Defective Federalism and the Emergence of Domestic Terrorism in Nigeria

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Abstract

The extremist Islamic sect Boko Haram is now feared for its ability to mount both low-scale and audacious attacks in Nigeria. This study attempts a consensual explanation of the defects of Nigerian federalism to facilitate the emergence of Boko Haram terrorism. The study is descriptive and data was obtained from secondary sources. It was found that the insurgence is a manifestation of frustration on account of the national political, religious and economic systems. The paper concludes that Boko Haram insurgence is part of the cycles and trends of unrest in Nigeria; responding to the same broad families of national fixations as other forms of national-level conflict. The study proposes a restructuring of Nigeria's federalism to surmount the inevitable agitations.

Keywords: federalism, terrorism, Boko Haram, Sharia law, violence, Northern Nigeria, peace.

Introduction

The legitimacy of the modern nation state is linked to its capacity to present itself as a provider of necessary public goods, and more importantly, a neutral arbiter that guarantees the security of all sections of society. When the state is generally perceived as serving the particularistic interests of one group, it starts losing its legitimacy, and indeed, its authority. As state capacity declines, fear of 'the other' rises and becomes an objective factor of survival, and people are forced to resort to other levels of solidarity – religious, ethnic, regional, etc. - in search of security (Ibrahim, 1999).

The failings of Nigeria over the years have conspired to create the conditions for the transformation of Boko Haram from just one of several fundamentalist sects in Northern Nigeria into the irredeemably violent organization it is today; one that now appears to lie well beyond the capacity of the country to confront and defeat. The turning point in the drawn-out evolution of Boko Haram was the July 2009 killing of the sect's co-founder, Yusuf Muhammad (Al Jazeera, 2009) when he was under police custody, and just hours after soldiers arrested and handed him over. His capture followed five days of clashes between members of the sect and the military, who received their orders from the then President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua when it became clear that the police could not contain the uprising. Prior to the sect's attack, the authorities got warnings, but they did nothing pre-emptive until the sect struck.

Conceptual Issues

The two concepts that are central to this paper are federalism and terrorism. It is therefore necessary from the outset to define the perspectives in which these terms will be used for the

purpose of this piece. With reference to the concept of federalism, quite a voluminous body of literature exists that expounds a diversity of perspectives on the pre-conditions for, as well as aggregates of, factors that, taken together, constitute a federal system. It is not within the scope of this piece to contribute to the welter of existing definitions of federalism, but to extract that which will be analytically useful for this endeavor.

Because of its broad scope, the definition provided by Kenneth Wheare will be adopted. He defines federalism as "the method of dividing powers so that central and regional governments are each, within a sphere, coordinate and independent" (Wheare, 1963). One thing that is clear in a federal system of government is that the tiers of government ought to share political power as expressly spelled out in the constitution. In a federal structure, vertical separation of powers is necessary for preservation of liberty and the prevention of tyranny. According to James Madison, the primary control of the government is its dependence on the people. The Declaration of American Independence contains the facts,

> … That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their Safety and Happiness. (US Declaration of Independence, 1776)

Federalism presupposes limits to the federal government's power and authority. This allows for checks and judiciary review of both state and federal encroachment. But Nigeria lacks inter-institutional oversight. Except for the rather vague statement in Section 2 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), there are no definite, enumerated powers of the federal government in the Nigerian Constitution. The thirty-six states are merely administrative units of the central government. A federation is no doubt a political entity characterized by a union of partially self-governing states or regions under a central (federal) government. In a federation, the self-governing status of the component states, as well as the division of power between them and the central government are typically constitutionally entrenched and may not be altered by a unilateral decision of either party, or the states of the federal political body.

If these critical features provide the necessary underpinnings of a federation, then a federal state can be one move away from replacing a non-federating system with a federal one. It is a process that seeks unity, without resorting to uniformity; hence, federalism is conceived as the antithesis of a unitary system, which would ensure the prevalence of harmony across sundry groups and interests. According to Baron de Montesquieu, federalism is a society of societies (de Montesquieu, 1748). As would be expected, the structure or composition of the federation units involved and the practices of those units could vary from one state to another. Thus, dependence on the structure or composition is capable of affecting virtually every facet of life of a country's citizenry.

