



Terrorism, Sexuality and Sexual Violence in North-Eastern Nigeria: A Psychosexual Analysis

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Abstract: The emergence of Boko Haram terrorist organization and its activities has precipitated galaxies of security challenges for the Nigerian state. Thousands of Nigerians have been killed, properties worth millions have been destroyed, increase in Internally Displaced Persons and IDPs camps and other forms of humanitarian crisis and post-conflict reconstruction challenges. Boko Haram has employed Sexual Violence such as rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, enforced sterilization, forced marriage, and other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women and girls directly or indirectly as part of its strategy towards achieving its goals and objectives. There is a causal relationship between the sexuality of terrorist and sexual violence. Sexual violence by Boko Haram is an integral part of its strategy and weapon of terror as women's bodies are used by them as battlegrounds, serving the dual purpose of spoils of war and a means of terrorizing the populace. It is based on the foregoing that this paper attempts to investigate the nexus between sexuality and sexual violence by Boko Haram terrorist group with a view to appreciate the role of psychology in the study of terrorism. It is the position of this paper that the sexual behaviour of Boko Haram is a product of their psychological, phenotypic, physiognomic and ideological makeup. Methodologically, this paper relied on secondary sources, Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Sigmund Freud psychoanalytic theory as tool for data collection and analysis. Finally, it recommends among others the need for the study of terrorist psychology.

Key words: terrorism, sexuality, sex, sexual-violence, psychology and ideology

Background

Contemporary international system is faced with several threats and challenges. Notable of these challenges

is the increasing rate of terrorist activities and the corresponding impact and effects of terrorist on human societies. Africa and Nigeria in

particular is not also left out in this. The Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda' awati Wal-Jihad which in English means "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad which is popularly known by its Hausa name 'Boko Haram' was a local radical terrorist organization. Since 2009 this group has been a major threat to Nigeria's sovereignty and national security. It is pertinent to note that the activities of Boko Haram in terms of scope and geo-politics has gone beyond the sphere of Nigeria into several countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Over time, countries in sub-Saharan Africa have been faced with myriads of security challenges, ranging from militancy, ethno-religious crisis, political conflict, human and drug trafficking, to trans-border crimes. In recent times however, terrorism and insurgency have become a major security threat to the sovereignty of these countries, particularly the threat of Boko Haram in the Northeast of Nigeria and countries of the Lake Chad region; hence the formation of the Multi-National Joint Task Force as a military alliance to combat terrorism (Tar and Adejoh, 2017). This has stimulated attempts by scholars in several fields and most especially in social science to x-ray and interrogate the phenomenon of Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria in relations to its impact on national and international security; its impact on trans-national trade and its impact on economic and educational development in Nigeria.

A very important aspect of terrorism is sexuality and rate at which they

perpetuate sexual violence. The history of acts of sexual violence against women committed during wars and conflicts is as old as the history of war. As in the case of rape generally, this form of sexual violence is subsumed in a conspiratorial culture of silence: The victims do not want to talk about it, while society pretends that it does not exist. The result of this conspiracy of silence is manifested in the low record of prosecution and conviction of men who sexually assault women in conflict situations. The global upsurge in terrorism has led to increasing reports of acts of sexual violence committed against women by members of various terrorist organizations (United Nations, 2016).

Sexuality is the most secret and intimate feature of human life. People guard their sexual secrets so closely that they, or their partner, may never share all their sex related experiences, desires and dreams together, even in long-term relationships. Sometimes people hesitate to admit even to themselves that they long for a particular kind of arousal or pleasure, because it feels somehow, strangely, inappropriate. Just a few short decades ago, most women had a hard time acknowledging to themselves that sex was in general something they wanted. We have come much further along now, thanks to more open public discourse and improved information on the subject of sexuality.

The rate of at which women are raped, forced into marriage and sexuality exploited by Boko Haram is the major factor that precipitated this paper. This

group has embarked on the deliberate use of sexual violence against women as one of its tactics in the terror campaign against the Nigerian state. The sexual violence which humiliates the Nigerian state and its people and also destroys the social fabric of society, where a high premium is placed on the chastity of its women, has had a devastating impact on the victims – physically as well as psychologically. While some of the women rescued from the camps of Boko Haram militants have tested positive for HIV, majority of the rescued women were found to be pregnant (Nossiter, 2015:6).

