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Historicizing Boko Haram and the Politics of Violence in the Nigerian Polity, 2002-2012

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Abstract

This paper examines the history of the menace of insecurity caused by Boko Haram in the Nigerian political space. The paper posits that the emergence of Boko Haram has brewed the politics of insecurity, violence, and ethnic consciousness in Nigeria between 2002 and 2012 to an entirely new level never known in Nigeria. The paper principally relied on the historical and comparative approaches for data collection and analysis to reveal that the actions and inactions of the Nigerian Government to nip Boko Haram in the bud, are the root cause of national insecurity that has engulfed and continued to divide Nigerians along ethnic lines and threatened the continued political existence of Nigeria as a united and indivisible entity. This has further hampered economic development and the death of over 50 thousand Nigerians since 2002. The paper argues that the resuscitation of insecurity immediately before and after the 2011 presidential election was attributable to the politicization of violence and insecurity in Nigeria by non-state actors who used insecurity to achieve selfish political goals. Consequently, the Nigerian state must deploy strategic political will and demonstrate purposeful leadership to end the scourge of insecurity, as no meaningful development, particularly nation-building can take place in an atmosphere of instability.

Keywords: Boko Haram, Ethnic Politics, Insecurity, Nigerian Politics, and Nation-Building

Introduction

The need to create an ethnic balance in the distribution of appointments and developments in postcolonial Nigeria have for long troubled the nation since 1960.[1] As a nation of well over 300 ethnic groups, Nigeria has since the colonial period struggled to douse ethnic tensions. This was a sequel to the politicization of ethnicity and the use of religion as the yardstick in pursuing and

[1] Nigeria is a multi/religious nation with over 300 separate ethnic groups. See A. A Jekayinfa, 2002. "Implications of Competitive Ethnicity in the Process of Nation-Building", *Nigeria Journal of Social Studies,* IV, (2002):p1.

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consolidating political positions in Nigeria.[2] This became a prominent trend toward the end of colonial rule and within the first ten years of independence in Nigeria when major ethnic groups realized that the politicization of both ethnicity and religion could bridge the distance between them and power and further cement it. According to Adesina, "the nationalists shared class interests but became differentiated by ethnic interests. The early awareness that the ethnic that captured state power would have control of economic power made the rivalry between the groups extremely volatile".[3] A critical review of the major crises like the 1962/63 census crisis, the Action Group (AG) crisis, the 1964 General Election crisis, the 1965 Western Election Crisis, the 1966 coups, and the Nigerian Civil War, that bedeviled the nation were all laced with ethnic and religious undercurrents.

Between 1952 and 1970 for instance, the nature and dimension of the ethnic politics in the nation had been the tussle for power between the major ethnic groups at the center and peripheral levels coupled with the use of religion to converse support for such course. While the major ethnic groups at the center were busy struggling to grab power, the minorities in the regions were at the same time locked in the tussle to be independent and bring their suffocation in the hands of the majority to an end. This explains the nature of the crisis that later came to characterize the Nigerian political space in the last five decades of the 20th century. During this period, hardly did any decade passed without a serious crisis in Nigeria.[4] The jihad of 1804 greatly Islamized the north coupled with the colonial policy of hindering the proper integration, cultural diffusion, and religion of the various ethnic groups that made up Nigeria, through the introduction of *Sabon gari* settlement further strengthened the north as an Islamized region (although with pockets of non-Islamized parts).[5] This, however, maintained the distinct nature of the northern region. In addition, the adoption of sharia law by 12 northern states in 2001 went a long way in nursing and nurturing the belief that Islam has become a state religion in the north.[6]In Northern Nigeria, separating religion from ethnicity is not likely to yield any meaningful result. In as much as scholars like Ochefu, and Kukah Andre to mention a few,[7]before now have placed much emphasis on the religious and

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[2]Matthew Hassan Kukah,*Witness to Justice: An Insider's Account of Nigeria's Truth Commission*,(Ibadan: Bookcraft, 2011), p 2.

[3]Olutayo C. Adesina,*Nigeria's Imperfect Federation: The Case Against the Yoruba*. 2nd Prof. S.O. Arifalo Memorial Lecture. Aruba: Department of History and International Studies, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akugba, 2015, p 15.

[4] Principal among these crises was the Nigerian Civil War 0f 1967-to 1970, the Maitatsine Crisis of the 1980s, the Ogoni Crisis of 1993, the June 12 election crisis of 1992, and the Niger Delta Crisis, among others.

,[5] Akinola, A.G.,*Leadership and Postcolonial Nigerian Predicament*. Department of History, University of Ibadan Monograph Series, No. 1,(Ibadan: BookWright Publishers, 2009), p *4.*

[6] Pillar Paul,"American Perceptions of Terrorism in the Post 9/11 Decade", *Combating Terrorism Centre Sentinel*, Issue 9, 4, (2011): p 20.