Unlike federalism, the concept of terrorism does not have a voluminous body of explicatory literature to fall back upon. However, the perspective expounded by Dokun Oyeshola will be used. He states that:

Terrorism may be defined as the systematic use of threat of murder, injury and destruction to create a climate of terror, to publicize a cause, and to coerce a wider target into submitting to the terrorist's aims.   (Oveshola, 2005)

This definition of terrorism is useful for two reasons. First, it looks at terrorism in relation to tactics. It is only against the background of tactics used by terrorists that terrorism can best be understood. Second, the definition provides the advantage of being able to look at terrorism from two levels, namely, the level of the individual and the level of the nation-state.

The elucidation of the concept of terrorism that Oyeshola (2005) presents goes a little further in that it identifies three levels at which terrorism can be analyzed. These are the individual level, the national level and the international level. By his definition, Oyeshola implicitly concedes that at the level of the individual, it is difficult to provide an all-encompassing definition of terrorism. Nevertheless, the values of the individuals who terrorism attack tend to be the same as life, health, status, freedom and wealth. At the level of the nation-state, terrorism assumes a slightly different perspective. It is at this level that reference is made to the destruction of national stability and security, which involve essentially, the inability of a nation to protect values from terrorist attacks. These internal values include the ideas and conceptions of the state that are held by its citizens, the political, economic, and social institutions within the state, and the geographical and territorial base of the state with all its endowment.

At the international level, terrorism is derived from the perceived needs and requirements of the nation-states to defend their core national values against the pursuit of terrorists. The perception of a terrorist's threat from the international environment compels states to increase their level of security vis-à-vis terrorist organizations. Therefore, terrorism not only threatens the rights and values that are cherished at the level of the individual and state, but it also depending on its intensity. It may also constitute a threat to the corporate existence of the international system (Singer, 1969).

Nigeria's Defective Federalism: A Recipe for Extremism

To understand how defective Nigeria's federalism is, consider the contribution of the most consummate student of federalism Nigeria has ever known, Chief Obafemi Awolowo. He wrote;

From our study of the constitutional evolution of all the countries of the world, two things stand out clearly and prominently. First, in any country where there are divergences of language and of nationality-particularly of language - a unitary constitution is always a source of bitterness and hostility on the part of linguistic or national minority groups. On the other hand, as soon as federal constitution is introduced in which each linguistic or national group is recognized and accorded regional autonomy, any bitterness and hostility against the constitutional arrangement must disappear. Secondly, a federal constitution is usually a more or less dead letter in any country which lacks any of the factors conducive to federalism. (Awolowo. 1966, p. 199)

It could be recalled that federalism was adopted for Nigeria (Akinyemi, 1978) as a convenient means of administering a fractious multi-ethnic conglomerate. Though rickety in

practice since inception (Osuntokun, 1999; Tamuwo, 1998), federalism no doubt offered some hope that the multinational leviathan might not implode because of the substantial autonomy guaranteed the federating units (Awolowo, 1960). By the time the military action (civil war) ended in January 1970, Nigeria was no longer a conglomeration of three regions with separate constitutions that were attached as a schedule to the Federal Constitution and hinged upon the three major ethnic groups – Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, but was a unitary-federation composed of twelve state surrogates of the central government.

With the onset of the oil boom (Mayall, 1976) in the early 1970s and the Nigeria state as the primary vortex of revenue collection and disbursements, the states became subservient to the federal center. This is because, according to the then military head of state General Yakubu Gowon, "To keep Nigeria one is a task that must be done" (Clarke, 1987, p. 65). By introducing a unitary command structure, Gowon truncated Nigeria's federalism. This is because, according to Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black of the United States, federalism is a proper system for state functions with recognition of the fact that the entire country is made up of a union of separate state.

From the outset therefore, the structural reform and abrogation of regionalism, which Gowon did with messianic fixation, stifled the population. It opened Pandora's Box for instability, ethnic rivalry, abuse of human rights and societal mistrust between the government and the people. While Nigeria had in a way survived the *Biafran* secession, the same cannot be said of the ills of its brand of federalism. This practice of federalism seems an enduring phenomenon which remains destructive to the very essence of the Nigerian nation. To start with, Nigeria's federalism fundamentally violated B. J. Dureley's conceptualization of federalism as a division of powers between a central government and several regions of state governments, each acting directly with the people, each with a limited share of judicial competence, and each self-sufficient (Odisu, 2015).

