

TERRORISM IN NIGERIA:THEORIES AND PRACTICE

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BACKGROUND

- The hemorrhagic acts of the Boko Haram , Niger Delta militants and Fulani herdsman in Nigeria warrants an exhaustive discourse on terrorism and counter terrorism in Nigeria. Hence President Buhari in his inaugural speech said “he will commission a sociological research to understanding Boko Haram in Nigeria”. This paper argues that countering terrorism in Nigeria involves understanding the nexus of extremism and criminality in the political, social and religious spheres. It argues in line with Cockayne (2011) that there is a growing recognition internationally that criminal networks (both local and transnational) threaten not only to fuel violent conflict, but also to undermine democratic gains-by criminalising politics and instrumentalising continuing disorder.

BACKGROUND

- Hence there is concern that in its over 50 years of existence as an independent nation, Nigeria has faced diverse forms of security challenges. These challenges which emanate mostly from within had consistently over the years, disrupted governance, caused massive deaths, created an atmosphere of fear and insecurity, threatened the corporate existence of the nation and portrayed Nigeria poorly at the international scene.

BACKGROUND

- Today, if one opens pages of Nigerian dailies, all we see and read are anomie and threats to life and national development such as: Boko Haram killed 83 in Maiduguri, 40 people in Agatu massacred by Fulani herdsmen, Gunmen kidnapped 3 in Edo, Niger Delta Avengers blew up gas pipelines in Warri, RCCG female evangelist killed in Kubwa, Violence looms in Jos, etc. The list is endless. On this note one begins to wonder “what happens when gold rusts”.
- I will argue that all of these criminal and extremist behaviours are rewarding some elites involved in criminal, religious and political entrepreneurialism.

CONCEPT OF TERRORISM

- The International Terrorism and Security Research (ITSR) allude to the fact that terrorism is not new, and that even though the word has been used since the beginning of recorded history it can be relatively hard to define.
- However, terrorism according to the ITSR has been described variously as both a tactic and strategy; a crime and a holy duty; a justified reaction to oppression and an inexcusable abomination. The United States Department of Defense (USDD) defines terrorism as “the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological.”

CONCEPT OF TERRORISM

- Within the above definition, there are three key elements—violence, fear, and intimidation—and each element produce terror in its victims (both real/precarious victims) .
- The FBI defines terrorism as “the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.” The U.S. Department of State (USDS) also defines terrorism as “premeditated politically-motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience”.

CONCEPT OF TERRORISM

- The United Nations (1992) also defines terrorism as; “An anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons”.
- From the above definitions therefore, terrorism is a political, criminal and idiosyncratic act that influences an audience beyond the immediate victim, and that the strategy of terrorists is to commit acts of violence that draws the attention of the local populace, the government, and the world to their cause.

CONCEPT OF TERRORISM

- The effectiveness of the terrorist act therefore lies not in the act itself, but in the public's or government's reaction to the act. For example, in 1972 at the Munich Olympics, the Black September Organization killed 11 Israelis to express their views on the plight of the Palestinian refugees. The Israelis were the immediate victims but the true target was the estimated 1 billion people watching the televised event. Similarly, in October 1983, the Middle East terrorists bombed the Marine Battalion Landing Team Headquarters at Beirut International Airport. Their immediate victims were the 241 U.S. military personnel who were killed and over 100 others who were wounded. Their true target was the American people and the U.S. Congress to withdraw the Marines from Beirut.

HISTORY/CHRONOLOGY OF TERRORISM IN NIGERIA

- Obene (2012) argues that the killing of Mr Dele Giwa, by a 'Letter Bomb' in October 1986 marked the beginning of violent killing and use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) in Nigeria. Subsequently, the Movement for the Advancement of Democracy hijacked a Nigeria Airways aircraft in October 1993 following the annulment of Chief M.K.O.Abiola's presidential election. After this, a vicious bomb blast ripped Shed 6 of Ilorin Stadium in August 1994. Several other incidents have occurred since then. For instance between 1996 and 1998 there was bomb attack on the car of the then Chief Security Officer of Federal Aviation Authority of Nigeria, Dr Omoshola. Subsequently, the escort car of the former Military Administrator of Lagos State, Brig Gen MB Marwa (Rtd) was attacked.

