

Poverty and Terrorism in Nigeria: Boko Haram Revisited

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ABSTRACT

Boko Haram is well discussed in the extant literature but the root causes of the crisis are grossly under discussed. Beyond the template of religion, Boko Haram took advantage of massive poverty in the region to recruit members to its folds. Also, Terrorism flourishes in Nigeria due to economic ills. It also constitutes a fundamental factor fueling Boko Haram in Nigeria. Correspondingly, when terrorism broke out in Nigeria very few people observed the nexus between poverty and terrorism. However, the intensity of poverty and its manifestations have assumed unprecedented magnitudes in Nigeria with negative implication on the security architecture of the state. The Maitatsine crisis of 1980 and the recent Boko Haram crisis in Nigeria established a strong nexus between poverty and terrorism. In the light of poverty that have ravaged the country for several decades, Nigeria has become vulnerable to all manner of violence. This paper examines the nexus between poverty and terrorism in Nigeria using Boko Haram as a point of departure. It argues that galloping poverty has inspired terrorism in Nigeria coupled with the negligence on the part of government to provide greater happiness for the greater number of people most especially in the northern parts of the country. Worse still, during 1999 electioneering campaigns, politicians in the north were desperate to win elections by dishing out campaign promises which were later unfulfilled. Also, politics that characterized the implementation of Sharia law was not deniable in the North. In line with this complicated scenario, this paper infers that Nigeria is a giant experiment in the genesis of terrorism in the continent because of the pervasiveness of poverty. The paper adopts bibliographical and descriptive methods of research with recommendations on how Nigeria can escape the boredom; the paper argues that holistic measure has to be taken against poverty for the country to be freed from Boko Haram conundrum.

Keywords: Poverty; Terrorism; Boko Haram; North East, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Since the attacks on the US on September 11, 2001, politicians and the public have tried to bring to light the factors that incite terror. The then US President George W. Bush (2002) argued that there is a vicious circle of disenfranchisement, state failure and terror, stating that because persistent

poverty and oppression can lead to hopelessness and despair, failed states can become havens for terror. The media and public were highly receptive to lines of argumentation that linked terror to socio-economic and political underdevelopment. Accordingly, policy measures have been advocated that aim at alleviating underdevelopment, e.g., by reducing socio-economic strain or political instability. For instance, the then German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (2003) argued that to address the root causes of terrorism poverty must be dealt with. (Cited in Krieger, 2011:1-2)

The above quotation epitomizes the central argument of this paper. All over the world poverty has been considered to be the major fertilizer of terrorism. In 2001 when Al Qaeda attacked the World Trade Centre the then President of US George Bush also considered poverty as one of the major causes of terrorism in the World most especially in Africa where poverty profile is high. Also, Africa has been considered as a continent vulnerable to terrorism in the light of poverty and different developmental crises ravaging the continent. The Bilma Bombing of 1989 served as the watershed in the annals of terrorism in the region and since that period Africa as a continent has been battling with terrorist attacks of various magnitudes. Notable among these terrorists group is Boko Haram in Nigeria with ever growing violence coupled with indiscriminate and perennial attacks on various institutions in the country (Olanrewaju, 2015:1). Many analyses about the Boko Haram and its splinter factions limit its root causes to issues of religious fundamentalism and fanaticism. However, it is instructive to note that the reasons underlying the crises go far beyond issues of ideological radicalism. The most viable explanation for the insurgency, including religious and sectarian violence, is the failure of good governance in Nigeria to provide greater happiness for the greater number of people in the country. To be objective, Boko Haram crisis is a symptom of multiple rationales characterized by corruption, mismanagement and unresponsive government.

Also, grievances over persistent government corruption and mismanagement, economic injustice led to pervasiveness of poverty especially in the northern part of Nigeria. However, poverty has been one of the underlying causes of most sectarian violence in the country's history since independence. The Niger Delta crisis and the Maitatsine crisis of 1980 are graphic cases in point. Although Nigeria remains one of the largest producers of oil in the world, about 69% of the population (approximately 112.6 million people) lives below the poverty level according to the Nigerian Poverty Profile Report, 2010. The North West and North East geo-political zones of Nigeria, the home region and bastion of Boko Haram, are the areas with the highest poverty rates with 77.7% and 76.3% respectively (National Bureau of Statistic, 2010). For several decades, the northern part of Nigeria has remained

impoverished and underdeveloped with a very high rate of youth unemployment, extreme poverty, poor health care, poor educational facilities and poor infrastructure (Kwes, 2012:6). Therefore, poverty and unemployment are said to spur terrorism in Nigeria. The most tragic is that the youth within the age bracket of 14 and 50 years are the worst hit (Ajegbu, 2012, Usman, 2015). This makes it dangerous because this vulnerable group is susceptible to committing or perpetrating all sorts of crime like terrorism. According to Piazza (2006), as cited by Usman, (2015:4), terrorism and other forms of political violence are products of poverty. Similarly, After September 11, 2001 terrorist attack in US by the Al-Qaeda group, there was an indication of presumed link between material want and terrorist activities. (Abodurin, 2011:9)

