Implication of the Political and Economic factors in the rise of "Boko Haram" insurgence in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to contextualize the political and economic factors in the rise of the phenomenon of Boko Haram in Nigeria. It argued that Boko Haram represents a very complex matrix of both domestic and international dimensions that have also fueled extremism by Non-State Agencies (NSAs) in Nigeria since the 1980s. This paper demonstrates how 'political elites' have used 'religion' to increased 'bargaining power' and 'political space', as well as compete for access to 'state power', in the light of the incidences of 'state failure' and 'alienation in Nigeria. The paper further holds that Boko Haram represents the realities, exigencies, intricacies and extricacies of the nature of politics in the neo colonial Nigerian State, i.e. the politics of violence and the violence of politics by the elite class. To this end, this paper recommends among others that good governance, accountability, transparency and equity would restore governmental legitimacy.
Keywords: *State Failure, Elite-Class Competition, Alienation, Boko Haram, Violence*

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, viewed from many angles, is important in any discussion of violence emanating from religious radicalization. For a long time, conflicts associated with the expression of radical religious views in Nigeria have been explained with reference to broader issues like the nature of the country's ethno-religious division, the fluidity of its socio-economic and political structure and the ways both issues under-pin politics and governance in the country. At the heart of the problem are political questions about the allocative efficiency of the state; the control of economic resources; and the monopolization of political and economic power. To this end, the struggle for access leads to constantly shifting alliances, which in-turn contributes to political instability, strengthening of ethnic and communal ties, and wastage of resources by the ruling class (Mustapha, 1995). The problem lies in how religion is instrumental in politics … and how politics is erratically constructed to serve the egoistical interest of the country's ruling and governing elite. The national bourgeoisie is relatively divided by sectarian differences. As a result, state power and structures are susceptible to prebendalism and neo-patrimonialism, defined as a high degree of personalized rule, in which the ruling and governing elites, are able to extract and redistribute patrimonial resources along regional, ethnic, religious and familial lines in order to consolidate political power and ensure regime survival. Access to power involves both rational and irrational game-play, including, but not limited to, the use and threat of violence, extortion, and outright plunder. This reality is manifested in the nature of Nigeria's post colonial state

system, particularly the capture and control of state power by self-centered, if divided, political class, that strategically uses religion and politics to divide the people and consolidate and extend its control over resources and power in Nigeria's emerging capitalist formation (Tar and Shettima, 2010). Again, part of the failure of the recycling elite, or what we have termed "insufficiency of elite competition" has led to struggle among ethnic-nationalities (Agarah, 2009) and religious bigots for access to positions that control 'political power' and 'economic resources'. However, the failure to open up the access way for 'new elite' by the old ones has driven many frustrated would be 'elite', who feeling alienated, to acts that are inimical to the continued well being of the society (Agarah, 2009).

Clearly, competition among the elites for access to 'state power' often leads to acts of violence, terrorism and conflict. The monopolization of the political terrain and scene, to the exclusion of 'new aspirants', has no doubt produced the huge syndrome of insufficiency of 'elite' competition (Agarah, 2009), with implications for democracy, development, and stability. Be that as it is, this latter argument of elite-class competition and struggle for access feeds robustly and nicely into the wider decadent societal deprivation, marginalization and alienation which in turn has encouraged the mobilization of ethnic, religious and other primordial sentiments through mobilization, manipulation and propaganda to concoct and create the right conditions and nursery bed for grooming and nurturing the rise and resurgence of Frankenstein monstrous and radical militant Islamist group, Boko Harm. The struggle for political power in Africa, as in Nigeria, exemplified by the elite-class competition, have in fact entailed to the manipulation of religious symbols and beliefs, of both Islam and Christianity (Kempkey, nd) by 'political actors'.

These actors seeking political influence and other offices have used religion to gain legitimacy (Kempkey, nd) and ascendancy. The relevance of this point for the contemporary African state, and particularly Nigeria is important. For when the elite-class believed that their positions are threatened, they fall back on the 'religious element', 'emphasizing values' and 'religious differences' in their attempt to draw sympathy from those of their 'original faith' (Kempkey, nd). And cashing in on the reticent choruses of indignation, discontentment, disenchantment, disillusionment, alienation, marginalization, exclusion and anger, already built, overtime, behind the restive social forces as a result of extreme poverty, globalization and marginalization which creates other excruciating frictions and crises, as well as other extremities, there has been a release of a deluge of disillusionment and discontentment of pent-up-anger, mostly ventilated through extreme ethno-religious conflicts and violence with the mobilization of the formation of 'pseudo identities', manipulated along primordial lines to suit politicians and conflict entrepreneurs. Thus, the context of the rise of the phenomenon of Boko Haram can be situated within the clime of a concoction of a complex matrix of an interactive trinity of: 'State Failure', 'Elite-Class competition' and 'Alienation' in Nigeria. It must be mentioned here that, the elite-class through its continued contrived, scheming, conniving and manipulative tendencies either, 'secured' the 'services' of existing cults and gangs or facilitated the formation of new ones to attain their electoral objectives (Ukiwo, 2011).

CONTEXTUALIZING AND EXPLICATING STATE FAILURE IN NIGERIA AS ENABLERS OF BOKO HARAM

State failure refers to the implosion of the state by which is meant two things. The first is the transformation of the state into an instrument of predation. As states fail, politicians had employed political power to levy resources from those who lack it. Rather than deploying the power of the state to enhance security, those in power use the state to promote their own interests, rendering others insecure (Bate, 2008). A state fails where it suffers the loss of physical control of its territory; its monopoly on the legitimate use of force; the erosion of its legitimate authority to make collective decisions; an inability to provide reasonable public services; and the inability to interact with other states as a full member of the International Community. The 2007 Failed State Index (FSI) complied by the Fund for Peace and Foreign Policy Magazine, identified these indicators of a failed state and then ranked the nations of the world from those most to least likely fail based on institutional corruption, criminality, the ability of a government to regulate the economy and collect taxes, internal displacement of citizen, sharp economic decline, group grievances, institutional discrimination, the emigration of the intelligentsia, and the state of the ecology.