[7] See Yakubu A. Ochefu,"Historicizing and Prognosticating Education and Internal Security Challenges in Nigeria", A Convocation Lecture delivered at the 6th*Convocation Lecture of Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba*, 27th January 2022. 7; Matthew Hassan Kukah,*Witness to Justice: An Insider's Account of Nigeria's Truth Commission*. 2 and Andre Le Sage. The Evolving Threat of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, USA, available at www.ndu/inse, retrieved on March 23, 2013

ethnic cleavages in Nigeria, the very fact that Nigeria is not the only ethnically and religiously diversified country in the world suggests that the lingering political and religious crisis in Nigeria boils down to the nature and idiosyncrasies of the various crops of Nigerian leaders overtime. This paper cannot shy away from the fact since the 1914 amalgam,[8] the nation during colonial rule was similarly troubled by its ethnic and religious dichotomies sequel to the administrative politics of the British colonial administrators. Despite the above, the colonial administration with its limited personnel was able to contain the tension without resulting in insecurity and violence to an extent that could threaten nationhood. Suffice it to mention at this juncture, however, that during the tail end of colonial rule, the only major political crisis that nearly sectionalized the country was the Kano Riot of 1953. This was principally tied to the ethnic politics of the era. It is also worth noting that the Kano Riot occurred at a time when the nationalists had started dictating and politicking certain aspects of the country's future as regards how the nation should be governed and administered.

Despite the politicization of ethnicity and religion since independence, ethnicity had taken center stage as the major cause of the political crisis. As early as 1980 for instance, Nigeria was bedeviled by the outbreak of the Maitatsine crisis in Northern Nigeria which resulted in the maiming and killing of Christians and perceived corrupt Muslims of a puritanical nature. From this period up to the 21st century, the major issues that had threatened the perfect integration and oneness of Nigeria have been the politicization of ethnicity and religion; the cries of marginalization of the minorities by the majority, and the marginalization of the majorities by the majorities to some extent. Between the early 2000 and 2012, the major challenge that troubled the security of the country was the issue of the Niger Delta agitations and *Jama'atu Ahis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal Jiham* popularly known as Boko Haram. This paper is, however, concerned with the response of the Nigerian state to the Boko Haram menace.

Conceptualizing Politics and Security

Politics is an integral aspect of any human society often associated with the pursuit of both personal and collective interests. It is broadly concerned with how various interests in society are pursued and harmonized.[9] This is critical to any discourse on politics because if not harmonized, conflicting interests could shake the balance of such a society. This is attributable to the fact that groups or persons whose interests are not met, could devise other means to achieve their set out goals. This presupposes that the majority of the fallouts in human society are mostly tied to the struggle by individuals and groups to achieve goals through means that are not sanctioned by society. This could be taken as a pointer to the fact that politics is a system that ensures that interests are pursued in line with ethics. Aside from this, security as the system could be

[8] See Akinola, A.G,*Leadership, and Postcolonial Nigerian Predicament*. Department of History, University of Ibadan Monograph Series, No. 1,(Ibadan: Book Wright Publishers, 2009), p *4;* Obaro Ikime,*History, the Historian and the Nation: The Voice of a Nigerian Historian*, (Abeokuta: HEBN Publishers Plc., 2006), p 122.
[9]Neha Saxena,"Political Science: A Conceptual Analysis",*The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 72, No. 1, (2011): p 129.

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taken as a whole with the might of executing the interest of a society concerning the protection of lives and property before any other thing. Thus, it can be posited that both politics and security are intricately linked.[10] The fact remains that the constant tussles between political parties as interest groups to wrestle power from each other and the use of issues such as hunger, political instability, and economic stagnation to front their interests, has majorly narrowed thoughts on politics and security to party politics and the performance of the governments. Thinking in this direction may deprive thinkers of the window to mirror politics and security as a whole. The point being made is that politics and security differ across stages.

Similarly, politics constitutes a conscious and collective drive towards evolving policies, strategies, and ideologies that can lead to the emergence of a 'better nation or society.[11] Put differently, it could be taken as a struggle for a fair share of a nation's resources by leaders of various groups. These groups could be ethnic groupings, political parties, societies, the state, or charismatic leaders. Oftentimes, discussions on politics are limited to political parties to the detriment of the aforementioned groups. This may be attributable to the events toward the tail end of colonialism in Nigeria and the political texture of Nigeria in the first decade of its independence. During these epochs, the interests of the major groups in the country were masqueraded by the Northern People's Congress, Action Group, and the National Council for Nigeria and Cameroun of the northern, western, and eastern regions respectively. This to some extent, colored the assumption that politics is limited to political parties. In post-Civil War Nigeria, consultations, agitation, and campaigns for equal treatment and good governance took an inclusive pattern. This was because, beyond political parties, interest groups, civil society organizations, and religious organizations all became active in the bargain for good governance.

Be that as it may, politics transcends consultation, advocacy, and the evolution of policies within the lens of governance. At the level of governance, politics comprises the use of state machinery, resources, and policies to foster security, good healthcare delivery, access to education, human capital development, job creation, and a core sense of belonging by leaders of political officeholders. As a whole, it relates to the response of political leaders to pressing issues in matters that will not threaten lives and property within their domain. This explains the connection between politics and security. At the national level, elected leaders are responsible for galvanizing the available machinery of the state for the protection of lives and both private and public infrastructure in a time of crisis. Suffice it to state, that the action of the political class is not only limited to the utilization of state might and agencies in defense of the national integrity of the state or in imposing its authority as often claimed. It is equally inclusive of the legislation on new laws to tackle the perceived threat and the broadening of the state's diplomatic outpost.

At the societal level, politics and security comprise not only the ability of a society to stamp its authority and maintain its independence but also the

[10]Ibid., p 131.
[11]Obaro Ikime,*History, the Historian and the Nation: The Voice of a Nigerian Historian*. (Ibadan: HEBN Publishers Plc., 2006), p 85.

