

ESTABLISHING THE NEXUS BETWEEN WOMEN, SECURITY AND PEACE-BUILDING IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Security is the defense, policing, and intelligent functions of states, and the management of threats to the breach of peace through multilateral and bilateral processes. Security is often used to imply safety or freedom from danger and protection from external attack or infiltration. It is also a state of mind of the individual that is confidently secured of his/her well-being. Nigeria today lives in socially functional challenging times that make the state to be in a state of terror and has become quite paranoid and fearful of flying, of going to certain places, and fearful of certain people. These insecurity indices informed Nigerian search security, peace, and peacebuilding through various methods that have yielded minimal positive results. Using the structural-functional theory, the paper qualitatively provided answers to questions such as: What roles can women play in curbing insecurity in Nigeria? To what extent has the women's roles and position been utilized by the Nigerian government in peace and security? To what extent have previous security strategies of government worked without women's involvement? The paper revealed that without the adequate engagement of women in the management of insecurity the Nigerian search for a secured Nigeria may not yield the desired result. Women are veritable tools in the development of peace and security and should therefore not be neglected.

Keywords: Women, security, peace-building, Nigeria

Introduction

As long as human beings remain constituents of flesh and bones, and nations remain susceptible to disintegration, balkanization and outright

extinction, survival will continue to be the priority of most scared values of individuals and nations (Nwolise, 2014). This assertion was upheld by Zabadi (2001) when he argued that unless one can be assured of his physical security or safety, everything else will remain meaningless (Zabadi, 2001). This is why Okunola (2013) maintained that one of the things that can become a challenge to security and peace-building is crime especially when it becomes widespread to the point of engendering widespread fears but also a major breach of peace in the society. Crime insecurity disrupts the peace that is needed for development and structural-functionalism to take place and is well adapted. To him, crime is an affront on the collective conscience of the people and threatens the very foundation of the social contract upon which the society derives its existence (Okunola, (2013) He argued further that crime trends, perceived or real, affects our social life and often dictate daily activities (Okunola (2013).

The world, Nigeria inclusive today lives in socially functional challenging times that make the world to be in a state of terror. The world has become quite paranoid and fearful of flying, of going to certain countries, fearful of certain people. Today afraid of white powder, shoe metals, cutlery on aircraft. We are afraid of Muslims, Arabs, bearded people, afraid of war, the disruption it and uncertainties. People do not know how long we will remain in this state of terror thereby putting the social function of the constituent units of our political system to question Aitunaje (2013). She believes that gone are the days when insecurity and crimes can be said to be tales of other countries. Nigerians, both young and old today know one or two insecurity tales in Nigeria. Nwolise (2013) listed some manifestations of insecurity in Nigeria as follows: Boko Haram war in the north, and bombings and sporadic shootings in some northern towns- Kano, Abuja, Suleja, Kaduna Sokoto, and so on. Armed robbery, kidnapping, and hostage especially in the southeast and southwest which started as political action in the south-south meant to attract external and government attention to the plight of the long-neglected region development-wise and ended up as a commercial activity, in the southeast for criminal enrichment of the criminals. Others include hypnotism, plane crashes, fire outbreaks, flooding, vandalization of electric pillars, and accidental discharge from guns of the same security agents, road accidents, and ritual rapes. Ritual murder, political

thuggery, and assassinations, oil theft, piracy, sea robbery, cargo theft, crew kidnap on the high seas, cross-border banditry, transnational crimes, arms running, human trafficking drug trafficking, and so on. Human spare parts hunting, kerosene explosion, cult clashes, religious rights and communal clashes, oil/gas pipeline vandalization especially in the Niger Delta, herdsmen and farmer classes, and urban terrorism amongst others (Nwolise 2014).

How does insecurity hinder development and peace-building in Nigeria? What strategies have been employed by the State to contain insecurity in Nigeria? To what extent has these strategies worked in the management of insecurity and peace-building in Nigeria. This paper applied the structural-functional theory to attempt to provide answers to the questions posed.

Conceptual Pathway

Politics, which is the main thrust of political science and political scientists, is in itself political and contestable. As a general concept, politics is the practice of the art or science of directing and administering the states or other political units. While traditionally, it is seen as the art and science of government (Maclean and McMillan, 2009)

Politics is also concerned with acquiring and exercising power, governance of public affairs or the state, and the management and resolution of human conflicts (Maclean and McMillan, 2009). Easton, defined politics as the authoritative allocation of values which Laswell quoted in Gauba (2007) perceived power as the determination of who gets what, when and. It is also the handling of demands, and demands not property and properly handled transform into violence (Zartman, 1991). Conceptualizing a different concept of politics, Nwolise (2014) argued that politics or governance does not only occur in the physical but also spiritual dimensions. As he inquired is there no politics in the animal world and the spirit world? Do these conceptions bring out what I may call the character or hot features of politics which is the struggle? What happened between God and Lucifer that led to the latter's dethronement and dispatch to our earth to torment us humans that were fierce STRUGGLE he stressed.