Nigeria, an oil - rich country with the largest population in Africa and a top-20 economy, was ranked 17th most likely to fail on the list of 148 countries studied for the 2007 Failed State Index (FSI). The areas of greatest concern for Nigeria included: uneven economic and social development, a failure to address group grievances as manifested through an active insurgency, and a perceived lack of government legitimacy. The Failed State Index researchers conclude that State Failure, such as that considered possible in Nigeria, can be catastrophic based on a single incident or may be the result of a long period of decline in which the government can no longer govern or provide for its people. State Failure results in an increase in the rise of suppressed nationalism, ethnic or religious violence, humanitarian disasters, major catalytic regional crises, and the spread of dangerous weapons. In short, failed states are a danger not only to their own people, but also their regional neighbours, and in a highly globalized world, they are a probable danger to the world economy and the vital interests of other nations (Kinnal et al, 2011). In the absence of a pandemic, oil spill, or earthquake, national collapse and state failure are often the result of a culmination of a cascade of failures in critical areas required to build and maintain a healthy nation. These paths are often inter-twined; the loss of one or many can rob a nation of its identity and speed the process of failure (Kinnal et al, 2011).

As the state has failed to perform its critical roles, citizens and communities have resigned themselves to providing the basic social services such as water and electricity for themselves, at least most of the time. There is a huge insecurity of lives and property because of high violent crime rates. Neighbourhoods and communities provide their own security and safety, sometimes by hiring ethnic militia group members. Deepening poverty and lack of state support have frustrated citizens and driven some to crime. Many have also joined social enclaves based on religious fundamentalism, cultism, and banditry, primordial enclaves such as communal, ethnic, religious and regional groups, and political enclaves such as patronage and violent networks in search of platforms for social assistance

(Ikelegbe pp.133-134). The politics of exclusion and the use of the state mainly to demonstrate and deprive excluded groups of political participation and benefits have heightened ethnic nationalism, self determination struggles and identity conflicts, and produced ethnic militias in almost all regions, as well as violent and militia-based insurgency …since the late 1990 (Ikelegbe p.134); sufficient to induce resistance (Ikelegbe p.138). This milieu is the context for, and the enabler(s) of the phenomena of Boko Haram in Nigeria.

ELITE-CLASS COMPETITION, ALIENATION AND THE RISE OF THE PHENOMENON OF BOKO HARAM IN NIGERIA

For the purpose of this work, we shall explicate the difference between class and elite, and deploy the use of both concepts interchangeably. There can be no class within a class, but there are elite within a class. Elite arise from the development and formation of a class (Nkrumah 1970). Partly due to the strong influence of Marxism and radical political-economy perspectives, analyses of class identity in Nigeria have divided them into two broad classes. First, is the dominant class or elite, which has also been variously referred to as the ruling (elite), the political class (elite), the privileged class, and the hegemonic class (elite). Second, is the dominated class also called the masses, the ordinary people, and the non-elite; terms that described the urban segment as the poor and underprivileged, as well as the peasantry which is the common name for rural dwellers. The working class, whose identity is built around labour, constitutes a special category of the dominated classes. For a long time, analysts talked of a middle class, made up of the educated elite and the privileged salariat - intelligentsia, bureaucrats, technocrats, and so on.

Today, the existence of this class is the subject of a debate because, as some argue, the middle class was wiped out by the regime of Structural Adjustment and authoritarianism that encouraged massive brain drain and pauperized members of the class (Osaghae and Suberu, 2005). Although class categories exist, it has been argued that, in term of consciousness of belonging to classes and acting on that basis, classes are fragile and underdeveloped in Nigeria. This explains why the term "elite" is sometime preferred to "classes". It is, however, generally agreed that the Nigerian elite is divided along ethnic, regional and religious lines, and that this is a major factor in the underdevelopment of class forces, including working class consciousness. The attachment to exclusive symbols of ethnicity weakens class cultures as well as elite organization and occupational colleagueship.

Not with standing such structural weaknesses, both the elite and the non-elite have proven capable of class based mobilization and action, especially when their constitutive interests are threatened. However, it is no less true for the political elite that have closed ranks at critical points to ensure the survival and stability of the state. The circumstances that led the military to hand over power to civilians, and specifically to a Yoruba President in 1999, is a case in point (Osaghae and Suberu, 2005). Elites are a small, cohesive and privileged minorities which are found within ethnic groups and classes that often play critical role in ethnic mobilization. Elites can also be found in all the critical sectors of the society such that one can talk of economic elites, the military elite, the bureaucratic elites, and so

on. Another significant point is that elites are aspirants to, and competitors for political power and privileges. The elites are masters of the ethnic game. For a society like Nigeria characterized by inequality among the regions and the various ethnic homelands, it is a business made easy for the elites who are the interest bearers. They can as well capitalize on cultural differences and differences that are imagined and not necessarily real (Egwu, 1999). Competition among elite for possessive and access to state power (Agarah p.29) came to be formed, and it came to be formed not on the basis of production as such, but on the basis of its control of, and relationship with state power, and ultimately, on the basis of the exploitation of this power to its own ends (Tijani, 1989). Most of the present political elite can still trace their origin to former republics, past military ruling class, and many still profess allegiance and political upbringing to old or dead political elite in a bid to acquire political acceptability: where these old political elite are not seeking direct acquisition of power, they are doing so through either installing their 'biological children' or 'political children' in positions of power.

The outlook of the present political elite who have found themselves in power is considerably different, at least when compared to nationalists who were so called because they were actually nationalistic in their outlook. The present political elite who are kept alive by their recruitment from the nouveau riche class, have developed an aristocratic and predatory view of their functions and position, and this is primarily to loot the treasury, make their godfather happy, and generally to be served and not to serve. The leveling notion of democracy of the ruled by the ruler has not been apparent in Nigeria's democracy, rather the rulers are very sharply distinguished economically and socially from the ruled. In most Western democracies, it is always easy for citizens and especially the rich ones to exert some element of influence on the nature of decision made by the state with being a visible and active political actor or participant.

