

DEMOCRACY AND OPPOSITION POLITICS IN NIGERIA: A SECURITY THREAT?

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Abstract

Opposition politics is like an iron upon which democracy is chiseled. No democracy can flourish without it and at the same time, political opposition, mostly represented by the activities of the opposition political parties and those opposed to the government, appears to constitute that which threatens smooth democratic practice in Nigeria. Arising from the above, the study interrogated the security threat that accompanies democracy through the opposition politics and by extension examined the paradox of democracy in conflict resolution. The study is basically an attempt to understand how opposition politics in Nigeria has contributed to the continued security challenges bedeviling the country using the post colonial state theory. The work discovered that unpatriotism on the side of the opposition politicians as well as government political imbecility contributes to the exacerbation of the insecurity situation in Nigeria. To tackle this problem created by the politicians in the quest for power, the study recommended, among other things, a constitutional provision for two-party system where defection is criminalized. This will invariably serve as the engine for the development of a viable opposition politics in Nigeria.

Keywords: democracy, opposition politics, security threat

Introduction

Political opposition is to democracy what spice is to stew

The above quotation, extracted from an article written by Kali Gwegwe of *Daily Post*, September 20, 2014, perfectly captures the role of opposition politics in a democracy. In fact, just like stew cannot be made without spices, democracy cannot survive without opposition. Yet, the greatest security threat to most democratic societies in Africa and other underdeveloped countries appears to be the role of the opposition as an ingredient of spicing a democracy. This security threat arises as a result of the inability to separate selfhood from statehood. That means the inability to

separate the interest of the self (selfhood) from the interest of the state (statehood). In that case, it becomes difficult to distinguish between the service to the political party and the service to the state. In many African countries, including Nigeria, most politicians of opposition extraction see the party in power as an enemy that must be crushed at all cost and not as a partner in progress. That same understanding encapsulates the actions of the politicians of the ruling party towards their opposition counterparts. This underscores the gross political infelicity that undermines a genuine democratic process in Nigeria which is also in stark contradiction to the observation of Rutherford B. Hayes that "he serves his party best who serves his country best". This places primacy on the service to the country as a corresponding fulfillment of the service to the party; which is probably not the case in Nigeria where politicians see the dictum from the prism of "he serves his party best who serves his country worst".

Nevertheless, Benjamin d'Israeli, a 19th century two-time British Prime Minister who led the opposition in the British Parliament in the intervening period (a period of many cultural changes) – noted that, "no government can long be secured without a formidable opposition". Opposition politics remains an essential ingredient to a participatory and representative democracy especially because it turns vital "non issues" into "issues" and creates new structures of participation, transparency and accountability by virtue of being an alternative government in waiting. Accordingly, Prof. Alfred Stephen of Columbia University identified five key factors that make opposition politics vital to a democracy. These include:

- Resisting integration into the ruling regime
- Guarding zones of autonomy against the ruling regime
- Raising the cost of authoritarian rule (thereby making dictatorship difficult).
- Disputing the legitimacy of the ruling regime (where necessary) and
- Creating credible democratic alternative (cited in Mohammed, 2012).

As a corollary to the above, opposition politics promotes viable debates in the legislative house while scrutinizing other legislative and budgetary proposals of the government. This role keeps the ruling party on its toes in terms of providing good governance to the people. However, the manner both the government and the opposition parties have conducted

themselves in Nigeria since the return to democracy in 1999; especially between 2010 and 2014, leaves much to be desired. This therefore increases the security threats posed by the opposition members especially as the government party equally appears naïve in handling the opposition in a tactful manner. This raises the question whether opposition politics is indeed an ingredient necessary for spicing a democracy or as a security threat to its very existence. By extension, the system is caught in a dilemma of where opposition politics appears to be a security threat and one-party system (which the ruling or government party would want to convert the state to), a daredevilry.

The study is therefore an attempt to understand how opposition politics in Nigeria has contributed to the continued security challenges bedeviling the country, as well as how the government has exhibited gross political imbecility in managing the situation. The work is partitioned into six starting with this brief introduction.

Conceptual Clarification

Democracy and opposition politics are the two key concepts of the study that were given consideration in this segment.

Democracy

Of all the concepts in Political Science, democracy remains one of the most ambiguous. It has been used as a system of government, an ideal state of political development akin to what Karl Marx called communism, or even as a mass movement that can lead to mobocracy and anarchy (US Military Training Manual No. 2000-2025, November 30, 1928), as well as an indispensable bad form of government (as conceived by Aristotle). Consequently, Jega (2007: 14) noted that:

As democracy evolved and spread worldwide and as the dominant system of political organization in modern nation-states, attempts to conceptualize and theorize it have become too amorphous and imprecise with the result that democracy has become a heavily contested albeit over flogged concept. Not only are there numerous, often contradictory definitions of the concept, it also seems to mean different things to different people, as illustrated by the following formulations: People' Democracy,

Guided Democracy, People's Democratic Dictatorship (Chinese variant).

Jega (2007) also noted that modern conception of democracy has come a long way from its classical notion, as well as its practices, whose history can be traced to ancient Greece which in effect, is in line with observation that democracy is generally believed to have emanated from the attempts in the Greek city-state of Athens to reform, organize and manage its political community (polis).

