

## DEFECTIVE FEDERALISM AND THE EMERGENCE OF DOMESTIC TERRORISM IN NIGERIA

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### **Abstract**

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

**Key words:** Federalism; Terrorism; Boko Haram; Shariah law; Violence; Northern Nigeria; Peace

### **I. Introduction**

A number of scholars have examined federalism as a system of government in Nigeria. Others have also observed the emergence of resistant groups within the Nigerian body polity. However, the merit and defects of Nigeria's brand of has not been adequately explored. Thus, extant literature is yet to grapple with the nexus between the Nigerian government structure and the emergence of domestic terrorism against the Nigerian state. Consequently, using secondary data, this study describes how Nigeria's brand of federalism gave rise to the emergence of Boko Haram.

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

The failings of Nigeria, over the years, have conspired to create the conditions for the transformation of Boko Haram from just one of several fundamentalist sects in Northern

Nigeria, into the irredeemably violent organisation it is today; one that now appears to lie well beyond the capacity of the country to defeat. The turning point in the drawn-out evolution of Boko Haram was the July 2009 killing of the sect's co-founder, Yusuf Muhammad (Al Jazeera, July 31, 2009), under police custody, hours after soldiers arrested and handed him over. His capture followed five days of clashes between members of the sect and the military, ordered in by then President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua when it became clear that the police could not contain it. Prior to the sect's attack the authorities got warnings but they did nothing pre-emptive until the sect struck.

## **II. Conceptual Issues**

The two concepts that are central to this paper are federalism and terrorism. It is, therefore, necessary from the outset, to define the perspectives from which these terms will be used for the purpose of this piece. With reference to the concept of federalism, quite a voluminous body of literature exists that expounds a diversity of perspectives on the pre-conditions for, as well as, aggregates of factors that, taken together, constitute a federal system. It is not within the scope of this piece to contribute to the welter of existing definitions of federalism but to extract that which will be analytically useful for this endeavour.

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

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

Federalism presupposes limits to the federal government's power and authority. This allows for checks and judiciary review of both the state and federal encroachment. But Nigeria lacks inter-institutional oversight. Except for the rather vague statement in Section 2 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), there are no definite enumerated powers of the federal government in Nigerian Constitution. The thirty-six states are merely administrative units of the central government.

A federation is no doubt a political entity characterised by a union of partially self-governing states or regions under a central (federal) government. In a federation, the self-governing status of the component states, as well as the division of power between them and the central government are typically constitutionally entrenched and may not be altered by a unilateral decision of either party, the states of the federal political body.

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

The concept of terrorism has a voluminous body of explicatory literature (Kizito, 1995; Johnson, 2000; Kushner, 2003). However, the perspective expounded by Dokun Oyeshola (2005) will be used. Oyeshola (2005) states that:

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

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

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

At the international level, terrorism derives from the perceived need and requirement of nation-states to defend their core national values against the pursuit of terrorists. The perception of terrorist's threat from the international environment compels states to increase their level of security vis-à-vis terrorist organisations. Therefore, terrorism not only threatens the rights and values that are cherished at the level of the individual and state – also depending on its intensity – it may also constitute a threat to the corporate existence of the international system (Singer, 1969:20-29).

### **III. Nigeria's Defective Federalism: A Recipe for Extremism**

To understand how defective Nigeria's federalism is, we will consider the contribution of the most consummate student of federalism Nigeria has ever known – Chief Obafemi Awolowo (1966:199ff). Awolowo wrote;

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

It would be recalled that federalism was adopted for Nigeria (Akinyemi, 1978) as a convenient means of administering the fractious multi-ethnic conglomerate. Though rickety in practice since inception (Osuntokun, 1999:91-102; Tamuwo, 1998:13-33), federalism no doubt offered some hope that the multinational leviathan might not implode because of the substantial autonomy guaranteed the federating units (Awolowo, 1960:24). By the time the military action cum civil war ended in January 1970 Nigeria emerged no longer as a conglomeration of three regions with separate constitutions that were attached as a schedule to the Federal Constitution and hinged upon the three major ethnic groups – Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba but as a unitary-federation composed of twelve states surrogates of the central government.