Hence, recruitment into the elite-class is not usually accompanied by violence and visible agitations as it is in Nigeria because many avenues are opened to such a person to exert an influence on political life such as controlling media of communication, by playing acquaintances in the higher circles of politics, by taking a prominent part in the activities of a pressure group and advisory bodies of one kind or the other. A poor man has none of these opportunities or access. He has no relationship with influential people, opportunities of airing his view in the media, has little time or energy to devote to political activity and perhaps little opportunity to acquire a thorough knowledge of political ideas or facts except that which he learned from the streets. This accounts for, among many other reasons, for the rise and prominence which ethnic militias and thuggery have acquired in our political climate (Agarah, 2009). Where the elite is closed to 'new aspirants' who wish admittance and acceptance, their latter presence and wish can be felt through creating a climate of political instability and chaos. The 'area boys' syndrome is not only an economic phenomenon, it is also a way of attracting political attention to themselves and their need to be heed by the political elite. In Nigeria, the political elite class is a closed one that regulates strictly who to admit, and who not to admit, thereby, making it necessary for new aspirants to this class to resort to drastic acts (Agarah, 2009).

Nnoli (1980) however, argues that in competition for national resources, the various regional factions of the privileged classes employ both institutionalized and non-institutionalized means to limit competition in favour of one faction or a combination of factions … Violence is another non-institutionalized method of such competition, and of changing inter ethnic stratification' (Nnoli, 1980). Similarly, Arthur Nwankwo posits that: 'The Nigerian elite have revamped the old trick of an obsolete class that has exhausted the possibilities and is about to depart from the historical process. They are once again politicizing ethnicity and instigating religious riots…. The Nigerian elite are far from finding an appropriate method for negotiating the politics of the country…. They romanticize federalism and national unity whenever they successfully cut more than adequate share of the national wealth without protest and resistance from their ethnic counterparts. But if challenged, the resort to the politics of separatism and violence, invoking militant impulse inherent in aggressive evangelism, for terrorising their ethnic opponents' (Nwankwo cited from Nnoli).

The existence of the ruling class revolves around the state from which it derives its origin and wealth by employing every available means to secure power and access. Thus, the competition and struggles for state power, particularly in the economic crisis period and the post adjustment era, heightened identity politics in Nigeria. This situation intensified different forms of identity mobilization and consciousness on the ethnic, regional, religious, communal and minority political levels. The perception of denial of rights and domination by others create the basis for identity conflicts, with identities becoming highly politicized over the issues of control of political and economic power. The rise of religious identity is linked to the phenomenon of increased economic hardship under the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), which accounted for the sharp rise in religious activities, and the mobilization of religious identities in competitive politics. It is safe to postulate at this juncture that colonial and post-colonial Nigeria has been characterized and dominated by regimes that have been repressive and overtime, these regimes imposed their ideologies and political authority on the people. The repression, imposition of an official ideology and the excesses of the party machine forced people to retreat into ideological domains not controlled by the state and it would seem that religion is the major expression of this possibility.

The ascendancy of Shariah was its use as a bargaining chip by the north, which was losing political influence and relevancy in the Nigerian federation. In order to reassert the region's influence, its dominant class employed Shariah as a negotiating chip for a new national pact among contending national forces. One of the triggers of Shariah advocacy in some northern Nigerian states was the resentment of being at the periphery of Nigerian politics and its power configuration. There were time when the northern political leaders held powerful political positions in Nigeria, and others when the northerners accepted their economically marginal position. However, with the federal elections of 1999, the balance of power shifted to the South without a marked transformation in the economic marginality of the north. Hence, the politics of Shariah advocacy was part of a protest against regional economic inequalities in Nigeria (Isa, 2010). More recently, the 2011 elections considered by Islamist hardliners to be a forbidden 'innovation' (bid'ah) imposed by the West, were already contentious in that a significant number of Muslims, especially in

the North-east, deeply resented the candidacy of President Goodluck Jonathan, a Southern Christian who had succeeded President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, a northern Muslim, after the latter's unexpected death in 2010. The decision by Goodluck Jonathan to seek a full term in his own right upset the informal compact within the rulling People's Democratic Party (PDP), whereby the Presidency alternated every eight years between Christians who dominate the Southern part of the country and Muslims who dominate the North (Pham, 2012). The hypothesis that all such religious and ethnic conflicts are part of the inevitable competition for scarce resources by modernizing ethnic elites is perhaps the most popular in this country (Usman, 1987). The particular aspect of social and political reality to be obscured and mystified depends on the purpose of the manipulation.

It also depends on the structure of the economy and society within which the manipulation is taking place. In the case of the manipulation of religion in Nigeria today, the purpose of this manipulation is to be found in the purposes and function of the classes who do this manipulation. Nobody denies that the class responsible is the intermediary bourgeoisie. This class is created to serve as the link and intermediary between the people and the wealth of Nigeria and the world capitalist system. It is created to serve as the leading agent of the trading post which has been and still is, Nigeria. It can only continue to be dominant if Nigeria remains a trading post; that is a trading post, built to export raw-materials and import manufactured goods and services; a trading post where ownership and consumption and not production are dominant in the whole system. The real basis of the manipulation of religion in Nigeria today is the need to obscure from the people of Nigeria a fundamental aspect of our reality; that is the domination of our political-economy by a class of intermediaries... a class (which) cover themselves with religious and ethnic disguises in order to further entrench division …(Usman, 1987).