Nevertheless, to minimize the controversies arising from different conceptualizations of modern democracy, it is imperative to extract certain discernible uniformities inherent in virtually all the definitions. Among these are:

- Democracy is not a personal rule
- It is different from authoritarian or dictatorial rule
- It is based on some forms of participation or representation
- It is a rule where government derives legitimacy from the people
- The authority and power to operate by the government is derived from a body of rules called the Constitution (as in constitutional democracy)
- The people otherwise the citizens have the right to vote and be voted for equally or relatively so.

The above factors are characteristic of both liberal and socialist variants of democracy even though practiced under different pragmatic orientations. These orientations are mostly informed by the economic foundations of capitalism and socialism respectively.

Opposition Politics

In politics, the opposition comprises one or more political parties or other organized groups that are opposed to the government, the party or group in political control of a state (or other forms of political community) (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia). The degree of opposition varies according to political conditions. For example, in authoritarian and liberal systems, opposition may be repressed or welcomed respectively. Due to the fact that conflict is part of men, opposition is an inevitable aspect of men which is either repressed or welcomed.

Political opposition according to Okoli (2001) cited in Okoli and Ali (2014) denotes an organized partisan movement dedicated to opposing and

possibly changing an incumbent government. Equally, Robertson (1985: 357) defines it as “a political grouping, party or loose association of individuals who wish to change the government and its politics”. Ideally, the need for opposition political parties is to strike a delicate balance between majority power and minority rights (Egbewole and Etudaiye, 2010). In the context of this work therefore, opposition politics can be summarized as all those activities directly or indirectly associated with the roles of opposition political parties, grouping or loose association of individuals within the ruling political party who wish to change the government.

The explanation of opposition politics or political opposition as an organized group opposed to the government, the party in power or the group in political control of the state perfectly captures the state of the political opposition in Nigeria. This explains opposition as not just between two or more political parties (inter political conflict) but also even within a political party (intra party rivalry). Therefore, opposition in the context of this work may not necessarily be confined to the rivalry between and among different political parties like People’s Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressive Congress (APC), but to even among members of a given political party (for example, PDP members who are opposed to the individuals in control of the government). In fact, in Nigeria, what has continued to produce opposition to the government is an unresolved intra party conflict(s). Arising from the above therefore, the use of opposition politics in this context especially between 2010 and 2012 is the rivalry between President Goodluck Jonathan’s group and those opposed to his emergence as the Nigerian president, but between 2013 and 2014 is the political rivalry between PDP and APC.

Methodology

The study is a qualitative one that relied heavily on documentary evidence in data collection, while descriptive qualitative method was utilized in running the analysis. It also adopted Marxist post colonial state theory which contends that the post colonial state is a creation of imperialism and so follows a developmental pattern anchored on the interests of both the imperialist powers and the local bourgeois with little or nothing left for the helpless and hapless majority. As noted by Ekekwe (1986), the post colonial states rest on the foundation of the colonial state whose major pre-occupation was to create conditions under which primitive accumulation through the exploitation of human and natural resources by both local and international capitalists finds safe landing.

Post colonial states are noted for the following:

- Post colonial states are weak with weak political institutions. This informs the existence of some powerful notables who appear stronger than the state and whose activities are rarely regulated by the state.
- The state, being the instrument in the hands of the ruling class, is a means of primitive accumulation and this is why there is always a fierce battle between and among the ruling elites in the quest for political power.
- The post colonial states are replete with political instability arising from the crisis of relevance among politicians who ipso facto empower ethnic militias to help achieve for them what appeared difficult in an election.
- Selfish interest rather than national interest is the driving impulse of politicians in the post colonial state. This makes it difficult for the ruling elites to work in the same page in the course of nation-building and economic development.
- Ambition rather than inspiration is the guiding principle in the quest for power among politicians in the post colonial states.

The Paradox of Democracy in Conflict Resolution

Democracy by virtue of being an all-inclusive-government of the people is assumed to be a panacea for managing the people's problems. This is even so given that in a democracy, the majority will always have their way and minority their say; indicating that popular opinion is the driving force of policy making. As observed by Egbewole and Etudaiye (2010), majority rule (democracy) is the most satisfactory way of organizing the society especially because it acknowledges the pristine position of every individual having a role to play in the society where all constituent members of the community are necessarily given the opportunity to have their say while the majorities usually have their way. However, the same democracy appears to be a vector and harbinger of crisis that threatens the political system, including that of Nigeria. There are two critical questions to ask here: firstly, how has democracy been demonstrated as a panacea for resolving conflicts in Nigeria, and secondly, how has democracy contributed to the crisis situation in the country?

On the one hand, the idea of democracy being an instrument of peace led to the development of democratic peace theory by such scholars like

Professor Michael Doyle and John M. Owen. Professor Doyle argued that there are two variants of institutional constraints that prevent democracies from going into war. These include:

- Democratic governments are reluctant to go to war (internal or external) because they are held accountable and responsible and must answer to the people. The idea here is that if a democratic government goes into war and the price of the conflict becomes high on the people, such a government would be visited with political retribution by being voted out by the electorates. This fear makes it reluctant to breed crisis or go to war; thereby encouraging peace.
- Democracy is fixated on checks and balances and therefore makes arbitrariness (which breeds crisis) impossible.

