



Fragility of the Nigerian State and the Challenge of Boko Haram Violence

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Abstract: The state as a part of the socio-political system is expected to maintain the stability of the system and facilitate the delivery of public goods in the best interest of the populace. When the state fails in its responsibilities to effectively cater for the needs of the people or, when it fails in its socio-economic responsibility to the people, it is automatically calling for alternative to itself. The abysmal failure of successive administrations in Nigeria to address the challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequitable distribution of wealth among ethnic nationalities, ultimately resulted to anger, agitation and violent crimes against the Nigerian state by some individuals and group. Boko Haram violence has exposed the fragility of the Nigerian state. The deadly Islamic group in Northern Nigeria which has embarked on suicide bombing, guerrilla warfare tactics, kidnapping, and all kinds of atrocities all in the bid to impose extreme Islamic ideas on Nigeria has led to the loss of several lives and properties, displaced many, destroyed hundreds of schools and government buildings and devastated an already ravaged economy in the North East, one of Nigeria's poorest regions. This paper emphasized the centrality of the state in the Boko Haram violence; it explains that the fragile character of the Nigerian state is responsible for the Boko Haram violence. It also explored the integrity as well as the efficacy of the state response to Boko Haram violence, as well as a critical look at the character and context of the Nigerian state. It adopts the qualitative methodology and deploys data from secondary sources. This paper however concludes that even if the state defeats Boko Haram terrorists, it might not be an end to the resistance against it. The reason is

that the structures and Institutions of the Nigerian state are designed in a way that gives room for dissent and anti state struggles, and until that context of fragility is addressed, even if Boko Haram violence is quelled, another is likely to arise.

Keywords: Boko Haram, Fragility, Nigerian State, North East, Violence

Introduction

The Nigerian state is a state in constant crisis, there is never a hiatus from this; from the inception of the state till now, the state in Nigeria has been faced with one crisis or the other and the inability of the state revisit this context of violence and the neo-patrimonial character also explains the sequence of continuous violence from various group against the state. It is too simplistic an explanation that human condition problems are solely responsible for the various violence as that of Boko Haram experienced in Nigeria; such explanation does not take into consideration the character of state formation and the institutional basis of the state, its neo-patrimonial character. All these explain the fragile character of the Nigerian state and her inability to effectively put an end to the continued violence against it.

The Boko Haram violence is one of such violence against the state, even now, their mode of operation, persistence and strategies has further exposed the fragility of the Nigerian state and the fact that it completely lacks the capacity to effect its manifest destiny of law and order, as well as the fact that it has completely lost the control of the monopoly of the instrument of violence.

State fragility and the challenge posed by Boko Haram will be explored in this paper. The paper is divided into five sections. The first part introduces the context of fragility as well as explains the problem that necessitates the paper; the second section explores the various

literatures on the current issue and the theoretical frame work. The third section critically explores character of the Nigerian state. The fourth section explains state fragility and the challenge of Boko Haram violence, while the last section gave suggested recommendation on how to deal with the issue.

Introducing the Context of Fragility and Violence

The state has a manifested destiny; only she has the capacity to create an enabling environment for development. Though in modern times, the state is not the only institution that is responsible for development, but it is the only institution that is responsible for creating the enabling environment for advancement and improvement in human condition and economic qua social development (Ninalowo, 2010). The state is a force within society with coercive powers and monopoly of force; it is the only institution with this power. Even the state is a class within the various classes that permeates society, but the state as a class rises above society and mediates between the various classes in the society, thus the state is a neutral class, it is a neutral institution and it is also the medium of expression for the society and its various institutions and classes.

The state mediates between the various classes in the society on contractual basis since the state is expected to be a product of a social contract or call it a societal contract. The state determines politics, it is itself political and responsible for the allocation of values in the society, the state determines who

gets what, when and how of society's limited resources. The life of the individual in the state is been influenced by this core responsibility of the state since in the Aristotelian parlance, an individual has no life outside the state, it is the state that gives him humanity, the absence of the state makes him vice versa.

Ninalowo (2010) posited that inability of the state to effectively perform its responsibilities thus fulfilling its own part of the social contract has led to chaos and crisis in some parts of the world, specifically insecurity at all levels of human existence and the worsening of the human conditions in some places in the world. This inability has led to the emergence of none state organizations which manifest as insurgent groups or terrorist organizations acts as resistance to the state and has continually question the legitimacy of the state and its power to exercise its manifest destiny. They have arisen to question the monopoly of the state as a dominant institution that determines the affairs of men. As they are of the opinion that the state has failed woefully in its responsibility to them and therefore they seek for a right to determine their lives, they make immediate demands on the state and they expect to get it in time, the inability of the state to meet up with their demands often leads to violence and unconstitutional activities, some even go to the extent of demanding their own neutral existence, a state of their own independent of the state of the commonwealth. The core of the matter here is that the inability of the state to meet up with its responsibility often creates a backlash in the form of groups carrying out violence against it to seek their own ends on their own.

Osaghae (2010) in his examination of the concept of state fragility alludes that when one considers the state as the mainstay of political order, her roles are justifiable, but the challenge has always been that the state has not always been able to play the roles expected of it. Perhaps this is reasons why some of these states have been typified as failed, weak and rogue, thus associating them with underdevelopment. The argument here is that the state has been unable to play its role and sometimes have even failed abysmally in this regard especially in the Somalian situation, therefore given rise to anti state groups. This is however very common in some clime especially in Africa of which our case Nigeria is a part.

Brock et al (2012) stated that despite the heterogeneity in the world of states, there are some basic functions which all states are expected to fulfill in order to be qualified as states. Among these are the provision of both security and material well-being. Failure to provide these two public goods is not simply expressions of doing things differently but evidence of doing them badly. In this sense, the terminology of failed, weak, or fragile states is not descriptive, but also has a normative connotation: states are not functioning as they should. Thus the extent to which a state is able to fulfill that global historical mandate of promoting or enhancing the quality of life of the citizenry is a fundamental measure as to the degree to which such state is designated to be either responsible/successful or unsuccessful or constituting failure or failed state (Ninalowo, 2010).

