THE CRISIS OF LEGITIMACY, TERRORISM AND THE IMPERATIVE OF STATEBUILDING IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

How can we promote peaceful co-existence among the diverse ethnic, socio-political and religious groups that constitute the Nigerian state? This question is very relevant today given the incessant violent conflicts that we have witnessed to date among different ethnic and religious groups in the country. The resultant precarious security situation in the State is also exacerbated by the terrorist activities of the Islamic sect, popularly called Boko Haram.

Against this background, this paper critically examines the challenge of counter hegemonic terrorism, exemplified by the activities of the Boko Haram religious sect and the prospect of the survival of the Nigerian state. In exposing the root cause(s) of domestic terrorism in contemporary Nigeria, the paper identifies the perennial crisis of legitimacy bedeviling the regimes down the line as the underlining factor responsible for the spate of violent attacks and insecurity within the nation.

The paper contends that violence, rather than dialogue, has become the language of social interaction and mode of expressing differences in Nigeria due to the inability of the authorities of the state to secure popular legitimacy’ - both at the level of procedure and performance - from the mass of the Nigerian people.

Consequently, the paper argues that in addressing the rising phenomenon of terrorism and incessant violent conflicts between groups within the Nigerian state, the crisis of legitimacy bedeviling

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state power must be conscientiously addressed. The paper contends that this can be achieved through inclusive or popular state-building processes that are anchored onto the consensus of both the elite and the mass of the people of the Nigeria state.

Terrorism will only be defeated if we act to solve the political disputes or long standing conflicts that generate support for it1

...Kofi Annan, (2003)

Existing literature has clearly shown that there is clear correlation between the quality of governance Nigerians get and the degree of violent conflicts the country encounters2.

...I.O. Albert, (2012).

Introduction
There is general insecurity within the geographical territory called Nigeria today. The spate of terrorism and other genre of violent conflicts ongoing within the borders of the country have become source of serious concern to the nation’s stakeholders. Terrorist bombings have become so regular and more vicious than ever before, especially in the northern part of the country. Consequently, this has given birth to cacophony of voices ranging from call for true federalism, regionalism to demands for balkanization of the country. In fact, aside corruption which has become endemic in the country, the greatest threat confronting the Nigerian state today is perhaps the terrorist activities spear-headed by the fundamentalist Islamic sect popularly known as Boko Haram.

This security challenge, as it were, is posing a serious threat to the nation’s fledgling democratic process and efforts at nation-building. It has worsened the abysmally low capacity of the state to perform the role of a modern state, deepened citizens’ apathy about the viability of the ‘Nigerian project’ and considerably exacerbated the hitherto terribly bad crisis of legitimacy confronting the state’s authorities and power.

This paper emphasises the idea that terrorism, especially the counter hegemonic genre, becomes an instrument of expression in a society when
the legally recognized channels have consistently failed to respond to the disaffection and discontentment of a group of individuals within the polity. The truth of the matter is that the Nigerian state has consistently failed to be responsive to the abysmally poor material conditions of the generality of the people of the State. Consequently, the legitimacy of state power in Nigeria has always been very weak. Characteristically, this impacts on the relationship between the leadership of the Nigerian State and the mass of the people. In fact, the mass of the people see the state and all it represents in a negative light.

This crisis was exacerbated by the lack of consensus between social groups that constitute the country on the one hand and the elite and the mass of the people on the other hand on what constitutes legitimate authority within the polity. Thus, it has become extremely difficult to generate the much required social capital for the promotion of people’s support for government actions and programmes - an ingredient critical to the achievement of social order in a polity.

Hannan Arendt (cited in Richard A. Couto, 2012:67) expresses the importance of legitimacy to the effectiveness of state power and the achievement of the essence of the state when she states that “the authority, strength, and power of the state rest upon its legitimacy, what gives it the power to foster collective action among the citizens.” Lipset (1960) reiterates this when he states that “the problem of instability exists and persists, when the political system fails to engender, maintain and sustain the belief in its constituent members and its citizenry that the regime defined as constitutional order, is the most appropriate one for the society.”

Against this background, this paper examines how the crisis of legitimacy bedeviling the Nigerian state precipitated, triggered and continues to nourish the prevalent terrorist activities and other violent conflicts confronting the country and how this negative situation can be addressed. This paper submits that a holistic state building process that is grounded on full and popular participation of all the social groups in the country is sine qua non to establishing a legitimate state power in the country. Put differently,
when the state becomes capable, accountable and responsive, the much needed legitimacy would naturally be accorded state power and the prevalent violent expressions would considerably reduce.

