SOCIO-POLITICAL CONFLICT PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY HARMONY IN NIGERA: AN ANALYSIS OF CULTURE NEGLECT IN THE BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY

[1]OPURUM Innocent Okwu and [2]DIBIA Joseph Ahamuefula.

[1]Department of Political Science, Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri, Imo State.
[2]Department of History and International Studies, Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri, Imo State.

Corresponding Author Email: innocentopurum@yahoo.com

Abstract

The paper analyzed the Boko Haram insurgency to show the culture neglect in political conflict prevention and community harmony in Nigeria. It relied on unstructured available data, which were collected from secondary documents for descriptive analysis of a non-survey and non-experimental qualitative study. Cultural determinism was found a suitable theoretical framework based on the papers position that pluralist paradigm, conflict theory and communication theory which bear relevance to the study are all culture deterministic. The paper revealed that Culture is the nexal gap between socio-political conflict prevention and community harmony in Nigeria. It observed that the absence of an active national culture with capacity to make divergent interests of sub-cultures or component units conform to national interest in Nigeria was the vacuum that led to the failure of early warning signals and mechanisms to prevent the Boko Haram conflict. It recommended long term and short term culture-sensitive pathways to harmony in the Nigerian national community and cautioned that the greatest danger facing communities at all levels, which consciously or otherwise, undermine the culture-dimension to socio-political relations of conflict within it, is unending or at least, not near-ending crisis, conflict, and disharmonious living, even an outright dismemberment.

Introduction

Indeed, conflict is a constant variable and radiant vector of change in any given community where it is managed or resolved. It can be a clog in the wheel of community harmony and progress, where it is mismanaged or ignored. Deutsch and Coleman (2000) believe that "conflict by itself is neither good nor bad. However, the manner in which it is handled determines whether it is constructive or destructive". Good hand and Hulme (1999) insist that conflict is only a problem when a society cannot represent, manage or resolve its different interests in a productive manner, thus initiating a degenerative or destructive cycle of physical violence. However viewed, it is "a natural part of human existence"
(Odunga 2013).

Socio political conflicts fit into the above construct of conflict. Socio-political conflicts are the outcome of the irreconcilable and contradictory values, interest or interactions which are manifest in man's core and flux nature. Man's desire or quest to dominate others but not to be dominated; or to be visibly recognized by others and to vehemently resist being disregarded could be attributed as the root of socio-political conflicts. The Nigerian community has witnessed series of short lived, protracted and ever-continuing socio-political conflicts since independence. The national census controversy of 1962/63, the general election crisis of 1964, the Civil war-turned secession crisis of 1967-1970, the Zangon Khataf massacre of 1992 (in Kaduna state), the Ugep-Idomi-war of 1992 (in Cross Rivers State), the Tiv-Jekun conflict of 1992 (Taraba State), the June 12 election annulment crisis of 1993, the Ogoni Massacre of 1993/1994 (in Rivers), the Kano conflicts of 1995 and 1997, the Ife-Modakeke crisis of 1997 (in Osun State), the Niger Delta militancy since 2001, the MASSOB agitations and the Boko Haram insurgency are examples of diverse socio-political conflicts in Nigeria .

Community harmony in Nigeria is a long sought project that has become a recurring mirage, despite several mechanisms for conflict prevention and management. A condition of harmony in a typical socio-political system does not mean absence of conflict in its sense. It is rather an indication that divergent views which are prone to conflict situations are prevented, managed or resolved through formal or informal mechanisms.

Prevention of Socio political conflicts therefore, is the surest way to community peace through a set of culture-relevant processes and strategies. This is because conflict prevention processes tend to respond to diversities in and peculiarities of culture, just as most conflict situations are culture induced.