To this end, democracy is seen as a panacea for violent conflicts and this informs the reason for being one of the measures the United Nations (UN) often advocates in their intervention efforts in war torn countries (Joshua, 2013). Democracy, by its very nature, is a system designed for broadening governance and incorporating the majority while reducing rancor characteristic of authoritarian regimes. This role alone is germane to peace. Accordingly, Moore (1966: 414) cited in Jega (2007: 11) noted that:

The development of a democracy is a long and certainly incomplete struggle to do three closely related things: 1) to check arbitrary rulers, 2) to replace arbitrary rules with just and rational ones, and 3) to obtain a share for the underlying population in the making of rules.

This understanding makes opposition germane to a democracy and reduction of arbitrariness in governance imperative; and both are combined to produce a result of organizing a just society based on rationality. Arising from the above, Nigeria since 1999 has inevitably achieved certain progress through the democratic project in terms of conflict resolution. Some of these achievements include:

- Successful protection of the provision of the Constitution against arbitrariness following the move to scuttle it through tenure elongation by President Olusegun Obasanjo.
- Granting of fair hearing to the Niger-Delta militants which culminated to the Amnesty Programme as well as the

establishment of the Ministry of Niger-Delta by Yar'Adua's government.

- Invocation of the Doctrine of Necessity by the National Assembly which empowered Goodluck Jonathan (then, as a vice president) to be the acting president and subsequently averted a calamity that would have befallen Nigeria following the continued absence of President Yar'Adua under a deteriorating health condition and vacancy created thereof.

However, these achievements are still far from being commensurate to what those who fought and died for democracy anticipated. This therefore rekindles the observation by Jega (2007: 22) that:

In the Nigerian context, democracy is something much talked about, greatly aspired and strenuously struggled for. It is a set objective pursued with apparent vigor but not yet attained. It is an aspiration dearly cherished by many but far from being realized.

On the other hand, even democratic peace theorist like Owen noted that liberal ideas cause democracies to turn from war with one another, and those same ideas prop these states to go to war with illiberal states. Internally, therefore, these liberal ideas characteristic of liberal democracy are also turning the states of Africa (including Nigeria) against the people and the people against the state; thereby making violence inevitable. Against this backdrop, democracy has been seen as a vector and harbinger of violence. In fact, according to Keane (2010), democracy rather than being a solution to conflict, is a major driver of conflict. He further stated that:

The conjecture that democracy and bellicosity are terrible twins is a healthy corrective to evolutionist views of democracy that see only its benign freedom-loving qualities, or prefer to emphasize its 'world-historical' tendency to spread secular, science-induced economic growth across the whole earth. To insist that democracy has a violent heart is correctly to draw attention to the entanglement of democratic institutions and ideals in the facts and fantasies of war, but the protest it launches against democracy as an engine of war – paradoxically – feeds upon a deep-seated historical tendency

for democracies to 'denature' war and other forms of violence (Keane, 2010: 3).

Continuing on the tendencies of democracy to generate crisis, Keane (2010:3) also observed that:

Like the rebellious teenager whose hot-tempered behavior owes much to careful parental nurturing in the arts of resisting deference, so the thesis that democracy has a violent hearts is symptomatic of the unusual sensitivity of actually existing democracies to war, and other forms of violence. Contemporary democracies enable the 'democratization of violence'.

This democratization of violence is noticeable around the world especially since the era of liberal democratization process. The attendant consequences of liberal democracy is exemplified in the crises in the Middle-East and other parts of the world, and Nigeria since 1999 has continued to have a fair share of this democratization of violence. Violent ethnic militias, rebel movements, political assassinations, electoral violence, among other forms of terrorist activities have been characteristic of the majority rule system (democracy) in Nigeria. Indeed, since 2010, Nigeria has been in a near-state of war and there appears no hope that the situation will improve in the foreseeable future. As shown in table one (1) below, Nigeria since 1999 has not had it so good given the prevailing crisis exemplified in both the extra judicial and other forms of violent killings.

Table 1: The Extra-Judicial Killings in Nigeria, between 1999 and 2012.

	Cause	Place and Number of Death
1.	Vigilante Killings	This accounted for over 15,000 unlawful deaths mostly carried out in the 5 South Eastern states (Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi, Abia and Imo) and Lagos state
2.	Police crackdown on MASSOB activists	This accounted for about 2,000 deaths in Anambra, Ebonyi, Imo, Abia and Enugu states
3.	Inter-communal and intra-communal conflicts	Ezza-Ezillo inter-communal conflicts of 2008 and 2010 accounted for over 300 deaths; Ife-Modakeke 1999/2001, Hausa/Yoruba in

		Sagamu in Ogun state, Igbo/Yoruba in Alaba market and Lagos wharf 2001, Umuleri-Aguleri 1999/2000, Owerre-Ezukala/Ogbunka conflict in 2011, Umunya intra-communal conflict, Akpu-Ajali inter-communal conflict, Fulani/host farmers' clash in Nasarrawa and Benue states, et cetera, have resulted to over 1000 unlawful deaths
4.	Military invasion of Nigerian hostile communities	Over 4,000 civilians were killed outside the law by the Nigerian Security forces led by the Nigerian Army during the military invasion of the Odi community in Bayelsa state in 1999, Zaki-Biam in Benue state in October 2001 (over the abduction and killing of 19 soldiers), Gbaramatu community in Delta state in May 2009 and other troubled areas in the Niger-Delta region between 1999 and 2009
5.	Ethno-Religious/Sectarian killings	Over 16,000 Nigerian civilians might have been killed in ethno-religious/sectarian violence in Nigeria since 1999. As at March 2010, over 13,500 deaths were recorded. Over 5000 have died in Jos crises since 2001. In the 2000, 2001 and 2002, Kano and Kaduna ethno-religious violence alone, over 3000 deaths were recorded. In May 2004, over 700 lives were lost in Yelwa, Plateau state and up to 1000 deaths were recorded in Jos in 2011 alone
6.	Other sectarian killings since 2002 including the ones from Boko Haram	In 2004, the Yelwa killings in Jos led to reprisal attacks in Kano in 2005 which resulted to over 200 deaths (mostly Igbo traders). This also led to reprisal attack in Anambra leading to over 80 deaths (mostly, Hausa muslims). In 2002, about 3000 deaths were recorded in Borno state (and at 2012, the death toll has been put at over 7000