Due to this contradistinction, Nigeria became an exclusive *oil* of gladness for a privileged few, and the *water* of affliction for the rest of the stock. Thus, the first line of threat to human security (Imobighe, 1998) in Nigeria was the agents of the anti-people policy. This threatened the ability of the ordinary citizen to realize self-actualization, that is, the ability to be liberated from poverty, ignorance and disease. These were the people who looted the public treasury, mismanaged the nation's economy, scuttled the efforts towards the just sharing of the rewards and burden of citizenship, as well as those who undermined the solidarity of the people by manipulating ethnic, religious and sectional sentiments. How anyone could imagine that this cauldron of negative and antagonistic factors would lead to a brew of national unity and stability must be evidence of man's incurable predisposition to delusion.

The direct result was that the centralization of political and economic power reinforced, above all, corruption, pillage and predation as well as the marginalization of several ethnic communities from any access to state resources. Under the circumstance, politics became a zero-sum enterprise where winners take all and losers lose everything. In this, there is no room for magnanimity in victory or gallantry in defeat. It is a dog-eat-dog game where only the violent survive and thrive. With the appropriation of national wealth for private use, good governance has become an alien philosophy since the government is never accountable to the people.

The second means by which Nigeria's federalism brought about terrorism is in respect to the distribution of political power. It is expected that, in a federal state, the constituent units have equal power and are thus able to develop at their own pace. But Nigeria's federalism has given the 'federal' center enormous powers at the expense of the states, and these powers are unknown in any other federal state (Awe, 1998). This reckless appropriation of extreme power has totally subverted the very essence of federalism. The implication of this is that Nigeria has been only federate in name but unitary in reality and operation. It is taken for granted that federalism is an acknowledgement that the government will be greatest if the states and their institutions are left to perform their separate functions in their separate ways. Instead, whoever occupies the presidency in Nigeria becomes an indisputable colossus among the plethora of governors of the thirty-six states. Needless to say, this system does not permit independent thinking, nor allow the states to develop at their own pace. The unwillingness of the 'federal' authority to relinquish power to the 'federating' units fuels the spiral of violence, and the existence of religious, ethnic, and regional cleavages that political violence easily feeds upon.

The Nigerian governmental structure is an 'imperial presidency' and the federation a 'unitary system.' The country retains the title 'federation' in its name, but in reality, it is a very strong, powerful and overbearing central government that appropriates all of the nation's power and wealth and distributes it to the 'federating units' at its whim. In accordance with the constitution, the system exercises absolute control over the nation's economy by appropriating all mineral resources to itself. The importance of this centralization is clearer when it is realized that Nigeria is a mineral dependent state that currently derives about 80% of its external revenue earnings from petroleum alone. In the same vein, the entire coercive apparatus of the state, i.e. the armed forces, the police and other security and intelligence apparatus, are firmly under the control of the central government. The enormous powers of the central government make it a money-grubbing but unproductive behemoth. The federal system of government has become a monster that the people are incapable of taming through peaceful means. While state governors are, technically speaking, the chief security officers at the state level, in practice, they have no control over the police commissioners appointed and deployed from Abuja, the capital.

The third way in which Nigeria's federalism constitutes a source of terrorism is in relation to the country's inability to meet the aspiration of its citizens (Burton & Dukes, 1990). It had been assumed that federalism would result in a more rational and efficient management of the economic system as a whole, which, in turn, would result in greater equity in the distribution of goods and services. The success of a federal system depends on an acceptable distribution of resources and functions among the three levels of government so that efficiency in the use of scarce resources is encouraged while reducing inequality in the treatment of individuals (Ekeh, 1972) among different states.

Given the structure of the Nigerian economy, the state and local governments have had to be heavily dependent on the federally collected revenues. But revenue allocated statutorily to the state governments has not fostered any sense of financial responsibility on the part of state and local governments as they increasingly become inefficient in the use of the meager funds they

receive. These governments are tempted to spend money on questionable projects. In addition, the revenue allocation formula has not given sufficient incentives to these governments to establish their own sources or revenue. In fact, state and local governments have found it more rewarding to concentrate their energies on attempting to obtain a larger transfer from federally collected revenues than attempting to generate more revenue internally. Because of these problems, the expenditures to which the state and the local governments are committed far exceeds their revenue. While state and local government statutory allocation has shown little growth potential, their expenditures have shown high growth potential. Not only is there a large excess of their expenditures over revenue, but the extent of imbalance is progressively rising.