**Having said this, the objectives of this paper are:**

- To contribute to the fast growing literature on terrorism;
- To establish the correlation between the endemic crisis of legitimacy in Nigeria and the prevalent terrorist activities ongoing within the nation's territory;
- To expose the centrality of state-building project that is owned by the people rather than elite parted state-building process to the legitimation of state power in Nigeria.
- To bring into fore the centrality of popular legitimacy to the achievement of peace and sustainable development of the Nigerian state.

**Conceptual Clarification**

It is important that we clarify the key concepts that are germane to this study. This becomes necessary in view of the fact that some of these concepts are essentially contested and controversial. They are legitimacy, terrorism and state building.

**Legitimacy**

It is a concept that has been of interest to different groups of scholars—legal experts, moral or political philosophers, social scientists, to name but a few—who had defined it according to their respective intellectual and ideological standpoints. In fact, legitimacy is a classic topic of political philosophy.

Legitimacy, broadly speaking, has to do with moral appropriateness of how power is acquired and the purpose for which it is employed. David Bentham (1991:4) expresses this when he writes: “when power is acquired and exercised according to justifiable rules, and with evidence of consent we call it rightful or legitimate.” Essentially, legitimacy is concerned with
the question of how power relations within a society ought to be arranged, and what would count as a sufficient justification to require the support of the subordinate for them.

Thus, legitimacy is a political concept that is concerned with the justification of power relations between the rulers and the ruled. Max Weber,(cited by David Benthem, 1991:6) an authority on the concept of legitimacy expresses this when he defines it “as the belief in legitimacy on the part of the relevant social agents: and power relations as legitimate where those involved in them, subordinate as well as dominant believe them to be so.” The point that is being advanced here is that if people believe that existing political orders or laws are appropriate and worthy of obedience, then those orders and laws are legitimate. In the context of legitimacy, orders and laws are said to be appropriate when such orders and laws emanate from authorities that the people recognise and believe in. This perhaps explains why legitimacy is referred to as the popular acceptance of a governing regime or system of governance.

Having said this, let us quickly point out that legitimacy is seen, in the contemporary times, as a concept that is examined from two perspectives -procedural or legal validity and performance. Procedural legitimacy is earned by a regime or state power when the processes that produce a regime is one that conforms to established procedures and laws. In contemporary times, procedural legitimacy is earned when leaders and those saddled with the responsibility of managing state power are products of free, fair and democratic electoral processes.

In other words, procedural legitimacy is conferred on state power when the people freely choose their leaders and the processes are in accordance or in conformity with established legal procedures. While performance legitimacy is gotten or earned by the state authorities when power is exercised in a manner that the basic needs of the mass of the people are provided. Performance legitimacy, thus, is conferred on state power when institutions of the state manifestly promote the well-being of the generality of the people.
Terrorism

Though terrorism as an act is receiving global attention, especially following the Sept 11, 2001, attacks on strategic locations in the United States by the Al-Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist group, there is no universally acceptable definition of the term. Walter Laqueur (1987) captures this when he posits: “it is neither possible to do so nor worthwhile to make the attempt”. Obviously, the difficulty associated with achieving a generally acceptable definition of the term stems largely from the fact that it is a value-laden concept. Put differently, defining terrorism becomes very difficult in view of the fact that our interpretation of what constitute act(s) of terrorism is largely a reflection of our ideological or political learning. The person who bombs an office building or hijacks an airplane is not considered a terrorist by those who believe that the workers in the building are part of a military and industrial complex that threatens world peace or that their political cause will somehow be advanced by the hijacking. (Carole Nagengast, 1994:115)


Having said this, it must be stated very clearly that the term terrorism, broadly speaking, is a violent reaction to issues, positions, regimes and ideological standpoints that stands in contradiction to ours or the group we belong to. It is a violent act perpetrated to express displeasure to dominant or hegemonic interests and dispositions. It is a violent response to hegemonic dominance and may represent an attempt to overcome the dominant hegemony by the creation of an alternative, a counter hegemony. (Scott, 1990:10)

Let us go a little further on the concept of terrorism by bringing into fore the social context which normally precipitates this violent act. In every
society, generally speaking, there are two classes of people - the ruled and the rulers. The relationship between these two groups determines the stability or otherwise of the society. When the rulers (or the leaders) are able to carry along the ruled (or mass of the people) in the governance process, there is socio-political stability (social order). On the other hand, when there is disconnect between the two groups, usually as a result of the failure of the leadership of the state to satisfy the mass of the people. This characteristically gives birth to discontent on the part of the ruled and ultimately affects the legitimacy of state power.