Problem Setting

Conflict and harmony exist in polar-distance positions in Nigeria. Conflict prevention moves and strategies no longer lead to community peace. Divergent interests which can be mutually addressed through relevant channels of discussion and negotiation have degenerated into prolonged unrest, deep seated violence, insurgency, terror and militancy. The situation has revealed perceived weakness or outright failure of most processes, institutions and mechanisms for conflict

prevention. The effect is huge financial waste on aborted or failed peace programmes, destruction of innumerable lives and properties, very scary environment for foreign and domestic investment in the country; which summarily lead to delayed national development. Obviously there is a linkage gap between prevention of socio-political conflicts and attainment of community harmony in Nigeria. This paper suspects the absence of national culture as the linkage gap in this regard. Most socio-political conflicts are either culture-linked or culture-sensitive. After all, "only those who spoke their language could understand their behaviorus, values and social system" (ancient Greece wisdom: study.com 2015).

Objectives of the Study

The central objective of this paper is to use Boko Haram insurgency   to establish that there is culture neglect in the relationship between socio-political conflict prevention and community harmony in Nigeria. Specifically, the study is designed to investigate the following:

1.   Find out the reason for the failure of the early warning signals to prevent Boko Haram conflict.
2.   Ascertain if the prevention strategies of the Boko Haram conflict followed the culture sensitive   dimension or mechanism.
3.   Find out what should be done to resolve the Boko Haram Conflict in Nigeria.

It is intended that this paper will help to stimulate further debate in socio-political conflict prevention mechanisms and community harmony in Nigeria and by extension, Africa.

Methodology

To establish that there is culture neglect in socio-political conflict prevention and community harmony in Nigeria, the study focused on the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria covering eleven year period (2010-2021). It relied on documentary study to collect unstructured data from secondary documents (Books, Magazines, Journals, Newspapers, On-line reporting platforms etc.) on the insurgent activities of the Boko Haram Sect within the period under study. This method of data collection is found suitable for a non survey and non experimental qualitative study.

The data collected were analyzed descriptively to realize the study's stated objectives. Cultural determinism is accepted as a relevant theoretical framework or explanatory model to anchor analysis herewith and this framework is drawn from a philosophical assumption that; a strong cultural community will resort to confrontation or violence in defense of its tacitly held values perceived to be threatened in a national community that has no dominant national culture. And the possible conflict there from will hardly be prevented, controlled or resolved in a short while or even in a lifetime of that national community, if the response mechanisms undermine the potency of cultural path-ways.

Theoretical Framework: Cultural Determinism

Cultural determinism draws from and lends support to the environmentalist's assumption that the surroundings or the material and spiritual world possess nurturing influences which inevitably affect the growth, development and existence of living organisms. It is profoundly culture that provides the physical environment with the said nurturing influences which shape the impulses and perceptions, restiveness and peace as well as actions of progressive and retrogressive living of a people. Barber (2012) is right to believe that cultural determinism is based on cultural relativity which is the notion that growing up in one society is so different from growing up in another that they cannot be properly compared and differences are attributed to cultural differences.

Wilson (2014) is contextually linked by a ''web source'', through his contention that ''the idea of cultural determinism is extremely common: numerous societies have believed that their habits, ideas and customs were what determined the source of their uniqueness above all else. This can be seen in adherence to national epics, particular religious customs and the focus on the importance of language as the determiner of National Identity'' (Wikipedia 2016). Language as a cultural asset is invaluable in determining nature of interaction and of communication in the society. This agrees with the ancient Greece adage which says that ''only those who spoke their language could understand their behaviours, values and social systems" (Study.com, 2016). Indeed people reason in their language, perceive in their language and understand the language of violence and peace that is known to the tongue of their shared heritage. By this they can understand when the interface of desire driven values is becoming or has become intolerable. The knowledge of which can make possible the choice of appropriate mechanisms for conflict prevention or resolution even for conflict escalation which are common to their way of life.

Akanle (2012) situates it correctly. ''A society, region or nation that does not pay sufficient attention to its culture will thus, certainly not grow, never develop and will ultimately extinct. It will be swallowed up within the scheme of things as it will lose its very essence and definite character that makes it different 'from' others and that which will drive its growth and development''. This paper also believes that the same faith as painted above beholds or awaits any community - regional, national or international - that 'undermines the culture of any component unit, community or group within it'. The status of culture in human actions is simply as Smith (2006) has put it ''Culture is the bearing of every human action and aspiration. It determines what groups fight for to achieve development.''

