased incidence of failed economic policies in the global south that has led to the creation of a third world characterised by the 33rd United States President, Harry Truman (1945-53) in his 1949 inaugural speech where he notes:

We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas... More than half the people of the
world are living in conditions approaching misery. Their food is inadequate. They are victims of disease. Their economic life is primitive and stagnant. Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas.... The old imperialism—exploitation for foreign profit—has no place in our plans. What we envisage is a program of development based on the concepts of democratic fair-dealing.

(Truman (1949) cited in Escobar (1995: 3) and Esteva (2010:1)

This lends credence to the fact that the ‘making of the third world’ was a western project (Escobar, 1996) designed for resource accumulation in the global north (Escobar, 1984; Ziai, 2013). To sustain this project the construction of development from the western perspective was often envisaged as a ‘cure’ and never the ‘cause’ of problems in the south (Crush, 1995: 10). Within this context, the ontological interpretations of development underpinned by modernization theory assumed that economic rationality exemplified by the global north is a recipe for a better world (Peet and Hartwick, 2009). However, the realities of development practice reveal a widening gap between and among countries of the north-south divide (Seers, 1969; Willis, 2011) in an age of development (AoD) viewed from broad propositions of modernization, and the dependency and world systems theories (Willis, 2011; Hooper, 2012; Todaro and Smith, 2012). Modernisation began with the institutionalization and expansion of industrialism that led to new ways of ordering socio-economic roles and organizing goods and services (Giddens, 1991; France, 2009; Bradford; 2012) in a linear progression from traditional to contemporary societies (Hooper, 2012). Peet and Hartwick (2009) assert:

...Modernization theory, like conventional economics, has a class commitment—to rich elites... More specifically, in economic sphere, modernization means specialization of economic activities and occupational roles and the growth of the markets; in terms of socio-spatial organization, modernization meant urbanization, mobility, flexibility , and the spread of education; in the political sphere, modernization meant the spread of democracy and the weakening of traditional elites; in the cultural sphere modernization meant growing differentiation between various cultural and value systems (for example, the separation between religion and philosophy), secularization, and the emergence of new intelligentsia.

In SSA, modernization was spearheaded by a dominant class of ruling and privileged elites who sought to reproduce westernized development models as an active policy of social change (Hoogvelt, 2001; Harrison, 2010). The objective of development as modernization focused solely on economic growth and rapid capital accumulation but not on equitable distribution of wealth (Hooper, 2012; Tadaro and Smith, 2012). The
structuralist assumption of modernization is that economic growth and capitalist accumulations would eventually trickle down to the impoverished periphery (Kapoor, 2004, Herath, 2009). However, to become modern, individual-nation states had to navigate and transit through the stages of economic growth (Rostow, 1960) in a complex web of functional relationships in which the gross domestic product depended directly on national net savings and inversely on national output ratio. This functional relationship is represented by the Harrod-Domar Growth model (HDGM) (Todaro and Smith, 2012). While development was conceptualized as an emblem of linear and sequential progress in which the competitiveness of nations was framed based on their stage of economic development, the position and ability to become efficient and innovative hinged upon issues of power, measured by the GDP (Todaro and Smith, 2012; Randall, 2014). This laid bare the philosophical limitations of the modernization theory and dilemmas of dependency of the weak on the powerful (Herath, 2008; Peet and Hartwick, 2009). Within this context, dependency and WST (world systems theory) theories emerged as alternatives to the modernization theory (Herath, 2008). However, a critical evaluation of the aforementioned theories reveals similarities in the fundamental construct of their underpinning philosophy (Rodney, 1973) which essentially neglected the possibility of ‘multiple independences’ (e.g. Eisenstadt, 2002; Hooper, 2012). These mainstream theories explain the marginalisation and alienation of Africa’s position in the global economy (Hettne, 1995; Biccum, 2002; Onwuzuruigbo, 2010).

The dependency theory created ‘two worlds’ – the core and the periphery in which the south remained dependent on the industrialized north (Kapoor, 2002; Nafziger, 2006; Ndi, 2011). This theory was re-conceptualized into the World System Theory (WST) with spatial economic divisions of a core, semi-periphery and periphery (Wallerstein, 1991, 2004; Hooper, 2012). The global south occupied the position of the periphery and transitional economies were considered to be the semi-periphery, while the developed societies represented the core (Wallenstein, 2004). The intellectual ruins of development discourse during the age of development were underscored by ‘zombie-economics’ in which economic development became ‘unfit’ for its purpose (Fine, 2009, 2013). Instead of these economic growth models addressing issues of income distribution and societal inequality, incidence of poverty that reflects the realities of underdevelopment were exacerbated (Easterly, 2002; Geda, 2006). If dependent development is expected to narrow the ‘disconnects’ between the global north and south through conformist
modernization models (Nafziger, 2006), national autonomy and power politics of representation will require appropriate deconstruction and re-construction.

2.2.3. Development and Neoliberalism: The Impact of Integration on the Africa

The aftermath of the golden age theories, reconstructed a new phenomenon of neoliberalism in a space of global capitalism (Harrison, 2010; Pieterse, 2010), reinforced by arguments of economic integration and dependency (Ekeh, 1975). Conditionality of dependent development exposed Africa to the vulnerabilities of globalization and neoliberal orthodoxy (Abrahamsen, 2004; Gibb, 2009; Taveres and Tang, 2011) characterised by pre-conditions required to be open market-conforming economies (De Rivero, 2001; Harrison, 2010). Western based international financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monitoring Fund (IMF) prescribed structural adjustment programmes (SAP) and the execution of certain social programmes, as a precondition for guaranteeing external capital flow to developing economies (Soederberg, 2005; Mkandawire, 2005). Within this context and from a social constructivist standpoint, neoliberalism is underpinned by the following ideologies:

First, neoliberalism is socially produced: it is... “a human invention, the artefact of particular historical material practices and struggles.” Second, the production and reproduction of neoliberalism does not just happen; but rather, takes an incredible amount of work, even more to naturalize it, to make it seem that “there is no alternative”. Third, neoliberalism is not a disembodied, aspatial, preformed external entity but involves actually existing people engaged in situated, grounded practices and governmental technologies that produce particular places and particular outcomes in those places.


Several authors contend that neoliberalism is not simply an ideology, but it is also a strategy that ensures the globalization of the political economy (Kay and Gwynne, 1998; Pieterse, 2004; Blakeley, 2009; Schuurman 2009). In this regard, the underpinning philosophy was to limit as much as possible, the role of the state in favour of the market economy (Peet Hartwick, 2009; Willis, 2011). The outcome of this philosophy was the perpetuation of a dependent global south (Gwynne and Kay, 2000). In this regard, Kay and Gwynne (1998) opine:

For developing countries in particular, the impact of being more fully inserted into the global economy increasingly reduced the room for policy manoeuvre. [Stressing that] in part, this [was] because the governments of developing countries [were] more dependent on the policy approval of the global institutions that “supervise” the world economy (such as the IMF, World Trade Organization, and the World Bank) and on the investment
decisions of multinational companies that can be strongly swayed by the verdicts of international institutions

(Kay and Gwynne, 1998: 56 with embedded emphasis)

In this context, Foucauldian perspective on disciplinary neoliberalism underscores discursive debates on how regimes in the south were managed, controlled and governed (Gill, 1995; Cotoi, 2011) on the impetus of capitalism, privatization and market liberalization (Willis, 2011). The theoretical landscape of neoliberal development underpinned by the Washington Consensus (WC) (Williamson, 1993, 2003) broadly prioritized economic growth and dependent inclusion of the global south at the expense of people-centred approaches (Sen, 1995; Simons, 2000; Nussbaum, 2011). However, the inherent limits of neoliberal development doctrines created a premise for further deconstructions of development to emerge (Sen, 1983; Sandbrook, 2000, Pieterse, 2010).

2.2.4. Post-Washington Consensus and the Emergence of People Centred Approaches to Development

The Post-Washington Consensus (PWC) sought an improvement on the development models of the neoliberal WC era and signalled the emergence of a people-centred approach to development theorising (Stiglitz, 1998; Adesina, 2006; Rodrik, 2006; Payne and Phillips, 2010) and expansion of freedoms for the ‘bottom billions’ (Sen, 1999; Collier, 2008; Alkire, 2010). From an African perspective, the human capital challenges in education and health, skilled migration, globalization, poor infrastructure and the HIV/AIDS pandemic set the context for critical review of previous models of development (Sydhagen and Cunningham, 2007). With a specific focus on human development as the central goal of all human resource development interventions (Kuchinke, 2010), the global goal of striving to eradicate poverty and marshal development, at least since the 1990s, has been conceptualised through the lens of freedom (Sen, 1999). As Sen (1999: xii) states,

Expansion of freedom is viewed, in this approach, both as a primary end and as a means of development. Development consists of the removal of various types of unfreedoms that leave people with little choice and little opportunity of exercising their reasoned agency. The removal of substantial unfreedoms… is constitutive of development. The intrinsic importance of human freedom, in general, as the preeminent objective of development is strongly supplemented by the instrumental effectiveness of freedoms of particular kinds to promote freedoms of other kinds… there is strong evidence that economic and political freedoms help to reinforce one another, rather than being hostile to one another… Similarly, social opportunities of education and health care, which
may require public action, complement individual opportunities of economic and political participation and also help to foster our own initiatives in overcoming our respective deprivations.

Although discursive shifts in the neoliberal era informed the deconstruction of the WC, the underlying objective of the PWC was to arrive at models of practical human development that go beyond the narrower economic development models. To this end, a holistic paradigm that better incorporates economic and social policy through good governance and support structures was essential to the creation of an integrated approach to development (Simons, 2000). The PWC deconstruction of the development discourse reconceptualised strategies of poverty alleviation, peoples freedoms, equality and social justice (Green, 2008; Alkire, 2010; Eade and Cornwall, 2010). Unlike post-development critiques who urged for a total disregard of existing development doctrine (e.g. Escobar, 1995: 2000; Esteve, 2010), proponents of the PWC sought to include a human face to strategies of economic development (Jolly, 1991) while ensuring the effective functioning of all marginalized parts – women, children, youth (HDR, 1995; Ansell, 2005, Cornwall et al., 2008; UNDP, 2010; UNESCO, 2010) engendered in the deconstruction of the human capital theory and the human development approach to development (UNDP, 1990; Ul Haq, 1995; Sen, 1999, 2004a; Nussbaum, 2000).

2.2.4.1. Deconstructing Human Capital Theory (HCT)

The concept of human capital (HC) as a factor of production was developed to address the difficulty of economic growth studies in the 1960s (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1964; Nafukho et al., 2004). The philosophical foundation of HC in mainstream development economics sought to explain the duality and determinants of unequal growth paths between countries. The human capital theory (HCT) leveraged on Adam Smith’s thesis on the wealth of all nations where he pointed out that investment in human capital enables an increase in future productivities; providing ‘competitive advantage’ for nations in the global political economy (OECD, 2011a; Chiaperro-Martinetti and Sabadash, 2014). The level of educational attainment of the labour force is considered an important factor driving this competitive advantage. In this regard, investment in human capital development in both formal and informal education and training programmes increases economic productivity and enhances the prospects of improving innovation and competitiveness (Psacharapoolos, 1994; Mehrotra, 2005).
The underlying argument is that the returns on education and life-long learning will enhance overall production of nation states, improve individual income earnings and social status (Paprock, 2006; Wilson, 2012). OECD (1998: 9) contends that human capital describes the combined skills, knowledge, competences, aptitudes and other attributes embodied in individuals that are relevant to economic development. Similarly, Schultz (1963: 25) argues that:

Education and other forms of human capital investment increase output in a variety of ways; by generating new ideas and techniques that can be embodied in production equipment and procedures. By equipping workers to utilize the new production techniques and initiate changes in production methods; by improving the links among consumers, workers, managers; and by extending the useful life of the shock of knowledge and skills that people embody.

The deconstruction of HCT in the 21st century assumes multidimensional spectra in which the emergence of different forms of capital is geared towards skills development, and a drive towards entrepreneurial empowerment as a strategy for developing national human capabilities (Kuruvilla, 2007). Human capital interventions are often used as a strategy to raise the productivity of labour, increase the volume of resources and obtain gains of foreign trade and foreign capital (Yu, 2010). Although education is central in the HCT, the quality of this education is a crucial element that must be appraised in the ‘global knowledge economy’ (King et al., 2007; Unterhalter, 2009; Tikly and Barrett, 2011). Some scholars (e.g. Sweetland, 1996; Sidorkin, 2007) have argued that the limitations of HCT are down to empiricist assumptions and credentialism that underpins the idea that education improves economic growth, individual and societal wellbeing. While proponents of HCT suggest correlations between economic growth and socio-economic progress of people’s lives, other scholars have argued that this narrow economic view of ‘human capital’ needs to be reconceptualised if ever ‘human’ development is to occur (Eade, 2010; OECD, 2010). In his deconstruction of the HCT, Bourdieu (1986) opines that apart from economic capital there is social capital and cultural capital. Social capital refers to social networks, obligations and connections that can provide access to valued social goods while cultural capital refers to legitimised knowledge present in an endogenous/ context specific setting that creates a platform for individuals to internalize indigenous behaviours, dispositions, knowledge and lifestyles acquired in the socialisation process, or accumulated through investment in education and training or in the acquisition of cultural goods (Coleman, 1988; Putnam; 2000; Moser and Norton, 2001).
In contemporary times, deconstructions of HCT have also unveiled other meanings of capital such as intellectual capital and identity capital. Intellectual capital may be referred to as ‘competence multiplied by commitment’ (Ulrich, 1998) or ‘packaged useful knowledge’ (Stewart, 1997), that envisions human capital from a standpoint of value creation (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). Contrastingly, identity capital which is predominant in youth studies (Cote 2002, 2009) emanated from the deconstructions of cultural capital. Cote’s (1996) argument on identity capital describes the means individual use when engaging in transactions as they attempt to negotiate the fuzzy passages created by socio-economic obstacles in late-modern societies. In the approaches to positive youth development (PYD), various forms of capitals help explain youth competence (human capital), confidence (cultural capital), connection (social capital), character (identity capital) and caring (Coleman, 1998; Cote, 2005; Silbereisen and Lerner, 2007; Duerden and Gillard, 2011). Arguably, the importance of how these forms of capital generally influence youth wellbeing (Bassani, 2007), or in particular, how human capital through education, creates transition pathways and opportunity structures on the one hand, and minimises the possibility of youth poverty on the other hand (Heinz, 2009; Hasan and Birungi, 2011; Furlong, 2013), helps define success or failures of youth transition to independence and prosperity. Against this backdrop, the nuances of human capital theory within youth discourse has far reaching benefits in understanding both individual and collective wellbeing of young people (Ibrahim and Alkire, 2007; Owen, 2013) as well as how identity capital provide youth with the agency to navigate socio-economic structures (Bassani, 2007; Bourn, 2008). In youth studies, both social and cultural capital have provided analytic frameworks in creating spaces for youth identity formation processes which could help explain youth transition patterns (Cote, 1996; Raffo and Reeves, 2000; Cote, 2005; Dlamini and Anucha, 2009) and address issues of inequality, social exclusion, and youth poverty.

2.2.4.2. The Human Development Approach (HDA)

The HDA is a compendium of perspectives from economic and social theories, as well as gendered and sustainable approaches to development (Sen, 1999; Alkire, 2010; Nussbaum, 2011). Despite the pursuit of economic growth and policies of market liberalization and globalization, the ‘means’ to enhance human development remained obscured by statistical aggregates (e.g. national income) which ignore the ‘primary objective’ or ‘end’ of development – people (Streeten, 1994; Sen, 2013). Beyond this shortcoming, the need to reconceptualise development to bring about increased
freedoms became apparent (Simons, 1999: Sen, 1999). Hence, the paradigmatic change from mainstream development economics to a people-centred approach began in the 1980s with the UNICEF studies on ‘The State of the World’s Children’ and ‘Adjustment with a Human Face’ (Jolly et al., 2004:151). Emanating from these studies was the desire to maintain human development in the absence of increased economic resources (UNICEF, 1984, 1987). In this context, sustainable utilisation of existing resources becomes crucial. The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987:43) defines sustainable development (SD) as – ‘development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs’. This presupposes that in the construction of the HDA, the interconnectedness of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), human rights, human security and happiness must be taken into consideration (Alkire, 2010). The MDGs as a global development construct therefore encapsulates the thematic domains of addressing human development challenges like eradicating human poverty (HDR, 1997: 2003), improving human security and human rights while ensuring that globalization has an engendered ‘human face’ (HDR, 1994, 1995, 1999, 2000).
Table 2a: Thematic Construction of the Global Human Development Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Rethinking work for human development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Sustaining human progress: Reducing vulnerabilities and building resilience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>The rise of the South: Human progress in a diverse world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Sustainability and equity: A better future for all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>The real wealth of Nations: Pathways to human development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Overcoming barriers: Human mobility and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007/2008</td>
<td>Fighting climate change: Human solidarity in a diverse world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Beyond scarcity: Power, poverty and global water crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>International cooperation at a crossroads: Aid trade and security in an unequal world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Cultural liberty in today’s diverse world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals: A compact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Deepening democracy in a Fragmented World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Making new technologies work for human development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Human rights and human development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Globalization with a human face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Consumption for human development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Human development and eradicate poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Economic growth and human development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>New Dimensions of human security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>People’s participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Global dimensions of human development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Financing human development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Concepts and measurements of human development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (UNDP Human Development Reports from 1990 to 2015)

The position of MDGs in HDA has been critiqued by scholars (e.g. Chakravarty and Majumder, 2008; Nayyar, 2013) who contend that the framework objectifies human reality under the guise of globalized policy planning that encourages the use of generalisations instead of a context specific development agenda. Such generalisations explains how youths became subsumed under broad constructs like ‘people’ (HDR, 1990; 1993), ‘gender and human development’ (HDR, 1991; 1995; 1996; 2010) (HDR, 2014) as evident in Table 2a and 2b.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal: Focus</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>General Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 1</strong> Eradicate Extreme poverty and hunger</td>
<td><strong>Target IB</strong> Achieve Full and Productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Although a general reference is made to <strong>young people</strong>, however, there are no indicators to measure youth poverty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Target IC</strong> Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer hunger</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 2</strong> Achieve universal primary education</td>
<td><strong>Target 2A</strong> Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary school</td>
<td><strong>Indicator 8</strong> Literacy Rate of 15-24 years old</td>
<td>Children, Adolescence and <strong>Youth</strong> – people aged between 15-24 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 3</strong> Gender equality and empower women</td>
<td><strong>Target 3A</strong> Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education by 2015</td>
<td><strong>Indicator 9</strong> Ratio of boy and Girls in primary, secondary and tertiary education</td>
<td>Genders across life course including <strong>youth (18-24)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Indicator 10</strong> Ratio of literate women to men, 15-24 years old</td>
<td><strong>Gendered ratios on Youth literacy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 4</strong> Reduce child mortality</td>
<td>Not Specified</td>
<td>Not Specified</td>
<td>Women and Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 5</strong> Improve Maternal health</td>
<td>Not Specified</td>
<td>Not Specified</td>
<td>Women and Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 6</strong> Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases</td>
<td><strong>Target 6A</strong> Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of HIV/AIDS</td>
<td><strong>Indicator 18</strong> HIV prevalence among pregnant women aged 15-24 years</td>
<td>Human and genders. The only indication that this target includes youth is indicator 18 which makes reference to age category (15-24).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Target 6C</strong> Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases</td>
<td><strong>Indicator 19</strong> Condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate</td>
<td>Human, genders, children, young people, aged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Indicator 19b</strong> Percentage of population aged 15-24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Human, genders and youth (15-24).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability</strong></td>
<td>Not Specified</td>
<td>Not Specified</td>
<td>Human, genders, children, young people, aged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 8: Develop a global partnerships for development</strong></td>
<td><strong>Target 16</strong> In corporation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for <strong>youth</strong></td>
<td><strong>Indicator 45</strong> Unemployment rate of <strong>young people</strong> aged 15-24, each sex and total</td>
<td>Human, genders, <strong>Youth</strong>. This is the only goal that has specified targets and indicators that are concurrent and focus on youth in particular.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: United Nations Millennium Development Project [UNMDP], 2006; MDGs Nigeria (2013)
Although youth capabilities and demographic presence are instrumental in promoting MDGs advocacy in addressing critical national development needs (World Bank, 2006), youth-led policy design remains elusive. This reality may change in 2016 as the need to include the voices of youth and their agency in policy making processes is one of the underpinning frameworks of the post-2015 SDGs agenda (Vandermoortele, 2012; UNMDCY, 2014; WYC, 2014). This will go a long way in addressing the theoretical vacuum that currently exists in youth in development studies (Ansell, 2005; Chaaban, 2009; USAID 2012; Salehi-Isfahani, 2013). While some studies strive to understand the extent of youth exclusion from mainstream development discourse (e.g. Ansell, 2005; Selvam, 2008; USAID 2012; Salehi-Isfahani, 2013), only few research (e.g. Ansell, 2005; Chaaban, 2009: 2010; Lintelo, 2012a; Arah, 2013; Sukarich and Tannock, 2015) have specifically investigated the intersectional realities between youth and their positions in development. Another point of inflection is the gendered turn in human development influenced by decades of development deconstructions wherein gender mainstreaming was advocated as a timely imperative for establishing the relationship between rights and empowerment (Moser, 1989; Moser and Moser, 2005; Momsen, 2010).

The philosophical underpinnings of empowerment and capacity development in which conscientization becomes a critical intersection between individual and societal development for change, has long been recognised (Simons, 2000; Freire, 2000; Narayan, 2005). In this context, Rights-Based Approach (RBA) provides a nuanced alternative to need-based theories (Schuppert, 2013) by supporting and ensuring ‘human rights’ is enshrined as a development objective (Facio, 1995; Overseas Development Institute [ODI], 1999; Jonson, 2003; Eyben, 2003; Petit and Wheeler, 2005). The ODI (1999) aptly observed that:

A rights-based approach to development sets the achievement of human rights as an objective of development. It uses thinking about human rights as the scaffolding of development policy. It invokes the international apparatus of human rights accountability in support of development action. In all of these, it is concerned not just with civil and political (CP) rights (the right to a trial, not to be tortured), but also with economic, social and cultural (ESC) rights (the right to food, housing, a job).

However, given the socio-economic challenges (e.g. wars, poverty, limited freedoms, prolonged transitions due to limited opportunity structures etc.) across the world in general and in Africa in particular, the positioning of human security in development discourse becomes fundamental. Although the components of human security point to various issues (e.g. economic, food, health, environmental, individual, collective as well
as political security), the fundamentals and practice of human security seeks to complement state security structures, enhance human rights, and strengthens human development indicators in society (HDR, 1994; Alkire, 2003; CHS, 2003). CHS (2003:4) opines that:

Human security in its broadest sense embraces far more than the absence of violent conflict. It encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and health care and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfil his or her own potential. Every step in this direction is also a step towards reducing poverty, achieving economic growth and preventing conflict. Freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment – these are the interrelated building blocks of human, and national, security.

To advance the youth in development discourse, a detailed analysis of the capability approach to human development on which this research is hinged is required.

2.2.4.3. Sen’s Capability Approach (SCA): A theoretical framework for understanding the HDA

The philosophical underpinning of the Capability Approach (CA) is rooted in a number of theories and concepts including Aristotle’s theory of political distributions and his ideas on human ‘flourishing’ and ‘capacity’; Adam Smith’s – writings on the Wealth of Nations and moral sentiments; Karl Marx’s insights in human freedom, conscientization and emancipation; Raul’s theory of justice and ideas on political liberalism, as well as John Stuart Mills views of liberty and self-development (Nussbaum, 2000, 2011; Sen, 1983, 1985a, 1994, 1999, 2005). CA as conceptualised by Sen (1979; 1985b; 1999) and Ul Haq (1995) presented a sustained critique on welfare economics and argued that an essential goal of human development strategy should be to enhance people’s capabilities (Frediani, 2010). As part of the moral imperatives to understanding individual freedoms and social commitments in development practice, the CA questioned the narrow ‘informational base’ of welfarism – which concentrated solely on ‘people’s happiness or desire fulfilment, or on income, expenditures, or consumptions, without considering their ‘doings and beings’ – i.e. their capabilities (Janah and Sen, 2002; Alkire and Deneulin, 2009). Although the construction of the CA was put forward by Sen (1979, 1985a, 1985b, 1999) and Ul Haq (1995), the contributions of Nussbaum (2000, 2011) and a growing number of other scholars (e.g. Alkire, 2002, 2005; Robeyns, 2003, 2005, 2006; Alkire and Deneulin, 2009; Alkire 2010; Ballet et al., 2011; Chiappero-Martinetti and Sabadash, 2014) have enhanced the functional utility of the approach.
Sen (2004) asserts that human capabilities, has direct relevance to well-being and people’s freedoms while indirectly influencing economic production and social change. A people-centred approach to development from two ontological standpoints of well-being and agency formed the crux of Sen (1985b) Dewey Lecture on ‘Wellbeing, Agency and Freedom’ (Alkire, 2010). Both ‘well-being’ and ‘agency’ aspects of an individual’s or collective capabilities are relevant in assessing the effectiveness of development interventions through ‘states’ and their ‘actions (Sen; 1985a; Alkire, 2002). As Sen (1985b:203) notes:

Well-being freedom is freedom of a rather particular type. It concentrates on a person’s capability to have various functioning vectors and to enjoy the corresponding well-being achievements. This concept of freedom, based on the well-being aspect of a person, has to be clearly distinguished from the broader aspect of freedom related to the agency aspect of a person. A person’s “agency freedom” refers to what a person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards important.

Within this context, human freedoms are reflected through ‘inequality of agency’ often perpetuated by cultural, social and economically embedded hierarchies (Rao and Walton, 2004). As a strategy to address social inequality and expand people’s freedoms and choices, the articulation of development as freedom (Sen, 1999) suggests a departure from the narrow economic postulations of evaluating well-being in the context of income, resources or psychic utility to spaces of capability and functioning (Sugden, 1993; Sen, 1985b, 1999; Freidiani, 2010; Alkire, 2010). Beyond the economic dogma of ranking social needs (Nussbuam, 2011), Frediani (2010) acknowledged that the fundamental characteristic of the CA is that, contrary to income-led evaluation methods, there was a focus on the expansion of people’s ability and agency so that they may achieve things they value or have reason to value (Ibrahim and Alkire, 2007). However, peoples choices are often understood in terms of three inter-related dimensions i.e. resources which are ‘preconditions’, agency which envisions development as a ‘process’; and achievements which are ‘outcomes’ (Kabeer, 1999). In this regard, issues of access to resources and power which are often defined by the institutional environment that enable human agency achieve freedoms and individual power of choice, often focuses on ‘opportunity structures’ that acts as preconditions for effective agency (Narayan, 2002: 2005; Alkire, 2010). Although human agency may include ‘effective power’ – which describes a person’s or group’s ‘power to achieve chosen results’, it also focuses on ‘control’ which refers to a person’s ability to make choices and directly control the procedures (Alkire, 2008).
In understanding the intersections between power and agency, Frediani (2010) points to a ‘capability space’ – which includes various support structures that influence the conversion of resources into functionings. The difference between capability and functionings is one between opportunity to achieve and actual achievements – i.e. between potential and outcome (Alkire, 2010). Hence, the role of power through peoples ‘agency’ and choices they make sometimes enhances or conflicts with personal well-being (Clark, 2005; Alkire, 2010). Alkire and Deneulin (2009:28) citing Sen (2004a: vii), opine that:

… This perspective of human development incorporates the need to remove the hindrances that people face through the efforts and initiatives of people themselves. The claim is not only that, human lives can go very much better and be much richer in terms of well-being and freedom, but also ‘human agency’ can deliberately bring about a radical change through improving societal organization and commitment.

Nonetheless, the central goal of human development as envisaged by the CA (Sen, 1985, 1999, 2005) depends on the extent to which people’s capabilities empower them to become “agents” of change (Clark, 2005; Alkire and Deneulin, 2009). The difference between commodities, human capability/functioning and utility as a process of well-being, draws on several conceptualizations of the CA from which the following themes are identifiable (see Sen, 1999; Clark, 2005; Alkire and Deneulin, 2009; Deneulin and McGregor, 2010; Frediani, 2010).

1. **Functionings:** This is an achievement of a person. It depicts various things a person may value ‘doing’ or ‘being’. For example, achieving a functioning (e.g. being educated) with a bundle of commodities (e.g. financial capital – school fees, libraries, media, etc.) depends on a range of personal and social factors (e.g. good health, mental and psychological capacity to be educated). Happiness derived from a functioning of ‘being educated’ for instance, occurs when a person utilises commodities or resources for educational and other purposes.

2. **Capability:** refers to freedom or a person’s ability to achieve or enjoy various functionings (beings and doings). Succinctly put, capability is a combination of various combinations of functionings that a person can achieve. It is the substantive freedoms a person enjoys to lead the kind of life he or she has “reason to value”. Capability refers to the extent to which a person is able to choose particular combinations of functionings (Sen, 2004: 334).
3. **Agency** – i.e. the ability to pursue goals that an individual values or might have a reason to value.

4. **Functioning n-tuple and Capability Set**: Sen (1999: 310) asserts that when the numerical representation of each human functioning is not possible, the analysis has to be done in terms of the more general framework of seeing the functioning achievements as a “functioning n-tuple” and the capability set as a set of such n-tuples in the appropriate space. Clark (2005:4) further opines that while functioning n-tuple (or vector) describes the combination of doings and beings that constitute the state of a person’s life, the capability set describes the ‘attainable functioning n-tuples or vectors a person can achieve.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodity /Resource/ Endowment</th>
<th>Conversion factors</th>
<th>Capability Set to function</th>
<th>Choices</th>
<th>Functioning Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Preconditions or means to achieve)</td>
<td>Based on human Agency controlled by internal and external factors</td>
<td>(Freedom to Achieve)</td>
<td>Power and Functioning</td>
<td>(Achievement Outcomes Utility or Happiness)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2.1: Practical understanding of the CA adapted from Clark (2005), Alkire and Deneulin (2009) and Chiappero-Martinetti and Sabadash (2014)**

In the context of the present research:

Capability approach is a propositions and the proposition is that social arrangements should be evaluated according to the extent of freedom people have to promote or achieve functionings they value. It equality in social arrangement is to be demanded in any space – and most theories of justice advocate equality of some space – it is to be demanded in the space of capabilities. (Alkire, 2005: 122).

It can therefore be contended that education and knowledge should not only be viewed as either an ‘end’ – where high levels of education and knowledge are achieved, or a ‘means’ – to ensuring work status through obtained education, but should be seen as a conversion factor –through which there is effective capability development of other aspects of people’s lives including health, social and intellectual capital.
2.2.4.4. **Human Development without Youth? A methodological Critique**

The 2009 report of the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress (CMEPSP) (Stiglitz et al, 2009), reinforced post-development critiques (e.g. Haq 1995; Sachs, 2010; Haddad et al., 2011) of existing human and women-specific development indices that have failed to measure the true socio-economic and political realities, particularly those relating to youth and children (Young, 2007). For instance, the human development index (HDI) and other gendered indices such as Gender Development Index (GDI), Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) and Gender Parity Index (GPI) and Multi-dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) (Jahan, 2004; Lopes-Carlos and Zahidi, 2005; Moser 2007; Stanton, 2007; Alkire and Santos, 2009; Alkire and Foster, 2010) fell short of proffering a youth development index to capture the realities of this segment of the human population. In this context, that Young (2007) citing Murphy (2006: 243) observed that:

… The gross national product index does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education, or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage; neither our wisdom nor our learning; neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country. It measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.

While there is a vertical understanding of how human and women development together with human poverty is measured, only recently has the inclusion of a horizontal life course perspective that positions youth development and their wellbeing (Figure 2.2) gained traction in mainstream human development discourse of nations.
Sequel to the above, it is evident that advancements in global human development movements have preceded since the first decade of development without youth specific indicators until very recently. Arguably the methodological individualism of global postulations, suggest mal-conceptual philosophies, exacerbated through political propogandas of MDGs that subsumes youth development on both global and national levels.

2.3. Conclusion

This chapter explored the economic, socio-political and historical evolution of mainstream development theorizing up until the era of human development discourse. Through deconstruction philosophy of the development discourse, it is evident that the positions of youth in mainstream development discourse have been subsumed under broad constructs of development, human development and gender approaches to development. In this regard, the positions of youth within hegemonic epistemological constructs offered by mainstream human development discourse has reduced youths to positions of the dependent ‘other’, the underclass, or the ‘marginalized other’. This is particularly true in the global south where the impact of neoliberalism on youth construct introduced a web of uncertainty, vulnerability and precarity caused by growing poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, etc. It can be argued that although development
theory is appropriate in understanding how development has become more inclusive in focusing on both human and gendered approaches, it has been somewhat narrow in that it has assumed and subsumed youth within its epistemologies. It ignores youth specific lenses and theoretical discourses from the multidisciplinary fields of development psychology, criminology, cultural studies as well as youth studies and has for a long time, dwelt on assumptions, philosophies and methodologies from development, human and gendered approaches to development. Given the foregoing, therefore, the next chapter, in attempts to bridge the theoretical gaps in mainstream development discourse, draws on theoretical propositions from youth studies. This aim of this is to understand the theoretical intersections between youth studies and mainstream development theorizing that plausibly inform the youth in development discourse.
Chapter 3: Youth in Development (YID): Theories and Concepts

3.1. Introduction

This chapter explores youth specific theories, concepts and discourses that inform the global and sub-Saharan Regional conceptualization of youth in both youth and mainstream development discourses in attempts to arrive at the definition of youth that informs this study. This chapter also explores historical reconstructions of how youth research has shifted overtime – from late-modernity, through sociological interpretations within development theory, and towards an emerging political economy of youth. This provides the backdrop for understanding ideological and paradigmatic positioning’s of youth in development practice in relation to the global and, regional constructions of policy directives that guide youth inclusion, participation and empowerment for societal development. The historical rationale for the formation of National Youth Service (NYS) schemes and re-emergence in the political economy of Sub-Saharan African states (inclusive of Nigeria) explores and extrapolates on a regional level to provide a broad understanding of the connections between policy directives and the human development agenda.

3.2. Defining the Concept of Youth

Based on the socio-economic and geopolitical antecedents that have shaped social history, the meaning of youth like development, is an amorphous concept with differential meanings, constructed through intersections of multidisciplinary perspectives in which the epistemology is shaped by the paradigm that defines it (France, 2009). Even within particular cultures and socio-economic and political spaces, the interpretation of who can be considered a youth depends on the philosophical underpinnings of social science disciplines informed by purpose of usage and the contextual specificities. In this light, youth studies as a ‘broad church’ has not only embraced research on all aspects of young people’s lives, it has focused on multidisciplinary interpretation of youth constructions in the social sciences (Heath et al, 2009). Depending on the context and time in social history, the concepts of ‘childhood’, ‘adolescence’, ‘teenager’, ‘young people’, ‘young adults’ and most recently ‘emerging adulthood’, have been used interchangeably to either describe the social category of youth or the process of becoming an adult (Annett, 2000; Ansell, 2005; Ezeah, 2012). From Turner’s (1974) interpretation of liminality⁶, the youth concept, especially when understood in the

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⁶ Turner (1974: 237) argues that ‘…liminality represents a mid-point in the status-sequence between two positions, outsiderhood refers to actions and relationships which do not flow a recognized social status
context of life-course and transition theories, describes an ‘ambiguous’ and ‘semi-dependent’ social category, or a position of ‘being’ that is ‘betwixt and between’, meaning ‘both’ – i.e. neither childhood nor adulthood (Best, 2007). When viewed from a poststructuralist premise, the process of ‘being’ a youth and transiting to a phase of adulthood remains problematic even in contemporary times. Although the concept of youth has always had dual meanings – representing both ‘a person’ and ‘part of the life course’, the construction of ‘youth-hood’ in comparison to other definitive constructs like ‘childhood’ or ‘adulthood’, remains unclear (Jones, 2009: 2). However, when the meaning of youth is juxtaposed against the transition theory, the conceptualization of ‘being youth’ or ‘becoming’ an adult, constructs youth as a ‘transitional period’ or ‘transitional concept’ (Wyn and White, 1997; Spence, 2005).

The concept of youth in national development planning and policy is often intertwined with biologically related constructs which are reproduced based on age related definitions (Wyn and White, 1997). The 2003 World Youth Report (WYR) suggests that the concept of youth is constructed as a statistical entity of people between ages 15 and 24. This provides a comparative platform for understanding the complexities of the socio-economic and political limitations that impede youth transition and development (WYR, 2003). However, the concept of youth is not static but relational on the subjective realities that shape the socio-cultural and spatial interpretations of youth meanings (Ansell, 2005; Spence, 2005; Hine, 2009). Hence, flexibility in the definition of ‘youth’ allows for country-specific policies and programming (UNDP, 2014). Ansell (2005) observed that a broad construct such as ‘young people’ may either be interpreted as a child aged between 0 and 17; an adolescent aged between 10 to 19; a teenager aged between 13 – 19; a young adult aged between 20 and 24; or a youth aged between 15 and 24 depending on the context. Although meaning of youth primarily focuses on ‘young men and women ages 15 -24’, the ‘extension’ of this youth group to include ‘young men and women ranging from ages 25-30 (and above) are based on contextual realities, national youth policy directives, and legal frameworks that define youth political participation (UNFPA, 2010; UNDP, 2013). This explains the differential definition of youth observed in Table 3.1.

