Boko Haram Insurgency, National Insecurity and Polarized Nigeria: A Pedagogical and Analogical Study of Media Silence Vis-À-Vis Responsive Journalism

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria is presently polarized along ethnic and religious lines. Today, Boko Haram sect, a religious sect in Northern Nigeria, has not only held Nigeria by the jugular, but actually snuffing life out of the seemingly lifeless body. The journalists on their own have chickened out as a result of the threats and attacks from the dreaded Islamic sect. This fearfulness and media silence informed this research. This paper is a pedagogical and analogical study of Boko Haram insurgency, threat to national security and largely disunited Nigeria, aimed at using the news media for national re-orientation and positioning Nigeria on the path of unity, peace and progress. Descriptive research design was adopted. The researcher used questionnaire in collecting of primary data. Representative sample of 400 was scientifically determined from a population of 26,947,640. Six trained research assistants were promptly deployed to each of the six geopolitical zones. Key Evidence from data analysis shows that people do not see Nigeria as a peaceful and united nation. Research data points out the obvious-that Boko Haram is a big threat to the corporate existence of the political entity called Nigeria. Evidence from research data shows that Nigeria journalists have actually chickened out of the professional responsibilities as they dread criticizing the terrorist activities of Boko Haram in recent times. The researcher concludes that Boko Haram is indeed a threat to the corporate existence of Nigeria. It was recommended that the Nigerian journalist be fearless and responsive in the coverage of all acts of terror.

Keywords: Insurgency, Insecurity, Polarized, Fearlessness, Media Silence, Responsive.

INTRODUCTION

The activities of ethnic and religious militia groupings have continued to threaten the fragile peace in various individual nations of Africa, particularly the multi-ethnic and religious Nigeria. Indeed, Nigeria is at her crossroads. No doubt, the society has been held hostage by the Boko Haram Islamic Sect in some northern States of Nigeria [1].

Insecurity has become a reoccurring decimal in Africa's most populous nation, Nigeria. Priding herself and a big brother and the giant of the continent, Boko Haram seems to have held Nigeria in the jugular and has perpetually brought the so called giant on her knees. No wonder Prof. Wole Soyinka aver that Nigeria is a giant with decaying feet.

Although Nigeria as a nation may not have fared well, 52 years after she gained political independence from Britain, it will be trite to posit that insecurity, occasioned by various ethnic and religious militia sects have become

her major undoing. Today, Boko Haram sect has not only held Nigeria by the jugular, but actually snuffing life out of the seemingly lifeless body [2].

Nigeria: An Insecure and Largely Polarized Nation

Virtually in all societies of the world, unity, peace and progress have continued to be priced values. But in Nigeria, these values have continued to be threatened by ethnic divides and sentiments as well as religious intolerance. Since 1960 when Nigeria attained independence, the unity of the political entity called Nigeria has been trudging on a shaky ground [3].

The way the Nigerian state is structured must have been responsible for the deepening ethno -religious contradictions. This multi ethnic and religious nature originates a constant feeling of distrust between the component members. The fear of one ethnic or religious group dominating the other is could also be a divisive element. No doubt, ethnic suspicion and intrigues that had existed before 1960 led to the military coup d'etat of 1966, the traumatic civil war between 1967 and 1970, mutual distrust afterwards, and the incessant ethno religious skirmishes that have continued to threaten the very fabric of Nigeria's democratic experience and national existence. It was in consonance with the above that [1] avers that the unity of Nigeria will continue to elude us because of the variance in religious belief and ethnic divide.

The political elites have constantly sacrificed opportunities for initiating national integration on the altar of short-term interest, thus worsening the already bad situation. Consequently, despite the creation of several states and local Governments over the years, and all efforts geared towards national cohesion, the Nigerian state remained plagued with conflicting interests that threatens Nigeria's corporate existence. At every opportunity to grow as a nation is the problem of intolerant ethnic diversities and religious world view which are continually expressed in the series of violent crises that occur at quick succession in our body politic [4].

For sure, Ethnic and religious issues are the most recurring issues in Nigeria's political system. These issues have permeated the political landscape from the colonial period up till the present age when Boko Haram seems to have worsened matters as it concerns national unity, peace and development.

Nigeria remains a multi-ethnic and religious state. No doubt, the ethnic groups (dominant and minority) always treat each other with suspicion and different religious beliefs clash at the slightest provocation.

Institutional efforts which were made to satiate these tendencies since 1960 have proved inadequate. The long years of military rule increased the gap of distrust as the elites deliberately employed state power to pursue primordial sentiments, thereby increasing the gap and intolerance in

Nigeria. This may have prompted [5] to state that the current political cum religious battles is fuelled by certain quarters and individuals who benefits at the expense of the state and citizens.

The introduction of the sharia legal system equally brought another dimension into the whole farce. While the Moslems justifies its introduction as part of the dividends of democracy, the Christians see its introduction as contrary to the spirit of secularism as provided for in section 10 of the 1979 and 1999 constitutions, which states that "the Government of the Federation or of a state shall not adopt any religion as a state Religion". The above brings to the fore that the real problem in Nigeria is not so much the level of ethnic differences, secularity or religiosity but fears of political domination of one ethnic or religious group by the other.

With over four hundred (400) ethnic groupings, belonging to several religious belief systems, Nigeria since 1960 has remained a multi-ethnic state, which has been grappling with the problem of ethnicity on the one hand, and the problem of ethno-religious conflicts on the other.

This phenomenon of ethnic and religious intolerance have led to incessant recurrence of ethno-religious conflicts over the years, which have given birth to so many ethnic movements like Odua People Congress (OPC), the Bakassi Boys, the Egbesu Boys, the Ijaw Youth congress (IYC), and the Igbo people Congress (IPC). Others include the Arewa people's Congress (APC), the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), and the Ohaneze Ndigbo [6].