The discontent on the part of the ruled is usually expressed through the advocacy of alternative socio-political arrangement. Cry for change in some cases might involve the employment of the use of terror (violence). Terrorism, thus, represents violent acts targeted at changing or overthrowing a dominant ideology, governance system or hegemonic interest. It is a violent mode of response to conflictual relationship …. It has become a readily available instrument of struggle between opposing camps in a violent adversarial relationship (Thomas A. Imobighe, 2009:15). According to Kofi Annan, terrorism is “an act intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act”.

Let us at this juncture point out that there are many forms of violence that are grouped under the concept or term “terrorism”. Some of them are: “state sponsored terrorism, international terrorism, religious terrorism, domestic terrorism, state repression and many others. (David Boyns and James David Ballard, 2004:6) Broadly speaking, activities that are referred to as terrorism are categorized according to the status or leverage of the perpetrators of acts of terrorism. When the perpetrators are representative or agents of the state, it is said to be top-down terrorism or state sponsored terrorism. On the other hand, when the perpetrators or practitioners of violent acts are non-state actors or groups operating independent of the state and terrorist acts are directed against the state, it is referred to as bottom-up terrorism or ‘counter hegemonic terrorism’.
State-building

This is a concept that is often misconstrued with some other kindred concepts such as peacebuilding and nation-building. Thus, there are diverse opinions on the meaning of the term from literature spanning several different fields-social sciences, international relations, political studies, anthropology, economics, international development and security studies. This, perhaps explains why Zoe Scott (2008:8) states that “statebuilding is a truly interdisciplinary”.

Following from the above, there are numerous definitions of the term, both in the academic literature and in its conception by international development agencies. Let us proceed to examine some of these definitions.

DFID (2008:8) defines state-building as an essentially endogenous process through which states enhance their ability to function, determined primarily through the interaction between the elite, state structures and other non-elite groups. Essentially, state-building processes are targeted at enhancing the capacity of state institutions to perform and deliver her functions and realize her essence. OECD captures this when it conceives statebuilding as “purposeful action to develop the capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state in relation to an effective political process for negotiating the mutual demands between state and societal goals.”

Broadly speaking, statebuilding processes seek to achieve the following objectives:

1. Enhance the functional capacity of the state (to make the state capable);
2. Enabling effective political processes to promote peoples’ participation and leadership accountability in the government process;
3. To make the state responsive to the demands and yearning of the people.

Against this backdrop, statebuilding can be aptly defined as processes targeted at achieving the development of capable, accountable and responsive (CAR) states.
The Crisis of Legitimacy in Nigeria: Causes, Dynamics and its Consequences

First and foremost, it is germane that we give a little insight into what is referred to as ‘crisis of legitimacy’. This would go a long way to assist our appreciation of the content of this segment of the paper. Having said this, it must be emphasized that legitimacy crisis is a multidimensional concept that has to do with the exercise of power and its justification. Essentially, crisis of legitimacy occurs when a political system lacks the capacity to guarantee the security and provide basic needs of the mass of the people. Bensman (1988) captures this succinctly when he defines “legitimacy crisis as a problem emanating from the frustration of the expectation of the governed.”

Unfortunately, one of the problems confronting the Nigerian state today is how to establish a regime that will enjoy the support and admiration of not only the mass of the people but also that of the diverse groups that constitute the nation. It can be argued that crisis of legitimacy is one of the key political problems affecting the Nigerian state today. The crisis is compounded by the fact that some groups and individuals are rabidly opposed to the nation’s extant political cum constitutional arrangement. Thus, such groups and individuals rather than comply with the laws of the state, engage, repeatedly in activities targeted at undermining state sovereignty and security.