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but originate outside it, while lowmost status refers to the lowest rung in the social stratification in which unequal rewards are accorded to functionality differentiated positions'.
Table 3.1: Meaning of Youth: A global, Regional and Local Nigerian Perspective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Age Category</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UN Habitat (Youth Fund)</td>
<td>Youth: 15-32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UNICEF/WHO/UNFPA</td>
<td>Adolescent: 10-19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Young People: 10-24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Youth: 15-24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UNICEF/Convention on Rights of the Child</td>
<td>Child: 0-18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional/African</td>
<td>African Youth Charter</td>
<td>Youth: 15-35</td>
<td>African Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local/Nigerian</td>
<td>Federal Republic of Nigeria</td>
<td>Youth: 18-35</td>
<td>National Youth Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Youth Service Corps (NYSC)</td>
<td>Youth: 18-30</td>
<td>NYSC Handbook</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: NYSC (1999); Ansell, 2005; FRN (2009); UNDP 2013; UNDESA (2014)

Arnett (2000, 2004, 2007a, 2007b) theory of emerging adulthood describes an extended period (i.e. between 18-25 years old) of youth development between adolescence and young adulthood. This theory stresses on the subjective experiences of individuals within this age group (18-25), characterised by identity explorations, instability, feeling ‘in-between’, self-focus and possibilities (Tanner and Arnett, 2009). Prolonged youth transition patterns are influenced by a number of factors including globalisation, and changes from an industrialized to an information-based economy (Bynner, 2005). However, from a *glocalized* perspective (Jeffrey and McDowell, 2004), a homogenous age related definitions of youth (UNFPA, 2008) within local institutional context will depend on the socio-economic and geopolitical complexities that youths encounter (Arnett, 2007b).

For the purpose of this study, the analysis of how youths are socially constructed within the Nigerian context, will not only draw on constitutional and NYSC definitions of a Nigerian youth, but will also be informed by the biographical accounts; subjective narratives and voices from youth respondents from the field. This will facilitate the construction of youth from a nuanced narrative.
3.3. Theorizing Youth Research in Development: Constructions and Changing meanings in Academic Research

The social constructions of youth in policy and research practice was shaped by the epistemological and methodological traditions of youth studies built on theoretical findings from developmental psychology, sociology, criminology, educational research, cultural studies, media studies, feminist youth research, and development studies (Ansell, 2005; Heath et al, 2009; France, 2009; Chisholm et al, 2011; Cieslik and Simpson, 2013). Beyond the rhetorical application of the youth concept identified by Bourdieu (1978), Chisholm et al (2011: 12) also notes that:

“…any discussion of youth practice, youth policy or youth research, raises questions about the meanings of the concept of ‘youth’, its social and historical construction, as well as the social and political implications for our understanding of young people’s lives. In what follows, [youth researchers] try to get behind that ‘word’, unpacking [or deconstructing] its ambivalence and shifting denotations in differing political and cultural settings.”

Jones (2009) asserts that it is the task of sociology of youth to provide an understanding of ‘how and why’ the theoretical interpretations of youth are social construction within changing historical contexts. Although the youth construct is often presented as a dormant ‘third term’ in development theorizing, it is important to untangle the ‘categorical ambiguity’ that ‘supressed’ youth within binary logics that dominate the development discourse (Gabriel, 2013).

3.3.1. The Emergence of Youth in late-Modernity

The conceptualisation of youth is as recent as the idea of modernity (France, 2007; Clarke, 2010). Kehily (2013) suggests that construction of youth as a life-phase in western cultures was initially seen as a biological progressive period. However, with the large scale economic restructuring in Europe and North America, youth, became a socially significant and psychologocially complex period in human life-course. Although in early-modernity the unit for analysing the concept of youth was based on the family, several authors (e.g. Zinneker, 1990; Wallace and Kovacheva, 1998; France, 2007) suggests that the ‘de-traditionalization’ of family socialization patterns across the West (from the 19th century), informed representations of youth experience as a socially turbulent period. The subsequent socio-economic changes and re-configuration of the social order across the world reinforced by the ideals of industrialization, ensured that youth and the agency of their roles in society assumed linear idealisms – e.g. from traditional to a modern society (France, 2009; Cieslik, 2013). Labour reforms and the
The introduction of child protection laws in the modern era helped prohibit child employment by creating a mandatory alternative – Education as a tool for ‘enlightenment’ (e.g. Jones, 2002, 2009).

The dynamics of modern socialization patterns and relationships as represented in the field of development psychology provides an understanding of the construction of youth as ‘adolescence’ (Heath et al., 2009). Hall’s (1904) thesis suggests that ‘adolescence’ is a period of ‘storm and stress’ that is recapitulated through psychological reproduction and genetic transference of problematic behaviours (Arnett, 1999, 2000; Kehily, 2013). Consequently, the study of youth focused on the physiological (biological) and psychological (mental) patterns of youth development (Arnett, 1999) represented both as a problematic period of universal behavioural patterns amongst cohorts and a time in life-course when young people had ‘mood disruptions’, rebelled against parental control, and became engulfed with ‘anti-social behaviours’. Within the sociological realities at these intersections, an ‘identity crises’ is established (Erikson, 1968). The instability caused by the designated period of youthhood shapes, and is shaped by problematic youth identities reinforced in this ‘crisis’ discourse (Cote, 2000; Kehily, 2013). In this regard, youth transitions to adulthood is not only ‘arrested’ (Cote, 2000), the problematization of their identity as exacerbated by precarious socio-economic challenges (Standing, 2011), traps them in this period of waithood (Salehi-Isfahani and Dhillon, 2008; Honwana, 2014).

In pre-modern societies, the transitional arrangements of youths were not clearly defined but rather, was understood as ‘rites of passage’ embedded in symbolic and patriarchal formations of societies that dictates transition pathways which youths could follow (van Gennep, 1960). The WYR (2003:5) notes that:

‘…in more than half of the societies studied, the progression from childhood to youth, especially for boys, involved some systematic rites of passage. These rites had symbolic significance in that, simply by participating in them, an individual achieves a new status and position. It is also a matter of genuine community action; the new status gains validity only through community recognition’

In this context, the realities of youth stress and storm (problematics) in a developing country’s context seem to be more precarious in comparison to youth realities in the global north (Curtain, 2001).
3.3.2. The Sociology of Youth and the Intersections with Development Theory

In contemporary times, the central challenge of youth sociology aims to understand the dynamics transitions, change, and how the dilemmas between youth agency and structure are managed in social contexts (White and Wyn, 1998; Woodman and Wyn, 2014). Sociological frameworks for conceptualising youth start with the recognition that the experience of age is shaped by social conditions including operations of the contemporary realities of globalising processes that contribute to the meaning of who can be classed as a youth (Wyn and Woodman, 2006). The introduction of sociological perspectives in youth studies stands as a critique to scientific and objective propositions which regard youth or young people as a universal category by ignoring class analysis that are reproduced through cultural and intergenerational tensions (Furlong et al., 2011; Bradford, 2012). From a sociological lens, youth is envisioned as a relational concept that refers to social processes where age is socially constructed, institutionalised and controlled in historically and culturally specific ways (White and Wyn, 1997). Several authors (Spence, 2005; Hine, 2009; L. Green, 2008) conclude that the sociological perspectives of youths embody ‘contextual factors’ (e.g. historical, cultural, spatial, political and media representation) that underpin the idea behind ‘social difference’ in relations to class, gender and race (Jones, 2009; Bradford, 2012). This provides a crucial base for understanding power relations between youth and society that informs identity formations (Furlong et al., 2011) bounded by processes of socialization that underlie the debates of how power relations challenge flat-imagery and homogenous assumptions of youth livelihoods (White and Wyn, 1997). In this regard, the concept of youth subculture explains ways in which dominant discourses construct youth as ‘problematic and resistant’ to the status quo of existing societal structures (Bennett, 1999; Heath et al, 2009). Hence, the philosophical underpinning of the youth subculture concept was informed by the Marxist concepts of social class and the Gramscian ideas of hegemony (Ansell, 2005; Huq, 2006). This further provides explanations for the construction of youth position based on issues related to power relations, subjectivities, choice biographies, and the reality of resistance (Wyn and Woodman, 2006; Cieslik, 2013).

Cohen (1997) and Jones (2009) observed that the conceptualization of youth dwelt on the same philosophy of binary-logic that trapped mainstream development theory in a conundrum wherein modernization was seen as a transitional process of shifting from being ‘primitive’ to becoming ‘enlightened’. Table 3.2 summarizes how mainstream development discourses construct ‘youth binary logic’. It is evident that the state of
‘youth-hood’ like ‘underdevelopment’ remains constructed as ‘deficient’ or a ‘problematic other’. For instance, ‘civilization’ or the act of modernization was synonymous with ‘extended youth’ (Jones, 2009). In this context, the deconstruction of the youth binary logic within mainstream development theory represents a premise for understanding how the reconstructions of the youth question have emerged overtime.

| Table 3.2. Sociological perspectives on the Global Hegemony of youth in Development theory |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Mainstream Development Thinking               | Youth Binary Logic                             |
| Colonial Anthropology and social Darwinism    | Not developed                                  |
|                                               | Not adult/adolescent                           |
|                                               | Developed                                      |
|                                               | Adult/grown up                                 |
| Classical political economy                   | Catching up                                    |
|                                               | Becoming                                       |
|                                               | Industrialized                                 |
|                                               | Arrived                                        |
| Modernization                                 | Traditional                                    |
|                                               | Pre-social self that will emerge under the right conditions |
|                                               | Modern                                         |
|                                               | Identity is fixed                              |
| Dependent Development                         | Operates from the periphery of socio-economic order |
|                                               | Powerless and vulnerable                       |
|                                               | Powerful and Strong                            |
| Structural Adjustments                        | Structurally Deficient and in need of Structural Reforms |
|                                               | Less responsible                               |
|                                               | Structurally Efficient – Prescribes Best practice models of reforms |
|                                               | Responsible                                    |
| Dependency within globalization lens          | Becoming                                       |
|                                               | Dependent                                      |
|                                               | Independent                                    |
| Human Development                             | Poor, illiterate, low life expectancy, unhealthy because of diseases |
|                                               | Rich, literate, high life expectancy, healthy because education creates a ‘healthy environment |
|                                               | Knowledgeable                                  |
| Sen's Capability Approach                     | Lacks the capability to conform                |
|                                               | Has the capability to conform                  |
|                                               | Risky Behaviours                               |
|                                               | Considered behaviour                           |
| Alternative development e.g. Human development| Opposes mainstream development approaches      |
|                                               | Creates neoliberal order and advocates ‘rule of law’ |
|                                               | Conformist                                     |
| Structural Reforms e.g. MDGs                  | Dependent on policy prescriptions              |
|                                               | Offers policy models                           |
|                                               | Autonomous                                     |

Sources: adapted from Wyn and White (1997), Jones (2002) and Pieterse (2010)
3.3.3. **Youth and Post-modern realities: Towards a Political Economy of Youth**

The realities of the current youth generation are more precarious in a globalizing world (Standing, 2011; Furlong, 2013); revealing disconnects and prolonged transitions between their agency, and barriers within societal structures. Youth transitions are neither linear nor emergent, but are contingent on complex interactions between individual decisions, opportunity structures and social pathways with institutionalized guidelines and regulations that shape transition successes or failures (Furlong, 2009; Heinz, 2009). Some scholars (White and Wyn, 1997; Heinz, 2009) argue that young people confront contemporary challenges not because of their homogeneity but because of differences that are based on age, sex, experience, marriage status, interests and preferences, family background, income, religion, culture and history. Raffe (2004) opines that the conceptualization of how youth navigate social pathways in historical times has been critiqued for dwelling on the ethos of *linearity, economism and individualism*. Thus, it would be a misconception to equate youth transition as a linear pathway to freedom, as young people navigate multiple transition pathways differently from cradle to grave (Heinz, 2009:4).

Contemporary paradoxes which have shifted youth experiences from jobs without education to education without jobs; overqualified to underemployed; lost in transition to transition lost (Ainley and Allen, 2010) makes it pertinent to rethink strategies that guide modern youth transitions and conceptualisation (Cohen, 1997; Wyn and White, 1997). With emerging approaches to inclusive growth (AfDB, 2011a), there is a growing consensus in youth research, policy and practice (RPP) on the need to increase the voices and biographical agency of youth as co-articulators and co-constructors in youth-related affairs (Androutsopoulos and Georgakopoulou, 2003; Raffe, 2003). This is critical in uncovering how dominant policy discourses shape youth identity formations, social meanings of age, power relations, generational consciousness and intergenerational relationships (Wyn, 2011). As Durham (2000:113) notes:

> To pay attention to youth is to pay attention to the topology of the social landscape – power and agency; public, national, and domestic spaces and identities, and their articulation and disjunctures; memory, history, and sense of change; globalization and governance; gender and class.

Increasing pressures by ‘sovereign polities’ of the North have created an impetus for individual nation-states in the South to adjust to the complexities of the ‘global order’ (Hajer, 2003; Jeffrey and McDowell, 2004) shaped by changes in welfare regimes, high
skilled human resources and the need for pro-democratic structures (Sukarieh and Tannock, 2008). In this regard, the construction of young people’s lives needs to be registered as a theoretical, moral and political centre of gravity (Giroux, 2009; Chisholm et al., 2011) amidst the context of changing trajectories of policies (DFID-CSO, 2010) aimed at bridging the gap between youth and society (World Bank, 2006; Ouedraogo, 2010; Chisholm et al 2011; Van De Mieroop, 2011). Giroux (2009: 21) argues that:

Youth provide[s] a powerful touchstone for a critical discussion about long-term consequences of neoliberal policies, which undermine any viable notion of justice, equality, and freedom while also gesturing toward those conditions that make a democratic future possible.

Within this premise it is conceivable to argue that the realities of young people’s lives have often been blinded by the political mantra of a ‘broken society’, with experiences that are often captured through positivist methodologies and negative stereotypes (Spence, 2005; Davies, 2011). Consequently, the policy response to repositioning youth seeks to engage young people in society by ensuring increased levels of active citizen participation and empowerment through positive social action (Barber, 2007, 2009). Although contemporary youth movements offer a positive imperative to the modern challenges encountered by young people, the most critical and unresolved question still remains: ‘in whose interest? the youth or for neoliberalism?’ (Sukarieh and Tannock, 2008, 2011, 2015). Smyth et al (2014) opines that while neoliberal reforms are laudable in theory, their focus on individualisation, privatisation, and commodification reduces youth development initiatives to tokenism. In this context, Sukarieh and Tannock (2011) argue that contemporary youth agenda should be built on a ‘new political economy of youth’ underpinned by the ‘political positioning of the youth segment in capitalist economies’. Cote (2014: 538) notes that the political-economy position stands as a critique to:

(1) Workplace proletarianisation and exploitation are imposed on young people as a cohort in certain ways (2) neoliberal capitalist economies [which] create conditions that on average delay ability of younger people to earn a living wage, a delay that is not necessarily a result of someone ‘choosing’ to delay financial security; and (3) neoliberal conditions [that] have produced employment conditions that need to be rectified, rather than accepted as a ‘new normal’ which recent generations have happily and successfully adapted.

There is urgent need to move beyond deficit perspectives on youth that problematically construct their realities based on ‘development needs’, to a holistic approach that
genuinely recognizes the place of youth in development planning (WDR, 2006; Maguire, 2007).

3.4. **Global Policy context of Youth in Development**

The challenges faced by youths on a global\(^7\), regional African\(^8\) and national Nigerian level\(^9\) are well documented (UNICEF, 2004; Heath et al, 2009; FMYD, 2009; AU, 2011; Chisholm et al, 2011; WYR, 2011; UNFPA, 2010; UNECA, 2011b; Ezekwesili, 2014). Youth construction and subsequent positioning in postmodern societies have been dictated by debates within multidisciplinary fields of inquiry and projected through dialogues and policy practices led by United Nations and other affiliated agencies (Ansell, 2005; Chaaban, 2009; Ijeoma, 2009). Global responses to the challenges of youth development were based on four “e” target areas that include education, equal opportunities, entrepreneurship and employment creation (UNECA, 2011b).

The thematic focus of global youth policy frameworks underpinned by discourses of inclusion, participation, empowerment and mainstreaming (DFID–CSO Youth Working Group, 2010; WYC, 2014) is shown in Table 3.3. Arguably, these global youth policy mandates were designed to put pressure on governments to develop coherent National Youth Policies (NYPs) and establish institutional support structures such as ministries of youth development (MYDs) and national youth councils and parliaments (NYCPs) to address issues of youth inclusion, participation, development and empowerment (AU, 2010; UNFPA, 2010). This will ensure that youths are active partners in decision making processes of development planning until they become leaders and initiators (WDR, 2006). By the end of 2014, 122 countries (62%) of the World had an operational youth policy (Youth Policy Press Report [YPPR], 2014) wherein their participation in the development planning process is defined. Ashcroft (2008) asserts that the ethos of participation is typically underpinned by western epistemologies and understood within the context of sharing power and enabling

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\(^7\) The World Bank (2006) in its *World Development Report 2007* which was dedicated to *Development and the Next Generation* suggested that of 1.5 billion people (aged 12 – 24), 1.3 billion of youths are in the developing countries.

\(^8\) The African Human Development Report (2012) suggests that Africa’s Population has expanded at a staggering 2.5% average annual rate for the past 6 decades, from 186 million in 1950 to 856 million in 2010. It argues that… SSA is the fastest growing in the world and by 2050; its population would have reached 2 billion and 1 in 5 people on the planet would be African (AHDR, 2012).

\(^9\) The *Report on the 18th Nigerian Economic Submit* suggests that by 2030, Nigeria’s population will double and Nigeria would have about 300 million people. More than half of these population would be youth and by 2025 Nigeria would be one of the largest supplier youth workforce in the world (NESG, 2012).
change. Regardless, scepticism still surrounds youth participation practice because it has created more neoliberal ‘subjects’ than ‘good citizens’ (Clark, 2008).
### Table 3.3: Youth in the Global Development Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples</td>
<td>Member States of the United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Resolution on the International Youth Year (I YY)</td>
<td>UN General Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>World Conference on Education For All (EFA)</td>
<td>UNESCO</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>World Programme of Action for Youth for the Year 2000 and Beyond (WPAY)</td>
<td>UN General Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Resolution on Policies and Programmes Involving Youth</td>
<td>UN General Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Lisbon Declaration on Youth</td>
<td>Ministers Responsible for Youth Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Resolution on Policies and Programmes Involving Youth</td>
<td>UN General Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>World Education Forum: Dakar Platform for Action</td>
<td>UNESCO</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Special Session to review progress achieved over the last decade and outline a future vision for young people</td>
<td>UN General Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Youth Employment Network Launch</td>
<td>UN Secretary General Jointly with the World Bank and ILO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Resolution on Policies and Programmes Involving Youth</td>
<td>UN General Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>World Youth Report: Young people today and in 2015</td>
<td>UN General Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>International Labour Conference (ILC): Resolution Concerning Youth Employment.</td>
<td>ILO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>GA Resolution on Tenth Anniversary of WPAY</td>
<td>UN General Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Commission for Social Development Resolution Concerning Youth Employment</td>
<td>UN General Assembly and ILO</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>World Youth Report: Young People's Transition to Adulthood</td>
<td>UN General Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Putting Youth in National Development Poverty Reduction Strategies</td>
<td>UN General Assembly and United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>UN International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Understanding</td>
<td>UN General Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>World Youth Report: Youth and Culture</td>
<td>UN General Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>World Youth Report: Youth Perspectives on the Pursuit of Decent Work in Changing Times</td>
<td>UN General Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>ILC: The Youth Employment Crisis; A call to Action</td>
<td>ILO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>World Youth Report: Youth and Migration</td>
<td>UN General Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Colombo Declaration of Youth in the Post-2015 Development Agenda</td>
<td>World Youth Conference</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5. Regional Youth Policy: the State of the African Youth and implications for National Youth Development Programmes

Young people below the age of 30 years constitute approximately 70 percent of the entire population of Africa (AfDB, 2011b) with approximately 200 million people (i.e. approximately 20 percent) within the age bracket of 15 and 24 years (United Nations International Youth Year Report [UNIYYR], 2010; Azeng and Yogo, 2013). By 2050, this population is expected to have doubled with approximately one-third of the total world youth population who would reside in Africa (UNECA, 2011b; ILO, 2012; Cunha-Duate et al., 2013). Although youth as a social category makes up approximately 37 percent of the total labour force of Africa (OECD, 2011b) they make up about 60% of the total unemployment (AfDB, 2011b; Page, 2012; Azeng and Yogo, 2013). In absolute terms, while the working-age population in Africa grew by 96 million, despite this growing number, the number of jobs grew by only 63 million (African Economic Outlook [OEO], 2012). With 10 to 12 million entrants into the labour market every year of which 5 million of this population are graduates, there is a strong call to address the Africa’s poor absorptive capacity to manage the burgeoning youth population (AfDB, 2011; AEO, 2012; World Bank, 2009, 2013). The consequence of this jobless growth reality in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), is the creation of an ‘educated unemployed’ youth class who exist in ‘capability traps’, with limited socio-economic and political opportunities (AfDB, 2011b; Pritchett et al, 2013; Assaad and Levison, 2013; Filmer and Fox, 2014). Cunha-Duate et al (2013) estimate that approximately 72 percent of the youth population in Africa lives on less than $2 per day. This increases their vulnerability to poor health and susceptibility to traps of conflict and violence (UNECA, 2009; Page, 2012). This informs the ‘ticking time bomb’ characterisation of this demographic group (ILO, 2012; Cunha-Duate et al., 2013). As some scholars (Urdal, 2012; Azeng and Yogo, 2013; Bloom et al, 2013) contend, if the demographic dividends and capabilities of the youth population remains underutilized, then, the current intergenerational clashes and violence in North Africa and Arab countries would be infinitesimal in comparison with what may occur in SSA countries. Against this backdrop, the increasing realisation by African governments and their regional/international partners on the centrality of youth in the development agenda (AU, 2010), has being underpinned by Charter’s (AU, 1986, 1990), forums (AfDF, 2006), and regional Declarations (AU, 2009), that have brought about reports and policy
action plans, that seeks to ensure that youths are supported as critical agents that can
drive the African renaissance movement (AU, 2014) (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Regional Policies that Inform Youth Development in Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRW)</td>
<td>OAU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>NEPAD Framework</td>
<td>African Union (AU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>African Youth Charter</td>
<td>African Union (AU) and Member States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>5th African Development Forum</td>
<td>African Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>African Youth Decade 2009 -2018</td>
<td>AU and Member States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>African Youth Report</td>
<td>Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>State of the African Youth</td>
<td>AU, UNFPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>17th AU summit: Decisions of African Heads of State and Government on Accelerating Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development</td>
<td>AU and Heads of States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Youth and Children’s Forum: African Renaissance – Africa we want to see 2063</td>
<td>AU and ECA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In the African continent, the adaptation of the global human rights policy frameworks
was first reinterpreted to fit the context-specific realities of the African child as
exemplified in the Banjul Charter on Human and People’s Rights and the African
on these two Charters’, the ‘New Partnership for Africa’s Development’ (NEPAD)
framework, reinforced Africa’s broad position on human rights, with a specific focus on
child and youth development (NEPAD, 2001; UNICEF, 2004). Subsequently, the
African Youth Charter (AYC) provided the strategic and political direction for youth
empowerment and youth development activities in the continent (AU, 2006). As part of
National Action Plans (NAPs) and National Youth Policies (NYPs) individual African
nation states are expected to adopt a multi-sectoral and integrated approach to fully
comprehend the complexities of the shared experiences of African youth (Mac-
Ikemenjima, 2006, 2009; UNFPA, 2010). In this context, Lintelo (2012a) argues that the
state of NYPs in various African states are either shaped by the ontology that ‘youth are
the nation’s future’ or by problematic narratives which reinforce and continually reproduce precautionary strategies similar with global best practices of youth development. However, in attempts for African governments to address the present and future challenges of youth development in the continent, Gyimah-Brempong and Kimeyi and Kimeyi (2013) recommend as an integrated approach to youth policy development needs to focus on: the improvement of investments climate for youth entrepreneurship to thrive; expanding rural infrastructure to boost employment opportunities; harnessing innovation through youth capability development programmes, and; building institutional quality.

Overall, an analysis of the impact of regional declarations and consensuses that have shaped youth policy in Africa suggest that in mainstreaming and rethinking the position of youth in development RRP, certain conditions are necessary. These include:

1. Development of NYPs and NAPs as guiding principles for youth development planning.
2. Harmonisation of the NYPs and NAPs with the fiscal budgets so that the socio-economic wellbeing of youths are catered for and in-line with the regional focus of inclusive growth.
3. Establishment of political platforms and exclusive ministries of youth (e.g. MYD, NYCPs etc.) to ensure that their voices are part of development planning and decision making processes.
4. Establishment of agencies like national youth service (NYS) and development platforms to provide clear pathways to ensuring participation in the socio-economic and political economy.
5. Adapting a youth development index (YDI) to measure the state of youths at any given time in the development process. (MDGs Youth Working Group, 2005; Commonwealth 2008a, 2008b; UNFPA, 2010; AU, 2006; 2010, 2011, 2013).

In this regard, a cursory look at the regional policy landscape that examined the extent to which African governments incorporated NYPs as part of the national development frameworks (YPPR, 2014), reveals that by the end of 2013, 23 (43%) countries in Africa had a national youth policy, 14 (26%) are currently revising existing national youth policies (NYPs), while only 14 (26%) had no NYPs. Therefore in order to critically examine how youth are mainstreamed in a regional African youth policy context (e.g.
Commonwealth, 2008a, 2008b), Table 3.5 draws on several studies (e.g. Innovations in Civic Participation [ICP], 2010; Bodley-Bond and Cronin, 2013; YPPR, 2014) in order to contextualize the state of NYPs in selected African countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Ministry of Youth Development (MYD)</th>
<th>National Youth Policy (NYPs)</th>
<th>National Action Plans for Youth (NAPs)</th>
<th>National Youth Service (NYS)</th>
<th>National Youth Council (NYCs)</th>
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<td>Uganda</td>
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<td>Zimbabwe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21 (91%)</td>
<td>19 (83%)</td>
<td>6 (26%)</td>
<td>13 (57%)</td>
<td>17 (74%)</td>
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</table>

N/A means that either the data could not be found or the country in context has either stopped these programmes or is in the process of developing them.

Sources: Adapted from ICP (2010, 2013); Bodley-Bond and Cronin (2013); YPPR (2014)

Based on these finding (Table 3.5), only Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Zambia have met all criteria for regional youth development. Arguably, although most African
countries have actually mainstreamed youth\textsuperscript{10} in their development agenda through the NAPs (Commonwealth 2008a, 2000b; WYC, 2014), the current challenge borders on lack of implementation and limitations of existing institutional structures. Paradoxically, despite policy responses and investments in human capital development initiatives targeted at youth, the realities of the African youth continue to reaffirm disconnects between youth and society.

3.6. The Emergence and Institutionalization of National Youth Service (NYS) organizations in Africa

Africa has the third largest NYS-based institutions and programmes in the world (McBride et al., 2003, 2004). The idea of establishing NYS programmes to address the socio-economic challenges of post-conflict societies evolved into a predominant youth empowerment strategy in the first decade of development (Eberly and Gal, 2007; Caprara et al, 2012). Obadare (2007: 40) observed that:

The idea of national service in postcolonial Africa is best understood within the context of socioeconomic pressures which beset the newly independent states in the 1960s. Two pressures seem to have been replicated across the continent. These were the twin issues of youth unemployment and the emigration of young skilled people from rural areas to urban settings... The idea of national service emerged as a way to stem unhealthy rural-urban drift, impact skills in the burgeoning youth population, and provide temporary employment for increasing high school graduates’

The understanding of the historical and etymological construct of ‘service’ suggests that the concept originated in the 8th century as a differential strategy aimed at examining ‘how people perceived the relationship between their actions and responsibilities towards others’ (Menon et al., 2002). However, the contemporary understanding of service within the context of development was conceived from the works of James (1910) as the ‘The moral equivalent of war’ (Eberly and Sherraden, 1990; Sherraden, 2001b). Sherraden (2001a: 2) opines that service is seen as ‘an organized period of substantial engagement and contribution to the local, national, or world community recognized by society, with minimal monetary compensation to the participant’. Herein lays the intersections between youth service and contributions to national building as a

\textsuperscript{10} According to the Commonwealth (2008b) document, youth mainstreaming is a two-fold strategy that involves ensuring that: youth perspectives are integrated in policy and project stages in various sectors on the one hand, and that there are specific policies, projects and/or actions aimed at narrowing the gap in specific areas of youth empowerment.

2. FMYD (2007:8) asset that aim of youth mainstreaming especially in the Nigerian context is to: (1) integrate relevant youth policy areas into programmes of relevant agencies; (2) Ensure that certain percentage of budget, programmes and initiative of relevant and non-government agencies are targeted at young people, and; ensure that young people are beneficiaries of private sector-led development initiative.
strong policy for youth development (Eberly et al., 2006). In most recent times, NYS is conceptualized as a strategy for promoting youth for community development, for combating youth unemployment and poverty, as for creating pathways for sustainable youth livelihoods (Alessi, 2004; Aimee and Alessi, 2006; Buhrer, 2008; Bodley-Bond and Cronin, 2013; Spera et al, 2013). Indeed, the positioning of Youth in national service programmes provides them the agency to shape, reconstruct and develop national democracies in the African continent (Elderly 2008).

Although youth community service programmes in Africa could be traced back to periods when youths were organised as age-cohort groups and mobilised for defence of communities and infrastructural development purposes, it is often criticised for being too militaristic; reinforcing the power of the ruling class by dispensing patronage on ethnic localities (Brav et al., 2002; Patel and Wilson, 2004). Jones (2009:48) asserts that:

Original youth organizations … seemed to have been based on the idea that young people’s minds were empty vessels open to the influence of ideologies, and sometimes extreme ones, because their primary socialization and cognitive development were incomplete. Youth organizations arose with the development of ideologies associated with nationalism…

The ethos of the NYS programme is to infuse discipline, national norms, values and customs in youth while preparing them for civic responsibility (Pritzker and McBride, 2005; McBride, 2009). Hence, NYS is mandatory in the socio-political economy of certain countries (e.g. Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya) of SSA (Adebanwi, 2009; Bodley-Bond and Cronin, 2013) particularly where the rite of passage to the political economy has been shaped by entrenched service traditions (Obadare, 2010). To promote character development and patriotism in these societies, youths are drilled to conform to hierarchical constructions based on ideas like ‘seniority’ and respect for ‘elders’ (Eberly, 2008). In this context, youth participation in NYS aims to develop in the youth a ‘sense of citizenship’; psychosocial empathy, self-esteem, competence, confidence, connectedness and employability through experience and ‘commitment’ to service’ (Patel, 2009; Bodley-Bond and Cronin, 2013; Spera et al., 2013).
3.7. **Conclusion**

This chapter explored multidisciplinary approaches to understanding youth social constructions on a global, regional, and local Nigerian level. Depending on the purpose of usage, context, and positionality of the youth concept across social history, this chapter reviewed how youth remains constructed as a transitional phase – bound by conditionality’s that impede/facilitate movement to adulthood. Despite the fact that age-related constructions dominate development planning and policy discourses, this chapter concludes that youth as a concept is not static but is subjective depending on socio-economic realities and experiences that shape social imagining of youths in society. In mapping the historical and theoretical trajectory of youth construction from late-modernity to contemporary times, this chapter reveals how youth theorizing draws from similar discourses of mainstream development RPP. In this regard, this chapter suggests that the underlying socio-economic challenges that impede youth positioning’s as partners in development have informed the global and regional policy mandates aimed at addressing youth exclusion and vulnerability in development realities. This inherently introduced the paradox that despite the advancement of youth in development policy both globally and in the SSA region, the state of youth reveals disconnects between policy and practice. With the centrality of youth development in SSA in particular, it remains to be seen how participation in NYS programmes shapes youth transitions from their formal/informal education, to the labour market and their eventual engagement in the political economy of their nation state.
Chapter 4: Understanding the positioning of Nigerian youth in Development: A Contextual Analysis

4.1. Introduction

Through critical deconstructions of historical antecedents and national development policy steps, this chapter provides the contextual background for this research. The chapter explores the constructions and roles of youth from Nigeria’s colonial past to its contemporary national development context. In this regard, understanding the construction of youth across the six (6) national development planning episodes across Nigeria’s social history and even in contemporary times was considered important because it provides a nuanced critique about the shifting positions, roles and identity of youth in national development agenda. This chapter also explores in detail, the antecedent context that led to the formation of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme by reviewing policy documents, academic journals, and official reports. The chapter further provides a critical overview of the other youth capability development programmes (YCDPs), policies and programmes, advocated by the Nigerian government outside the policy mandate of the NYSC. This helps contextualise the realities and positioning’s of youth through both development and deployment in the Nigerian national development context.

4.2. Youths in Nigeria’s State Building: A Historical Perspective

To establish a Nigerian identity, historical debates underpinning Nigeria’s colonial struggle began with critiques that strove to challenge the etymological constructions about the geographical entity called ‘Nigeria’ (Adebanwi and Obadare, 2010). The ‘mandatory marriage’ between the predominantly Christian Southern protectorate and the predominantly Muslim Northern protectorate in 1914– without prior consultation of other ethnic nationalities (Obichere, 1982; Momah, 2013) created a national identity question that continues to pervade the modern Nigeria state. The impasse about the Nigerian national identity began through a philosophical and intellectual revolution in which youth were primary agents, and ‘western education models’ were tools in fostering the processes of psychological de-ruralisation (Woolman, 2001) and re-imagination of the ‘traditional’ social fabric of Nigeria against the prospect of a modernized and industrialized future (Guest, 2004; Abbink, 2005). Youth education was envisaged as an integral aspect in addressing nation-building problems like integrating multicultural traditions and ethno-regional mandates; narrowing the gaps between rural-urban livelihoods; bridging the divides between ethnic and geographical access to
resources, and developing a national identity (Abuduntu, 2010; Ibukun and Aboluwodi, 2010). Through western education, youth nationalist movements reproduced the same ideological underpinnings of colonial schemes (Bah, 2005; Lincoln, 2011; Olaiya, 2014).

Although the institutionalization of colonial models of development in Nigeria conceptualised youths as key agents in constructing a Nigerian identity (Halloway, 2013), the models were based on the same problematic ‘moral prisms’ that guided mainstream development theorizing (Abbink, 2005). This colonial narrative of youths shaped the early youth movements of the 1930s/40s and facilitated the emergence of ‘Nigerian nationalism’ (Falola and Heaton, 2008) underscored by differences in approach of the traditional nationalist on the one hand, and beneficiaries of western education on the other (Onuoha, 2013). This reproduced a duality between traditional nationalist and modern nationalist movements, and widened the intellectual gap between ‘African scholars’ and ‘western Africanists’ (Bah, 2005; Cheru, 2012).

The history of political party formation in the Nigerian political space was built on youth activisms for national sovereign identity (Akintola, 2010; Anyanwu, 2012). These youth-led nationalist activism initiated various youth organizations like the Lagos Youth Movement (LYM) in 1923 which later became the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) in 1936; the Union of Young Nigerians (UYN); Borno Youth Movement (BYM), Bauchi Improvement Group (BIG); the Zaria Study Group (ZSG); the Nigerian Union of Students (NUS) which later became the National Association of Nigerian Students (NUNS) in 1962; the Nigerian Youth Circle (NYC) etc. (Iweriebor, 2003; Falola, 2009; Akintola, 2010; Olaiya, 2014). This created platforms for awakening national consciousness towards a common national identity by ‘unifying the different ethnic tribes in Nigeria’ and inspiring the creation of the first political party in 1923 (Oke, 2013; Chika et al, 2014) and the ‘Nigerian Youth Charter’ (Coleman, 1958; Iweriebor, 2003; Falola, 2009). Coleman (1958) asserts that:

![Image](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

The charter in its political section demanded a speedy movement toward political independence within the British Commonwealth. Socially it demanded the expansion of education, the provision of a free and compulsory education, expansion of secondary education, the establishment

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11 According to Bah (2005:19) Traditional Nationalism refers to the early resistance toward British conquest and pacification. It was characterized by localized and religious forms of resistance against British rule.