Security

The term or special word security is often used to imply safety or freedom from danger and protection from external attack or infiltration. It is also a state of mind of the individual that is confidently secured of his/her well-being. Security is defined as defense, policing, and intelligence functions of states, and the management of threats to and branches of the peace through multilateral and bilateral processes (Eze and Hettmann, (2005) another orthodox security of thought state that security is the study of threat, use, and control of military force. Mclean in modernizing society explained that security means development and without development, there can be no security. This infers that security has to be appreciated by both military and non-military dimensions.

National security, therefore, conjures a perception of comprehensive defense of a country against a myriad of both internal and external threats in ways that inspire the confidence of the citizens (Onovo, 2005). Obasanjo believes that the primary objective of security shall be to contain instability, control crime, eliminate corruption, enhance genuine development, progress, and growth, and improve the well-being and quality of life of every citizen (Obasanjo, 2003).

On the other hand, peace-building is an activity that aims to resolve injustice in non-involvement ways and to transform the cultural and structural conditions that generate deadly or destructive conflict. It revolves around developing constructive personal, group, and political relationships across ethnic, religious, class, national, and racial boundaries. This process includes violence prevention, conflict management, resolution, or transformation, and post-conflict reconciliation or trauma healing, that is, before, during, and after any given case of violence (Kroc Institute, 2018).

Peace-building, therefore, is a multidisciplinary, cross-sector technique that becomes strategic when it works in the long run and at all levels of society to establish and sustain good relationships among people locally and globally. This also has the potentials to engender sustainable peace. Strategic peace-building activities also address the root causes or potential causes of violence and create a societal expectation for peaceful conflict resolution and stabilize society politically and socioeconomically. The methods of peace-building vary depending on the situation and the agent of peace-building. Successful

peace-building activities create an environment supportive of self-sustaining, durable peace, reconcile opponents, prevent conflict from restarting, integrate civil society, create rule of law mechanisms and address underlying structural and societal issues. Researchers and practitioners also increasingly find that peace-building is most effective and durable when it relies upon local conceptions of peace and the underlying dynamics that foster or enable conflict (Coning, 2013).

The United Nations (UN) has been involved in the peace-building process in Guinea-Bissau since the late 1990s. Following the armed conflict and the deployment of a peacekeeping operation by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the UN established a political office in Bissau to ensure the continuity of the ceasefire. More recently, in addition to transforming this political presence into an “integrated office,” the UN included Guinea-Bissau in the agenda of the peace-building Commission (PBC), an intergovernmental advisory body created in 2005 to provide greater coherence and coordination to the efforts of the various actors involved in peace-building processes worldwide (Kroc Institute, 2018)

The structuralism/functionalism theory explained that society is composed of different parts, and the proper operation of these parts is necessary to the smooth operation of society as a whole, the interdependence of the parts is an important feature of functional analysis. Functionalism sees society as a system, a set of interconnected parts which together form a whole. Parson’s structural theory was supported by Emile Durkheim, who argued that parts of society are interdependent and that this interdependency imposes structure on the behaviour of institutions and their members. To Durkheim, the interrelations between the parts of society contributed to social unity—an integrated system with life characteristics of its own, exterior to individuals yet driving their behaviour. Following the structural/functional theory, every constituent element of the system is important in the effective functioning of the system. This infers that for Nigeria to successfully achieve security and peace and peace-building there is a need for all hands to be on the desk including the adequate involvement of women in the containment of insecurity in Nigeria.

State Approach to the Management of Insecurity in Nigeria

In the face of the seemingly overwhelming security and peace-building challenges, the Nigerian government does not seem to be folding its arm and watch the citizens being destroyed. Consequently, the state has employed several methods to curb insecurity to no avail. Nwolise, (2014 14, p.12) argued that in addition to leadership failure, the character of the Nigerian state vis-à-vis conflict management is outdated. To him, the state seems to feel too proud to condescend to dialogue with the citizens and the social groups. Instead, the state prefers the big stick (force) most of the time even when clear injustice or violation of the agreement is on the ground. Negating that the fundamental responsibility and obligation of any state is to provide security for its citizens. In Nigeria, Section 14 (2c) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) clearly states that “the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government.” In line with this obligation, the Nigerian government has, since 2010, adopted multiple but varied security-driven strategies and tactics to curb violent extremism and other forms of insecurity in the country. These have included improved defense funding, police reform, enacting and strengthening terrorism legislation, use of military force and community vigilantism, international collaboration and support, and dialogue with extremist groups.