Cultural factors will therefore, certainly affect local, national, regional and overall international relations. Culture affects policy and economic behaviour and this is usually in at least four ways, through its impact on organization and production, attributes towards consumption and work, the ability to create and manage institutions and the creation of social networks (Akanle, 2012). In the light of the above, the peace or harmony and crisis or insecurity level of any community ''could only be best appreciated'' and explained through the affective prism of culture and cultural dimensions.

No longer can modern communities and nations undermine the potency of culture and cultural resoluteness in shaping national or community life. The power of cultural strongholds in

multi-cultural societies, to determine the course of behaviour, action and survival therein is not in doubt. The greatest danger facing communities at all levels (local, national, regional or international), which consciously or otherwise ignore, undermine or shadow the culture dimension to socio-political relations within or without, risk unending or at least not near-ending instability, conflicts and disharmonious living; even outright dismemberment.

Socio-political conflicts, as we have posited in this paper, represents all divergent interests in society which may result from interactions of power, status, faith, pecuniary considerations and of environmental space and traits, leading to either hostility or harmony. Socio-political conflicts therefore, spring from all aspects of a people's way of life, hence it is essentially cultural. At local community, regional community or national community levels, nature of conflict eruption, conflict resolution or particularly conflict prevention has serious implications to the exigencies of culture. Exact situating of the concept of culture and national culture will help to unravel their exigent implications to socio-political conflict prevention.

Conceptual Clarification
Conflict and socio-political conflicts
Conflict is a universal phenomenon that underpins the foundation of a civil society or community. Francis (2006) defines it as a "situation of hostility between individuals, groups or states resulting from competition over resources, power or opposing interest in other areas". Wang (2010) sees conflict as a difference of opinion regarding ideas, wishes or desires. Nathan (2007) holds a different view from the duo above. He posits that a conflict is a nature consequence of major reform and popular pressure for fundamental political or economic change. In fact, most conflicts of the society or community are essentially socio-political conflicts irrespective of their coloration, nomenclature or design.

Socio-political conflicts are therefore, all manners of divergent interests in the society or community, resulting from interactions of power, status, faith, pecuniary considerations, and of cultural space and traits, leading to either hostile or peaceful living. Socio-political conflicts in line with Odunga (2013) construct, ranges from relationship conflicts, data conflicts, interest conflicts, structural conflicts, value conflict, leadership conflicts and social conflicts. Presenting these conflict types in their literal and denotative understanding, Odunga (2013) situates data and structural conflicts slightly different, thus: Data conflicts "occur when people lack information to make wise decisions and are misinformed thereby disagree on which data are relevant hence interpret information differently or have competing assessment procedures." Structural conflicts, he explains, "are caused by external forces to the people in dispute"; hence are outside of the conflicting parties control.

The above classification of conflict is fraught with inadequacies. Man in the community finds himself unconsciously into definite and varying sets of relationships which determine his co-existence and functionality. The community itself is the "highest stage of all relationships of man that started from the family" (apologies to Aristotle), irrespective of the range of considerations - local community, national community or international community. We do not, therefore, accept

the classification of relationship conflict which is based, perhaps on the immediate cause of conflict-breakdown of mutual or emotional ties between friends or family members. This is because every conflict of the community is a situation of breakdown in relationship; nature or nurture of such relationship notwithstanding. Also, the cause of a conflict or the differences which lead to a conflict situation, may not constitute an objective criteria for classification in all cases, unless where explicitly manifest. Ball and Peters (2003) hold a congruent view thus:

> The diversities that give rise to conflict need not have an
> objective base such as economic or racial differences;
> all differences are not sources of conflicts at public level
> because the differences between tall men and short
> men do not give rise to political conflicts.