Elite construction and Elite manipulation is a major factor in community and ethnic conflicts and the funding, recruitment, arming and control of militant movements. In several instances, they are formed for intra-elite power and resource struggles and to intimidate political rivals and opponents. In Nigeria, ethnic, regional, and political elites have been major factors in the formation, funding, arming, protection and use of diverse armed bands, ethnic and political militias and cult groups… There are numerous informal linkages between armed opposition groups and elite political networks. The elites further hijack conflict situations for personal interests. Politicians bent on asserting themselves latch onto legitimate popular grievances and dissatisfaction, and sometimes criminalize political conflicts and deploy criminal terror. The manipulation and mobilization of youths belonging to political parties and of urban youths in general by the political elites have also come in handy. In the Niger-Delta, Militancy and the heightening of militia activities have been partly founded on political elite power struggle. The political elite hire, arm and use militant youths and militians to intimidate opponents and perpetuate electoral abuses and violence (Okumu and Ikelegbe 2010). It is, however, instructive to note at this point that the understanding of alienation can be viewed from two (2) perspectives.

(a)   From the point of view of alienation of aspiring new, and would be members of the elite-class seeking to gain access and ascendancy, but were denied by the existing

power bloc on account of real or perceived 'fear' or 'threat' from the potential 'new members'.

(b)   From the point of view of the alienation of the wider social forces from the day-to-day existential conditions and material well-being, owing to bad governance, and especially of the failure of the state to fulfill its quintessential function of social security provision, and of social good as well as the provision of social safety nets.

It is, the alienation of (b) that provides an important nursery bed for mobilization, and the trigger for manipulation by (a), and thus, the spark for religious, community and ethnic conflicts, through funding, recruitment, arming and control of militants movements. As Shehu Sani (2011) argues of Boko Haram, "As a matter of fact, Mohammed Yusuf, the late leader of the group was arrested on several occasion by the police in Maiduguri, but before the police could roll out the drums and start celebrating his capture, Yusuf would have resurfaced in his vast compound in Maiduguri. There was a time when the man returned from Abuja barely five (5) days after his arrest. Before he was killed, you should have been there on a Friday, you would think a big party was going on there. The whole area (Railway Quarters) would be lined by exotic cars as very powerful individuals went to see Yusuf. They went in cars with tinted glasses and nobody would be able to see them. That is why many people believed that the man was being sponsored by some very powerful individuals (Sani, 2011). This connection, however, proves the point that the phenomenon of Boko Haram in Nigeria is a manifestation of mobilization and manipulation within the elite-class as well as of the class opportunistic competition, and struggle of the alienated elite within the power group who are frequently in contention for political power and offices as well as for scarce state owned economic resources. At this stage, it is nonetheless, instructive that we examine the ecology of the political-economy of Nigerian state and especially of the socio-economic and political conditions that have enabled the rise of this phenomenon of Islamic radicalization and violence. That way, we shall have established the theory of a wider societal alienation that broods the emergence, and midwife the birth of the extremist's militant Islamist group, Boko Haram.

Many conflicts are linked to local issues and often exploited by the political and sometimes religious elite for selfish ends. Of these local issues to find expression includes; political differences, economic deprivations and disputes over ownership, management and control of natural resources, have played the most important roles. Indeed, there are many who are of the opinion that economic deprivation is often at the centre of many of these conflicts and that politician have only exploited the whole situation to their selfish advantage (Alao, 2010). First, is the alliance between this group and the politicians in the country. It is believed that members of the BH group are closely connected to state governors and that the resources sustaining their activities came from the state. The leaders of these groups are normally loyal to one or two powerful political figures that are rich. They are used as pawns in political power games. This group (BH) was well known to government officials since its formation in 2004. They are not secret societies and they preach openly in their mosques. However, successive governments chose to ignore them (Alao, 2010).

So, like the Maitatsine before it, the BH group had informal links with key politicians who assist their activities. For instance, after Mohammed Yusuf was arrested, he was later killed in a police custody on the ground that he was trying to escape. This has, however, been contradicted by other reports. What is widely believed in the country is that he was killed because his powerful friends in government would have ensured his release if he were to be spared and put in jail. As there had been previous cases of arrest and detention which ultimately resulted in his release because of his powerful connection with those in government (Alao, 2010).

Alienation, the Rise of Islamic Radicalization and Violence: Boko Haram and the Dilemma of the Nigerian State

The emergence of a nebulous neo-militant Islamist movement in the eastern part of northern Nigeria in 2001, and subsequent transformation of this movement are linked with the dissatisfaction associated with the weak economic base of the contemporary Nigeria economy, which is characterized by poverty, deteriorating social services and infrastructure, educational backwardness, rising number of unemployed graduates, massive numbers of unemployed youths, dwindling fortunes in agriculture, and the weak and dwindling productive base of the northern economy. According to this movement, the current democratic enterprise had produced a set of political leaders who lead by deception and sloganeering of Islamic revivalism to mobilized and capture support by claiming to be re-introducing Islamic legal principles, despite a massive collapse of services, poverty, failed governance, absence of social justice and a fair electoral process that produced consensus candidates that lack legitimacy. The corrupt and power hungry politicians hijack votes and are self-imposed leaders. They declared billions of fictitious amounts of naira as assets to recouped as investments through falsification and overpricing contract - all of this inspite of the existence of a framework of due process and diligence in contracts awarded and procurements (Isa, 2010).