It is against this fundamental background or context that this paper would be examining the Nigerian state and its ambiguities, its fragility and

Boko Haram violence which have beclouded the peace of the country for more than a decade.

Political violence, conflict, and crisis have become essential characteristics of the political process (Anifowoshe, 1982). The Nigerian state has been a state in perpetual crisis given the nature of its formation; it has witnessed series of violence both political and terroristic. The violence ranges from the Kano Riots of 1953, to the census crisis, the 1964 western election crisis and the organized pogroms of 1966 against the Ibos in the North. But in 1980, a group called the Maitatsine perpetuated violence in northern Nigeria, the stated aim of the sect was to confront materialism and purify the Islamic practice (Agbonifo, 2014).

Boko-Haram though has had an uneasy reign of violence and terror in Nigeria, but has been responsible for the death of thousands in Nigeria despite efforts of the Nigerian security forces at tackling the menace. The point at which they transformed from being a radical religious organization in North-east Nigeria to being an insurgent terrorist organization having regional ramifications with global connection has been a subject of contestation. The role of the state in this, and its response has also been controversial. Boko Haram had perpetrated violence not only in the North-eastern part of the country which is their home, given the terrain, but also in some core northern states like Kano, Niger, Sokoto and even the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Scholars defer on when Boko-Haram started in Nigeria, but there is a consensus that though it could actually be traced beyond 2002 but 2002 marked the beginning of their activities in the

country. They became militant in 2009 after the gruesome killing of their leader, Mohammed Yusuf by the Nigerian Security Establishment and since then they have rained terror and violence on Nigeria with impunity in spite of the efforts of the state at curbing and eradicating them.

The Nigerian state has thus failed to live up to its responsibility, it has been helpless in the face of this crisis and have only resorted to the use of the conventional military method of curbing this menace which has yielded no result. The state has failed to identify the major causality for this violence or pretended not to know which is also responsible for its festering for this long. The argument is however that the fragile nature of the Nigerian state has made it impossible to address core socio-economic problems which has a concomitant effect on the economic environment and the social relations of the people, the Nigerian state is not a failed state in the example of Somalia and others, it is a fragile state that is not capable of enhancing development. Thus given rise to the various anti-state violence especially the Boko-Haram violence which is the core of this paper.

Statement of Problem

What kind of state is continually susceptible to crisis and immediately it is done with one; it is immediately faced with another? From independence till date, the state in Nigeria has continually experience one crisis or the other. The speed with which another raises its head after one is quelled is phenomenal. All these crises seem to always be the advanced form of the previous ones, thus no problem or challenge is effectively solved or eradicated.

The Boko Haram violence is an advanced form of the previous ones in the north eastern region such as maitatsine, Niger-Delta crisis might have worn a new cloak, but it has always been there, the Fulani herdsmen/pastoralist crisis has always been there and several other of such. One of the identifying characters of Nigerian state is susceptibility to crisis and lingering on of such. Within just seven years of independence the Nigerian state has exploded into several crises which culminated in the civil war of 1967, perhaps there is a context of violence; it is this context that explains the various wars fought within the territory of the state.

The Nigerian state is not exempted from the above explanation, the fragile nature of the state in Nigeria has resulted in various form of sociopolitical violence and crises and also resistance against the Nigerian state, ranging from insurgency in the Niger-Delta staged by the militants to Boko-Haram. Hence the Nigerian state given its character and nature and the precarious nature of its fragility have found it difficult to effectively perform its duties, the consequence of which are the various manifestation of sociopolitical upheaval and violence, including Boko-Haram. The objective of this paper is to interrogate the fragile character of the Nigeria state and to see the extent it has exacerbated conflict.

Review of Literature

Before delving directly into Boko Haram, it is important to place the group inside Nigeria's larger context of varying social, economic, religious, and political factors in order to have a more nuanced understanding of why the group exists and where it is possibly headed. It is within this environment of

challenges and enable Boko Haram operates, finds sanctuary, and draws recruits.

Gourley, (2012:2) examined the operating environment of Boko Haram; he highlights the socio economic conditions that prevailed in Northern Nigeria and in Nigeria as a whole. He is of the opinion that these socio-economic conditions gave rise to Boko Haram and sustains the group. The economic system in Nigeria according to him faces a substantial number of challenges which has translated into open protests to influence the political system. Illiteracy and poverty continue to ravage the northern region despite the efforts of various groups to curb them. The author also believes that the socio-economic conditions are not alone. They exist alongside religious issues and governance failure and political challenges created by rampant endemic political bribery and corruption at the local level. The concomitant effect of all these factors is the Boko Haram violence. Adesoji (2010) in similar vein, highlights these environmental conditions which are socio-economical, they include mass poverty, inequality of opportunities, improper use of resources, revulsion of injustice, lack of educational opportunities, ignorance, corruption and unemployment. Corroborating Gourley (2012) argument, Isa (2010) posits that states that are been affected by Boko Haram activities as a result of abject poverty, lack of basic infrastructure, high level of illiteracy, unemployment, dwindling fortunes in agriculture as a result of the negative effect of climate change, the almajiri system of education and the unproductive nature of the northern economy.

Aliyu, Moorthy and Idris (2015) wrote that the key issues that gave birth to Boko Haram include poverty, corruption, unemployment among the youths, armed robbery, moral decadence and the problem of bad governance. Following this line of thought is Sope Elegbe; the research director of the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) who posits that rising poverty in Nigeria is accompanied by increasing unemployment. Unemployment is higher in the north than in the south; this alongside radical Islam explains growing violence in the north (as cited in Oxford research group, 2011, p. 4). It is obvious from the foregoing that socio-economic factors which are obvious creation of the nature and character of the existing state in Nigeria are responsible for the anomaly called Boko Haram violence or insurgency.

These crops of scholars are of the opinion that the major factor responsible for the upsurge of the Boko Haram violence is the condition of the human life which basically point to their socio-economic well-being. In similar vein, Bintube (2015) in a survey carried out in the north-eastern region disclosed that the root cause of Boko Haram phenomenon is the inherent self-sustaining nature of its driving force stemming from ignorance, poverty and illiteracy. He buttressed his argument with empirical evidence when he argued that socio-economic factors were the major influences responsible for the insurgency; which a lot of scholars have agreed that these social economic factors is the root causes of Boko Haram activities in Nigeria.