Thus, with a non-hegemonic and profligate ruling elite that is always concerned with spoliation, predation and de-legitimation of the state, the Nigerian state, in the words of Ihonvbere (1995), has become irrelevant in terms of the consciousness of existential conditions of the populace which it is supposed to serve, unite and nourish through the provision of basic social services as well as security of life and properties. This has resulted in the creation of Boko Haram as an alternative ethnic, communal and religious network and structure for providing social welfare needs (Ake, 1997).

Looked at from another perspective, modern federal countries have three levels of government with each distinguished by the scope of the geographical areas over which their respective jurisdiction extend. The jurisdiction of the federal government covers the entire country in some subject matters. Regional (state) government's jurisdictions cover sub-sections of the country, while local governments exercise responsibility in non-over-lapping areas within a state. Federalism is a standard concept of a government unit based on an area to govern. Ideally, a system of multi-level government should be structured from the point of view of ensuring an efficient supply of public services. In line with this, each level of government ought to have adequate resources to perform its functions without appealing to the other levels of government for financial assistance. Revenue allocation under a federal system of government creates complex problems. The complexity stems from the distinctive nature of federalism as a form of government in which the legislative, executive and judicial functions, or powers, of the states are shared amongst the three tiers of government.

Rather than address this complexity, Nigeria is a manifestation of an over-centralized federation of weak units in which the politics of distribution of public goods triumph over that of production. This manifestation can be evidenced at all levels of the federal arrangement as a culture of venality, a fractured and largely insensitive political elite, decaying basic infrastructure, and a neglected or lacking system incorporated into the national life of ethnic minorities, rural areas, women and the youth, among others, as well as an economy overburdened by debt, exogenous tastes and consumption habits with cross-regional internal markets suffering from bureaucratic bottlenecks (official and unofficial), and over-dependence on oil for national income. Nigerians cannot therefore be blame for believing that their leaders have driven the country to an ignominious, ominous, and perilous precipice. Nigeria is viewed by Nigerians as an affliction, a sickening of bad breath that will make you disgorge, a belch from the gastro-intestines of hell, and

a country furbelowed with deliberate disapprobation and depravity (Solarin, 1965). Many around the world believe that Nigeria is like the axis of tragedy, horror, infamy, and a messy amalgam of degeneracy and turpitude. There is no doubting the fact that the Nigerian federal structure is inherently conducive to the development of rebel movements.

Fourth, the peace and stability of Nigeria is further threatened by the federal character principle. The federal character (Ekeh, 1989) principle has been manipulated by and channeled to serve the overall interest of the petty bourgeois ruling class. It is the members of this class who have formulated and operated the principle under the guise of the federal character principles. The members of the bourgeois class also get themselves entrenched in power and exercise control over the machinery of state through the application of this principle. They strive to reconcile their class differences through the operation of an acceptable formula for the allocation, distribution and sharing of national resources, while receiving benefits among themselves. While they do this, they capitalize on and fan the members with ethnic differences among the various Nigerian peoples to win the support of the masses in their areas.

The federal character principles have satisfied the quest for representativeness and appointment among various groups (Ekeh, 1989). However, in the application of the formula, choices are often made based on a criterion other than merit. For example, the quota system as applied in education leads to lowering standards against national interests. In the army, it leads to the production of sub-grade soldiers and officers. In the civil and public services of the federation, standards and professionalism are compromised by eschewing meritocracy without recourse to standards. Thus, the quota system becomes morally reprehensible and an act of injustice. Viewed from this perspective, the quota factors in the federal character principle have become not only counter-productive but counter to the peaceful and orderly progress and development of Nigeria.

One of the major and most problematic features of the federal character principle (Adebisi, 1989) is the complexity of the interest and units as represented by some states and local governments, and ethnic and religious group affiliations. For example, the creation of more states and local governments and the establishment of federal educational institutions in every state to enhance greater representational opportunities has led to the multiplication of governmental and administrative units and facilities which become disturbingly expensive to the nation. This is often done against the evidence of the inability of the new states and local governments to discharge their statutory duties because of their unavailability. As a result, the federal character principle has deepened the problem it was devised to tackle.