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creation of a working economy and the development of human capital in a bid to fight hunger, provide its population with the means to work and earn, pay bills and cater to medical exigencies. From a governance perspective, security governance covers the public sector responsible for exercising the state monopoly of coercive power.[12] It should be noted that the population in any location will often respond to the ability of the society to provide the above or not positively or negatively. This is anchored on the fact that the ability of the state or society to stamp its authority, create a working economy, and develop human capital could create a core sense of belonging among its population or not. Where there is no sense of belonging among a majority of the population that peopled a society, it may ignite abuse of ethics and the employment of unethical means to get what they cannot get from the state or government. This is a pointer to the fact that politics and security are core societal issues.

Using Nigeria as a study, Ochefu opined that since independence, the country has recorded over thirty critical security challenges which to him are limited to four domains: the politically and economically motivated, the religiously motivated, criminally motivated, and those rooted in migration and settlement.[13]A common thread in these domains is injustice and its perceptions. These injustices could be traced to political, economic, and socio-spatial arrangements that date back to colonial rule.[14] This explains the series of political and security challenges that confronted the Nigerian state in the decade of its independence. Revenue allocation, for instance, had generated critical tension in postcolonial Nigeria. According to Ogbogbo, revenue allocation and resource control had stemmed tensions and conflicts within the Nigerian polity.[15] This is attributable to the fact that none of the formulae evolved at various times by special commissions or decrees under different regimes had gained general acceptability among the component units of the country.[16] This had enjoyed scholarly interventions from Osaghe, Nnoli, and Achebe, to mention a few.

The second subject matter of our discourse–Security is multifarious and at times, multi-dimensional.[17] It is principally but not limited to the safety of the state's sovereignty and the preservation of the nation-state and its core values.[18] Aside from the safety of the state, it is related to the citizens and other

[12]Yakubu A. Ochefu,"Historicizing and Prognosticating Education and Internal Security Challenges in Nigeria", A Convocation Lecture delivered at the 6th*Convocation Lecture of Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba*, 27th January 2022. 7
[13]Ibid., p 7.
[14]Ibid., p 7.
[15]C.B.N. Ogbogbo, "Historicising Revenue Allocation and Resource Control in Nigeria since 1960", Olayemi Akinwumi, Okpeh O. Okpeh and Terhemba Wuam (Eds), *Studies in the Economic History of Nigeria since the Nineteenth Century*,(Ibadan: *Historical Society of Nigeria*, 2017), p 292.
[16]Ibid., p 293.
[17]Okpeh O. Okpeh,"Emerging Security threats in Nigeria: Patterns and Implications on National Development", S. Ibrahim, OE Tangban, AO Ahmed and CC Osakwe (Eds), *Defence, Security, Economy and Development in Nigeria*. Vol. 1. (London: Bahiti & Dalila Publishers, 2017), p 360.
[18]Ibid., p 360.

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macro issues of safety.[19] This implies that security irrespective of any perspective we choose to interrogate it from, is fundamental to any well-meaning citizen and government.[20] This explained why it was stated in section 4 (2) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended in 2010 that 'security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government'. This includes protection from both hidden and hurtful disruptions in the routines of daily life in the workplace, at home, and in the community.[21] Some of the hidden disruption mentioned comprises food, hunger, housing, and other social issues like health. All these can only be ascertained when prioritized by the ruling elites. Within the context of Nigeria, this paper is concerned with the response of the various regimes to the political crisis that had over the years threatened the security of lives and both private and public infrastructures in the country and the reactions of Nigerians to the crisis.

Historicizing Boko Haram and the Politics of Violence in the Nigerian Polity

Boko Haram is an Islamic fundamentalist group that came to the limelight in 2002 under the leadership of Yusuf Muhammed.[22] The group right from inception was very critical of Western education. The group's dislike for Western education was evident in its advocacy for the substitution of Western education with Islamic education in northern Nigeria. This stems from the groups' belief that Western education was responsible for the underdevelopment in the northern part of the country. This was demonstrated and philosophized in their complex in Yobe State.[23] The group's critical dislike for Western education and the branding of Western education as illegitimate created a seemingly ideological semblance between them and the Maitatsine uprising in the 1980s.[24] In addition to the interest of the group to have Western education replaced with Islamic education was the substitution of the operational secular law in the country with Sharia law.[25] Between 2002 and 2008, the group pursued these interests without any clash with the security

[19]Enesi Prince Habib,"Peace, Security, and Territorial Defence: An Examination of Traditional Defence Mechanism of the Ebira People, 1850-1950", S. Ibrahim, OE Tangban, AO Ahmed and CC Osakwe (Eds), *Defence, Security, Economy, and Development in Nigeria*. Vol. 1.,(London: Bahiti & Dalila Publishers, 2017), p 528.

[20]Bilkisu F. Aimola,"Security and Abridged Intergroup Relations among Residents in Kaduna Metropolis), Abdullahi M. Ashafa, Gaius Jatau and Ayemga Tor. (Eds),*Perspectives on Nigeria's Challenges in Nation-Building*. Vol. II.,(Kaduna: Department of History, Kaduna State University, 2020),p 305.

[21]United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),*Human Development Report.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994)

[22]Adagba Akaga, Ugwu Sam Chijioke, and Eme Okwchukwu Innocent,"Activities of Boko Haram and Insecurity Question in Nigeria"*Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review,* 9. (2012): p 83.