Increasing Defense Funding

The government responded to the Boko Haram menace by increasing defense funding, ostensibly improving equipment, human resource, and training of existing defense and security agencies. The government sought to improve the capacities of the military and security services by improving training, equipment, and coordination, with emphasis on retraining personnel in urban warfare, counter-terrorism, and counter-insurgency (ICG, 2014). ICG believes that the security approach involves providing funds to heighten physical security measures around the country aimed at deterring or disrupting potential attacks, and strengthening security agencies through the provision of ‘security facilities’. The defense budget was increased from ₦100 billion (\$625 million) in 2010 to ₦927 billion (\$6 billion) in 2011 and ₦1trillion (\$6.25 billion) in 2012, 2013, and 2014. Much of these rises were to specifically fight Boko Haram extremism (ICG, 2014). In February 2018, the

government announced a plan to deduct \$1 billion from the Excess Crude (Oil) Account (ECA) to fund the fight against insurgency which many people see as throwing money at the problem than finding a solution to the problem

Police Reform

The Nigerian government re-organized and equipped the armed forces, police, and paramilitary agencies, inspiring them to effective action. The police force had been ill-equipped to address the Boko Haram threat and enjoyed little public confidence. It was also grossly underfunded – less than five percent of the budget. The technical capacity of the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) was improved by making it a more information technology integrated force, with a global System for mobile communication (GSM) tracking device. An additional 10,000 persons were recruited into the NPF to boost its personnel.

Strengthening Terrorism legislation

Another measure Nigeria took to curb extremist ideas and activities in the country was the criminalization of terrorism through the enactment of the Anti-Terrorism Act in 2011. The legislation was strengthened in 2012 to boost the capacities of the military and other security agencies. On 4 June 2013, the government banned Boko Haram and Ansaru, pronouncing their actions as terrorism, and cautioned that any persons affiliated with the two groups would be prosecuted (ICG, 2014).

Use of Military Force

As incipient extremism went beyond the control of conventional policing, the Nigerian government resorted to the military option, starting in early 2011. The use of military options essentially involves a strategy of stationing a large number of military personnel in the states affected by crises, in the framework of the Joint Task Force (JTF). JTF refers to a special formation of military, police, and Department of State Services DSS units in conflict areas. An example is when in 2011 the government deployed some 3600 personnel to Maiduguri and other major northeast towns. Specific military operations and task forces were also installed, including 'Operation Lafia Dole' in Yobe State and Special Task Force (STF) in Plateau State.

On assumption of power in May 2015, President Muhammadu Buhari ordered the relocation of Military Command's Headquarters to Maiduguri, Borno State, and the epicenter of Boko Haram insurgency. The design was to move the troops close to the hotspots for operational effectiveness and efficiency. The dysfunctional top hierarchy of the Nigerian military was overhauled. The Nigerian Military Command Centre was relocated to Maiduguri in May 2015. Curfew was also imposed in the areas considered as flashpoints of the insurgency, such as Yobe, Borno, Bauchi, Adamawa, Plateau, and the Niger States, to control and prevent the activities of the Islamic sect (NISER, 2016).

Community Vigilantism

From 2013, military operations were supported by civilian vigilante groups. These were youths from city neighborhood security watch groups who organized themselves into groups to patrol streets in search of Boko Haram. An example is the Bush Hunters in Kaduna State. The community Vigilante is armed with machetes, axes, bows and arrows, clubs, swords, and daggers, as well as dame guns, which were organized into neighborhood sectors under the supervision of JTF sector command. This way they become instrumental in the anti-insurgent campaign (ICG, 2014)

International collaboration and Support

The Nigerian government also employed the option of international collaboration and support to explore this option, the Nigerian government restored broken-down relationship with Nigerian neighboring countries such as Chad, Cameroon, and Niger as allies in the war against terror in a region the first military formation in this manner was the joint military operations by Nigeria and Cameroon.

Second and much significance was the 8,500-strong regional Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTF) stationed in N'Djamena, Chad but headed by a Nigerian military general. The MJTF, which started as small contingents from Chad and Niger, was revitalized, by providing the required funding and leadership.