12 Modern Nationalism refers to the coherent and systematic struggle to end British rule and lead the country into nation-statehood. It was strategically oriented toward independence and led by western Africans, commonly referred to as nationalist leaders.
of a university, the award of more scholarships for higher education abroad, and the expansion health services. In the economic sphere, it called for equality of opportunity and treatment Nigeria and foreign businesses and for launching of thrift (saving) schemes, probably to enable Nigerians deprived of credit from colonial banks have access to independent sources of investment.

In this regard, youth nationalist’s identities were instrumental in guiding Nigeria’s socio-economic development agenda. The pan-Nigerian movements informed the renegotiation of better conditions for Nigerian employees in mercantilist firms in which youths demanded for the Nigerianization of the civil service through increased representations (Coleman, 1958; Sklar, 2004). Bah (2005: 19) notes that “in addition to the groundwork laid by traditional nationalism, modern nationalism was bolstered by negative impacts of a money economy”. This engendered in the NYM a dangerous culture of internal politicking, rent-seeking, and patronages to ethnic traditions, which in turn undermined the unity of youth nationalist groups (Sklar, 2004). The aftermaths of this colonial legacy enforced dichotomous divisions between ‘indigenes’ and ‘settlers’ (Akanji, 2011); ‘educated class’ and ‘illiterate class’ (Woolman, 2001), and ethno-regional tensions (Jega, 2000) that continues to undermine the efforts of ensuring a common nationhood even in contemporary Nigeria where power politics and identity chauvinism provide a pretext for excluding the profound roles of youths in the state building processes (Olutola, 1979; Olugbade, 1990; Jega, 2000; Iwilade, 2013; Uhumwunwanguho and Oghator, 2013; Malachy and Nwobi, 2014). The ‘problem of belonging’ to the Nigerian State has always focused on the ‘national question’, which is often underpinned by broader question of identity formations and how youth identities are constructed, instituted and reproduced in a local context (Abutundu, 2010; Akanji, 2011). Herein lay the overarching challenge in the formation of the modern Nigerian state since its independence in 1960 (Falola, 1996).

The Nigerian development discourse under the guise of national unity, and for the purpose of ethno-religious integration, continues to treat Nigeria as a homogenous entity (Jega, 2000; Adebanwi, 2004a; Uwa et al, 2013). This marginalizes the reflexive narratives and voices of not just ethnic minority groups across the ethno-religious divide (Mustapha, 1997; Simola, 2000; Adebanwi, 2004b) but also those of the youth segment. Jega (2000) suggests that the Nigerian case is laden on the “us” versus ‘them’ syndrome” – in which discursive and real tensions are politicised through elite manipulations and reproduced through religious dichotomies. However, the positioning
of youth in Nigeria’s colonial history generally portray them as vanguards that resisted colonial oppression through the establishment of youth nationalist movements with the ascribed role of initiators of political party formation (Olaiya, 2014).

4.3. National Development Planning in Postcolonial Nigeria

The history of national development planning efforts in Nigeria can be traced back to the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940 which prescribed a ‘Ten Year Plan for Development and Welfare in Nigeria’ (1946-1954) (Balogun, 2009; Falola, 2009). This was closely followed by the Economic Development Plan (1955-1960) which was geared towards promoting the modernization of Nigeria (FRN, 1962, 1970). These plans were criticized on the ground that they lacked national contents that reflects practical realities (Marcellus, 2009; Iheanacho, 2014). This reality which signalled an era of unplanned growth was primarily down to lack of capacity for planning and management, limited financial resources, as well as inadequate information systems and monitoring systems, especially in the implementation of National Policy on Education (Moja, 2000). Ibietan and Ekhosuehi (2013) opines that national planning in pre-independent Nigeria was rather haphazard and inconsistent with no clearly defined national objectives or institutions that would promote effective implementation of the plans.

The Nigerian development philosophy in the immediate post-independence period sought for ways to promote industrialization (Sanusi, 2012; Akims, and Kromtit, 2013; Ogundele et al., 2014), urbanization (Ejumudo, 2013), political integration (e.g. Ake, 1967) and human resource and nation-building (Arowosegbe, 2011). Since this early period of indigenous development discourse, the Nigerian development policy landscape has significantly evolved (Obadan, 2003; Osabuohein et al., 2012; Ogundele et al., 2014) spanning 6 planning episodes that include:

1. 1st national development plan – 1NDP (1962-1968),
2. 2nd national development plan – 2NDP (1970-1974),
3. 3rd national development plan – 3NDP (1975-1980),
4. 4th national development plan – 4NDP (1981-1985)
5. Nigeria’s National development agenda in a Neoliberal era (1986-Present)
6. Contemporary Positioning of Youth in Development in Nigeria
4.3.1. First National Development Plan (1962-1968)
The First National Development Plan (1NDP) was endorsed at a time when ideological and policy tensions still existed between regional and federal system of governance in Nigeria (Osabuohien et al., 2012; Ejumudo, 2013). Underpinned by models of development economics, this 1NDP, which was considered the first in the series of Nigeria's decolonization, adopted a growth and trickle-down approach (Falola, 1996; Dibua, 2006). During this period, a combination of global policies (i.e. modernization and economic growth models) and local agrarian policies were utilized concurrently to ensure that Nigeria increases rural incomes and productivity while improving the livelihoods of its citizenry (Ariyo and Mortimore, 2012). The 1NDP was built on the assumption that the plan was consistent with the ‘the democratic, political and social aspirations of Nigerians’ (FRN, 1970). The official policy document highlights that the macroeconomic objectives was to ensure a growth rate of at least 0.4% per annum while achieving economic take-off by 1980 (FRN, 1970) and developing opportunities in specific areas like health, agriculture, education and employment (Briggs, 2007; Ejumudo, 2013). In the absence of a viable industrial sector, the provisions of the 1DNP embraced an import-substituting industrialization (ISI) framework with the aim of mobilizing national economic resources (Ogundele et al., 2014). Accordingly, the 1NDP was designed to put the Nigerian economy on the path of accelerated growth by prioritizing industrial and agricultural development (Olomola, 2011). The policy imperative of the plan constructed a dichotomous dynamics between rural poverty, powerlessness, urban affluence and power (Ejumido, 2013). Critics of the 1NDP argue that the implementation of the 1NDP was skewed by regional and not national development needs (Ojo, 2012; Ejumudo, 2013), and thus, did not exactly reflect the aspirations of the country. The conflict between regional aspirations and national objectives during the programme implementation phase revealed lingering loopholes in the ‘conception, organization and institutional leadership’ for national development and cohesion (FRN, 1970). Furthermore, issues relating to youth development were conspicuously absent in the 1NDP.

The hiatus between the end of the 1NDP in 1968 and the commencement of the second national development plan (2NDP) in 1970 was informed by the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970). The impact of the civil war on children and youths was evident in the reported disruption to schooling and conscription into the ranks of the separatist militia
As subjects of war, the precarious youth realities were used as tools for propaganda as they became trapped by discourses that constructed them based on dilemmas of development and peace (Chick, 1971; Uchendu, 2007; Ismail and Alao, 2007). This limited the contribution of youth agency to Nigeria’s national development (Uhungu and Oghator, 2013). The subsequent enactment of the 3R policy—reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction (Momah, 2013) as a deliberate strategy of national integration after the civil war (Gowon, 2007; Arowosegbe, 2011) resulted in the establishment of numerous agencies, including the NYSC directorate (Sanda, 1980; NYSC 1999). Within this context, the establishment of the NYSC was seen as a platform for mobilizing Nigerian youth for socio-cultural integration and national development (Sanda, 1980; Ladele and Fadairo, 2008).

The 2NDP (1970-194) and 3NDP (1975-1980) provided the immediate framework for post-civil war reconstruction and development (Marcellus, 2009; Sanusi, 2012). The development plans sort to improve infrastructure, basic amenities, and build a new and prosperous nation (Marenin, 1990; Olomola, 2011). The development agenda during the post-war period was informed in particular by a reconstructive National Policy of Education that advocated conscientization and development of youth towards nationhood, peace and cultural pluralism (FRN, 1977; Bray and Cooper, 1979; Marenin, 1979, 1989a, 1990; Amali and Jekayinfa, 2013). The need for improving the livelihoods of youth gained added urgency following the post-war challenges of youth unemployment, high illiteracy and poor educational facilities punctuated by student unrests (FRN, 1970; 1975; 1985; Anuwo, 2009). Akintola (2010) opines that the famous ‘Ali must go’ protests allowed the NUNS to demand for the reformation and democratization of education at all levels to ensure that it was a right for all and not an exclusively elitist luxury. In this regard, specific provisions of the 2NDP and 3NDP was geared towards addressing ‘Labour and Social Welfare’ challenges like youth unemployment through an effective ‘Manpower Development and Utilization’ strategy that prioritizes skill acquisition (FRN, 1970, 1975). In the 2NDP

High priority [was] accorded to programmes for training young men in such skills designed to improve their prospects of employment… The establishment of a National Youth Organization [was] designed to develop

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13 According to Akintola (2010) Col. Ahmadu Ali who was the Minister of education immediately after the war had proposed a policy whose implementation meant an increase in tuition, feeding, hostel and administrative fees and the scrapping of car loans for graduating students.
young persons in simulated work conditions. The primary aim of the organization is to provide appropriate training in various skills in real working conditions, inculcating a healthy attitude toward manual labour. The organization will also provide a means of channelling the talents and energies of youths towards national service through the spirit of community service… Development of the youth service organization as a measure against youth unemployment… will be established [and] designed to provide health work orientation for young school-leavers. The [NYSC] Corps will be project-oriented and will be deployed on projects in rural communities involving the building of roads, bridges, schools and dispensaries.

FRN (1970: 261)

To further address youth unemployment, the ‘National Manpower Policy’ (NMP) enshrined in the 3NDP actively sought for ways to ‘train youths in specific skills and aptitudes necessary for eventual absorption into the national economy either as self-employed persons or as wage earners’ (FRN, 1975). The main objective of the NMP was to:

…contain the incidence of youth unemployment by providing training and employment opportunities; correct imbalances in the educational system consistent with the changing requirements of the economy; provide industrial-placement programmes, occupational guidance, and similar schemes which are aimed at bridging the gap between education, training and the world of work.

FRN (1975)

Development especially during the second decade of Nigeria’s development was driven by sectoral demands in the construction, agricultural, and health sectors (FRN, 1975: 379-382). Within this context, youth development was synonymous to youth employment and the NYSC was seen as vehicle through which youths could have gainful employment. The 2NDP set the policy context upon which the NYSC was established in 1973 (FRN, 1970, 1975; Obadan, 2003; NYSC, 1999; Raimi and Alao, 2011; Ismaila and Jekayinfa, 2013).

4.3.2.1. The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme and the Nigerian Youth: History and Rationale

The NYSC was established by Decree 24 of 1973 (NYSC, 1999). This Decree was later revised to Decree No. 51 of 1993 and enacted as an act of parliament in the NYSC ACT, Cap. 84 of 2004 (NYSC, 1993, 2004) and is under the oversight of the Federal Ministry of Youth Development (FMYD, 2013a, 2013b). As a product of the post-civil war 3R policy (Obadare, 2010), the NYSC is viewed as a strong incentive for cohesive nation-building and sustained peace (Marenin, 1989b; Sherraden, 2001b; Ugwuegbu,
The NYSC scheme has since assumed multiple mandates with focus on youth development, national integration and development (Sanda, 1980; Obadare, 2010; Raimi and Alao, 2011). The core aims of the NYSC as contained in the enabling act (NYSC, 1983, 1993, 1999, 2004) are to:

1. Inculcate discipline in Nigerian youths by instigating in them a tradition of industry at work and of patriotic and loyal service to the nation in any situation they find themselves;

2. Raise the moral of our youth by giving them the opportunity to learn about higher ideals of national achievement, social and cultural improvement;

3. Develop in the Nigerian youths the attitudes of mind, acquired through shared experience and suitable training, which will make them more amenable to mobilisation in the national interest;

4. Enable Nigerian youths acquire the spirit of self-reliance by encouraging them to develop skills for self-employment;

5. Contribute to accelerated growth of the national economy;

6. Develop common ties among the Nigerian youths and promote national unity and integration;

7. Remove prejudices, eliminate ignorance and confirm at first hand the many similarities among Nigerians of all ethnic groups; and

8. Develop a sense of cooperate existence and common destiny of the people of Nigeria.

To this end, the NYSC scheme is a compulsory one-year programme that mobilizes all young (international and local) university and polytechnic graduates between 18 and 30 years of age for national service (NYSC, 1999). The only exemptions are those that have served in the armed forces, the Nigerian police forces and other national security agencies (NYSC, 1993). To ensure that the NYSC attains institutional effectiveness, section 1(3) of Decree 51 highlights seven (7) main objectives of the scheme (NYSC, 1993, 2004). These objectives including the strategy of implementation as well as the expected outcomes are enumerated in Table 4.1.
Table 4.1: The NYSC Mandate and Strategies for Youth and National Development in Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NYSC Objectives</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Proposed Outcomes</th>
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| Ensure the equitable distribution of members of the service corps and effective utilization of their skills in areas of national needs | 1. Mobilization and Deployment  
2. Orientation  
3. Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship  
4. Community Development Service (CDS) | 1. National integration  
2. Equality  
3. Capability usage  
4. Address national development needs |
| That as far as possible, youths are assigned jobs in states other than their state of origin | 1. Intra-state deployment and career development  
2. Inter-state deployment | 1. Capability usage  
2. National consciousness, cultural integration, and nation-building |
| That that such group of youths assigned to work together is representative of Nigeria as far as possible | 1. Deployment equality  
2. Intra-state deployment | 1. Equality  
2. Identity formation, recognition and representation |
| That Nigerian youths are exposed to the modes of living in different parts of Nigeria | 1. Value re-orientation and leadership development  
2. Inter-state deployment | 1. National integration and citizenship development  
2. Enhanced interethnic awareness and cultural tolerance |
| That the Nigerian youth is encouraged to eschew religious tolerance by accommodating religious differences | 1. Youth re-orientation  
2. Inter-state and intra-state deployment  
3. Leadership Development | 1. Enhanced interethnic and religious tolerance  
2. Citizenship and leadership development  
3. Conflict management |
| That members of the service corps are encouraged to seek at the end of their one-year national service, career employment all over Nigeria, thus prompting free movement of labour | 1. Intra-state placement and career development  
2. Youth transition  
3. NYSC certification | 1. Youth transition  
2. Enhanced employability  
3. Spatial labour mobility |
| That employers are induced partly through their experience with members of the service corps to employ more readily and on a permanent basis, qualified Nigerians, irrespective of their state of origin | 1. Intra-state deployment  
2. National reorientation  
3. NYSC certification | 1. Youth transition  
2. Enhanced employability and retention in employment  
3. Induce work ethic |

All aims and objectives of the NYSC are designed to be mutually reinforcing to ensure systemic and institutional efficiency of the scheme and youth development in Nigeria (NYSC, 1983: 16). The mobilization of youths for economic and socio-cultural development is also driven by the need to prepare future leaders with positive ethos for national cohesion, development and self-reliance (Sanda, 1980; Marenin, 1990; ICP, 2003; Stroud, 2005; World Bank, 2005; Perold et al., 2013). In this regard, some studies consider the NYSC as a pathway and platform that improves youth transition into productive adulthood and effective citizenship (Obadare, 2010; Perold et al., 2013). The expected outcomes of youth participation in the NYSC programme includes but is not limited to psychosocial and character development (Bodley-Bond and Cronin, 2013; ICP Synthesis Report, 2013); interethnic tolerance through enhanced cognitive and perceptual shifts that seeks to eliminate discriminatory practices and manage conflicts (Olaiya, 2014); creation of platforms for youths to gain practical experience, reflexive learning and exit opportunities (Bodley-Bond and Cronin, 2013); competence, skills (both soft and technical), and social capital development (Eberly and Gal, 2007); improved levels of patriotism and citizenship through awareness, loyalty, and sense of belonging (Obadare, 2010; Raimi and Alao, 2011); entrepreneurship development through orientation programmes; as well as, deployment and usage of youth capabilities solely for national interest and economic development needs (Ojo, 1980; Raimi and Alao, 2011).

Two major bodies – The National Directorate and The State Committees – are involved in policy decisions and governing of the NYSC (Olutola, 1979; NYSC, 1993, 1999). The National Directorate, headed by a Director-General, is responsible for drawing up detailed capability development programmes of training schedules and coordinating implementation with the governing boards of the State Committees (NYSC, 1993, 2004). The mobilization of eligible youth participants in the NYSC scheme is carried out by the National Directorate while the State Committees under the authority of State Coordinators are responsible for deploying mobilized corps members to places of critical national and community development needs (Olutola, 1979; Marenin, 1989b, 1990). At the grassroots level, the operation of the scheme is supervised by the State Zonal Officers and the Local Government Inspectors (NYSC, 1999). On average, the NYSC programme mobilizes an average of 250,000 graduates for national service and community development (FMYD, 2013a). Mobilization of corps members is guided by two policies: deployment and posting policy.
4.3.2.1.1. Deployment Policy/State Deployment
NYSC deployment is the strategy used to expose corps members to the many similarities and diversities of cultures and traditions in other parts of the country, with a view to eliminating any inherent ethno-religious prejudices and stereotypes (NYSC, 1999: 13). As a matter of policy, no corps member should be deployed to his/her institution of graduation or local government of origin (NYSC, 2011a, 2012). Corps members typically do not have a say in the deployment exercise. However, there is a notable exception known as ‘concessional deployment’ in which corps members are redeployed on the grounds of health, marital and extreme compassionate reasons (NYSC, 1999, 2012). Furthermore, the recent security challenge in some North Eastern states of the country is shaping deployment to this region and has currently made deployment to such states, an optional exercise. Nevertheless, sex-disaggregated deployment data of corps members who participated in the NYSC between 1996 and 2005, increased 2.34 by fold (i.e. from 48222 youth corps members in 1996 to 113 026 in 2005) (FMYD, 2008a).

4.3.2.1.2. Posting Policy/Intra-State Deployment
NYSC posting is a strategy for deploying youth capabilities to areas of national development needs (NYSC, 2014). The posting strategy is usually applied at the state level to direct corps member capabilities and ensure maximum utilization of the youth capital (Marenin, 1990; NYSC, 1999). As part of the implementation of the Transformation Agenda (TA) (2011-2015), posting is currently streamlined into four (4) priority sectors, namely: agriculture, health, education and infrastructure (FMYD, 2012).

4.3.2.2. The Youth Capability Development Programmes (YCDPs) of the NYSC Scheme
The NYSC scheme has four cardinal programmes and they include Orientation, Primary assignment, Community Development Service and Passing Out.

4.3.2.2.1. Youth Orientation and Induction Programme (YOIP)
After mobilization and deployment to their states of national service, the corps members undergo a 3-week orientation in a paramilitary camp setting where virtues of discipline and resilience are inculcated under a command structure (Figure 4.1).
The YOIP from the perspective of the federal ministry of youth development (FMYD) points to the ‘whole person development’ framework (WPDF) that seeks to improve youths social, mental, emotional, interpersonal, professional, physical, financial, and environmental well-being of Nigerian youths (FMYD, 2012). Within this policy context, the objectives of the orientation programme as contained in the General Policy Guideline for NYSC Orientation Courses (NYSC, 2011b: 4) seeks to:
(1) Give Corps Members a better understanding of the objectives of the NYSC Scheme and enable them internalise its ideals;

(2) Acquaint members with their environment in their political, cultural, social and economic setting;

(3) Prepare Corps members for their particular roles in the Scheme;

(4) Equip them with practical social and leadership skills that will enable them meet the challenges of the service year ahead;

(5) Lay the foundation of the much envisaged Nigerian unity through the interaction of corps members from different political, cultural and social backgrounds in the camp;

(6) To inculcate discipline and raise the moral tone of corps members by subjecting them to military drills and educating them on topical nationalist issues.

As part of the orientation activities, youth corps members receive lectures from facilitators of different organizations including International Governmental Organizations (e.g. UNICEF, World Bank), Global Humanitarian Organizations (e.g. the Red Cross) and Nigerian Governmental Organizations (e.g. Economic and Financial Crimes Commission – EFCC) and multinationals (NYSC, 1999). FMYD (2014) highlights some of the most recent achievements of the NYSC in the development of youth capabilities through various partnership programmes.

The MDGs advocacy programme has trained and deployed 104,182 corps members as DKF’s. In 2013 alone, the NYSC (MDG) trained and deployed 13,551 corps members. While the WAP programme has trained 3,869 corps members, it has also, empowered 3060 to be WAP corps entrepreneurs. Further, the advocacy programme utilized corps MDGs advocates to carry out “My World” survey report under the auspices of the United Nations Millennium campaign Office to highlight key areas that would be addressed in the post-2015 sustainable development goals agenda.

FMYD (2014:10)

During the YOIP, skills acquisition and entrepreneurship development programmes, language seminars, socio-cultural and traditional lectures, development workshops, career mentoring programmes and religious activities are offered together with Man-O-War paramilitary training (NYSC, 2011). The expected outcomes of participating in these activities are to increase self-discipline and opportunity for ethnic interaction; reduce fear of the unknown, enhance knowledge of the country’s development agenda, and imbibe the culture of professionalism (NYSC, 1983, 2007, 2008).
4.3.2.2.2. **Primary Assignment**

At the end of the YOIP activities, corps members are deployed to their places of primary assignments. Place(s) of primary assignment (PPA) are spaces that youths and their capabilities can be deployed or posted in Nigeria’s political economy. Although attempts are made to deploy corps members capabilities to sectors relevant to their certified areas of specialization, national development needs very often override this consideration (NYSC, 1983a, 2012). Service in PPA typically last for approximately eleven (11) months.

4.3.2.2.3. **Community Development Service (CDS) programme**

The CDS programme of the NYSC scheme is aimed at harnessing the skills, creativity and innovativeness of Corps members (NYSC, 2014). As one of the cardinal programmes of the NYSC scheme, the CDS programme obliges the corps members to identify the needs of their host communities, and undertake at least one community development (CD) project that will be beneficial to their host community (NYSC, 2012, 2014). There are three types of CDS programme, and they include: (1) Year Round CDS\(^\text{14}\); (2) Individual CDS\(^\text{15}\) and; (3) Traditional CDS\(^\text{16}\) (NYSC, 2012). Through these types of CDS programmes, corps members are directly involved in community development of one form or another, including the construction of small bridges, primary health care centres, classroom blocks, market stalls, culverts etc. (NYSC, 2014). Akume et al (2012: 106) asserts that:

> The CDS requires that corps members use their acquired skills to provide services like education, health care delivery, rural infrastructural and community development, agriculture, science and technology, and enlightenment campaign for the benefit of their host community… As such, ensuring the success of the CDS imposes on the corps members to wear a spirit coated with dedication and enthusiasm irrespective of the challenges they might face in so far as they are not life threatening.

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\(^{14}\) Year Round CDS is the weekly compulsory CDS for all corps members. Some of the CDS groups in which NYSC corps members can be aligned to across the service year include: Groups (e.g. NYSC publicity, Dance and Drama, Sport Group, Medical CDS group, Mass Literacy Group, EFCC Group, MDGs Group) and Clubs (e.g. Road and Safety Club, Health Club, Drug Free Club, Anti HIV/AID club, Legal Aid club, Entertainment Band Club, Environmental Club) (NYSC Handbook, 1999; NYSC, 2012)

\(^{15}\) Individual CDS is usually a project organized and executed by an individual or group of corps members. Through this personal CDS projects, corps members identify some needs in the host communities; mobilise the people to pool money and materials to execute it (NYSC, 2012)

\(^{16}\) Traditional CDS involves host communities identifying which CDS project they will want corps members to assist them execute per time (NYSC, 2012)
Over the years, corps members have also carried out projects like sensitization on adolescent reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention, adult literacy campaign, extra-mural classes for students, road safety campaign etc. (NYSC, 2014). In recent times, the NYSC in collaboration with the Office of the Senior Special Assistant on Millennium Development Goals (OSSAP-MDGs) of the Presidency and other international partners (World Bank and the British Council) have embarked on training of young corps volunteers as Development Knowledge Facilitators (DKFs) (Eboh, 2010; Holmes et al, 2012). The role of the DKFs is to act through their CDS programmes as advocates of the MDGs and National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) (NYSC, 2007, 2008; FMYD, 2014). Other grassroots development programme in which corps members are heavily involved as a primary bridge between policy and people includes; war against poverty (WAP), Family and Community Life Reorientation Programme (FACOR) and the MDGs Advocacy Creation Programme (MACR) (NYSC, 2008).

4.3.2.2.4. Passing Out/Certification

This programme of the NYSC is usually the shortest and signifies that the corps member has been appraised and found to have adhered to the NYSC service bye-laws of 2011 (NYSC, 2011a) in the NYSC camp, place of primary assignment, and participated in CDS activities (NYSC, 1999, 2011a, 2011b). The reward for active participation is NYSC certification (NYSC, 1999, 2011b). This certification is a prerequisite for employment in the political economy of Nigeria. Section 11 and 12(1) of the NYSC decree of 1993 states that:

(1) The Directorate shall, on completion of a member of service corps unless such person is exempted under section 17 of this Decree, issue him with a Certificate of National Service which will contain such particulars as may be prescribed

(2) For the purposes of employment anywhere in the Federation and before employment, it shall be the duty of every prospective employer to demand and obtain from any person...

Consequently, the value of the NYSC certificate to Nigerian youths stands as a bridge between aspirations and gainful employment, and as a catalyst in easing the transition patterns towards adulthood for youths who desire to participate in Nigeria’s political economy (NYSC, 1993, 2004).
4.3.3. The Fourth National Development Plan (1981-1985) (4NDP)

At the start of the third decade of development, the 4NDP was designed to bring about real improvement in the living conditions of Nigerians (FRN, 1981). The main aims of the 4NDP were to:

1. increase the real income of the average citizen; 2. ensure more even distribution of income among individuals and socio-economic groups; 3. Reduce unemployment and under-employment; 4. Increase in the supply of manpower (5) Reduce the independence of the Nigerian economy on a narrow range of activities; (6) Enforce the ethos of even development; (7) Increase participation by citizen in the ownership and management of productive enterprises and; (8) Encourage greater self-reliance by ensuring optimum utilisation of human and natural resources.

FRN (1981: 37)

The 4NDP sought to ensure income equality, equitable resource redistribution, and a people-centred approach to development (FRN, 1981). Unlike previous development plans, the 4NDP is the first plan to explicitly highlight that children, women, disabled people and youths as vulnerable groups and victims of economic deprivations (ibid, 1981; FRN, 2010). Although reference to youth are captured in the NYSC policy (FRN, 1970, 1975, 1981), national manpower policy (NMP) (FRN, 1970, 1975) and ‘Youth Employment Policy’ FRN (1975: 284) in 2&3NDPs, the 4NDP is the first to have a specific section dedicated to ‘youth development’. Youth development in the context of the 4NDP entailed “the development of youths for the promotion and strengthening of national unity through inter-state youth activities and services for self-reliance” in such a way that youth are “gainfully and positively occupied at all times” (FRN, 1981:313).

4.3.4. Nigeria’s National development in a Neoliberal era (1986 –present)

The economic downturn in the wake of the global oil crises of the early 1980s (Olomola, 2011; Momah, 2013) signalled a need for structural economic reforms. To this end, the structural adjustment programme (SAP) was initiated in 1986 (World Bank, 1994). The economic deregulation and liberation policies of SAP aimed to stabilize the national currency; restructure and diversify the productive base of the economy; reduce overdependence on the oil sector; and foster the effective allocation of scarce resources through the removal of cumbersome administrative protocols that limited the role of the market economy in national development processes (Okoro, 2012; Sanusi, 2012). However, the programme was bedevilled by poor institutional frameworks, fiscal indiscipline and absence of concrete plans to foster its realization (Obadan, 2003; Osabuohien et al, 2012). Hence, the promise of developing a ‘self-reliant and productive economy’ through the institutionalization of the SAPs only created a mirage that led to
greater impoverishment of the citizenry (Adesina, 2000; Ya’u, 2000; Otite, 2011; Olomola, 2011). Akintola (2010) presents the paradox associated with the implementation of the SAPs when he notes that:

This dream proved farfetched because instead of improving, the economy took a turn for the worst. The result was drastic cut in educational budgets and social funding to universities, increased inflation, devaluation of the naira, and high rate of unemployment. The deepening crisis in education induced by SAP generated a serious contradiction. It reproduced forms of resistance by staff and students [youth] in schools, with staff struggling against their deteriorating welfare and working conditions, and the students (youth) embattled by their despicable accommodation facilities and learning environment.

The poor implementation of SAP, galvanized by economic contraction, inspired youth-led protests across the country as they sought alternative routes for economic survival and political expression (Osaghea, 1995; Abuduntu, 2010; Nwajiaku-Dahou, 2012). Increasing levels of youth unemployment and limited opportunities made the brain drain phenomenon a reality during the SAP era; and still continues till date (Awogbenle and Iwuamadi, 2010). Inconsistencies in the post-4NDP policy planning created a multiplicity of uncoordinated development strategies and policies including three-year rolling plans (1990-1993), undefined policies (1996-1998) NEEDS (2000-2007), Agenda’s (e.g. 7-Point Agenda and Transformation Agenda) and Visions – e.g. Vision 20:2020 (Oviawe, 2010; Arah, 2013; Osabuohien et al, 2012). This seeming lack of coherent development planning compounded Nigeria’s transformation into a neoliberal economic powerhouse.

### 4.3.5. Contemporary Positioning of Youth in Development in Nigeria

After more than three decades of unstable governance structures, Nigeria’s transition to democratic rule in 1999 offered an opportunity for broad debates on the role of youths (FMYD, 2007, 2009b). The 1999 constitution sets the legal framework for positioning youth in development in Nigeria by declaring that government actions shall adopt a ‘humane’ approach to development (FRN, 1999; section 17 (2c)). Section 17 (3f) of the constitution explicitly states that ‘children and young persons and the aged are protected against any exploitation whatsoever, and against moral and material neglect’. This informs the guiding philosophy of the first National Youth Policy (NYP) of 2001 which was underpinned by the ideals of:

1. Social Justice
2. Equality of Opportunity
(3) Transparency and Accountability
(4) Self-Reliance and Selflessness
(5) Hard-Word and Entrepreneurship
(6) Unity and Cooperation
(7) Respect for human Rights, and
(8) Democracy and Good Governance

(FRN, 2001:13)

The NYP is aimed at ensuring ‘…purposeful, focused, well-articulated and well directed effort aimed tapping the energy and resourcefulness of the youth and harnessing them for vitality, growth, and development…’ (FRN, 2001:1). In this context, the vision of the policy is considered as ‘one of positive future roles of youth in national socio-economic development’ that enables ‘empowered Nigerian youth to fully realize their potentialities’ (Ibid, 2001; 12). Although the first NYP was gender neutral, the second NYP of 2009 recognised the gendered approach to youths in development (FRN, 2009). Similarly, driven by the need to ‘foster a feeling of belonging and of involvement among the various categories of people of the federation... (Section 15(4) and 18(3))’, the government’s direct policy towards ensuring equal and adequate educational opportunities, offers young women and men, free compulsory and universal primary education; as well as free secondary, university and adult literacy education (also see chapter 3 of the NYP in FRN 2009). Regardless of these constitutional provisions, Ezekwesili (2014) suggests that the capacity development challenges of youth development in Nigeria include:

Non-existent critical knowledge base, inadequate manpower; skill gap between Nigeria and other nations; unemployment and underemployment; creation of disparate generations of Nigerian youth – those educated locally and those educated abroad, and; the brain drain Phenomenon…

In this regard, several scholars (NNGR, 2010; Oviawe, 2010; Ezekwesili, 2014; Olaiya, 2014) accentuate the need for Nigeria to reappraise its funnel approach to youth education as this creates bottlenecks and capability traps that limit the effective functioning of youth capabilities.

4.3.5.1. Youth Construction in Nigeria’s Constitution

Although the legal-civic conception of youth in many countries is often viewed as the age at which a person is given equal treatment under the law – often referred to as the “age of majority” (Olaiya, 2014), in the Nigerian constitution (section 29 (4a)), it is constructed as “Full age’ – which means the age of eighteen (18) years and above. In
this regard, “full age” refers to the legitimate voting age. However, the Nigerian constitution applies differential age limitations for persons who have the intention of running in elections to the house of assembly; governorship of a state, and the Presidency. Accordingly, an individual must be 30 years of age to qualify to run for the house of assembly; 35 years for governorship and 40 years for the presidency (FRN, 1999). These age differentials define the extent to which youths can be represented in the political space of Nigeria (Olaiya, 2014). NESG (2012) highlights other barriers that limit youth participation in the political space of Nigeria. These barriers include: (1) the challenge of defining youth as a district social category; (2) the idea that “youths are leaders of tomorrow”; (3) the idea of youth wings in Nigerian political parties; (4) pseudo participation; (5) youth snobbery – that explains the misinterpretation by youths that politics is a dirty game, and; (6) the faulty connotations in “youth empowerment” - that informs the need to interrogate and understand what it aims to achieve (NESG, 2012:54).

4.3.5.2. **Youth in Development: Programmes, Policies and Practice in Nigeria**

By the turn of the century, the single most important guiding policy of nations youth development strategy, encapsulated in the MDGs, was the need to halve poverty by 2015 (FMYD, 2007, 2009; Eboh, 2010). This led to the initiation of various poverty reductions policy initiatives in many countries including Nigeria. One of such poverty reduction initiative in Nigeria was the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) that sought to:

- Provide jobs for 200,000 unemployed people; create a credit delivery system from which farmers would have access to credit facilities; increase the adult literacy rate from 51% to 70% by year 2003; shoot up the health care delivery system from its present 40% to 70% by the year 2003; increase the immunization of children from 40% to 100%; raise the rural water supply from the present 30% to 60% and do the same for rural electrification; embark on training and settlement of at least 60% of tertiary institution graduates; and develop simple processes and small-scale industries.

(Obadan, 2001; Omotola, 2008)

However, the implementation of this initiative was hampered by financial mismanagement, inadequate fiscal policy framework, and no well-defined time frame for meeting the job creation target (Omotola, 2008; Oshewolo, 2010, 2011). To address these shortcomings and ensure effective targeting of development policies, the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) was initiated (Oshewolo, 2011; Rahila and Abbass, 2012) with the aim of promoting self-employment and economic empowerment
The macroeconomic framework of NAPEP focused on the utilization of youth capabilities for rural infrastructural development, social welfare service provisions, and community policing (Omotola, 2008). To this end, a subsidiary initiative known as the Youth Employment Scheme (YES) was inaugurated as a dedicated strategy to address youth capacity acquisition, mandatory industrial attachment, productivity improvement, credit delivery, technology development and enterprise promotion (FMYD, 2008a).

The policy framework of the National Economic Development Strategy (NEEDS) (2003-2007) and its extensions (State Economic Development Strategy – SEEDS, and Local Economic Development Strategy – LEEDS) focused on human capital investments in the areas of education, vocational training, and entrepreneurial skill development. This was informed by the realisation that empowering people, particularly youths, is the surest way to guarantee Nigeria’s future prosperity (FRN, 2004, 2010). Youths were socially constructed in the NEEDS framework as ‘risks’, ‘at-risk’ and ‘a vulnerable group’, (FRN, 2004). Consequently, the NEEDS target for youth capability development (FRN, 2004) is to:

- Create about 7 million jobs by 2007
- Update and restructure curricula to meet the demands of the national economy
- Mainstream science and technology, especially information and communication technology
- Expand opportunities for vocational training and entrepreneurial development.
- Provide facilities for sports and recreation (public sports facilities and parks).
- Promote the arts and culture
- Wage a sustained campaign against drug use and abuse, cultism, prostitution, and trafficking of women
- Promote targeted youth employment to deal with the short-run consequences of the reform process.
- Increase access of women and youths to credit under existing arrangements.
- Increase opportunities for Nigerian youth, especially in the choice of profession, through youth exchange programmes and other avenues that expose them to international best practices.
- Eliminate factors that promote ethnic, religious, and social divides among Nigerian youths
Just like plans and policies before NEEDS, budgetary allocation towards its actualisation still hampers the realisation of the goals. For instance, between 2004 and 2009, only 7% of the budgetary allocation went to education (Sanusi, 2012). Another problem with policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria is the inflexibility of their designs, which does not take into cognisance current political, economic and demographic realities. Although one of the main objectives of NEEDS was the creation of millions of jobs, youth unemployment has since risen from 11% in 2004 to 37.7% in 2013 (MDGs Report, 2013). Similarly, the shortcoming of NEEDS in the provision of adequate access to tertiary education hampers the development of highly skilled youth capacity. Sanusi (2012:5) notes that:

...data from the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) showed that of the 1,046,940 applications into Nigerian Universities in 2003/2004, only 107,860 (amounting to 10.3%) were successful. In 2004/2005, out of 838,051, only 122,496 (14.6%) were admitted. In 2005/2006, 2006/2007 and 2007/2008, only 8.4%, 12.9% and 4.6% respectively of total applicants were successful.