With the emergence of these ethnic groups and the deep divides between the various ethnic groups, religious intolerance has become more violent and bloodier using the ethnic militias as the executors of ethno-religious agenda.

In Nigeria, it is interesting to note that ethnicity and religious bigotry has become a fulcrum of various forms of nationalism ranging from assertion of language, cultural autonomy and religion, superiority to demands for local political autonomy and self-determination. All these have along the line led to some forms of contextual discrimination of members of one ethnic or religious group against another on the basis of differentiated Systems of socio- cultural symbols and religion.

Therefore, in a multi-ethnic and religiously diverse society like Nigeria, with some forms of contextual discrimination, relationships between people may be characterized by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear as it is the case among the ethnic and religious groups in Nigeria. This explains why ethno- religious conflicts have become a permanent feature of Nigeria as a nation as far back as 1980s to date.

Nigeria today is being ravaged by Boko Haram sect, seen to be ethnic and religious sect that has continued to

threaten the unity of the Nigerian people. Thus, before the present democratic experiment in Nigeria, there were ethno-religious conflicts that claimed so many lives and property (Mohammed, 2005). The frequent occurrence of ethno- religions conflict with the coming of democracy is due to freedom provided by democratic rule, salawu [7].

The emergence of Boko Haram (Jama' atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda' awati wal-Jihad) meaning western education is sin has added another dangerous dimension to the already threatened unity peace and stability of Nigeria. So far, the sect has coordinated various attacks against government institutions, security agencies, the media and most unfortunately, the Christians. Today, their major targets have always been the Christendom. This prompted Efe [8] to aver that Boko Haram is a war against Christians, not education as the sect has always claimed.

Statement of the Problem

The fact that Nigeria is presently facing the most difficult of times in her political history is never a subject of disputation. That Nigeria is presently polarized along ethnic and religious divides is also not debatable. Various ethnic and religious interests have continued to undermine the corporate existence of Nigeria in recent times. Boko Haram Sect has remained one of the forces trying to muzzle the will of the Nigerians. Their attacks and insurgent activities seem to have sent cold shivers down the spine of the Nigerian Journalist. The name Boko Haram is indeed making news reporters to dread their news beats and such fears have gradually redefined the concept of news reporting, news analysis, investigative journalism and editorials. Today, the Nigerian journalists have gradually chickened out of objective reportage of Boko Haram activities. There is media silence to terrorism and terror activities of this deadly Islamic sect. But the extent to which the Journalists could be gingered to give objective and responsible journalism in the face of these attacks from militia gangs informed this study.

Research Objectives

The general objective of this research paper was to analogically teach the news purveyors (Journalists) on the need to be brave in the face of threats and attacks from Boko Haran and other ethno-religious militia groups in Nigeria. In specific, this study was set to achieve theses key objectives;

1. To evaluate the attitude of Nigerians towards the insurgent activities of Boko Haram sect since 2009.
2. To know if the activities of Boko Haram sect have indeed affected the peace, unity and development of Nigeria over the years.
3. To ascertain the influence of traditional and religious leaders in the inflammation of ethno-religious uprising in Nigeria.

4. To check if Boko Haram insurgencies have made journalists to chicken out of the professional responsibilities.

5. Strategizing ways of encouraging the press to the fearless and responsive to the Boko Haram question in Nigeria, and by extension, national security and cohesion.

Significance of the Study

This study is contributing significantly to knowledge in this area of learning. That is, it enriches teaching and learning literature in the areas of Peace and Conflict resolution, International Relations and jurisprudence, Diplomacy and Mediation, Investigative journalism and Conflict/ crisis reporting. This advocates fearless journalism, confrontational reporting and socially responsible news interpretation and analysis. This will give the conventional and future journalists the needed impetus to report terrorism and all acts of terror in the future. This study provides the needed blueprint for media owners to formulate their editorial policies and in the recruitment of journalists that should cover terrorism, ethno-religious conflicts, social uprising and national insecurity. The study is indeed a pacesetter as it concerns modern approach to terrorism reportage in this challenging period.

Research Questions

Theses research questions were raised to direct the research effort.

1. Do Nigerians still believe in the Nigerian project despite the insurgent activities of Boko Haram sect since 2009?

2. Have the activities of Boko Haram sect affected the peace, unity and development of Nigeria over the years?

3. To what extent have traditional and religious leaders influenced ethno-religious uprising in Nigeria.

4. Have the insurgent activities of Boko Haram made journalists to chicken out of their professional responsibilities?

Research Hypotheses

The researcher formulated the following hypotheses to check the statistical significance of the findings.

Hypothesis One

Hi: Nigerians still believe in the Nigerian project despite the insurgent activities of Boko Haram sect since 2009.

Ho: Nigerians have lost faith in the Nigerian project as a result of the insurgent activities of Boko Haram sect since 2009.

Hypothesis Two

Hi: The insurgent activities of Boko Haram sect have actually affected the peace, unity and development of Nigeria.

Ho: The insurgent activities of Boko Haram sect have not affected the peace, unity and development of Nigeria in any way.

Hypothesis Three

Hi: Traditional and religious leaders do influence ethno-religious uprising in Nigeria.

Ho: Traditional and religious leaders do not influence ethno-religious uprising in Nigeria.

Hypothesis Four

Hi: The insurgent activities of Boko Haram have made journalists to chicken out of their professional responsibilities.

Ho: The insurgent activities of Boko Haram have not made journalists to chicken out of their professional responsibilities.

Brutal Attacks on Journalists

Recent attacks on two photojournalists while on their legitimate duties in different parts of Lagos represent a growing trend of violence towards the Fourth Estate that should not be allowed to fester. They also mirror a society in a rapid descent into anarchy, where people feel free to take the law into their own hands [10].