Beyond the MJTF, there has been cohesive international support in the fight against terrorism. Principal Officers of Nigeria's National Assembly and United States Congress reached an agreement to the effect that the US government would sell arms to Nigeria to

strengthen the efforts of the Nigerian armed forces. There was military cooperation between Nigeria and Ukraine and 'technical assistance' from the German government. The Japanese government donated \$3 billion in support of victims of the Boko Haram insurgency in Adamawa, Borno, and the Yobe States. Assistance to victims and communities affected by terrorism has continued since President Buhari's meeting with G7 leaders and other world powers. The Malian army also supported and cooperated with the Nigerian army in the fight against extremism.

Successes, Challenges, and Limitations of State Response

The contributory role of the military and CJTF have been applauded. Due to the activities of the state apparatus, although technically degraded, the activities of the insurgency have become less of a menace than they were in 2014 and the first quarter of 2015. The coalition of domestic and foreign troops substantially reduced Boko Haram's footprints and decimated their activities in the north-eastern territory which it had held for much of the earlier years. Troops from Chad, Cameroon, and Niger retook the border towns once held by the insurgents, while Nigerian troops reclaimed all the previously occupied towns and villages in the North East (ICG, 2014; FGS 2018). Also, the DSS in 2017 foiled a plot by Boko Haram militias linked to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) to attack British and American embassies and other Western interests in Abuja.

Despite the success so far recorded in the fight against Boko Haram insurgency, other militia groups have also sprung up in different states of the nation. This means that the problem is still unabated.

This suppression of Boko Haram by the military and subsequent negotiation with them by the federal government and international agencies resulted in the rescue and/or release of many held hostage. As of February 2016, the total number of persons rescued by Nigerian troops in the North East was about 11,595. Between May 2015 and May 2017, about one million displaced persons returned home. Also, about 106 of the kidnapped girls from Chibok regained their freedom after more than two years in captivity, in addition to other captives who were freed. Schools, hospitals, and businesses are springing back to life in the Northeast, especially in Borno State the epicenter of the crisis. Farmers are returning to the farms from which they fled in the wake of

the Boko Haram insurgency. The affected populations are getting the chance to begin the urgent task of rebuilding their lives and their communities (Gbadebo-Smith, 2018).

However, notwithstanding these efforts and the successes recorded so far, the state of insecurity linked to Boko Haram is still high. Boko Haram's ability to conduct the coordinated campaigns might have been diminished, but the group has not been defeated. Strengthening anti-terrorism legislation was effective but not totally successful as it was unable to deal with various leakages of information and support to the militants. There were also continued instances of professionals who apparently gave the militants straight logistical support or trained them in weapons handling. The MJTF was often stretched too thin to control the large stretch of the Sambisa forest haven of the insurgents. A lot of funding might have been channeled into advancing the competencies of the military and other security agencies, but despite the increased defense spending, Nigerian security agencies remain ill-prepared for the contemporary challenge of fighting terrorism. Corruption in the high echelons of politics and the military has seen the misappropriation of much of the defense budget. Police reform has had limited success giving that many residents accused police of selling informants' identities to Boko Haram. Flaws in the security and intelligence architecture mediated by the deep fissures and fault lines in Nigeria's socio-politics, especially ethnicity and religion, ensure that extremists are all too often well informed about planned moves of security personnel. (ICG, 2014; Roberts, 2018).

Apparently, the conventional responses of the Nigerian state have had limited success. The level at which extremism can be curbed by such measures can only be minimal because the fundamental causes have not been addressed. Hitherto declining in intensity and fatality, there are daily reports of re-emergence of destructive activities of Boko Haram insurgents in the northeast and other parts of the country. The sect has continued to unleash terror on Nigeria, thereby compounding the already precarious security situation. Nigeria has one of the largest security deteriorations among Sub-Saharan countries not at war, just better than Libya, Syria, and Pakistan. Violence against women and girls is underreported but also estimated to be high. The feeble response of the government and the security institutions does not demonstrate a clear sensitivity and understanding of the worsening situation. This true

but so far hidden lack of competence of the law enforcement agencies in tandem with the absence of a coherent security strategy appears to have emboldened the insurgents, the militias, and recently, the herdsmen, who have continued to unleash more terror on the citizens, the ripple effect of which has angered the citizens and communities, forcing them to consider violence as a viable option (NISER, 2016; Gbadebo-Smith, 2018). The limitation of state response is a pointer to the need to search for alternative, if not fresh perspectives to curbing radicalization and extremism.