In the light of the above, the question that looms large now is: what are the factors responsible for the crisis of legitimacy bedeviling the Nigerian state? It is instructive to point out that legitimacy crisis in Nigeria is not a recent development in the nation’s political history. It has always been a recurring phenomenon in the nation’s political process. In fact, it can be argued that this challenging phenomenon has always been the main factor responsible for the collapse of virtually all regimes that had governed the nation. Ogundiya (2009:129) reiterates this when he states that “the crisis of legitimacy in Nigeria has become persistent, endemic and cyclical.”
Let us at this juncture identify a number of reasons that underpin the crisis of legitimacy in Nigeria. First is the nation’s experience with colonialism. Colonialism, characteristically uprooted the peoples’ willful loyalty to the state and thus laid the foundation for the crisis of legitimacy that define virtually all post colonial African states, including Nigeria. The point that is being emphasized is that “legitimacy crisis in Africa is not a crisis of transition but a legacy of colonialism and its attendant evils ... the root of legitimacy deficit in Africa lies in the fact that legitimacy was not vigorously pursued as part of statehood under colonial rule.” (Eghosa Osaghae, 1994)

What Eghosa Osaghae is saying essentially is that the genesis of Nigeria’s legitimacy crisis is rooted in the nation’s colonial experience. An interrogation of the character of colonialism and the elements that define legitimacy would clearly reveal that the two - colonialism and legitimacy - are parallel lines. Colonialism, which basically is an imposition of foreign rule over a territory, is usually through the use of the instrument of force and thus the idea of consent of the people which is critical to the idea of legitimacy is strange to the whole notion of colonialism. Similarly, the performance constituent of the idea of legitimacy is virtually a misnormal when discussing colonialism. This is because foreign rule over another territory, as it were, is characteristically set up to benefit the colonizing nation and her people rather than benefit the colonized.

Second, the crisis of legitimacy in Africa, nay Nigeria, can also be traced to the character of the modern state which, basically, reflects the values of the colonizers. The modern state structures and institutions, such as the legislature, the executive, the judiciary, the bureaucracy, political parties and the electoral system were alien to African indigenous political structures and ethos. Thus, making it extremely difficult for African people to repose confidence and trust in the imposed political system.

Third, the source of legitimacy crisis in Nigeria is also traceable to the nature of the nation’s politics. This was succinctly presented in former Nigerian president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo’s conception of the 2007
elections as do or die. Pye (1971) captures this when he attributed the legitimacy crisis in Africa to “excessive and institutionalized competition for power.” The truth of the matter is that Nigeria’s politics is one that is characterized by deep seated ethnicity and intense struggles for power. The reason for this is not far-fetched. It is so because of the prebendal nature of the nation’s politics and the fact that access to state power is perhaps the readily available means through which material resources can be quickly acquired.

Consequent to the driving force for the struggles for power, it becomes extremely difficult for those who lost out in the power contest and their supporters, who are usually people from their ethnic cum religious groups to recognize the authority and accord legitimacy to those in control of state power. The point that is being stressed here is that with the prevalent conception of state power by the average Nigerian politician as a means to enrich self and their cronies, rather than as a means to dispense state resources to promote collective well-being of the Nigerian people, it becomes difficult for those who do not have direct access to state power and resources to accord legitimacy to the regime in power. In fact, for such people, it would amount to undermining self and the group they belong to recognize the regime in power as legitimate.

Fourth, which is largely a derivative of the third reason - the nature of Nigerian politics - is the “lack of consensus among the elite as to what constitute legitimacy” (Cited in Ogundiya, 2009). Where there is no elite consensus as to what is legitimate and what is not legitimate, there is usually political tension and arbitrariness which consequently threaten peaceful co-existence and social order. On the other hand, where there is elite consensus, especially among the power or ruling elite, rules of engagement in the political process are easily agreed upon and this facilitates social cohesion.

Unfortunately, the ruling elite in Nigeria have not been able to forge a consensus as to what constitute legitimacy and what not. As a matter of fact, the nation ruling elite can be said to be at war with each other. The
Nigerian ruling elite, rather than serve as an instrument of national cohesion and stability, is more disposed to deepening the differences between the various ethnic groups that constitute the Nigerian state for personal aggrandizement (Aluko, 2010:132).

Fifth is the introduction of western inspired economic and financial policies such as structural adjustment programme (SAP) and privatization of state owned companies. While structural adjustment programme (SAP) characteristically constraints the state from providing basic human needs to the citizenry, privatization on the other hand greatly eroded the sense of belonging of the mass of the people in the Nigerian state. Privatized companies were bought by politicians and their cronies. This made the mass of the Nigerian people to conclude that the Nigerian state was the ruling elite’s property and thus do not deserve their support and loyalty. The perception of the mass of the Nigerian people that the Nigerian state only exists to protect the interest of the bourgeoisie has had negative impact on the legitimacy of the state.