With the onset of the oil boom (Mayall, 1976:327) in the early 1970 and the Nigeria state as the primary vortex of revenue collection and disbursements, the states became subservient to the federal centre. This is because, according to the then military head of state, General Yakubu Gowon, ‘To keep Nigeria one is a task that must be done’ (Clarke, 1987:65; Dudley, 1982). By introducing a unitary command structure Gowon truncated Nigeria’s federalism. This is because according to Supreme Court Justice, Hogol Black of the United States federalism is a proper respect for state functions, recognition of the fact that the entire country is made up of a union of separate state.

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

Due to this contradistinction, Nigeria became an exclusive oil of gladness for a privileged few, and the water of affliction for the rest of the stock. Thus, the first line of threat to human security (Imobighe, 1998) in Nigeria is the agents of anti-people policy. Those who threaten the ability of the ordinary citizen to realize his self-actualisation, that is, his ability to liberate himself from poverty, ignorance and disease. Those who loot public treasury; mismanage the nation’s economy, scuttle the efforts towards the just

sharing of the rewards and burden of citizenship, as well as those who undermine the solidarity of the people by manipulating ethnic, religious and sectional sentiments. How anyone can imagine that this cauldron of negative and antagonistic factors would lead to a brew of national unity and stability must be evidence of man's incurable predisposition to delusion.

The direct result of the above is that the centralisation of political and economic power reinforced, above all, corruption, pillage and predation as well as the marginalisation of several ethnic communities from any access to state resources (This Day, January 19, 2003:29-34). Under the circumstance, politics became a zero-sum enterprise where winners take all and losers lose everything. In it there is no room for magnanimity in victory or gallantry in defeat. It is a dog-eat-dog game where only the violent survive and thrive. And with the appropriation of national wealth for private use, good governance became an alien philosophy as government is never accountable to the people.

The second means by which Nigeria's federalism brings about terrorism is in respect of the fundamentalists' discontent with the distribution of political and economic power. It is expected that, in a federal state, the constituent units have equal power and are thus able to develop at their pace. But Nigeria's federalism gave to the 'federal' centre enormous powers, at the expense of the states, that are unknown in any other federal state (Awe, 1998:41-48). This reckless appropriation of extreme power totally subverted the very essence of federalism. The implication of this is that Nigeria only federate in name but unitary in reality and operation. It is taken for granted that federalism is an acknowledgement that the government will be far best if the states and their institutions are left to perform their separate functions in their separate ways. Instead whoever occupies the presidency in Nigeria becomes an indisputable colossus among the plethora of governors of the thirty-six states. Needless to say that, this system does not permit independent thinking, nor allow the states to develop at their own pace. The unwillingness of the 'federal' authority to relinquish power to the 'federating' units fuels the spiral of violence; and the existence of religious, ethnic, and regional cleavages which political violence easily feeds upon.

The Nigerian governmental structure is an 'imperial presidency' and the federation a 'unitary system.' The country retains the title 'federation' in its name but in reality is a very strong, powerful and overbearing central government that appropriates all the nation's power and wealth and distributes to the 'federating units' at its whim. It exercises absolute control over the nation's economy by appropriating all mineral resources to itself (1999 Nigerian Constitution). The import of this centralisation is clearer when it is realised that Nigeria is a mineral dependent state that currently derives about 80% of its external revenue earnings from petroleum alone. In the same vein, the entire coercive apparatus of the state; the armed forces, the police and other security and intelligence apparatus are firmly under the control of the central government. The enormous powers of the central government make it money-grubbing but unproductive behemoth. The federal system of government becomes a monster that the people are incapable of taming through peaceful means. While state governors are, technically speaking, the chief security officers at the state level, in practice, they have no control over the police commissioners appointed and deployed from Abuja.

The third way in which Nigeria's federalism constitute a source of terrorism is in relation to the country's inability to meet the 'aspiration of its citizens' (Burton and Dukes, 1990). It was assumed that federalism will result in more rational and efficient management of the economic system as a whole which, in turn, will result in greater equity in the distribution of goods and services. The success or otherwise of a federal system depends on an acceptable distribution of resources and functions among the three levels of government so that efficiency in the use of scarce resources is encouraged while reducing inequality in the treatment of individual (Ekeh, 1972:77) among different states.