The factors that cause a population to defer to terrorism are a sense of grievance, oppression, frustration and depravation, including poverty and other adverse effects of globalization and rank disequilibrium including class and tribal alteration, and changes in attainments or expectations. In addition, there is the feeling of grievance from being exploited by narcissistic leaders with borderline personalities, and by groups who are opposed to them. The sense of injustice is also making individuals turn to terrorism in order for the population at large to hear of their suffering and sense of injustice. This has created mass psychosis that turns citizens against innocent people which is manifested in mass killings during religious, communal, inter-

communal, ethnic and related face-offs in different parts of Nigeria: North, East, Middle Belt, West, South-South, and so on. In addition, since the Nigerian state seems to have lost its *raison d'etre* and legitimacy in the eyes of most of the populace, the violent resurgence of the national question has been manifested in the Boko Haram's successes.

Finally, a proper federal system with considerable devolution of powers to the constituent regions/states and local governments, with attendant separation of powers between the different arms of government, would not only ensure unity in diversity but also would ameliorate pronounced ethnic antagonism. Expectedly, the arrival of democracy, which will allow people to express their pent-up frustration without the fear of military reprisals, can open the floodgates of agitation. Unfortunately, the federal arrangement that Nigeria operates is structurally defective. The inability of this structural asymmetry to effectively manage the mirage of interests is responsible for the instability of the Nigerian state. With this in mind, the National Conference in 2014 proposed far-reaching changes to correct the structural defects of Nigeria, and the calculations for the 2015 general elections were paramount in the mind of the political cabal.

This picture of Nigeria indicates that within the last century of amalgamation and fifty-five years of independence, the country's leaders have not been able to forge an agenda of national coherence, integration, or the ability to address the urgent issues of poverty, inequality, identity conflicts and popular democracy. Nigeria's internal organization is rigidly stratified and disperses too many rewards to too few of its members while the allegiance of it citizenry has dwindled. Throughout its history, Nigeria has been held together in artificial unity more by coercion than by the consent of the people.

It is indeed disheartening that Nigeria only operates the federal system on paper. Real federalism has never existed in Nigeria (Ajasin, 1992; Odisu, 2015). The reasons are not far fetch; the federal government, ever since the intervention of the military in government, has always assumed superiority over the state governments while the states do the same to the local governments. Because military federalism had been more common than civilian federalism, this model made the federal government the master in relation to the dependent state governments. Therefore, the future of Nigeria lies in only one direction - true federalism, together with fiscal federalism and resource control by the owners of the resources. For there to be an atmosphere of peace, harmony and progress in Nigeria, there should be a clear division of power between the federal government and the state governments. The states must be given the economic power to carry out their increased political, social and economic responsibilities. Until that is done, there will always be the search for alternatives like Boko Haram to the Nigerian state.

Boko Haram's Terrorism

When Britain amalgamated Nigeria in 1914, it sealed off the North from the South (Osuntoku, 1979). What was united were fundamentally the administrations of the North and South and not the people of the North and South (Perham, 1960). The British allowed minimum contact between the North and the South because it was not in British interest that the North be allowed to be polluted by the educated South (Akinjide, 2002).

While it is true that northern Nigeria is not a religious monolith, Northern Nigeria houses a majority of the country's Moslem population, most of whom are Sunnis. With their majority, the Moslem population sought the introduction of *Sharia* as the foundation of all legislation in the region. It should be noted that Northern Nigeria has always shared the sentiments of the Moslems of the Arab world for Islamic solidarity (Minorities Commission, 1958). Thus, Boko Haram, whose official name is *Jama'atul Alhul Sunnah Lidda'wati wal Jihad* which means Group of the Sunni People for the Calling and Jihad (NCTC, 2013), has been connected to the fanatical Palestinian movement that has been frustrated and desperate to avenge the Arab defeat in the Six Day War of June 1967 by using weapons of new terrorism that started September 11, 2001. In addition, Al Qaeda and aligned organizations have taken advantage of the situation in Nigeria to promote their own causes (Nossiter & Murray, 2011), including engaging in a war with the West. While not universally successful, these groups have benefitted from the misapplication of Nigeria's federalism, and they have been able to recruit from militant groups in Northern Nigeria.