Sixth, the crisis of legitimacy bedeviling the Nigerian state is largely a function of the failure of the state to facilitate the promotion of the wellbeing of the generality of the Nigerian people. The Nigerian state has been grossly deficient in the provision of essentials of life such as good education, drinkable water, housing, food, employment etc. Ekeh, (1985) reiterates this when he writes: “The endemic crisis of legitimacy in Nigeria is a function of state incapacitation and policy failures. Therefore, the poverty of legitimacy, first cultivated in the process of decolonization has been reinforced and compounded by failures of governance.”

Let us conclude our exposition on this segment of the paper by saying that the crisis of legitimacy bedeviling the Nigerian state is at the root of the multidimensional problems confronting the Nigerian state today. Ukpabi Asika(1 994:232), a prominent Nigerian in the immediate post independence era in the nation’s history, expresses this when he argues that “the problem of legitimacy is the central problem of our time, it is the national question...
all other questions are secondary and arise because of the problem of legitimacy."

Consequent to the pervasive legitimacy crisis bedeviling the Nigerian state, the nation has been persistently contending with catalogue of disenabling and destructive phenomena. Some of these include prolonged military rule which did not only lead to the pauperization of the mass of the people but also laid the foundation for the overt militarization of the nation's politics so much so that violence has become institutionalized in the nation's political processes. In fact, the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970) was essentially a fall-out of the legitimacy crisis bedeviling the country. Ditto the collapse of the Shehu Shagari led civilian administration in 1983.

Furthermore, the emergence of Non-state Arr led Groups (NSAGs) like the Oduduwa Peoples’ Congress (OPC), Egbesu Boys, Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSSOP), Bar assi Boys (BB) and all forms of militant groups from the Niger Delta area and lately the Boko Haram which has its roots in the North-eastern part of the nation are traceable to the endemic legitimacy crisis bedeviling the Nigerian state. The terrorist activities of the Boko Haram religious sect is, arguably, the most challenging of the fall outs of crisis of legitimacy / bedeviling the nation today.

An Overview of Counter Hegemonic Terrorism in Nigeria
In a discourse of this nature, it is apposite to present an overview of counter hegemonic terrorism in Nigeria. It is instructive to point out that counter hegemonic terrorism became pervasive in the nation’s political history lately. What was common was ‘state-sponsored terrorism’ against perceived and real enemies of the government in power. This got to its apogee during the Abacha military regime between (1993-1998) when state agents killed many pro-democracy activists, including the wife of the presumed winner of the 1993 presidential election, Alhaja Kudirat Abiola.

However, it must be clearly stated that ‘counter hegemonic terrorism’ has been a recurring phenomenon in the nation’s political history though
previous acts were not as profound, organized and devastating as it is happening lately in the country. In the early 60s, there was the Isaac Adaka Boro revolt against the Nigerian state and in the early 80s, the Nigerian state witnessed the onslaught of the Muhammed Marwa led Maitasine religious sect, and many others.

Having said this, it is important to note that counter hegemonic terrorism in Nigeria can be broadly categorized into two groups. They are:

1) Purely political terrorism: this form of terrorism encompasses the activities of ethno-nationalist and separatist groups such as Odua Peoples’ Congress (OPC), Movement for the survival of the Ogoni People (MOSSOP) and the activities of Niger Delta militants, who employed terrorism to draw the attention of the world to their plight. The other form of terrorism, noticeable in Nigeria is the political religious terrorism exemplified by the activities of Maitasine religious sect in the 1980s and Boko Haram lately.

The purely political form of terrorism was largely precipitated and triggered by structural violence (injustice) that characterized the Nigerian state. In this category was the Adaka Boro led insurrection against the Nigerian state of the 1960s, the Oodua Peoples’ Congress, OPC, violent activities following the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential elections presumably won by the late Chief M.K.O. Abiola, a Yoruba man from the south western part of the country. Also, the terrorist activities of the Niger Delta militant groups, which was a reaction to the neglect and pauperization of the oil producing communities by the Nigerian state is a form of purely political terrorism.