The London Times (Anonymous 2010) saw the uprising as symptom of the social breakdown that has made Nigeria

so prone to violence (As cited in Abimbola, 2010 p. 7). Still on the socio-economic thesis, Achebe (2012, p. 250) believes that the economic deprivation and corruption in the north warrant Boko Haram. To him, these twin problems produce and exacerbate financial and social inequities in a population, which in turn stimulate political instability. Arguing from this point of view, the Boko-haram implore all kinds of religion tactics, fundamentalism to sway the local citizenry that they are fighting an holy war, thus gaining sympathy and also increased their recruitment and support base, which they capitalize by adopting the unconventional warfare tactics to unleash havoc on the lives of ordinary citizens.

Agbibo (2013) also submits that relative deprivation and the history of Militant Islam is responsible for the Boko Haram violence in Nigeria. Aliyu, Morthy and Idris (2015) contend that bad governance, poverty, corruption, unemployment among the youths, armed robbery, and moral decadence are the root causes of Boko Haram. The Oxford Research Group also share the same line of argument in their work on Boko Haram, they believe that the socio-economic context should be given more emphasis in the analysis of the Boko Haram violence. Harnischfeger (2014) posits that the young militants in Maiduguri or Potiskum have good reasons to hate the representatives of the state. He wrote that their rebellion is born out of poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment; hence a response to social neglect. Harnischfeger however puts a poser which would lead us to the next strands of arguments in literatures. He stated that interpreting the rebellion as a protest against the declining living conditions is not in consonance with the

statements of Boko Haram leaders who insists that the insurrection is religious.

What can be stated absolutely about Boko Haram is that it represents an element of the Nigerian Muslim dominationism that has not been satisfied with the current state of the imposition of Sharia since 2000. Its believe hold considerable appeal to dissatisfied elements throughout Northern Nigeria (Cook, 2011).

This is a deviation from the socio-economic poverty thesis which seems to be a general opinion. Cook (2011) brought our attention to something far more critical not only in the context of the Sharia argument but in the direction of the fact that there could be some less considered issues which could serve as explanation to the violence in Nigeria. The Sharia line of argument was total in his work; he was however convinced beyond doubt that the Sharia factor is primary in the consideration of the Boko Haram violence in Nigeria. He however alluded to the frustration felt by Muslims that none of the northern states in Nigeria have effectively implement Sharia which perhaps is the reason for the rise of Boko Haram, first in Maiduguri and then throughout the Northeast part of Nigeria.

Succinctly speaking, the failure to effectively implement the Sharia law in the Northern region is probably the reason for the emergence of Boko Haram. Following this line of argument is Abimbola (2010); who expressed it in the context of partisan politics and political patronage, he argued that the introduction of Sharia in some parts of Northern Nigeria beginning from 1999 appear to inspire closeness between Yusuf and the ruling class since their decision aligned with his plan to promote strict adherence to Islamic law,

but he was disappointed at the type of Sharia introduced which fall short of his standards, thus putting him in a situation to reach a conclusion that the ruling elites were not serious Muslims or that their western education was hindering or limiting their commitment. He continued in his line of Sharia politico thesis citing Omipidan (2009) who posits that Yusuf's fraternization with the political class possibly informed his willingness to use his group to assist the political elite to secure political power that would in turn be used to protect and possibly advance his career. His abandonment by the political class could have hastened his dissent to violence to effect change.

McConnell (2009) posits that failure to attach the Sharia based law to social welfare schemes, the implication of which would mean that the dividends of Sharia are not forthcoming; the reality of this is the radicals stepping in to demand fully beneficial Islamic state (as cited in Abimbola, 2010). Barna (2014) having cited socio-economic factors as necessitating Boko Haram also contend that the implementation of the Sharia law is considered by some as incomplete and lacking in meaning as it is not effectively dealing with the fundamental issues like corruption or poverty, she further stated the lack of connection between the Sharia law and a social welfare system in states in Northern Nigeria is cited as a potential reasons for Yusuf's dissatisfaction with its introduction, hence falling short of his standards. Dearn (2011) also submits that there is no doubt that many Muslims were not satisfied with the adoption of Sharia law in 12 northern states between 1999 and 2001, because they felt it was either too watered down

and discriminatory in favour of the rich and highly placed or that the whole of the Nigerian state should have been Islamized.

Harnischfeger (2014) also argued following this line of thought posit that at the height of the Sharia campaign, most political and religious leaders in the far north supported the introduction of harsher Islamic laws, yet made sure that these laws were implemented only in a selective and half-hearted way. The politicians are however responsible for Boko Haram because of the political gimmicks they played in the adoption of Sharia, they did not go for Sharia because they wanted religious purification in the north but for political motives, and then when they could not put Sharia into full practice nor continue with it, they set ablaze the incendiary centrifugal forces of religious fanaticism cum violence that we are all witnessed to.

It would be very difficult to leave out the Sharia thesis in the blossoming of the Boko Haram violence in Nigeria, especially giving the insincerity of the politicians in its application and adoption without due regards to the religious atmosphere of the North. The moment they introduced Sharia, they gave room for divisive tendencies that they might not be able to engage nor handle, they empowered radical Islamic groups who also seized this opportunity of Sharia to advance their interests. Harnischfeger contends that no Northern Muslim wants to leave in a Taliban-like regime even though they find it difficult to formulate an alternative if they distance themselves from the militants, it does not however mean that the Militants could count on widespread support. In other words, as Montclos (2014,) argue that the radical

form of Sharia that Boko Haram wants to impose does not correspond at all to the demand of a very large majority of Nigerian Muslims, which has been openly criticized by Islamic clerics. The core of the matter is that all hell was let loose when Sharia was introduced.