However, as at the November 2001 UN General Assembly meeting in New York, Forty-one heads of state and Government in attendance urged the world body to address the issues of poverty, inequality, and underdevelopment which they believed are major factors precipitating international terrorism. (Usman, 2013:12). According to Danjibo cited by Usman (2014:1), it was stated that the eruption of Boko Haram violence is fuelled by the fact that Nigeria, one of the largest producers of oil in the world has its vast bulk of the population live below the poverty line of one U.S Dollar a day. Instructively, the tearing of certificates and renunciation of studentship from tertiary institutions by some graduates and students of the University of Maiduguri, Ramat and Federal Polytechnic in Borno and Yobe states to join Boko Haram could be attributable to brainwashing by extremists (Usman, 2014:4). The failure of Nigerian government to provide employment to many graduates who were (are still) roaming the street in search of unavailable job opportunities provides justification for the intensity of terrorism in Nigeria.

Conversely, Adesoji (2010) remarked that the Boko Haram uprising was a manifestation of certain conservative elements in the core northern region of Nigeria to achieve Islamic revivalism in Nigeria. This argument by Adesoji (2010) seemed not to be valid because of the question of whether Boko Haram was founded on strict Islamic ideology. This is not unconnected with the view of the sect's preference to violence as a means of proselytization and societal change (Okoli and Lortyer, 2012:5). Also, it is equally germane to note that Sharia law was already in place in some Northern Nigeria before Boko Haram was launched in 2002. It could have been thought that what the sect needed to do was to call for internal reforms to entrench a proper Islamic order rather than resorting to violence (Okoli & Lortyer, 2012; Onuah, 2014; Ufiem et. al., 2014). Basically, the question of whether poverty serves as a veneer to terrorism is not an understatement as Awoniyi submitted that Boko Haram phenomenon has a deep economic root more than any perspectives from which the investigating intelligence can suggest. These assertions are predicated upon the 2010 Nigerian Living Standard Survey conducted by the National Bureau

of statistics (NBI), which showed a high level of income inequality and degrading general standard of living, especially in the northern part of Nigeria. Available data suggests that states with the highest percentage of people living in absolute poverty in Nigeria are those in the north, Jigawa tops the list, with 95 percent of its citizen classified as poor. This is followed by Sokoto, with 81,2 percent. Some of the other top ranking states with above 70 percent of their populations living in absolute poverty are in the North East: Adamawa (74,2 percent),Bauch (73 percent),Gombe (74,2percent),and yobe (73,8percent).In the North-West, we have North Central zone, plateau State leads with 74,1 percent. Another report recently shown that as many as 76 percent of northerners earn a daily income less than the equivalent of USD1 when compared with other states in the country, the northern states, especially the North East and North West zones with high security risks, have the highest incidence of poverty in Nigeria compare to their counterpart in the south. (Cited in Ufiem et. al., 2014:148-149)

BOKO HARAM IN REVIEW

Boko Haram today is a product of history. The precise date of Boko Haram is shrouded in obscurity. Majority of local and foreign media trace its origin to 2002 (Olanrewaju, 2015:16). Since the inception of Boko Haram it has metamorphosed in different ways both in term of leadership and tactics. According to Taiwan and Olugbode (2009), Boko Haram was established by Abubakar Lawal in 1995 as *Ahulsunna wal'jama'ah hijra* sect in University of Maiduguri, Borno State. It flourished as non violent organization until Mohammed Yusuf assumed the mantle of leadership in 2002 shortly after Abubakar Lawal left to pursue further education in Saudi Arabia (Olanrewaju, 2015). It will be recalled that Boko Haram first took up arms against state security forces on 24 December 2003 when the group attacked police stations and public buildings in the towns of Geiam and Kanamma in Yobe State (Onuoha, 2010). The members of Boko Haram occupied the two buildings for a number of days, hosting the flag of Afghanistan's Taliban movement over the camps. This called for attention of police and soldiers to dislodge them which eventually led to the killing of 18 members of Boko Haram while loads of its members were arrested (Julian, 2009). On 31 December 2003 Boko Haram left the village and dispersed into other northern states after inscribing the word "Taliban" on a captured vehicle. In 2004 it established a base called Afghanistan in Kanamma village in northern Yobe State (See Onuaha, 2010). From 2004, the activities of the sect became more worrisome when majority of students withdrew from different schools to promote the activities of Boko Haram. Also, some of them went to the extent of tearing their certificates after serious brainwashing .On 21 September 2004 members of Boko Haram attacked Bama and Gwoza police stations in Borno State,

killing several police men and stealing arms and ammunition (Onuoha, 2010). Also, Boko Haram was so desperate to the extent of setting the Gwoza police station ablaze.