One of the journalists, an employee of Leadership newspaper, Benedict Uwalaka, was at the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital to cover the release of the remains of the June 2012 Dana Airline plane crash victims to their relations when, unprovoked, the mortuary attendants vented their fury on him. In a display of pristine barbarism, about five of the attendants reportedly descended on the poor, defenceless journalist and beat the living daylights out of him [11].

Even when he was knocked down on all fours, reeling from the pains of the unwarranted brutalization, his assailants did not deem it fit to give Uwalaka a break. He was kicked and shoved. His clothes were torn and his face, already a distorted mask of blood, bore the brunt of a bottle that was broken on his head.

His "offence", was that he had the audacity to attempt taking photographs of the release of the corpses. In an incident of almost a similar circumstance, another photojournalist, Tunde Ogundeji, was also attacked in the Ikeja area of Lagos by a mob for taking photographs of some passengers who, for the reason of not wanting to pay the fare for the trip, usually risk their lives by hanging on windows, doors and on top of a moving train. A third photojournalist, Idowu Ogunleye, was lucky to have escaped without any physical assault, but lost his camera to the mob. But the curious thing was that policemen actually witnessed the assault but chose to ignore it.

While it might be difficult to identify the attackers of Ogundeji and Ogunleye and prosecute them, the same cannot be said of those who brutalised Uwalaka. The employees of the mortuary were caught on video camera as they were carrying out their brutal assault, apparently without their knowledge, as that would, likewise, have brought out the animal instinct in them once again.

In the course of practicing journalism in Nigeria, professionals have been

exposed to all manner of occupational hazards, which is why the France-based Reporters Without Borders described Nigeria, some years ago, as "one of the world's most violent countries for journalists." It is also in recognition of this danger that the Society for the Protection of Journalists said, "In the United States, revealing corruption can win you a Pulitzer Prize. In other countries, it can get you a bullet to the brain."

Admittedly, journalists can occasionally be intrusive in the pursuit of stories, yet it cannot be a license to brutalize them. Theirs is to bring relevant information to the public at all costs. Right from the colonial days when journalists were locked up by the colonial masters for daring to criticize them, and the detention and shaving of the head of an *Observer newspaper* reporter, the late Minere Amakiri, with a bottle for criticizing the then Rivers State military governor, Alfred Diete-Spiff, to the bombing of the late *Newswatch* founding Editor-in-Chief, Dele Giwa, and even the recent bombing of *ThisDay* offices in Abuja and Kaduna, practicing journalism in Nigeria has been quite challenging.

Other journalists, such as Bayo Ohu of *The Guardian*, Bagauda Kaltho of *The News*, Abayomi Ogundeji and Godwin Agbroko, both of This Day, and Edo Ugbagwu of *The Nation*, have also been cut down in their prime in the course of advancing the cause of the society through the practice of journalism.

Zakariyya Isa, a reporter with the state-run Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), was shot dead in front of his house in Bulunkutu area of Maiduguri shortly after leaving the mosque. Characteristically, none of the killers of these gentlemen have been arrested.

The journalist has a unique calling to hold public office holders to account on behalf of the people. It is difficult to find a society making significant strides when the freedom of the press is not guaranteed. Even those assailants who have taken the law into their own hands by attacking journalists know that a media house is their first port of call once they are oppressed, either by the government or the more powerful elements of the society.

Journalists Killed in Nigeria

1. **Enenche Akogwu, *Channels TV***
   January 20, 2012, in Kano, Nigeria.

2. **Zakariya Isa, *Nigeria Television Authority***
   October 22, 2011, in Maiduguri, Nigeria

3. **Sunday Gyang Bwede, *The Light Bearer***
   April 24, 2010, in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria

4. **Nathan S. Dabak, *The Light Bearer***
   April 24, 2010, in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria.

5. **Bayo Ohu, *The Guardian***
   September 20, 2009, in Lagos, Nigeria.

6. **Samson Boyi, *The Scope***
   November 5, 1999, in Adamawa State, Nigeria.

7. **Sam Nimfa-Jan, *Details***

May 27, 1999, in Kafanchan, Nigeria.

8. **Fidelis Ikwuebe,** *Freelancer*
April 18, 1999, in Anambra, Nigeria.

9. **Okezie Amaruben,** *Newsservice*
September 2, 1998, in Enugu, Nigeria.

10. **Tunde Oladepo,** *The Guardian*
February 26, 1998, in Abeokuta, Nigeria.

11. **Nansok Sallah,** *Highland FM*
January 18, 2012, in Jos, Nigeria.

12. **Edo Sule Ugbagwu,** *The Nation*
April 24, 2010, in an area outside Lagos, Nigeria.

13. **Eiphraim Audu,** *Nasarawa State Broadcasting Service*
October 16, 2008, in Lafia, Nigeria.

14. **Paul Aboyomi Ogundeji,** *ThisDay*
August 16, 2008, in Dopemu, Nigeria.

15. **Godwin Agbroko,** *ThisDay*
December 22, 2006, Nigeria.

16. **Bolade Fasasi, National Association of Women Journalists**
March 31, 1999, in Ibadan, Nigeria.

17. **Chinedu Offoaro,** *The Guardian*
May 1, 1996, in Nigeria, Nigeria.

18. **Baguda Kaltho,** *TheNEWS*
March 1, 1996, in Nigeria, Nigeria

Boko Haram *Violent* Attacks on Media and Journalists

A radical Boko Haram Islamist group released an 18-minute video on May 1 that threatened attacks on at least 14 local and international news outlets, according to news reports. In the video, Boko Haram, a group seeking the imposition of Sharia law in northern Nigeria, accused the outlets of biased reporting and crimes against Islam and also claimed responsibility for prior attacks on newspapers, news reports said.