Situated within existing and wider framework as well as dynamics of radicalization in Nigeria, Abiodun Alao identified some very relevant socio economic and political underpinnings responsible for the resurgence of Islamic radicalization and violence in Nigeria. A detailed look at Islamic radicalization in Nigeria reveals that it has not taken place outside the country's socio - economic and political context. Indeed, while there are cases where external considerations including developments in the Middle East may sometimes be issues underlining the occurrences of radical tendencies in Nigeria, the primarily reasons for most cases of radicalization in the country have been domestic, socio-economic and political factors. An issue that has always been mentioned in explaining the massive move towards radical tendency in the country has been the downward plunge in the economic wellbeing of the population. The issues associated with Nigeria's economic plight have been recorded in several studies, thus making a rehash unnecessary in this paper. However, what can be said is that by the mid 1980s, the enormous wealth that had accrued from the country's oil deposit had been mis-managed and the implications of the downward plunge in the country's economy had become manifest. It was, indeed, not long afterwards that

the country began serious negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). How Nigerians reacted to the downward plunge in their economic well-being is linked to radicalization in a numbers of ways. First, it resulted in a situation where many people, unaware of any other way of meeting the pressure created by the change in economic tide, turned to religion. Indeed, the period of economic decline in Nigeria witnessed the massive proliferation of radicalization tendencies in Nigeria. Many youths who could not find gainful employment turned around to take their religion more seriously in the hope that solace could come by being closer to God. But the area of economic deprivation that is more crucial in understanding the politics of radicalized violence is the vulnerability and exclusion it has created for youths in the country. Many youths, unable to make a living, became tools in the hands of those who had hidden agenda. This tendency is particularly prominent in northern Nigeria where homeless youths, popularly known as Alamjiris, are the keys participants in most of the cases of religious violence in the country (Alao, 2010). The impacts of the political situations have also been as profound. Significant political developments occurred in Nigeria between 1980 and 2007.

During this period, the country witness two civilian administrations, five military coup, (two executed, one attempted, and two alleged), a benevolent military rule, an annulled election, an interim administration and a brutal dictatorship. All these left lasting impacts on the country and the consequences can be seen in the country's massive move towards religious radicalization. In a rather curious way, it would appear that economic deprivation drove more Christians towards the direction of radicalization, political developments and uncertainties seems to have had more impacts on Muslims. Indeed, with the coming of the second republic in 1979 and the controversies surrounding the introduction of sharia into the constitution, some forms of Muslims radicalization seem to have begun in the country and this was to continue all through the era of political uncertainties up until the Third Republic.

Since the September 11 attack on the United States introduced a new dimension to global radicalization, the situation in Nigeria has continued to be more of the response to domestic situation than reaction to external developments. Immediately after the attack there were cases of jubilation in some of northern Nigeria, a situation that changed to violent demonstration after the United States attacked Afghanistan in retaliation. But these were just cases of spontaneous reactions to a global event of unprecedented proportion, rather than, an indication of 'external' taking over from the 'internal' in explaining radicalization in the country. After this, other domestic issues took over from the 'external' in explaining radicalization in Nigeria (Alao, 2010).

On the Boko Haram phenomenon, Freedom Onuoha had succinctly captured the context of the growth and development of radicalization of BH into a domestic terror group. He argued very intelligently thus: 'The resort to terrorists tactics by BH to realize its aims is now a matter of public concern. Its transition to domestic terrorism has raised concerns regarding factors responsible for its radicalization... There is no single factor …, but rather a complex overlap of concurring and mutually reinforcing factors. These factors can manifest in different forms depending on individual and context. However, agreement

tends to revolve around a broad set of parameters that acts as ingredients in the radicalization process, namely: grievance, ideology, mobilization and tipping points. While grievance is understood to be the sense of alienation or disenchantment that provides a cognitive opening; ideology entails the extreme set of ideas that provides the individual with a new outlook and explanation for the world in which they find themselves; mobilizations captures the process by which the individual is slowly integrated into a community of individuals who are like minded and create a self reinforcing community; and finally, tipping points are the specific events that push an individual or group from rhetoric to action. External forces may also facilitate and reinforce these factors (Onuoha, 2012). The issue of widespread corruption, pervasive poverty, moral decadence and injustice, among others, in contemporary Nigeria society constitute major sources of grievances harbored by the BH sect. Although the political leaders from the northern Nigeria dominated position of leadership, such as president and heads of state, before the return to democracy in 1999, they did little or nothing to address pervasive poverty afflicting the northern region.

High rate of poverty have alienated many young people in the relatively poorer north. As a result, many impoverished, disenfranchised and devoutly Muslim youths are becoming increasingly skeptical about a system that has brought them little benefit and has served the interests of the established political elite, well. Therefore, it is not uncommon to hear in discussions among Islamist scholars and average northerners that poverty and collapsed governance - the bane of the northern region - are responsible for the failures and corrupt attitudes of Yan Boko (modern elites trained at secular 'school' who have acquired western education, and are currently in positions of power. As such, the sect believes that the system represented by the Yan Boko is unjust and secular, and has no divine origin. It is, therefore, un-Islamic, which in turn accounts for its ineptitude and corruptness (Onuoha, 2012). The organization is still comprised of the composite of different actors, ranging from Islamist militants to disaffected citizens to opportunistic criminals and hooligans, including some who have been encouraged by politicians keen on exploiting the ensuing violence and instability to advance their own political agendas' (Pham: p.5).

In fact, the contradictions created by poverty and unemployment played a critical role in pushing young impressionable maids to extremism in northern Nigeria. Young people without formal education suffer the worst impact of poverty and diminishing employment opportunities in Nigeria. Those with formal education, especially university degrees are being increasingly attracted to extreme religious views. They are further radicalized out of frustration due to their inability to secure paid employment that befits their qualification and status. Consequently, these young men are increasingly questioning the whole essence of western education if it cannot secure them decent jobs or make political leaders in Nigeria accountable and responsive.

Unfortunately, as a result of this, some may fall victims to the appeals of violent extremist ideologies. This explains why some graduates of tertiary institutions tore up their certificates in 2004 to join the group. The idea of Boko is not just about rejecting western education per say, it is a judgment of its failure to provide opportunities for better lives and thus become a symbol for the BH movement to capitalize on the short comings of Yan

Boko. Thus, the movement used the term BH to mobilize and radicalized unemployed, unskilled and poverty - stricken youths to join its cause and dislodge the secular, Boko controlled state in Nigeria. Regrettably, a good number of young Muslims across northern Nigeria are growing up with this deep-seated anger and resentment and seeking alternative explanations to the meaning and reasons for their predicament. The philosophy and ideology of BH provide readily available or plausible answers to their misery. It is the gap that powerful ideologues, political opportunists and extremist movements like BH exploit in radicalizing the minds of Muslim youth in northern Nigeria. Their radicalization is mixed with a deep sense of grievance against the south and the central government as well as antagonism towards the sizable Christian minority that co-exist with Muslims in the north. This explains why institutions that represent the secular state, including churches located in northern Nigeria, have been the major target of attacks by the sects.