Consequently, few weeks later police launched a counterattack on the sect during which 24 members were killed and 22 assault rifle and large quantities of ammunition were recovered (See Onuoha, 2010:56). Boko Haram became a popular movement under the leadership of Mohammed Yusuf. Initially, it was a peaceful movement until 2003, 2004, and 2009 respectively. The 2009 faceoff between Boko Haram members and Nigerian security agencies marked the beginning of intensified radical approach of Boko Haram. The 2009 crisis led to the extra judicial killing of their leader which really threw caution to the wind by making Boko Haram to become more radical and brutal in their attacks. The radicalism of Boko Haram started after 2009 under the new leadership of Abubakar Shekau. Also, Boko Haram was known as Islamic movement at its inception under Mohammed Yusuf but Abubakar Shekau made it to become one of the sophisticated terrorist groups in the world by pledging allegiance to some international terrorist groups in the world. It is unfortunate today that Boko Haram has been misrepresented by different scholars and this has grossly affected the state response in this regard. The same interpretations given to Boko Haram under the previous leaders have not been altered in the literature. There was an iota of Islamism in Boko Haram movement during the leadership of Mohamed Yusuf but the trends of Boko Haram under the current leadership has no indication of fighting religious course because Boko Haram members have attacked both Christians and Muslims, the number of mosques destroyed by Boko Haram cannot be fathomed in recent time. Also, it is perplexing that Boko Haram has attacked different emirs in the North, the representatives of one of the most formidable institutions of Islam and Sharia in Nigeria (Omotola, 2014).

Thus, Boko Haram terrorist group under the current leadership represents another high profile violence after the end of Civil War in Nigeria (1967-1970). It has engaged in a violent campaign against the Nigerian state since 2009, following a violent suppression of group by the Nigerian military (Mohammed, 2016). Since 2010 Boko Haram has progressively transformed itself from a local terrorist group to an international threat. In 2013, Boko Haram was designated as an international terrorist group by the United States of America Department of State. In a similar vein, on 22 May 2014, the Security Council's Al-Qaida Sanction Committee approved the addition of Boko Haram to its list of individual and entities subject to the targeted financial sanctions and the arms embargo set out in paragraph 1 of Security Council resolution 2083(2012), adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations (United Nations Press Release, May, 2014). Also, the funding

network of Boko Haram has been discussed in the literature but not in a meticulous way. To discuss the sources of funding of any terrorist group in world is always a difficult enterprise. According to Onuoha (2010). There was daily levy of 100 naira per day to their leaders at the inception. The question of where Boko Haram members raise this 100 naira was not fully discussed. Also, the sect also alleged to be receiving funds from outside Nigeria. For example Mohammed Damagun was arraigned in a federal high court in Abuja on three charges, namely belonging to the Nigerian Taliban, receiving a total of US\$ 300,000 from al Qaeda to recruit and train Nigerians in Mauritania for terrorism and aiding terrorists in Nigeria (See Onuoha, 2010). There is no doubt on the issue of foreign collaborators aiding Boko Haram in Nigeria considering the trends of their operations, there have always been countries providing financial supports for terrorist groups in the world. Recently, Iran tops the list of countries that are providing financial assistance to terrorist groups. It is unfortunate today that Nigeria is a victim of international vacuum after the Cold War. According to Huntington, terrorism all over the world was a product of vacuum created by Cold War. He identified different classes of civilization and Islam is one of these classes identified by Huntington. Islam was considered as world religion which set out to challenge the hegemonic power of US. (See Omar and Albert, 2003). Nevertheless, it is easily understood to consider Boko Haram as a terrorist group enjoying financial aids from external Bodies once it is assumed that Boko Haram is a factor in filling the international vacuum. However, Stern (2010) contends, terrorist groups all over the world have the means of making money to finance their campaigns. He identified criminal acts such robbery, hostage taking, drug trafficking, terrorist groups also engage in legitimate business such a constructions, taking contracts from the government and swap deal that will be accomplished with certain amount of money with the host government as demonstrated in Nigeria recently before the release of 21 Chiboks girls abducted in 2014 in Chibok Local Government of Borno State (The October 13, 2016)

Conversely, since Boko Haram launched their terror campaign over 2.4 million people have been displaced which represent 6% of the world population (Mohammed, 2016:1). Boko Haram has also killed over 25,000 people since 2009 (IOM, 2015). Also, an estimated 600 teachers were killed, several school children were murdered in cold blood at FGC Buni Yadi in Yobe State (Mohammed, 2016). Similarly, health facilities had been damaged and destroyed in all conflict areas. About 431,842 housing units were completely destroyed. Most of the destruction 95% occurred in Borno State (FGN, 2015:3). Boko Haram deliberately targeted public buildings, school, health facilities and other public infrastructure for destruction. The damage to infrastructure across the six North East states of Adamawa, Borno, Yobe, Bauchi, Gombe and Taraba is US\$9.2 billion. Borno, being

the worst hit state, suffered the greatest damage worth US\$6.9, followed by Yobe (US\$1.2 billion) and Adamawa state (US\$828 million) (FNG, 2015:42)

Poverty and Terrorism: A Theoretical Note

The nexus between poverty and terrorism has generated a number of theoretical debates. However, poverty thesis carries a lot of explanatory power in relation to analyzing the Boko Haram crisis in Nigeria. "The discernible "blame game" between northern and southern politicians and government officials tends to obfuscate the connection between poverty and Boko Haram" (Olabanji, 2015:3). Nevertheless, beyond the template of north-south political divides blame games, scholarly explanations of the current crisis orchestrated by Boko Haram using the poverty thesis provides some meaningful intuition. For analytical simplicity, extrapolating from the theory of relative deprivation in reference to Boko Haram, Daniel Egieba Agbiboa notes, "It is no coincidence that the worst forms of collective violence in Nigeria today originate in the most socioeconomically deprived parts of the country" (Cited in Olabanji, 2015). As Agbiboa (2015) laments, the existence of unemployment and chronic poverty has encouraged Boko Haram to challenge the authority of Nigerian state (See Olabaji, 2015)