[23] Ayuba J.M, "From Yankalare to Boko Haram: Political and Violence in Northern Nigeria" A. O. Agwuele, U.M. Nwanko and O. Akinwumi (Eds),*Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Overcoming the African Predicament*,(Berlin Germany: Mediateam Education Publishers, 2011), p 263.

[24] Abimbola Adesoji,"The Boko Haram Uprising and Islamic Revivalism in Nigeria",*African Spectrum*, (2010): pp 95-108.

[25] Yusuf Alli,"Revealed: Boko Haram Leaders trained in Afghanistan: How Security alarm was Ignored for two years",*The Nation,* August 2, 2009, pp 1 & 8.

operatives in Nigeria. This was not without serious reports of potential violence by the security outfits. In 2006 for instance, the State Security Service (SSS) reported that the group had an ulterior motive of carrying out a nationwide violent jihad in the country. The report revealed that Boko Haram has had its members trained in Algeria with the Al-Qaeda In Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in preparation for its interests.[26] Despite the early warning signals contained in the report, it was consequently and technically sidestepped for not being factual.[27] This particularly illuminates why the report was swept under the carpet until 2009 when the potency contained in the report which seems invisible in 2006 started to manifest.

Be that as it may, the clash between motorbike (Okada) riders and the police in Yobe state over the use of helmets in 2009 marked a turning point in the *modus operandi* of the group.[28] This change in operation went a long way in branding the group as violent. The group reacted to this by attacking several police stations and churches in the Yobe State in a sporadic format.[29] This particularly, coupled with the State Security Service (S.S.S) report of 2006, led to the operation flush the order given by the then-president Umaru Musa Yaradua, using the 2006 security report as a base for the government action in July 2009.[30] In the course of the operation, Yusuf Muhammed was arrested and later killed,[31] alongside one of the group's acclaimed financiers Alhaji Buji Foi and Yusuf's former teacher and in-law, Mohammed Fugu.[32] About 900 members of the group were killed with their complex destroyed. The remaining members went underground. The successful execution of the 'operation flushes them' to a very good extent restored peace and order to the northeastern part of the country, especially Yobe State.

However, during the second half of 2010, police stations and churches in the Northern part of the country were subjected to sporadic attacks.[33] At first, the identities of those behind the attacks were given as the resuscitated members of the once suppressed Boko Haram group, but the tense political situation in the country at that moment was characterized by 'the zoning or no zoning *saga* of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) coupled with the traumatic nature of the

[26]Ibid., p 8.
[27] It was believed that the report lacked the necessary substantial shreds of evidence needed to prompt governmental actions. According to Yusuf Alli, the report was sidelined in response to the accusation made by northern leaders and some Islamic clerics that the report was aimed at witch-hunting Islam. Also, see Yusuf Alli, "Revealed: Boko Haram Leaders trained in Afghanistan: How Security alarm was Ignored for two years" *The Nation,* August 2, 2009, 1&8
[28] Adagba Akaga, *et al* "*Activities of Boko Haram and Insecurity Question in Nigeria*", p 88.
[29] Dan Buzu, January 27, 2012 (11:54:41pm) "A Critical Appraisal of the Genesis of Boko Haram Insurgency - Dialog NG" *The E-Palance Blog*, January 30th, 2012, www.my.opera.com/danbuzu/blog/2012/01/27/9-critical-appraisal-of-the-genesis-of-Boko-haram-insurgency-dialog-ng, retrieved on 12-04-12
[30] Yusuf Alli,"Revealed: Boko Haram Leaders trained in Afghanistan: How Security alarm was Ignored for two years".. pp 1-6.
[31] Abimbola Adesoji,"The Boko Haram Uprising and Islamic Revivalism in Nigeria", pp 95-108.
[32]Abimbola Adesoji, "The Boko Haram Uprising and Islamic Revivalism in Nigeria", pp 95-108.
[33]Adagba Akaga, *et al* "*Activities of Boko Haram and Insecurity Question in Nigeria*", p 88.

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security clampdown on the group in 2009 influenced the response of Nigerians regarding the resuscitation of the group using the timing of the resuscitation and other variables as a base. This situation made other ethnic groups in Nigeria label the resuscitation as an ethno-religious and politically driven resurrection. The change in Boko Haram's *modus operandi* coupled with the timing of her second coming reveals that the major elements that motivate the group are a combination of religious, political, and ethnic undertones.

The resuscitation of the insecurity and violence in the northeastern part of Nigeria which had been the stronghold of Boko Haram right from its inception was attributed to the group's interest in avenging the death of Yusuf Mohammed and their members in the hands of the Armed Forces. In doing this, the group unleashed *sporadic* attacks on police stations, churches, and social gatherings or centers. A comparative analysis of the group's modus operandi and that of their formative years would reveal that the group constitutes a serious challenge to the security of lives and property in the country. In the same vein, the timing of her second coming and its *modus operandi* before and after the 2011 general election also reveals the ethnic and regional underpinning of the group. Boko Haram's attacks on churches within this period were taken by many as a Jihadist-motivated attack. During this period, several churches in Yobe, Kaduna, Kano, Bauchi, Niger states, and others were subjected to attacks. Principal among these attacks was the Madalla Christmas day bombing in Niger state (where about 50 souls were lost) on 25 December 2011, the attack on the Christ Apostolic Church in Yola, Adamawa State where about 17 people were killed on 6 January 2012, on the same day, about 20 Igbo people were killed in Postikum, on 20 January 2012 two churches were destroyed in Kano State.[34] Although the group attacked other northern clerics selectively, research has shown that the few northerners attacked were either those who aided security operatives in the wake of the 2009 crackdown on the group or those who directly or indirectly criticized the group's operations. For example, in the case of the following; Bashir Kashara (killed in October 2010) a well-known *Wahhabi*, Modu Fannami Godio (killed in January 2011) a secular preacher who opposed the group's mode of operation, Ibrahim Ahmed Abdullahi (killed in March 2011) a non-violent Muslim preacher, Abba Anas bin Umar (killed in May 2011), and Ibrahim Birkuti (killed in June 2011) a well-known Islamic cleric who condemn Boko Haram via his preaching.[35]