It is based on the foregoing that this paper attempts to answer the following questions:

- i. What is the nexus between terrorism and sexuality?
- ii. If terrorists are monsters, how come they are sexuality active?
- iii. What is the relationship between terrorism and sexual violence?
- iv. What are the implications of Boko Haram's sexuality on human rights?

Theoretical and Conceptual Perspectives

The human system is made up of several component parts that are interdependent and complimentary and the survival of the system is dependent on the functionality of each of these parts. Man is both a biological and social being hence the manifestation of biological and social characteristics of man. Sex and Sexuality is one inherent component of man as a biological being and it is reflected in man's social interactions. This intercourse between

the biological and social traits of man has precipitated several works by scholar each pontificating from different theoretical lens.

According to Freud, sex is the most important life instinct in an individual. According to him sex instinct is centered around a number of bodily needs that give rise to erotic wishes. Each of these wishes has its source in a different bodily region referred to as erogenous zones. An erogenous zone is a part of the skin or mucous membrane that is extremely sensitive to irritation and which when manipulated in a certain way removes the irritation and produces pleasurable feelings and experiences (Freud, 1940).

The lips and mouth, anal region, and the sex organs are examples of erogenous zones. Thus, sucking produces oral pleasure, elimination anal pleasure, and rubbing genital pleasure. In brief, Freud regarded the sexual instinct as a psychophysiological process, which has both mental and physical manifestations (Phillip, 2011). Human sexuality refers to people's sexual interest in and attraction to others, as well as their capacity to have erotic experiences and responses. People's sexual orientation is their emotional and sexual attraction to particular sexes or genders, which often shapes their sexuality. Sexuality may be experienced and expressed in a variety of ways, including thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors, practices, roles, and relationships. These may manifest themselves in biological, physical, emotional, social, or spiritual aspects.

The biological and physical aspects of sexuality largely concern the human reproductive functions, including the human sexual-response cycle and the basic biological drive that exists in all species

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In a similar light, the Resource Center for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (ReCAPP) and ETR Associates (2011) conceptualised Sexuality as the total expression of who you are as a human being, your femaleness or your maleness. Our sexuality begins at birth and ends at death. Everyone is a sexual being. Your sexuality is interplay between body image, gender identity, gender role, sexual orientation, eroticism, genitals, intimacy, relationships, and love and affection. A person's sexuality includes his or her attitudes, values, knowledge and behaviors. How people express their sexuality is influenced by their families, culture, society, faith and beliefs (ReCAPP and ETR Associates (2011).

Sexuality is a central aspect of being human throughout life and encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors, practices, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by

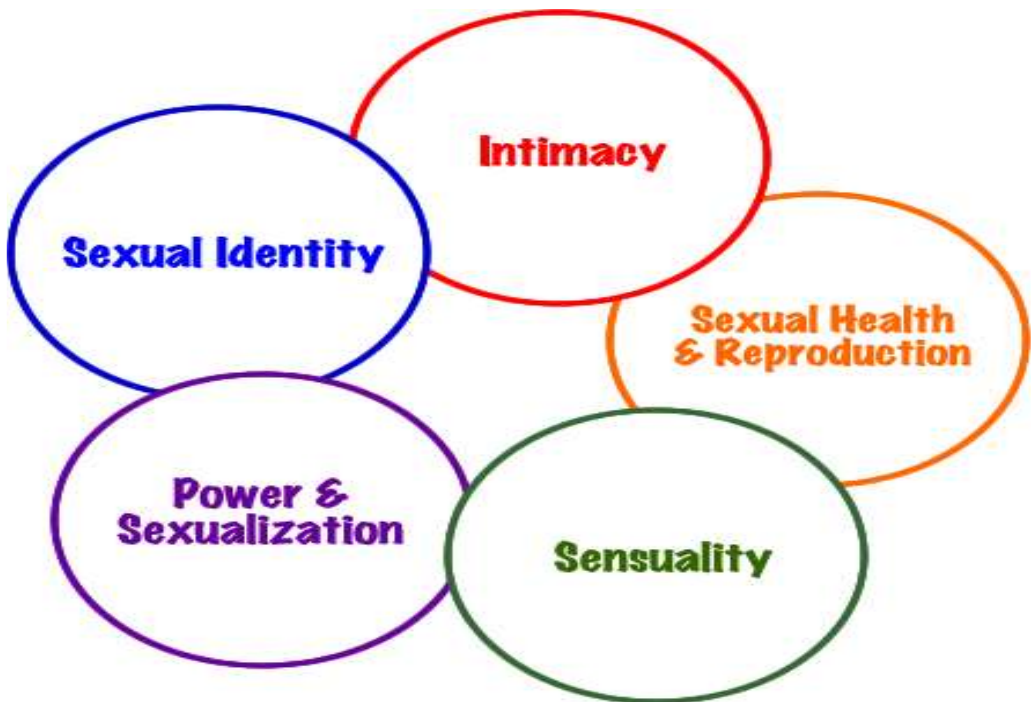
the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, ethical, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors (World Health Organization, 2006).