HISTORY/CHRONOLOGY OF TERRORISM IN NIGERIA

- Other notable acts of terrorism in Nigeria can be summarized as follows: General sectarian violence in Jos (2004, 2010, and 2011). Series of bombings and killings in Maiduguri (since 2004 to date). The 2010 New Year's Eve bombing of Mogadishu Military Cantonment Mammy Market Abuja. The May 29 2010 Presidential Inauguration bombing in Abuja. The 1st October 2010 bombing in Abuja that disorganised the marking of Nigeria's 50th Independence Anniversary. The Mammy Market bombings in Bauchi, and Zuba near Abuja in 2011. Post-April 2011 Presidential Election violence in the Northern parts of Nigeria. April 8, 2011 Suleja INEC office bombing.

HISTORY/CHRONOLOGY OF TERRORISM IN NIGERIA

- May 29, 2011 bombing of social drinking sports in Maiduguri and Zuba an outskirts of Abuja. June 16, 2011 Nigeria Police Force Headquarters bombing in Abuja . August 26, 2011 bombing of UN House in Abuja. Nov 4, 2011 bombing of Army Task Force Operational base, Police Headquarters and other government buildings in Damaturu, Yobe State and Maiduguri in Borno State. Christmas day bombing at St Theresa Catholic Church in Madalla near Abuja (25 December 2011). Mubi, Yola, Gombe and Maiduguri bombings (5-6 January 2012). Kano bombings (20 January and 1 February 2012). HQ 1 Division Nigerian Army and Kawo bridge bombings in Kaduna (7 February 2012). The list is endless.
- Warning: Some shocking pictorial evidence.

Post-April 2011 Presidential Election violence in the Northern parts of Nigeria



Victim of Religious Crisis in Kaduna.



Victims of Terrorism in Nigeria



Boko Haram bombing of Police Hqrs in Abuja.



THEORETICAL EXPLANATIONS

- Theories for understanding terrorism in Nigeria points towards a more historically-rooted and locally-specific account that examines how “greed”, “grievance”, “criminality” and psychosocial factors have combined in processes of terrorism. Granted that Islam is a religion of peace however, this paper hypothetically asks that: Are there any socio-psychological factors that predispose Muslim youth to act of terrorism? Why are youth generally (whether Christian or Muslim) proportionally involved as both perpetrators and victims of violence in Nigeria? The following theoretical paradigms are posited aimed at addressing the hypothetical questions thereof (see Omale,2013 p. 98-99)

Psychoanalytic theory

- Whereas there are lot of sociological explanations to explaining terrorist behaviour, we cannot afford to obscure the element of humanity's psychological propensity to be bad.
- “So does it mean that we have “born terrorists?” The answer is neither here nor there. However, Sigmund Freud's analysis of human mind-id, ego and superego is implicated therein. Other evidence include:
- The protracted debate on the role of “Nature and Nurture” on human behaviour.

Psychoanalytic theory

- Lewin Kurt's field theory also argues that $B=f(P \times E)$. That is., every human behaviour (including terrorist behaviour) is a function of human personality and the environment he finds himself.
- Stanley Milgram's experiment is also implicated herein.
- There are also Biblical evidence "that the heart of man is dangerously wicked", and even "God regretted for creating man".
- So human's outward "persona" does not explains his "inner mind".