Given the structure of the Nigeria economy, the state and local government have had to be heavily dependent on the federally collected revenues. But revenue allocated statutorily to the state government has not fostered any sense of financial responsibility on the part of state and local government as they increasingly become inefficient in the use of the meagre funds they get. These governments are tempted to spend on questionable projects. The revenue allocation formula has not sufficiently given incentives to these governments to exploit truly their own sources or revenue. In fact, they have found it more rewarding to concentrate their energies on attempting to obtain larger transfer from the federally collected revenue rather than attempting to generate more revenue internally. As a result of these problems, the expenditure to which the state and the local government are committed far exceeds their revenue. While state and local government statutory allocation showed little growth potential, their expenditures showed high growth potential. Not only is there a large excess of their expenditure over revenue, the extent of imbalance is progressively rising.

Thus, with a non-hegemonic and profligate ruling elite that is always concerned with 'spoliation', predation and de-legitimizing of the state, the Nigerian state, in the words of Ihonvbere (1995:141-158), has become 'irrelevant' in terms of the consciousness of existential conditions of the populace which it is supposed to serve, unite and nourished through the provision of basic social services as well as security of life and properties.<sup>19</sup> This has resulted in the creation of Boko Haram as an alternative ethnic, communal and religious network and structure of providing social welfare needs (Ake, 1997:305).

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

Rather than address itself to this complexity Nigeria is a manifestation of an over-centralised federation of weak units in which the politics of distribution of public goods

triumphs over that of production, an executive arm of government overdeveloped vis-à-vis the other arms at all levels of the federal arrangement, a culture of venality, a fractured and largely insensitive political elite, decay in basic infrastructure and neglect and lack of effective incorporation into national life of ethnic minorities, rural areas, women and the youth, among others, as well as an economy overburdened by debt, exogenous tastes and consumption habits with cross-regional internal markets suffering from bureaucratic bottlenecks (official and unofficial), and over-dependence on oil for national income. Nigerians cannot therefore be blame for believing that their leaders have driven the country to an ignominious, ominous, and perilous precipice. Nigeria is viewed by Nigerians as an affliction, a sickening bad breath that will make you disgorge, a belch from the gastro-intestine of hell, and a country furbelowed with deliberate disapprobation and depravity (Solarin, 1965:85). Many around the world believe Nigeria is like the axis of tragedy, horror, infamy, amalgamates of mess, degeneracy and turpitude. There is no doubting that fact that Nigerian federal structure is inherently conducive to the development of rebel movements.

Fourthly, the peace and stability of Nigeria is further threatened by the federal character principle. The federal character (Ekeh, 1989:24) principle has been manipulated by and channeled to serve the overall interest of the petty bourgeois ruling class. It is the members of this class who formulated and operated the principle under the guise of the federal character principle, the member of the bourgeois class get themselves entrenched in power and exercise control over the machinery of state through the application of this principle too, they strive to reconcile their class differences through the operation of acceptable formula for the allocation, distribution and sharing of national resources and benefits among themselves while they do this they capitalise on and fan the members of the ethnic differences among the various Nigerian peoples to win the support of the masses in their areas.

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

One of the major and most problematic features of the federal character principle (Adebisi1989:333), as presently is the complexity of the interest and units as represented by some states and local government, ethnic and religious group affiliations. For example the creation of more states and local government and the establishment of federal educational institutions in every state to enhance greater representational opportunities lead to the multiplication of governmental and administrative units and facilities which become disturbingly expensive to the nation. This is often done against the evidence of the inability of the new states and local governments to discharge their statutory duties as a result of their unavailability. As a result, the federal character principle deepened the problem it was devised to tackle.

The factors that cause a population to defer to terrorism are a sense of grievance, oppression, frustration and depravation including poverty and other adverse effects of globalisation, rank disequilibrium including class and tribal alteration, and changes in attainments or expectations. The feeling of grievance is being exploited by narcissistic leaders with borderline personalities, and also by groups that are opposed to them. The sense of injustice is also making individuals turn to terrorism in order for the mass population at large to hear of their suffering and sense of injustice. This has created mass psychosis that turns citizens against innocent people manifesting in mass killings during religious, communal, inter-communal, ethnic and related face-offs in different parts of Nigeria: North, East, Middle Belt, West, South-South, etc. And since the Nigerian state seems to have lost its *raison d'être* and legitimacy in the eyes of most of the populace hence the violent resurgence of the national question manifesting in Boko Haram's successes.