Boko Haram singled out three international news organizations and 11 local newspapers in the video and accused them of misrepresenting the group's activities, inciting the public to support the government against the group, and attacking Islam in their reporting, among other allegations, the news website *Premium Times* reported. The video was recorded in the Hausa language [12].

"These media houses have committed a lot of offences that is detrimental to Islam, and we don't have the power to forgive them. We will take revenge on them by God's grace," the video said, according to a translation by the *Premium Times.*

The international news outlets that were mentioned in the video include the Hausa-language service of the U.S. government-funded international broadcaster Voice of America; the French government-funded international broadcaster Radio France Internationale; and *Sahara Reporters*, a New York-based citizen reporting news site. The 11 local newspapers named were *ThisDay*, *Punch*, *Daily Sun*, *Vanguard*, *Guardian*, *Nation*, *Tribune*, *National Accord*, *Leadership*, *Daily Trust*, and *People's Daily*.

Boko Haram also claimed responsibility in the video for the April 26 coordinated attacks on the offices of three newspapers--*ThisDay*, *The Sun*, and *The Moment*--in the capital, Abuja, and the northern city of Kaduna, according to news reports. The group justified the attacks by blaming *ThisDay* for "dishonoring our prophet, Mohammed (SAW) during a beauty pageant in Kaduna in November 2002," the video said

Nationalism and the Question of Integration in Nigeria

The literature on integration is replete with different definitions of the term. [13] defines it as "the process of unifying a society which tends to make it harmonious city, based upon an order its members regard as equitably harmonious". To Philip E. Jacob and Henry Tenue (1964:9), it is "a relationship of community among people within the same political entity... a state of mind or disposition to be cohesive, to act together, and to be committed to mutual programmes". In the same vein, some scholars have defined it as a process. [7] say it is:

> A process by which members of a social System (citizen for our purpose) develop linkages and location so that the boundaries of the system persist over time and the boundaries of sub systems become less consequential in affecting behaviour. In this process members of the social system develop an escalating sequence of contact, cooperation, consensus and community.

Claude Ake also implies process in his definition of an integrated political system thus:

> To the extent that the minimal units (individual political actors) develop in the course of political interaction a pool of commonly accepted norms regarding political behaviour patterns legitimized by these norms... [1].

[9] looked at it as the progressive reduction of cultural and regional tensions and discontinuities in the process of creating a homogenous political community. For Leonard Binder (1964: 630), integration involves the creation of a very high degree of comprehensiveness.

By the time Nigeria won her independence from Britain in 1960, its artificial origin, coupled with other factors, had bequeathed it a number of fundamental problems, one of which is the challenge of integrating, into a cohesive socio-political whole, the various entities and strange bed fellows that were lumped together by the colonialists, [2].

What the creation of Nigeria as a single political entity did was to bring together people of different nationalities "under

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a single territorial and institutional framework, [and] widened their social space as a result of greater inter-ethnic interaction through the institution and practice of the colonial system and thus created a common historical experience of economic exploitation, political and administrative oppression and cultural oppression", [6]. Nonetheless, the peoples making up the country were not effectively integrated toward the end of evolving a true sense of national identity and commitment to the survival and development of the nation. One factor responsible for this is the class interests and political ambitions of the "African petty bourgeoisie, the class that was to become the standard bearer of modern African nationalism (Ibid.)." To fully understand this factor and its ill consequences, we need to carefully examine the idea of nationalism and its manifestations within the Nigerian context.

Preventing further fragmentation of Nigeria: the Place of the Journalists

Just as attempts to promote unity by structural means have largely failed, an alternative and more effective approach seems necessary. As Kwame Nkuruma posited, what is first required for any fundamental change in the character of the society we have inherited is a body of connected thought that will determine the general nature of our actions and social structure [10]. Hence, the kind of significant social change desired in Nigeria, requires a radical intellectual transformation in which our thinking and philosophy are directed toward the redemption of our society. In this connection, the Nigerian Journalist ought to or should brace up to the challenge and see the unity of Nigeria as a noble goal and something worth dying for. Therefore, they must never be silent in the art of terrorism reportage, occasioned by the dreaded acts of terror like that of Boko Haram. This calls for fearless journalism and socially responsible approach in this regard.

Within the context of the debate on how to attain an enduring social peace, Irving L. Horowitz similarly contends that a lasting social peace could only be attained if there is a fundamental change in the attitudes and values of members of society, from those that are predisposed to war and violence to those that are productive of peace [9].

Likewise, the integration of the ethnic nationalities in Nigeria requires a transformation of attitudes and values. This the media could do through attitudinal reformation and transformation. The people level of thinking should be raised above the ordinary, while news reportage should concentrate on rejecting evil. All media programmes should be tailored towards discouraging and rejecting terrorism and all acts of terror.

This would entail a process of social mobilization that teaches and persuades members of different ethnic nationalities to see themselves as people with common destiny, whom they must rise and fall together, while

bringing them to a belief that their destinies are inextricably knit together. It would require a massive media approach that should involved civic education that would downplay the importance attached to kinship and ethnicity.

Also, the citizens must learn to consistently demand transparency and accountability from their leaders while ostracizing leaders who have been found to be wanting. Advocating for a similar transformation of attitudes as against structural transformation in Kenya, Ali Mwitani Masero argues that both leaders and ordinary citizens must be counseled and persuaded to embrace objectivity and fairness in relationships if the task of nation building and national integration would ever be achieved [11]. But who will do all this? It is only when efforts to effect the kind of change in attitude requisite for a positive change in the ethnic relations in Nigeria has begun to yield positive results that structures, laws and policies designed to engender unity could be effective. The communication media have a lot of roles to play in this regard.