Rational choice/Opportunity theory

- This theoretical assumption typically sees armed violence (including terrorism) as the outcome of rational individual choices to maximise economic, social or political benefits. Rebellion is only feasible when the opportunity and potential gain from joining an armed group outweigh the benefits of not fighting and pursuing alternative income-generation opportunities (Urdal, 2007). From this perspective, the costs of organising rebellion are lower where there is a large youth population (which is relatively cheap to recruit), where there are high levels of poverty and illiteracy or where there is an abundance of easily lootable resources (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004). Suffice to say that these identified variables abound in Nigeria and could perhaps explain why some Nigerian youth are more inclined to armed violence in contemporary times.

Greed and Grievance perspective

- Stewart (2008) argues that there is a link between horizontal inequalities and armed violence. Walton (2010) also sees armed violence (including terrorism) as a response to relative deprivation or exclusion. This theory supports the findings of Omale (2012) which argues that many people in Nigeria call for the restorative justice paradigm because they are 'aggrieved and hurt' socially, politically and economically; and could not explain why 'a people who stand in plenty of water should wash their hands with spittle'

Greed and Grievance perspective

- One “grievance hypothesis” that this paper argues is that some modern Nigerian youths are becoming politically conscious and aware of their political right which have been constitutionally disfranchised. In Uganda a 19 years old girl won election into the National Parliament in 2012, but section 65 ss (a) and (b) of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria states otherwise that ‘a person shall be qualified for election to the National Assembly if he has attained the ages of thirty five years (for the Senate) and thirty years (for the House of Representative). These constitutional provisions automatically disqualified potential youths electable into the National Assembly.

Greed and Grievance perspective

- By implication therefore, Nigerian youths are only good to be used as thugs and dumped by politicians but not as electable politicians themselves. Such political attitude can fuel a militarized sense of “we will do it ourselves” when provoked by the failure of government to provide for them in the mist of plenty. This theoretical discourse is relevant to Nigeria where people already feel that our democracy is anorexic (people do not feel the dividends of democracy) because Nigeria’s democracy is suffering from “democratic kwashiorkism” (a situation where power is concentrated at the top and the head feeds fat while the lower extremities are extremely malnourished).

Social and political exclusionism

- This perspective sees youth violence as a product of the social and political marginalization of young people. As Hilker and Fraser (2009, p.18) have argued, there is a growing sense in the literature that ‘the social and economic statuses required for adulthood are increasingly unattainable for young people’. For instance, Sommers’ (2006) work on ‘**youthmen**’ in Rwanda and on blocked youth transitions in West Africa; research on ‘**waithood**’ in the Middle East, and studies of youth violence in Sri Lanka (Sommers, 2007), all emphasize a blocked transition to adulthood emerging as a result of a complex combination of economic, social and political recycling of elites as rooted in corruption or hypocrisy of the political elites.

Economy of Violence/Criminal Entrepreneurism

- This theoretical proposition explains to a large extent the proliferation of:
 - Militancy in the Niger Delta;
 - Kidnapping in the South South/South East
 - Cattle rustling and the “fish criminals” in the North east.
 - BH in 2013 allegedly received funding from a group in Algeria known as Musulmi Yammias, and other local interest in Nigeria that may want the oil discovered in the Lake Chad basin to be seceded.
 - Pseudo-Boko Haram in Nigeria e.g Okene in Kogi State. The police have also alleged that some successful attacks on banks have been linked to the *criminal Boko Haram* as a source of financing their operations. Furthermore, during my own counter-terrorism training, the claims that *criminal Boko Haram* used stolen cars in their suicide bombings were discussed.
- In Nigeria today, it appears easy to form an armed group than to register a business premise with the CAC.

Idiosyncratic/Theocratic State Theory

- Some scholars see the Boko Haram insurgency in northern Nigeria as *the fulfillment of the fears and Biblical warning of an impending doom from the North*, based on the Bible's book of Jeremiah 1:14 that states, "out of the North an evil shall break forth upon the inhabitants of the land" (Makinde 2011: 1). This narrative is at odds with the view held by certain sections among the northern Muslims
- However, *Boko Haram* popularly interpreted to mean *Western education is evil*; has its official Arabic name as, *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad* meaning *People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad*. Boko Haram is also known as *Yussifiya* sect; so-named after its leader Mohammed Yussuf, whose ideology is seen as advocating a return to the "most conservative fundamental elements" of Islam, its "pure, strictest form"-Wahhabism also known as Salafiyyism.