Finally, a proper federal system with considerable devolution of powers to the constituent regions/state and local government, with attendant separation of powers between the different arms of government, would not only ensure 'unity in diversity' but also ameliorate pronounced ethnics' antagonism. Expectedly, the arrival of democracy, which allowed people to express their pent-up frustration without the fear of military reprisals opened the floodgates of agitations. Unfortunately, the federal arrangement that Nigeria operates is structurally defective. The inability of this structural asymmetry to effectively manage the mirage of interests is responsible for the instability of the Nigerian state.

This picture of Nigeria indicates that within the last one century of amalgamation and fifty-five years of independence, it has not been able to forge an agenda of national coherence, integration nor addressing the urgent issues of poverty, inequality, identity conflicts and popular democracy. Nigeria's internal organisation is rigidly stratified and disperses too many rewards to too few of its members while the allegiance of its citizenry dwindled. Throughout its history, Nigeria has been held together in artificial unity more by coercion than by the consent of the people.

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

#### **IV. Boko Haram's Terrorism**

When Britain amalgamated Nigeria in 1914 it sealed off the North from the South (Osuntokun, 1979:91-108). What was united were fundamentally 'the administrations of the North and South and not the people of the North and South' (Perham 1960:413).The



British allowed minimum contact between the North and the South because it was not in British interest that the North be allowed to be polluted by the educated South (Akinjide, [2000] 2001).

While it is true that northern Nigeria is not a religious monolith, at any rate, Northern Nigeria houses a majority of the country's Moslem population, most of whom are Sunnis. With their majority, the Moslem population sought the introduction of *Shariah*, as the foundation of all legislation in the region. It should also be noted that Northern Nigeria has always shared the sentiments of the Moslems of the Arab world for Islamic solidarity (Minorities Commission, 1958; Daily Times 10 January 1958). Thus, Boko Haram whose official name is *Jama'atul Athul Sunnah Lidda'wati wal Jihad*, which means: 'Group of the Sunni People for the Calling and Jihad' (Counter-terrorism 2013 Calendar) is connected with the fanatical Palestinian movement frustrated and desperate to avenge the Arab defeat in the Six Day War of June 1967, through the weapon of new terrorism which started since September 11, 2001. Al Qaeda and aligned organisations have taken advantage of the situation in Nigeria to promote their own causes (Nossiter and Murray, 2011), including engaging in a 'war' with the West. While not universally successful, these groups have benefitted from the misapplication of Nigeria's federalism, and, they have been able to recruit from militant groups in Northern Nigeria.

The mission of the Palestinian movements is complemented, in Nigeria, by the *Shariah* debate which has been lingering in Nigeria since the Constituent Assembly controversy of 1977/78 (Aguda, 2002:33). When the debate resurfaced under the presidency of Olusegun Obasanjo, he described it a 'political *Shariah*' that would fuss out. Though the National Council of States directed all Northern states to desist from implementing the Islamic legal system the Northern states have been insisting that *Shariah* system should be implemented. Former President Shehu Shagari and retired General (now President) Muhammadu Buhari immediately aligned themselves with the *Shariah* proponent by saying that Moslems have the right to insist on it because it is their 'way of life' (Adebajo, 2000). They were not alone, the then Vice President, Atiku Abubakar, stated at the Sultanate Council of Sokoto that States governors implementing *Shariah* were responding to the wishes of their people. In his words 'This is a democratic setting, they have the right to do the wishes of their land, and I don't think that should bother anybody' (This Day 2000).

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

To compound the situation, at about this period also, there was the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW), smuggled in across Nigeria's porous 4,000-mile-

stretch borders with Benin, Niger, Chad and Cameroon, coming from the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone. In response, Obasanjo, in 2005, set up a Presidential Action Committee on Control of Violent Crimes and illegal Weapons, which reportedly raised fears that extremist sects were gaining roots in the country.

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

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

There were also reports of Libyan President Mohammed Qaddafi of Libya sending financial resources to the group (Thomson, 2012:53). Another international source of financing is from Muslim charity organisations in Europe. In 2012, the British House of Lords led an investigation against the charity Al-Muntada Trust Fund for transferring funds to Boko Haram (Kalu, 2012).