We do not also accept the classification of interest and value conflicts. All conflicts of society or community are issues of diversities of interests and of values. To a very reasonable extent, selfish interests and values repugnant to public interests are at the base of most conflict situations. In Nigeria the situation is not different. Selfish interests and preference to sub-cultural public values prevalent in her primordial differences have continued to shape the nation's history of co-existence as a national community. It is in these differences of cultural, ancestral, political and religious history that lies the nurturing hold of conflict in Nigeria. Otite and Albert (1999) contend that "Nigeria's structure is inherently prone to generate conflicts from diverse ethnic, cultural interests and goals and from the political and economic necessities of survival''. The scholars further identified seven factors as sources of conflicts in Nigeria thus:

1. ***Land Space and Resources Available*:** The understanding is that different people within and across the boundaries of local government council areas lay claim to land as original settlers. For instance, the claim of the Modakekes of Ile-Ife in Osun state to the ownership of their settlement and farmland, which was vehemently resisted by the Ife people, led to the Ife-Modakeke conflict in 1997.
2. ***Disputed Jurisdiction of Certain Traditional Rulers and Chiefs:*** The explanation is that when a king from one ethnic or sub-ethnic group claims rulership over people belonging to another ethnic group, his reaction often generates conflicts. For instance, in Warri, Delta state, the label of Olu of Itsekiri ethnic group as the Olu (or king) of the whole Warri inhabited by the Ijaws, the Itsekiris and the Urhobos led to serious conflict in 1999.
3. ***Creation of Local Government Councils and the Location of their Headquarters:*** This was a clear indicator of the Warri conflict in 1999, among the Itsekiris, the Ijaws and the Urhobos. The same was the indicator in the Ife-Modakeke conflict of 1997, as well as the cause of the Zangon Khataf conflict of 1992.
4. ***Ethnic, Individual or Group, Competition over Scarce Political and Economic Resources:*** This factor is perceived in terms of relative deprivation or neglect of ethnic groups, some privileged individuals or sections or vis-a-vis others, in the allocation of

national resources. The Niger-Delta militancy which significantly destabilized Nigeria within the early years of democratic governance, and still destabilizing is located in this factor. The South Eastern secession conflict that degenerated to civil war 1967-1970 is an example of conflict resulting from completion over scarce political or economic resources.

5. ***The Segmented Nature of Nigeria with Conflicting Cultural Interests, Values and Preferences:*** This is a situation where a section or group of the society pursues irreconcilable and extreme cultural positions to a level of sustained violence as in the case of Boko Haram in Nigeria since 2002.

6. ***Population Growth and Expansionist Tendencies to Sustain Ethnic Boundary Occupations:*** In this case "mythology and migration histories as well as descent and inheritance claims are manipulated (due to population explosion) to assert new ownership in foreign territories and in the process create conditions of conflict and bloody clashes and violence". This was the case of Tiv-Junkun's conflict in Wukari area of Taraba state.

7. ***Perception of Disregard for Cultural Symbols and the "Pollution" of Cultural Practice:*** This factor is manifest in the killing or eating of certain animals within a community that respect or worship them as totem. Also, the destruction of community's central shrine of a protective god or deity could spark off violence. "In July 1999, when the Yoruba of Sagamu, performed the night rights associated with Oyo festival, during which time women are forbidden from coming out of their houses. However when two Hausa women violated this cultural practice, they were immediately apprehended. One of them was killed and the other that managed to escape reported the incident to immigrant Hausa community. A violent and bloody conflict ensued, resulting in loss of several lives and property on both sides" (Otite and Albert 1999:22).

These examples of the sources of conflict as identified by Otite and Albert (1999) above, are what give communities at various levels shape or identity towards harmony or otherwise in the midst of other numerous sources.

The Concepts of Community and Community Harmony

The term community in this paper refers to a group of people related by common living environment with identifiable forms who may or not share the same ancestral history, language, faith and way of life. The level of socio-political organization distinguishes a human community from another in terms of "range of relationship" as a village community, clan community, sub-national community, ethnic community, national community, or international community. The form of socio-political organization shows the difference between a human community and another, in terms of "nature of tie" or "ancestral relationship" as cultural community, non-cultural community or multi-cultural. A cultural community is one that has a well known and commonly accepted single dominant culture and may include village, clan, ethnic, sub-national or national community. *A non-cultural community* is one that has no dominant culture and lacks cultural definitions of its identity as may be the case of some national, sub-national, regional or international communities.