Idiosyncratic/Theocratic State Theory

- These teachings were inspired by the works of Ibn Taymiyya, a fourteenth century Islamic legal scholar who preached Islamic fundamentalism and is considered a major theorist for radical groups in the Middle East (Johnson 2011), after whom Yussuf named his mosque in Maiduguri.
- This may also explain why a faction of Boko Haram, *Ansaru* (known by its full Arabic name as *Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina Fi Biladis Sudan* - loosely translated to mean *Vanguards for the Protection of Muslims in Black Africa*) has as its main focus and objective to re-build the political and social order of the ancient Othman Dan Fodio Empire from 1802 to 1812. By doing so, Ansaru are promoting Musa Mansa's ideology which formed the core of the Islamized ideology of the ancient Kanem-Borno Empire (which was a collective of present-day Mali, Chad, Niger, Cameroon and Nigeria).

Idiosyncratic/Theocratic State Theory

- This racialized ideology of *Islamism* - a political ideology that dictates that Islam should be the primary form of governance in a political community has taken a violent political-turn in recent years, especially after *al-Qaeda* made it part of their propaganda campaign to use their subjective historical narrative in drawing a connection between the social ideals of Islam and the historical processes of political empire building in the middle and modern ages in the global south.
- *Al-Qaeda* has reiterated, amplified, reinterpreted and re-contextualized these responses and arguments to make a case for the global acceptance of the *Islamic Theocratic State Theory* in an attempt to return the world political systems to the days when the various Muslim empires that spanned the world were strongest - in terms of their opposition to the *western other*.

COUNTER TERRORISM MODELS

- Any counter terrorism measures must take note of what Piombo (2007) calls the four “Ds” of counter terrorism:
- ‘Defeat’ terrorists and their organizations;
- ‘Deny’ sponsorship, support and sanctuary to terrorists;
- ‘Diminish’ the underlying conditions that terrorist seek to exploit, and
- ‘Defend’ citizens and interests at home and abroad.
- Another way to consider counter terrorism’s effectiveness is that we should attempt to fight the supply of terrorists, the demand for terrorist networks, and the ability of terrorist to operate and maneuver.

1. Counter Violent Extremism and De-radicalisation Programmes (CVEDP)

- Nigeria is a complex nation with a crowded religious and political space that get in the way of effective interfaith and interreligious cooperation. For instance, ‘radical Islamism suffocates conventional Islamic beliefs with a diet of anger, hate and intolerance among young men, who perhaps are already convinced of being outcasts, and are intoxicated by teachings that not only entrench this difference further but demands that they despise the society they leave behind with suicide bombing’.

Counter Violent Extremism and De-radicalisation Programmes (CVEDP)

- Similarly, among the Christian brethren, crusades that dwell much more on the Biblical verse of Mathew 11: 12 which states: “And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffered violence, and the violent takes it by force” are becoming common citations among youth in Nigeria. Whereas, this Biblical injunction does not encourages violence, perverse interpretations of these religious injunctions however have crept into the minds of some people.
- Terrorists can, and have exploited this opportunity, so we need to counter religious extremism among the faiths in Nigeria.

2. Counter ecological opportunities

- Nigeria's geography and ecology provide hiding spaces for terrorists to operate. Hence forests (e.g Sambisa forest); creeks (for Niger Delta militants); rocks, hills and mountains (as in Jos, Okene and Adamawa) have provided opportunities for terrorists, kidnappers, militants and Fulani herdsmen to operate with ease and impunity.
- So tactical military air surveillance/GIS to monitor and flush out terrorists from these ecological hideouts is imperative for counter terrorism.