Despite the religious coloration in the activities of Boko Haram, the ever-present ethnic politics in the country, went a long way in convincing other Nigerians who were not of northern origin that the insecurity in the Northern part of the country was more political than religious.[36] This was exhibited in some of the proclamations made before the 2011 General Election in Nigeria. Before the general election, prominent northern leaders promised to make the country 'ungovernable' should the power configuration of Nigeria be altered. To further drive their point home, the northern leaders thus posit that those who were bent on advocating and supporting the shift of the power or leadership

[34]Ibid., p 88.
[35] Paul R. Pillar,"American Perceptions of Terrorism in the Post 9/11 Decade"p 4.
[36] Leon Usigbe, "Don't Disrupt Zoning System – North Warns",*Nigerian Tribune,* December 4, 2009.

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from the north should first consider the corporate existence or oneness of the country.[37] Empirically, during the 3rd quarter of 2010 when it became evident that the concentration of power in the north would be altered as later witnessed in the outcome of the 2011 general election, the north, and Nigeria thus, began to witness security challenges that threatened the security of the country. A development that others believed came as a result of the politicization of religion and ethnicity and the effect of the stands of the northern leaders. Whether the northern leaders accredited to the above comments were directly or indirectly linked to the outbreak of violence (Boko Haram) that today threatens the corporate existence of the country remains unclear and uncertain. Comparatively, one thing is certain, that is, the treasonable comments of the northern leaders played a major role in the resuscitation of the group and its *modus operandi*. Because the comments of the northern leaders *tongue-powered* the political and religious violence that erupted in the north before and after the 2011 election and the Boko Haram issue. In sum, phase two of Boko Haram is in historical context. ushered in a violent approach in pursuit of the group's goal. This violent element of the group as described above marked the main difference between the first and the second group but analysts have posited that although the group shares great semblance with the first yet it is not devoid of been hand pick toward the engineering of the northern agenda that was 'strangled' and 'crippled' during the build-up to the 2011 general election.

Boko Haram and the Menace of Insecurity and Nationhood in Nigeria

Boko Haram between 2002 and 2012 was a thorn in the footing of Nigeria's effort toward building a formidable nation. This was because the activities of the group not only jeopardized the Nigerian security architecture but set in motion the seeds of disintegration in the country. The group between 2002 and 2012, more than ever before re-awaked insecurity and the politics of ethnic consciousness in the country rather than fostering intergroup relations in the country through economic relations in terms of trade, inter-regional relations, inter-ethnic movement, and migration without any fear of political, ethnic or religious-oriented attacks or persecution.

Within the purview of this paper, the level of inter-regional or ethnic migration dwindled.[38] This was a sequel to the sectarian killing that was predominant in the northern part of the country. The result of the foregoing was the tactical movement of many Nigerians of southern origins from the north. Even Nigerians of southern origins who were working in the Civil Service or private sectors in the north were not spared from the relocation from the northeast due to the security threats posed by Boko Haram. Besides, the number of students of southern origin in the unity schools was seriously affected.[39] The parent had majorly withdrawn their children from northern schools because of the activities of the Boko Haram sect.[40] The Federal Government College Potiskum

[37]Ibid.
[38] Inalegwu Shaibu,"Boko Haram: Fear of Civil War Grip Senate",*Vanguard* (Mobile Edition), January 17, 2012. Available at www.vanguardngr.com/2012/01/boko-haram-fear-of-civil-war-grips-senate/ retrieved on March 3, 2012
[39]Oral interview with B.U. Ojonuba, a Federal Civil Servant, aged 60, on May 6, 2012, in Kogi State.
[40] Ibid

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for instance was relatively reduced to a community school due to the massive withdrawal of students of southern and other origins from the school. This particularly was a setback for nation-building in Nigeria. This was because, the Unity Schools (Federal Government Colleges, F, G.C) were built across the country, as a means of integrating students from the different states after the Nigeria Civil War.[41] Hitherto, the unity schools in the north had students from both the Southern and neighboring states. The abandonment of northern schools was not only peculiar to the F.G.C. Potiskum alone, but it also applied to other northern states. The principal of SS Peter and Paul Secondary School Egume, revealed that several students previously in northern school joined the academic without transfer letters because of the tense security situation in the core northern states.[42] In the same vein, other neighboring schools like Ochaja Boys Science Secondary, Grace Academic, Our Ladies, and the rest admitted a good number of students that ran from the northern states.[43]

Besides, the huge migration of people from the northern part of the country due to insecurity was not only limited to students alone. Workers and artisans also migrated back to their various regions or states. The case of Mr. B.U Ojonuba showed how the violence and insecurity unleashed on the public to a good extent broke the bond between family members.[44] To Mr. B.U, a staff of the Federal Civil Service in the northeastern part of the country, "I had to relocate all my beloved sons and daughters away from the core north, now my children are living in different places, the bond between us has dwindled, I now live in the north at the expense of my life with my wife because from here we generate our income to take care of the children".[45] He further stressed that most of his coworkers have also sent their children back to their various states and schools outside the north because 'once your children go out for school or church, your mind will know no comfort or peace until they return home safely.[46] In the case of Mr. B.U. Ngado and his colleagues greatly epitomized the state of insecurity in the north within the time scope of our study and how it affected the sense of belonging of most Nigerians, especially those of southern origins.