In a similar vein, William and Umma (2013) adopt Franz Fanon's concept of "wretched" to explain Boko Haram crisis. In this framework they maintain that despite the seemingly delusional anti-statist "liberatory message" of Boko Haram, the group continues to attract support among "the impoverished and desperate people of northern Nigeria. Similarly, Aghedo and Osumah (2013) maintain that members of Boko Haram are uneducated, school drop outs, jobless youths, political thugs and students from low socio-economic injustice.

Also, different attempts have been made to explain the intensity of terrorism in Nigeria through the lenses of state failure and frustration aggression theories. The work also advances state failure and frustration aggression theories to explain the grievances that propel Boko Haram members to resort to terrorism. Starting with state failure, it is an undisputable fact that nation states exist to provide basic amenities as well as ensure the standard of living that will provide greater happiness for the greater number of people. It is the duty of nation states to attend to the legitimate concerns and demands of their citizens (Roberg, 2002:2).

The success or failure of a state depends primarily on the living condition of the people in the country. Experiences have revealed that majority of states fail to provide basic amenities, security of life and property, health care facilities, infrastructure, employment opportunities and legal framework for law and order most especially Nigeria. Once the state is unable to perform these primary responsibilities, it will definitely lose its legitimacy in the eyes of citizens (Rotberg,

2002:1). In this kind of situation, some people will naturally transfer their allegiances to more responsive authority groups while some people will go further by becoming terrorists (Benjamin, etal2013). Rotberg, (2003) went further to present the comprehensive and graphic description of failed state as a "polity that is no longer able or willing to perform the fundamental task of nation state in the modern polity". According to him nation states fail because they are convulsed by internal violence and can no longer provide greater happiness for greater number of inhabitants (Rotberg, 2003). The rise and fall of nation state is a new phenomenon in the modern time, the idea of failed state featured predominantly in the international system after the end of Cold War. Basically, nation states constitute the building blocks of legitimate order while the violence and weaknesses of most African states, Asian and Oceanic and Latin America states threaten the very foundation of the system. There are number of pre conditions for strong, weak and failed states to emerge. States succeed or fail across all or some of these conditions. But it is according to their performance and levels of their effective delivery of the most crucial goods. As Rotberg puts it:

Strong states may be distinguished from weak ones, and weak states from failed or collapsed states. Strong states unquestionably control their territories and deliver a full range and a high quality of political goods to their citizens. They perform well according to indicator like GDP per capital, the UNDP Human development Index, Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, and Freedom House's, Freedom of the World Report, Strong states offer high levels of security from political and criminal violence, ensure political freedom and civil liberties, and create environments conducive to the growth of economic opportunity. Weak states include a broad continuum of states that are: inherently weak because of geographical, physical, or fundamental economic constraints; weak states are basically strong but temporarily or occassionally weak because of internal antagonisms, management flaws, greed, despotism, or external attacks, and a mixture of the two. Weak states typically harbor ethnic, religious, linguistic, or other intercommoned tensions. In a failed state, government troops, battle armed revolts led by one or more rivals. The official authorities in a failed state face two or more insurgencies, varieties of civil unrest, different degrees of communal discontent and plethora dissent directed at the state and at groups within the state. It is not absolute intensity of violence that identifies a failed state. Rather, it is the enduring character of that violence as in Angola,

Burundi, Sudan and Nigeria. In a failed state there no modicum of order (Rotberg, 2003:5).

The above factors identified by Rotberg as the necessary pre-conditions for strong states to emerge in international system did not found sanctuary in Nigeria. The symptoms of failed states are evident in Nigeria no wonder different scholars especially (Rotberg, 2003, Piazza, 2008) predominantly focused Africa in their theoretical postulations. However, scholars note that there are also many states in the international system that have some of the features mentioned by Rotberg and are therefore at risk of complete state failure, but have not quite crossed the threshold (Piazza,2008:12). Scholars refer to these states as "weak states" (Rotberg 2002), "quasi-states" (Lambach 2004, Menkhaus 2003). Similarly, addressing the problems of failed or weak states will definitely yield humanitarian and security dividends for the international system (Piazza, 2008:1). United States policymakers regard failed and failing such as Afghanistan, Somalia and Nigeria to be the festering incubators of terrorism, and lament that for too long United States foreign policy has ignored the threat that these types of states pose to the international order and national security. "Post September 11th national security documents explicitly describe failed state as safe havens for terrorists" (US Department of State, 2010:15), thus, making the question of how to tackle the problem of state failure a big challenge of 21st century.