The above definition by World Health Organization (2004) can be summarized into four different levels:

1. Sexuality is a central aspect of being human throughout life and encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction.
2. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships.
3. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, ethical, legal, historical and religious and spiritual factors.
4. Sexuality includes the basic need for human affection, touch and intimacy, as consciously and unconsciously expressed through one's feelings, thoughts and behaviour.

Concept of sexuality encompasses the following aspects: a. Individual capacity and desire, b. Sexual functions, c. Social organisation of sexual relationships, d. Associations between sexual behaviour and individual identity, sexual appetites, style and group identity, based on the expression of sexuality and/or sexual preferences. Dailey,D.(1981) has attempted a categorization of sexuality

into five as exemplified in the diagram below.



Source: Dailey,D.(1981)

These terms “sexual exploitation” and “sexual abuse” are used to distinguish those who are physically forced to have sex and those who are coerced into it owing to a lack of alternative survival tactics or through ignorance of their rights. “sexual exploitation” is defined as “any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another” and “sexual abuse” as “the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or

under unequal or coercive conditions” (United Nations, 2005).

Theoretical framework

Theories are germane and central to understanding socio-political and economic issues. Human behaviours are multifaceted and multidimensional. The interplay of several variables such as culture, traditions, believe systems, religion, background, environments etc constitute major indices that shape human personality. Theories are lens and sign post. As lens, theories give clearer understanding to issues associated with human societies and as a sign post, theories gives directions, focus and predictability. For the

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purpose of this study, the Sigmund Freud theory of psychoanalysis will be employed to illuminate our understanding of terrorism, sexuality and sexual violence in Nigeria with a view to examining the biological and social characteristics of terrorist.

The theory of psychosexual development, also known as theory of libidinal development, is one of the earliest theories explaining how personality develops in human beings. This theory owes its credence to the findings of Sigmund Freud's clinical research with emotionally disturbed people. The theory of psychosexual development, however, is an integral part of the psychodynamic personality theory proposed by Freud. In essence Freud used the term sexuality to refer to the erotic life of the individual. According to him, sexuality is not a matter for adults alone but also infantile. It is all-pervasive and covers all those activities and sensations that are pleasurable and afford sensual gratification. Freud noted that infants were capable of erotic activity from birth onward (Freud, 1920).

Personality development takes place through constant activation of the life instinct. Sex being the most important life instinct in an individual, engagement in different erotic activities is a must to activate the life instinct. Sex is a biological instinct, which needs to be gratified. When present it creates tension and when met with, it leads to satisfaction.

In his analysis of human personality particularly on sexuality, Sigmund Freud maintained that the human

system is divided into three interrelated parts. This component parts according to him performs specific roles as far as sexuality is concerned. They are the Id, Ego and Superego.

Id is governed by the *pleasure principle*, with an overriding goal maximising pleasure and eliminating tensions and conflicts associated with achieving pleasure. The characterising way of processing information or thinking by id is referred to by Freud as *primary process*. The primary process is primarily emotional, irrational, illogical "and filled with fantasies and preoccupations of sex, aggression, selfishness and envy (Barlow and Durand 25).

a. ID

- the reservoir of psychic energy
- pleasure principle
- unconscious
- biological part of personality

b. EGO

- psychological part of personality
- reality principle
- mostly conscious

c. SUPEREGO

- social part of personality
- idealism principle (conscience)
- partially conscious

Boko Haram: Why Sex and Sexual Violence?