Similarly, in another interview, it was reported that "…the people perpetrators of insecurity in the region were mostly religious, political and ethnic minded people who wanted the north for the northerners. Today, we can't go to church to pray without fear of being attacked or without asking ourselves are we going to make it back home?, whereas the Muslims here go to the mosque without necessarily any fear of being attacked''.[47] The above view shows how the Boko Haram menace has coaxed some level of hatred between Muslims and

[41]Ineke Ugbede Joseph,"Building without Pillars: Nigeria and the Quagmire of Nation Building, 1966-1999",*Kashare Journal of Humanities, Management and Social Sciences*, Vol. 2, No. 1, (2018): p 37.
[42]A conversation with Rev. Father, Emmanuel Bruno, Principal, SS Peter and Paul Academy Egume, Kogi Station 05-06-2012 in Kogi State
[43]A conversation with Rev. Father, Emmanuel Bruno, Principal, SS Peter and Paul Academy Egume, Kogi Station 05-06-2012 in Kogi State
[44] Oral interview with B.U. Ojonuba, a Federal Civil Servant, aged 60, on May 6, 2012, in Kogi State.
[45]Ibid.
[46]Ibid.
[47]Oral interview with Uteno Onalo, a resident of Kaduna, aged 50, on May 8, 2012

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Christians. Yet, the point should be made that, the extent to which the above statement is correct cannot be quantified, but the basic fact that can be deduced from it is that the menace posed by insecurity in the north has nurtured certain elements of discord, fear, and disintegration at the expense of national integration. This particularly brings to mind the 29th April 2012 attack in Bayero University Kano (BUK), where Boko Haram attacked Christian worshipers in the church, killing 13 people including two professors both of Yoruba descent. In the course of interviewing Jerry, it was learned that most supermarkets and provision stores in Potiskum that were owned by the Igbo were abandoned and closed down while some have been looted.[48] A good example of this was the famous decency supermarket in Potiskun which was looted after the Igbo owner closed down the supermarket in January. In like manner, Mathia Uteno said;

> "we that remain here (north) are those that have no option but to stay at the expense of our precious life because our source of livelihood is rooted here in the north. The Ibo are the major victims of Boko Haram; they easily attack us because they know where we live. At times, other northern minorities here especially the Christians also hardly find any haven from the bullets of the Boko Haram. The same fate is also applicable to other Muslim clerics that openly criticize the group".[49]

Utena's view that Boko Haram was out to wipe the Igbo population out of the northern region could be attributable to the 11th April 2011 attack in the Maiduguri market, where 9 Igbo were killed out of a total of 11 victims. Although his view could explain the level of insecurity among the Igbo people in the north, his claim that the insecurity was targeted at wiping the Igbo people from the north was mono-causal. This was premised on the fact that most of the bombings and attacks that took place in public places affected not only the Igbo but also the various Nigerians at the scenes.

The extent to which Boko Haram's *modus operandi* threaten the process of national integration in Nigeria was greatly exhibited in the group's ultimatum given to southerners and other Nigerians living in the north to vacate the north in January 2012.[50] This was followed by a counter-ultimatum by the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOP), which thus ordered the Hausa-Fulani people living in the east to vacate the east within ten days or else face persecution. Although it took the deployment of heavily armed security operatives to hinder the actualization of the threats embedded in the ultimatum and counter-ultimatum, it could not, however, hinder the massive migration of the Igbo and other ethnic extractions from the north and the Hausa-Fulani people from the east to the north. This movement led to the loss of many lives on both sides as accidents were recorded. For instance, a trailer

[48]Oral interview with Jerry Ojonuba, a resident in Yobe state, aged 30, on May 8, 2012
[49] Oral interview with Uteno Onalo, a resident of Kaduna, aged 50, on May 8, 2012
[50] See Inalegwu Shaibu,"Boko Haram: Fear of Civil War Grip Senate"*Vanguard*, January 17, 2012. Retrieved from www.vanguardngr.com/2012/01/boko-haram-fear-of-civil-war-grips-senate/ on March 3, 2012.

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load of Hausa-Fulani people fell in Okene in Kogi state, claiming not less than 25 lives with several others injured.[51] According to the deputy senate president, Ike Ekweremadu, "the threat contained in the ultimatum, whether it is real or imaginary posed a great challenge to the unity, security, and co-existence of the country''.[52] He further drew the attention of the Nigerian Senate to the ethnoreligious-oriented migration of people from the north and eastern parts of the country in January 2012.[53] This migration was not in any form *in tandem* with the dictates of national integration.