As Krieger and Malliekes (2011) lament:

"Since the attacks on the US on September 11, 2001, politicians and the public have tried to bring to light the factors that incite terror. The then US President George W. Bush (2002) argued that there is a vicious circle of disenfranchisement, state failure and terror, stating that persistent poverty and oppression can lead to hopelessness and despair, failed states can become havens for terror. The media and public were highly receptive to lines of argumentation that linked terror to socio-economic and political underdevelopment. Accordingly, policy measures have been advocated that aim at alleviating underdevelopment, e.g., by reducing socio-economic strain or political instability. For instance, the then German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (2003) argued that to address the root causes of terrorism and insecurity, we must ensure social and material but also cultural security".

It is on this note that Failed State Index emerged. Compiled annually by the Fund for Peace and Foreign Policy Magazine, it ranks nations of the world from most failed to least likely to fail (Benjamin, et. al., 2012:43). In line with Failed States

Index, Nigeria has consistently been featured as a state on the brinks of total collapse. Currently it ranks fourteen on the list which makes it close to other countries that have experienced total collapse in recent time (Foreign Policy, 2011). Undoubtedly, this was as a result of incessant crises of various magnitudes in Nigeria, corruption, electoral violence, infrastructure squalor, institutional problem, political instability among others, which have propelled the intensity of violence and terrorism in the country. As Benjamin et al lament "there has been a general discontent in the country from an army of unhappy, despondent, impoverished, or aggrieved citizens, some of whom are clearly and increasingly choosing a terrorist path.(Benjamin et al,2012:43).

However, the outbreak of Boko Haram's bomb attacks in some parts of the country is symbolic of the sustained and holistic failures of successive governments in Nigeria. Boko Haram has taken the opportunity of these failures by recruiting the affected youths to pursue their puritanical ideology. Boko Haram exploits the porosity of Nigerian borders to smuggle arms and sophisticated ammunition to destabilize the state. (Onapajo and Uzodike 2012:9). Also, the foregoing analysis has focused on the state failure thesis; the frustration-aggression theory has also pasted the argument. The frustration-aggression theory has provided the dominant paradigm for the psychological study of aggression during the more than three decades since it was first formulated by Dollard and his co-workers (Dollard et al, 1931:2). As originally proposed, the theory held that "the occurrence of aggression always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression" (Dollard et al. 1939:1).

Frustration was thus seen as both a necessary and a sufficient condition for the occurrence of aggression. However, the views of aggression that it involves seem to have become widely adopted and accepted; they have become commonplaces. This popular success may have various sources. First the principal hypothesis is uncomplicated and easy to grasp. The theory is generally well structured and clearly articulated, a fact that again facilitates comprehension. Second, the theory does not involve overly abstract concepts or elaborate procedures. It is very close to common sense seeming to be built on it. Finally, as Selg (1971) observed, "the theory tends to provide a justification for behaving aggressively: 'Being frustrated made me do it'". Like the aggression amnesty provided by instinct notions "Although not as strong, this kind of justification can be drawn upon as a ready-made excuse for uncontrolled (or premeditated) hostile or aggressive actions" (Zillman, 1979).

As to the principal theory, Frustration, in this context, was specified as the thwarting of a goal response, and a goal response, in turn, was taken to mean the reinforcing final operation in an ongoing behavior sequence. At times, however, the

term 'frustration' is used to refer not only to the process of blocking a person's attainment of a reinforce but also to the reaction to such blocking.

The central argument here is that frustration precipitated by factors such as unemployment, elite corruption, severe poverty, causes aggression within the affected masses. In Nigeria, criminality and terrorism cannot be totally divorced from the frustration aggression of some people in the country especially the case of Boko Haram in Nigeria. Another argument of frustrations aggression is that after the reinforcement of Sharia law in twelve northern states, there was widespread disillusionment at the ways it was implemented coupled with massive spread of poverty in the northern part of the country.

Poverty and Terrorism in Nigeria: A Methodological Analysis

Poverty represents one of the global challenges of 21st century. It is a universal phenomenon which has brought untold hardship to people in different regions and countries. Poverty is not a respecter of boundary or region; it is a failure of governments across the globe most especially in Africa to adopt meaningful policies and developmental plans that always put them on the threshold of poverty. Also, the major problem of poverty is the manifestation; it has the capacity of creating a number of social crises in the country such as terrorism, guerilla warfare, insurgency, militants among others. Africa is often described as a giant experiment in the genesis of terrorism because of prevalence and galloping poverty ravaging the continents. However, Boko Haram was violently inaugurated in Nigeria in 2009 which has made Nigeria greatly unpopular among the comity of nations. Also, since 2009, the North East inhabitants has been witnessing season of death on daily basis. This scenario has called for a number of factors fueling Boko Haram conundrum, the inauguration of Boko Haram in 2009 did not only represent the subject of concern but the enduring characters of the violence signaled the presence of absolute poverty in the North East because one wonders where Boko Haram gets the army of untrained foot soldiers to fight its cause. The nexus between poverty and terrorism is not deniable. Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa with population of 140 million populations based on the 2006 population census and this population has been increasing geometrically over the years. The total population in Nigeria was estimated at 189.2 million people as at December 23, 2016 by Wordometers (Wordometers, 2015)

Relative Poverty Headcount from 1980-2010

Year	Poverty Incidence%	Estimated Population (Million)	Population in poverty
1980	27.7	65	17.1
1985	46.3	75	34.7
1992	42.7	91.5	39.2
1996	65.6	102.3	67.1
2004	54.4	126.3	68.7
2010	69.0	163	112.27

Source: National Bureau of Statistics: HNLSS 2010

The economy of Nigeria is paradoxically growing while the proportion of Nigerians living in poverty is increasing every year as shown in the table above.