Since 2009 Nigeria and in particular the North-Eastern part of Nigeria has been seriously ravaged by Boko Haram thereby posing galaxies of security challenges to the inhabitants of this geo-political area. The social,

economic and political architecture of these people has been restructured by the activities of Boko Haram. Apart from the killings, destruction of properties and kidnapping, Boko Haram has given room to different forms of human rights violations.

There have been series of human rights violations by Boko Haram manifested in the forms of destructions of lives and properties, kidnappings, detentions, force marriages etc. in addition to these is the issue of sexual violence/exploitations that has characterized the activities of this terrorist group. In his examination of terrorism, sexuality and sexual violence Storr (2016), was of the opinion that sexual violence is both a tactic of war and a tactic of terrorism and this tactic have been manifested and are associated with most terrorist organizations. Sexual violence has variously been described as ‘one of the most horrific weapons of war, an instrument of terror used against women. conflict-related sexual violence”, as used in the 2017 Annual Report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-related Sexual Violence, it refers to rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, enforced sterilization, forced marriage, and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls or boys that is directly or indirectly linked to a conflict. There is no evidence to prove that men or boys have been sexually violated by Boko Haram however a lot of evidence and instance have proven beyond reasonable doubt the sexual violation of

women and girls. It is also pertinent to note that sexual violations and exploitation is note peculiar to Boko Haram alone. It is manifested in the activities of most terrorist organizations in different parts of the global system. Attah (2016:385) corroborated the above discuss from both the angle of generalization and particularization when he says:

Over the centuries rape has been used effectively by terrorist groups as a weapon of terror. In this context, women’s bodies are used by terrorists as battlegrounds, serving the dual purpose of spoils of war and a means of terrorising the populace. The Nigerian fundamentalist group, Boko Haram, has employed sexual terrorism in its campaign of terror against the Nigerian state and its people. Boko Haram has since 2013 embraced this tactic, which has led to the abduction of hundreds of women and girls, the most outrageous being the abduction of 276 ‘Chibok girls’ that has attracted global concern.

The 2017 eighth Annual Report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-related Sexual Violence, states that:

Despite military gains made against Boko Haram, women and girls remain exposed to the risk of sexual violence and other crimes, including being used as suicide bombers. Efforts led by the Government to secure the release of the girls abducted from Chibok and others held in captivity continued in 2016. Hundreds managed to escape or

were rescued, with many returning pregnant or with babies, some having contracted HIV. Their accounts corroborate information received about forced marriage, forced pregnancy and sexual slavery by Boko Haram. Those living in Boko Haram-controlled areas that were compelled to marry insurgents face acute stigma and discrimination... (United Nations, 2017:12).

Expressing her frustration on the activities of Boko Haram, Zainab Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on Sexual Violence in Conflict had this to say:

I am appalled by reports that hundreds of the recently released female captives were repeatedly raped by Boko Haram militias and compelled to 'marry' their captors. In order to give rise to a new generation raised in their own image, they (Boko Haram militants) are waging war on women's physical, sexual and reproductive autonomy and rights (Zainab Bangura in Lord-Mallam and Adejoh, 2018:84).

Understanding the rate of sexual exploitations and sexual violence by Boko Haram can be situated within the context of sex and sexuality which reflects the humanity and biology of the human system. It is very easy for people to assume that terrorists should have nothing to do with sex since they are monsters and are interested in destroying lives and properties, creating fear, tension and chaos. Regardless of the nonconformist and rebellious nature of Boko Haram, the

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humanity in them will also manifest hence their involvement in sex and sexual violence.

It is based on this that Maslow classified sex as a basic need of man regardless of whether the man is a terrorist, prophet or a clergy. Sex is a biological response to innate human nature. What this portends is that Boko Haram's sexuality is only a confirmation that terrorists are both biological and social beings with needs that need to be expressed and gratified. It is in line with this that Hawkes and Scott (2005:7) argued that:

Human sexuality is distinct from non-human sexuality in that it is neither immutable nor static but is highly responsive to social forces. Human sexuality is imbued with symbolic meaning and social significance...given that humans are social beings, human sexuality is inevitably influenced by a person's social location...forms of social stratification, relating to class, status, gender, ethnicity, age and so on, will influence modes of individual self-expression.