In Western Nigeria for instance, the Odua Nationalist Coalition (ONAC) reacted to the killing of two Yoruba professors by the Boko Haram group in a press release by ONAC public affairs secretary, Alhaji Yunusa Akinkunmi. In their reaction, it was stated that ONAC was running out of patience with the Federal Government in its failure to bring the killings of Nigerians of southern origin in the north to an end.[54] The group thereafter, threatened that should the continuous spate of bombing, selective killings, and sectorial killings continue unchecked, there will be proportional revenge.[55] To them, northern and Muslim clerics who were not in support of the group were those the group was hastily terminating. Akinkunmi, further stressed that ONAC believed that;

> "Boko Haram is a product of three major factors; the faulty foundation of Nigeria which has been a subject for violent questioning, the excruciating pains of daily survival occasioned by the wicked, 'greedy' and spineless political leadership, the perceived loss of power by the Hausa- Fulani ruling class[56] and the crisis in the Maghreb region where Islamic fundamentalist is taking over the government which has emboldened their counterpart in Nigeria and lastly, the lack of honest, transparent and selfless approach to tackling the problem by the ruling class."

ONAC explained that 'Boko Haram's strategy was aimed at two things, to cause anarchy and probably invite the military to thwart the democratic experiment practiced in the country and also to position the Hausa-Fulani north as an intimidating political bloc thereby cowing other nationalities into submission, in the usually fierce contest for political power in Nigeria. ONAC rejects the notion that Boko Haram is poverty-induced'.[57]

The attack on the Maiduguri market in April 2012 was perceived as an ethnically motivated attack by the Igbo.[58] This was because the attack left a total

[51]Oral interview with Egbunu Obaje, aged 60, in Okene on 20/04/2013
[52]See Inalegwu Shaibu, "Boko Haram: Fear of Civil War Grip Senate" *Vanguard*, January 17, 2012
[53]Ibid
[54] Letsgist news, "Odua Nationalist Congress To Attack Boko Haram", available at www.letsgist.com/odua-nationalist-congress-to-attack-Boko-haram, retrieved in May 2012
[55]Ibid.
[56]Ibid.
[57]Ibid.
[58] James Bwala,"The Maiduguri Market Attack",*Sunday Tribune*, April 8, 2012, p 13.

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number of 12 people dead, out of which 9 were Igbo and 3 Kanuri. Eye witnesses attested to the fact that the three Kanuri victims, attempted to challenge the killings of the nine Igbo victims.[59] According to Mr. Micheal Osita, an Igbo man in Maiduguri, "This is too much for us, these people (Boko Haram) are targeting us, and how can flying bullets only hit the Igbo"?[60] A careful, examination of the stand and press release of ONAC, the ultimatum and counter-ultimatum by Boko Haram and MASSOB respectively, and the feelings of other Nigerians concerning Boko Haram and its operation between 2002 and 2012 would reveal that Boko Haram had compromised the security of Nigeria and Nigerians in the North. Besides, other northern minorities, who are majorly Christians and adherents of other religions, have been pushed to a complex state, where their tradition of origin and religion have both been confronted with the threat of going into extinction due to the activities of Boko Haram. This particularly shows that it was not only Nigerians of southern and eastern origins that suffered from the menace but rather, other northern minorities hardly found any haven.

The National Youth Service Corp (NYSC), an institution that was tailored toward enhancing national integration in Nigeria was not sparred by the insecurity ignited by Boko Haram. In the wake of the current security challenges in the country, coupled with the massacre of NYSC members of non-northern extraction after the 2011 presidential election in the northern part of the country, parents have cautioned authorities of the NYSC against posting their children to the northern states. This was further strengthened by the advocacy of the University of Lagos (UNILAG) Parent Forum, which again warned the NYSC to reconsider its posting formula.[61] They posited that "if the slain corps members were from Bauchi state, they might not have been killed." The University of Lagos Parent Forum used the post-election massacre of corps members and the outbreak of the crisis in the core north as a base, advocating that prospective corps members should be allowed or posted to serve in their state of origin or their geo-political zones. The relaxed posting formula of the NYSC which allows Corp members posted to the northern states to redeploy (if they are posted there at all) was a big blow to the spirit of the scheme in Nigeria because, before the post-2011 election, the NYSC had served as a mechanism of uniting and integrating youth from every part of Nigeria across their diverse ethnoreligious lines and differences.

Aside from Boko Haram, the politicization of religion and substitution of secular law for Sharia law by 12 northern states in 2001 was believed to have facilitated religious extremisms and intolerance in the north. This paper is thus, concerned with how the adoption of the Islamic code further dichotomized ethnic and religious differences in Nigeria. This paper argues that the adoption of the code implied that the country is been governed by different laws.[62] This was predicated on the fact that while others were governed by the secular

[59]Ibid., p 13.
[60] Ibid., p 13.
[61] Kafoworola Bello-Osagie,"UNILAG Parent Forum: If Slain Corp Members were from Bauchi",*The Nation*, June 23, 2012, p 27.
[62] Sunday Iduh,"The Key Challenges to Peace in Nigeria",*International Journal of Vocational and Technical Education* 8 (2011):p 122.

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constitution, some were governed by laws that were derived from faith and inclined by religion.[63] Hence, the adoption of Sharia in the 12 northern states and the emergence of Boko Haram in 2002 may not be a coincidence as argued by Claude Ake, 'ethnicity and religion are mere objects but become destructive and deadly when politicized or manipulated'.[64] The significance of the above was well felt before and after the April 2011 general election, when the response of the North to the outcome of the election was demonstrated with violence due to the extent to which both religion and ethnicity were used and manipulated for political ends by their leaders. In light of this, the Boko Haram crisis can also be said to have been spurred by the politicization of ethnicity and religion in the north.[65] This form of politicization of ethnicity and religion was tied to tongue-powered because before the election a group of northern leaders vowed to make Nigeria ungovernable, should the north lose out in the mandate to contest for the presidency in 2011, and by 2012, Nigeria to a large extent became relatively ungovernable.