The mission of the Palestinian movements has been complemented in Nigeria by the Sharia debate which has been lingering in Nigeria since the Constituent Assembly controversy of 1977-78 (Aguda, 2002). When the debate resurfaced under the presidency of Olusegun Obasanjo, it was described as a political Sharia that would burn out. Though the National Council of States directed all Northern states to desist from implementing the Islamic legal system, the Northern states continue to insist that the Sharia system should be implemented. Former President Shehu Shagari and retired General Muhammadu Buhari immediately aligned themselves with the Sharia proponents by saying that Moslems have the right to insist on it because it is their way of life (Adebajo, 2000). They were not alone, because the then Vice President Atiku Abubakar stated at the Sultanate Council of Sokoto that State governors implementing Sharia were responding to the wishes of their people. In his words, "This is a democratic setting, they have the right to do the wishes of their land, and I don't think that should bother anybody" (This Day, 2000).

As a result, as many as twelve of the states, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara in Northern Nigeria, have relied on Sharia Law as the basis of their legislative, executive and judicial arrangements. While there remains a lot of tension in the states where many Christians live, Mohammed Yusuf deemed the introduction of Sharia in these states as insufficient (Pham, 2012). The Federal Government, as it characteristically does, adopted the do-nothing approach while the Sharia controversies led to the legitimate existence of many ethnic militias and ethno-terrorism of which Boko Haram is the strongest (Wellington, 2008). Meanwhile, the domestic and international condemnation of the judgement of the Sharia courts has snowballed into the decision of its proponents to the point that they would not continue to accept and tolerate Western culture in their domains.

To compound the situation, at about this time, there was the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) coming from the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone and smuggled in across Nigeria's porous 4,000-mile-stretch borders with Benin, Niger, Chad and Cameroon. In response in 2005, Obasanjo set up a Presidential Action Committee on Control of Violent Crimes

and Illegal Weapons that reportedly raised fears that extremist sects were gaining roots in the country.

Funds also flowed into Northern Nigeria from abroad to support the array of Moslem sects. In 2002, a Nigerian associate of Osama bin Laden reportedly received N300m ($3m at that time) from bin Laden to donate to several Islamist sects across Northern Nigeria, including Boko Haram (Walker, 2012). In February 2003, Bin Laden broadcast a message in which he said, "the areas most in need of liberation are Jordan, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen" (Lawrence, 2005, p. 183). Writing in 2011, Mai Yamani, author of *Cradle of Islam* noted,

> Despite the decade of the West's war on terror, and Saudi Arabia's longer-term alliance with the US, the Kingdom's Wahhabi religious establishment has continued to bankroll Islamic extremist ideologies around the world.

There were also reports of Libyan President Mohammed Qhaddafi of Libya sending financial resources to the group (Thomson, 2012). Another international source of financing has been from Muslim charity organizations in Europe. In 2012, the British House of Lords led an investigation against the charity Al-Muntada Trust Fund for transferring funds to Boko Haram (Kalu, 2012).

This funding should not be surprising because it seems that violence has been associated with religion since the beginning. In this way, the crisis of the foundation of Islam, which is paradigmatically recorded in Muhammad's *Hijra* to Medina and the abiding claim to the *Ka'ba* in Mecca, readily comes to mind. Despite the original tolerance towards the Jews and Christians (the 'people of the book'), a final alternative that can no longer be overcome by human beings presents itself. An indispensable claim arises out of the inclusion of Jews and Christians. "If they accept your faith, they shall be rightly guided; if they reject it, they shall surely be in schism. Against them God is your all-sufficient defender" (Muhammed, 656). An unbridgeable opposition arises here, as soon as others think that they can reject a conviction recognized as God's truth. Also, despite the often-conciliatory tone to be found in the Qur'an, everything in Islam seems to be attuned to conquest and fighting. In the shaping of a just world, as conceived by Islam, the missionary goals of conversion and dissemination of the faith are legitimate and even called for under certain conditions. The conception of a common life shaped in accordance with the Qur'an and the Sharia seems to require at least violence and the resolute implementation of Allah's will.

Connected to religion, the records of the destructive activities of Boko Haram are sufficiently within the public domain to demand documentation here. Suffice it therefore to say that the first violent uprising associated with the sect took place in December 2003. About 200 armed youths who styled themselves *Al Summa Wal Jamma* (Followers of the Prophet) attacked the police stations of two border towns in the state of Yobe, near Nigeria's border with Chad. The attack was said to be in retaliation for what the sect termed maltreatment of its members by the police. By June 2009, the members of the sect encountered a team of Operation Flush, which is a special security unit under the control of the then Borno state governor Ali Modu Sherrif. The sect's members sustained gunshot injuries from this encounter. In response, Yusuf Muhammad reportedly wrote and circulated an open letter to President Yar'Adua threatening violence. By July,

the sect fulfilled its threats through a series of brazen, coordinated attacks on police stations and government buildings in four states. This led to the capture of Yusuf. Yusuf's father-in-law and two alleged financiers of the sect. Alhaji Buji Foi (Former Borno State Commissioner for Religious Affairs), and Alhaji Buni Wakil (local contractor) were also killed (Shenu, 2001).