This implies that at least 700,000 youths on average are denied access to tertiary education every year in Nigeria. A major factor in the creation of this reality is the limited absorptive capacities of the available tertiary institutions (129 universities) which do not match the number of qualified applicants (OGB, 2013; Ezekwesili, 2014). Consequently, a quota system of admission is adopted to match available infrastructure and human capacity (Omebe and Omebe, 2014). Aside numerical limitations of the universities, infrastructural decay has hampered the quality of teaching and learning that is offered (OGB, 2013). This has resulted in the production of graduates, whose skills mismatch the labour market needs, in driving the competitive advantage in a globalised market economy (British Council, 2014; WEF, 2014b). Despite these shortcomings, Nigeria policy planners are constantly striving for new strategies of engaging the Nigeria youths in the development agenda of the nation. One of such strategy was the creation of the Federal Ministry of Youth Development (FMYD) in 2007. The ministry is directly responsible for developing the Nigerian Youth Development Index (NYDI) and engaging youths in the realisation of the national development agenda (FMYD, 2009; FRN, 2009). To this end, the FMYD notes that:

Youth are [seen as] one of the greatest assets that any nation can have. Not only are they legitimately regarded as the future leaders, they are potentially and actually the greatest investment for a country’s development. Young women and men are, in particular, recognized as a vital resource whose future prospects are inextricably tied to that of their country. They are the valued
possession of any nation or region. Without them there can be no future. They are the centre of reconstruction and development. They serve as a good measure of the extent to which a country can reproduce as well as sustain itself. The extent of their vitality, responsible conduct, and roles in society is positively correlated with the development of their country. (FRN, 2009:2)

Strengthened by this positive policy construction of youth is the National focus on youth development (FMYD, 2013b). In this Regard, FMYD (2009:8) opines that:

Youth development can be defined as … the process in which all youth are supported, encouraged and given opportunities to be involved in realizing their economic, political and social aspiration, dreams, rights etc… it is a process that enables them build skills and competencies that allow them to function and contribute in their daily lives… youth development is therefore a combination of all the people, places, supports, opportunities and services that young people need to be happy, healthy and successful.

However, after a critical deconstruction of this assertion, it is evident that although Nigeria ‘recognizes’ the importance of youth assets in nation building processes, the question of youth ‘representation’ and contributions seems to be postponed to the future. This inherently undermines their creative power for addressing ‘present’ national development challenges (NESG, 2012). The downside of such omission would be the creation of a pool of skilled; well trained, and highly motivated delinquents (Bloom et al., 2010). To forestall such complications, the Vision 20:2020 programmes were initiated to amongst other goals:

- Create decent jobs in sufficient quantities to address the protracted problem of unemployment, and reduce poverty
- Lay the foundation for a robust and inclusive growth of the Nigerian economy; and
- Improve on a sustainable basis, the well-being of all classes of Nigerians regardless of their personal circumstances and location.

(FMYD, 2013b)

Other embedded youth development programmes include:

1. YouWIN (Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria) – this is a collaborative initiative involving the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology and the Ministry of Youth Development, supported by bilateral donors and private sector organizations (NSRP, 2014). Launched in 2011, YouWIN supports young entrepreneurs to develop business ideas or expand existing business that will lead to job creation (YouWIN, 2013).
The target of this programme is to generate 80,000 to 110,000 new jobs through grants of between N1 million and N10 million. YouWIN as a programme of youth development seeks to create a multiplier effect of private entrepreneurship wherein youths become job creators themselves (FRN, 2013a).

(2) The Community Service, Women and Youth Employment Scheme (CSWYE) – was launched in 2012 in order to create employment opportunities for 185,000 women and youths through labour intensive public work. It represents one of the first policy initiatives to emanate from the dividends of the Subsidy Reinvestment Programme (SURE-P) of savings accruing to the government from the removal of petroleum subsidy (FRN, 2013). It is split into two main schemes: the Community Service Scheme (CSS) and the Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS).

(3) The Youth Employment in Agriculture Programme (YEAP) – is expected to create job for 740,000 young commercial farmers and entrepreneurs.

(4) The National Enterprise Development Programme (NEPEP) – developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, aims to create 3.5 million direct jobs and 5 million indirect jobs from 2013 to 2015.

(5) The Youth Employment and Social Support Operation (YESSO) which was launched in 2013, applies a social safety net approach to youth unemployment (NSRP, 2014). The overarching aim of YESSO is to strengthen existing social safety net system, reduce vulnerability of poor youths, and promote human capital development of poor households (World Bank, 2013b; NSRP, 2014).

In summarizing the successes of these development programmes, FMF (2014:5) opines that:

In the agriculture sector, support structures and inputs in 10 Northern states enabled 250,000 farmers and youth to engage in dry season farming. In manufacturing sector, the Onne Oil and Gas Free Zone created an estimated 30,000 direct and indirect jobs. While the YouWIN programme has supported young entrepreneurs to create over 18,000 jobs, and the SURE-P CSS has created 120,000 job opportunities across Nigeria.

Although the focus of these programmes in terms of job creation was in the agricultural sector and medium scale enterprise, the need to diversify Nigeria’s economy beyond these sectors was given a critical boost by evidence from the rebasing of the country’s GDP, which showed that the share of the service sector for instance, to the country’s GDP in nominal terms is approximately 50% (NBS, 2014). This led to an increasing realisation of the need to develop and expand existing intellectual capacity to strengthen
the human capital base of the country. To this end, since 2013, over N76.7 Billion have been allocated through the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) to the expansion and delivery of qualitative education in Nigeria (FRN, 2013). Such investment in activities and infrastructure that enhances (youth) capacities, has positioned Nigeria on the path to economic diversification by empowering the human capital engine of national growth and development (NESG, 2014). However, the current reality of development in Nigeria, in comparison to those of other developing countries remains a paradox when viewed within the context of indicators like HDI and MPI (Table 4.2).

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<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>65.08</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>53.32</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>50.56</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>52.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FRN (2013a); HDR (2014)

Although there has been a dramatic increase in the budgetary allocation to human capital development between 2012 and 2015 (Table 4.3), a detailed evaluation reveals that education and health are the greatest benefactor of this increase. Other aspect of human capital development including youth development has seemingly declined. This is apparently due to the policy emphasis on education as a means of empowering youths (both women and men alike) for development. Together with youth budgeting efforts (Table 4.3), the FMYD (2009) reveals that from all Federal Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDA’s), the Nigerian government spend over N2 billion in three core areas (Education and Participation, Hunger and Poverty Eradication, and Conflict Resolution).
Despite these efforts, the FMYD (2009) contends that total investments in youth development by States in Nigeria remain unimpressive. This continues to feed the viscous cycle of joblessness, criminality, militancy, youth restiveness that further disconnects from mainstream society (Ibid, 2009: 8).

4.3.5.2.1. **Nigerian Youth Development Index**

Nigeria is the first African country, and the fourth world nation to develop a national youth development index (FMYD, 2008b; FRN, 2010). The Nigerian youth development index (NYDI) is aimed at: (1) providing measures for understanding the wellbeing of the Nigerian youth; (2) enabling the assessment of existing status and needs of the Nigerian youth; (3) generating empirical date to inform policy decisions and guide their implementation, and (4) providing evidence based advocacy tool on behalf of the youth (FMYD, 2008b:x). The NYDI covers four main domains – access, quality of life, value system and perception – and 14 dimensions (FMYD, 2008b).
The average value of the NYDI is 0.34 (FMYD, 2008b), suggesting that overall development index of the Nigerian youth is in the low category (Table 4.4). Only the media influence dimension with a value of 0.45 is average. This can be attributed to the improved access to internet facilities. Contrastingly, in the Global Youth Development Index (GYDI) (Commonwealth, 2013:5) Nigeria’s youth development is classed under medium or average with an average value of 0.41. However, comparatively, Nigeria is ranked 44th from 54 Commonwealth countries and 140th from 170 countries of the world categorized using the GYDI (Commonwealth, 2013). It can therefore be concluded that Nigeria is at best, average ranking in supporting young people in the actualisation of their full potentials, capabilities and general wellbeing.
4.4. Conclusion

This chapter examined the socio-historical construction and policy document narrative of youth in development in Nigeria. It reveals that in Nigeria’s colonial past, youths assumed roles of democratic activists of postcolonial change in which they challenged the oppressive ideologies of colonialism. As founders of most of the first political parties in Nigeria, youth’s social movements especially in pre-independence struggle, played critical roles in shaping party formation that set the scenery for Nigeria’s first republic (1960-1966). However with the ‘liberty’ that came with independence, Nigerians in general and youths in particular became entangled in an identity crisis. The aftermath of this quagmire was the reproduction and perpetuation of the same colonial stereotypes, otherings, and chauvinistic practices. The only difference is that Nigerians became the architects of repression in which the state created dichotomies between religions and ethnicities and within sub-nationalities. The height of this impasse and undercurrents of irreconcilable difference amongst Nigerians was the civil war that further created a problematic for youth constructions in Nigeria’s political economy, as they were metaphorically relegated from positions of political party leaderships, to spaces of violence and war where they became victims of propaganda. With the creation of the NYSC, there was a renewed hope for repositioning the Nigerian youth as agents of development. By the third decade of Nigeria’s development and neo-liberal conformity, youths once again were situated in peripheral and vulnerable positions in the political economy of the country. The concomitant effect of this alienation was the exacerbation of youth poverty, unemployment, militarism and ethnic extremism. This has continued till present, in different shape and shades. However, since the turn of the century, the focus has shifted to youth development geared toward ensuring greater inclusiveness, empowerment, and effective participation in the development of Nigeria. Although the implementation of recent youth development strategies (e.g. YES, YOUWIN, CSS, GIS etc.) and the establishment of a federal ministry dedicated to youths have improved the socio-economic realities of youth, there is still great room for improvement especially with regards to political representation.
Chapter 5: Research Design, Methodology and Methods

5.1. Introduction

In contemporary social methods of research associated with human development (Desai and Potter, 2006; Laws et al, 2013) and youths (Best, 2007; Delgado, 2006: Heath et al, 2009), it is evident that the thematic focus has either sought to uncover the relationship between individual and society or understand the interactions between human actions and social structure (Giddens, 1991; Elliot, 2009). This chapter begins by acknowledging the ‘impossibility’ of proceeding without ‘commitments’ that are indicative of the researcher’s position in the ‘philosophy of social science’ (Kurki and Wight, 2010). The reflexive choices of the researcher’s philosophical stance should reflect a critical understanding of the nature or theory of being and reality (ontology); the theory of knowledge (epistemology), the roles and values in research (axiology), the language of research (rhetoric), and the investigative methodology (Creswell, 2009, 2013; Lincoln et al, 2011). Several authors (e.g. Jensen, 2011; Nayar, 2014) have reiterated the need for contemporary youth research to utilize methods which can critically challenge humanistic doctrines of dominance that promote exclusion, marginality, difference and ‘othering’ of young people. Within this context, the overall research strategy of this study is underpinned by a qualitative dominant mixed methods approach (Qual-MMR) (Johnson et al 2007; Creswell, 2013). The Qual-MMR is a type of research in which one relies more on a qualitative, constructivist-poststructuralist-critical view of the research process, while concurrently recognizing that the addition of quantitative data and approaches will likely benefit the overall project analysis (Johnson et al., 2007). This study draws on the ‘instrumental case study’ approach (Stake, 2005; Tucker, 2012) that typically plays a supportive role in facilitating the understanding of secondary concerns, be it theoretical debates or social problems. The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) is applied as an instrumental case in this study, to critically deconstruct the theoretical debates of mainstream development discourse in order to understand the social-economic challenges associated with the Nigerian youth. In addition, this chapter further discusses how narrative analysis was employed in interpreting nuanced perspectives (by corps members and NYSC officials) about how youths are constructed and positioned in development through the evaluation of the NYSC’s activities (orientation, industrial placement, community development service Programmes and certification) and deployment strategy.
5.2. Research Philosophy

Research philosophies are often shaped by the researchers’ ontological and epistemological positions (Lincoln et al., 2011; Creswell, 2013). Social constructivism and post-structuralism form the respective ontology and epistemology of this research.

5.2.1. Ontology: Social Constructionism

In line with the constructivist argument that ‘knowledge’ is beyond ‘universal laws’ (Heron and Reason, 1997; Fox, 2001; Miller and Brewer, 2003), this research emphasizes that youth ‘do not construct interpretations of their realities in isolation, but against shared understandings, practices, languages and narrative discourses (Crotty, 1998; Crewell; 2009). Contrary to positivist ‘naïve realism’ and the ‘probabilistic realism’ of postpositivist philosophies, social constructionist ontology advocates for a critical understanding of how the subjective realities of research participants captures their own narrative interpretations of their social world (Miller and Brewer, 2003; Liu and Matthews, 2005; Creswell, 2013). Several youth researchers (e.g. Morch, 2005; Kehily, 2013) have demonstrated that social constructivist ontology is not just a critical analytic tool for understanding the lived experiences of young people, but is also an instrumental philosophical lens in exploring fragmented choice biographies in youth transition pathways (Furlong, 2006). Morch (2005) asserts that social constructivism help unravel the vertical relations between individual and society, as well as the horizontal biographical narrative of life course between childhood and adulthood in which youth is at the epicentre. In this regard, social constructivism will help provide an understanding of constructions, deconstructions, and reconstructions (Demmitt, 1999; Morch, 2005; Schwandt, 2007) of the Nigerian youth in mainstream development discourse. Arguably, the choice of a social constructivist ontology in this research would create new narrative discourses for understanding how ‘youth are positioned in development’ within the context of the NYSC while shifting the Nigerian youth development agenda beyond conceptual locks that impede youth capability development in a challenging socio-economic and geo-political environment.

5.2.2. Epistemology: Poststructuralism

The underpinning epistemology of this research is the poststructuralist philosophy (Culler, 1982; Derrida 1981, 1988; Elliott, 2009). Poststructuralism challenges hegemonic ideologies in mainstream development discourses that has taken-for-granted ‘the emergence of new forms of struggles’ that explain the positions of youth in development (Dillon, 2000; Gabriel, 2013). Poststructuralist’s reject grand theorising as
well as ‘totalising discourses’ that claim to construct coherent patterns and truths by emphasizing the importance of youth representation (France, 2007). Poststructuralism, in challenging patriarchal social order, looks beyond pure and unified voice of people in social spaces, by unravelling deeper insights based on ‘difference’, and how subjects are positioned within the field of practice (Gabriel, 2013). While poststructuralist approaches to youth research have been critiqued for been too ‘radical’ in deconstructing objective truths (Dillion, 2000) and for its tendency to overemphasize youth agency over structure (France, 2007, 2009), its applicability in youth studies is still widespread (Chisholm et al, 2011; Gabriel, 2013; Wood and Hine, 2013). The centrality of poststructuralism in this study is to present experiential accounts of signifiers (youth corps members and NYSC officials) that reinforce alternatives to mainstream development theories through multiple and biographical narratives that shape how Nigerian youths interpret their own identity and position within the context of national development.

5.3. **Research Design: Mixed Methods**

The overarching research design of this study is informed by a mixed methods approach (Johnson et al, 2007; Tashakkori and Teddie, 2008; Doyle et al, 2009; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011; Creswell, 2014). The mixed method approach can be viewed as a product of ‘paradigm dialogues’ broadly referred to as the ‘third methodological movement’ or the ‘pragmatic paradigm’ (e.g. Denzin, 2008; Teddie and Tashakkori, 2010). Unlike ‘qualitative-quantitative paradigm’ divide, this third research paradigm is pragmatically driven because the ‘research problems and questions that need answers’ precedes the choice of methods (Punch, 2014). Although ‘pragmatic paradigm’ is envisaged by some scholars (e.g. Teddie and Tashakkori, 2010) to provide an underlying philosophical framework for a multiphase mixed methods research (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011), other scholars (e.g. Mertens, 2010) note that MMR also informs transformative mixed methods designs. Mertens (2010) opines that in adopting a ‘multiphase’ mixed methods design within a pragmatic paradigm, the choice of research design should be shaped by the purpose of the research. Within this context, the pragmatic paradigm is considered appropriate for this study because the objectives utilises both qualitative narratives and quantitative data. Broadly, this research adopts a qualitative dominant mixed methods approach (Johnson et al, 2007; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). The quantitative data is used to mainstream qualitative findings from
interviews and focus group discussion (FGD) to reinforce youth voices in the development discourse.

The choice of a qualitative dominant mixed method approach for this study is informed by a number of factors. First, qualitative modes of academic inquiry is often viewed as a pathways to social justice (Clark and Scheurich, 2008; Denzin, 2009a). Hence, qualitative engagement is required to capture societal representation and perspective of youths who are actively engaged in community programmes under varying socio-economic and political realities. Secondly, conventional approaches to youth research are often blurred by resurgent positivism and government imposition of experimental designs (Lather, 2004, 2006; Denzin, 2009b) that are too often purely quantitative in the Nigerian context. This meant that the realities and experiences of young Nigerians who had participated in the NYSC programme have either been objectified or completely ignored.

5.4. Methodology: A Case Study Approach
A case study is a strategy of social inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, an event, a process or an activity (Creswell, 2009; Flyvbjerg, 2011). Yin (2014) contends that the case study approach is appropriate when “how” or “why” questions are posed, and the investigator has little control over events that focuses on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context. Case studies are relevant when the research either addresses a descriptive question along the lines of “what is happening or has happened” or an exploratory question of “how and why did something happen” (Schwandt, 2009; Yin, 2014). This research adopts the NYSC as the case of study to evaluate the extent (i.e. how and why) to which youth capabilities are enhanced through this agency for the national development of Nigeria. The researcher through this single case study seeks to explore the NYSC:

- Programme.
- Activities i.e. orientation, industrial placement, community development service and certification.
- The process of capability development through these activities and the deployment strategy.
- The participant perspectives.
The typology of case study designs includes the intrinsic case – study of one particular instance of the phenomenon; the instrumental case – is studied because it facilitates the understanding of something else – whether it be a theoretical debate or a social problem and collective; and the collective case – which studies several instances of the same phenomenon to identify common characteristics (Stake, 2005; Tucker, 2012). Within this context, the single case study in this research fits the narrative of an instrumental case study design as it challenges the theoretical gaps in mainstream development literature with the aim of gaining an understanding of the socio-economic and political ‘phenomenon’ of youths (Mertens, 2010; Tucker, 2012; Cullen and Bradford, 2012) in Nigeria. The NYSC case analysis would ensure a nuanced exploration of lived experiences of the youth participants to produce what is sometimes described as ‘thick descriptions’, through narratives and in-depth perspectives that provides a platform to test hegemonic ideologies and deficit theoretical perspectives, geared towards evaluating the utilization of youth capabilities both as means and ends of national development in Nigeria.

5.5. Study Area

This study was conducted in the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) geographically located between latitudes 10° 00’ N and 8° 00’ E. The country is bounded to the west by the Republic of Benin, to the east by Cameroun, to the north by Niger Republic and Chad, and to the south by the Atlantic Ocean. With a total area of 923,768 km², Nigeria stands as the 32nd largest country in the world (AfDB, 2013a; AfDB, 2013b). The 2006 Population and Housing Census reported Nigeria’s population to be 140,431,790 (NDHS, 2013). With average growth rate of 3.2 percent (NBS, 2010a; NESG, 2012), and current estimated population of 174 million people (PRB, 2013), Nigeria is the 7th most populous country in the world and the largest single black nation (Hagher, 2011; Okonjo-Iweala, 2012, NDHS, 2013). Demographic statistics reveal that 70 percent of Nigeria population are under the age of 30 years (Awogbenle and Iwuamadi, 2010; NESG, 2012; WEF, 2014a). It is projected that by 2050 Nigeria will be one of the largest suppliers of youth workforce globally (NESG, 2012). This represents a major rationale for choosing Nigeria as the study area of this research. Nigeria is home to over 250 ethno-linguistic groups, the most populous being Hausa and Fulani – 29%, Yoruba – 21%, and Igbo or Ibo – 18% (FRN, 2010; The Nigerian Report, 2013). Christianity and Muslim religions dominate the religious landscape of Nigeria. During the last decade, the World Bank (2013a) Report estimates that Nigeria’s annual GDP growth
has been over 7%. Nigeria now stands as Africa’s largest economy in terms of GDP. The rebased GDP figures suggest that with approximately 509.9 billion U.S. dollars, Nigeria has now surpassed South Africa with a 2013 rebased figure of 370 billion U.S. dollars (AfDB, 2013; NBS, 2014). Despite the robustness of the Nigerian economy, challenges of youth unemployment and poverty continue to overlook the country’s youth demography (NNGR, 2010; Page, 2012; AfDB, 2013a; Cunha-Duarte et al. 2013). Accompanying factors to the challenges affecting Nigerian youth development include; high population growth with approximate 1.8 million entrants into the labour market annually; low literacy rates due to high drop rates; poor investment climate, and; lack of targeted investment in key youth dominated sectors (NBS, 2010a, 2011a; AfDB, 2013a; MDGs Nigeria, 2013)

5.5.1. Study Sites

In choosing the study sites for this research, the researchers’ reflexive knowledge of the context was important. In a country of 36 states and a Federal Capital Territory (Abuja), 6 geopolitical zones17 and 774 local government areas (Alapiki, 2005; MDG Nigeria Report, 2010), it is near impossible to conduct a research of absolute national coverage considering the financial cost, logistics and time constraint. As a result, Lagos and Abuja representing the commercial and political administrative capitals respectively were chosen as the investigative sites for data collection (Diagram 4.1). Also, the NYSC national directorate headquarters is located in Abuja and as one of the study sites it was logistically easy to gain access to key informants (NYSC officials) on national youth development and deployment strategy. The study sites are also prime destinations of youths involved in inter-state migration in search of jobs (NBS, 2012: 53). The GDP per capital of Lagos and Abuja are amongst the highest in the country (NHDR, 2009). Arguably, Lagos and Abuja provide adequate opportunity structures for youths (NHDR, 2009) at the end of the service year. Hence, aside their current engagement in the NYSC programme, youth corps members deployed in these states potentially have a feel of what opportunities or lack of , awaits them after service.

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17 From a geo-political perspective, Nigeria’s 36 states and the federal capital territory (FCT) are further sub-grouped by the Nigerian government as geopolitical zones that include: South East, South-South, South West, North Central, North East and North West (See Appendix C: Table A).
5.5.2. Study Sample

Officials of the NYSC institution and the youth participants in the 2013/14 service year formed the sampling frame of this study. A multistage sampling technique was then used to obtain the study sample through snowballing and simple random sampling techniques (Mertens, 2009). The aim of the research was subsequently explained to each participant to obtain informed consent. A total of 132 persons voluntarily participated in the research. Thirty four (34) participants provided qualitative information through semi-structured interview (SSI) and focus group discussion (FGD) and 98 participants provided quantitative data through structured qualities (SQ). As a youth research, data collection was skewed towards the youth stakeholder group. Overall, 93% (123) of the participants were youth respondents while 7% (9) were NYSC official.

5.5.3. Methods of Data Collection

A range of techniques were used in data collection, and can broadly be classified into qualitative and quantitative methods. Detailed methodological approaches used in this study are shown in Table 5.1.
Table 5.1: Mixed Methods Approach Data Showing the Sample Size of the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mixed Methods</th>
<th>Respondent Group</th>
<th>No of Methods</th>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Study Site</th>
<th>Sample Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qual Youth Respondents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>SSI</td>
<td>Lagos</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>FGD</td>
<td>Abuja</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Respondent Total (Qual)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYSC Officials</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>SSI</td>
<td>Abuja</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYSC Official respondent Total (Qual)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qual Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quant Youth Respondents</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>SQ</td>
<td>Lagos</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Abuja</td>
<td>98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quant Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Youth Respondents (Qual+Quant)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>123</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Research Participants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>132</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1= Semi-Structured Interviews (SSIs); 2= Focus Group Discussion (FGD); 3: Structured Questionnaires (SQ)

Source: Fieldwork 2013

5.5.4. Qualitative Methods
Published government documents and policy reports, SSIs, and FGDs represent the qualitative method of data collection in this study. The NYSC Handbook, NYSC Bye-Laws; NYSC Decree No 51; NYSC ACT N84; Nigeria Vision 20:2020, Transformational Agenda, National Youth Policy documents and related youth policy documents were evaluated as part of the document analysis in this research. The importance of document analysis in youth research provides areas of priority, kinds of knowledge territories, and paradigm shifts in policy/practice contexts (Barker and Alldred, 2012). Reviewing policy documents and contextual literature will initiate a point of ontological critique that enable the youth researcher to question constructs of how people see the position of youth in the world (Bowen, 2009; Barker and Alldred, 2012) and how youths themselves construct their own identity in national development discourse in Nigeria. This reinforces analytic frameworks by providing a contextual understanding of how the historical realities of youths are constructed while explaining
contemporary realities, government policy priorities, agendas, and youth constructs (Mogalakwe, 2006; Barker and Alldred, 2012).

To obtain narrative perspectives, data was collected through instruments of SSIs and FGD (Appendix B) from two stakeholder groups—youths and the NYSC officials (Table 5.1). Narratives from the youth stakeholder group were aimed at providing individual biographic accounts (SSIs) and collective voices (FGD). Similarly, SSIs with the NYSC stakeholder group aimed to provide a nuanced policy perspective and activities of the scheme, to corroborate findings from document analysis and provide deeper insights into the institutional responsibilities of the scheme towards youth development in the context of Nigeria’s national development. A detailed demographic profile of all youth respondents who voluntarily participated in the SSI’s and FGD is provided in Appendix C: Table B.

5.5.4.1. Criteria of Inclusion of Key Informants

Key informants in the context of this study are NYSC officials who had, or are holding management positions at the time of data collection. Informants needed to have had work experience of at least 4 years with the NYSC and have voluntarily giving formal consent to participate in the study. Interviews with key informants were conducted during working hours within the NYSC office spaces and typically lasted an hour. In line with the ethics of anonymity and confidentiality of respondents, the names and ranks of the key informants are not included in this research. However, their departments, dates of interview and researchers allotted codes are shown in Table 5.2. The key informants for this study were drawn from 82% of the NYSC departments (i.e. 9 out of 11 departments).
Table 5.2: Interview Matrix for Key Informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NYSC Officials (NY)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY1</td>
<td>Information Communication and Technology (ICT)</td>
<td>3/06/2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY2</td>
<td>Human Resource (HR)</td>
<td>3/06/2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY3</td>
<td>Community Development Service (CDS)</td>
<td>10/06/2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY4</td>
<td>CDS</td>
<td>12/06/2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY5</td>
<td>Corp Welfare and Inspectorate</td>
<td>12/06/2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY6</td>
<td>Venture Management</td>
<td>17/06/2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY7</td>
<td>Planning Research and Statistic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY8</td>
<td>Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurial Development (SAED)</td>
<td>19/06/2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY9</td>
<td>Finance and Accounts</td>
<td>22/06/2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s Fieldwork 2013

5.5.4.2. Criteria of Inclusion of Youth Respondents

A Nigerian youth according to the National Youth Policy Document of Nigeria is a person who is between 18-35 years of age (FMYD, 2009). However, for the purpose of validity and reliability of data, the inclusion criteria and choice of youth respondents for this study were based on the construct of youth guided by NYSC Decree No. 51, 1993; section 2, sub-section (1) and (2) and NYSC ACT 2004 section 2, sub-section (1) and (2) (NYSC, 1999: 2004). Another criterion for youth inclusion in this study was affiliation to community development service (CDS) programmes such as the millennium development goals (MDGs) that is geared towards national development (NYSC, 2007, 2008). The matrix of anonymized youth respondent group that participated in the SSI and FGD are shown in Table 5.3. Further information on the demographic profile of all youth respondents, are detailed in Appendix C: Table B and Table C.
5.5.5. Quantitative Methods

Structured questionnaires (SQs) were used to obtain data for quantitative analysis (Delgado, 2006; Heath et al, 2009; Barker and Alldred, 2012). In this study, SQs were only administered to youth participants and were handed to respondents in person – while asking them to complete them by hand and return to the researcher. Although 100 SQs were administered, only 98 were returned and used in this study after checking for errors and inconsistencies. Captured data is analysed using simple descriptive statistics. A detailed demographic profile of all youth respondents who voluntarily participated in completing the SQs is provided in Appendix C: Table C.
5.6. Methodological Challenges and Limitations

The integrity of applying government generated quantitative data in the analysis of social phenomenon in Nigeria has long been recognized (Adele, 2009; Soludo, 2012). Several authors (e.g. Potts, 2012; Arouri et al, 2014) contend that most of the time some of these data sources and statistics may be highly suspect and ‘downright wrong’ because of their political connotations. While addressing reliance on quantitative statistics in understanding social problems in Nigeria, Soludo (2012) notes that:

… without timely and reliable data on social and economic conditions of a society, much of public policy becomes an exercise of shadow-boxing… and policy analysis becomes a case of garbage in, garbage out.

The above argument highlights one of the major limitations as to why this research opted for adapting a mixed method approach that utilized both qualitative field data sources (e.g. SSI’s and FGD) and Quantitative field survey data from structured questionnaires. Again, given that the NYSC is a governmental institution, conflict of interest led to prolonged ethical approval process (see Appendix A: a; Appendix A:c). The time frame for research approval from the NYSC to carry-out this study was approximately 9months. This also influenced the choice of a case study approach, as the initial choice for this study was ethnography.

Another challenge that limited this research is the bureaucratic protocols of the NYSC organization. Despite the fact that the NYSC had granted access to carry-out this study, on getting to the field, an extra letter of introduction (see Appendix A:d) needed to be given to the researcher to ensure unrestrained access and total cooperation of all key informants and youth respondents. Therefore based on contextual factors (e.g. time and reliability of data sources), and realities on field which range from bureaucratic protocols in obtaining ethical approvals from the NYSC in Nigeria, this choice of a mixed-method approach sought to ensure reliability and validity of data within the field. Overall, despite these challenges and limitations, all research ethical and field-related actions as well as rationale for methodological choices were taken to ensure the validity of the research.

18 The NYSC’s scepticism concerning the conflict of interest, was down to the fact that this research was not government sponsored and research on the NYSC is highly politicised.
5.7. **Methods of Data Analysis**

Although Narayan-Parker (2002, 2005) empowerment model is adapted to provide an understanding of the position of youth in Nigeria’s development context, the Constructivist Narrative Analytic (CNA) lens (Esin et al., 2014) underpins the method of data analysis in this study.

5.7.1. **Constructivist Narrative Analysis: Life Course Perspective**

In youth research, narrative analytic frameworks are widely accepted tools for understanding social constructions of young people’s lives in different contexts (Morch, 2005; Chisholm et al, 2011). Through social constructivist ontological frameworks, narrative analyses have helped uncover effects and positioning of youth within societal processes and structures (Esin et al, 2014). In this regard, the narrative constructivist’s analysis facilitates the deconstruction of power relations in order to challenge dominant ideologies that continue to undermine the agency of young people (WYR, 2003; Morch, 2005). Narrative constructions can be obtained either through the research process, the interview context or the historical and cultural context (Esin et al., 2014). Morch (2005) provides a diagrammatic representation of how a narrative analysis can be utilized within the context of youth research and practice (Figure 5.2).

![Figure 5.2: Constructivist Research Perspectives for a Mixed Methods Youth Research](source: Morch (2005:53))
From the reflexive positions of the researcher as a youth and an ex-corps member, the social constructive lens of this study allows for the express identification of how Nigerian youth are constructed and positioned in society in general and in research in particular. Through biographical narratives and a life-course perspective a social constructivist ontological stance provided a nuanced account of how youth envision their social reality and conditions within the context of their NYSC experience. The trajectory or transition pathways from NYSC orientation through deployment to places of primary assignment reinforces how the Nigerian youth and NYSC officials envision the prospect of ‘actualizing’ or ‘effectively utilizing youth capabilities’ for Nigeria’s national development.

5.7.2. A ‘WorkAble’ Youth Capability Analytic framework for Nigeria

To effectively deploy Nigerian youth capabilities in national development, it is imperative to understand how they are positioned in the NYSC policy context. In this context, this study adapts Narayan-Parker (2002, 2005) the empowerment model, that is informed by Sen (1999, 2004), and the ‘workAble capabilities’ approach (Chiappero-Martinetti and Sabadash, 2014) that advocates for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth of young people’s opportunities. Unlike Nussbaum capability approach – where she adopts a fixed list to reflect the ‘universal common human values in suggesting a basis for determining a decent minimum variety of capability areas’ (Nussbaum, 2000:75), conceptual components of the Sen’s capability approach adapted in both Narayan-Parker (2002, 2005) and the ‘workAble capabilities’ approach (Chiappero-Martinetti and Sabadash, 2014) shaped the development a youth capability analytic framework (Figure 5.3) for this study. (2000:75). It builds on Robeyns (2005:94) argument that the capability approach is…‘not a theory that can explain poverty, inequality or wellbeing; instead it rather provides a tool and a framework within which to conceptualise and evaluate these phenomena’. Therefore in reconceptualising Sen’s CA for poor people, Narayan-Parker (2005) empowerment model suggests ways to ensure that:

1. Marginalized (poor) people’s livelihoods (resources, incomes and assets) are improved
2. Governance, peace and access to justice is expanded
3. Functioning and more inclusive service are readily available
4. More equitable access to markets and business services is ensured
5. Civil society and marginalized people’s organizations are strengthened
The application of the adapted frameworks will allow for a critical assessment of youth social construction in development, improvement in capabilities and realities of deployment for national development in Nigeria.

Figure 5.3: Analytic Framework of Research

Source: Author’s (2014)
5.7.2.1. Themes and Concepts of the Analytic Framework

1. **Youth**: a person who is 18-30 years old as at the time of national service.

2. **Youth agency** is the constructions of youths and their capabilities as envisioned in the context of policy and by the youths themselves. Youth agency also reflects the reality of how stakeholders in youth development positions youth as part of the national development solution. Furthermore, youth agency explains how both the individual and collective capability sets that youths possess/lack, may/may not enable them contribute to Nigeria’s national development.

   - **Individual capabilities** relates to person-specific educational qualifications, experiences and training that a youth may have received before gaining mobilization to service in the NYSC. It also captures perspectives from constitutional (from the Nigerian constitution), institutional (from the NYSC policy directives) and Narratives (from participants) on how youth capabilities are constructed, developed and deployed for national development purposes.

   - **Collective capabilities** relates to the groups dynamics and combination of capability sets that Nigerian youths possess that may/may not enable them address individual as well as national development challenges.

3. **Opportunity and Support Structures** capture both the institutional and socio-political structures made available prior to the NYSC programme (i.e. in the educational pathway) and during the duration of the service year (i.e. the NYSC pathway). It also refers to possible areas of development and employment needs that youth may fit/not fit into based on their existing capabilities, and human capital development interventions by the NYSC.

   - **The institutional climate** for this research refers to constitutional provisions made by the Federal Republic of Nigeria as well as the internal rules and regulations that guide the work of the NYSC.

   - **Socio-economic and political structures** points to capacity development platforms and strategies available to youths, prior to and during the NYSC service year.

   - **Youth Capability Development Programmes (YCDP)**: This describes the practice and educational programmes such as orientation, skills and entrepreneurial development trainings that youths may have received prior to and during their participation in the NYSC.
HRD of the NYSC this describes the absorptive capacity of the NYSC to sustain the mandate of youth development for national development in the Nigerian context.

4. **Deployment** – this explains the strategy of the NYSC for mobilizing and deploying youth capabilities to areas of critical national development needs.

5. **Capability Unfit** means deployment of youth capabilities to areas of development needs without considering the existing qualitative training and capacity of the youth. It is the resultant effect of capability traps.

6. **Capability Fit** means the deployment of youth capabilities to areas of development needs after careful consideration of the exiting qualitative training and capacity of the youth.

7. **Others** are corps members whose capabilities do not match the national priority sectors of deployment enshrined in the NYSC policy.

8. **Areas of Development Needs** in the Nigerian context refers to sectors that have been considered as critical to driving national development.

5.8. **Researcher Reflexivity and Narrative Identity**

In *Research and Research Methods for Youth Practitioners* Cullen et al (2012) opines that beyond positivist doctrines which ignored the narrative position of researcher in the construction of new knowledge, reflexivity suggests awareness that the researcher cannot be detached from the subject matter when conducting social research. They further argue that reflexivity may require youth researchers to explore personal reflections on their values, politics, social status, relationships and experiences within the research context (Ibid, 2012:14). Reflexivity creates researchers consciousness about their biases, values, and experiences that they bring as part of the research narrative (Creswell, 2009). As such, the importance of reflexivity to youth research includes statements about past experiences that provide background information about the topic, setting, and narrative identity of the researcher (Elliot, 2005). The narrative identity of the researcher is often used in contemporary social constructivist studies to understand ‘local explanations’ of how youths are considered either as agents and/or social constructs (Puuronen, 2005; Esin et al., 2014).