Another perspective on Boko Haram violence in Nigeria from literatures is that expressed by Kukah (2012), a scholarly clergyman from Northern Nigeria, he is of the view that bad governance is responsible for the Boko Haram violence in Nigeria. He went further by reiterating the effect of bad governance, corruption, total lack of security and welfare have all constitute the reality of our daily lives, thus in the eyes of the sect members, the persistent corruption, collapse of public morality, injustice and so on could only be attributed to those who govern. They thus reason that those who govern us have acquired their tools by gaining western education. The author argued (As cited in Agbiboa, 2013, p. 9).

Ojukwu (2011) submits that naturally, conflicts and violence can set in, in a state where there is crisis of governance and bad leadership which might be what elicited or provoked the current political disorder in the Northern region. The author argued that bad governance is one of the most theoretical explanations for state collapse. According to him, the phenomenon of governance emphasizes leadership, the manner in which political state leaders manage, use or misuse power to promote economic development or pursue agenda that undermine such goals. The author explained that governance must be reflective of the various institutions that pervade the state, hence to him, there would not be good governance if there

is no good leadership; the absence of both is responsible for the violence of Boko Haram. Hence, the emergence of Boko Haram is a direct consequence of government failure to provide the basic human needs of the citizenry (Ugwu, 2015). He continued by stating that the prevalence of abject and dehumanizing poverty; bad governance; high rate of unemployment; hunger and disease; rising tides of social unrest among others are the indicators of the failure of governance which according to him have created the breeding ground for the rise and escalation of Boko Haram insurgency.

Ilechukwu (2014) also surmised that corruption in government, unfavourable state of the economy among other factors is responsible for the radicalization of Boko Haram. Muzan (2014) in addition argued on a general note that religious & ideological discontent, political alienation, unemployment, poverty and discrimination are causative factors of insurgency in Nigeria. Council of foreign relations in the United States (2010, 2011) submits that governance failures is often how extremist groups have historically taken hold, resulting in political gains, as exemplified by Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Palestine. (as cited in Gourley 2012, p. 4)

In similar vein, Clinton (2009, p.1) on her visit to Nigeria noted that the most immediate source of disconnect between Nigeria's wealth and its poverty is the failure of governance at the federal, state and local level....lack of transparency and accountability has eroded the legitimacy of the government and contributed to the rise of groups that embrace violence and

reject the authority of the state (As cited Agbiboa, 2013).

Oviasogie (2013) took a radical state-centric turn when he argue that state failure is responsible for Boko Haram activities in Nigeria; He went further to state that the characterization of Nigeria as a failed state has impacted in making it a breeding ground for terrorism. The problem with this line of argument is that even the author finds it difficult to reach a conclusion on whether Nigeria is actually a failed state especially given the fact that the various conceptualizations of a failed state depicts a situation of anarchy and loss of the state coercive powers. He stated again causal factors such as corruption, poverty and ignorance as causatives of terrorism even after the state failure thesis; this is however contradictory since the state failure thesis is inclusive of the causatives he outlined. Also, the fact that a state possesses the characters of corruption, poverty and ignorance does not make it failed; hence, the emergence of Boko Haram does not necessarily mean that Nigeria is a failed state. All these further expose the controversial nature of the state-failure thesis.

In similar vein, Okorie and Adebajo (2014) argued contrary to the above line of thought, he opined that the Nigerian state is not failed but fragile, as the characterization given for its failure only reinforces its fragility; characteristics such as poverty, corruption, low economic growth, unstable and divided population, legitimacy crisis, weak and ineffective and unstable political institutions and bad governance. All these are product of the crisis of governance in the context of state-fragility.

The International Crisis Group (2014) also contends that the socio-economic conditions of resource curse and rampant, entrenched corruption constitute the context from which Boko Haram emerged. The group noted as it has done in previous reports that “bad governance, sustained economic hardship; rising inequality and social frustration are fostering the growth of radical extremist groups” (p. 8). According to the group, there is a complicated link between politics, governance, corruption, poverty and violence in Nigeria. They also cited declining human development resources, growing alienation and radicalization as factors to be considered in the emergence of Boko Haram.

Another interesting work is that of the United States Institute for Peace Special Report (2012,). They believe that Boko Haram is a creation of violence which was perpetrated against it by the Nigerian state. The institute is of the opinion that the way the Nigerian State handled the Boko Haram group is responsible for their resorting to violence. They opined that weakness in the institutions of politics and the security services creates a political situation where such threats to stability are not dealt with until violence is a certainty. Their only method of dealing with any threat against the state is violence. Boko Haram according to the institute was created under these circumstances. Aliyu et al (2015) also contends that political, external forces and lack of counter insurgency approach by the Nigerian government which are busy fighting the symptoms and not the root causes have been identified as some of the major factors which has contributed in worsening the

situation in the north eastern part of Nigeria.

Insurgency in Nigeria is unconnected with frustration caused by high rate of poverty, unemployment, weak governance, religious fanaticism and Islamic catechism known in Arabic as the Almajirai system, social inequality among others (Okoli et al, 2014, Akinbi, 2015). Aro (2013) in similar vein argued extensively that the same factors responsible for the emergence of other militant armed groups in Nigeria are also responsible for the emergence of Boko Haram. In fact, He took a cynical stance when he argued that Boko Haram is not the first militant group to arise in Nigeria and would not be the last, the reason he cited was that the factors that creates enabling environment for militant insurgency still persist in the country. These factors according to him are: ideology, unemployment, poverty, corruption and lack of development, fictitious fact and ignorance, failure of governance and good leadership, social justice, marginalization and neglect, human right violation and frustration. Aro defined fictitious facts as those facts that do not directly or physically exist; their existence can only be proved with the instrument of faith. They are facts that cannot be directly confirmed. Aro also reiterated a point espoused by the United States Institute For peace which opined that Boko Haram is a product of the Nigerian state, particularly the way they were handled by the state security apparatus. The implication of this argument is that Boko Haram as it is today is as a result of the way they were handled by the Nigerian security forces. Hence Boko Haram metamorphosing from a Dawah to an arms-bearing sect was in part the making of the Nigerian security forces which approach the

situation as one of law and order and thus responded as such, there was no attempt to see the issues raised by the movement in a broader multifaceted prism as political, social and economic (Mohammed, 2014).