		deaths)
7.	Police extra-judicial killings	An average of 1,500 extra-judicial killings is recorded annually in Nigeria since 1999 arising from custody and road block killings, torture, high handed crowd control and conflict management

Source: Edeh and Ugwueze (2013). "Democratic Performance and Political Discourse in Nigeria". Nigerian Journal of Social Sciences, 9(2): 94-117

A look at the global peace index (see table 2) between 2009 and 2012 will equally add to the level of insecurity situation in Nigeria even in the midst of democratic practice.

Table 2: Nigeria and other West African Countries on the Global Peace Index Ranking

S/N	Country	GPI Score 2009	GPI Rank 2009	GPI Score 2010	GPI Rank 2010	GPI Score 2011	GPI Rank 2011	GPI Score 2012	GPI Rank 2012
1	Ghana	1.76	52	1.78	48	1.75	42	1.81	50
2	Sierra Leone	-	-	1.82	53	1.90	61	1.86	52
3	Burkina Faso	1.91	71	1.85	57	1.83	51	1.88	52
4	Gambia	-	-	-	-	1.91	62	1.96	74
5	Senegal	1.98	80	2.03	79	2.05	77	1.99	78
6	Guinea	-	-	-	-	2.13	92	2.07	92
7	Guinea Bissau	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.11	95
8	Liberia	-	-	2.15	99	2.16	97	2.13	101
9	Mali	2.09	96	2.24	109	2.19	100	2.13	102
10	Benin	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.23	114
11	Niger	-	-	-	-	2.36	119	2.24	116
12	Mauritania	2.48	124	2.39	123	2.43	130	2.30	125
13	Cote D'Ivoire	2.34	117	2.30	118	2.42	128	2.42	134
14	Nigeria	2.60	129	2.76	137	2.74	142	2.80	146

Source: Global Peace Index (2009-2012). Compiled by Achumba, Ighomereho & Akpor-Robaro (2013:87) and cited in Okolie and Ugwueze (2014: 14-15).

In fact, between 2009 and 2014, more than the total number of deaths recorded in the table 1 has been caused by the Boko Haram insurgency alone; thereby worsening security situation and reducing Nigeria more in the global peace index (see the tables below).

Table 3: deaths caused by the Boko Haram insurgency since 2009

S/N	Date	Nature and Place of Attack	Number of Casualties
1	26 th July, 2009	First clash with the security agencies in Bauchi state after an all night attack on Dutsen-Tanship police station	42 people killed including 39 sect members, 2 policemen and 1 soldier
2	27 th July, 2009	First attack in Yobe state during an invasion in Potiskum Divisional Police Headquarters	4 killed including 3 policemen and 1 fire service officer
3	29 th July, 2009	Confrontation with security men at Mamudo village, along Potiskum/Damaturu Road, Yobe state	33 members of the sect killed
4	29 th July, 2009	An all-night battle with combined security operatives at Railway Terminus, Maiduguri	Unreported scores killed and operational base of the sect destroyed
5	13 th March, 2010	Attack in Northern part of Jos, Plateau state	300 people killed
6	8 th September, 2010	Attack at Bauchi Central Prison	No record of death but prisoners were freed
7	24 th Dec., 2010	Bomb explosion in Barkin Ladi, Jos, Plateau state	30 people killed
8	31 st Dec., 2010	Explosions at Mogadishu mammy market, Abuja	About 10 people killed

Boko Haram attacks from January 2011 to June 2012

S/N	Date	Nature and Place of Attack	Number of Casualties
1	28 th Jan., 2011	Attack on the ANPP governorship candidate's convoy at Lawan Bukar ward, Maiduguri	7 people killed including the governorship candidate
2	2 nd Mar., 2011	Attack on DPO Mustapha Sandamu's residence at	2 policemen killed