The other strand of counter hegemonic terrorism noticeable in Nigeria is the political religious terrorism. This represents religious terrorism that aims at a political goal. It is carried out by religious fanatics. In this category is the activities of the Muhammed Marwa led Maitasine religious sect which had its base in Kano during the Shehu Shagari civilian government in the 1980s and the ongoing terrorist activities of the late Muhammed Yusuf le: religious sect, popularly known as Boko Haram.
While purely political terrorism is usually carried out to draw the attention of the state authorities and the international community to an unpleasant and unacceptable situation with a view to engendering a redress. Political religious terrorism on the other hand is targeted at overthrowing the dominant ideology cum prevalent religious disposition with a view to replacing it. Tell Magazine in one of its publications captures the ideology and philosophy of Boko Haram, a political religious terrorist group thus: “The mission of the sect was to establish an Islamic state where orthodox Islam is practiced.....”

Having said this, a little insight into some of the activities of the Boko Haram sect would enhance our appreciation of the depth of the violence that is ravaging the Nigerian state. A catalogue of the activities of the sect includes the following:

- On the 25th Dec., 2011, the members of the sect attacked Saint Theresa Catholic Church in Madalla town near Abuja killing 42 worshippers.
- The sect has been attacking police stations, government institutions and worship centres in the north of the country.

An analysis of the phenomenon of terrorism in Nigeria reveals that at the root of the causes of terrorism - whether the purely political form or the political religious form is the dysfunctional character of the Nigerian state. Dysfunctional in the sense of its failure to effectively function as agent of social control, due largely to the state’s inability to retain the distinctive feature of having monopoly of instrument of violence and promote citizens’ socio-economic well-being, justice and equality within her territory.

Ostuta O. Oshita in one of his papers captures this when he identifies the causes of terrorism in Nigeria as “poverty, unemployment, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, tension over ownership and management of resources, ethnic relations and armed militant movement, especially in the Niger Delta.” Dipak Gupta’s analysis of the causes of
terrorism “as elements of socio-economic causation, legitimation process and identity movements”, captures the Nigerian situation succinctly.

It is instructive to point out at this juncture that though the major factor responsible for ongoing counter hegemonic terrorism in the Nigerian state is attributable to what Albert (2011) expresses as “failure of the state to perform functions necessary to meet citizens' basic needs and expectations,” the phenomenon of globalization cannot be ignored as a contributory factor to the spate of terrorism ongoing in the Nigerian state. Kofi Annan(2003) acknowledges the presence of factor external to a nation’s internal dynamics when he argues: “we should not pretend that (...) the decision to resort to terrorism is unrelated to the political social and economic situation in what people find themselves. But we are also mistaken if we assume, equally, that terrorists are mere products of their environment.”

**The Imperative of State-building to Legitimization of Power in Nigeria**

This segment of the paper explores the interface between statebuilding and legitimacy and emphasises the importance of consensus between the power elite and the mass of the people of the Nigerian nation on the logic of the statebuilding process.

Having said this, let us reiterate that legitimacy refers to the perception by important segments of society that the government is exercising state power in a manner that promotes the collective welfare of all. Unfortunately, the character of the Nigerian state-largely patrimonial and ineffectual - has become a stumbling block to the realization of the essence of the state.

Following the failure of the state to effectively manage differences between conflicting groups, promote equitable distribution of the collective wealth of the nation and its abysmal failure to meet the basic needs of the generality of her citizens, individuals and groups, thus, evolved their own peculiar way of responding to the situation. The point that is being emphasized here is that following that: disenchantment with the state of affairs,
groups and individuals resorted to employing violent means, including terrorism, to express themselves.

In the light of the above, it is imperative that the Nigerian state be recreated and re-invested to promote the interest of all the groups that constitute the nation. An insight into the character of the post colonial African state would be instructive. The state inherited was non-hegemonic and lack the capacity to create the sort of environment that would have allowed public policy to be rational, sustainable, and effective. Africa does not inherit an environment that was conducive to democracy, growth and development.” (Julius O. Ihonvbere, 2011). Indeed, virtually all the post colonial African states had demonstrated lack of capacity to exercise effective control over her territory. Moreover, despite the enormous resources that these countries are endowed with, the level of poverty and underdevelopment is scary.