Next is the aspect of economy. One of the most pressing of these is the problem of unemployment, which has grave repercussions for the prospects of nation building: the bulk of the unemployed see their plight as a consequence of the inefficient running of the state and therefore seek solace and security in their immediate families and ethnic associations. This intensifies ethnic loyalty at the expense of the ideal of Nigerian unity.

Having identified a change in values and attitudes as indispensable for national integration, the all-important issue to address is: Who is likely to bring about such policies?

Our political elites are not ideal for this task, given their past contributions to the polarization of the state along ethnic lines coupled with the consistent demonstration of their inability to sacrifice their personal ambitions for national interests. The media must be at the forefront in all of these.

Besides, since they are the primary agent and beneficiary of ethnic politics, it is very unlikely that they would be willing to work for the dismantling of an arrangement they built and from which they have benefited for years.

Unification rather than fragmentation of Nigeria will come about from a change in personal attitudes through the dissemination of the Nigerian ideal via the news media. It would also help if this pattern of civic education could be taken to the grassroots and penetrate all the diverse sections of society to change the attitudes of all the stakeholders in the country. To achieve the desired end, the cooperation of the news media, nongovernmental organizations, international and non-governmental organizations as well as individuals committed to the survival of Nigeria would be required. The media should direct affairs in this regard. This is a very large challenge, but it would seem

to be a necessary prerequisite if the diverse nationalities that live within the territorial boundaries of Nigeria are to develop a new pan-Nigerian consciousness.

Ethno-Religious Conflict: Impact on Nigerian State

Federalism represents a unique form of governmental arrangement. This is because, it involves organization of the state in such a manner as to promote unity while at the same time preserving existing diversities within an over aching national entity [12]. It implicitly means that it is a system which mediates the potential and actual conflict that often arises from the heterogeneity within a political entity. In the Nigeria context, federalism has become problematic since many factors have come to impair it functionality. Among them are the problems of ethnicity, resource control, 'ethno religious' crisis, electoral crisis, legitimacy crisis and so on. Firstly, it must be noted that 'ethno-religious' conflict does more harm to the federalism than good. Ethno religious conflicts in Nigeria have presented many challenges that border on security and the corporate existence of the country which is the fundamental reason for the adoption of a federal system in the first place. These crises suggest a transfer of aggression from one grievance to innocent Nigerians, thereby creating hatred among Nigerians as well as demeaning the sense of belonging to one Nigeria. The 'ethno religious' crises in Jos have very often served as a tenterhook to national unity and integration. For instance, in the Jos crisis, the Hausa-Fulani have been piqued against Christians instead of confronting Plateau State government in order to resolve their areas of disagreements. In other words, the crisis has weakened patriotism, commitment to national ideals and true nationhood, giving rise to parochialism, ethnicity and other cleavages which 'ethno-religious' Jingoists exploit for their interest and advantage. More so, the Plateau crisis has had enormous negative consequences on the economy. For instance, President Obasanjo in justifying the declaration of the state of Emergency in plateau State stated, among other things, that:

Violence has reached unprecedented levels and hundreds have been killed with much more wounded or displaced from their homes on account of their ethnic or religious identification. Schooling for children has been disrupted and interrupted; business lost billions of naira and property worth much more destroyed [6].

President Obasanjo further observed that visitors and inventors have fled or are fleeing Plateau State and the neighbouring states have had their economies and social life disrupted and dislocated by the influx of internally displaced persons [5]. To further stress

this point, Obasanjo said that the Federal Government and the neighbouring states to Plateau State are incurring huge expenses in managing the socio-political and economic consequences of the near collapse of state authority and the breakdown of law and order in some parts of Plateau State and elsewhere [5]. In a research report presented by participations of the senior executive course No. 26 of the National Institute, the economic consequences of 'ethno religious' conflict were noted as follows: "In addition to the irreplaceable loss of lives, losses in terms of property (goods, houses, business premises) have not yet been fully ascertained. Some survivors have permanently lost all they laboured for in their lives. Consequently, one can reasonably argue that the aggregate of such instances negatively impact on the overall economy of these communities and by extension, the rest of the country; new armies of the unemployed, the destitute and highly aggrieved are added in the streets with its attendant

consequences. Victims are also generally made and belonging to the economically active segments of the society [4].

Also, the various 'ethno-religious' disturbances were a critical and potent force for socio-political instability, as they portray the gross inadequacy and ineffectiveness of the state security, security of lives and property that could not be guaranteed. The climate of insecurity usually created by violent conflict also deters investments. It is a truism that an insecure, crisis and violence - ridden polity can never attract foreign investment. No investor knowing full well that the polity is a security risk would venture his capital there. This has been the scenario since 2009 in the North East Nigeria where the economy is near collapse, if not outrightly collapsed.

Religion and Violence in Nigeria: Modern Trends

In recent times, the word religion seems to be synonymous with violence. This perhaps informed the assertion of Charles Selengut that:

Religion is thought to be opposed to violence and a force for peace and reconciliation. However, the acknowledges that the history and scriptures of the world's religions tell stories of violence and war as they speak of peace and love [6].

In making a case for the symbiosis between religion and crisis, [5] argues that the mere fact that religions claim divine favour for themselves, over and against other groups, this sense of righteousness leads to violence (crisis) because conflicting claims to superiority, based on unverifiable

appeals to God, cannot be adjudicated objectively.

But one fact that cannot be argued is the tremendous harm that religions do to the society. The religions leaders have continued to use violence to promote their goals.

However, the rhetorical question posed by [7] "did God mandate these folks to kill in His name? Or, are some religions

truly the opium of the masses; and, if I may, the narcotic of the elite?