Following this comprehensive state centric causative, Stevenson (2014, p. 3) in a comparative study of Boko Haram, ISIS, and Al-Shabaab stated that these three groups emerged out of crisis within their respective states. He went ahead to state specifically in page 25 of his study that the rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria could be traced to the challenges of governance in the North east, aggressive police response and prison breaks. But one would probably not be surprised giving the nature and character of the Nigerian state, the state itself is a law and order state, that is its colonial tradition and formative character, thus the post-colonial Nigerian fragile state is not different.

Mohammed in the process of setting a background for the emergence of Boko Haram by an examination of historical Islamic dynamics in Northern Nigeria argued thus:

The development of radical Islamist ideology in North-eastern Nigeria has drawn its inspiration from both internal and external sources. The external factors include the worldwide resurgence of radical Islam owing to the US global war on terror and the general decline in the living conditions in Muslim-majority countries, coupled with internal economic problems of urban destitution and rural decay in this part of Nigeria. A large pool of Almajirai and urban unemployed were conducive to the emergence of Boko Haram (Mohammed, 2014, p 30).

Hence following Stevens's (2014) argument, the Nigerian state is a state in crisis, this crisis which is not exactly absence of law and order or violence simply means failure of governance or the continuous and consistent incapacity of government to deliver public goods. It is in this atmosphere of incongruity and failure and crisis that Boko Haram emerges.

Akuva, Zumve and Ingyoroko (2013) argued critically that corruption and dysfunctional state system is singularly responsible for terrorism in Nigeria. They believed that the root cause of terrorism in Nigeria is corruption and they collectively agreed that intellectual effort should be focused on the official corruption and if there is any need to do critical analysis on the emergence of Boko Haram. They surmised that economic deprivation, marginalization, frustration, and desperation experienced by the larger population of Nigeria which is a consequence of official production are the fundamental cause of terrorism in the present day Nigeria. Hence Boko Haram violence (my emphasis) is the underlying function of prolonged failure of the Nigerian state to deliver purposeful good governance. They added that religious and ethnic factors cannot be ignored as factors to be considered causatives of terrorism in Nigeria.

Adelabu & Oladele (2015) in line with the following argument also contend that terrorism (Boko Haram violence) which started as a form of state backed violence is a threat to the Polity. The nature and character of the Nigeria state is an invitation or call to anarchy which has led to political landscape open to various surge of uprisings and conflicts. Due to the pluralist nature of Nigeria state, the issue of religion and ethnicity

is now been implored as a protest groups under various disguises.

They reiterated that the greatest asset the Boko Haram sect has is the level of unemployment, infrastructural decay and official insensitivity to poor Nigerian. Oarhe (2013) reasoned that Nigeria with its ready pools of unemployed labour force, exploitative and unrepentant politicians, radical fundamentalist; large chunk of population prone to violence offers competitive advantage for militant and terrorist organizations. Hence, according to him, Boko Haram insurgency is provoked and reproduced by diverse factors, many of them mutually interactive. They include new patterns of social inequality; disjunctive process of democratization; criminal networks and other adverse effects of globalization and also, the perverse effects of mass media. Chinwokwu (2013) cited executive lawlessness, neo imperial elites, government insincerity and insensitivity, marginalization, unemployment and underemployment, absolute poverty, oppression among others as the root causes of Boko Haram violence in Nigeria. Hence, it is therefore partly the failure on the part of the leadership in the North and government to uphold the tenets of constitutions as contained in sections 16 and 17 of the 1999 constitution that has produced the social upheavals and terror that confronts the country (Adigbuo 2014). He added that this is what informed many analysts to argue that the principal cause of Boko Haram zealotry is the systemic failure of the political leadership to solve the nagging problem of poverty in the land.

Islam must however be examined through the prism of conservatism, modernism and fundamentalism.

Fundamentalism is the most marginal. It perceived the existing political system as not effective and corrupt. The fundamentalist cite dysfunctional condition of the Nigerian state as the reasons for their actions (Chalk, 2004 as cited in Adigbuo, 2014, p. 3).

The existing literatures also do not consider the nature and character of the Nigerian state as it pertains to the rise of Boko Haram violence which would be interrogated in the present paper, the present work aim at unifying all these arguments and subsume them in the context of state fragility which would also bring to the fore other political economic issues that are culprit in the phenomenon of Boko Haram violence.

Theoretical Framework

For this work, the Structural Functional theory is adopted as a framework of analysis. Structural functionalism has a sociological background. It developed from the works of Radcliffe-Brown, Talcott Parsons, and Robert K Merton. But it was brought into political science through the works of Easton, Gabriel Almond, and Coleman etc. Structural functionalism envisions society as a system of interconnected parts and they stress how these different parts work for the good of the system. Almond alongside his colleagues, Coleman and Powell on different occasions had explained the structural functionalist theory. Almond and Powell in 1960 using structural functionalism compared political systems in developing and developed areas. In the process, they see the state as a political system, instead of powers with its legal connotation, they used functions, instead of offices they used roles; instead of institutions which direct thinking towards formal norms, they used structures and instead of public

opinion and citizenship training, they preferred political culture and socialization. They described political system as that which allocates values by means of policies; the allocations are authoritative; and its authoritative allocations are binding on society as a whole (Fisher, 2010). Almond contends that political systems perform input and output functions. The input functions are: Interest articulation; interest aggregation; while the output functions are: rule making, rule adjudication, rule implementation. The system also performs the function of political communication, system maintenance and adaptation functions through political socialization and recruitment of people.

The fulcrum of Structural Functionalism theory is that systems which is an elaborate connotation for state has inbuilt structures which carry out designed functions for the survival of the state or political system. There is an organic relationship between these structures to the extent of an interrelated functioning so as to avoid system failure or system collapse. Hence, chaos arises if any part of the political system fails to perform its function.

The state itself is part of societal system and it could be considered as a political system. As a part of the societal system, there are functions expected of it to maintain the stability of the system. Systemic failure arises when the state fail in its responsibility to perform its functions. And as political system, the state becomes endangered when the structures of the state witness challenge in the performance of their functions.