The unprogressive and oppressive character of the state inherited from the colonial Listers was further strengthened by the character of the power elite whose motive for power was for self rather than the collective good of their people. Ihonvbere reiterates this when he writes: “In fact, African elite did everything to by-pass the rules of politics, depoliticize the polity, intimidate the people and their communities and divert attention from the realities of underdevelopment and unequal exchange” (Mius Ihonvbere, 2011:6). The situation is worse in Nigeria as the ruling elite cash on the multi ethnic configuration of the Nigerian state and the vulnerability of the mass of the people to circumvent the system for personal aggrandizement.

The corollary to the character of the post-colonial state and the predisposition of the power elite is that the state rather than be an instrument for the emancipation of the people progressively become oppressive. This naturally made the mass of the people to withdraw from the civic public space to primordial private space. Only very few people, largely the political class, who apparently are looting the state’s resources are interested in what operates in the civic public sphere where the state operates.
An analysis of Nigeria’s political situation would reveal the fact that state power is in dire need of legitimization. Unfortunately, it has become extremely difficult to achieve this as a result of a variety of factors some of which include corruption, ethnicity, lack of effective political institution, failure of the state to exercise overarching control over her geographical territory, the colonial character of the Nigerian state and the prebendal nature of the nation's politics. The truth of the matter is that the character and the management of the Nigerian state as it were, is a negation of the pillars upon which legitimacy rests - procedural and performance.

The crisis of achieving procedural legitimacy in Nigeria is deepened by the reality of the very low participation of the generality of the citizenry in the political process. This low participation in the political process, it must be noted is a function of both the militarization and monetization of the process so much so that it has become an exclusive platform for only the rich and those that are predisposed to violence.

At the performance level, the capacity of the Nigerian state to provide the basic needs of her citizens has been seriously hindered by endemic corruption of the leadership of the state. Julius Ihonvbere (2011:7) expresses that economic mismanagement, rabid corruption, irresponsible political behaviour and squandering, the near abandonment of the state by its very custodians had weakened it and made it largely irrelevant to the daily lives of the people. The state was now seen and treated as enemy by the people, a force that was to be avoided, cheated, attacked and subverted as opportunity permitted.

Having established that given the character of the state and its leadership, the Nigerian state cannot but be confronted with the crisis of legitimacy. The question that looms large now in the light of the deepening crisis of legitimacy confronting the Nigerian state is how do we recreate the state to become capable, accountable and responsive? It must be stated very clearly at this outset that the reinvention of the state is critical to procuring legitimacy and addressing the fall out of the legitimacy crisis, such as terrorism and incessant ethnic conflicts bedeviling the state.
Our position in this paper is that to generate the much needed legitimacy, the statebuilding processes be anchored by the true representatives of the people. Put differently, we need a bottom up approach rather than top-down approach which has little or no relevance to addressing the plight of the mass of the people. We mean a state-building process that involves creating mechanisms for popular participation where all the constituent groups of the Nigerian society will not only be involved but as well promote equitable distribution of the nation’s resources.

There is the need for a national dialogue. This will provide the space for all the groups within the state to agree on what constitutes legitimate authority and what not. The involvement of pre-existing social groupings rather than political parties would engender popular and meaningful participation of the Nigerian people. When this is done there will be consensus on what is legitimate and what is not. The existing situation where legitimacy is tribalised- ascribing legitimacy to a regime on the basis of where the president comes from will continue to undermine and obstruct national integration and the much required collective resolve to make the leadership of the state accountable, responsible and responsive.

**Conclusion**

The kernel of our argument in this paper is that the crisis of legitimacy bedeviling the authorities of the Nigerian state is the root cause of spate of terrorism in the nation today. The crisis of legitimacy, we argued, is essentially a function of the failure of the state to meet the basic needs of the generality of the Nigerian people. Johnnie Carson, the US Assistant Secretary on African issues acknowledges the nexus between socioeconomic condition of the mass of the Nigerian people and the ongoing terrorist activities in the nation when he states that Boko Haram cashed in on people’s disenchantment 'with the nation’s leaders, poor administration, ineffective service delivery and dismal living conditions of many northerners ... maintaining that the socioeconomic afflictions ravaging the Nigerian nation was the causal agent of such prolonged killings.
In the light of this, the Nigerian state has a duty to address the precarious material conditions of the people that underlie the violent acts. This, we submit can be done through state-building processes that are grounded on a consent is between the ruling elite and the mass of the people of the nation. It is only then that the much required legitimacy that is critical to the achievement of a stable social in Niger: a can be obtained.

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