Over the years, religion has remained a core, largely divisive part of the ethnic and political structures in Nigeria. The Bible and Quran have turned the means of playing the divide and conquer strategy in the geopolitics of Nigeria.

The activities of Boko Haram became more worrisome when on December 24, 2010 the sect stormed some churches including the victory Baptist church at Dala-Alamderi and shot to death the resident Pastor, Rev. Bulus Marwa, The Sun (2011, p.11). The rampaging gunmen also set the church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) in Ruwan Sati ablaze.

In the Federal Government investigation panel on the 2011 Election violence and civil disturbances, the chairman Dr. Sheik Ahmed Lemu said ethno-religious sentiments, negative campaigns and rumour mongering played a big part in the crisis, The Sun (2011, p.6). This is a confirmation of communication experts' belief that politics cannot be separated from religion. Hence the averment of [8] becomes apt;

Similarly, the zoning controversy, which started basically as an internal political affair of the ruling party, ultimately changed the nature of the presidential election into ethnic-religions contest in the country particularly in the northern states. (p.6).

In another confessional statement to drive home the politics – Religious relationship, an acclaimed Islamic fundamentalist Ali Sand Umar Konduga said that a serving senator, a former governor of Borno State and an ex-envoy, now late, are behind Boko Haram. The sect had claimed responsibility for the bombing of the United Nations (UN) building in Abuja which killed 24 people and injured several staffers of the world body. It also claimed that it had a hand in last Sallah (Eid-el-kabir) terror attacks on Yobe state which claimed over 150 lives.

Unfortunately, the leaders of the north have been silent on these religious war being championed by the dreaded Boko Haram sect. hence, a government official quoted in the Sun Newspapers (2011, p.5) stated that the federal government;

Was worried and concerned that since the sect increased its spate of attacks over a year ago, there has not been a strong condemnation of Boko Haram from the region, hence raising concerns on the continual co-existence of the country.

Hence, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) belief that the terrorists attacks on Christians and churches in the country on Christmas Day bomb blasts in Madalla, Jos, Damaturu and Maiduguri as a declaration of Islamic Jihad on Christians, The Sun (2011, p.3).

In a CAN prepared text read by the chairman;

Having reviewed the pattern, trend and frequency with which these terror crimes occur, it fits into the profile of Islamic Jihad over the years on the Christian community, which properly are contextualized. It is considered as a declaration of war on Christians and Nigeria as an entity.

In support of the silence theory of the federal government, CAN believes;

The Christian community has found the responses of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs and other Islamic bodies on this matter to be unacceptable and abdication of their responsibilities over these extremist members. It is on record that most religious, traditional and political leaders in the North have not come out openly to condemn the extremist activities of Boko Haram. We hold them responsible for what is happening, because they have not taken concrete steps to check the excesses of their members. (Ibid)

In Nigeria today, ethnic or religious coloration is given to all critical policies and programmes of government. This was concretely showcased when the Central Bank proposed the establishment of Islamic bank in Nigeria. In defense of the CBN's policy, Evah (2011, p.10) stated;

I advise our Christian leaders to leave Sanusi alone. They should go and establish catholic Bank, Methodist Bank, Redeemed Christian Church Bank, Covenant Church Bank, Christ Embassy or Baptist Bank.

The attacks from Boko Haram threatened the peace and stability of Nigeria between 2010 and 2011. However, the activities of the sect grew to its peak soon after the declaration of Goodluck Jonathan (a Christian) as president of Nigeria. It is not an error to state that Boko Haram activities are anti Christianity. On November 4, 2011, a well coordinated onslaught by the sect which lasted more than four hours in Damaturu left in its wake no fewer than 100 dead, The Sun (2011, p.8). Churches at the New Jerusalem area of Damaturu and private property were burnt. According to the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), 11 church buildings were destroyed in the attacks. In another attack in plateau, the Sun newspaper reported on November 13, it stated;

But the full-blown mayhem, according to the resident, broke out yesterday morning with the killing of three Muslim youths and brining of the Islamic school in the area. The Hausa/Fulani teamed up and wrecked havoc on the Berom natives and their churches.

Research Design and Methodology

This was indeed a case in point of religious intolerance in the north

This research adopted the descriptive research design. The study population was taken from the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria (Enugu, Rivers, Ondo,

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Kaduna, Bauchi and Benue) which is **26,947,640**, according to the 2006 census result as obtained from the National Population Commission official website.

The researcher purposively selected the state capitals of the randomly selected states from the six geopolitical zones of this country. The rationale for the selection was based on the fact that the state capitals have the most educated people that can respond to the questionnaire.

The researcher used questionnaire in the collection of data. The questionnaire was considered because the respondents were scattered in the sampled location (Six geopolitical zones of Nigeria). The

DATA TESTED: Data generated from question 13 as presented on table XIII was used in testing this hypothesis.

researcher engaged the services of six trained research assistants who were trained with the nuances of these research objectives.

Testing of Hypotheses and Results

Research data collected from the field have been presented in tables for clarity and analyses.

Hypothesis One

Hi: Nigerians still believe in the Nigerian project despite the insurgent activities of Boko Haram sect since 2009.

Ho: Nigerians have lost faith in the Nigerian project as a result of the insurgent activities of Boko Haram sect since 2009.

Table 1:   Respondents' Belief in Peaceful Coexistence and Unity of Nigeria despite Attacks from Boko Haram

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	55	14%
Somehow	66	16.7%
No	262	66.5%
Can't say	11	2.8%
Total	394	100%

Source: Field Data, 2012

Data presented on table 1 reveals that 55 or 14% in peaceful coexistence and unity of Nigeria despite attacks from Boko Haram; 66 or 16.7% somehow believes in peaceful coexistence and unity of Nigeria despite attacks from Boko Haram; 262 or 66.5% of the respondents no more believe in peaceful coexistence of Nigerians based on the Boko Haram insurgencies, while 11 or

2.8% were indifferent. This goes to show Boko Haram sect as a national threat to the unity, peace and development of Nigeria.