Based on this theory, one can attempt an explanation that the structures of the Nigerian state has failed in its manifest

functions to maintain the political system. The Boko Haram violence shows a lot about this failure in the political system

From the above explanation, the theoretical frame work of analysis explains that the fragility of the state is the fragility of the political systems and the structures whose designed functions determines its stability, the inability of the parts that makes up the political system to effectively perform the functions of input, output and system maintenance has affected the delivery of good governance that are capable of delivering public goods in the interest of the populace, hence, resistance and protest against the state such as Boko Haram violence. This extrapolation is not stressing the complete failure of the political system but rather the ineffectiveness and decay of the parts. This puts the state in a situation of fragility with dialectical conflictual patterns of actions and structures with political processes that legitimizes inequality and negative human conditions. This enmeshed the state in a cesspool of crisis and violence, against itself and against the people, consequently leading to such realities as the Boko Haram violence.

The Character of the Nigerian State

The Nigerian state no doubt is a colonial infrastructure. It is an imposed state with an imperialist agenda. The colonial state however is a necessary infrastructure that was designed to remedy the hailing western capitalism. It was actually not meant to engender any meaningful development. The Nigerian state in its inception is not only a distorted version of the state but it also facilitated the distortion of existing local pre-colonial structures. It was Olowu (1994) that argued that

colonization has been the most important factor in the evolution of the modern African state. He added that colonialism sets the boundaries of the state, provided it with state structure, constitution, governance systems, bureaucracy, etc., as well as linked Africa with the global economy in a centre-periphery fashion. Hence, the structural weakness of African states can be traced to the colonial period and the peculiar nature of the political institutions that were imposed on the African societies by their colonial masters. Ekeh (1975) also alluded to this when he stated that it is to colonialism that any valid conceptualization of the nature of African politics must look. See also Alavi (1972) and Osaghae (1998).

The colonial state immediately displaced the pre-colonial state; this was the aim if imperialism was to be effectively perpetuated. It not only displaced the existing structure but also distorts and attempts a structural disarticulation of these pre-colonial structures. In his analysis of the colonial state, Olowu (1994) argued strongly that the colonial state is a state of conquest, created and sustained by force of arms, its emergence displaced and bastardised pre-colonial state structures, this it did for two reasons which are:

First, the colonial state was based on a theory of racial superiority best articulated in Lord Lugard's 'dual mandate'. It therefore had to supplant whatever 'inferior' institution it met. Secondly, the colonial state was short of personnel even for the purpose of affecting its overriding agenda of extracting resources for the benefit of the metropole. To be able to secure law and order, it

adopted an 'indirect rule' system whereby local chiefs were transformed into local potentates with absolutist powers similar to those of the colonial governors, even where there were stateless societies, the colonial authorities created 'warrant chiefs' (Olowu, 1994, p. 6)

It becomes easier to understand the dysfunctional character of the state system in Nigeria given the above historical exegesis. The character of the Nigerian state is a product of its colonial character, also, most of the characteristics of the colonial state also go for the post-colonial states since the state was inherited and not dismantled, it was just a mere change of baton. In addition, the colonial state from the above exposition is a law and order state and it explains the integration of the Nigerian state into the world capitalist system.

This analysis of the nature of the Nigerian state reveals that over concentration of power at the centre at the expense of the centrifugal arrangement is responsible for the various violent resistance on the state which itself is a direct consequence of structural and institutional inequality and economic neglect. Danjuma (2014) argued that because of the despotic and overbearing character of political leaders in Africa, the state has been entangled in basic and obvious contradiction of too much concentration of power at the centre at the expense of weak economies or low economic performance. He further argued that the economic crisis in most African states gave rise to the emergence of opposition political bodies and interest groups that question the basis and legitimacy of their leaders. Danjuma cited Schraeda (2004)

The inabilities of most African leaders to meet with the yearnings and aspirations of her citizenry make the government rely heavily on the instruments of coercion in order to secure compliance. The struggle for power or access to the state resources eventually leads to sectarian violence in these countries. This further expands the problems of African states because it has greatly exposes their weaknesses, ineptitudes as well as their inability to maintain, defend and control their respective territories..... Some other studies on the nature of African states suggest lack of stable political system and development is responsible for the spate of political crisis in these countries. The failure of some of these states for instance Nigeria to perform or meet some of its basic functions and needs has been sole responsible for the creation of vigilante groups or ethnic militias that have been perpetuating violence against individual citizens (Danjuma, 2014).

The complexities of politics in Nigeria and the incompatibility between the state as an offshoot of society and the society itself creates contradictions that endanger the continuity of the Nigerian project. This is a peculiar nature of most African states, What Ekeh called the two publics. Ekeh argued that:

When one moves across western society to Africa, at least, one sees that the total extension of the western conception of politics in terms of a monolithic public realm morally bound to the private realm can only be made at conceptual and theoretical peril. There is a private realm in Africa. But this private realm is differentially associated with the public realm in terms of morality. In fact, there are two public

realms in post-colonial Africa, with different types of moral linkages to the private realm. At one level is the public realm in which primordial groupings, ties, and sentiments influence and determines individual's public behaviour. I shall call this the primordial public.... The primordial public is moral and operates on the same moral imperatives as the private realm. On the other hand, there is a public realm which is historically associated with the colonial administration and which has become identified with popular politics in post-colonial Africa. It is based on civil structures: the military, the civil service, the police, etc. Its chief characteristic is that it has no moral linkages with the private realm. I shall call this the civic public. The civic public in Africa is amoral and lacks the generalized moral imperatives operative in the private realm and in the primordial public. The most outstanding characteristic of African politics is that the same political actors simultaneously operate in the primordial and the civic publics (Eke, 1975, p. 92-93).

Eke added that the dialectical relationship between the two publics foments the unique political issues that have come to characterize the nature of African state and its politics.