I fall under the Nigerian youth categorization of 18-35 years. As a youth in Nigeria, you are required to participate in the national service programme. In this regard, I was mobilised as a Batch (A) ex-corps member and deployed to Lagos State for my service.
NYSC (2008/09). My prior and reflexive knowledge of the workings of the NYSC programme within the Nigerian State has influenced some of the methodological decisions of this study. Gained experiences from my MSc research on ‘Human Development and Women Empowerment: a case of Lesotho women’ (Arubayi, 2010) also shaped my contextual understanding of mainstream development literature on the one hand, and the practice of operationalizing youth development in the African context, on the other hand. Hence, I identified the NYSC (The national youth organization in Nigeria) as my suitable case to investigate the extent to which youth capabilities are enhanced through the NYSC for the National Development of Nigeria.

5.9. Ethical Considerations

Delgado (2006) highlights that although ethical dilemmas reveal imbalances in power dynamics between youth and social systems by neglecting the voices of the youths in social research, contemporary emphasis tend to respect and focus on young people’s social agency both in the realm of social RPP. The ethical guide of this research combines perspectives from Delgado (2006) and Heath et al (2009) typologies. These perspectives and typologies are summarized as follows:

- **Participation and protection:** Foremost, participation in this study for both youth respondents and NYSC officials was voluntary. Before the research was conducted, formal approval was obtained from the NYSC through the Department of Planning Research and Statistics (DPRS) of the NYSC (see appendix A). This provided official protection of youth corps respondents and participating NYSC officials. Furthermore, the administered data collection instruments and responses were anonymized for identity protection.

- **Informed Consent/ Working with Gatekeepers:** In negotiating research access, a letter introducing this study to the NYSC was sent to the Director General of the scheme (Appendix A: a). Official and informed consent (Appendix A:c) as well as gatekeepers proved to be important in ensuring the unrestrained access within the organization of research. Ethical approval was obtained on an institutional level – first through the University of Manchester, Research and Ethic Committee (UREC) (Appendix A: b), and then through the NYSC DPRS, a letter of introduction for the researcher (Appendix A: d) was granted to researcher on arrival on the field. Regardless of these formal
approvals, informed consent at the different stages of data collection and was sought and obtained from all participants in the study.

- **Confidentiality and trust**: To build respondents' trust, information obtained was treated with strict confidentiality.

- **Incentives/Payment**: Given that this research was voluntary, no incentives were given.

### 5.10. Conclusion

This chapter presented the methodological underpinnings of this research. Through a social constructivist ontological lens which was reinforced by a poststructuralist epistemology adapted from Derrida's (1981) deconstruction philosophy, I was able to justify the rationale behind the choice of my philosophical stances. The methodological design is hinged on the mixed methods approach while the NYSC represents the case study. Methods of data collection included qualitative (SSIs, FGD and document review) and quantitative (SQs) survey methods. Simple descriptive statistics were used to analyse quantitative data while document and narrative analysis was also adopted as methods of qualitative data presentation. The developed analytic framework (Figure 5.3) of this study was utilized to guide analysis of narratives from both NYSC officials and Youth respondents. The binding conditions under which access was granted to research participants is reflected in the ethical codes of practice as highlighted by Delgado (2006) and Heath et al (2009).
Chapter 6: Institutional (NYSC) perspective on the construction and positioning of Youth in Development (YID)

6.1. Introduction

Building on opportunity and support structure components of the Analytic Framework for this study (Figure 5.3), this chapter presents findings and analyses from the narratives of identified NYSC officials. The framework is applied to understand how youths are developed within institutional and socio-political structures that inform the HRD strategies and Youth Capability Development Programmes (YCDPs) of the NYSC. The extent to which NYSC officials evaluate the capacity of the scheme to handle the dual mandate of youth development and national development is also explored. Firstly, in understanding the intersection between the national identity question and social construction of youths, four (4) narrative themes (i.e. Change, Bonding, Control, and Ethno-religious) which permeate the responses of the NYSC officials, are analysed in details to clarify the social construction of youth from an NYSC perspective. Secondly, in order to critically examine the policies, frameworks and programmes that inform the NYSC scheme, this chapter explores the level of policy awareness of NYSC officials. Again, to fully appreciate the institutional perspective of youth social constructions in Nigeria, this chapter illustrated how the meaning of youth is not restricted by dominant age-related constructions of youth, but are also bound to cultural norms that are reproduced through the ‘Nigerian factor’. Furthermore, uncovering the art of mainstreaming youth capabilities in Nigeria led to a critical examination of the process of mobilization and deployment, as well as in-depth evaluation of the capability development realities that young Nigerian graduates encounter when navigating transition pathways from education to the NYSC pathway. This then provides a nuanced critique by highlighting challenges and critical areas in need of capacity development in attempts to improve the overall institutional effectiveness of how the NYSC develops, deploys, and positions youth in Nigeria’s national development agenda.

6.2. Understanding the NYSC Imperative: National identity question and the social constructions of youths

The rationale for the establishment of the NYSC points towards addressing some of the fundamental issues of the civil war by actively promoting the ethos of unity and cultural integration that is relevant to the national identity question (Soyinka, 1996; Abutudu, 2010). The national question of Nigeria can be viewed from three critical perspectives:
the ethno-relativist perspective, class perspective and the identity perspective (Abutudu, 2010). Although the ethno-relativist and class perspectives have dominated mainstream national development discourse, national identity has emerged as the most dominant discourse in contemporary Nigeria (Omoniyi et al, 2009). In the formation and negotiation of multiple identities (Omoniyi et al, 2009), youths are constantly engaged in struggles for survival, inclusion, participation and empowerment for national development (Ikelegbe, 2006). Osaghae et al (2011:1) citing DeBoeck (1999) and Argenti (1998) assert that:

[As] “Makers of society”… [Youths] contribute to structures, norms, rituals, and directions of society [while also being shaped by them]…They make themselves, through inventive forms of self-realization and an ingenious politics of identity, and they make themselves as a political force, as sources of resistance and resilience, and as ritual or even supernatural agents and generators of morality and healing through masquerade and play. On the other hand, [youths] appear as “breakers”… a tension-filled, highly unstable category whose management is of crucial importance for societal stability and development as it is a zone of restlessness, anxiety and chaos for the youth and society.

The recognition of youths in Nigeria’s social history has always been built on a dichotomous (positive and negative) understanding of their roles as ‘change agents’. As positive agents of ‘change’, key informants (NY4; NY7) argue that youths have been instrumental in shaping the dynamics of national unity and integration between different ethnic-nationalities, and in reversing ‘otherness’ and hierarchical dominance over ethnic minority regions and groups. However, problematic stereotypes of youth behaviours that dwell on their negative agency as ‘vandals’, are driven by joblessness, the resource curse and religious fundamentalisms (NY8). Regardless of how youths have been socially constructed, studies have shown that issues of power struggles which continue to shape pre-given policy discourses, blur the voices and realities of youth (Giroux, 2009) by prescribing deficit constructs to young people’s identity in order to justify hierarchal structures that reinforces systems of inequality, oppression, and patriarchy (Gabriel, 2013; Guitierrez and Hopkins, 2014; Tyyska, 2014). As crucial agents of national identity change, ontologies captured in the narrative of NY2 suggest that ‘unlike older Nigerians who had already formed an opinion… they [i.e. the Nigerian youth] were seen as people who were yet to form an opinion’. This is consistent with the views of several
officials (NY2, NY4, and NY8) who conceptualize young corps members as ‘children’ – whose ‘decisional power’ and spheres of influence are ascribed to elitist networks of parents and other stakeholders that indirectly control their everyday lives.

Only children [i.e. youth] of the big [i.e. elites] gets lucrative jobs… As an official, in my camp if I have 10 youth with a first class honours and 15 more with a second class upper (2.1) who have a background in banking and finance, I always ensure that for every two of your ‘oga’s’ children [elite youth] corps employers would have to take one of my candidates [poor youth], because these children don’t know anybody… and this was how I was able to get these children in there. (NY2 and NY8)

Aside the conceptual issues surrounding the social construction of youth in Nigeria (Ezeah, 2012), NY4 notes that young Nigerian graduates are able to ‘bond’, ‘co-exist’, and foster a sense of individual and collective youth identity in the NYSC environment (i.e. camp, PPA, and community). This ‘bonding narrative’, which is an integral element of social capital theory (Coleman, 1988; Bassani, 2007), reinforces the overarching aim of youth service (Ford Foundation, 2000) in societal development. NY4 opines that:

…‘for a nation to develop, the communities must develop…Indeed, it is the collation of the different developments at community level and grassroots level that translates into national development’.

In this context, the extent to which youths become an ‘agency of positive change’ in national development is dependent on how effectively the NYSC can transform and channel youth resources and identity capital (NY1; see also Bassani, 2007). However, the first pre-condition for participation in the national development process through the NYSC is to imbibe the culture of ‘discipline’.

[the Nigerian government] made the scheme militarised and regimented so that we [the NYSC] can have control, because if [youth], immediately after they finish university get thrown into the society [without discipline] they are going to have more problems. So therefore, the one year [of compulsory service] is a way of stabilising them [the youth] so that after they have seen life in the university… the NYSC can enforce some little discipline in youths using the military and then have a lot of control on what youths do. For instance, if you are serving in a state you don’t travel [without going through the right chain of command] because you have someone controlling you. This is a way of actually addressing
the youth restiveness in Nigeria… The NYSC is just coming in to see how it can address youth restiveness by actually bringing in discipline into the system. (NY6)

This mechanism of disciplining youth behaviours which the NYSC Habitus and its associated youth capability development activities provides, allows for ‘control at a distance’ (Fournier, 1999) that justifies the need to build and enforce disciplinary structures. In this regard, it may appear that the rationale behind constructing youths through change and bonding narratives is for the purpose of reinforcing democratic militarism and a command and control narrative (Ifeka, 2006; Iwiliade, 2013) that doesn’t take into consideration, youth agency and voice. Indeed, with the advocacy of force and power exemplified through the presence of military officers in youth orientation camps, the assumption of this command and control narrative is that it is a strategy of preparedness for patriotic engagement to forestall the outbreak of future civil war (Obadare, 2010). This will also provide an organised and coherent national identity formation of future generations.

Before the war, many Nigerians were more or less in their own region then. You could see someone who did primary school up to university level [residing] in a particular region. [Let’s] say western region, northern region or eastern, and the person had no idea about the other regions in the country, had never communicated with them, and knew little or nothing. All that he knew were just all that he heard people say, which predominantly were false because people were saying ugly things about the other regions. (NY1)

Within this context, the relevance of the NYSC in contemporary Nigeria is conceptualised as a:

Post-civil war strategy and a unifying institution that was established to bridge ethnic and national skill gaps respectively (NY2, NY4) and fill divides between regional dichotomies (NY7) in such a way that youths could be used as primary agents in healing wounds of the civil war through the reconstruction of a Nigerian identity (NY3; NY4) in an environment that enhances cultural knowledge about others in fostering unity and integration (NY1; NY5; NY8; NY9).

NY2 recounts from personal experience, the role of the NYSC in driving national integration and ethno-religious tolerance.
For instance, despite the fact that my best friend who I met in the NYSC camp is a Muslim, and I a Christian, we ended up being friends. As a pastor, he ended up being my best man in church… Even when I dedicated my child in church, he came and he was the one holding the young boy, dancing in the church… We met on camp. The same thing happened when he got married in Sokoto State in Nigeria. I travelled to Sokoto to be his best man. We sat down on the mat and though I could not even understand what they were saying, I still sat there in his marriage. Indeed, he insisted to his Muslim clan that this is the person that must sit with me. With this I can say that there is nothing a person would desire that would be greater than these. Categorically, almost 60 percent [i.e. by interaction with and experiences and not by confirmed statistics] of the marriages that you find today, started when these people were in camps because there was a level of interaction that was beyond ‘makeups’ as people see others for who they really are in the orientation camps. Personally, I can tell you that including my own wife was met on an orientation camp [laughs]. (NY2)

This ethno-religious narrative suggests that the NYSC is fulfilling some of its aims as stipulated in the establishing decree and act (see Table 4.1). However, the contemporary reality of religious extremism and intolerance in north-eastern Nigeria, has called into question the success of the NYSC in pre-empting this conundrum (Osaghae et al., 2011; Obadare, 2010; Raimi and Alao, 2011) particularly as some of the actors in this crisis have previously participated in the NYSC programme (NY1). NY4 notes that ‘when talking about national service, the NYSC takes into cognisance the needs of the nation, and not necessarily the needs of the individual’. This makes it difficult to identify deviant behaviours, as youths are seen as means, but not envisaged as ends of national development. Thus, while the construction of youths as change agents in the NYSC is hinged on positive youth capability development programmes that seek to promote ethnic-unification and socio-cultural bonding, the real purpose of youth participation in the scheme is to ensure control and power over (Rowlands, 1997) youth agency.

6.3. Policy awareness: Global vs Local

Findings from this study demonstrate that NYSC officials are quite knowledgeable about the guiding policy, legislations, and frameworks on which the NYSC operates (Table 6.1). However, a major challenge of development planning in Nigeria is the seeming disconnect between the triad of policy, practice and implementation (Osabuohein et al, 2012). This study confirms this assertion with an even more ironic
dimension. While all interviewed NYSC officials were able to discern the global MDGs framework, only 78% of respondents were able to identify an endogenous development policy (e.g. NEEDS). This suggests the relative effectiveness of globally advocated development programmes (such as the MDGs), in comparison to national development strategies. It also raises major questions bordering on the ‘paradox of looking without focusing’ (NY1). NY8 notes that:

*When we talk about the MDGs we talk of the UNICEF, USAID. These organizations which are in Nigeria are using the youths to achieve these things. For instance, USAID focus on food provision or security programme, which allows some of our corps members who are on camp to be trained in order for them to start their Agri-businesses and all that. So when you look at the MDGs and look at the UNICEF … with what the UNICEF has done, we have statistics showing reduction in HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in Nigeria, compared to when people had no clue. So UNICEF is partnering as far as health is concerned and we are using the youths to achieve all these things if … we have adequate partnership and financing from government.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.1: Level of Policy Awareness on the Guiding Policy, Frameworks and Programmes of the NYSC scheme.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Policies, Acts of Parliament, frameworks and Programmes of the NYSC</td>
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</table>
| **Guiding Policy and Constitutional Provisions** | 3R policy of the 2NDP  
Decree No 24 and Decree No 51  
NYSC Act N84 | On the average 6 out of 9 respondents (67%) were able to identify policies, constitutional decrees and the act of parliament that informs the NYSC’s work. |
| **Development Frameworks** | MDGs Policy  
NEEDS Policy | While all respondents were able to identify the MDGs as a critical policy framework that informs YCDPs, only 67% of NYSC officials highlighted the importance of the NEEDs policy. |
| **4 cardinal Programmes of the NYSC** | Youth Orientation and Induction  
Primary Assignment  
Community Development Service  
Certification | All respondents were able to identify 4 cardinal programmes that underpins the NYSC scheme |

Source: Authors Fieldwork Data (2013)
Although Nigeria’s commitment to the implementation of the MDGs is not in doubt (NYSC, 2007, 2008; MDGs Nigeria Report, 2013), what remains problematic is a lack of advocacy on locally evolved strategies of national development. The dissemination of national strategies of development may be hampered by a number of factors including inadequate funding. The MDGs programmes have permeated institutional discourse of the NYSC because they are mostly funded and monitored through global partnerships for development. Hence, they are able to shape community development initiatives.

6.4. Institutional Perspective on Youth Social Constructions in Nigeria

…Both the experience and meaning of these processes, including this stage we call ‘youth’ will be historically and socially constructed. This ‘social construction of reality’ involves the idea that meanings are attributed to constructs like ‘youth’ are culturally determined impositions rather than attributes of data… A young person will both construct a social reality and form part of other people’s constructions, including the implicit models that underpin policy. Both what [young] people ‘are’ and how they are ‘seen’ are tied to circumstances that differ across societies and cultures, time and history – as well as within the same society or culture over time.

Chisholm et al (2011: 12; with emphasis)

Although there are different conceptualisations of who fits into the category of ‘youths’ (see Table 3.1), this study suggest that this depends on perception and subjective interpretations of who can be defined as youth (Table 6.2.).
Findings from this study (Table 6.2) reveal that age-related construction (ARC) of youth is adopted by all NYSC officials interviewed. Although about two-thirds of NYSC officials suggest that these ARC’s do not appropriately capture the socio-economic and political complexities that the Nigerian youth face, the understanding of the youth concept from a national context is profound among respondents. Consequently, in advocating for an extension to national and institutional conception of youth, officials highlighted the importance of extending the age bracket in order to accommodate prolonged complexities that impede transitions into adult statuses (Arnett, 2000, 2007a; Mortimer, 2012) or questions their classification as ‘adults’.

At a time, my church was debating on making me a youth pastor. In answering the question of youth, we tried to look at maturity of a person because we realised that while there are some 12 year old children that are really mature, there were also some people that are 45 years old who could not be considered mature individuals [adults] in the real sense of
it. So, I will say that the meaning of youth depends on the purpose for which a person wants to define it for. (NY2)

The institutional interpretation of how youth are seen and constructed from a governmental perspective, presents a dichotomy between the faint understanding of a global youth and a nuanced interpretation of a Nigerian youth. Such dichotomy basically reinforces argument of a spatial dimension to understanding the youth concept that relates to the geography or place of the individual that reproduces differential meanings based on cultural context (Spence, 2005). It also draws some similarities with Arnett’s (1999, 2000, 2007a, 2007b) theoretical proposition of ‘emerging adulthood’ that is bound to context specific realities that define and validate the need to rethink the concept of youth. Although there is a near general consensus to leave the youth construct as broad as it is (i.e. 18-35), ~22% of NYSC officials interviewed recommend a rethinking of the youth construct. Narratives from NY2 and NY8 suggest that:

A youth is… I would like to say that once a person becomes an adolescent, you can be termed a youth because you are no longer a child. For me I would like to use 16 maybe or let me say 16 to 25 – which is pretty old … maybe let’s say 23 is appropriate. That is in general terms because when a 16 year old does something you say ‘you are not a kid, what are you doing?’… And I will feel very aggrieved if at 25 someone says ‘look at this small boy or you are youth’ because for instance personally by 22, I was married and making babies… therefore for the purpose of NYSC and youth mobilization for service, the age limit should be brought to 25 and I will tell you why. People mature much earlier these days. Also in attempts to reduce the population of people who can fall under this age bracket for the purpose of NYSC mobilization, I believe that reducing the age to 25 will ‘allow Nigeria spend the little money on “youths” – the ones who need it’. 

The suggestion that the reality of being youth is based either on ‘feeling like an adult’ (perception) or ‘behaving like a young person’ (behavioural patterns) reinforces youth-adult dichotomies (White and Wyn, 1997) that often starts with the development of psychological perspective (Heath et al, 2009) shaped by real life experiences. In support of the continued implementation of Nigeria’s national ARC of youth (18-35) as against the global ARC of youths, NY2 notes that conforming to the global construct (18-25) “will tactically exclude (without knowing) young people who like doctors have to stay longer in institutions of higher learning’ and defeat the reality of addressing human development challenges because the health sector is critical to national development”. It is within this context that NY9
conceptualises youth as a relative term – bound by multiple and subjective interpretations intersecting across transnational contexts. This is consistent with the argument of (Arnett, 2007b:80) who opines that the premise for an emerging adulthood category ‘depends on the cultural context in which young people develop, and the social institutions they encounter’.

Consequently, beyond narrow biological essentialist perspectives which neither acknowledges inner differences nor intergenerational continuity’s in predicing static categories and age brackets for defining youth (Spence, 2005; Chisholm et al 2011), the social construction of youth in a postmodern Nigerian context suggests a fluid and transitional identity (WYR, 2003). However, a major challenge to this fluidity is that the interpretations of youth constructions are shaped by hierarchies enshrined in the constitution. Thus, in explaining the transitional nature of the youth concept in Nigeria, NY4 stresses that:

The conceptualization of youth depends on the context in which it is defined because in Nigeria you would see some organization’s where a 55 year old man will contest to be the youth leader. I stand to be corrected, but I am aware that the United Nations definition is between 16 and 24 and that is the definition. However some of us [Nigerians] even at 48 we believe ourselves to be youth. Perhaps, maybe it is because we work with the NYSC that we claim ourselves to be youth, I cannot really say… But [in Nigeria], it is possible [to see a 48 year old youth] because when we [the older youth] want to be able to relate with these young people, we ascribe on ourselves, even when we have passed the age bracket, the identity of being youth.

This viewpoint reinforces Jones (2009) argument that although ‘youthfulness’ conveys qualities such as strength, beauty, idealism, energy, which are desirable and coveted by older age groups, it is also associated with ‘inferior’ characteristics of inexperience, lack of wisdom, hot-headedness, experimentation, naivety, greenness and lack of maturity and sense. In other words, just like the constitutional construction of youth in Nigeria presents differential demarcations for youth (see section 5.3.7.1 in chapter 5), NY8 argues that social construction of youth is often shaped by the ‘politics of vested interest’ and ‘the Nigerian Factor’ that is driven by ethno-religiosity and sustained patriarchal structures that glorifies the elderly and demonises the youth. Arguably, with the discursive construction of youth as ‘children’ (NY8) or as people who are ‘yet to form an opinion’ in Nigeria (NY2), the findings from this study demonstrates that although
ARC of the youth concept may provide a premise for strategic policy interventions and execution of action plans in Nigeria, these age-related demarcations would indirectly limit youth choices, freedoms, and agency to contribute effectively to national development. Furthermore, narrative from the NYSC officials suggest that the social construction of youth in Nigeria appears to overlook the immediate potentials and capabilities of young Nigerians in favour of mantras of maturity and experience that benefit the ‘older youth’ – ‘the adults’.

6.5. The NYSC Practice and the art of Mainstreaming Youth capabilities in Nigeria

This discussion sections evaluates how youth capabilities fit or totally miss the national development challenges with a specific focus on deployment as a strategy that can creates pathways from youth education to places of decent work, community service and national development spaces.

6.5.1. Mobilization and Youth Transition pathways

The practice of mobilization can be conceptualised as a preliminary juncture that guides the passage of youths to states of national service. It is an integral strategy designed to facilitate the effective emplacement of youth capabilities in places of development needs (NYSC, 2014). The strategy of mobilization involves a process of identifying young Nigerian graduates (local and international) who meet the education and age criteria with no previous work experience in the security service apparatus of state (NYSC, 1999, 2004). The question of how youths are mobilized to states of national service occurs without the biographical agency and choice of young graduates (Heinz, 2009).

…the process of youth mobilization to states and places of national service occurs outside the cleavages of youth control and power. (NY8)

However, several respondents (e.g. NY1, NY3, NY4) note that the ‘process of youth mobilization’ hinges on dialogues between multiple stakeholder groups including tertiary educational institutions, state governments, employers, and community leaders. Mobilization offers the youth a ‘rite of passage with symbolic significance’ into new statuses and positions, to take advantage of available opportunity structures across the national service pathway and in the political economy of national development in Nigeria (WYR, 2003). After mobilization dialogues with stakeholders, the instrument for triggering the pathway of national service for young graduates is the ‘call-up letter’ –
which when received, activates the process of state deployment (NY6). This interwoven discourse of mobilization and state deployment is portrayed as reinforcing strategies (NY4, NY7, and NY9) underpinned by the human resource development practice (Wilson, 2012) in ensuring recruitment and equal opportunities for Nigerian graduates.

For instance, if we [the NYSC] have a thousand law graduates we would try to ensure that they all deployed to the 37 locations in Nigeria ‘equally’ because we expect each sector of that economy to grow and receive man power… While doing that, we also bear in mind where they are coming from [i.e. their state of origin]. So that when the figures [of young graduates] are put together and they are split and you find out that sometimes 1,500 going to Lagos, 1,600 going to FCT, 1,450, going to another state and so on to ensure even distribution. (NY8)

Although this assertion portrays the practice of enforcing ‘equal opportunity’ for youth (FRN, 1999, 2001; FMYD, 2008a) within the broader philosophy of the human capability approach (Sen, 1999; Alkire, 2010), there are some inherent policy controls on where young people’s capabilities can be mobilized and deployed. In examining the ‘process of deployment’ NY2 notes that:

Deriving directly from of the major aims of the NYSC scheme [which is integration and national unity], and given that the nation is divided into geopolitical zones, it expected that a corps member is not to serve in his own geopolitical zone19 [GPZ] because it assumed that youths are already knowledgeable about their own area… ‘State deployment’ is done in such a way that it will ensure that youths do not serve either in their state of origin or their geopolitical zone20 of education. [Stressing further be suggests that] perhaps, if a person did not study in their own geopolitical zone, it is programme’s responsibility through deployment to eliminate the geopolitical zone youths graduate from.

The analysis of this mobilization and state deployment criteria reveal that youth can only be deployed to 4 out of 6 GPZs – that is for people whose SO is different from their GPZ; and 5 out of 6GPZs for youths whose SO and GPZE are same. In other words, youth capabilities can only be state-deployed to either 83% or 67% of the remaining

19 Appendix C Table B further elaborates on how coded geopolitical zones in Appendix C, Table A were adapted in providing a detailed demographic profile of each youth respondent of this study.
20 Drawing on the narrative of NY2 and for the purpose of investigating the effectiveness of NYSC deployment strategy in mainstreaming youth capabilities for national development (objective 3 of this study), both youths geopolitical zone/state of origin (SO), and geopolitical zone/state of education (SE) were coded as GPZO and GPZE respectively (see also Appendix C: Table B and Table C).
geopolitical zones (GPZs) in Nigeria, depending on whether GPZO and GPZE are the same (mobilization opportunity 1) or different (mobilization opportunity 2). If the security challenges arising from the *boko-haram* phenomenon in north-eastern region of Nigeria is factored into the GPZO and GPZE criteria, the opportunities for youth mobilization and deployment to states of national service becomes further skewed towards the remaining 5 geopolitical zones that are considered safer (NY2, NY4, and NY9). This implies that youths in contemporary Nigeria can only be deployed to 80% and 60% of the 5 safe geopolitical zones. This has broader implications on the absorptive capacity of NYSC facilities in these 5 geopolitical zones and prescribes further challenges for employment and retention of youths in places of primary assignment.

Although the foregoing analysis acknowledges that the practice of mobilization initiates youth entry into the national service pathway, the youth development phase prior to their mobilization is also a crucial factor in ensuring service performance. NY2 notes that:

> In summary, the family foundation has to be solid. Solidity is determined by the quality of parenthood. Where parenting stops, religious organizations continue with the process of youth character development. I strongly believe that the doctrines religious practices should be part of the parental makeup in child or youth development. With the level of moral decadence amongst youths in Nigeria at large, I can categorically say that the missing link between parenting and religious development is the real cause of deviant youths. Actually the failure of parenthood abdicates responsibilities of individuals who failed to contribute to their children’s development to other institutions in society, by decreasing the possibility of arriving at ‘moral Nigerian youth’.

This assertion provides a retrospective and nuanced narrative concerning stakeholder’s roles and contributions to pre-NYSC youth capability development. Within this context youth capability development hinges on informal (e.g. parental guidance and counselling) and formal phases of erudition that is geared towards the mobilization phase of the national service pathway (Figure 6.1).
In this regard, the measure of how successful youth transition from the informal and formal education phase to the mobilization phase depends both on the presence/absence of multiple stakeholder’s contributions, and on how well youths have been able to ‘receive’ these support structures in navigating societal challenges (NY8). However, instrumental capability enhancement programmes (Otto and Ziegler, 2006) are available within the NYSC scheme to address youth capability needs for national development.
6.5.2. Capability Development Programmes and Youth: Navigating NYSC Pathway to Decent Work

There are few pathways available for young people to develop their skills and social capital needed to transition to work. Many young people also find themselves outside the cultural and state systems that are intended to enable their transition. Some of the available pathways do not sufficiently prepare young people with the skills required for today’s labour market which requires high skills levels.

(ICP Synthesis Report, 2013: 5)

The above assertion reinforces the analytic framework (Figure 5.3) for understanding the NYSC as a pathway that links youth agency to available opportunity structures provided by the YCDPs (Figure 6.2). Figure 6.2 presents the youth transition pathway by putting into context the taken-for-granted pathways (i.e. informal and formal youth capability pathway) from policy and NYSC practice perspective and how it is positioned within the broader analytic framework.
Figure 6.2: Youth transition and pathways
Source: Author (2014)
In examining how youth capabilities are developed while in the NYSC pathway, NY2 and NY4 note that orientation can be viewed as an induction into a model community of cohorts wherein youths can be acquainted with the realities of the outside world.

The orientations objective aims to introduce the corps members to their new environment. Indeed, in order to achieve national unity and integration, youths participating in the NYSC are posted to states other than their own and they are also posted to work together in groups that is varied [diversified] – having people from different backgrounds working in the same group. This is how we work [through the orientation exercise] to ensure that the youth get to: know each other; understand each other’s norms, customs and traditions of the communities where they are posted; imbibe the spirit of team work. Orientation… also focuses on giving them a general overview of what the scheme is about and youth roles are about. (NY2, NY4).

This narrative suggests that YOIP fosters a common Nigerian identity and engender interethnic tolerance among youth participants in the NYSC scheme. NY4 notes that:

If Nigerian youths are able to live, work, have an objective and achieve together, and most importantly, if youths are able to collectively work as a team to get results [in other words, co-exist] because as you know “together each achieves more”, then they will inherently build new skills, that enhances their tolerance level of interaction with other youths with different cultural orientation.

This intercultural competence as Campbell-Patton and Mattero (2009) suggests, is a critical aspect of leadership development discourse (Obadare, 2010) and ‘whole person development’ framework (FMYD, 2012) aimed at ensuring that youth’s enhance their social and emotional capabilities, otherwise referred to as soft skills (McNeill et al, 2012). Through the enhancement of youth’s self-awareness and socio-cultural consciousness, it is expected that they become empathetic to the ‘understanding of self’ and ‘others’ as well as managing emotions and self-discipline. These are necessary skills youths need to transit to sustainable employment in the political economy of Nigeria’ (NY2, NY5).

‘Posting’ to places of primary assignment offer NYSC youths the opportunity to demonstrate the work ethics and professional life-skills gained during YOIP (NY3). This resonates with findings from other studies (Hahn, 2002; Roth and Brooks-Gunn, 2003) where it was suggested that the development of youth ‘life skills’ whether for work in the political economy or for community service, empowers youth with a sense of
agency, independence and sustainable livelihoods. In the contemporary NYSC scheme, the development of life skills builds on economic philosophies that informs skills acquisition and entrepreneurship which challenges youth corps members to become more 'self-reliant' so that they can become: independent and entrepreneurs; resourceful and have initiatives; employers of labour (NY7). However, to achieve this end, the need for continuous innovation in training and capability development cannot be overemphasized. UNECA (2011: viii) African Youth Report assert that:

The need to invest in human capital through education and skills development for young people remains of paramount importance...because of the return on education and the contribution to poverty reduction and achievement of the MDGs... Young people need an enabling environment politically, economically and socially to thrive in our countries. They need to be empowered so that they can be represented and participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives.

NY1 and NY2 opine that the practice of investment in youth capabilities has created further spaces for youths to become:

*Principals and teachers in rural schools, medical doctors and health awareness agents in rural communities, developers of rural infrastructures like roads, bridges, classrooms, and toilets for deprived communities, advocates of political development through their participation in elections, and agriculture-extension workers who acts as interfaces between policy makers and farmers on the ground.*

These findings reinforce policy prescriptions as contained in the documents by clearly highlighting the benefits of youth participation in the NYSC scheme, and their ascribed roles through the community development service programme. Within this context, youths are constructed as positive agents of change. While the navigation through the NYSC pathway begins with the ‘call-up letter’ that confirms state deployment, the ‘NYSC certificate’ symbolises the end of this pathway and is a mandatory requirement for public and private sector employment.

6.5.2.1. Dilemmas in Youth Capability Deployment Practice

To provide a nuanced evaluation of the NYSC’s deployment strategy, clarifications from NYSC officials on the dimensions of the strategy was required. The respondents explain that:
With regards to deployment from the headquarters to the states of national service, the deployment strategy takes into consideration the ‘absorptive capacity’ of each state. By absorptive capacity… the NYSC evaluates how many companies are available in such a state, in other words, how commercial is that state [industrial capacity of the state to handle the youth bulge], how many schools are present in each state [educational capacity – from primary to tertiary] and so on. So before deployment occurs, the NYSC reaches out to all the stakeholders, evaluates the absorptive capacity of the state and deploys youth from federal to state levels, were youths within the state are later posted or deployed based on state/local government needs.

It is evident that deployment of youth capabilities occurs on two levels. First the deployment from the National Directorate is an emplacement strategy that mobilizes youths from their states of domicile to states of national service [SNS] (NY7, NY8). The second is the intra-state level deployment otherwise known as ‘posting’, by the State Directorate of the NYSC to spaces of sectoral and community needs (NY4). The posting policy has evolved over the years. NY2 notes that:

_Hitherto recent policy upgrade, deployment within the NYSC is underpinned by the act of parliament in the Nigerian constitution. Precisely, deployment for service as highlighted under section 9(2) of the NYSC act identifies 10 sectors that youth corps members can be placed in the Nigerian economy. However in 2011, after consultations and reforms of the NYSC deployment policy between the NYSC and Federal Ministry of Youth Development [FMYD], a ‘new deployment policy’ was developed. This new policy identifies four critical areas that corps members are to be posted to… and they include Agriculture, Education, Health and Infrastructure._

NY4 provides some rationale for understanding the ‘new deployment policy’ (hereafter NDPo).

_We did a study, where we tried to arrive at the average number of corps members that are deployed for national service every year. We strove to uncover: what were the critical areas of national needs? And, where do we have skills gaps in Nigeria? The findings of this study which led to this new deployment policy since 2011, suggests that these four sectors were suffering in terms of manpower deficit. From our findings about the agricultural sector, the study revealed that there was a stereotype that agriculture is a practice for old men. From the_
educational sector, we realised that there are not enough teachers to address the Nigerian literacy challenge and so on. (NY4)

NY8 further argues that:

The NYSC has moved the emphasis from private sector posting because we found out that they were just misusing them [the youths]. It is unfortunate that some of the youths don’t get it, but I want to stress that this policy is for their good. For instance in the banking sector, you would find out that people write exams and get into banking jobs. In the past it was garbage in, garbage out. They string youths along during the service year and promise to retain them, and they don’t. How are you going to retain someone that has been brought in by your brother in-law for instance? …. Because a person may be incompetent and may not be able to do the job, but due to the fact that the person was sent in by family, you wouldn’t to offend family. However with this new policy, private sector employers are no longer getting that cheap labour force anymore and this has made them proactive as they are beginning to organize interviews and the corps members who are skilled and properly qualified are getting permanent and not contract jobs.

However, with the exclusion of six sectors from the deployment list, this NDPo reduces the sectoral opportunity structures that youths can occupy by 40%. Although it may be argued that these new identified deployment areas fit into the global human development (2000-2015) and post-2015 development agendas of inclusive human development (HDR, 1990, 2014; UNDP, 2014) that identifies education (literacy), health (life expectancy and well-being), infrastructure and agriculture (food security), these sectors are too narrow to address the dual challenge of youth and national development. Paradoxically, the argument for not posting corps members to the private sector (e.g. Banks) undermines their contribution to Nigeria’s national development while overlooking the wide-ranging weakness of the public sector (Caprara et al., 2012; Udende, 2012). The well-documented contributions of telecommunications, banking, real estate, entertainment, etc.to national development (AfDB, 2013a; NBS, 2014) makes the NDPo ‘a contradiction in Nigeria’s national development’. The main policy focus should however be on finding ways to expand the absorptive capacity and opportunity structures of the private sector. Also, there is the existing need to address the rent-seeking behaviour of ‘man-know-man’ syndrome in the public sector (NY7, Venatus, 2013) which may eventually erode the effectiveness of the already skewed NYSC NDPo for national development.
6.5.2.2. The NYSC’s Institutional Climate and Capacity Development Challenges

The NYSC like many other parastatal in Nigeria is faced with a number of challenges that bedevils its effective functioning. NY2 and NY5 observes that:

For instance, talking about how the Boko Haram insurgency in particular has affected the focus and deployment strategy of the NYSC scheme is that what we now have is that a significant number of corps members in reality are not in the north. To be specific, most of the corps members are not in the North East. Similarly, there are tribes and people that are peculiar to the North-East. The question the NYSC seeks to address is how the NYSC gets the youths to appreciate the culture of Kanuri person for instance? So over these few years, you would find only the Kanuri’s in the North-East. Apart from the Kanuri’s those that opt to serve in the North East are the only ones that are deployed there. For instance, I tell you that there is a problem in understanding the typical Kanuri Man at the moment. Who is a Kanuri man? What are their nuisances? What are their motivations? How do they dress? What’s their mode of relationships and their culture? These questions are amongst many questions that are yet to be answered because over the past few years you cannot really get an average Nigerian youth who may be able to describe who a Kanuri person. However … the first thing the NYSC has done is to de-emphasise the posting to areas that are largely known to be insecure.