Nexus between Women, security and Peacebuilding in Nigeria

The catalog of women's protests and activities to protect and preserve their societies is lengthy. The flagship of such activities is the Aba women riot of 1929. To resist the colonial masters' heavy imposition of taxes on women. Then women conferenced from all over the then eastern region which now includes Calabar, Rivers, Ibibio, Andoni, Ogoni, Bonny, Opobo, and Owerri, and other communities in now southeast and south-south Nigeria today. During this very women protest, many women died but also, many Warrant Chiefs were forced to resign their positions. A total of 16 Native Courts was attacked, most of which were destroyed. It was the first major revolt by women in West Africa. The protest revealed that when it comes to protecting the communities' women will leave no stone unturned. Women were able to stop the colonial masters from continuing with the imposition of tax on women which would have affected women economically and subsequently their families. Women are vital in all aspects of life especially in the security and preservation of traditional and political institutions. This they do through training and socialization of their children to become patriotic citizens as mothers. The significant role of women in curbing and fighting terrorism cannot be over-emphasized. Beginning from the Aba women riot carried out to prevent arbitrary tax imposition was a hallmark of the extent women can go to protect all that is theirs. Nigerian governments have employed various options such as those mentioned above- Increasing Defense Funding, Police Reform, Strengthening Terrorism legislation, Use of Military Force, Community Vigilantism, International collaboration and Support and Dialogue with Extremists amongst others but have failed to utilize the veritable role of women in the fight against terrorism and general

insecurity in Nigeria. The stakeholders in security and peace are yet to leverage the vital role of women in curbing and mitigating insecurity and terrorism in the country.

As part of the Nigerian social system women in Nigeria, have to be actively involved in containing insecurity in Nigeria especially in the northern part where there many unengaged children, teenagers, and young adults who are vulnerable to radicalization extremist indoctrination. Literate and non-literate women will have to cooperate and agree to resist radicalization and extremism. Like the Aba women of 1929, women's influence and power can always yield positive results with men and government when they muster with the unity of purpose. Women can get the government to enact policies that will bring about good governance in all the states which will in turn help to deliver justice all promote peace and an egalitarian society. If women should collectively agree to resist insurgency, radicalization, extremism, and militarization in Nigeria can be curbed. (Adejimi, 2018)

The role of advocacy cannot be over-emphasized. With the strategic and veritable position of women all over the world not just in Nigeria women can explore advocacy to the constituent states of Nigeria. Women can appeal to every state governor through the state first ladies for the governors who also doubles as chief security officers of the state to curb insecurity in the various states. Meeting governors' wives in the 36 states of the federation and demanding a stop to carnage, kidnap of innocent girls, and the killings will go a long way to sensitize state authorities on the urgency of curbing radicalization and violent extremism. Women can do little without the support of government both at the federal and state levels. Nigerian women in power should rise together to source for a collective solution to extremism either through peaceful protest or sponsorship of bills in parliament. An example is Senator Zainab Kure, who sponsored a bill popularly regarded referred to as the 'Land Grazing Bill' that was aimed at making provisions that would douse the raging herdsman-farmers conflict.

Conclusion

Individually, women may not be able to achieve much but collectively they can achieve a lot. Women are married to government officials, military men, and business moguls with influence on the deep state.

They can be influential as regional or National Association of First Ladies, Nigerian Army Officers Wives Association (NAOWA), Police Officers Wives Association (POWA), to mention just a few. If all army officers wives, police officers wives, all first ladies, and the Nigerian first lady should agree to persuade their husbands to stop the killings across the nation, and begin a programme for reconciliation, national orientation, and de-radicalization, that would prove to be a fresh perspective on preventing and countering violent extremism in Nigeria and indeed Africa.

Above all, women must not keep quiet in the face of extremism. During the incident of abduction of the Chibok girls, the girls' parents were grieved but quiet. The Chibok community, its traditional leaders, and the parents were all quiet and to date, half of the Chibok girls are yet to be rescued. But in the case of the Dapchi abductions, the women, parents, and community leaders cried out loud hence the pressure on the government and the Islamic insurgents to release the girls save one, who remained in captivity because she refused to deny her Christian faith. Women must perpetually bring pressure to bear on the governing class.

Recommendations

1. The expertise of women is needed in the fight against insecurity because when it comes to protecting their families' women will leave no stone unturned. This character of women can be gauged by the government and those committed to having a peaceful Nigeria. If women could stop the colonial masters from the imposition of taxes it means that women could also be very useful in curbing insecurity.
2. Women play a very vital role in the rearing of their children, they are therefore important in the socialization and transmission of cultural values to the generations of their societies. To this extent, the government need to involve them in security programs of their communities
3. Government should engage women's associations and groups in training and socialization of the youth in their communities to become patriotic citizens as mothers. This is because women know the youth in their communities better than people coming from outside.

4. Traditional rules should make women close allies in security issues and programmes
5. Government and stakeholders of peace need to explore the position of women as mothers and wives to drive advocacy in their communities against radicalization and to mitigate insecurity in their areas and communities.

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