Table 2 Zonal Incidence of Poverty by different poverty measure across the six geo political zone

Zone	Food Poor	Absolute Poor	Relative Poor	Dollar Per Day
North Central	38.6	59.5	67.5	59.7
North West	51.5	69.0	76.3	69.1
North East	51.8	70.0	77.7	70.4
South-East	41.0	58.7	67.0	59.2
South-South	35.5	55.9	63.8	56.1
South-West	25.4	49.8	59.1	50.1

Source: National Bureau of Statistics: HNLSS 2010

There are four main measures of poverty, Relative poverty, Absolute poverty and Dollar per Day and Subjective poverty. A national breakdown for Absolute, Relative, and Dollar per day and Food Poor is provided in Table 2. It appears from the table that North West and North East take the lead in the four parameters in 2010 base on figures released by the National Bureau of Statistics. The predicament has always made the regions more vulnerable to all manners of crises because of the pervasiveness of poverty in the regions. The monumental increase in the level of poverty has made the socio economic landscape frail and fragile. Today, Nigeria is ranked among the poorest countries in the World as well as the most terrorized country in the world (Oshewolo, 2011, Olanrewaju, 2015).

Consequently, the available data present a graphic picture of the circumstances. Inferring from the records of the Federal Office of Statistic, about 28 millions of population was poor in 1980, but the figure rose to 54.4 in 2004. And by 2010, the incidence of poverty in Nigeria was 69 million one year after Boko Haram was inaugurated. According to National Bureau of Statistic (2010), the total

population of Nigeria in 2010 was over 126 Million and the population in poverty was more than 50 percent. This is very tragic when one consider the potential of Nigeria. As Suberu (2007) laments, Nigeria earned around US\$500 billion in Oil revenue since the 1970 yet remains mired in poverty, unemployment, burgeoning domestic debt, and infrastructural squalor, abysmal health and educational services and attendant social frustration and unrest. Nigeria reflects most parts of Africa in that it inherited arbitrary state boundaries from its colonial agenda was under military authoritarianism for most part of its existence as a nation, said of Nigeria that "it earned around US\$500 billion in oil revenues since the 1970s, yet remains mired in poverty"(Alumona, 2009:2).

Barely, some years after independence, hope and expectations were high on the new emerging state that has been under the stranglehold of colonialism for many decades given its huge resource endowment-human and material resources. In buttressing the above analysis, Omotola (2014) asserts that of these are not heady days for Nigeria, heralded at independence in 1960 as a missing giant at both regional and global levels, given its huge resource endowment- human and material, the country has not only failed to actualize its potentials, but also appears to have effectively squandered its opportunities for greatness, ignominiously seated at the very nadir of development. The quest for stability and development is, without doubt, the Holy Grail for many third world countries, a never ending, tedious, yet elusive, search for that condition under which these countries would be able to develop institutions and structures with the capacity to ensure economic growth, equitable distribution of national wealth, political stability and accountability but reverse has been the case in Nigeria thus leading to uprising in different parts of the country from Niger Delta militants to avengers, from Maistine Crisis to Boko Haram crisis. It appears that poverty has provided solid foundation for crises of various magnitudes to flourish in Nigeria.

In addendum with the above analysis, the rising profile of poverty in Nigeria served as an inspiration for all manners of violence. It has assumed a notorious dimension in the country most especially in the Northern parts of Nigeria. It is no longer news that North East region comprising Borno, Adamawa, Yobe among others has been ravaged by the Boko Haram terrorist group since 2009 because of prevalence poverty in the region. One may want to argue that poverty is a universal phenomenon but the peculiarity of poverty to the Northern parts of the country is not debatable especially the North East, the epic center of Boko Haram. The activities of Boko Haram have been flourishing because of its numerical strength. From 2009 to 2011, Boko Haram recruited about 280,000 members to its fold (Danjibo, 2011:6).This recruitment trend by Boko Haram was decorated by the prevalence poverty in the region. The membership of Boko Haram has increased to a

number that no one can be easily quantified. Its membership keeps on increasing because of the increasing poverty in the region, which the group uses as basis for recruitment. As Bartolota (2011) laments, Boko Haram grows in ranks by taking advantage of widespread anger in the north over the country's wealth gap. Also, most of recruited members have been suffering from chronic poverty and seems to have no hope in this world. They however, became vulnerable with token a little as 2 dollars per day (Danjibo, 2011:7)

Beyond the Template of Religion: Understanding Boko Haram Enigma in Nigeria

Boko Haram was violently inaugurated in 2009. Prior to this period the sect was established on the platform of religion with the intention of using religion as a defense to correct the abnormalities in Nigerian political terrain most especially the accumulated poverty occasioned by bad governance over the years bearing in mind the full implementation of Sharia law. It is a common doctrine among many supposedly Islamic fundamentalists' group and some moderate Muslims in Nigeria to demand for full implementation of sharia law. Also, since the departure of the British in 1960, the controversial debates over the full implementation of sharia in Nigeria have produced a number of changes and continuities (Olabanji, 2015). Similarly, the political transformation from military autocracy and absolutism to civilian in 1999 gave room for local politicians, mainly in the northern Nigeria, basically to campaign for votes with the manifesto that Sharia law will be fully implemented after the election.