This is, should, not surprising because violence seems to have been associated with religion since the beginning. In this wise, the crisis of the foundation of Islam which is paradigmatically recorded in Muhammad's *hijra* to Medina and the abiding claim to the *Ka'ba* in Mecca readily come to mind. Despite the original tolerance towards the Jews and Christians (the 'people of the book'), a final alternative presents itself that can no longer be overcome by human beings. An indispensable claim arises out of the inclusion of Jews and Christians: 'If they accept your faith, they shall be rightly guided; if they reject it, they shall surely be in schism. Against them God is your all-sufficient defender' (*Surah* 2: 135-8). An unbridgeable opposition arises here, as soon as others think that they can reject a conviction recognised as God's truth. Also, despite the often conciliatory tone to be found in the Qur'an, everything in Islam seems to be attuned to conquest and fighting. In the shaping of a just world, as conceived by Islam, the missionary goals of conversion and dissemination of the faith are legitimate and even called for under certain conditions. The conception of a common life shaped in accordance with the Qur'an and the *Shariah* seems virtually to require at least violence and the resolute implementation of Allah's will.

In connection, the records of the destructive activities of Boko Haram are sufficiently within the public domain to demand documentation here. Suffice it therefore to say that the first violent uprising associated with the sect took place in December 2003. About 200 armed youths who styled themselves *Al Summa Wal Jamma* ('Followers of the Prophet') attacked police stations in two border towns in Yobe state, near Nigeria's border with Chad. The attack was said to be in retaliation for what the sect termed maltreatment of its members by the police. By June 2009, the members of the sect encountered a team of 'Operation Flush', a special security unit under the control of the then Borno state governor, Ali Modu Sherrif. The sect's members sustained gunshot

injuries from this encounter. In response Yusuf Muhammad reportedly wrote and circulated an 'Open letter' to President Yar'Adua threatening violent. By July the sect fulfilled its threats through a series of brazen, coordinated attacks on police stations and government buildings in four states. This led to the capture of Yusuf earlier mentioned. Yusuf's father-in-law and two alleged financiers of the sect, Alhaji Buji Foi (Former Borno State Commissioner for Religious Affairs), and Alhaji Buni Wakil (local contractor) were also killed (Shenu, 2001).

The subsequent notorious activities of Boko Haram could be understood in the context of the questioning of the *raison d'être* of the modern nation-state as climaxed in the reconstruction of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia in southern Europe (Huntington, 1991) as well as Somalia and Ethiopia in Africa. It would also be noted that the relevance of the Nigerian nation-state has also been contested by the Igbo ethnic community by declaring the short-lived 'Republic of Biafra.' The crises in the Niger Delta which escalated following the execution of Kenule Saro Wiwa in 1995 by the Abacha junta are all in this clime (Nyiam, 1999:46). Thus, no matter what we may think of Boko Haram and its tactics, however, the truth that must be admitted is that this conflict is based on issues which are real and concrete (Laski, 1968:2). This is if we admit that the best antidote to domestic terrorism is good governance. This would mean an explicit admission that bad governance leads to domestic restiveness. History will show whether we are right in seeking to construct a linkage between good governance and national peace and stability. But for now, it is as good a linkage as any to work on.

As human right groups document accounts of abuses by the Nigerian security forces, local communities are alienated and Boko Haram's sympathisers are further radicalised. Due to the sect's attack on Western culture and Nigeria's decadent political system whose legacy are corruption and poverty the sect has a large and deeply devoted youth population galvanise to it because its socio-economic grievances resonate with theirs (Arthur, 1997:101-115). Meanwhile the objective of Boko Haram is to weaken the government and governance, divert its security forces from other tasks, attracts sympathisers and ultimately force government into overreaction that would throw the population into the arms of the terrorists. This would be because citizens cannot have the faith that their government will act swiftly and fairly since the government itself is understood to be inherently corrupt and the feeling of injustice is prevalent.

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

However, the sect's demand for and declaration of Islamic caliphate (Counter-terrorism 2013 Calendar) could also be an attempt by the sect to undo the subordination of the old Kanem-Borno Empire under the politico-military power of the British colonial state which later became Nigeria. Boko Haram wishes to reverse this and re-installed and continued with the long existence of the Seifawa dynasty in Kanem-Borno. This is because unlike in the present circumstance where the North is bereaved of power, even under the colonial state the dynasty has power. For instance, under Indirect Rule, 'the tendency was to define the customary powers of the Emir (Akinjide, 2002:27) in a way so embracing as to fortify him from any external threat. If the Native Authority was akin to a colonial fortress in a hostile wilderness, the Emir (Chief) was its knight whose armour must not be allowed to be breached at any point (Mamdani, 1996). In sum, since the establishment of the Kanem-Borno Empire the people have become accustomed to the idea of an Islamic state under the seemingly unquestionable authority of the Emirs. And the colonial administration through the framework of Indirect Rule acknowledged and reinforced the Caliphate notion of the ownership of the emirate by its rulers (NAI/CE/W3F4 1958). Even the incursion of the military to power after independence allows the North to enjoy the largess of the concentration of power at the centre.