The central issue in this analysis of the nature of the Nigerian state as a causative of insecurity is the fact that its incompatibility with the societal moral structure is as a result of the fact that it is a foreign infrastructure. It was not allowed to evolve from the societal legal structure but rather a product of colonialism; hence the institutions of

the state have a peculiar alien character. Thus according to Olowu (1994), the emphasis of this kind of distorted state seems to be on power to the exclusion of ethics and a complete reliance on western conceptions of authority and imported western institutions of government such as the legislature, executive, military etc., without the attending norms supporting them. This has alienated the African states from the past and the people.

It is this disjuncture between the state and society that underlie the legitimacy crisis which debilitates the state in Africa (Osaghae, 1998). Hence the amoral nature of politics and the prevalence of two divisive publics in Nigeria are responsible for the contradictions that beset the Nigerian state. Insecurity is just one out of the numerous consequences of these contradictions. This according to Ake (1989) as cited in Olowu (1995) arises because the state belongs to few, it does not belong to all, and therefore a large portion of the society is stateless. The implication of this according to Olowu is that the state becomes non-accountable and does not respond to the wishes of the people. As such, these stateless individuals (my emphasis) are subjected to the oppression of the strong ones. This generates violent clashes and weakens the capability of the central authority to maintain effective control over the people therefore giving rise to various typologies of the state (Danjuma, 2014). The Nigerian state is characterized by class inconsistencies and complexities as no class can effectively lay claim to it, it has a dysfunctional hegemonic class arrangement or order incapable of staring it out of crisis. No one single class can lay claim to the Nigerian state,

hence, there is no hegemonic hold or influence.

Another character of the Nigerian state as captured by Osaghae (1998) He posited that the federal system adopted in 1954 which has been in decline since late 1970s underlies some of the peculiar features of politics in Nigeria. Principal among these according to Osaghae is the legitimization of accommodationist demands which are intolerable in most other African states. This includes demands for equitable power, resource and power sharing, which frequently involve extra-parliamentary tactics by aggrieved groups. Another of these features is the live and let live political culture which moderate political competition in a way that makes monopolization or domination of state power by a single group unacceptable.

A third feature is the deflection of conflict of local nature to the states and local government leaving only conflict of national significance to the center. This federal character of Nigeria inherited from the colonizers has generated questions of national significance that has continued to query the logic and integrity of the Nigerian project. Call it national question but the fact is that they had their antecedents in the colonial state and since inception these questions have been a protest on the federal state and the Nigerian project. This thematic issue of state formation and its peculiar character explains the Boko Haram violence. It first and foremost infects the state with a fragile character which in turn explains the various violence and protest against the state of which Boko Haram violence is one in many.

State Fragility and the Challenge of Boko Haram Violence

What kind of state is faced with the challenge of armed groups, in what kind of state would violence such as that of BH linger for long with many casualties and hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons? This paper has emphasized the fragility of the Nigerian state as an evidence to explain and justify the reason why it seems helpless and incapable in the face of BH violence. It is also worthy to note that one of the peculiarities of this fragile context of violence is that a fragile state begets contradiction and opposition for itself and even if it succeeds in quelling one, it is faced with another, this is because of its structures and neo-patrimonial leadership who sees the state as a personal property to acquire private ends, therefore rendering a large portion of the population stateless. We defined this context as that of violence because right from its inception, the state in Nigeria is always in one crisis or the other, facing one armed group or the other. This context of violence breeds and sustains armed groups violence and also this violence reinforces state fragility. Having set a contextual background for the BH and other armed groups violence, the next step would be to interrogate the fragile context conceptually and examine the core characteristics of fragile states and then establishing the challenge posed by BH.

Our connotation of fragility is in line with Brock et al (2012) which posits that the normal connotation of ascribing a state has failed, weak and fragile states is not only descriptive, but also has a normative connotation: states is not functioning and is not meeting up to her responsibilities. In justifying the

neo-patrimonial character of the fragile states, Brock et al (2012) stated that fragile states are dominated by social forces and political groups who use the language of modernity and development to give legitimacy and subsequent exploitation of the state as a source of private enrichment and accumulation, hence fragile states are states on the brink; they do not have what it takes to effectively perform the function of statehood, it is an ineffective state in a precarious condition, it is however not a failed state. Hence, fragile states are often characterized by ongoing violence and insecurity, a legacy of conflict, weak governance and inability to deliver public goods (World Bank, 2007 as cited in McLoughlin, 2012, p. 8).

Political instability, economic failure, social dislocation, institutional and policy weaknesses and failures are all integral elements of state fragility which by definition gives primacy to the political correlates of statehood (Osaghae 2010). He further argued that fragile state lacks the capacity to function as an effective or capable state. In order words, the emphasis of state fragility concept is not only on personality or leadership but on institutional capacity and structural functionality and efficacy. Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD suggests that states are fragile when state structures lack political will and/or capacity to provide the basic functions needed for poverty reduction, development and to safeguard the security and human rights of their populations (OECD 2007 as cited in Brock et al 2012).

Osaghae argued that a fragile state cannot function effectively as a responsible state because it lacks the

capacity, he continued by citing von Einsiedel (2005, p. 15) who wrote that such state has lost its power to confer identity, lost its legitimacy and can no longer assure security. It is no longer able to maintain the monopoly of the instrument of violence (Ignatieff, 2002, p. 117 as cited in Osaghae 2010) and it is vulnerable to collapse and conflict, in order words, according to Osaghae, fragile states have the potential to self-destruct, they are vulnerable to collapse. He cited some features of fragile states which are worth noting in this work, they are:

- Weak and ineffective bureaucracy, civil service and public agencies;
- Lack of capacity to enforce rules and regulations and exercise effective jurisdiction over its territory and to defeat/control opposition groups, militants, rebel forces, warlords, urban gangs and the like, leading to the recent concept of ungoverned territories;
- Lack of capacity to extract surplus and taxes, and manage resources and the economy.
- Endemic legitimacy crisis manifest in problematic national cohesion, unequal and contested citizenship, disorderly, inconclusive and violent elections, and contestations for state power as well as challenges to the validity of the state.
- Unstable and divided population torn apart by fractured social fabric, minimum social control and pervasive strife that encourage exit from rather than loyalty to the state.
- Weak regulatory and conflict management institutions, including police and other security forces, credible judicial structures and access to justice, all of which encourage resort to conflict-ridden, violent, non-systemic and extra-

constitutional mode of grievance articulation and redress seeking.