However, this electioneering campaign during this period really garnered support by these electoral promises. In January 2000, Zamfara in the northwest Nigeria was the first state to fulfill this campaign promise. Zamfara state gave effect to the full implementation of Sharia penal code (See Olabanji, 2015:12). In a similar vein, eleven states also followed the same direction with Zamfara by introducing Sharia law. The introduction of Sharia law in the north was greeted with much euphoria in some parts of the north and crises in the major parts of the north. The crisis that followed the implementation of sharia law was orchestrated by two major factors (1) There was early assurance that Sharia law will not be applied to non Muslim except they consent but reverse was the case when it was implemented (2) The enforcement of Sharia law was majorly directed against poor and vulnerable people in the North while the elites in the north enjoyed unwritten immunity from enforcement latitude. More so, in the midst of disillusionment that trailed the implementation of Sharia law, it continues in twelve state in the north and this controversy has made some analysts to content that the introduction of Sharia law in 2000 was more political than religion and this lacuna sent signal to Boko Haram as a means to perpetrate all manner of evil in the name of religion. Also, Boko

Haram's role in shaping the implementation of full sharia law in Borno state in the early 2000s snowballed into local politics before it detached its association with the Borno state government in the late 2000s.

Although the precise date of Boko Haram is shrouded in controversy especially if someone rely on media account (Onuoha, 2011). The exact date of Boko Haram's establishment is clearly unclear but many observers traced the origin to early 2000s when Mohammed Yusuf became a leader. Also, at the inception of Boko Haram it appears as a religious organization until 2009 when it assumed a notorious dimension after the extra judicial killing of their leader. Albeit, some analysts were of the opinion that radicalization of Boko Haram goes beyond jungle justice exercised on their leaders simply because the new leader of Boko Haram Shekau had always been radical prior 2009 crisis (Omotola, 2014). Also, the electioneering campaign in Borno State in 2003 also played a major role in understanding the political economy of Boko Haram, it was also on record that , in the build up to 2003 general elections, the Boko Haram support enjoyed by Ali Modu Sheriff, who was then a gubernatorial aspirant was widely believed to have enhanced Sheriff's victory at the 2003 election with eventually made him the executive governor of Borno state between 2003 and 2007 following his reelection for a second time of four years in 2007, he was the governor until 2011.

However, Boko Haram did not support Sheriff who was desperate to win gubernatorial election without some agreements and promises between the two parties. It was that agreement that conditioned him to appoint Alhaji Foi as commissioner for religion affairs while Yusuf was made a member of the Borno State Sharia Board, a board responsible for supervising for implementation of full Sharia in the state. However, the strained relationship between the two parties explains the violent character of Boko Haram in some quarters. Similarly, some people was of the opinion that Yusuf fell out with his local political allies because of the manner the Sharia law was implemented in the state as Adesoji Aderemi laments:

The role of partisan politics and political patronage in the sustenance of Boko Haram sect is obvious. It would appear that the introduction of Sharia in some northern states beginning in 1999 encouraged some closeness between Yusuf and some of the ruling and/or aspiring politicians, as their decision aligned with his plan to promote strict adherence to Islamic law, but he was perhaps disappointed, as the type of Sharia law that was introduced across northern states fell short of the standard that he had expected (Cited in Olabanji, 2015:15)

Obviously, the link between Sheriff and Boko Haram most especially during his electioneering campaign is not debatable. The political underpinning that supported the rise of the groups is impregnability in the light of group's involvement in the politics of parts of Yobe and especially Borno state in the 2000s to the extent that Sheriff sponsored some Boko Haram members to hajj at the inception of his administration. Also, the interpretations and representation of Boko Haram as a protest against the government of the then President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan due to his Christian and Southern backgrounds often overlook these local political links. According to General Owoye Azazi during a public address at the South South Economic Summit in April 2012, attributed Boko Haram's attacks to the quest by northern political elites to rule Nigeria by all means (The Punch, April 2012). The declaration by Azazi was a pointer to the fact that the altering of zoning formula of People Democratic Party by former President Jonathan represents a major cause of Boko Haram.

Thus, as plausible as this assertion by Azazi might be, is quite simplistic for two major reasons(1) The emergence of Boko Haram in the early 2000s predates ascension of President Jonathan as the president of Federal Republic of Nigeria in 2010. Also, it was former president Yar'Adua, a northerner and Muslim, who first ordered a military crackdown on Boko Haram in 2009 following the intensity of violence occasioned by Boko Haram and having fallen out with its local political allies (2) Boko Haram is committed to killing Muslims as it is committed to killing Christians as well the attack against political leaders and emirs in the North places its activities and ideologies beyond the template of religion because of the preference and respect accorded to the institution among Nigerian Muslims. Hence, the discussions of Boko Haram as simply a North-South/Muslim-Christian political divide misrepresent the current situation.