Every human being undergoes psychosexual development or libidinal development as it's also called. The genetic, physiological and phenotypic components of man have made sex and sexuality an integral aspect of man. Sexual drives, feelings, desire, urges, response and stimulants are also felt by Boko Haram since this terrorist are not less humans. This view was corroborated by Freud when he claimed that:

The sex drive in the organism is based on a special form of energy

called *libido*. This has its seat in that part of personality called *id*, which is essentially unconscious. The libido or sex energy is best released through amorous activities. However, “society can see no more menace to its culture than would arise from the liberation of sexual impulses and a return to their original goal (Freud, 1920:180)

The sexuality and sexualisation of Boko Haram if situated within the Freudian psycho-sexual analysis will illuminate ones understanding better. Human behaviour is a reflection personality traits and development and the interplay between these traits is manifested in man’s behaviour. The id, ego and superego are the three components parts of man and they regulate and determine human thoughts, stimulus, behaviour and response.

Freud encapsulated this position when he says: Id is the prime-mover; it is the source of all psychic energy. The psychic energy or drive within it called the *libido*, if left totally unchecked will lead to amorous activities and if fully checked will lead to damming up of libido. Both are dangerous, to the society and to the individual respectively. Id is governed by the *pleasure principle*, with an overriding goal maximising pleasure and eliminating tensions and conflicts associated with achieving pleasure.

Sexual rights offer the potential for an approach that goes beyond identity politics. With identity politics, rights are associated with particular categories of people, such as ‘women’s

rights’ or ‘gay rights’. Sexual rights can instead be taken to mean that everyone should have the right to personal fulfilment, and to freedom from coercion, discrimination and violence around sexuality, whatever their sexual orientation or gender identity

World Health Organization (WHO) Working Definition of Sexual Rights is that Sexual rights embrace human rights that are already recognized in national laws, international human rights documents and other consensus statements. They include the right of all persons, free of coercion, discrimination and violence, to:

- i. the highest attainable standard of sexual health, including access to sexual and reproductive health care services;
- ii. Seek, receive and impart information related to sexuality;
- iii. Sexuality education;
- iv. Respect for bodily integrity;
- v. choose their partner;
- vi. Decide to be sexually active or not;
- vii. Consensual sexual relations;
- viii. Consensual marriage;
- ix. Decide whether or not, and when, to have children; and
- x. pursue a satisfying, safe and pleasurable sexual life.

The responsible exercise of human rights requires that all persons respect the rights of others.

(WHO 2004)

WASH (2013) identifies eleven sexual human rights, which include the right to sexual freedom, sexual autonomy in individual decision-making, and to be free from sexual violence, as well as

the right to sexual privacy. It also includes the right to be free from sexual discrimination, the right to experience sexual pleasure and sexual expression. It asserts that individuals have the right to choose with whom they associate sexually and to make their own reproductive choices.

The Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995 maintained that the human rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. Equal relationships between women and men in matters of sexual relations and reproduction, including full respect for the integrity of the person, require mutual respect, consent and shared responsibility for sexual behaviour and its consequences.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Contemplating the relationships between terrorism, sex and sexuality may look strange to a lot of people and the reason is not farfetched. Off course, some will feel that terrorist have no business with and time for sex since their concern is more on how to create fear, tension and destructions. This paper has attempted to discuss a number of issues on terrorism, sexuality and sexual violence with a view to stimulate further research in the

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psychology of terrorism. The rate of sexual violations by Boko Haram is not unconnected to their sexuality and personality development. Sex is a major need for humans and attempt is usually made to achieve this need which itself is a manifestation of the psychological, biological and genetic makeup of man. Hence the sexuality of Boko Haram is not the issue, the issue is the way and manner such sexual drives and appetite is achieved with human rights considerations and consent. The paper therefore recommends that:

- i. Government should ensure the protection of her citizens from being kidnapped or taken hostage so as to avoid and prevent women and girls from been sexuality abused by the terrorist;
- ii. There is need to increase research in this area so as to further illuminate people on the psychology of terrorism;
- iii. There is the need to criminalize and punish sexual exploitation by terrorist in Nigeria;
- iv. An effective, efficient and practicable counter-terrorism strategy be put in place to ensure total eradication of terrorism in Nigeria as this will serve as a lasting solution to sexual violation by the terrorist

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