Table 2:   Contingency Table for Question 13

Response	Male		Female		Total
	fo	*(fe)*	*fo*	*(fe)*	
Yes	32	(33.2)	23	(21.8)	55
Somehow	39	(39.9)	27	(26.1)	66
No	162	(158.3)	100	(103.7)	262
Can't say	5	(6.6)	6	(4.4)	11
Total	238		156		394

Figures in brackets are the frequencies expected

At 0.05 level of significance and 3 degree of freedom, the table value is 7.815

TEST RESULT: The calculated value (1.349) is less than the table value (7.815). Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted, while the research hypothesis was rejected. It therefore means that the activities of Boko Haram have negatively affected the psyche and attitude of Nigerians, thereby justifying the need for this study in the first place.

Hypothesis Two

Hi: The insurgent activities of Boko Haram sect have actually affected the peace, unity and development of Nigeria.

Ho: The insurgent activities of Boko Haram sect have not affected the peace, unity and development of Nigeria in any way.

DATA TESTED: Data generated from question 15 as computed on table fifteen was used in testing this hypothesis.

Table 3: If Insurgent Activities of Boko-Haram Are Believed To Have Undermined the Unity, Peace and Progress of the Nigerian state

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	355	90.1%
No	39	9.9%
Total	394	100%

Source: Field Data, 2012

Table 3 indicates 355 or 90.1% of the respondents believes that the insurgent activities of Boko-Haram have undermined the unity, peace and progress of the Nigerian state, while 39 or 9.9% did not believe that the insurgent activities of Boko-Haram have undermined the unity, peace and progress of the Nigerian state

Table 4:   Contingency table for Question 15

Response	Male		Female		Total
	fo	*(fe)*	*fo*	*(fe)*	
To a large extent	49	(35.6)	10	(23.4)	59
To some extent	122	(140.1)	110	(91.9)	232
Not at all	59	(48.9)	22	(32.1)	81
Can't say	8	(13.3)	14	(8.7)	22
Total	238		156		394

Figures in brackets are the frequencies expected

At 0.05 level of significance and 3 degree of freedom, the table value is 7.815

TEST RESULT: The calculated value (29.22) is greater than the table value (7.815). Consequently, the research hypothesis (Hi) was accepted, while the null hypothesis was rejected. The implication is that the insurgent activities of Boko Haram sect have actually affected the peace, unity and development of Nigeria.

Hypothesis Three

Hi: Traditional and religious leaders do influence ethno-religious uprising in Nigeria.

Ho: Traditional and religious leaders do not influence ethno-religious uprising in Nigeria.

DATA TESTED: Data generated from question 17 as presented on table seventeen was used in testing this hypothesis.

Table 5: If Traditional, Ethnic and Religious Leaders Have Facilitated the Increase of Ethno-Religious Movements and Conflicts in Nigeria

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	225	57.1%
No	169	42.9%
Total	394	100%

Source: Field Data, 2012

Presentation of research data on Table 5 shows that 225 or 57.1% of the respondents claimed that traditional, ethnic and religious leaders have facilitated the increase of ethno-religious movements and conflicts in Nigeria. But 169 or 42.9% of them sharply disagreed that traditional, ethnic and religious leaders have facilitated the increase of ethno-religious movements and conflicts in Nigeria. The implication of this is that traditional, ethnic and religious leaders have facilitated the increase of ethno-religious movements and conflicts in Nigeria; Boko Haram sect is never an exception.

Table 6:   Contingency Table for Question 17

Response	Male		Female		Total
	fo	*(fe)*	*fo*	*(fe)*	
Yes	228	(214.4)	127	(140.6)	355
No	10	(23.6)	29	(15.4)	39
Total	238		156		394

Figures in brackets are the frequencies expected

At 0.5 level of significance and 1 degree of freedom, the table value is 3.841.

TEST RESULT: Since the calculated value (22.0259) is greater than the critical value (3.841), the null hypothesis was rejected, while the alternate hypothesis was accepted. It therefore means that traditional and religious leaders do influence ethno-religious uprising in Nigeria. This they do through their teaching and preaching.

Hypothesis Four

Hi: The insurgent activities of Boko Haram have made journalists to chicken out of their professional responsibilities.

Ho: The insurgent activities of Boko Haram have not made journalists to chicken out of their professional responsibilities.

DATA TESTED: Data generated from question 20 as presented on table twenty was used in testing this hypothesis.

Table 7: If Insurgent Activities of Boko Haram Have Made Journalists to Chicken Out Of Their Professional Responsibilities

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Of course	327	83%
Not at all	21	5.3%
I doubt	46	11.7%
Total	394	100%

Source: Field Data, 2012

Data presented on table 7 shows that 327 or 83% of the respondents are in agreement that activities of Boko Haram have made journalists to chicken out of their professional responsibilities; 21 or 5.3% differed, while 46 or 11.7% were in doubt. The above statistics is an indication that journalists have shirked their responsibilities in Nigeria as a result of threats and attacks from Boko Haram.

Table 8:   Contingency Table for Question 17

Response	Male		Female		Total
	fo	*(fe)*	*fo*	*(fe)*	
Of course	198	(197.5)	129	(129.5)	327
Not at all	6	(12.7)	15	(8.3)	21
I doubt	34	(27.8)	12	(18.2)	46
Total	238		156		394

Figures in brackets are the frequencies expected

At 0.5 level of significance and 1 degree of freedom, the table value is 5.991.