From the foregoing narrative, a dual challenge is emerging for the NYSC. First, the security situation of the north-east region is increasingly undermining the NYSC’s strategy of fostering cultural integration and interaction through deployment. Secondly, there is the creation of a youth-flation – i.e. more youths chasing limited opportunity structures in the other 5 geopolitical zones. The implication is that why the north-east losses out on youth capabilities for development, the stable regions are awash with varied dimensions of youth capital. This in the end will hamper even and integrated development. To address some of these challenges, respondents recognise the need for institutional dynamism.

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Recent findings suggest that the Boko Haram Sect mostly comprises of ethnic Kanuri’s (Ojojo, 2013; Onuoha, 2014). Olojo’s (2013) research also reinforces the US Homeland Security Report (2013) argument by citing anti-colonial movements of the 1950s which was spearheaded by the Kanuri-led Borno Youth Movement as the genesis of popular support for Boko Haram which simply interprets as ‘Western Education is Bad’.
No society that is static. The same goes for any organization, no organization is static; every organization is supposed to be dynamic [and this includes the NYSC]. As time goes, organizations as supposed to evolve and change to meet the challenges of time... As such, for the NYSC over the years has had to assess its own institutional and absorptive capacity in order to ascertain its own organizational needs. [In fact]... there is no way one can talk about the youth in isolation of the Nigerian economic dynamics and socio-political activities that affects both the NYSC and youths lives. (NY1, NY8, NY9)

Approximately 22% of respondents (Table 6.3) opine that the NYSC in its current state do not have sufficient human resources to execute its responsibility of youth and national development. NY2 seems to suggest that the reason for deficient human resource capacity is the lack of personal development of officials

To be very frank with you and I know what am about to say will offend a lot of people but we don’t! We don’t!!! A lot of my colleagues have confined their selves to the practice of the Youth mobilization practice that started in 1973, they are not involved in line with the dynamics of the society, the need of Nigeria has changed, the need of the Youth has changed, the need of the community has changed, so you must change alongside these variables. You will be applying wrong medicine to the wrong ailment and I have found out that a lot of my contemporaries do not read. (NY2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.3: Findings on the Institutional Capacity of the NYSC to Youth Development for National Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question:</strong> Does the NYSC currently have sufficient human resources (staff skills and experience) to execute its responsibilities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responses</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78% of respondents agree that the NYSC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s Fieldwork (2013)

The overall institutional operations of the NYSC as ranked by the respondents reveals that the NYSC is performing at 68% with major deficit in the finance and accounts department (Table 6.4.). There is still scope for capacity improvement in other departments, particularly those (e.g. SAED) directly involved in YCDPs for national development.
Table 6.4: Institutional Performance of the NYSC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Departments</th>
<th>Performance (%)</th>
<th>Average Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information Communication and Technology (ICT)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource (HR)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development Service (CDS)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDS</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corp Welfare and Inspectorate</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venture Management</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Research and Statistic</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurial Development (SAED)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and Accounts</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s Fieldwork (2013)

Although 12 areas of institutional needs (leadership, funding, communication strategy, IT, funding, managerial competence, human resource capacity, leadership, partnerships, training, management, intellectual property, structures, systems and processes, and ethical dimension transparency) were highlighted by Ezekwesili (2014) as crucial to the improvement of public sector performance, 8 areas of NYSC needs were identifiable from the narratives of respondents (Table 6.4).
This findings fits into narratives and pressures of neoliberal globalization which proposes new institutional roles and capabilities that are commensurate with the demands of knowledge-ICT driven economic development (OECD, 2001; Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall, 2003;; Bessey, 2010; Eneh, 2011; Sukarieh and Tannock, 2015). Though the endogenous challenges (e.g. nepotism, red-tapism) of the NYSC are salient

### Table 6.5: Critical areas needed to Improve Institutional Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of institutional Needs</th>
<th>Identified Components that needs to be addressed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **1. Public-Private-Partnerships (PPPs)**          | 1. Clarify Stakeholders Interests  
2. Emphasize the need for all stakeholders to understand the NYSC Bič  
3. Ensure inter-government corporation between all tiers of government (G2G)                                                                                                    |
| **2. Funding**                                     | 1. Provide more Credit Granting Institutions (CGIs) that can support the skill acquisition agenda  
2. Increase budgeting and financial support                                                                                                                                            |
| **3. Human Resource Management and Development**   | 1. Staff Training  
2. Develop a learning culture  
3. Capacity building in areas of human relations  
4. Recruitment  
5. Review performance appraisal system  
6. Improve staff motivation and welfare (reward and pay)                                                                                                                              |
| **4. Become Information Communication and Technology (ICT) Savvy** | 1. Develop a data management base system (DBMS)  
2. Staff training in the use of ICTs  
3. Provide ICT infrastructures after training                                                                                                                                 |
| **5. Correct Institutional Disconnects and promote Synergy** | 1. Improve the synergy between the NYSC and the FMYD  
2. Ensure that youth budgeting is clarified  
3. Decentralize power and devolve responsibilities                                                                                                                                       |
| **6. Correct the Politics of Vested Interests**    | 1. Understand the merits and demerits of the global-local policy divide  
2. Clarify the limits of all stakeholders                                                                                                                                               |
| **7. Poor Infrastructure**                         | 1. Develop ICT enable infrastructures  
2. Ensure that states live up to their responsibility of providing the necessary infrastructure                                                                                     |
| **8. Growing Youth Population**                    | 1. Take into consideration the youth bulge and rendering proactive solutions to harness this demographic youth resource                                                                                                                                   |

Source Fieldwork (2013)
in the respondent’s narratives, they may indirectly influence the effective performance of the NYSC.

6.6. Conclusion

This chapter has presented narrative arguments and data, bordering on how the construction of youth across Nigeria’s social history is reproduced in contemporary NYSC practice context. Within this context, this chapter argued that not only are youths are described normatively through age-related constructions, but also, their identity is shaped through transitional-related interpretations and pathways (e.g. through educational and NYSC pathways respectively) that explain the rites towards inclusion, participation and eventual empowerment for national development in Nigeria. Further perspectives from NYSC official’s narratives reveal that while there are defined age-related categorization of youth that fit both global and local Nigerian definitions of youth, the subjective interpretations, invites a need to accommodate an extended youth category (35+) to compliment the local realities in Nigerian political economy.

This chapter subsequently reveals that the understanding of who youths, replicates the same negative-positive dichotomy that underpin western epistemologies in global youth studies. This in-turn shapes the reality of ‘being young’ in the Nigerian context, which suggests youth’s either as ‘makers’ or ‘breakers’ in national development and societal transformation. The foregoing analysis which this chapter provides revealed that, although the NYSC practice context accepts the ontological possibility of youths as prospective ‘problems’, the overall institutional interpretation and response to ‘youth in development’ builds on neoliberal insinuations of youth capital that operates from a positive youth development lens – socially constructing youths as vital resources/assets of national transformation). Based on this, the centrality of the NYSC’s policy and practice/work in developing a collective youth identity and capabilities through YCDPs is not only crucial in reconstructing a pro-Nigerian national identity; it is also, instrumental addressing issues of sustainable national development (e.g. national integration). Also, from a policy perspective, this chapter reveals that although NYSC officials demonstrated a nuanced knowledge local guiding policies, legislations and strategic frameworks guiding the NYSC’s work, global development frameworks (e.g. MDGs) permeates the institutional discourse that inform YCDPs.

While this highlights a critical achievement in achieving the 2015 goal of halving global poverty, the local imperative to address challenges of youth development may be
overlooked. Indeed, given the military-style structure of the NYSC, this chapter suggests that the need to ‘control’ and ‘discipline’ youths to the point of national integration conformity seems to be a priority for enforcing YCDPs and deployment. This has implications for addressing youth (individual and collective) development, as state and sectoral mobilization and deployment provide limited opportunity structures for youth capabilities to thrive by undermining their freedoms and choice to shape their transition pathways to decent work. With emerging security challenges in North-eastern Nigeria, the challenges of youth mobilizations and absorptive capacity concerns will further threaten the Nigerian mandate of national integration. Amidst institutional challenges that impede the NYSC’s work, the scheme performs at 68% of its capacity to address the dual challenge of youth and national development.
Chapter 7: Critical Perspectives on Youth Social Construction, Development and Positioning in the Nigeria’s Political Economy

7.1. Introduction
This chapter explores the experiences of Nigerian youth’s vis-à-vis the YCDP training they received during the NYSC programme, in order to provide a conceptual grounding of the roles they play in national development. Findings from youth narratives captured with semi-structured interviews (SSIs), focus group discussion (FGD) and structured questionnaires (SQ) were used to evaluate the extent to which the support and opportunity structures (see Figure 5.3) of the NYSC, acts as a catalyst in developing youth agency for capability deployment and effective functioning. This provides a nuanced understanding of how youths are socially constructed and positioned in Nigeria’s national development agenda.

Therefore, in-line with the best practice of disaggregating data by gender in mainstream human development discourse, this chapter presents the gendered profile of the youth respondents. Secondly, in arriving at the meaning of development from a Nigerian youth perspective, this chapter suggests that the same buzzwords and policy rhetoric that are embedded in the interpretations of neoliberal human development are reproduced in the narratives of the Nigerian youth. Thirdly, beyond the broad understanding of development, this chapter revealed the contextual interpretation of how young Nigerian graduates socially constructed their own identity. In this regard, apart from the dominant age-related construction (ARC) of youth identity, other social constructs (e.g. transition-related constructions (TRC) and capability-related construction (CRC)) also explained how issues power, agency, and pathways impede/facilitate transitions of youth towards new status, positions, and relevance in national development. Fourthly, the transition realities and experiences that youth encounter as they navigate pathways from education to the NYSC were also explored in order to capture the contextual interpretations of how Nigerian youths interpret the differences between them and their counterparts in other parts of the world.

Furthermore, this chapter sets an in-depth context that reflexively critique policy proposition in contemporary Nigerian development discourse and evaluate the extent to which the Nigerian youth capability pool is developed, deployed, and utilized/fits the national development narrative in Nigeria.
7.2. Gendered profile of youth respondents

Based on gendered critiques of mainstream human development and poverty indices that advocate for the disaggregation of data by gender (Chowdhury, 1991; Klasen, 2006; Gaye et al. 2010), youth respondent data is disaggregated to capture the level of female to male participation in this study. Table 7.1 presents the gendered distribution of all 123 youth respondents who volunteered to participate in this study.

Table 7.1: Gendered Distribution of Youth Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>SQ Total Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>SSI Total Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>FDG Total Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fieldwork Data (2013)

Although male voices often dominate in policy and research discourses in Nigeria (Agbalajobi, 2010; Ayobade, 2012), more females (55%) participated in this study in comparison to their male counterparts (45%). Ayobade (2012:237) opines that the dynamics of how gender relations are reproduced in the Nigerian context does not only ‘privilege the voice of the man and discounts that of the woman, but also, arrogates ‘ownership’ of the woman to the man’. However, the level of young Nigerian women voluntary participation in comparison to their male counterparts in this study, suggests advancement in women’s empowerment movement in Nigeria that doesn’t predicate the freedom of women’s voices on male respondents. The narratives of the female youth respondents in this study were not trapped in patriarchal sensitivities while describing their challenges and experiences during the NYSC programme.

7.3. Understanding the Meaning of Development

The evaluation of positioning of youths in the Nigeria’s national development cannot be conducted in isolation of how youths understand development. Therefore, youth respondents who participated in qualitative SSI’s and FGD sessions were asked to define development. Box 7.1 presents a collective narrative of all themes that explains how youths interpret the meaning of development.
Box 7.1: Youth’s Understanding of Development

Nigerian Youth’s conceptualise development as a ‘process’ of ‘positive advancement’, ‘achievement’, ‘progress’, ‘impactful growth’ and ‘societal improvement’. In their opinion, development occurs through policies and practices that promotes ‘investments in education’ and focuses on ‘political leadership’ and how ‘good governance’ structures could become central to national development. The aim of development as they argue is to ‘raise the knowledge base of a national economy’ in such a way that people are able contribute to ‘economic growth’, ‘human development’, and ‘sustainable development’ in different nation states. On the one hand while some see development as providing opportunities, basic infrastructure, and human welfare support systems, development is also conceptualized as the ‘level of access to resources’ and the ‘ease through which people meet their needs’. To majority of respondents, youth’s position in development would not have been possible if MDG related programmes had not given them a platform to contribute to national, community, and personal development.

Source: Fieldwork Data from FGD (2013)

These findings (Box 7.1) resonate with some of the thematic domains of the mainstream development discourse (Table 2a, Alkire, 2010). In succinct terms, it portrays how youths in Nigeria conceptualize development as a multi-dimensional concept that is aligned with mainstream interpretation of development as a means and an end (Sen, 1999). Although these themes provide a nuanced collective narrative, individual youth interpretations may slightly vary. For instance, YP2 conceptualises development as a measure of the ‘increase in per capita income’ or an ‘improvement in the standards of living’. YP7 also assert that ‘a nation is said to be developed, when that nations GDP is substantial enough to cater for its people’. Accordingly, both collective narratives (Box 7.1) and biographical perspectives reaffirm arguments from several scholars that point to development as economic growth (Sumner and Tribe, 2008). However, YP4 defines development ‘sociologically as change in norms and values in a particular community’. This perspective is consistent with UNDP’s HDR (2004) advocacy that development should focus on ‘cultural freedoms’ of not just communities, but diverse people’s across different nation states. Some respondents envision development as ‘human development’ (see Sen, 1999; Alkire, 2010). YP3 opine that ‘development has to do with making provisions for things that are not in place to be in place, relative to the needs of people, without compromising certain
Deconstructing human development from a youth-friendly lens (World Bank, 2006) YP1 suggest that ‘youth development has to do with making provision of things for the ‘actualization of a particular dream of the moment’. In positioning these arguments within the analytic framework (Figure 5.3), it is evident that development is not only conceptualized as an ‘opportunity structure’ but also as a ‘support structure’ that shapes the contributions of youths to national development. Furthermore, YP23 opine that ‘Development has to do with being able to be sustainable: if development is not sustainable it is not development at all. In the same way if leadership is not good leadership, it is simply rulership’. This perspective is a subtle critique of the militaristic-style of governance that has predominantly shaped the political landscape of Nigeria’s social history (Achebe, 1983; Momah, 2013). It also advocates good leadership and effective governance as necessary conditions for securing the sustainable development of Nigeria.

To ensure the sustainable future of Nigeria, focus has to be on the development and effective utilization of the country’s demographic bulge – the youth (Bloom et al., 2010). However, ‘development typically happens without youth’ in Nigeria (YP21). YP4 metaphorically states that ‘a nation without youth is like a table with three legs instead of four’. This is synonymous with the gendered critique of the one wing as opposed to a two winged strategy22 of human development (UNDP, 2006). YP9 contends that:

‘Personally, I don’t think they incorporate the Nigerian youth in development of the nation because the youths these days are really left out in so many aspects. Everything these days has to do with selfishness and family possessions. They don’t really care about what happens to the youths out there’.

[Fieldwork Data (2013) from SSI]

Some youth respondents display reservations on the success of government policies and institutional mechanisms aimed at addressing youth development challenges in Nigeria. Despite the recorded achievements of MDGs driven development planning in Nigeria (MDGs Nigeria Report, 2013), the MDGs focuses on general issues like poverty, education, maternal health, which encompasses youth, but is not really directed at youth’ (YP6, YP13 and YP21). Within this context, the dilemma of youth’s positioning in development is

\[22\] UNDP (2006) conceptualises women’s position in development as thus, ‘the world of humanity has two wings; one is women and the other men. Not until both wings are equally developed can the bird fly’ informed the two winged strategy.
trapped in a paradox of ‘looking without focusing’ (NY2) at the inherent challenges of Nigerian youths.

7.4. How youths construct their identity

Despite increasing efforts to ensure that Nigerian youths are included in national development processes, they remain marginalized and suffer most critically in the face of poverty, power and resource control (Abbink, 2005; Ikelegbe, 2006; CLEEN Foundation 2011; Osaghae et al., 2011; Arah, 2013). This is further complicated by the constitutional youth construct which is based on age demarcations rather than social categories (FRN, 1999, 2009). This has created a host of problematic stereotypes and deficit constructions about what being young in Nigeria means. The youth reality in Nigeria as captured by collective narratives from the FGD reveals that:

‘Despite the fact that we know that in perspective, youths are usually looked at as criminal and violent people [problems], we are also aware that the energy to produce results and productivity [capabilities] lies in young people. The big question however remains, do we have the right environment [opportunity and support structures] and avenues [pathways] to effectively utilise our potentials’ (YP1, YP2, YP4 and YP7).

Nonetheless, the interpretation of how youth’s reimagine their identity leans towards their capabilities and agency to bring about positive change in Nigeria (Durham, 2000; FRN, 2009). This fits into the national policy narrative that is saturated with the language of positive human capital intervention which constructs youths as ‘assets’ and ‘resources’ (Dike, 2009, 2012; Bloom et al, 2010; Sukarieh and Tannock, 2015). In this regard, the onus of how the construction of youth affects the utilization of their capabilities in addressing national challenges (Bloom et al., 2010; NNGR, 2010), depends on how well the Nigerian government can implement strategies that goes beyond the existing problematic stereotypes of youth constructs.

To arrive at narrative themes that describe how youths perceive and reflexively construct their own identity (Heath et al, 2011; Chisholm et al, 2011) youths were asked to explain whether or not they ‘see themselves as a youth?’
The results (Figure 7.1) reveal that 95% of respondents ‘view’ themselves as youths. Their categorisation of being a youth stems from age construction (54%); relational association through capabilities – ‘youth at heart syndrome’ (43%), marital status (8%), and other reasons (11%) like agility, strength, motivation, and intellectual capabilities (Figure 7.2). These findings reinforce the argument that the concept of youth is not only determined by the ‘age-bracket’, but are also shaped by socio-cultural norms like marriage that define social status across transition pathways etc. (WYR, 2003; Pieters, 2012; UN, 2014).

From the foregoing youth narratives, three (3) themes together with eleven (11) thematic components are discernible from the SSI’s and FGD findings (Table 7.2).
Table 7.2: Thematic Domains Through Which Youths Construct their Identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Description of Themes</th>
<th>Thematic Components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Age-related Construction (ARC)</td>
<td>ARC of youths based on the fact that they see themselves as youth because they fall under an ‘age bracket’. These interpretation of youth as an ARC explain constitutional and ideological conceptualization of this social category</td>
<td>(1) Legal Age for Inclusion (i.e. age 18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Global definition of youth (15-24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3) Nigerian constitutional definition of youth (18-35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(4) NYSC related definition of youth (18-30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(5) Individual narratives that define youth beyond global, national, and institutional interpretations of youth. For instance youths are age 35 and above but can still be considered ‘youth at heart’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Capability-related construction (CRC)</td>
<td>CRC of youth focuses on the energies, strengths, and productive agency of youth that is not only bound by policy definitions of youth based on age but also on the subjective interpretation of youth as ‘youth at heart’.</td>
<td>(6) Demographic power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(7) Capability Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(8) Economic Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Transition-related construction (TRC)</td>
<td>TRC explains youth based on transition realities, conditions and experiences in youth pathways. TRC focuses on the transitional interpretation of youth as ‘becoming’. It is based on transition conditions like marriage and financial independence.</td>
<td>(9) Capability Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(10) Support conditions (e.g. welfare and funding packages available during youth educational pathway)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(11) Opportunity conditions (e.g. employment opportunities)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fieldwork Data from SSI and FGD (2013)

Given the above thematic domains through which youths conceptualize their identity and reality, the next sub-section will unveil youth perspectives through responses from SQ and narratives from SSI’s and FGD that explain age-related constructions of youth identity in Nigeria.

7.4.1. Youth as an age related construction (ARC)

Although youth respondents to this study were within the NYSC (18-30) and national (18-35) age categorisations of youth in Nigeria (Table 7.3), they had varied perceptions about the existing categorization which reflects disconnects between how institutions
constructs youth, and how youths construct their own identity. USAID (2012) notes that development planning can be strengthened when age demographics and life conditions of young people are juxtaposed against their perspectives, aspirations and ideas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>SQ</th>
<th>SSI</th>
<th>FDG</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age Groups</td>
<td>Total Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Total Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 - 21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-26</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fieldwork Data (2013)

However, critical perspectives on youth social inclusion in society point to issues of ‘institutional ageism’ which informs relative deprivations of young people’s status in the social hierarchy (Barry, 2005). YP19 opines that:

… I consider 18 to 30 as a youth and when a person goes beyond 30 you are no longer talking about a youth. That is what we have in Nigeria “grandfather youths”… who would claim to be youths just because they are championing youth development and all those stuffs… it is nonsense. Let us tell ourselves the truth, they [grandfather youths] can’t feel like me, once a person is old, he is old. In fact most of the time when you are married, your youthful exuberance really starts diminishing because you are moving to the stage where you are already thinking differently from a youth.

In this regard, the institutionalisation of age shapes, and is shaped by, individual attributes based on stereotypes that explain discrimination and perceived levels of youth participation in employment and politics (DFID-CSO, 2010; Sargeant, 2011). The expression of bias against the ‘grandfather youths’ by YP19 codifies the problematique of the contextual reimagining of the constitutional categorisation of youths in Nigeria’s political economy. Barry (2005) notes that in describing the links between age and discrimination of youth through data, institutionalized ageism against youth is usually based on a fear of change or loss of power. Although age is often considered a vector of inequality in policy planning context, that explains the exclusion of millions of young
men and women from access to resources (Holmes et al, 2012; Pereznieto and Hardin, 2013a, 2013b), NESG (2012) highlights some of the problems associated with the social construction of youths in Nigeria. The problems include ‘the challenge of defining youths as distinct social category; the idea that youths are leaders of tomorrow; the idea of youth wing in our political parties; and the reality of pseudo-participation’ (NESG, 2012:54). However, some respondents critique the constitutional age constructions and demarcations that limit the effective functioning of youths in the political economy of national development in Nigeria when they argue that:

\[\text{...Although the only way we have been included as part of the solution is in terms of voting and the elections that we took part in, we remain marginalized… if someone has enough sense to vote at 18, how can you say he doesn’t have enough sense to hold a political office and responsibility}.\] (YP25 and YP23)

This narrative suggests an ‘inclusive exclusion’ phenomenon that traps youths in a web of pseudo participation (Barber, 2007; DFID-CSO, 2010; Lintelo, 2012a, 2012b). Participants at the 2014 International Youth Conference lend further credence to the critique of constitutional age limits that continues to restrict youth representation and opportunity in Nigeria.

The youths have no limit in terms of number and capacity to lead this country to greatness. The only limit is that for youths to contest as president, they need to be 40. If Gen. Yakubu Gowon was able to rule this country at 32, there is no reason why the youths should not be given the chance. So, don’t ask for a percent [representative quotas] because by that request you are limiting yourselves. I think what the youth should do now is to come together and I will support you, and take a bill to the National Assembly to amend some discriminatory provisions of the constitution in terms of age.

(Ehikioya, 2014:12 citing President Goodluck Jonathan with emphasis)

Several youth respondents attribute the contemporary challenges youths in Nigeria to the weaknesses of a neoliberal market economy that proposes illusive strategies of development were:

Nigerian youths, who are ‘in poverty’ become ‘agents fighting poverty’ (YP20); the ‘unemployed’ becomes ‘creators of employment’ (YP7; YP22); ‘certification is glorified
over sabification\(^{23}\) (YP11), ‘seniority is confused for experience’ (YP24); ‘luck is a remedy for uncertainty’ (YP10); ‘prolonged education is a norm’ [and justifies the extended age categorization of youth] (YP9; YP18); ‘the value of education is undermined’ (YP17) [because there are skills mismatches between what youths study and the practicality in context].

[Fieldwork Data (2013) from SSI’s and FGD with emphasis]

The youths generally envisage their participation in the NYSC acts as a bridge for transition into the employment pathway. Their labour market challenges increase without the NYSC certificate (YP3, YP4 and YP16). Several respondents contend that “whenever we think about ‘who a youth is in Nigeria, [the premise is always based on] ….what has been put forward before us as underpinned by relevant constitutional acts and provisions of law (YP2, YP20). In light of this, YP14 suggested two kinds of Nigerian youths:

…a “constructed youth” is one who has already been told who they are, what to do, when to do it, how to do it and the way it expected to be. A “constructed youth” is one that has no say or a critical mind to change that word or the actions that we have been assigned. However, by the time a constructed youth has been exposed, they are able to see things differently from the western culture or the English system. This is how you identify a “perspective youth”….You cannot have a perspective on something when you have no self-construction. A youth who has experienced critical perspective can see things from two sides.

From the foregoing analyses, it is apparent that while youths may be constructed as an age-related category in policy and practice, the extent to which youths ‘become’ self-aware (perspective youth) depends on the realization that their own capabilities and agency are critical in impacting the dynamics of national development (YP16; Jennings et al, 2006; McNeil et al, 2012). Based on this conclusion, the next portion of this chapter will critically examine how youths perceive and understand their identity as a capability related constructs (CRC).

\(^{23}\) In Nigerian vernacular, YP11 explains that ‘certification’ is confirmation of education attained, while ‘sabification is the application of book knowledge’. In other words, while certification refers ‘end’ of all human capital development interventions by the Nigerian government and YCDP’s as advocated by the NYSC scheme, sabification focuses on the effective functioning of the already acquired individual and collective capabilities of youth.
7.4.2. Youth as a capability-related construction (CRC)

Drawing on human capability literature, it is evident that education and knowledge can be conceptualized as a ‘conversion factor’, as a ‘means’, and as an ‘end’ that can impact on national and individual wellbeing (Chiappero-Martinetti and Sabadash, 2014). Within this context, the attainment of tertiary educational status is considered the ‘conversion factor’ while YCPDs is the ‘means’, and certification is an ‘end’. As expected, all participants in this study were graduates with a minimum qualification of a Higher National Diploma (HND). The educational status of the respondents is shown in Figure 7.3.

![Figure 7.3: Educational Status of Youth Respondents](source: Fieldwork Data (2013))

Beyond the use of age categorisation as a dominant social construction of youths in Nigeria, the youth respondents through their narratives also conceptualise youths based on their abilities (capability), strengths, energy (power) and state of wellbeing. Box 7.2 presents the findings on how youths construct their identity from a CRC perspective.
These narratives (Box 7.2) reinforce the articulated rationale of youth identity construction in Figure 7.2. Although youths are aware of how their identity is interpreted through age-related definitions, the contextual reality of the ‘Nigerian factor’ which dwell on pre-given discourses and control narratives of power, continue to sustain an unspoken legality for ‘grandfather youths’ that very often represent the youths in Nigeria’s polity. This perpetuates the paradox of youths becoming (too young to lead at the moment) but never belonging (too old to become leaders) (Omoniyi et al., 2009; Abutundu, 2010; Ezeah, 2012). The injustice and discriminatory practice of the constitutional construction of youths in Nigeria, does not only conceptualise them as futuristic agents of change (NESG, 2012), it adorns the power of their capabilities and their agency to a class of ‘grandfather youths’.

**Box 7.2. Collated Perspectives on how youth constitute their identity as a CRC**

Respondents define youths as...people that constitute the largest population and percentage of manpower in Nigeria and almost every society [demographic power] (YP2, YP9). For the educated ones, who have attained a certain level of education [certification] and intellectual resources [capability power] (YP8, YP14), youths are seen as people who have the skills [habilitation] that enable them contribute through work, to national economy [economic power]. Overall ‘youthful energy’ and positive drive [youth power] allows them to pursue and execute whatever policies or ideas that have been formulated and that is exactly where Nigerian youths come in (YP20). They are individuals who are active, strong, and agile enough to undertake any task (YP24) and with this, youths are not only bound by the ARC as constituted in policy or presented by society, but by the energy that a person has, whether the 50 or even older. In other words, though some respondents may refer to people beyond age category (35+) in Nigeria as ‘grandfather youths’, alternative perspectives justify this age category by arguing that as long as they still have the ‘youthful energy’ to address youth problems, they can be considered as ‘youth at heart’.
Although, youth respondents generally concede that the application of youth capabilities play a critical role in national development, 22% is of the opinion that Nigerian youths do not possess the required capability and skills to contribute to Nigeria’s development (Figure 7.4). In spite of these reservations, the ontological narrative of 78% of the youth respondents reinforces propositions of the positive agency of youth capabilities in national development. YP1 notes that: ‘though youths are usually viewed as criminal and violent, all we know that the energy to produce results and productivity lies in young people’. Two themes are discernible from this narrative: youth power and youth agency.

7.4.2.1. Youth Power

The centrality of youth power – whether as silent partners (e.g. while in education) or active agents (e.g. in Nigeria’s national development agenda) in the economic prosperity of a nation cannot be over-emphasized. From the narratives, youth power refers to the demographic strength and potentials of the youth population that could shape the economic realities of Nigeria if the ‘right environment and avenues are created to effectively utilise these potentials’ (YP6).

…when you talk about the labour force you are talking about a demographic population of people who are defined by age within a certain age range in every nation that are considered to be: energetic, innovative, positive oriented and are willing to get results at all costs. (YP7)

In this context, youth power reflects physiological and psycho-social interpretation of youth construction (Jones, 2009) across a ‘value chain’ of society. YP4 notes that:
There is no point in the value chain (whether they are graduates or not) of national development that youths are not actively participating. In other words, whether a youth is a wheel barrow pusher in the streets [Poor] who doesn’t have primary education… or a professional [Middle income], or even an expert [Rich] who went to one of the best universities across the world, youths are influence planning decisions and implementation of development processes. So whether youths are active recipients of developing planning [those without power] or those actively involved in the implementation [those with power] youths are contributing to the value chain of development planning processes.

[Fieldwork Data (2013) from SSI’s]

This narrative suggests that youths are co-constructor’s (Androuatsopoulos and Georgakopouloou, 2003) of youth identity formations in national development planning in Nigeria. To ensure a sustainable future for Nigeria, ‘youths, and not oil’ are the critical fulcrum (Bloom et al., 2010) that will drive and sustain Nigeria’s ‘economic power’ both regionally and on a global level.

7.4.2.2. Youth Agency

Despite the recognition of the importance of youth power in shaping the political economy of national development in Nigeria, youth respondents also argue that without the relevant skills they may struggle to change the course of the country’s development. In this context, youth agency points to the skills requirements and capabilities needed for youths to navigate social structures in Nigeria. YP20 contends that:

… Several youths have applied their skills in peace making, reconciliation and conflict resolution movement in different phases of the country’s history.

As a result of their innovative and technocratic capabilities, Nigerian youths are able to shape political directions through their agency by challenging existing power structures. YP20 opines that:

… through the mobilisation of discontented voices by the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) which is the body that represents all university students in Nigeria, youths were instrumental in pulling down the military dictatorship in Nigeria.

In contemporary Nigeria, youths can also ‘acquire more economic and political power by harnessing social media platforms for mobilisation and intellectual engagement’ (YP22). Indeed, with approximately 50 million internet users – majority of who are youths, African Practice (2014) reinforces that youth agency in Nigeria directly controls several e-business
platforms, blogging and social networking sites. The NESG (2012:53) notes that youth are the ‘greatest consumers of ICT content and creators of ICT driven businesses’ – the fourth largest contributing sector to the Nigerian economy, with a value of N76.3 billion and a growth rate of 29.5% in 2012. The next section examines TRC, and evaluates how Nigeria youths envision themselves within policy, in their transition to adulthood.

7.4.3. Youth as a transition-related construction (TRC)

Subjective interpretations of the youth concept as a transitional stage between childhood and adulthood are often reinforced by the stereotypes of marriage or singlehood in African societies. Majority of young graduate school leavers are unmarried (Figure 7.5) because they see early commitment to marriage as an unwanted drag on their personal, social, intellectual and financial growth (YP17). The youth respondents also recognise the societal and gendered stereotypes that approximate marriage to responsibility and singlehood to irresponsibility. YP14 contend that:

*Of course, to be married you should be a man. When I say being a man, you should be matured, spiritually, physically, mentally, financially and all of those…. And if you are not, then you are not fit for the journey of responsibility. That’s the deal and these people [youths] are lacking in these areas so they are not really… they are men but they are not real men yet.*

However, some youth respondents challenge the basis for such thinking given that:

*For most event of my life, I can say that I am adult. I have seen different stages of my life as young as I am; many adults have not even seen the same thing. So not even marriage, having a child, not even leaving my parents’ house can make me an independent adult. These things do not make me an adult. It is the ability to get a job and also keep that job that makes me an adult because there are some people that are adults that can’t even keep a job. So it is not about being where you are at that point in time – were you are working, married and all. It doesn’t make you an adult. Also for some young girls who are now having children at age 16 and 17 does it make them adults? They are still kids but then it depends on if that person is able to ‘man-up’ to that position, that is when you are adult and when you do it to the perfection of desired prescriptions, for instance within an organization, it makes you an adult…being able to comprehend and put into practice what you are asked to do.* (YP13)
The cultural creation of gendered-traps is also an embedded discourse in the TRC of youth. For instance, YP8 and YP9 opine that:

…I cannot be fully independent because of the cultural values in Nigeria. A woman can’t be fully independent… I can’t be fully independent. However, when I am married, I am fully independent of my parents but then again, dependent on my husband (YP8). … in the north here, most women are really being restricted from so many things including from employment and movement… some of them are being restricted from going out because their husbands are protecting them from other men, but with ongoing empowerment programmes women are being liberated. (YP9)

These narratives reflect the practical realities of TRC of youths in Nigeria. The narratives affirm that marriage forms part of the transition-related discourse that explains how youths are socially constructed. This makes marital status a pre-given construct that determines youth’s position in Nigeria’s national development agenda.

7.5. Youth transition realities: The education to NYSC nexus
The transition realities of youths are assessed from two angles: youth experiences in the education pathway, and in the NYSC pathway.

7.5.1. Youth experience in the education pathway
The narratives from youth respondents will be discussed under the following themes: youth poverty; access to support structure; inadequacies of the Nigerian education system; and the limitations to youth choices in the education pathway.
7.5.1.1. Youth Poverty

Although lack of gainful employment continues to shape the economic condition and access of the Nigerian youth to opportunity structures (WYR, 2007; Ezeah, 2012; NBS, 2012; Ogbu, 2012; World Bank, 2013; Akande, 2014), their resilience and motivation to excel is evident in the narratives of youth respondents to this study. YP4 contend that:

Growing up wasn’t all rosy because I came from a poor background. My dad is a peasant farmer and so I had to do so many things to make ends meet. At a point, I was even a common ‘okada rider’ [commercial motorcycle rider]. I did this to fund my education because my dad was poor and I felt that, if I didn’t take my destiny into my own hands I would end up being on the street. Also, as the eldest son in the family, I realized that if I didn’t go to school, my siblings would also remain poor. So I took up the challenge and I went to Kaduna Polytechnic where I acquired my Ordinary National Diploma (OND). Due to personal hardships, I had to postpone continuing with the Higher National Diploma (HND) for a year. This was a period of immense struggle because I was busy sourcing for money. Luckily enough, after I got the money, I obtained admission to do the HND in Mass Communication and Media Studies. So now that I have finished my schooling and I am doing my service, I would say that it was a great challenge for me, and my siblings are still struggling back home. So I am just praying that after this ‘service of a thing’, I can get something doing so that I can help them.

This narrative denotes a correlation between how family poverty put pressures on male youths in patriarchal Nigeria to take up adult responsibilities at a young age. Regardless of the perilous condition of a Nigerian youth, the pursuit of emancipation from poverty and economic deprivation typically begins with a self-realization and will-power to attain higher educational status (Arah, 2013; Ezekwesili, 2014). However, the government provision of support structures needed to obtain higher education was questioned by some youth respondents. YP22 opine that:

The irony of youth challenges is that, though I am equally aware of the provisions of chapter 3 of the Nigerian constitution and how it instructs the government to ensure that education is accessible to Nigerians at all levels... I fail to understand why there was no education for me at ‘all levels’, given that there was no ambiguity in that statement to warrant further interpretation by a law court.

This affirms the aphorism that Nigeria has the constitutional and policy mechanisms to ensure inclusive growth and economic prosperity but lacks a comprehensive approach
to implementation (Dintelo, 2012, Ogbu, 2012). Within this context, youths can only escape the poverty traps in Nigeria if the government moves beyond mere policy formulation into effective programme implementation.

7.5.1.2. Access to support structure

The extent to which the educational policy provisions of the government are translated into action will have a direct bearing on youth access to allocated opportunity structures. Although there are numerous government funded scholarship boards in Nigeria, family/self-funded education (80%) and multinational corporations/NGOs (12%) are the principal sources of sponsorship of youth respondents’ education (Figure 7.6).