With the epidemic of security challenges in the country, many apologists of the situation have quickly sort of a safe 'haven' as a rationale for the violent killing in the country under the guise of economic marginalization, deprivation, underdevelopment, and abject poverty in the north.[66] This was to a very good extent displayed in the mono-causal statement of Lamido Sanusi and Aliyu Babaginda where they both opined that the Boko Haram crisis erupted because of the economic marginalization of the north.[67] This seems to have no base; the only element of truth inherent in the above assertion was that: the presence of *unenlightened or illiterate* youths (in the context of secular education) to some extent coupled with the *Almajiri* system in the north, serves as a mechanism for Boko Haram's easy access to willing *foot-soldiers*. The northern part of Nigeria has been fortunate to house a good number of prestigious citadels of learning like the Bayero University Kano, Amodu Bello University, University of Maiduguri, and a host of others. These universities were situated in the region to fasten the educational transformation of the north (it should be remembered that one of the remote causes that influenced the Kano riot was the disadvantaged educational proportion of the north when compared with the West, East, and Mid-West regions) but yet, most northerners paid less or no value to education when it comes to utilizing the citadel of learning at their disposal. Available data revealed that the number of students that seek admission into tertiary institutions from Imo state alone each year was over a hundred thousand and in contrast more than that of the core northern state as a whole which stood at 73,000 except Kogi, Benue, Plateau, and Kwara state.[68] This to a greater extent showed that the northerners attached less value to education because of their age-long stereotype belief that education is not

[63]Ibid., p 122.
[64] Claude Ake, "What is the Problem of Ethnicity in Africa? Available on www.history.ukzn.aczan/../442
[65] Murray Last, "Who and What are Boko Haram? Available at www.royalafricansociety.org. Retrieved on May 5, 2012
[66] Olawale Rasheed,"Boko Haram: Obama Accept Northern Elders Narration",*Nigerian Tribune,* April 8, 2012, p 46.
[67]Ibid., p 46.
[68] Ayuba J.M, "From Yankalare to Boko Haram: Political and Violence in Northern Nigeria" pp 225-265.

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significant.[69] In the face of all these, Nigerians are yet to be informed about the identities of those who impoverished the north. Hence, the extent to which northern leaders have tried to ameliorate the sorry state of educationin the northern part of Nigeria lies in paradox. The abject poverty in the north seems to be self-inflicting. The northerners despite all the efforts of the federal government to bridge the gap between education in the north and other states of the federation have continuously shunned education.

There is no gain in saying that there was the security of life and property in Nigeria, especially in the northern part of the country between 2009 and 2012. The security situation in the northern part of Nigeria during this period assumed a new scenario where the 'hunters became the hunted. This was because unarmed civilians were not the only victims of insecurity but hard targets like military formations and other sister security operatives were equally subjected to attacks. Furthermore, the insecurity questions obstructed the interdependency that exists between several states across the federation, due to the dichotomy in the agricultural economy of Nigeria. For instance, the Eastern part of the country depends on the north for the supply of onions, the northern part of the country depends on the middle belt region for the supply of palm oil, and the north also greatly depends on the littoral states for the importation of foreign goods due to her landlocked geographical configuration. This interdependency had over the years led to the integration of this region beyond ethnic lines and had in other words tied the livelihood of Nigerians to the economy of different regions, for instance, the presence of Hausa men in Ife, the remaining Ibo men in the north who cannot abandon their investments despite the continuous bombing and killing and their likes. In addition, the activities of Boko Haram have hindered transporters, especially trailer drivers from going to the northern states (especially the northeast region in the north) and this particular has influenced the increasing alarm of food insecurity in Nigeria.

This paper is not ignorant of the fact that before 2002, civil servants and military personnel of southern origin settled in the north after their retirement, using their entitlements and benefits to build residential apartments and businesses in the north.[70] This alone shows the harmonious effect that national integration had induced in the mindset of Nigerians through the mechanization of acculturation, a common feature of national integration. Be that as it may, the glorious stories of civil servants and military personnel settling and establishing themselves in the North after retirement against the idea of going back to their states of origin showed the level of integration and acculturation in the North before 2012. The settling and setting-up of business in the north by Nigerians of southern origins after retirement has a lot of socio-cultural gains on the economy of the north. However, since this development forms one of the cardinal pillars of national integration, anything that obstructs it negatively will be deemed a threat to national integration.

[69]Ibid., pp 225-265.
[70]Oral interview with Sunday Unchola, aged 67, retired civil servant, 13-10-2012

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Conclusion

This paper submits that the activities of Boko Haram pose a challenge to the process of nation-building in Nigeria and the security of lives and property. The menace has reawakened the politics of ethnic consciousness among Nigerians. The paper contends that if the State Security Service Report on the group was not politicized in 2006, the group would not have grown into the monster it assumed between 2009 and 2012. The response of ONAC to the killing of the two Yoruba professors, the Boko Haram attack on BUK, the *imaginary* effect of the ultimatum and counter-ultimatum by Boko Haram and MASOB, and the nefarious effects of Boko Haram activities were the height of politicizing insecurity which threatens national unity and integration leading to the poor international image of Nigeria as a terrorist haven. The government must muster the strategic political will to end this menace in the interest of national unity.

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