		Rigasa area of Kaduna state	
3	30 th Mar., 2011	Bomb explosion in Damaturu	A policeman was injured
4	2 nd April, 2011	Bomb explosion at Dutsen-Tanship Police Station	2 policemen injured
5	4 th May, 2011	Attack at Maiduguri Prison on Kashim Ibrahim Way	A prison warden was killed
6	5 th May, 2011	Attack in Maiduguri Government House	2 people killed including the Duty Officer and a 13-year-old boy with another injured
7	9 th May, 2011	Attack on the residences of 2 Islamic clerics, Sheikh Goni Tijani and Mallam Abur, at Mairi and Bulabulum Wards in Bauchi state	The 2 Islamic clerics were killed
8	9 th May, 2011	Chairman of NURTW Bauchi state was attacked	1 person died – the chairman
9	13 th May, 2011	Bomb explosion at London Chinki, Maiduguri	2 people killed
10	15 th May, 2011	Bomb explosion at Lagos Street, Maiduguri	5 people injured including 2 soldiers and 3 policemen. Also, a police man was shot dead same day in the city
11	29 th May, 2011	Bomb explosion in Bauchi military barrack	14 killed
12	29 th May, 2011	Bomb explosion at Zuba, a suburb of Kubwa in Abuja	8 people lost their legs
13	31 st May, 2011	Attack on Shehu of Borno's brother	1 person killed – the Shehu's brother
14	1 st Jun., 2011	Attack on Police Station in Maiduguri	5 people killed
15	12 th Jun., 2011	Attack on a drinking joint in Bulumkutu, Maiduguri	4 people killed
16	16 th Jun., 2011	Bomb explosion at Police Headquarters, Abuja. Also, bomb explosion at Damboa town, Maiduguri.	2 people killed 4 children killed
17	20 th Jun., 2011	Attack on Kankara Police	2 people killed

		Station in Katsina state	
18	9 th July, 2011	Clash between Boko Haram and the military in Maiduguri. Also, bomb blast in a church at Suleja, Niger state	31 people killed. 4 died in that of Suleja with scores injured
19	11 th July, 2011	Bomb explosion at a relaxation joint in Fokados Street, Kaduna	Unreported scores killed with many more injured
20	12 th July, 2011	Attack on a moving military patrol vehicle with IED in Maiduguri	5 people killed
21	15 th July, 2011	Bomb explosion in Maiduguri	5 people injured
22	23 rd July, 2011	Bomb explosion close to the Palace of the Shehu of Borno	3 soldiers injured
23	25 th July, 2011	Bomb explosion near the palace of a traditional ruler in Maiduguri	8 people killed
24	26 th Aug., 2011	Attack on the United Nations building in Abuja	25 people killed with about 60 more injured
25	12 th Sep., 2011	Bomb explosion in a Police Station in Misau, Bauchi state	7 people killed including 4 policemen
26	13 th Sep., 2011	Attack on the military after a raid in Boko Haram hideouts in Bauchi state	About 4 soldiers injured
27	17 th Sep., 2011	Attack on Mohammed Yusuf's brother-in-law two days after playing host to Obasanjo	1 person – Babakura Fugu – killed
28	3 rd Oct., 2011	Attack at Baga market in Maiduguri	3 people killed
29	4 th Nov., 2011	Attack in Damaturu, Yobe state	About 150 people killed
30	27 th Nov., 2011	Attack in Geidaam, Yobe state	7 people killed
31	18 th Dec., 2011	Bomb detonation in Shuwari, Maiduguri	3 sect members died

32	22 nd Dec., 2011	Bomb explosion and gunshots in Borno state	4 people killed and several others injured
33	24 th Dec., 2011	Bomb explosion in Jos	About 80 people killed
34	25 th Dec., 2011	Bomb explosion at St. Theresa's Catholic Church in Madalla, Niger state	About 50 people killed and several others injured
35	30 th Dec., 2011	Attack in Maiduguri	7 people killed
36	5 th Jan., 2012	Attack in a church in Gombe	6 people killed
37	6 th Jan., 2012	Attack in Christ Apostolic Church, Yola, Adamawa state. Also, attack at Mubi, Adamawa	17 people killed. Also, 20 Igbo people were killed in Mubi
38	20 th Jan., 2012	Multiple attacks in Kano	About 250 people killed
39	22 nd Jan., 2012	Attacks at 2 churches and the headquarters of Tafawa Balewa LGA in Bauchi state	About 10 people killed
40	26 th Jan., 2012	Bomb explosion in Sabon Gari, Kano state	Many injured
41	28 th Jan., 2012	Attack in Gambiru Ngala, Borno state	1 killed
42	29 th Jan., 2012	Attack in Gambiru Ngala, Borno state	2 killed
43	30 th Jan., 2012	Attack in Maiduguri environs	6 killed including 2 Air force officers
44	4 th Feb., 2012	Attack in Damboa town, Borno state	2 killed
45	5 th Feb., 2012	Attack in Yobe	An SS man killed
46	7 th Feb., 2012	Attack at Kano market and military barrack	5 people killed
47	7 th Feb., 2012	Another attack in Kano	10 people killed
48	10 th Feb., 2012	Shootout with soldiers in Maiduguri	4 people killed
49	10 th Feb., 2012	Attack in Police Station in Shagari Quarters, Kano state	No casualty recorded
50	12 th Feb., 2012	Tip-off in Maiduguri	Some members of Boko Haram killed
51	15 th Feb., 2012	Jail break in Koton Karji	A warder killed and 199

		prison, Kogi state	prisoners freed
52	15 th Feb., 2012	Attack on policemen in Minna, Niger state	2 policemen killed
53	17 th Feb., 2012	Attack I Geidam, Yobe state	2 people killed
54	17 th Feb., 2012	Attack in Maiduguri metropolis	5 people killed
55	19 th Feb., 2012	Bomb explosion near a church in Suleja on the outskirts of Abuja	5 people injured
56	11 th Mar., 2012	Suicide bomb attack in a church in Jos, Plateau state	4 people killed and 38 others injured
57	8 th April, 2012	Bomb explosion on Easter Sunday near a church in Kaduna	36 people killed with 13 others injured
58	29 th April, 2012	Bomb attack at a lecture theater used as Christian worship in the University of Kano	19 people killed including 2 professors
59	3 rd Jun., 2012	Suicide car bomber drove into a church in Yelwa during Sunday service	About 12 people killed
60	10 th June, 2012	Attack on a church congregation in Biu town, Borno state	Unreported number of people killed