![Figure 7.6: Primary Stakeholders for Youth's Educational Development](image)

Source: Fieldwork Data (2013) From SSI’s and FGD

These findings suggest disconnects between government policy on youth literacy interventions and the practical realities (Moja, 2000; NBS, 2010b, 2012; AfDB 2013b; Okeke et al, 2015). Youths that have benefitted from government scholarship notes that the limited opportunity structures makes the criteria for award excessively stringent and inaccessible (YP10). This engenders a situation of survival of the fittest…and the mentality of suffering and smiling because we [Nigerian youths] believe that we need to struggle it out to make it (YP22). YP24 notes that:

…the new policy from the Federal Ministry of Finance advocates that for youths who made a first class – both on the undergraduate level and postgraduate master’s level, they would have the opportunity to be able to further their studies ‘abroad’. The irony of it all is that, though I am aware that they do sponsor to study abroad, however, this ‘abroad’ says a lot about the state of our educational system.

These narratives highlight the inadequacies of the government supported opportunity structures for youth education in Nigeria. It also suggests a tacit admission of the
limitations of the Nigerian educational system and the need for improved funding of the education sector to forestall the brain-drain of Nigeria’s brightest minds.

7.5.1.3. Inadequacies of the Nigerian education system

The state of the Nigerian education system remains a source of heated debate between the government, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the National Association of Nigerian Students. Jemie (2014) asserts that the future of the Nigerian education system:

…depends heavily on this three-cornered, inter-dependent and inseparable foundational base: security, jobs, and education. The planning for the one must entail the other two. …knowing it is not enough: it’s the doing it. The planning and consistent execution of policies regarding security, job creation and education must go hand in hand always. The fact that up to this point it has not is at the heart of our national crisis. To the question: What kind of future can Nigeria build with an uneducated citizenry? The answer, to put it in bold and possibly exaggerated terms, is: Boko Haram! When you sow no (or low) education, no (modern industrial) skills, and no jobs (no industrial enterprises where the young can earn a decent living), you reap armed robbery, kidnapping, and Boko Haram. In short, with an uneducated citizenry Nigeria has no future.

This assertion is a reminder of the profound position of the education sector as a driver of national stability. However, the current reality is that the budgetary allocation to the education sector is grossly inadequate – less than 7% of the national budget (Sanusi, 2012; FRN, 2010, 2013). This affects both the quality and quantity of knowledge delivery in Nigeria’s education system (Obadare, 2007; Ezekwesili, 2014) and creates a pool of low quality graduates (Sanusi, 2012) that can barely compete in a globalised market economy (Ezekwesili, 2014). These perspectives are reinforced by narratives of the youth respondents.

…when you critically examine the educational system in Nigeria you see that challenges like strikes are caused by inadequate funding of the [education] sector and all those other lecturer welfare issues that perpetuate strikes and other forms of industrial action…then it is easy to understand why the average Nigerian graduate is skills deficient even after completing tertiary education… A programme that you ought to complete in four years, you
would end up doing for 6 years and you are still there dealing with never ending strikes (YP6)… Your counterpart who has gone to the UK will complete his PhD in 3yrs or MSc in a year; comes back to Nigeria, possibly gets an appointment as a lecturer in your department and start lecturing you (YP5)…I also want to put forward that the Nigerian educational system has not been properly structured to inculcate the relevant skill needed for us to solve problems… people go through schools without being grounded and when they come out they require further training like the one that we had today during CDS…there is a gap between the educational qualification, knowledge and workplace experiences… We [Youth] have some skills but we do not have the sufficient skill… (Y23)

The foregoing youth narratives capture the challenges and inadequacies bedevilling the Nigerian education sector. The multiplier effects of these inadequacies range from prolonged youth-transition patterns to engrained inadequacies in the knowledge economy of Nigeria. This has created the perfect condition for youth disillusionment, restiveness, unemployment, poverty, and capability flight that could seriously undermine Nigeria’s national development agenda.

7.5.1.4. Limitations to youth choices in the education pathway

The essence of communality and family ties is a highly regarded ethos that provides social safety nets for the most vulnerable groups – including youths, in African societies (Salami, 2006; Sathiparsad et al., 2008 Shumba and Naong, 2012). This portends the dependence of the average Nigerian youth on communal or family safety nets that could be leveraged to influence youth behaviour in different facets of their lives including participation in the education pathway. Some youth respondents recount that:

Any social benefit including funding for my education was immediately stopped by my parents the day I chose to convert from the Muslim religion which my parents practice to Christianity… they said to me pack your things and leave this house until you rescind your decision… I didn’t and that accelerated my transition to adulthood and independence from such control (YP24)… I am from a very poor background and so I had to work very hard to fund my education myself after making the unpopular choice – at least from my parents perspective – to go to school rather than learn a trade (YP23).

This narrative underpins the dilemma that shapes youth choices and their decision to participate in the education pathway vis-à-vis the threat of sanctions from a conformist societal structure where differing opinion can sometimes be construed as rebellion (Arowosegbe, 2009; Nwajiaku-Dahou, 2012; Iwilade, 2013). Self-help appears to be the
only alternative support structure available to youths from poor background or those whose decision to express their freedom of choice to participate in the education pathway has cost them their family safety net. What is seemingly absent in the youth narratives is recourse to government funded safety net interventions. This again brings to the fore the effectiveness of the national youth development policies in Nigeria.

7.5.2. **The NYSC Pathway: Youth Experiences**

The rationale for the continued existence of the NYSC in Nigeria continues to generate heated debates among scholars and stakeholders. Some scholars (Akuwe et al., 2012; Ben-Kalio, 2012) have argued for the abolition of the NYSC because according to them it has outlived its usefulness and simply ‘misguide youth expectations’ while restricting their immediate transition into the labour market through unwarranted institutional protocols and oaths of patriotism. This view is at variance with those of other scholars and stakeholders (Obadare, 2010; Raimi and Alao, 2011; Udende, 2012; NYSC, 2014) who insist that the relevance of the NYSC to youth development in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized. They also admit that the programme needs to be constantly refreshed and restructured to fit and address the ever changing and emerging national challenges of Nigeria (FMYD, 2013a). However, youth voices and their reflexive agency are seemingly not factored into these debates. As a result, there is a constant disconnect between youth policy formulations and the practicalities of youth experiences. The narratives of youth respondents’ experiences in the NYSC pathway are discussed under the themes of national integration, capability and skills development, transition to full employment, and relevance to national development.

7.5.2.1. **National Integration**

Youth respondents to this study perceive the NYSC scheme as a viable platform for the integration of youths in the Nigerian society. YP13 contends that:

>This goal of NYSC focuses on ‘oneness’ because all Nigerians are supposed to come together to different communities and impact change; learn each other’s diversity and work together. National integration is what we call it in Nigeria. So while the NYSC has achieved national integration, they have not achieved making us want to serve in places that we are posted to… that is, the PPA is different from national integration. National integration is all NYSC corpsers coming together… we are happy in our different communities, in our new communities, though people ‘work’ [influence] theirs, but then it is a new community for every other person… in any case, we are supposed to implement
change in that community where we are posted… to teach them what we know, learn from what they know so that Nigeria becomes free of crises because people would start getting conscious of the reality of other regions of Nigeria and you hear parents saying stuffs like ‘oh! My daughter serves in so so and so State and place’. So even in the event of disagreement with that region, conflict resolution is faster because they have a stake in that community since we are all going to be one…Nigeria is safer for this.

This suggest that the strategy of national integration enhances cultural learning and understanding, thus, making it easy to resolve inter-ethnic conflicts. The youth respondents further opine that:

The NYSC is a good idea because to me it is a modest way of this culturally diverse society of ours. They send people from the north to the south and people from the east to the west (YP6)…youths from different regions of Nigeria converge in different orientation camps across the States for the purpose of unity and national development…participating in the NYSC programme has particularly enlightened me on the importance of national unity and on why people from diverse backgrounds regardless of their religion or ethnicity can live together in peace and harmony (YP15)… youths are the leaders of tomorrow and on the unity of Nigeria, we lead by example in the NYSC programme (YP20).

The foregoing narratives reaffirm the NYSC mandate and underlie some of their successes in enhancing youth national consciousness, and interethnic tolerance. This is consistent with the findings of Obadare (2010). However, the issue of insecurity in some parts of the north-eastern region threatens integration and the existing ethno-religious tolerance of Nigeria (YP22).

7.5.2.2. Capability and Skills Development

In general, youth respondents contend that the NYSC empowers them to become self-reliant through training in entrepreneurial courses during the YOIP in camp. Specifically, they highlight that the MDGs advocacy training workshops (YP7) and subsidized professional exams organized by the Nigerian Institute of Management (YP12), are important skill acquisition initiatives relevant to ensuing increased youth engagement in national development (YP23). Although efforts to enhance the capabilities of youths in the NYSC pathway are widely recognised by most youth respondents, others are critical of the type and relevance of the capacity development programmes on offer. Some youth respondents assert that:
While the NYSC has positively impacted on my current skills through a variety of not so relevant training programmes (YP11)… on how to become entrepreneurs in bead and hat making, costume and make-up artist… It is absurd to think that, after spending 4 years in the University, it is only now the Nigerian government feels that making entrepreneurs out of youths is the way out of our current situation. Why did we go to school then? Actually if entrepreneurship is the new education, then the Nigerian government should have advocated for this earlier. In my opinion, the approach of the NYSC towards this whole entrepreneurship thing is even more insulting…. In camp I never took those entrepreneurship classes for make-up, for hat making, and stuff because I have a ‘focus’. I read public administration in University for a reason, so that I can be able to bring about change in governance in Nigeria not to become a bead maker. So it actually irks me when people say that I need to do hat making because the government supports this, whereas I didn’t get any support as an economist or an administrator (YP15).

Similarly, 11% of youth respondents to the SQ indicate that they would have gained no new capability or skill, relevant to their future aspiration by the end of their participation in the NYSC pathway.

![Figure 7.7: Youths perspectives on skill acquisition in the NYSC pathway](image)

Source: Fieldwork Data (2013) from SQ

This critical narrative informs broader debates on the appropriateness of the YCDP particularly as there seems to be disconnects between the training youths receive and the already existing capability set they possess. However, the narratives of some other youth respondents suggest that though the capability development programme may not be directly enhancing their existing capacities, new skills can be acquired in the PPA to
diversify their ability to adapt and participate in different areas of national development needs. YP24 opines that:

*Although I studied human kinetics education in University My participation in MDGs and entrepreneurial training kind of prepared me for my present PPA where I am currently working as a resource personnel in a consulting firm…Occasionally, I teach physical education in a secondary school on CDS days with the knowledge from my first degree.*

7.5.2.3. Transitions to full employment

NYSC certification is a pre-requisite for gainful employment in the spaces of national development needs in Nigeria. Until such certification or official exemption is obtained through participation in the NYSC pathway, young graduates are exposed to exploitation by private capitalist. This assertion is evident in the narrative of YP23:

*I finished university in 2010 and when I was waiting for my call up letter, I got a job with a sporting outfit in Ikoii Lagos. I was working there but I wasn’t really paid well because I had not done my NYSC service and my boss was like you are not yet a full graduate because you have not served and so I will not pay you more than N40000 because I hadn’t served and that I can’t consider you a full graduate until after the NYSC. So to some extent, the NYSC still goes long ways to show how long they – employers would treat you. But now that I have gotten the NYSC certificate I am earning much better.*

This suggests that despite university certification the need for participation in the NYSC pathway is an embedded development policy lag that constrains youth transition into the political economy of national development in Nigeria. Youth respondents contend that:

*Prior to the NYSC, even though I was employed in a private company and met company target requirement for promotion, I was not promoted because management regarded me as a temporary staff since I hadn’t completed the NYSC service (YP4)… the business community in Nigeria does not really regard someone that hasn’t gone for NYSC service as an accredited graduate with full employment rights in Nigeria. When you graduate and you have not served, employers will suspect whatever certificate you provide to them. (YP5)*

The foregoing narratives suggest that rigid preconditions of societal recognition and fullness, traps youths in a pseudo-participative limbo (Ainley and Allen, 2010; Lintelo, 2012a, 2012b) where surveillance inspired by the general institutional suspicion undermine constructive engagement in society (Kelly, 2000; Giroux, 2009).
7.5.2.4. Relevance to national development

Majority of youth respondents (78%) recognise the relevance of the NYSC in youth and Nigeria's national development (Figure 7.8). The NYSC is an important bridge between youth development policy and the actual realization of youth policy initiatives (YP24) through various policy frameworks.

![7.8: Perception on the relevance of the NYSC to youth and national development in Nigeria](image)

Source: Fieldwork Data (2013) from SQ

The youth respondents have an impressive knowledge of the existing MDGs and local development frameworks. They opine that for the frameworks to be more effective in delivering the stated goals there is the need to properly align the objectives of the frameworks.

...programmes such as the MDGs provide a platform for youth training for development advocacy and community sensitization (YP17)... What I would subscribe to is a combined effort to make both channels [i.e. MDGs and other local Nigerian policies] effective... because as it stands, the roles of the MDGs as part of the CDS programme gives me more sense of belonging to something really important. It creates a fulfilment in you...

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24 Youth respondents identified a number of youth development policy frameworks including: (1) The National Poverty Eradication Programme which they argued was expected to focus on creation of Jobs in Nigeria; (2) The Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS) of the Transformation Agenda; (3) The establishment of both the OSSAP-MDGs – Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs and OSSAP-YSM – Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Youth and Students Matters; (4) The Youth Enterprise With Innovation in Nigeria (YouWIN); (5) WAP – War Against Poverty; (6) MDGs – Millennium Development Goals; (7) NEEDS – National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (8) SURE-P – Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme, and; (9) The policy frameworks identified include: The Youth Employment In Agriculture Programme (YEAP) initiative initiated as part of Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme of the Transformation Agenda as institutionalized by the Nigerian Bank of Industry (BOI) and Bank of Agriculture (BOA) in collaboration with the Agro-industry Department of the African Development Bank; (10) The NYSC.
to know that, despite your situation and circumstance that the world and your nation still needs your hand in the plough of development (YP25).

YP10 further contend that:

From participating in the MDGs group, I have come to understand that by default I am part of the scheme already – that is I have a role to play. This role is not limited to this one year of national service because I feel that, when we talk about national development, it has to start with the individuals… it is the individuals that eventually make up the community. So we can’t speak of national development in the sense of maybe throwing it all to the government, no. I think that it is the individual’s responsibility and as a youth to do something that would aid national development because I believe that I am contributing to the economy of the nation, by implication I am contributing to its development as well.

Although these narratives reveal that majority of the youth respondents view the NYSC as relevant to both individual and national development, some respondents highlights the need for the NYSC to undertake detailed youth research to better understand how to shape YCDPs in the YOIP. The youth respondents assert that:

Yes, the NYSC policy exists but they are not exactly practical in terms of really preparing youths for the challenges of national development (YP16)… Although the NYSC and its youth development programmes are very relevant I personally struggle to understand how some of the training will address our current predicaments (YP23)… the problem is that youth voices particularly undergraduate who will eventually participate in the programme do not have a say in the formulation of the training content (YP12)… it will make more sense if they [NYSC] conduct more research on how to effectively channel our [Youths] capabilities for national development (YP19).

What is evident from the foregoing narratives is that although the NYSC is a relevant agency for enhancing and directing youth capabilities to areas of national development needs, there is the need to deepen the positioning of youths in development planning, policy and practice.
7.6. Contextual conceptions of a Nigerian youth

The following themes are discernible from the narratives on how Nigerian youths perceive themselves vis-à-vis youths from other parts of the world.

7.6.1. Technical skills

The need to develop the youth capabilities of a nation through formal education and technical training has taking a more urgent dimension due to the ever changing demands of a globalized economy (ILO, 2008; Dike, 2009, 2011; UNECA, 2011; Pereznieto and Harding, 2013; Page, 2013; OECD, 2014). Evidence from the narratives of the youth respondents suggests that the strategies of youth capability development in tertiary institutions need to move beyond only the theoretical into a holistic practical knowledge economy. YP11 contend that the difference in the quality of livelihoods between a Nigerian youth and a youth in Europe or America is down to the quality of education they receive (YP11).… that gives them a greater competitive edge in the global market (YP17). Such advantage will act as a conversion factor in providing more than decent employment, financial security and independence (Okafor, 2011; AEO, 2012; NSRP, 2014). Youth respondents note that:

Although we receive formal education in our schools, training has not been properly structured to create sufficient skills needed to solve national problems or even compete with our counterparts overseas (YP19).… we all know what the problems are with our institutions…poor funding, decaying infrastructure, unnecessary strikes and so on. What type of skill can you really impact with these kinds of challenges? (YP12).… Lack of suitable skills compound the ability of youths to get good paying jobs in this country [Nigeria]… (YP10).

7.6.2. Human capital investments

Within the last decade, there has been an overall increase in investments in human capital development in Nigeria with emphasis on education (see Table 4.3.). Although this is a welcome development, the timing and quality of investments is very crucial. The youth respondents contend that while youths from the United States are thinking Z, the Nigerian youth is still stuck on F (YP22).… it is only now the government is taking a serious look at youth capacity development but it’s mainly for us that are here [in the NYSC]. How about the millions of unemployed graduates with no entrepreneurial skill or relevant expertise? (YP14). If this narrative is analysed from a development theoretical premise, the suggestion is that the Nigerian youths represent themselves as disadvantaged in a globalised market economy. Ancillary investment in cutting-edge technology that will provide competitive advantage for youth
capital is generally lacking in Nigeria. This has created an ever growing capability gap between the average Nigerian youth and youths in Europe and America. This assertion is reinforced by YP15 who contend that:

‘...before knowledge there must be information. For instance, when you go to our Nigerian libraries, you will find outdated books written in the 18th and 19th century – historic books. However, for our counterparts in the developed world, they have been empowered from childhood and have already started undertaking new inventions. Here in Nigeria we don’t even have the appropriate tools to translate our creativity but there [Europe and America] even at age 10, someone can produce a toy that works. So for the Nigerian youth, not only do we not have the information, we do not have the necessary technology to improve our knowledge.

As YP3 recounts:

...while I only acquired knowledge on entrepreneurship in my third year in university, my South Korean friend I met at a development conference was already a successful entrepreneur at the age of 13’...call it a bit of good fortune from his dad but still he was running his firm.

From the narratives of the youth respondents, it can be concluded that although ‘theoretical knowledge’ obtained through education is a crucial aspect of youth capability development, the presence or absence of skills – ‘right knowledge’ and ‘the time’ in which youths acquire both ‘theoretical’ and ‘right’ knowledge is an integral ingredient in shaping youth life course and the extent to which they can effectively contribute to processes of national development.

7.6.3. Enabling environment

The generally feeling of the youth respondents is that unlike in other developed/developing countries of the global North, the Nigerian government has not provided the right conditions and environment for youths to effectively apply their capabilities in Nigeria’s political economy of development. They collectively argue that:

Nigerian youths are not given an equal playing ground. If we look from 1960 till date, the same people that have been ruling us are still here. They never want, or wanted to quit and they keep cajoling us by telling us that youths are the leaders of tomorrow... but yet tomorrow never seems to come. So, there has never been an even playing ground for the youths to showcase their skills. (FGD)

This narrative suggests that youth transitions are hampered by existing structures designed by the older generation to perpetuate their dominance on national
development policies and discourse. It is evident that despite the efforts of government in establishing the NYSC, and creating an independent youth ministry, the sad reality of youths in Nigeria is that they remain a disadvantaged majority. YP8 further opine that:

Youths in Nigeria are not given the opportunities to express themselves. In this country [Nigeria] we have a lot of young people who have abundant talents. For instance, when I was in the university, I knew a guy who built an aircraft and every time we go to school, we see this thing and we say to him if it were overseas, they would have taken you and expanded your talent. But here nobody wants to give us the opportunity. They keep suppressing the youths here for their own selfish reason. Even when you try to raise your voice, they try to shut you up and ask questions like ‘how old are you’. For instance, I have a friend in South Africa, she joined politics at the age of 16 and she was in a political party, and now she is 25. So at this point, she knows so many things about the politics of her nation and she can stand up and tell you historical truths. For me, I wanted to join a political party in my state and they were like ‘you are a woman’, ‘you are still too young’, ‘you are still in the university’ and all and I felt discouraged and left them. So basically, here in Nigeria we are not given the opportunity to express ourselves or be involved in what’s going on neither are we given the support of the government.

From the foregoing narratives it is clear that beyond the rhetorical creation of ‘opportunity structures’, the level and ease of access to basic resources would be critical components that will help define successful youth transitions to adulthood in Nigeria.

### 7.6.4. Disconnects between youth policy and youth realities

Youth respondents identify variances in the development of youth policy in Nigeria and the global North. They contend that: YP6 together with YP22 critique the voice platforms that exist in Nigeria when they observe that:

> There is a total lack of communication between the governed and the government…some of the policies they put forward does not seem to match the problem they want to solve (YP6)… Youth usually don’t get the opportunity to participate in their development planning or policy formulation. It’s always a top-bottom approach in Nigeria. You either take it or leave it (YP22)… They [the government] might give us a forum to express ourselves but at the end of the day, that’s where it ends… it is all paper work (YP19)… We [youths] don’t really have effective voice in youth policy because whatever we say is not taking into consideration (YP11)… unlike in places like England and the USA (YP8).

This dilemma of inclusive exclusion where youths are ‘recognized’ but not ‘represented’ (Fraser, 2009), ‘included in policy but excluded in practice’ (NESG, 2012) reduces the
Nigerian youths to passive agents in national development policy planning. YP16 notes that:

*The decision of the governments to listen to and act upon the problems of the youth is the difference between us and them [the western world]. Again it is not solely that the policies are not relevant they simply don’t apply and our voices are not included in the policy making process. So as for skills, we have that….but our governments do not put enough effort to hear our voices so we can really help the nation. Likewise it is important to note that on a state level we have ministries of youth development and commissioners who head these ministries, so if it was a question of how to access young people the machinery is available but it is not just happening.*

Although the Nigerian government have made decent strides in implementing youth development policies (Alao and Raimi, 2011; Akuwe et al., 2012), lack of youth participation in policy formulation continues to undermine the effectiveness of these youth development programmes.

### 7.6.5. General Youth Capability Development Recommendations

Based on the perceived contextual difference between the average Nigeria youth and youths in Europe and America, the youth respondents offer the following recommendation on ways to develop quality and effective youth capabilities in Nigeria (Figure 7.9).

![Figure 7.9: Recommended Interventions for Youth Capability Enhancement in Nigeria](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investment in technical schools</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase funding of research and development</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships for youth training abroad</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment in education infrastructure</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of soft loans for SME investment</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth inclusion in development planning</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fieldwork Data (2013) from SQ
The improvement of the Nigerian education infrastructure is considered paramount by the youth respondents (47%). Consistent with the findings of FMYD (2013a, 2013b), the respondents (40%) recognise the centrality of research and development in the enhancement of youth capabilities in Nigeria. The full benefit of improved youth capabilities will be realised if adequate support and opportunity structures such as soft loans for SMEs are made available to drive genuine entrepreneurial enterprise (FRN, 2001).

7.7. Mobilization and Deployment Scenarios of Youth Capabilities in Nigeria

The NYSC mobilization and deployment strategies of youth capabilities for the purpose of addressing national development needs are evaluated within the context of available youth capabilities pool, national integration policy and effective deployment of youth capabilities.

7.7.1. Youth capabilities pool

Youth capability pool in the context of the analytical framework (Figure 5.3) refers to the collection of specialisations obtained during the tertiary education of youths and available to the NYSC for mobilisation and deployment to areas of national development needs. Eighteen (18) key activity sectors are identifiable from the currently rebased GDP of Nigeria (NBS, 2014). The capabilities pool of all youth respondents fall into eleven (11) activity sectors of the Nigerian economy (Figure 7.10). However, the new deployment policy of the NYSC is based on a four (4) sector strategy (education, agriculture, health and infrastructure) that creates an artificial capability mismatch of 78%. This raises a critical question about the wisdom of continuing with the four (4) sector deployment policy especially when this juxtaposed against the substantial contributions of other sectors such as finance, IT and communication to the GDP of Nigeria.
Although it may be argued that these four (4) sectors underpins global human development focus (HDR, 2014) and may have a multiplier effect (especially education and health) on the economy (Johnson, 2011; Eneji et al., 2013), this deployment strategy generally limits youth opportunity structure in the Nigerian political economy.

7.7.2. National integration policy

A cardinal objective of the NYSC is to facilitate the national integration of Nigeria through the mobilisation and deployment of youth to places other than their states or geopolitical zones of origin and schooling. Based on findings from documents, and narratives from key NYSC officials, young Nigerian graduates can only be state-mobilized and deployed either to 83% or 67%25 of the available geopolitical zones in Nigeria. Within this context, the mobilization scenarios in which youth capabilities can be deployed for the purpose of national integration would first depend on whether the youth’s State/GPZO26 and the State/GPZE27 are the same (deployment Scenario 1) or different (Deployment Scenario 2) from the geopolitical zone or state of national

25 Both these percentages from NYSC official’s perspectives were earlier conceptualized as mobilization opportunity 1 and mobilization opportunity 2 respectively. They explained the mobilization chances of youth and capabilities based on the national integration policy of the NYSC scheme is based on the mobilization criteria that, young Nigerian graduates could only be mobilized and state deployed to: 83% of the available GPZ’s for youth whose state or GPZ of origin (SO) and GPZ of education (GPZE) were the same and; 67% of the available geopolitical zones (GPZ) for those youth state or GPZ of origin (GPZO) and GPZ of education (GPZE) were different

26 Further details of all youth respondents GPZO is captured in Appendix C: Table B and Table C.

27 Further details of all youth respondents GPZE is captured in Appendix C Table B and Table C.
service (GPZ-SNS)\(^{28}\). This simply suggests that, as much as possible, the integration of Nigerian should be implemented in such a way that youth have differential experiences across their transition pathway. For instance their GPZO must be different from GPZE, and different from GPZ-SNS.

![Figure 7.11: National Integration Criteria Fit](image)

Source: Fieldwork Data (2013)

The findings from the youth mobilization for national integration reveal that only 64% of the youth respondents meet the requirement of either scenario of national integration. Although a number of reasons can be adduced for this apparent lapse in deployment for national integration, the prime factor may be the politics of concessional favouritism wherein youths influence their deployment with the social capital or financial muscle of their guardians.

7.7.3. Deployment of youth capabilities

The deployment of youth capabilities by the NYSC is hampered by the current four (4) sector deployment strategy that negates the original constitutional sectoral provisions which advocates for the deployment of youth capabilities to 10 sectors (NYSC, 1999, 2004; NY2). The new deployment policy also ignores the contemporary contributions of a number of other activity sectors to Nigeria’s GDP (NBS, 2014). Table 7.4 show data on how youth respondent capabilities were deployed in the pre-given sectors.

\(^{28}\) Further details of all youth respondents GPZ-SNS is captured in Appendix C Table B and Table C.
It is evident from Table 7.4 that 40% of youth capabilities were forced to fit the new NYSC sectoral deployment policy. Under this circumstance, their potential contribution to national development through existing capabilities is underutilized. About a third of youth respondents indicate that their capabilities have been deployed to sectors where they can’t function effectively to bring about national development (Figure 7.11).

These findings points to the contradiction inherent in the NYSC deployment strategy and its objective of deploying youth capabilities for national development. In the end there is a mismatch of practice based on the new deployment policy and the intended
outcome as youth positioning and transition within the Nigerian political space is further complicated.

### 7.8. Conclusion

This Chapter report and discuss findings from SQ and narratives from the youth respondent group. The disaggregation of youth respondent data by sex reveals optimism for engendering youth and women voice in the national development agenda in Nigeria. Nigerian youth conception of development is closely aligned with thematic domains of mainstream development discourse. The reality of how youths are social constructed in Nigeria is centred on three dominant themes of age-related construction (ARC), capability-related construction (CRC) and transition-related construction (TRC). In this context, ARC strengthens pre-given age categorization of youth, based on global, national, and institutional definitions of youth, while CRC magnifies the demographic, economic, and productive agency of youths, and TRC explains how conditionality’s/rites along youth transition pathways (e.g. marriage) continue to construct youth as ‘becoming’. For instance, ARCs (the most dominant way in which Nigerian youths conceptualise their identity) informs a new categorization of ‘grandfather youths’ who fit the local Nigerian narrative. Findings from youth narratives suggest that although youths are often expressed based on their ARC and TRC, CRCs of Nigerian youth are often undermined by the politics of interference. The narratives from respondents also suggest that the social construction of youth is embedded in politics of rhetorical representation that adorns power and youth agency to the older generation as the legitimate representatives of youth development in Nigeria.

In uncovering the experiences of youths in the education transition pathway, the contention is that challenges such as poverty, lack of access to support structure, inadequacies of the Nigerian education system, and the limitations to youth choices, generally creates youth capability traps. Furthermore, youth respondents concede that the capability gaps between the average Nigerian youths and their counterparts in Europe and America is the direct consequence of limited technological and human capital development investments in Nigeria that have created a pool of graduates with limited technical skills. Although the support structure provided by the NYSC pathway to the Nigerian youth include national consciousness, capability and skills development, and transition to full employment for national development, these efforts have been criticised for been too narrow with no connection to youth realities. In this regard, the youth capability development programmes (YCDPs) in the NYSC transition pathways
are often hampered by poor support structures and limited opportunity structures. Findings also suggest that although there is a vast array of youth capability pool, the implementation of the new four (4) sector deployment policy continues to undermine the effective contributions of youths to Nigeria’s national development through the NYSC pathway. With regards to NYSC deployment for national integration, about a third of youth respondents were not properly state deployed. The effectiveness of the NYSC in enhancing youth capabilities for national development is dependent on the extent of commitment towards enhancing support and opportunity structures, and revising existing policy frameworks that continue to undermine the effective functioning of youth capability in Nigeria.
8.1. Introduction
This chapter provides a synthesis of the study and summarizes the major findings and conclusion. Major contributions of the study to theory and practice of youth positioning in development in Nigeria are highlighted. The chapter also offers recommendations on how to rethink the construction and positioning of the Nigerian youth in development research and policy through the NYSC practice context. The areas for future research are also suggested.

8.2. Youth Positioning in Development (Objective 1)
Over the last 5 decades, strides made in engendering development (e.g. establishing a distinct paradigm with philosophies, approaches, frameworks, and methodologies) have made it possible to reimagine a nuanced human development approach, inclusive of youth. Contemporary focus of the global human development approach as a means, an end, and a conversion factor (Chiappero-Martineti and Sabadash, 2014) have advocated for more inclusive policies aimed at reducing vulnerabilities, protecting choices and enhancing capabilities that generally prevent transition shocks across life course (Holmes et al, 2012; HDR, 2014). Within this context, the advancement in the mainstream development literature on a global and local Nigerian level, seeks to promote policies and programmes that reduce social exclusion of marginalized groups (e.g. women, youth and children) and the poor (UNDP, 2010; UNESCO, 2010; FRN, 2013). Despite these advancements, global development discourse has subsumed youth development as a marginal paradigm. This study suggests that a critical aspect of the reality of youth marginality across Nigeria’s social history is embedded in social constructions of youth in research, policy, practice.

The historical construction of youth in colonial Nigeria points to a period when youths assumed privileged positions as agents of the Nigerian nationalist’s movement, and initiators of co-ordinated political consciousness. After independence in 1960 the conceptualization of Nigerian youths were expressed based on dichotomies of positive agents of change and problems to be disciplined and managed. Subsequently, to address the fallout of the civil-war there was the need to develop a post-war strategy that recognizes the centrality of youth in nation building. This strategy was transmitted through the 3R policy and underpinned by the establishment of the NYSC with a mandate of national integration and development. With the poor implementation of
SAP exacerbated by growing economic deprivation and unemployment, the re-emergence of problematic youth behaviours had to be specifically addressed through targeted youth development programmes. In this regard, Nigeria’s implementation of global and regional best practices of engendered development was made possible through the ratification of national policy frameworks on poverty eradication and MDGs for sustainable growth (FRN, 2014). These policy frameworks strengthened the positioning of youths within national policy discourses that have shaped their lived realities in the transition pathways.

Although there has been credible efforts to ensure that youth and their voices are granted increasing institutional representation and recognition (e.g. FMYD, OSSAP-MDGs, OSSAP-YSM, NYSC, etc.) in driving national development (e.g. through the NYSC CDS), the challenges facing their effective positioning in the political economy of development in Nigeria is daunting. Some of these challenges include limited support structures from the government during their education pathways, redundant skill sets in a market economy driven by technical expertise, capability traps that create a pool of unemployed graduates, policy disconnects, and misplacements of youth capabilities. In this regard, this study concludes that youth development in Nigeria appears to be trapped in mainstream development and global buzzwords that is bound by the paradox of ‘looking’ and creating mimetic institutions without necessarily ‘focusing’ on the everyday challenges of the Nigerian youth.

8.3. Social construction of youth in National development Discourse (Objective 2)

The social clarifications of the meaning of youth are a multidimensional concept bound by context and the subjective purpose for which it is defined. Narratives from both youth respondents and NYSC officials demonstrate a nuanced understanding of mainstream development buzzwords. From a constitutional and policy perspective, this study conclude that the interpretation of youth meanings remains varied across differing nation-states/regions, transnational organizations, national institutions, and subjective individual biography. Although adaptation of human development approach in local Nigeria policy context has introduced buzzwords of equality, social justice, and youth rights in the constitution, age-related youth construction continues to limit (e.g. exit and entry ages) and define the eligibility of persons considered ‘mature’ or ‘responsible’ enough to anchor leadership roles in Nigeria’s political economy. Age-related youth
construct in Nigeria is definitive on entry ages but vague on exit ages. This is the most probable reason why the phenomenon of *grandfather youths* trends in Nigerian politics. The legitimacy for *grandfather* representation of Nigerian youth’s as this study demonstrates hinges on the transition related constructions (TRC) where attainment of marital status is seen as a criteria for recognised youth inclusions into adulthood. This creates a situation where capability related constructions (CRC) that are based on demographic and knowledge powers is side-lined in the shaping of Nigeria’s national development policies. The subjective interpretation of how youths construct their identity in national development points to their power and doggedness in navigating the challenges of Nigeria’s socio-economic and political realities. Indeed, regardless of the age discriminatory practice in the constitution and in development policy discourses in Nigeria, the social construction of youth from the youth respondents’ perspective reveals that the identity formation of young graduate hinges on them being positive assets of national development.

### 8.4. Youth Transition pathways (Objective 3)

Findings from this study highlight poor infrastructure and inadequate investment necessary for human resource development in tertiary institutions as critical setbacks to youth development. Narratives from the NYSC official suggests that other challenges like poor public-private-partnerships (PPPs); limited ICT for development; lack of institutional synergy between the NYSC and FMYD; vested interest in the Nigerian polity, and insufficient focus on the growing youth population are critical setbacks to effective institutional and human resource functioning of the NYSC. The conclusion from this study is that the NYSC operates at 68% of its institutional and human resources capacity. Although this percentage of functional capacity for an African country is a laudable achievement, the interpretation especially when understood from a development perspective draws into question the ability of the NYSC to meet its mandate of youth and national development in Nigeria.

Though the challenge of poor support structure for youths in the educational pathway is widespread, the NYSC is recognised as a pivotal national youth institution that not only provide support and opportunity structures to youth in a number of ways including:

1. The development of youth entrepreneurial skills and professional capabilities
2. Acting as a catalyst for successful youth transition to full employment through deployment.
3. Providing a platform for youth inclusion and participation in Nigeria’s national development.

Although youth respondents are aware of products of challenges (e.g. skill gaps, capability traps, and misplaced reality between capability development and application of skills), majority of them view the NYSC as the only platform where they can truly apply their capabilities especially in grassroots development.

8.5. NYSC deployment of youth capabilities for national development (Objective 4)

The NYSC deployment of youth capabilities for national development is underpinned by the four (4) sector (education, health, infrastructure, and agriculture) deployment policy which ironically excludes fourteen (14) other activity sectors of the economy that contribute to Nigeria’s GDP. This creates deployment traps that limit the effective functioning of youth capabilities. Findings from this study suggest that although 60% of youth capabilities fit the pre-given four (4) deployment sectors, only 69% of youth respondents are deployed to areas where they can effectively function based on their specializations or capabilities. In this regard, the effective contributions of youth capabilities to national development through the NYSC pathway could be more robust if deployment is not constrained by the four (4) sector deployment policy. Another aspect of NYSC state-deployment of youth capabilities is to achieve national integration. The rationale for national integration is to ensure that youths have differential experiences across their transition pathways. The strategy is dependent on whether the youth GPZO and/or GPZE experiences are the same with GPZ-SNS or different. Findings from this study reveal that on 66% of the youth respondents meet the national integration deployment criteria. The contextual interpretation of this national integration deployment has broader implications on peace, security and development of Nigeria.