These extremists are not motivated by or radicalized solely by internal factors. External influences also contribute to the radicalization. The return to democracy in Nigeria has witnessed unprecedented growth and penetration of the internet, satellite television and mobile communications technologies. The availability of these information and communication technologies has facilitated access to information including radical messages coming from al-Qaeda. For example, the development of television satellite links and global communication networks has made it easy for terrorists to relay their 'propaganda of the deed' around the world and instantaneously. From leader's pronouncements and publications, the sum of al-Qaeda interests in Africa is the desire to 'liberate' the African Muslim population from what it deems to be 'apostate' regimes. It will be recalled that in 2002, Osama bin Laden singled out Nigeria as an area of special interest for al-Qaeda's destabilization agenda, and the following year the activities of the so-called Nigerian Taliban now BH became more popular. As they gain access to radical al-Qaeda messages that give a negative image of the US vis-à-vis its role in the Israel-Palestinian conflict, the invasion of Iraq and anti-terrorism onslaught in Afghanistan, these extremists became more radicalized. Increasingly, its spokepersons had expressed support for the al-Qaeda network and its violent jihadism, and attempts to replicate the same in Nigeria' (Onuoha: pp.171-172).

Boko Haram: A Concoction of 'State Failure', 'Elite-Class Competition' and 'Alienation' in Nigeria

Drawing the thread together, this paper shall, at this point demonstrate how an interplay of the combined issues of 'State Failure', 'Elite-class competition' and 'Alienation' have interacted and concocted the present phenomenon of the Boko Haram in Nigeria. To understand this connection therefore, it is instructive that we clearly highlight and explain certain very vital issues with a view to demonstrating that an interactive trinity of: 'State-Failure', 'Elite-Class competition' and 'Alienation' were not only more to blame, but that such complex factors as poverty, the philosophy of global jihad etc, have also added to explain away the rise of the phenomenon of Boko Haram. According to Ikelegbe, the nature and processes for the consolidation of power after the post independence election

were structured in ways that promoted a zero-Sum game in politics. This in turn heightened the struggle for power and turned it into warfare, deepened and politicized divisiveness, cast inter-elite power struggles in ethnic, religious and regional moulds, and personalized power. The inevitable outcome of this political reality was violence, which became a tool for either perpetuating power of one group and appropriating it for other groups. Elite group struggle for consolidating power turned the state into a rapacious and predatory force. The security agencies became abusive, brutal, suppressive and repressive instruments that were used against the opposition, activists, protesters and citizens. Individuals and groups that dare to criticize against the government or support opposition elements were visited with excessive and indiscriminate force. Particularly, as state officials lost support as a result of increasing corruption, ineffective governance and economic decline, and faced growing legitimacy crises, state violence became the instrument to suppress dissent, challenges and resistance. Apart from the security agencies, state elites began to use thugs and armed bands, create militant youth wings of political parties, establish state paramilitary units and militias and support, and utilize private militias.

The state, thus, constructed a terrain of violent politics, made violence a key resource for acquiring and accumulating power, created and made use of entrepreneurs of violence, institutionalized violence in politics and created a public sphere in which non-state actors were forced into counter violence as a mode of defence and resistance. Armed Non-State Groups (ANSGs) then emerged from support of state elites, the mobilization of opposition elements against state brutality and repression, the construction of alternative paths to power and resources, and as the last resort of excluded, marginalized and discontented elements (Ikelegbe:p.137).

State weakness, failure and irrelevance are clearly indicated in the militias and rebel movement phenomenon. First, state weakness creates the incapability to maintain a monopoly of institutions of coercion, provide security and maintain public and social order and peace. Second, the decline of state resources, roles and capacity leads to an inability to provide economic opportunities, social services and facilities, employment and good living conditions. Third, weakness creates a growing state of irrelevance and the promotion of identity groups and movements to fill the vacuum. Fourth, state weakness heightens the quest for identify solidarity, assertion, and mobilization, and creates a fertile environment in which non-state actors can thrive.

Typically, in weak state, the non-state actors, groups, and individuals takes on the roles and fill the vacuum of social assistance, welfare and security and the maintenance of social order, but are not moderated, regulated or organized. In the absence of state control, regulation and any form of lawful deterrence, it is not surprising that the behaviour and practices of these groups become lawless and disorderly. These emergent actors in governance and security, thus incubate criminality, excessive and abusive force and violence. Further, the political and constitutional environment and weaknesses of the Africa states are fertile breeding grounds for extra-constitutional actions, violent politics, challenges of state security, political conflicts and hostilities, and deepening identity-based divisions. Even the reforms since the 1980s, in the form of S.A.Ps, political liberalization, state roll-

back and privatization, further weakened the state and prevented them from performing basic and critical functions. The state and governance crises generated political alienation and discontent, which created the social bases for opposition, challenge and resistance to state authority and instability, civil strife, urban riots, banditry and insecurity in which non-state institutions operate and thrive. Vulnerable and dominated groups also used and mobilized ethnic identify and non-state institutions to challenge the state. Thus, the state has become susceptible to challenge. Weak and deteriorating social service, mass unemployment, poor education systems, economic decline, stagnation and regression, de-industrialization, urban decay, deepening poverty, collapsing and corrupt law enforcement agencies and wide spread insecurity, uncontrolled and ungoverned spaces and weak, unstable and violent terrains are the conditions in which the militias, Islamist militant - groups and rebel are bred (Ikelegbe: pp137-138). These are accountable for Boko Haram's rise to prominence in Nigeria.