The subsequent notorious activities of Boko Haram could be understood in the context of the questioning of the *raison d'etre* of the modern nation-state as climaxed in the reconstruction of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia in southern Europe (Huntington, 1991) as well as Somalia and Ethiopia in Africa. It should also be noted that the relevance of the Nigerian nation-state has been contested by the Igbo ethnic community who declared the short-lived Republic of Biafra. The crises in the Niger Delta that escalated following the execution of Kenule Saro Wiwa in 1995 by the Abacha junta are all in this clime (Nyiam, 1999). Thus, no matter what we may think of Boko Haram and its tactics, the truth that must be admitted is that this conflict is based on issues that are real and concrete (Laski, 1968). That is, we must admit that the best antidote to domestic terrorism is good governance. This would mean an explicit admission that bad governance leads to domestic restiveness. History will show whether we are right in seeking to construct a linkage between good governance and national peace and stability. But for now, it is as good a linkage as any to work on.

As human rights groups document accounts of abuses by the Nigerian security forces, local communities are alienated and Boko Haram's sympathizers are further radicalized. Due to the sect's attack on Western culture and Nigeria's decadent political system whose legacy is corruption and poverty, the sect has a large and deeply devoted youth population galvanize to it because its socio-economic grievances resonate with theirs (Abraham, 1997). Meanwhile, the objective of Boko Haram is to weaken the government and governance, divert its security forces from other tasks, attract sympathizers, and ultimately force government into overreaction that would throw the population into the arms of the terrorists. This would be because citizens would not have the faith that their government can act swiftly and fairly since the government itself is understood to be inherently corrupt, and the feeling of injustice is prevalent.

Therefore, as of August 2014, Boko Haram is said to have about fifty thousand comrades (Stephen, 2014) comprising of Islamic students, clerics and professionals from the north, and these comrades are committed to its mission of murders throughout Northern Nigeria. Boko Haram hopes to introduce its own true version of Islam and liquidate Western culture starting with Northeast Nigeria by constituting itself into an irresistible agent of change. But, the present Boko Haram is a product of the weakness of Nigeria in not responding credibly to terrorism. Meanwhile, with this army of youth, the sect has held an attraction for Nigerian politicians who are on a desperate quest to gain or retain political office. It is a pattern across Nigeria that politicians cultivate, for the purpose of winning elections, armies of youths whose job it is to intimidate opponents, and create the kind of chaos that makes election rigging easy. This also explains the insouciance and dilatory response, and ever present reluctance and inability, to decisively resolve the issue (Abraham, 1997). It is an undeniable fact that Nigeria's main political parties are using the sect to gain their own ends; a basis for trading accusations aimed at undermining opponents.

However, the sect's demand for and declaration of Islamic caliphate (NCTC, 2013) could also be an attempt by the sect to undo the subordination of the old Kanem-Borno Empire under the politico-military power of the British colonial state that later became Nigeria. Boko Haram wishes to reverse this, and re-install and continue with the long existence of the Seifawa Dynasty in Kanem-Borno. This is because, unlike in the present circumstance where the North is bereaved of power, even under the colonial state, the dynasty has power. For instance, under Indirect Rule, "the tendency was to define the customary powers of the Emir" (Akinjide, 2002, p. 27) in a way so embracing as to fortify him from any external threat. If the native authority was akin to a colonial fortress in a hostile wilderness, the Emir (Chief) was its knight whose armor must not be allowed to be breached at any point (Mamdani, 1996). In sum, since the establishment of the Kanem-Borno Empire, the people have become accustom to the idea of an Islamic state under the seemly unquestionable authority of the Emirs. And, the colonial administration through the framework of Indirect Rule has acknowledged and reinforced the Caliphate notion of the ownership of the emirate by its rulers (NAI, 1958). Even the incursion of the military to power after independence allows the North to enjoy the largest concentration of power at the center.