8.6. Re-imagining Youth Identities: A New Perspective of Human Development Discourse

In presenting identified contributions for future policy planning for improved youth development in Nigeria, this part of this concluding chapter provides theoretical, methodological and practical suggestions that can help advance youth research work in Nigeria in particular, and in other developing countries that have embedded national service as a viable strategy to youth development.
8.6.1. Theoretical contributions towards advancing human development discourse and research

This study contributes to the advancement human development discourse through reimagining and effective re-positioning of youth in development research. As this study has highlighted, the level of marginality of youths in mainstream human development discourse globally, and in Nigeria in particular, underscores the imperative to reconsider youth livelihoods through a life-course perspective with a specific focus on capability development in the design of social policy (Holmes et al, 2012). In advancing the positioning of youth in research, policy and practice, the study advocates for proponents of development discourse to draw on theoretical propositions of already established youth studies discourse (Furlong, 2009, 2013; Cieslik and Simpson, 2013), as there appears to be a disconnect between youth studies and mainstream human development discourse. Cognisant of this disconnects between youths studies and mainstream discourses of development, the theoretical advancement for a comprehensive youth development paradigm that this study offers, combines perspectives from critical youth studies (Sukarieh and Tannock, 2008, 2015) and advances in human development (Sen, 1999; Alkire, 2010; Nussbaum, 2000). In this regard, despite the fact that youths have metaphorically been considered as ‘elephants in room’ in scene of global politics (Cote, 2013), it is not until recently, that proponents (e.g. Ansell, 2005; Cote, 2014) have suggested the need to advance a new political economy of youth (Sukarieh and Tannock, 2015). This study therefore contributes to these ongoing global debates, by advocating the following:

- Mainstream development needs to advance beyond the vertical focus of human and gendered debates that strive to balance power relations of development realities (e.g. global north vs global south) and genders (e.g. male vs woman), so that horizontal, transitional and precarious realities across life-course (Holmes et al, 2012), in which youths are positioned at the centre, can be addressed. As a critique to for instance to mainstream MDGs agenda in particular, this study argues that the positioning of youth in global human development discourse remains marginalized. This is due to fact that it was not until 2013, that Commonwealth proposed a Global Youth Development Index to ascertain the youth wellbeing on a global level (Commonwealth, 2013). Indeed, even if the Nigerian Youth Development Index, was propounded in 2008 to provide measures for understanding the true state of youth welfare and wellbeing in the
Nigerian context (FMYD, 2008b; FRN, 2010), overall, on a global or local Nigerian level respectively, development has carried on in this MDGs planning era, for approximately 13 years (since 2000), globally measuring human and gendered deprivations through various global indicators (e.g. HDI, MHPI, GDI, GEM, and GGGI) and for 7 years in Nigeria, without youth. Therefore for youth to become part of, and key players in shaping the dynamics of the post-2015 development agenda (FRN, 2014), their voice and capabilities need to be central in development research, methodologies, policy planning and practice.

8.6.2. Methodological contributions towards advancing human development

As a methodological contribution, this study adapted a qualitative-dominant mixed methods approach (Qual-MMA) to understand the dynamics of youth in development in Nigeria. The benefits of utilizing a Qual-MMA will afford future researchers’ who are challenged with bridging the objective-subjective divide in social research, to have the reflexive freedom of having a ontological and epistemological viewpoint, while appreciating the use of quantitative data. In this case, the complementarity of utilizing narrative accounts from dual stakeholders groups (i.e. youth and NYSC respondents) and analysis of policy documents, together within descriptive analysis of quantitative data from survey questionnaires, all contributed to an in-depth analysis of how youth’s everyday lives are socially constructed and positioned in development policy and practice. Arguably, with the mixed-methods research (MMR) methodology still at infancy, and with a dearth in practical examples in mixed-methods youth research (MMYR), save Helve’s (2005) seminal text, this research embodies a practical advancement in MMYR (with the NYSC as a youth-specific organization case).

8.6.3. Practical Contributions of Youth Capability Analytic Framework in the NYSC practice context

This research also advances youth service research through the development of Analytic framework that adapts Narayan-Parker (2002, 2005) empowerment framework with critical reflections on the works of Sen (1999:2004) and Chiappero-Martineti and Sabadash (2014) theoretical integration model of human capital and capabilities (see figure 4.1 and Figure 6.2). In a nutshell, there needs to be an increased focus on empowerment models that will enable increased youth capability freedoms that will be able to transform Nigeria’s national development agenda. Arguably, with the growing demographic reality of youths in Nigeria in particular, the centrality of the capability approach to youth development discourse especially in the Nigerian NYSC context,
informs the need for a paradigm shift from pure ‘national service’ doctrines – where
perspectives on wellbeing, choices, agency and capability functioning is plausibly
subsumed under discourses of patriotism, to a more comprehensive strategy that
reconstructs national service scheme with the considerations of youth freedoms, rights,
social justices. In this regard, the adaptation of a number of capability development
models as exemplified in the analytic framework of this study (Figure 5.3), puts into
context, the assumptions and practical realities of how the institutional intersection of
youth agency vis-à-vis the opportunity and support structures that youths receive, in
this case – during the NYSC programme, that helps explain the limitations in
deployment and utilization of youth capabilities within the context of national
development. For instance, the contributions of the analytic framework of this study,
helps contextualize deployment practice (Figure 8.1) in demonstrating how youth
capability fits/unfits are reproduced through the NYSC 4-sector deployment policy.
Figure 8.1: Contributions of the Analytic Framework to the Deployment Practice of the NYSC
Source: Author (2015)
The operationalization of the analytic framework for this study (Figure 8.1) critiques the assumption by the NYSC that the deployment of ‘all’ youth capabilities ‘fit’ the four pre-given deployment sectors (Education, Agriculture, Infrastructure and Health). On the contrary, this assumption paints of controlled/forced deployment – where youth graduates are mandated to function in places of national development needs – regardless of whether their capabilities fit or not. In truth, analytic framework of this study suggests that the setbacks of this pre-given 4-sector deployment of the NYSC, unknowingly, creates a pool of young Nigerian graduates whose capabilities are misplaced (capability unfit). The implications of this skewed deployment policy will create plausible scenarios that prolong youth transition patterns, as the misplacement of youth capabilities and forceful deployment will further disconnect youths from employment retentions and prospects of sustainable livelihoods.

8.7. **Recommended practice for developing and deploying youth capabilities in the NYSC**

Based on the findings of this study the recommended for the effective development and deployment of youth capabilities for national development in Nigeria is provided below for policy makers and the NYSC organization context.

8.7.1. **Recommendations for policy makers**

1. Policy makers need to ensure that NYSC is made an optional and not a mandatory scheme in order to create alternative pathways for youth in development.
2. There is need for a paradigm shift from core national service ideology where the focus is strictly about getting youth for ‘national service’, to a youth development focus where ‘youths’ are seen as means, ends, and conversion factors in processes of national service for development.
3. The four (4) sector deployment strategy need to be reviewed to ensure effective deployment of youths to sectors where their capabilities will function at maximum efficiency.
4. As much as age-related constructions (ARC) dominates the social construction of youth identity in development policy planning context, policy planners need to focus more capability-related constructions (CRC) so that more strategies on how to map the capabilities to national development needs can be effective.
8.7.2. Recommendations for NYSC organization
1. Bureaucratic red tapes and unnecessary protocols must be eliminated to ensure effective functioning of all departments of the NYSC.
2. The NYSC needs to implement a comprehensive plan of ensuring continued social networks for ex-youth corps members for the purpose of sustaining national integration.
3. The NYSC should provide an environment for conceptualising ideas so that the views and voices of corps member can be represented in policy formulation.
4. Research should be the basis for the initiation of youth capability development programmes of the NYSC.
5. ICT-enabled programmes should be developed and incorporated as part of the YCDPs of the NYSC programmes.
6. The planning research and statistics department has to be more effective in evaluating the absorptive capacity of employers to minimise the rejection rate of corps members.
7. The NYSC needs to introduce a research and statistics CDS group that will provide useful feedback on the implementation of the schemes policies.

8.8. Further work
Due to the constraint of time and resources, the sample size of this study was restricted to 123 youth respondents. This sample size could be expanded to get the perspective of more youths in the NYSC pathway. Similarly, a comparative study of the lived-realities of youth in the transition pathways in different countries of the African continent will provide a nuanced perspective of youth participation in national development through youth service. Future research could apply a QuantDMM approach that combines the use of quantitative parametric and non-parametric statistics in hypotheses testing of youth development variables. This will aid comparative and cross-national analysis of youth in development.

8.9. Final Words
In attempts to reimagine new vistas to youth identities, and their effective positioning in national human development agendas globally, the impetus of contemporary youth studies to uncover a ‘political economy of youth’ begs for critical reflexivity and voice of the researcher in shaping mainstream youth in development discourse. The theoretical proposition which this thesis suggests does not only challenge dominant conceptualization of youth constructions (e.g. age-related [ARC] and transition-related
constructs (TRC]) in a developing countries context, it pushes the boundaries to appreciate the role of capabilities-related conceptualization of youth in development in Nigeria. The narratives and analyses which this study has provided, serves as a critique to the organizational lapses of the scheme that traps and creates capability gaps of youth agency, while subduing the plausible impact of youth capability freedoms. Arguably, through institutional control and disciplining of youth capabilities within a pre-given 4-sector deployment strategy, this study explains how agency, power, lack of retrospective critical imagery of the older order/grandfather, and policy, undermine youth capability freedoms from functioning effectively within the context of national development in Nigeria. In this regard, the strict focus of policy makers on the development *buzzwords* and *business*, together with the need to adopt global best practice models of youth development, downplays the ideological, social and political significance of youth capabilities while ignoring critical roles youths can plan in shaping the national development landscape in Nigeria. As this research has demonstrated, ignoring the holistic contribution of youth capabilities will plausible lead to increased skill wastages (capability gaps), mismatches (capability traps) and quell the long term effects of the brain-drain phenomenon if not checked. In conclusion, Nigeria has a wealth of human resources, developing youth capabilities in particular without providing either the necessary support structures for their capabilities to thrive, or the opportunity structures for their capabilities to effectively function, will threaten the stability, peace, and sustainable development prospects of the nation.
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Appendix A: Official Approvals for Research

a: Letter Requesting Research Access

11th of July 2012

The Director General
Attention: Director EP.
National Youth Service Corps
National Head Office,
Plot 416, Tigris Crescent
Off Agodi Ironsi Street, Maitama
PMB 138, Garki
Abuja, Nigeria

Attention: The Director of PRI

Dear Sir/Madame

Permission for Negotiated Research Access for Fieldwork

My Name is Derek Osedec Arena, an indigene of Delta State, Nigeria. I write with keen interest and utmost optimism as a researcher from the Institute of Development Policy and Management at the University of Manchester, in order to solicit access with the hierarchy of the National Youth Service Corps to facilitate my research process.

My thesis title is on “Youth Development, Capacity Building and Sustainability: The role of the NYSC in National Development.” The choice of this topic has been influenced by the general consensus by the general public, the government, and the citizens of Nigeria, for the NYSC programme become more strategic in addressing the developmental needs of the Nation. Also, as a rational to this research, as a Nigerian youth and an ex-corper, I adhere to the clarion call by top government officials, which is also imbued as an ethos of the NYSC programme, that ‘youths are the leaders of tomorrow’ and as such, the capacity to sustain the future of the nation rests on the ability of the youths.

Initial inquiries into the myriad challenges that the Nigerian youths encounter have highlighted issues of unemployment, poverty and the need for the entrepreneurial spirit in anchoring developmental change in the Nigerian state. Being that youths are the mirror image of what the Nation will represent in times to come, I believe this research is not only timely but is also crucial, as it hopes to place the NYSC at the epicentre of development policy initiatives in addressing the developmental challenges of the Nation. It is with this, and based on the foreknowledge as an ex-corper, that I know that the NYSC holds the key to ensuring that the demand of the labour market are met through the deployment of Nigerian youths to address diverse problems within the Nigerian society. Thus I anticipate this research will be of paramount interest both to the youths and the NYSC.

It is within this premise that I humbly request the permission of the Director to enable me utilize the NYSC as a platform to collect data which will be carried out through semi-structured interviews with corps and NYSC officials, a flexible participatory observation process of which I will volunteer to be part of. The NYSC camps, fawn groups that will permit me to be involved with youths at the local government level, and any other documents that can facilitate this research process. I anticipate that I will need to carry out this data collection process in both Abuja and Lagos. As a volunteer worker with the NYSC, I
anticipate that my field work and data collection process will start with the batch A corpers in Lagos for 3 months, which will require me to be at the camp, as well as attaching myself to the local government of choice. In the same vein, the second stage of my data collection process will commence with the batch B corpers in the Abuja for 3 months, which will also require me to be at the NYSC camp and volunteer to be attached to a local government of my choice. During the process, I will seek the support of the NYSC, to enable me address the NYSC corpers, in order for them to understand my role in the camp as well as enable them make free choices on participating/not participating in the research process. That said, the duration of the field work will require 6 months of volunteering work and data collection process with the NYSC.

Against this backdrop therefore, it is quintessential to highlight that confidentiality between me and the participants is guaranteed. Data collection process aims to uphold ethical standards and a firm assurance that all information collected will be aimed at upholding the integrity of the NYSC. As such, the conclusion and recommendations from my work will be made available to NYSC to create more effective ways in which the NYSC could more strategic in its approach to addressing the developmental challenges of Nigeria.

I will be very grateful if my request is given a positive consideration, as this will contribute immensely to the successful completion of my Ph.D. thesis. As a confirmation of consent to utilize the as a platform, I will require, that a letter of acknowledgement, confirming that I have been allowed to carry out this research in the stipulated field sites (Lagos and Abuja) be provided as well, because it a crucial part of the ethical imperatives of this research. I therefore look forward to getting a response your Honourable Office.

Thank you for unreserved cooperation.

Dereck Osei-Dere Arubayi B. A (Lesotho), MSc (Manchester), NIHA (Member)
Ph.D. Candidate (Manchester)
Institute of Development Policy and Management (IDPM)
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+4479956781380
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b: Ethical Approval from the University Research and Ethics Committee (UREC)

Mr Dereck Arubayi
School of Environment and Development
Institute of Development Policy and Management
University of Manchester
Dereck.arubayi@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

Ref: ethics/12422

9 April 2013

Dear Mr Arubayi

Research Ethics Committee 1

Re: Arubayi, Metcalfe, Morgan: Youth and Capacity Development: The Contribution of the National Youth Service Corps Programme to National Development (12422)

I write to confirm that the amendments to the ethics application form, participant information sheet, consent form and poster satisfy the concerns of the Committee and that the above project therefore has ethical approval.

The general conditions remain as stated in my letter of 2nd April 2013.

Finally, I would be grateful if you could complete and return the attached form at the end of the project or by April 2014, whichever is earlier. When completing this form, please reference your project as:

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Yours sincerely,

Katy Boyle
Secretary to University Research Ethics Committee
NYSC/NDHQ/PRS/002/VOL.II/212

8th April, 2013

Dereck Osadere Arubayi,
dereck.arubayi@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk,
Institute of Development Policy and
Management (IDPM),
University of Manchester, UK, M13 9PL.

RE: PERMISSION FOR NEGOTIATED RESEARCH FOR FIELD WORK

I write to acknowledge the receipt of your request through e-mail and to appreciate your keen interest in the activities of the NYSC scheme and for choosing it for your Ph.D research work.

2. I am happy to inform you that Management has granted approval to your request for research access as contained in your letter.

3. You are therefore to liaise with Director, Planning, Research and Statistics Department for further details on the modalities for the research work.

4. After the completion of the exercise, it is expected that a copy of your thesis will be forwarded to the scheme for record purpose.

5. Wish you success in all your academic pursuits.

M.S. Midala
Director (PRS)
d. Letter from the NYSC Introducing the Researcher to all respondents

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

I write to introduce Mr Dereck Osadere Arubayi a Ph.D student from the University of Manchester, U.K and to inform you that management has granted him approval for research access. The topic of his work focuses on “the contribution of NYSC to National Development”.

2. In line with the foregoing, you are kindly invited to assist in facilitating the research work.

3. Thank you.

M.S. Midala
Director(PRS)

Please note for further action
Appendix B: (Instruments of Data Collection Instruments and Fieldwork Materials)

a. Semi-Structured Interview Guide: Questions for Youth Participant

Research Title: Youth in Development: Understanding the contributions of the National Youth Service Programme (NYSC) to Nigeria’s National Development.

Preamble

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study and taking the time for this interview. It will be appreciated if for any reason during this interview you feel like, I am unethically probing beyond the scope of my research.

From the Participant Information Sheets on this research, I just want to confirm that I am currently a Ph. D student at the Institute of Development Policy and Management (IDPM) in Manchester. My research focuses on issues of youth and capacity development in Nigeria, of which I aim to get narratives of both youths and NYSC officials in order to know how they positioned the broader human development agenda of the country. By so doing, I hope to critically question the extent to which youths are included in policy and national development processes by raising questions that will focus on my Central Research Question;

To evaluate the extent to which youth capabilities are enhanced in the NYSC for National Development in Nigeria.

Based on this research question, the following objectives were derived

1. Critically examine mainstream development literature in order to understand the construction and positioning of youth on a global and local Nigerian context.

2. Provide a conceptual grounding on how Nigerian youths socially construct their identity and the roles they play in national development.

3. Explore the experiences of Nigerian youth’s transition pathways from education to the NYSC.

4. Examine the NYSC deployment realities of youth capabilities for national development in Nigeria.

Given the foregoing therefore, and before proceeding further, I will request your indulgence to kindly fill out the following information.
a. Demographic Characteristics

1. What age range do you fall under?
   - [ ] 18-21
   - [ ] 22-26
   - [ ] 27-30
   - [ ] 31-35
   - [ ] 36 and above

2. What is your gender
   - [ ] Male
   - [ ] Female

3. Marital Status
   - [ ] Single
   - [ ] Engaged
   - [ ] Married
   - [ ] Divorced
   - [ ] Separated
   - [ ] Other

4. What is your Highest level of Educational Qualification
   - [ ] HND
   - [ ] BSC/BA
   - [ ] Postgraduate Diploma
   - [ ] MSc/MA
   - [ ] PhD
   - [ ] Other (Please Specify) ____________________________

5. Please mention your course of study ____________________________

6. Mention your state of origin ____________________________

7. Did you study in Nigeria?
   a. If yes, mention the state of higher learning ____________________________

   b. If No, mention the country ____________________________

8. Which state are you currently serving? Please state ____________________________

9. Please tell me your place of primary assignment ____________________________

10. Could you identify some reasons why you think serving in this state is important to your development
    - [ ] Family
    - [ ] Job opportunities
    - [ ] Other Reasons (state) ____________________________
Questions

1. Questioning the youth construct from the Youth perspective in Nigeria

   a. In your own view how would you define development?

   b. Do you think youths play a key role in the development of nations?

   c. Do you see yourself as youth?

      i. Why (Explain)

   d. In your view, what age bracket of persons will fall under the category of youth in Nigeria?

   e. Given this age bracket construct of youth, do you think you have acquired sufficient skills to contribute towards solving Nigeria’s development challenges?

   f. As a youth do you think you have the required capability to contribute to Nigeria’s national development?

      i. Can you explain in some details?

   g. Based on the current capabilities you possess do you expect the Nigerian government to as a matter of policy include you as an agent of development in its national development agenda?

   h. What in your view is the difference between a Nigerian youth and youths in the developed world in terms of their contribution to development?

   i. Does the Nigerian government incorporate your voice as part of the development solution?

      1. If yes, through what means?

   j. Can you identify any policy framework that you are aware of in Nigeria over the last decade, which in your view, has impacted your life as a Nigerian youth? (refer to policy list)

      If yes or No tell me and explain in detail

2. Youth Capability Questions

   a. What is your highest level of Education?

      i. In specific terms, tell me a little about your educational life?

         1. How was your education funded? Throughout your educational life course, identify the major stakeholders in your development (explain)

         2. Did you at any point in time get any sort of bursary or scholarship from the government or private organizations (explain if any and give details)?
3. Do you know of anyone who was funded by or received bursary from the government or private organisation? If yes, how many?

4. Explain how your capabilities through education can be put to effective use in Nigeria.

5. Have you received any other training outside education and employment institutions that you believe are crucial to fulfilling your dreams and aspirations?

b. What was your current occupational status before entering the NYSC programme?

   a. If employed, what sector did you work in?

      i. Was it for government, private sector, or was it your personal business?

      ii. How easy was it to get a job without the NYSC certificate?

      iii. How did your education play a role in securing that employment?

   b. If unemployed, have you previously been employed? If yes, when was your last employment?

      i. Was it in the government or private sector, or personal business?

   c. At what point or what event would make you consider yourself an independent adult?

3. Questions on NYSC experience

   a. Please share your thoughts on your NYSC experience

   b. Describe some of your role as an NYSC ‘corper’.

   c. Would you say the NYSC activities and deployment have helped improve your skills and enhance your prospects for future employment? (Explain)

   d. Do you think your deployment to your place of primary assignment matches your course of study?

   e. Will your place of primary assignment help enhance your present skill set? (Explain)

   f. Do you think at the end of the service year you would have acquired any new skill that will be relevant for national development of Nigeria?

   g. What do you suggest should be the guide for deployment to place of primary assignment that would maximise the utilisation of your current skill set while positioning you for the challenges of the labour market?

   d. During the NYSC service year, what in your view informed community development programmes? Was it MDG focused or was it focused on National
policy initiatives (by this I mean was it focused on any national development plans or was it globally policy frameworks)

4. **Closing questions** (These questions aim to arrive at issues that have not be covered in the questions 1-3)

   a) What recommendations if any, would you give to the NYSC that will improve the orientation and service year process that will enable future corpers be more knowledgeable about policies as it pertains to youths and how they can function effectively in addressing national development challenges.

   b) Generally are there any further comments, with regards to issues of Youth, their capabilities, and how they can become an intricate aspect of National development.

   c) Based on these questions and conversations that we have had, and everything you have said, is there any quote that you will love to be left out of my analysis?

   I am going to be looking over what we have talked about in attempts to understand progress made concerning responses you have given today and maybe in comparison with other participants views with regards to the same questions. Perhaps if I have further questions that need clarification would it be appropriate if I get in contact with you again? Yes/NO

   If yes, how would you prefer you be reached

   Email ____________________________________________

   Phone ____________________________________________

   Facebook or other social media platforms: Please state ID

Lastly would you like to join the Facebook group I have created specifically for this project so as to engage all participants that are involved to get a wholesome view of what you all think are the issues that surround youths, their capabilities, and their role in development processes? If yes I will invite you to the group.

Thank you once again for your time. It’s been very helpful and I’m grateful.
b. Focus Group Discussion Guide: Questions for Youth Participant

**Research Title:** Youth in Development:: Understanding the contributions of the National Youth Service Programme (NYSC) to Nigeria’s National Development.

**Preamble**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study and taking at the time for this interview. It will be appreciated if for any reason during this interview you feel like, I am unethically probing beyond the scope of my research.

From the Participant Information Sheets on this research, I just want to confirm that I am currently a Ph. D student at the Institute of Development Policy and Management (IDPM) in Manchester. My research focuses on issues of youth and capacity development in Nigeria, of which I aim to get narratives of both youths and NYSC officials in order to know how they positioned the broader human development agenda of the country. By so doing, I hope to critically question the extent to which youths are included in policy and national development processes by raising questions that will focus on my Central Research Question;

**To evaluate the extent to which youth capabilities are enhanced in the NYSC for National Development in Nigeria.**

Based on this research question, the following objectives were derived

1. Critically examine mainstream development literature in order to understand the construction and positioning of youth on a global and local Nigerian context.

2. Provide a conceptual grounding on how Nigerian youths socially construct their identity and the roles they play in national development.

3. Explore the experiences of Nigerian youth’s transition pathways from education to the NYSC.

4. Examine the NYSC deployment realities of youth capabilities for national development in Nigeria.

Given the foregoing therefore, and before proceeding further, I will request your indulgence to kindly fill out the following information.
a. Demographic Characteristics

1. What age range do you fall under?
   18-21 □  22-26 □  27-30 □  31-35 □  36 and above □

2. What your gender
   Male □  Female □

3. Marital Status
   Single □  Engaged □  Married □  Divorced □  Separated □
   other □

4. What is your Highest level of Educational Qualification
   HND □  BSC/BA □  Postgraduate Diploma □  MSc/MA □
   PhD □
   Other (Please Specify) __________________________

5. Please mention your course of study __________________________

6. Mention your state of origin __________________________

7. Did you study in Nigeria?
   a. If yes, mention the state of higher learning

   __________________________

   b. If No, mention the country

   __________________________

8. Which state are you currently serving? Please state

   __________________________

9. Please tell me your place of primary assignment

   __________________________

10. Could you identify some reasons why you think serving in this state is important to your development

    Family □  Job opportunities □  Other Reasons (state) _____________
Questions

1. Questioning the youth construct from the Youth perspective in Nigeria
   a. In your own view how would you define development?
   b. Do you think youths play a key role in the development of nations?
   c. Do you see yourself as youth?
      i. Why (Explain)
   d. In your view, what age bracket of persons will fall under the category of youth in Nigeria?
   e. Given this age bracket construct of youth, do you think you have acquired sufficient skills to contribute towards solving Nigeria’s development challenges?
   f. As a youth do you think you have the required capability to contribute to Nigeria’s national development?
      i. Can you explain in some details?
   g. Based on the current capabilities you possess do you expect the Nigerian government to as a matter of policy include you as an agent of development in its national development agenda?
   h. What in your view is the difference between a Nigerian youth and youths in the developed world in terms of their contribution to development?
   i. Does the Nigerian government incorporate your voice as part of the development solution?
      1. If yes, through what means?
   j. Can you identify any policy framework that you are aware of in Nigeria over the last decade, which in your view, has impacted your life as a Nigerian youth? (refer to policy list)
      If yes or No tell me and explain in detail

2. Youth Capability Questions
   a. What is your highest level of Education?
      ii. In specific terms, tell me a little about your educational life?
         1. How was your education funded? Throughout your educational life course, identify the major stakeholders in your development (explain)
         2. Did you at any point in time get any sort of bursary or scholarship from the government or private organizations (explain if any and give details)?
3. Do you know of anyone who was funded by or received bursary from the government or private organisation? If yes, how many?

4. Explain how your capabilities through education can be put to effective use in Nigeria.

5. Have you received any other training outside education and employment institutions that you believe are crucial to fulfilling your dreams and aspirations?

b. What was your current occupational status before entering the NYSC programme?
   a. If employed, what sector did you work in?
      i. Was it for government, private sector, or was it your personal business?
      ii. How easy was it to get a job without the NYSC certificate?
      iii. How did your education play a role in securing that employment?
   b. If unemployed, have you previously been employed? If yes, when was your last employment?
      ii. Was it in the government or private sector, or personal business?

c. At what point or what event would make you consider yourself an independent adult?

3. Questions on NYSC experience
   h. Please share your thoughts on your NYSC experience
   i. Describe some of your role as an NYSC ‘corper’.
   j. Would you say the NYSC activities and deployment have helped improve your skills and enhance your prospects for future employment? (Explain)
   k. Do you think your deployment to your place of primary assignment matches your course of study?
   l. Will your place of primary assignment help enhance your present skill set? (Explain)
   m. Do you think at the end of the service year you would have acquired any new skill that will be relevant for national development of Nigeria?
   n. What do you suggest should be the guide for deployment to place of primary assignment that would maximise the utilisation of your current skill set while positioning you for the challenges of the labour market?
   d. During the NYSC service year, what in your view informed community development programmes? Was it MDG focused or was it focused on National
policy initiatives (by this I mean was it focused on any national development plans or was it globally policy frameworks)

4. **Closing questions** (This questions aim to arrive at issues that have not be covered in the questions 1-3)

   d) What recommendations if any, would you give to the NYSC that will improve the orientation and service year process that will enable future corpsers be more knowledgeable about policies as it pertains to youths and how they can function effectively in addressing national development challenges.

   e) Generally are there any further comments, with regards to issues of Youth, their capabilities, and how they can become an intricate aspect of National development.

   f) Based on these questions and conversations that we have had, and everything you have said, is there any quote that you will love to be left out of my analysis?

I am going to be looking over what we have talked about in attempts to understand progress made concerning responses yo have given today and maybe in comparison with other participants views with regards to the same questions. Perhaps if I have further questions that need clarification would it be appropriate if I get in contact with you again? Yes/NO

If yes, how would you prefer you be reached

Email ____________________________

Phone ____________________________

Facebook or other social media platforms: Please state ID ____________________________

Lastly would you like to join the Facebook group I have created specifically for this project so as to engage all participants that are involved to get a wholesome view of what you all think are the issues that surround youths, their capabilities, and their role in development processes? If yes I will invite you to the group.

Thank you once again for your time. It's been very helpful and I'm grateful.
c. **Questionnaire Survey for Youth Participants**

This questionnaire is part of the research instruments that is being used to explore youth capacity development in Nigeria and the role of NYSC within the context of Nigeria’s National development. The data provided will be used strictly for academic purposes and to inform policy formulation. Please tick and respond to the questions as correctly as possible. Responses will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality.

Thank you

a. **Demographic Characteristics**

1. What age range do you fall under?

   18-21  
   22-26  
   27-30  
   31-35  
   36 and above

2. What your gender

   Male  
   Female

3. Marital Status

   Single  
   Engaged  
   Married  
   Divorced  
   Separated  
   other

4. What is your Highest level of Educational Qualification

   HND  
   BSC/BA  
   Post-graduate Diploma  
   MSc/MA  
   PhD

5. Please mention your course of study

6. Mention your state of origin

7. Did you study in Nigeria?

   1. If yes, mention the state of higher learning

   2. If No, mention the country

8. Which state are you currently serving? Please state

9. Please tell me your place of primary assignment

10. Could you identify some reasons why you think serving in this state is important to your development

    Family  
    Job opportunities  
    Other Reasons (state)
SECTION B: Questioning the youth construct from the Youth perspective in Nigeria

11. Do you see yourself as youth?
   a. Yes  b. No

12. If yes, why?
   a. My age bracket  b. Am a youth at heart  c. Am not yet married  d. Others (specify)………

13. Do you think youths play a key role in the development of nations?
   a. Yes  b. No

14. If yes, do you think Nigerian youths have the required capability and skills to contribute to Nigeria’s development?
   a. Yes  b. No

15. In what ways can Nigerian youth capabilities/skills for development be enhanced or created?
   b. Establish functioning technical schools for youth
   c. Increase investment in research and development
   d. Provision of scholarship for youth training abroad
   e. Improve the Nigerian education infrastructure
   f. Provision of accessible soft loans to youth for SME investment
   g. Incorporate the Nigerian youth as part of the development solution
   h. Others (specify)……………………

Section C: Youth capability and the NYSC experience

16. Do you trust in the NYSC to deliver on Nigeria’s youth development agenda?
   a. Yes  b. No

17. Please give reasons for your answer to question 16

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18. Are you satisfied with NYSC deployment strategy to place of primary assignment?
   a. Yes  b. No

19. Please provide reasons for your answer to question 18

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20. Do you think NYSC deployment strategy to your place of primary assignment has helped enhance your existing skills and capabilities?
   a. Yes  b. No

21. Please provide reasons for your answer to question 20

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22. Do you think at the end of the service year you would have acquired any new skill that will be relevant for national development of Nigeria?
   a. Yes  b. No

23. If yes to question 22 please list some of these new skills
24. How can NYSC deployment strategy be improved to meet youth capacity development needs of Nigeria?

25. How will you rate the relevance of the NYSC in the context of youth capacity development in Nigeria?
   a. Very relevant
   b. Relevant
   c. Partially relevant
   d. Not relevant
   e. Very irrelevant
   f. Indifferent

26. What recommendations or comments if any, would you give to the NYSC that will improve the orientation and service year process to address the youth and national development challenges of Nigeria?

Thank you for your time!
Preamble
Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study and taking at the time for this interview. It will be appreciated if for any reason during this interview you feel like, I am unethically probing beyond the scope of my research.

From the Participant Information Sheets on this research, I just want to confirm that I am currently a Ph. D student at the Institute of Development Policy and Management (IDPM) in Manchester. My research focuses on issues of youth and capacity development in Nigeria, of which I aim to get narratives on youths from NYSC officials in order to know how they positioned the broader human development agenda of the country.

I have chosen as candidate for this study because you have been working for the NYSC programme for over 5 years. Your perspective from your experiences with working with Nigerian youths over the years, as well as your nuanced knowledge policy dynamics that have shaped youth development interventions through the NYSC in recent times, your perspectives are therefore deemed crucial to improving the effectiveness of the NYSC deliverables especially in linking youth capabilities with employment opportunities, and how these capabilities fit the development challenges in different sectors in the Nigerian economy.

I will endeavour to ensure that this interview last for approximately an hour. Perhaps during the interview, there is a pressing need for you to take a break or even end it at any point in time, please inform me.

Research Background
The development challenges in the Nigerian state in recent times have created conflicting perspectives in academia, government and other civil society groups. Against negative perspectives which always downplay the capacity of the Nigerian state to overcome its endogenous challenges like developing youths beyond poverty traps, the Federal Ministry of Youth Development advocates that for Nigeria fulfill what can be considered the ‘greatest transformation in its history’, development interventions have to
pay keen attention to the fact that ‘by 2030 youth not oil will be the country’s most valuable resource’ (FMYD, 2011).

The purpose of this interview with you (as an NYSC official) is to gather information about how the NYSC understands youth development issues and how it leverages on capacity development as a platform for ensuring that deployment of youths fits their capability set in ensuring that development prospects do not become a mirage. Thus this interview will be divided into 4 broad themes which will look at

1. Background: Understanding the NYSC
2. At the NYSC, what is understood by ‘youth’ and ‘capacity development’?
3. Understanding the links between youth capabilities and the NYSC capacity to ensure national development.
4. How can the NYSC become instrumental in ensuring that they get the youth-development fits in Nigeria’s development challenges? – in other words in what ways can capacity development interventions through the NYSC improve youth development through employment in addressing development challenges?

Questions
1. **Background: Understanding the NYSC**
   a. For what purpose was the NYSC established
   b. What are the guiding policy frameworks (legislation) of the NYSC?
   c. What internal rules and regulation influence the organization’s work?
   d. Given the current development challenges of the Nigerian state, how has the focus of the NYSC changed over the years?

   b. What is possible or not possible for the organization to achieve, given its current focus?

2. **Clarification of the youth construct**
   a. In your view, who is a youth?

   a. Perhaps the interviewee defines the youth construct from a global context (i.e. youths being 15-24) I will probe further to get a Nigerian Definition by asking specifically
   b. In your own words, Please define a Nigerian Youth?
   c. What has informed this definition of youth?
   d. Do you think it appropriately captures the socio-economic complexities the Nigerian youths face?
3. **Youth deployment and Capacity Development**
   
a. Can you describe in some detail, the deployment strategy of the NYSC?

b. In specific terms

c. Are there any specific criteria for the deployment of corps members to the various states? – How are youth corps identified and deployed to areas of primary assignment?

d. Is deployment to areas of primary assignment driven by the need to engender capacity development of the youths within the broader development agenda of Nigeria? If yes, is this policy based?

e. In your view, how can the NYSC effectively utilise youth capabilities in tackling national development challenges?

4. **Institutional capacity of the NYSC to youth development for National Development**

   
a. Does the NYSC currently have sufficient human resources (staff skills and experience) to execute its responsibilities?

b. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being the least need: 10 being the highest need) how will you rate the current human resource capacity of the NYSC?

c. In what areas does the NYSC require human resource capacity development? (E.g. staff training, career development, employment of new staff (R&S), pay and reward, performance appraisal, developing new partnership etc.)

d. What categories of staff (management, IT, Finance, administration, Field and programme staff etc.) are needed for optimal performance of the NYSC?

   a. State in the order of importance

   
e. Do you think there are any other challenges limiting the effective functioning of the NYSC to deliver on youth development promise in Nigeria? If yes, please state

   
f. What development projects are being executed by the NYSC in which the corps members play a crucial role?

   a. Who are the partners in this projects
g. How best do you think youth development issues should be addressed through the NYSC?

h. Any other comments?

I am going to be looking over what we have talked about in attempts to understand progress made concerning responses you have given today and maybe in comparison with other participant’s views with regards to the same questions. Perhaps if I have further questions that need clarification would it be appropriate if I get in contact with you again? Yes/NO

If yes, how would you prefer you be reached

Email ________________________________

Phone ______________________________

Facebook or other social media platforms: Please state ID ____________________________

Lastly would you love to join the Facebook group I have created specifically for this project so as to engage all participants that are involved to get a wholesome view of what you all think are the issues that surround youths, their capabilities, and their role in development processes? If yes I will invite you to the group.

Thank you once again for your time. It’s been very helpful and I’m grateful.
## Table A: Codes for Nigeria’s Geo-Political Zones

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<th>Geo-Political Zone (GPZ)</th>
<th>Geo-Political Zone Code (GPZC)</th>
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Source: Fieldwork Data (2013)