Boko Haram attacks from October 2012

S/N	Date	Nature and Place of Attack	Number of Casualties
1	1 st Oct., 2012	Attacks at Adamawa State University, Federal Poly, and the school of Health Technology and also University of Maiduguri in Borno state	About 43 students killed
2	1 st Oct., 2012	Attack in Minna, Niger state	2 policemen killed
3	7 th Oct., 2012	Confrontation between the military and the sect members in Damaturu, Yobe state	About 32 people killed including 30 members of the sect and 2 civilians
4	8 th Oct., 2012	Reprisal attack for the death	10 people killed

		of military officers through IED in Maiduguri	
5	14 th Oct., 2012	Attack at Dongo Dawa village in Gwari LGA of Kaduna state	24 people killed
6	28 th Oct., 2012	Attack in Kaduna	8 people killed and 100 injured
7	28 th Oct., 2012	Suicide bomber struck at St Rita's Catholic church in Angwar yero, Kaduna state	8 people killed
8	29 th Oct., 2012	Attack at a drinking bar in Gindin Akwati Barkin Ladi, Plateau state	6 people killed
9	21 st Nov., 2012	Attack in Maiduguri by the sect	10 people killed
10	22 nd Nov., 2012	Attack on ladies believed to be on mini-skirts in Maiduguri	20 women killed
11	24 th Nov., 2012	Bomb explosion in St Andrew's Anglican Church at the Armed Forces Command and Staff College Jaji, Kaduna State	15 people killed
12	26 th Nov., 2012	Attack on SARS headquarters in Abuja	2 officers killed and 30 detainees freed
13	1 st Jan., 2013	Shootout in Maiduguri	14 people killed including 13 sect members and a soldier
14	2 nd Jan., 2013	Attack on a Police Station at Song town of Adamawa state	4 people killed including 2 policemen and 2 civilians
15	4 th Jan., 2013	Attack on a military check-point in Marte town of Adamawa state	7 people killed including 5 sect members, a soldier and a policeman
16	19 th Jan., 2013	Attack on a contingent of Mali-bound Nigerian troops in central Kogi, Kogi state	2 soldiers killed and 5 others injured
17	19 th Jan., 2013	Attack on Emir of Kano's convoy	5 people killed mostly the Emir's security guards
18	21 st Jan., 2013	Attack of a market in Damboa town	18 people killed mostly local hunters

19	23 rd Jan., 2013	Attack at Gwange area of Maiduguri		5 people beheaded
20	27 th Jan., 2013	Attack of Gajiganna village near Maiduguri		8 civilians killed
21	1 st Feb., 2013	Clash with the military in two forests outside Maiduguri		17 sect members killed
22	8 th Feb., 2013	Attack on 2 polio clinics in Kano		10 polio immunization workers killed and 3 others injured
23	10 th Feb., 2013	Attack in Potiskum, Yobe state		3 North Korean doctors killed
24	15 th Feb., 2013	Bomb attack against military patrol vehicle in Maiduguri		2 suicide bombers died and 1 soldier injured
25	16 th Feb., 2013	Attack on a construction company in Bauchi state		1 security employee killed and 7 foreign nationals abducted
26	19 th Feb., 2013	French family taken hostage in Cameroun near the Nigerian border		No casualty reported but the family members were abducted
27	20 th Feb., 2013	Attack of a military patrol vehicle in Maiduguri		3 people killed including a suicide bomber and 2 civilians
28	18 th Mar., 2013	Bomb explosion in a luxurious bus park in Kano		More than 70 people killed and several others injured
29	16 th April, 2013	Clash between the JTF and the sect members in Baga, Borno state		Over 200 people killed mostly civilians
30	18/6/2013	Maiduguri	Unspecified	22 people mostly civilians were killed http://www.prestv.com
31	6/7/2013	Attack on government boarding school in Mamudo village Borno state	Sporadic shooting and throwing of explosives	At least 43 people were killed, mostly, students http://en.m.wikipedia.org

32	29/7/2013	Sabon Gari, Kano state	Coordinated bomb blasts	At least, 6 people died and 6 others injured	http://dawn.com/news...
33	4/8/2013	Military base and police post in Bama, Borno state	Unspecified	12 soldiers and 7 police officers were killed	http://world.time.com...
34	11/8/2013	Ngom village near konduga in Borno state	Shoot-out	12 people were killed	http://www.npr.org/blogs/
35	11/8/2013	Mosque in Konduga, Borno state	Coordinated attacks including shooting and throwing explosives	44 worshippers killed and 26 others injured	http://en.m.wikipedia.org

Source: Onuoha and Ugwueze (2014). "United States Security Strategy and the Management of Boko Haram Crisis in Nigeria". Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, 2 (3): 22-43.