Therefore, the dynamite that would eventually explode the peace of Northern Nigeria was laid by the re-introduction of democracy in 1999. In this democratic dispensation, characteristically insensitive to the wounded pride of the North whose son Umaru Musa Yar'Adua could not complete his tenure due to death and from whom political power had slipped, Goodluck Ebele Azikiwe Jonathan contested and won the presidency in 2007. Even granted that he had the right to contest, his election nonetheless showed poor political judgement on his part. Jonathan fatalistically failed to grasp the adverse relationship between the interests of the North and the rhetoric of liberal democracy. In this way, he mistook popular complacency in the face of power of incumbency for acquiescence. Therefore, the centralization of power at the center coupled with the fact that the South had been ruling since 1999, except for the interregnum of Yar'Adua, created a monstrosity that continues to bedevil the nation today. The virtual loss of power by the Northern elite who had practiced democracy since 1999 (Soyinka, 2011) represented an idea that was alien to Northern Nigeria. The result has led to the perception that the minorities are trying to take over the country. Boko Haram, with a powerful network of remote and immediate sponsors, is therefore a continuation of the struggle for power between the North and the South (For more on how the struggle by regional elites to control how central power has made the Nigerian state crisis-ridden, see for example, "Nigerian Politics: The Ordeal of Chief Awolowo," and "Contradictions in the Nigerian Political System" in Sklar and Whitaker's *African Politics and Problems in Development.*)

The sect Boco Haram has therefore been using terrorism in conjunction with rural and urban guerrilla warfare in an all-out bid to topple government interests in Northern Nigeria. The actions are systematic, premeditated and calculated. They have continued to use systematic murder, suicide bombings, mass adoption, injuries, and wanton destruction of lives and properties to create a climate of terror, to publicize its disdain for Western culture all in the bid to coerce a wider population of Moslems in the north and to submit to its aim of an Islamic caliphate. The

resulting toll in deaths, injuries and destruction are not the primary objectives. The carnage is a means to an end, part of the atmosphere of shock and fear that the sect wishes to create in order to undermine government authority and gain a hearing for its cause; which is a change of the idea that there is no future outside Western culture, change of the idea of the Saturday-Sunday weekend, change from the penal code to Sharia code in the executive, legislative and judicial administration, to abolish of Christianity, at least in Northeast Nigeria, and to ultimately establish an Islamic state.

Since the terrorists' activities in Algeria and Cyprus against French and British colonial powers succeeded in ending colonialism in those places, it is possible to end everything Western in Northern Nigeria. This can be ensured by the short-term gains of publicity, cash ransoms and release of terrorist prisoners. It is no wonder that the Boko Haram issue has now dominated the attention of Nigerians, Africans, and the World to the exclusion of related crimes, and the identification of the forces and individuals that were created and have sustained those policies (Haruna, 2001).

Conclusion

An attempt has been made in this paper to highlight how Nigeria's federalism created the platform for the emergence of Boko Haram's domestic terrorism. Nigerians' mistrust of their political leaders is historically documentable. Regardless of whether its cause is the British amalgamation of 1914, long military rule or something else, it is a part of the Nigerian character. At least in part, because of government excess which is the consequence of the defects of Nigeria's federalism, Islamic insurrection has grown throughout Northeast Nigeria. The implication of this study is therefore that there is an avoidable causal effect to the Boko Haram terrorism. In retrospect, when there is unity in diversity, when each unit is coordinated and independent to a reasonable extent, when power with the accompanying responsibilities is devolved of coordinated units to ensure their growth and development, when injustice of whatever kind is not condoned, when equality of all is guaranteed, when domination of one nationality or a group of nationalities by another is not allowed, when no unit is alienated under whatever guise but each has a sense of belonging, and when transparency, honesty, accountability and selflessness characterize leadership, only then will Nigeria experience peace (Olukoshi & Agbu, 1996).

Rendering a final or an authoritative judgement on Boko Haram's terrorism against Nigeria is not only required at this point in time, because it is actually not the objective of this piece. That would be a task for a later date and much fuller work. Here, we have restricted our analysis to describing and explaining the connection of Nigeria's brand of federalism with the emergence of the militant group Boko Haram. If this piece eventually serves as a platform from which deeper studies and in-depth analyses of the interconnectedness between Nigeria's brand of federalism and how the emergence domestic terrorism would take off, then it would have achieved its modest expectation.

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