Although the elite-(class competition) perspective presents us with a good analytical tool, its poverty as a rigorous instrument for analyzing social phenomenon and societal division into classes lies in its failure to relate elitism to class analysis. (The) governing elite is necessary in every society,and that elite are relatively 'open' and are recruited on the basis of merit. This further implies that there is, therefore, a continuous and extensive circulation of elite and that a distinctive feature of democracy in modern nation - states is that it permits elite to form freely and establishes a regulated competition between elite for the positions of power. This conception is what is called 'elite renewal'; that is, the replacing of the old and aging elites and a replenishing of their rank and file with new, young blood and new ideas. In this sense, therefore, democracy merely connote the ability of the masses to participate in politics, but only to the extent that they exercise a choice between rival elite group. Elite rule, therefore, exclude many from having a direct experience at governance. The rather undemocratic character of representative government is further driven home by a political system whereby elected elite further elect a second elite and who is now endowed with equal or superior political power.

Given the forgoing, it is clear that democracy is actually a competition among elite for possession and access to state power. We argue here that in Nigeria the failure of democracy can be traced to the failure of the elite, as a class. Since 1954, there has been a fusion of the elite such that political elite also constitute both the economic and social elite. To be sure, the emergent political elite since 1954 have monopolized the political terrain to the exclusion of new aspirants. The old elite have so monopolized the political scene such that where they are not competing for political positions, they desire to constitute themselves as power-behind - the - veil, thereby, leading to the phenomenon of 'godfatherism'. New and upcoming elite now have to associate themselves with the old elite, if such are still alive or to their ghost if dead (Agarah: p.41). .. (To this end), the development of a democratic polity requires (robust and quality) competition between elite, periodic changes in the structure and composition of elite in their self conceptions and in their relations with the rest of the population (Agarah). This, none-the-less, is lacking in Nigeria's politics albeit democracy. Thus, by the nature of Nigeria's politics, the 'poverty

or insufficient elite competition' portends very grave danger for the country's democracy. For when access, struggle and competition amongst the elite is impossible, poor, inadequate, or, and even denied, the alienated 'elite' belonging to the class, leverages on the use of cults, mimic and upstart groups, where they exist, and even create new ones where they do not exist, that way, such ANSGs phenomenon as Boko Haram is midwife. At this point, this paper shall interrogate the following questions with a view to providing answers.

i.   Why is Boko Haram and religious fundamentalism a problem at the time of rising democracy in Nigeria?

ii.   Has the current state of insecurity benefited some political elite?, and

iii. Does the solution to Boko Haram lie in the solution 'state-failure, elite competition and alienation"?

The analysis is based on the assumption that the emergence, growth and spread of militant Islamist groups in northern Nigeria poses a challenge to the legitimacy of the state, and are symptomatic of the weak nature and character of the state. The causes and consequences of the resurgence of militant Islamist movements and their challenge to the political status quo are discussed (within) the context of existing political realities (Isa: p.334).

(a)   The expansion of democratic spaces in Nigeria has created opportunities for civil society as well as non-state actors to increase their powers and activities. Militant religious and social movements of various persuasions, some of which pursue extreme ideals, are more willing than ever to capitalize on the weakening power and legitimacy of the state in order to assert their doctrines and philosophy. In some instances, avowed militants use extremist movements to create quasi-states, within the Nigerian state, thereby, further weakening and undermining its legitimacy. The failure of the government in Nigeria to provide social and economic benefits has severely undermined its support from the populace (Isa: p.337).

     Militancy, extremism, radicalism and fundamentalism means or ideologies are used to fill alternative spaces that the state has either failed to provide or closed; or they are a reaction against alienation from modern institutions of governance that fail to deliver social services and other benefits to the people. The search and quest to re-assert identities, institutions, values and norms that make meaningful sense to the average citizen in Nigeria cannot be wished away, particularly amid the decaying infrastructure and deteriorating social services in the country. The search for alternatives or new order is particularly attractive to the vulnerable, disempowered and marginalized Nigerians who are also susceptible to the manipulation by elites wielding or seeking power (Isa: p.336). As struggle for power by the ruling class, and excluded elites heightened, and citizen struggles for survival and livelihoods intensified, opportunities to profit from crime and violence began to emerge, leading to regime of pervasive crime, violence and violent engagements and to the proliferation of arms and emergence of ANSGs (Ikelegbe: p.135), such as Boko Haram.

(b)   In gaining a deeper understanding of the relationship between the state and ANSGs, special attention should be paid to how political elites govern the state, manipulate

groups and use violence to maintain control of the state. This calls for critical interrogation of how elections are held, how free and fair they are, and the role that violence plays in the electoral process. There are strong links among politics, opportunistic politicians and elites, unemployed youths and badly governed states. When stakes are high in elections, politicians turn to political gangs to intimidate opponents and voters. After the election, these political gangs are either transformed into criminal gangs or into rebel groups.… The risks of rebellion and insurgencies in sub-Saharan Africa increased because of the way elections are carried out - from multi-party presidential election to no elections at all-with the latter increasing the chances of political instability and large scale violence.

Some of the hitherto abandoned elite-sponsored political violent gangs, as is the case in Niger-Delta, later transformed themselves into militias and criminal gangs. These groups exploit the power vacuum created by weak states to create alternative government, which provide security and survives by extracting levies for this service. …: (And) political elites who pursue political power (exploit this situation) at the expense of democracy. The manner in which political elites capture political power and use it is critical to understanding the source and nature of political violence and how it has been used to gain control of the state (Okumu and Ikelegbe 2010b: pp.441-445), and the mobilization and contestation for political space, resources, state reforms and change (Okumu and Ikelegbe 2010a: p.28). This, nonetheless, is consistent with the elite-class, who is the power behind the veil in the current Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria.