In addendum with the above analysis, it appears that poverty is a major cause of Boko Haram. It represents a key explanatory factor in the emergence of Boko Haram. Nigeria is a rich country with poor inhabitants because of leadership failure in the country. Albeit, poverty is a universal phenomenon but the peculiarity of poverty in the northern Nigeria is not debatable. Despite being a major oil exporter, many Nigerians remain poor most especially people in the North West and North East of Nigeria. Similarly, Nigeria's low human development rankings on the United Nations annual Human Development Reports provides ample evidence of the state of poverty and underdevelopment in the country and for several years UNDP Human development Reports have consistently listed Nigeria as a low human development country. For example, the 2014 reports ranks Nigeria 152 out of 187 countries covered followed by Cameroun and Madagascar (New York: United Nations, 2014). In a similar vein, National Bureau of Statistics estimated

national poverty profile to be 61.9 percent nationally, and northern Nigeria, the epic center of Boko Haram rates are higher than 70 percent as at 2010 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). Illiteracy rates are higher in the north, life expectancy and per capital income are equally low when compared to the rates in southern parts of Nigeria. The unemployment situation in the country is alarming. In 2011, the unemployment situation among the youth in Nigeria was 37.7 percent while the northern states were the highest when compared to their southern counterparts.

Consequently, because of galloping poverty in the North Boko Haram was able to gather momentum in term of membership and recruitment. According to Hansen and Musa, the prevalence of mass poverty and deprivation among the many people in northern Nigeria on one hand and the high-level corruption among the political and religious class on the other provide an opportunity for Boko Haram to continually recruit members into its fold (Cited in Olabanji,2015:17). Also, the existence of unemployment and chronic poverty served as impetus for Boko Haram to flourish and challenge the authority of the state and there is no doubt that economic problems have worsened in Nigeria more than a decades and this constitutes a factor in the outbreak of Boko Haram .Also, Maitatsine movement flourished in 1980s because of economic ills, high prices, scarcity, retrenchment and unemployment .In 1980, the absolute poverty in the country was 29 percent and today is estimated around 62 percent. This economic predicament driving Boko Haram is totally undeniable. Also, the problem of climate change which has grossly affected the agricultural produce in the North and the countries in the Lake Chad Basin is another perspective towards understanding Boko Haram crisis in Nigeria. The three North Eastern states in Nigeria which are original constituencies of Boko Haram (Borno, Yola, and Adamawa) are arid zones with serious climate variations that always threaten the survival of crops and animals on yearly basis. The porosity of Nigerian border is another factor; some migrants from neighboring countries like Chad and Niger, always migrate to these cities in search of casual jobs and Islamic studies most especially during the dry season. Worse still, the failure of government to support irrigation in rural areas has only worsened the trend of migration in the North East. The North East Arid Zone Development Programme (NEAZDP) launched in the late 1980 to help rural development in the northeastern Nigeria has dramatically suffered from paucity of funds because of negligence on the part of government.

CONCLUSION

Contrary to general arguments in the literature, this paper has examined Boko Haram crisis from economic perspective. There are a number of economic factors driving Boko Haram movement in Nigeria, the lingering poverty and youth

unemployment are fundamental to the activities of Boko Haram. Albeit, Poverty is a universal enigma but the pervasiveness of poverty in the northern part of Nigeria is not debatable compared to other regions in Nigeria. Also, the nature of poverty in the north was a product of accumulated factors as government cannot be blamed for everything. People in the north are majorly polygamists that often believe in fulfilling social and cultural obligations without putting economic realities into considerations. There is no state in other regions that can compete favorably with northern states in term of poverty profile. Indeed, poverty is boldly written everywhere in the country but that of North is galloping. Inevitably, there exist a strong connection between poverty and terrorism. The bond between these two enigmas has undoubtedly validated the assertion that the poorest states are giant experiment in the genesis of terrorism. The spate of insecurity in Nigeria signaled the pervasiveness of poverty and it is no longer news that North West and North East top the list of the poorest regions in Nigeria. However, for Nigeria to win the war against Boko Haram, poverty must be dealt with through comprehensive empowerment programme. Also, National Orientation Agency of Nigeria must engage in comprehensive orientation and enlightenment programme in the core north. Similarly, the issue of Sharia law should be addressed holistically. Boko Haram should not be interpreted in the context of religion because there is no religion that condones violence. It must be noted that associating Boko Haram with Islam will continue to intensify the problem and it is high time for governments to know that Boko Haram is not a religious fundamentalist but a terrorist group most especially under the current leaders. The porosity of Nigeria border should be addressed. The recent regional collaboration in the Lake Chad Basin should upgraded while the problem of climate change in the region should be prioritized. It is unfortunate that when Boko Haram was inaugurated there was no viable legal framework against terrorism in the country. The legal framework has to be strengthened to prosecute terrorism, recently; Buhari government suggested the idea of creating special court that will be prosecuting terrorists in Nigeria and this development will go a long way in the war against terrorism. In a similar vein, the rebuilding of North East should be done with sincerity of purpose to avoid second phase of Boko Haram in the nearest future.

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