Therefore, the dynamites that would eventually explode the peace of Northern Nigeria were laid by the re-introduction of democracy in 1999. In this democratic dispensation, characteristically insensitive to the wounded pride of the North whose son (Umaru Musa Yar'Adua) could not complete his tenure due to death, and from whom political power had slipped, Goodluck Jonathan in 2007 contested and won the presidency. Granted that he has the right to contest, it nonetheless showed poor political judgement on his part. He fatalistically failed to grasp the adverse relationship between the interests of the North and the rhetoric of liberal democracy. In this way, he mistook popular complacency in the face of power of incumbency for acquiescence. Therefore, the centralisation of power at the centre couple with the fact that the *South* has been ruling since 1999, except for the interregnum of Yar'Adua, created a monstrosity that continued to bedevil the nation till today. The virtual loss of power by the Northern elite that the practice of democracy since 1999 till date (Soyinka, 2011) represented is an idea alien to Northern Nigeria. It has led to the perception that the minorities are trying to take over the country. Boko Haram, with a powerful network of remote and immediate sponsors, is therefore a continuation of the struggle for power between the North and the South (For more on how the struggle by regional elites to control central power made the Nigerian state crisis-ridden see for example, Nigerian Politics: The Ordeal of Chief Awolowo' and 'Contradictions in the Nigerian Political System' in Sklar and Whitaker, 1991).

The sect has therefore been using terrorism in conjunction with rural and urban guerrilla warfare in an all-out bid to topple government interests in northern Nigeria. The actions are systematic, premeditated and calculated. It has continued to use systematic murder, suicide bombing, mass adoption, injuries and wanton destruction of lives and properties to create a climate of terror, to publicise its disdain for western culture all in the bid to coerce a wider population of Moslems in the north to submit to its aim of an Islamic caliphate. The resulting toll in deaths, injuries and destruction are not the primary objectives. The carnage is a means to an end, part of the atmosphere of shock and fear that the sect wishes to create in order to undermine government authority and gain a

hearing for its cause; which are a change of the idea that there is no future outside western culture, change of the idea of Saturday-Sunday as weekend, change from penal code to *Shariah* code in executive, legislative and judicial administration, abolition of Christianity, at least in Northeast Nigeria and ultimately establishment of an Islamic state.

And since the terrorists' activities in Algeria and Cyprus against France and Britain's colonial powers succeeded in ending colonialism in those places it is possible to end everything western in Northern Nigeria. This is aside the short-term gains of publicity, cash ransoms and release of terrorist prisoners. No wonder that the Boko Haram issue has now dominated the attention of Nigerians, Africans, and the World to the exclusion of related crimes, and the identities of the forces and individuals that created, have sustained, those policies (Haruna, 2001).

## V. Conclusion

An attempt has been made in this paper to highlight how Nigeria's federalism created the platform for the emergence of Boko Haram's domestic terrorism. Nigerians' mistrust of their political leaders is historically documentable. Regardless of whether its cause is British amalgamation of 1914, long military rule, or something else, it is a part of the Nigerian character. At least in part, because of government excesses which are the consequence of the defects of Nigeria's federalism, Islamic insurrection grew throughout Northeast Nigeria. The implication of this study is therefore that there is an avoidable causal effect to the Boko Haram terrorism. That when there is unity in diversity, when each unit is coordinate and independent to a reasonable experience peace (Olukoshi and Agbu, 1996:87).extent, when power with the accompanying responsibilities is devolved on coordinate units to ensure their growth and development, when injustice of whatever kind is not condoned, when equality of all is guaranteed, when domination of one nationality or a group of nationalities by another is not allowed and when no unit is alienated under whatever guise but each has a sense of belonging, and when transparency, honesty, accountability and selflessness characterised leadership. Only then will Nigeria

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

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