Boko Haram attacks from November 2013

S/N	Date	Nature and Place of Attack	Number of Casualties
1	28/11/2013	Attacks on residents of Sabon Gari village in Damboa District, Borno state	More than 17 people were killed
2	30/11/2013	Coordinated attacks at Baga in Ningi villages	Scores of people were killed including 7 fishermen
3	2/12/2013	Around 200 Boko Haram gunmen dressed in military uniform launched coordinated attacks on an air force base in Maiduguri	Scores of people killed
4	20/2/2014	Coordinated attacks at Bama	More than 115 people killed

5	22/2/2014	Coordinated attacks at Izge village	More than 100 people were killed
6	25/2/2014	Attacks on Federal Government Boarding School at Buni/Yadi	About 59 people mostly students were killed
7	15/3/2014	Boko Haram clash with the military at 21 Armoured Brigade, Nigerian Army, Borno	More than 350 people were killed
8	5/4/2014	Attacks on Buni/Gari village mosque	More than 17 people were killed
9	9/4/2014	Multiple attacks on Dikwa, Kala Balge, Gambulga and Gwoza villages in Borno	More than 210 people killed
10	14/04/2014	Bomb blast at Nyanya motor-park, Abuja	More than 100 people killed and over 200 others badly injured
11	15/04/2014	Attack at a Government Senior Secondary School, Chibok, Borno state	Over 275 girls were said to have been abducted
12	26/04/2014	Attack in military unit at Blabili, Dandoa, Borno state	More than 44 people killed
13	01/05/2014	Bomb explosion in a Taxi park at Nyanya, Abuja	More than 25 people killed and above 71 others injured
14	02/05/2014	Attack on commuters along Maiduguri-Beneshiek-Damaturu Road.	About 10 people killed
15	05/05/2014	Boko Haram attack in Gamboru village, a border town with Cameroon	About 300 hundred people killed and 11 girls abducted
16	19/05/2014	Bomb explosion in Sabon Gari Kano	Over 10 people killed and several others injured
17	20/05/2014	Bomb blasts at Jos Terminus market, Plateau state	About 150 people killed
18	21/05/2014	Attack on Alagarno, a Village in Borno state close to Chibok	About 17 people killed
19	24/05/2014	Bomb explosion in Jos football viewing center	Unspecified number of people killed
20	28/05/2014	Attack by gunmen at Gurmushi, Borno state	More than forty people killed
21	2/06/2014	Bomb blast at a bar and a	More than 60 people killed

		brothel in military base, Mubi, Adamawa state	
22	3/06/2014	Boko Haram attacks at Attagara, Agapalawa and Aganjara, Gwoza Local Government Area of Borno state	More than 100 people were killed
23	15/06/2014	Attack at Borno market	More than 15 people were reportedly killed
24	17/06/2014	Bomb blast at football viewing center at Damaturu, Yobe state	About 21 killed and others seriously injured
25	23/06/2014	Suicide bomb attack at Kano School of Hygiene Technology, Kano state	About 8 people killed and many others injured
26	25/06/2014	Bomb attack at a shopping mall in Abuja	About 24 people killed and many others badly injured
27	29/06/2014	Gunmen attack at some churches in Chibok community, Borno state	Actual number of deaths yet to be unraveled
28	14/07/2014	Attack in Borno	About 26 people were killed
29	23/07/2014	Boko Haram attack in Kaduna	About 39 people were killed
30	24/07/2014	Suicide bomb attack on Buhari's convoy in Kaduna	More than 82 people were reportedly killed
31	31/07/2014	Boko Haram attacks in Yobe mosque and another female suicide bomb attacks in Kano	About 18 people were reportedly killed
32	11/08/2014	Attack in Borno	28 civilians killed with more than 97 others kidnapped
33	29/10/2014	Clashes between the sect members and the military at Mubi in Adamawa and Uba in Borno	Several people killed and many others injured.

Source: compiled by the researcher.

Most of the crises in the above tables are politically motivated but they are often religiously and ethnically cloned to conceal the true identities of their sponsors and for what political gain(s). Worst in this political

coloration are the Boko Haram insurgence, the electoral violence of 2011 and the continued indigene-settler conflicts in many northern parts especially Jos in Plateau state. These violent conflicts are linked to the political culture of winners take all which has propelled many disengaged politicians to resort to other means both lawful and unlawful in pursuit of what appeared impossible at the polls. According to Onaiyekan (2012) cited in Onuoha and Ugwueze (2014:24):

In Nigeria's "winner-take-all" political culture, where the country's political elites from a number of regions, religions, and ethnicities compete for power and the control of oil resources, militant groups (like Boko Haram sect) serve as a kind of pressuring mechanism for achieving what cannot be achieved in elections, in parliament, or in backroom deals...oil wealth has remained in the hands of a very powerful few, creating economic and social inequality for those regions – such as the Islamic North and the oil-producing but poor Niger-Delta regions – who are left out of the power balance.

This is what prevails when access to state power becomes a means of wealth accumulation which is often characteristic of the post colonial states, and, in most cases, the state is weak to regulate the activities of some powerful notables who constitute security threat. These powerful notables are found both in the ruling and the opposition political parties. In fact, those in the opposition political parties are mostly renegade elements who defected from the ruling party based on some perceived permutations of an impending political disengagement. This results to the continued permeation of political parties without ideological leanings.