TEST RESULT: Since the calculated value (10.2593) is greater than the critical value (3.841), the null hypothesis was rejected, while the alternate hypothesis was accepted. It therefore means that the insurgent activities of Boko Haram have made journalists to chicken out of their professional responsibilities.

Analysis of Results

Data generated from question 13 as presented on table 1 was used in testing hypothesis one. Data presented on table 1 reveals that 55 or 14% in peaceful coexistence and unity of Nigeria despite attacks from Boko Haram; 66 or 16.7% somehow believes in peaceful coexistence and unity of Nigeria despite attacks from Boko Haram; 262 or 66.5% of the respondents no more believe in peaceful coexistence of Nigerians based on the Boko Haram insurgencies, while 11 or 2.8% were indifferent. This goes to show Boko Haram sect as a national threat to the unity, peace and development of Nigeria. The calculated value (1.349) is less than the table value (7.815). Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted, while the research hypothesis was rejected. It therefore means that the activities of Boko Haram have negatively affected the psyche and attitude of Nigerians, thereby justifying the need for this study in the first place. This finding is in harmony with the conclusion drawn by [2] in his *Historical Review* and New Strategies for Curbing Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Nigeria. He concluded that various ethnic and religious crisis in Nigeria has not only affected the unity of Nigeria, but has indeed made Nigerians to lose their sense of nationhood. This research finding is also congruent with [3] paper where he strongly believes that such negative psyche is the major bane of development in Nigeria.

Data generated from question 15 as computed on table fifteen was used in testing this hypothesis. Table 2 indicates 355 or 90.1% of the respondents believes that the insurgent activities of Boko-Haram have undermined the unity, peace and progress of the Nigerian state, while 39 or 9.9% did not believe that the insurgent activities of Boko-Haram have undermined the unity, peace and progress of the Nigerian state. The calculated value (29.22) is greater than the table value (7.815). Consequently, the research hypothesis (Hi) was accepted, while the null hypothesis was rejected. The implication is that the insurgent activities of Boko Haram sect have actually affected the peace, unity and development of Nigeria. This research finding got empirical support from individual studies conducted by [6,7,8,9]. All these empirical cases point out that violent attack from most ethnic and religious Sect has at one point or the other threatened the corporate

existence of the political entity called Nigeria.

Data generated from question 17 as presented on table seventeen was used in testing this hypothesis. Since the calculated value (22.0259) is greater than the critical value (3.841), the null hypothesis was rejected, while the alternate hypothesis was accepted. It therefore means that traditional and religious leaders do influence ethno-religious uprising in Nigeria. This they do through their teaching and preaching.

Data generated from question 20 as presented on table twenty was used in testing this hypothesis. Since the calculated value (10.2593) is greater than the critical value (3.841), the null hypothesis was rejected, while the alternate hypothesis was accepted. It therefore means that the insurgent activities of Boko Haram have made journalists to chicken out of their professional responsibilities.

Key Findings

Major findings of this research work are hereunder summarized.

➤ Evidence from research data therefore shows that the activities of Boko Haram have negatively affected the psyche and attitude of Nigerians. Evidence from data analysis shows that people do not see Nigeria as a peaceful and united nation.

➤ Research data therefore point to the fact that Ethno- religious

movements have thrived more under democratic Nigeria more than in military regimes. This is as a result of the fact that a democratic environment would encourage the growth of religious movements that would eventually take the laws into their hands in the pretence that they are observing their freedom as enshrined in the nation's constitution.

➤ Research finding reveals that the insurgent activities of Boko-Haram have undermined the unity, peace and progress of the Nigerian state. The implication is that Nigeria is grappling with the issue of Boko Haram that has threatened the whole essence of the Nigerian nation.

➤ Research data points out the obvious-that Boko Haram is a big threat to the corporate existence of the political entity called Nigeria. Here, the unity of Nigeria has been largely challenged as a result of Boko Haram attacks. This goes to show Boko Haram sect as a national threat to the unity, peace and development of Nigeria.

➤ Government, to some extent has done much to address the Boko Haram challenge and activities of other religious movements in Nigeria.

➤ Evidence from research data shows that traditional and

religious leaders have actually fanned embers of disunity and conflicts in Nigeria.

➢ Statistical analysis of survey data shows that a synergy between and among the news media, government, security community, religious and traditional leaders will make Boko Haram a thing of the past in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

The researcher concludes that Boko Haram is indeed a threat to the corporate existence of the political entity called Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made.

1. Since the activities of Boko Haram have negatively affected the psyche and attitude of Nigerians, the news media should urgently work towards national rebirth and re-orientation. They should channel their various programmes towards national re-orientation.

2. No doubt, the insurgent activities of Boko-Haram have undermined the unity, peace and progress of the Nigerian state. This is a wake-up call on the security community to urgently work in harmony through a network of Management Information System that will enable exchanges of information that should address this national challenge as urgently as possible.

3. Although Government has done much to address the Boko Haram challenge and activities of other religious movements in Nigeria, it is highly recommended that they should do more, while not resting until peace and religious harmony is fully achieved as well as national cohesion.

4. A synergy must be struck between and among the news media, government, security community, religious and traditional leaders in the quest to make Nigeria a very peaceful and united society. Religious intolerance and violence must be made a thing of the past in Nigeria.

5. Unless these recommendations are urgently implemented, Nigeria in the near future would become a warzone, another Somalia, a jungle, and a banana republic. This will lead to a catastrophic situation for Nigeria as a political entity.

6. Most importantly, the Nigerian journalist must be fearless and responsive in the coverage of terrorist activities or other acts of terror. They must brace up to this national challenge. This peace and unity of the Nigeria nation cannot be negotiated with terrorists like Boko Haram.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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