(c)   And as to whether the solution to Boko Haram lie in the solution to, 'state failure, elite competition and alienation', this paper shall provide as much as possible the following answers. 'ANSGs (such as Boko Haram) have been closely linked to the nature of African states and how they are governed. The rise of the phenomenon of ANSGs is thus linked to the struggle for power and its consolidation, and the nature of politics and governance in Africa (Ikelegbe: p.140). These have taken their toll on the economy, social and public order and political stability of states and have weakened the very fabric of African society - its social existence, social realities and livelihoods, social coherence and harmony, social confidence and trust. With little capacity, dwindling resources and declining legitimacy, the state could no longer guarantee socio-economic progress, civil, individual and group rights or security. These created a quest for primordial identities through which citizens could assert themselves, and opportunities for NSAs in the form of diverse groups and even ANSGs to challenge state power and roles(Ikelegbe: pp.140 - 141).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In Africa, there is a tendency for elites to use any means at their disposal to capture state power and monopolise it, to exclude and marginalized other citizens from the benefits of the state, and use violence to contain or threaten opponents. When these threats reach a

certain level the ruling elites form state militias that it uses against opponents, thus removing itself from the direct intervention and creating plausible deniability. It is obvious that the persistence of militias in Africa reflects the penchants of elite manipulation of the youth and the depth of the 'culture of impunity' in most African societies. This culture allows these groups to develop parallel governance systems that weaken the legitimacy of the state, and use violence and intimidation to subjugate citizens.

In Nigeria the resurgence and rise of the militant Islamist group Boko Haram can fittingly be situated within the context, nature and character of the post colonial Nigeria state, politics and governance. In this case the politics of violence and the violence of politics. To explicate the fact of the claim of 'state failure', 'elite class competition' and 'alienation' in the rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria, it is important to conclude that (BH) represents a pawn in the hands of the 'elite class' in their quest and contestation for state power and struggle over economic resources. To this end, an interactive trinity of a relationship of: 'state failure', 'elite class competition' and 'alienation' explains away the resurgence and rise of (BH). The elite-class, in search of power and access manipulates religious and other primordial identities for selfish gains and other pecuniary purposes, accomplished through violence, terrorism and conflict.

However, the state and the citizens, through civil society, should share the responsibility for ending political violence, particularly during election periods, by monitoring and promoting a peaceful articulation of interest (Ikelegbe: p.141). The nature of politics, the dynamics of power, and its challenges, and particularly the politics of violence and the violence of politics that dominate the African political landscape (Okumu and Ikelegbe 2010a: p.27), must be brought to an end.

As stated elsewhere, alienation can be viewed from two perspectives. (a) The alienation of 'new' aspiring members of the elite-class seeking to gain access and ascendancy, but, denied access by the existing power bloc; and (b) The alienation of the wider social forces in the light of their existential realities, the result of which threatens their maternal conditions and well being, owing to corruption, bad governance, as well as of the failure of the state to provide social good.

According to Isa (2010), the government can turn around this negative trend by strengthening its capacity to provide public good, proactively responding to the needs of its citizens, and strengthening democracy as well as free and fair elections to guarantee the rights and security of citizens. The state must distribute national resources equitably and transparently, and has to be accountable to the population for how it uses these resources. The state must pursue a social and economic policy that will ensure the realization of right, equity and justice for all Nigerians, regardless of their identity: religious, ethnic, regional and or other affiliations.

The best guarantee for a peaceful and prosperous Nigeria is one that is not threatened by extremism or radicalism, (but) has deep democratic values and institutions, promotes good governance, and equal and fair treatment of all citizens, and has a visionary leadership that is fully committed to the Nigerian nation. Anything short of this would guarantee the continuation and even generation of more militancy that we are witnessing in the northern

part of Nigeria and Niger Delta regions of the country at present (Isa: p.337). That way, we can find solution to the BH phenomenon and threat in northern Nigeria. In view of the connection between ANSGs, and the state and governance crises, the best approach to containing their threats to human security will entail extensive reconstruction, rehabilitation and reform of state and governance institution. This should be the task mainly of African leaders who should put the African people at the centre of the state's existence. Africans should, therefore, reconstruct African states by themselves in line with their hope, needs, realities and existence. While external intervention could make a positive contribution, their aim is primarily to promote western interests.

The challenge to rebuild the kind of states that the people actually yearn for: states that are responsive and sensitive to citizen pressures guarantee human-security and manage state affairs in a transparent and accountable manner. African leaders, popular group and activists have to form state-citizenry pacts, build state and institutional legitimacy and credibility, establish new platforms for mobilizing the citizenry and build new commitments and followership towards the new Africa envisioned at inter independence (Ikelegbe: p.141). African states would have to do more in terms of building inclusive and integrated political communities, mediating between groups, divesting themselves to excessive force and authoritarian tendencies, building systems of dialogue, negotiating and reaching consensus with groups and opposition-elements, constructing secure and safe terrains devoid of the profits of violence, building platforms for mobilization of common commitments and productive engagements and building capacity for conflict resolution and promotion of peace. But the most important and daunting challenge is to build quality leadership that can move Africa forward. The present crop of leaders is still corrupt and self interested; a national, visionary, credible, selfless, committed and transparent leaders, clearly maintain in short supply. Present day African leaders have played a major role in weakening the state capacity to govern democratically and justly (Okumu and Ikelegbe 2010b: p.442). The findings of this paper contends that ones the elite-class find access to its control over resources, and state power threatened and, or even, denied, they leverage upon the use of unsavoury, mimic and upstart groups and associations into acts of violence to achieve their electoral objectives. In addition it recommends Inter-ethnic and religious harmony, the promotion of democratic consolidation, reconstruction, rehabilitation and reform of state and governance institutions; building and promoting inclusiveness in governance and state, mediating between groups, building strong and lasting systems of dialogue, negotiation and consensus within and between groups and opposition elements, divesting from the use and application of the use of force, manipulation and primordial mobilization in politics, building virile platforms for constructing secure and safe terrains devoid of violence, building productive engagements and capacities for conflict resolutions and promotion of peace. Building quality leadership, encouraging the politics of development and democracy, properly engaging the youth in development related issues, building a strong civil society, providing public good and citizens needs, free and fair election as well as guarantee the rights and security of citizens regardless of religious, ethnic, and regional affiliations and inclinations.

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