The type of democracy in Nigeria has encouraged a political culture of impunity that fuels violence. As Onuoha and Ugwueze (2014) noted, the Nigerian political culture of impunity which covertly encourages violence as a strategy for capturing state power fuels the embers of insurgency including that of the Boko Haram. The paradox of democracy in crisis management especially in Nigeria is that, while appearing as a panacea for conflict resolution (the reason for which many fought and died for it), it is also a vector and harbinger of violence. This was why G. Damachi, a confidant of former President Ibrahim Babangida, noted that what Nigeria needs is a benevolent dictatorship (equivalent to what some may call democratic dictatorship) along the lines of those in Malaysia and Singapore and not the

democracy as it is presently being practiced. While we may disagree with this notion, we cannot but accept that Nigeria's democracy is not living up to the expectations. The system has taken more of the negativisms inherent in a democracy than the developmental leaps it advocates, thereby making the entire process a security threat.

Developing a Viable Opposition in Nigeria

African traditional political system almost made no provision for opposition. Every member of the political community was expected to strictly submit to the authority that is in control of the system and any act of deviance was visited with ostracism, execution, public ridicule or other humiliating forms of punishment. This practice of strict obedience to the ruling authority is yet to completely leave Africa even in this era of democratization and its attendant opposition system. This is why the system has continued to view opposition as an assemblage of the enemies of the government rather than an organization of people out to inject the ingredients necessary for garnishing the sauce of democracy. According to Economic Commission for Africa (2007:1):

African countries are characterized by fragmentation of various aspects of their political economy, including their institutions of governance...The overwhelming majority in most African countries, continue to adhere principally to traditional institutions. The post-colonial State, on the other hand, essentially emulates western institutions of governance, which are often at odds with African cultural values and the region's contemporary socio-economic realities. Fragmentation of the institutions of governance (including the establishment of different political parties) along with economic and social fragmentation has contributed to Africa's crisis of state-building, governance, and economic development.

It further observed that despite modest progress in some countries, the post-colonial states of Africa have been unable to establish rights-based political and economic systems of governance that would facilitate consolidation of state-building and promote economic development. Largely, this has been due to its detachment from the institutional and cultural values of the pre-colonial African constituency.

Similarly, Gyekye (n.d.) observed that the early euphoric days of political independence of many African states have been blighted in several ways and that the political institutions, including political parties, that were bequeathed to the African peoples by their colonial masters did not function properly. He further noted the following factors to be responsible for the failure of the political institutions in Africa:

- African people simply did not have the ability to effectively operate systems of government that were entirely alien to them
- They did not try enough to make a success of those alien institutions.
- Not having any emotional, ideological or intellectual attachments to those institutions, African people had no real desire to operate them.
- They lacked certain moral or dispositional virtues or attitudes (such as patience, tolerance, incorruptibility) which would have made for the successful operation of those alien institutions.
- That the institutions might have worked well enough but for the disruptions of the political processes of the military (<http://www.crvp.org/book/Series02/II-1/CH12.htm>).

The results of the failure of these political institutions in Africa, including Nigeria, have been political instability, uncertainty and confusion.

The understanding of the above issues raised about the pre-colonial African political system is germane to developing a viable political opposition that is result-oriented, ideology-driven and healthy for smooth democratic practice. Arising from the foregoing, the following points are imperative for the development of a viable opposition system in Nigeria.

- There should be a constitutional provision for a two-party system where defection is criminalized. This will teach politicians the act of patience, tolerance and incorruptibility.
- The state should have the strong political will to punish those who incite the public through their utterances and other forms of illegal acts irrespective of the person's social status.
- The state should see both the ruling and the opposition parties as partners in progress rather than mutual enemies. This will reduce the antagonisms inherent in their relationship.

- Criticism of government policies should be constructive rather than destructive and purely based on issues rather than individuals.
- The underlining ethos should always be that 'he serves his party well who serves his state best'. This will place both the ruling party and the opposition at the vintage point of statesmanship where the national interest is the driving force.
- By virtue of being an alternative government in waiting, opposition political parties should always have viable and people-oriented programmes that could help them defeat the ruling party based on available issues.

Conclusion

The organizational prowess of democracy in enthroning a just society devoid of administrative arbitrariness has propelled its acceptance across the globe as the only form of government that has the propensity to enhance peace. In view of this, virtually all countries of the world have keyed into one form of democracy or the other. However, liberal democracy has dominated other variants in the global terrain via its domineering overture. The political opposition that accompanies it, as well as the lack of proper understanding of its operational relevance especially in Nigeria has led to the continued crisis of the state which has exacerbated the insecurity situation in the country.

Issues like conceptual clarification, the paradox of democracy in conflict resolution and the development of viable opposition in Nigeria constitute the explanatory tools that helped in understanding how opposition politics (through the activities of opposition political parties and those opposed to the government), as well as government political imbecility has contributed to the security challenges bedeviling the country. Consequently, unpatriotic opposition disposition and government political imbecility (exemplified in its inability to regulate the unhealthy activities of some powerful notables) have been identified as the contributory factors to the continued exacerbation of the insecurity situation in Nigeria; in addition to the politicization of security characteristic of post colonial states' politicians in their quest for political power. However, while democracy remains the best form of government vis-à-vis the political opposition it throws up, the manner it is being practiced in Nigeria where both the ruling and the opposition political parties adopt lawful and unlawful means in the quest to

capture (for the opposition parties) or retain (for the ruling party) political power has made democracy and opposition politics a security threat.

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