3. Meghalaya Model

- Counter human trafficking is relevant to counter terrorism as it could fight the supply of terrorists, supply of mercenaries for terrorism, and the demand for terrorist networks. This is imperative because, despite international agreements and national laws on counter terrorism, the issue remains one of the fastest growing criminal violence in the world. Its proliferation is due to its cross border nature and thus requires cooperation and collaboration between states, if it is to be tackled effectively. However, throughout the world counter terrorism initiatives often have failed to incorporate all relevant stakeholders.

Meghalaya Model

- The Meghalaya Model though originally designed to track and rescue trafficked children in Asia could be adopted or adapted to counter terrorism in Nigeria; as there are insinuations of mercenaries and conscripted fighters for Boko Haram terrorists. And with the porous nature of Nigerian borders and the rate of human trafficking in the country, these mercenaries and conscripted fighters could be trafficked victims from neighbouring countries.

4. Countering Terrorism through Public Private Partnerships (CTPPP)

- While combating terrorism is a primary responsibility of nation States, developing partnerships with the private sector can be beneficial especially in areas of training and information exchanges where State resources and expertise are limited. The United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) argues that progress to build partnerships on security matters has been hampered by lack of legislation to facilitate information exchange between the public and private sectors, as well as the absence of incentives.
- However, the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy explicitly encourages such partnerships.

5. Women Gender Intelligence (WGI)

- The innovation of what I call “Women-Gender Intelligence” (WGI) is particularly relevant in Nigeria. For instance, with the continued bombings in the country, the “Women for Change and Development Initiative” of the Office of the former First Lady of Nigeria orchestrated media campaigns and jingles of “Women: See Something; Say Something!”; “The One that give life must Protect Life!” The impact of these jingles and campaigns; this author would argue motivated a rural woman in a village called Haya Bui, Niger State to assist the State Security Service in Nigeria to unravel the hideout of some Boko Haram extremists on 6th September, 2011 whom until then have been hiding there and making IEDs.

Women Gender Intelligence (WGI)

- By this revelation, it could be argued that women can be strong agents of change and development if adequately harnessed. In terms of security and counter terrorism in Nigeria, if women voluntarily and unanimously agree to stop insecurity, they can; because, there is no terrorist or criminal that does not have a mother, a spouse, or a girlfriend. The Women Gender Intelligence (WGI) is even more relevant in the Nigerian context since it is insinuated that some Boko Haram perpetrators are youth who are so brainwashed and recruited to kill so as to be rewarded with seven virgins in Aljena. In this case therefore, if women are granted protection as whistle blowers, they can be good source of intelligence on counter terrorism in Nigeria.

6. SECURITY INTER-OPERABILITY (SIO)

- Security interoperability that encourages security networking and intelligence sharing could root out the bad eggs in the society. For instance, if the police, SSS, EFCC and NIA work collaboratively they could unravel both local and international sponsors and financiers of Boko Haram. Similarly, if the Customs, Immigration and the NDLEA work collaboratively they could unravel the criminal importation of foreign mercenaries, drugs, arms and ammunitions that are sustaining the Boko Haram insurgencies.

SECURITY INTER-OPERABILITY (SIO)

- In the same vein, the SSS and police working collaboratively with the Prisons Service could plant pseudo inmates who are fluent in Arabic, Hausa, Fulani and Kanuri in strategic prison cells for intelligence gatherings from detained Boko Haram suspects. The Military Joint Task Forces (JMTF) could as well invest in telemetric security and cable detection technology; and use less of road blocks. Where these security strategies are done well, the use of the Military Joint Task Forces (MJTF) fire operations would only be the last resort.

Conclusion

- From the foregoing, terrorism is a complex phenomenon and so there is no quick fix solution.
- Effective counter terrorism therefore must embrace the Multi-Agencies Professional Participation (MAPP). However, in Nigeria, I often hear that two many hands spoil the soup.
- The choice is ours! But we must encourage the attitude of “community crimino-vigilance”.
- THANKS FOR LISTENING