- Decay and collapse of physical and social infrastructure, especially the health, education and social service delivery sectors....

The Nigerian state evinces most of these characteristics, it is worthy of note to state that these characteristics did not just surface, they arise as a result of the peculiarity of the state creation process and has been there since the inception of the Nigerian state. It is this condition and context that necessitates the emergence of the radical Islamic group called Boko Haram and it would still be this condition that would give rise to a much more anti state armed group even if Boko Haram is defeated except if these conditions are collectively and immediately addressed. The logical reason is that fragile states fight war on several fronts and because of the flexibility of their social political enclaves and the already heated polity and the fact that the state does not have effective control over its territory, the instruments of violence freely comes in and go out at will creating an incendiary for a cesspool of violence. Fragile states like Nigeria are always at war but in their own case, they are always at war with themselves. Fragile states are held together by force of arm and usually have a very strong centre, the reason is that they cannot afford to have a weak centre or else, the already precarious mansion would fall like a pack of card. They are what Alavi (1972) called the law and order state or the overdeveloped state. Nigeria typifies this analysis.

To further our analysis of the fragility of the Nigerian state, it might be necessary to take a critical look at the Fragile State Index by the Fund for

Peace. The organization examines state fragility in all countries of the world by looking at three core factors which are economic, social and political/military which are further divided into some sub groups. The higher the score, the greater the instability in such country and vice versa. The Fund for Peace argued that in spite of the peaceful election which was against all expectations, the underlying drivers have not gone away. One wonders what the organization meant by 'underlying drivers,' In this case, they meant that the triggers of violence are still very much there, because the factors of fragility still remain and even if the state survives a stage, it is not a guarantee that it would sit back because it is a systemic thing which eventually triggers violence.

Boko Haram has effectively taken advantage of this context of fragility and had become one of the deadliest terror groups in the world. They have defied all effort at taming theme and have resorted to suicide bombing of soft targets and deploy the tactics of unconventional warfare to unleash mayhem on Nigerians.

For the year 2015, The Vanguard newspaper (July 12, 2015) reported that 444 people were murdered by BH in 39 days after President Muhammadu Buhari was inaugurated. Vanguard newspaper (September 21, 2015) also reported that at least 54 people had died in the previous day coordinated strikes by BH with 90 injured, but residents that were caught up in the explosions said as many as 85 lost their lives. The paper claimed that Nigerian Authority have continued to downplay the enormity of the attack. The Cable online news media in Nigeria did a detailed compilation of all BH attacks

that took place in 2015, at the end of it; the death toll of all BH attacks in 2015 alone was 4,780.

The Information above has shown that in the last few years, BH has practically operated with impunity and without any serious hindrance from the Nigerian state. In just few years of their emergence, they have grown to become one of the world's most feared and deadliest terrorist groups. The extent at which they perpetrate violence on the Nigerian state seems unprecedented in the history of the country even as the data above has shown. The above information clearly exposes the fragility of the Nigerian state and its inability to perform its manifest function of law and order and security of lives and property.

Boko Haram engages in well-coordinated simultaneous attacks on a continual and daily bases across the northeastern zones even outside it to the northwest and federal capital territory, Abuja, they carry out targeted assassination and bank robbery and even take on security forces. Since 2009 till date, the rate in which violence is been carried by Boko Haram on a daily basis is so enormous. The information above also shows that the state and its security apparatus cannot gather intelligence or lost the capacity because of the spate of the attacks. However, the most important is the fact that the BH violence is a war against the state.

The context of violence that Boko Haram takes full advantages of the extant issue of state formation in Nigeria. This root cause is what is ignored and substituted with the conventional symptoms of unemployment, Islamic radicalism, porous border, corruption and the likes. The state is central in the emergence of

Boko Haram violence, the state formation determines the strength, capacity and preparedness of the state to handle issues such as Boko Haram irrespective of the number of times they occur. But porous and conflict based formation character of the state which itself is precarious and fragile making it susceptible to every wind that blows makes it prone to every dissent, the fragile formation itself is founded upon dissent. It is the fragile character of formation of the Nigerian state that reinforces dissent and violence directed at the state such as Boko Haram and these crises in turn further reinforces state fragility. Hence the much talked about problem of federalism, corruption, Islamic radicalism, porous border, bad leadership is all symptoms of state fragility. Thus the state fragility having its root from the character and formation of the Nigerian state explains the susceptibility of the Nigerian state to violence, why it lingers and never truly quelled except that it takes another shade.

Conclusion

This paper has established the centrality of the state in the Boko Haram violence. It explains the fact that state fragility is responsible for BH violence in Nigeria. The work however explained that even if the state defeats the BH terrorists, it might not be an end to violence against it, the reason being that the structures and the institutions of the state are designed in such a way that it gives room for dissent and anti-state struggles and until that context of fragility is addressed, even if BH violence is quelled, another is likely to arise.

Recommendations

The real issues need to be addressed and not the symptoms. The real issue is the crisis of state formation, the state in Nigeria is not original to the people hence majority of the people do not identify with it and all seek for their own state to cater for their needs. The fragility of the state in Nigeria is a function of its formation. The present nature of the Nigerian state would continue to give room for dissent and anti-state struggles.

An overhauling of the Nigerian federalism and re-institutionalization of true federalism is recommended; this of course is not possible without a major amendment of the constitution. This amendment must be witnessed by representatives of the six geopolitical zones. Alternatively, a truly sovereign national conference, a genuine sovereign national conference that is not limited in the sphere of the matters it is meant to discuss, the so called no go areas must be the areas that must first and foremost be addressed is also recommended.

Groups of people whether diverse or not must negotiate their way to statehood whether through war or through a round table. The state formation process and the state itself must be owned by the people and not a foreign infrastructure and to own the state is to own its formation process. Until this fundamental issue of state is addressed; even if the government succeeds in defeating BH, there are other groups armed to the teeth ready to take on the state to seek redress to their grievances

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