A multi-cultural community, is one that has many cultural entities or groups of diverse strength (some are dominant and others are less dominant) which in essence tend to determine the course of community life). A multi-cultural community may be a sub-national community. Nigeria fits into a multi-cultural national community construct.

Community harmony typifies a condition of living in a socio political organization which harmony itself explains. This is because harmony is the crux of co-existence and stability of any community - local, national or international. It signifies a condition of "peace" and pleasing relationship that is observable in measurable degrees. Community harmony therefore is a state of "peace" and "pleasing relationship" among the inhabitants of a given community, irrespective of form or level (i.e. nature or range) of socio-political organization. Community harmony is not an indication of strife, violence, militancy or deep irreconcilable interest. It does not mean absence of conflicts or divergent interests in the community as often construed. Community harmony entails that issues likely to lead to irreconcilable positions are averted, and typical conflicts situations are mutually resolved without violence, and to the benefit of all. In fact, level of peace or harmony in a community does not only enhance opportunities for development, but a contemporary index of development of modern societies or states.

Culture and National Culture

Zimmermann (2015) accepts De Rossi's view as cited in Live Science that '' the word culture derives from a French term, which in turn derives from a Latin word, ''Colere'', which means to tend to the earth and grow, or cultivation and nurture. The Centre for Advance Research on Language Acquisition (2015) defines culture as ''shared pattern of behaviour and interactions, cognitive constructs and understanding that are learned by socialization. Thus it can be seen as the growth of group identity fostered by social patterns unique to a group''. Akanle (2012) defines ''culture as the totality of ways and manners people live their lives and make sense of their existence. It is what determines whether a group of people will be called humans or people. This is because it is culture that orders human and show the way forward for society. It gives pattern and uniqueness to a people. This is why it is difficult if not impossible to refer to animal culture in manners that reflect that of humans''.

Akanle (2015) view of culture agrees with the United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2002) broad definition of culture thus:

> The set of distinctive, spiritual, material, intellectual and
> emotional features of a society or social group, encompassing
> in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of life,
> value systems, traditions and belief.

Zimmermann (2015) submits that culture is the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group, defined by everything from language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts. Culture that is common within a locality defines a people or local community and may affect nature of conflict or its prevention in a national community with or without a national culture. Knowledge

of national culture is equally important in conflict prevention studies especially, when it is active or dominant in the midst of other subculture. When it is passive or when not profoundly evolved, national culture may lack the radiant values to prevent conflict within a national community or even to resolve one.

Arefina (2015) employs a pragmatic essentialist view of culture to perceive national culture as a stable phenomenon and permits its measurement by means of objective scales. She consequently conceptualizes national culture in terms of the values, motives, beliefs and attitudes which are shared by individuals from one national group. This view of national culture is deduced from House et al (2004) definition of culture as ''shared motives, values, beliefs, identities and interpretations or meanings of significant events that result from common experiences of members of collectivities and are transmitted across age generations''. National culture therefore, is a distinctive set of values known and accepted by the citizens of a nation as the entirety of their behavioural life and definitive of their national policy initiative.

The Boko Haram Insurgence in the North Eastern Nigeria

Background
Boko Haram was founded in 2002 by Mohammed Yusuf in Maiduguri, Borno state, as a reactionary religious sect. The sect which was codenamed Boko Haram by the media based on their open rejection of Western education as fake; was at its inception known as Yusifiyya (i.e. followers of Yusuf). The group came into existence as ''a Sunni Islamic fundamentalist sect, influenced by the Wahhabi Movement, advocating a strict form of Sharia law. It developed into a Salafist-jihadi group in 2009'' (Blanchard 2004, Onuoha 2014). After the death of its founder, Yusuf, and following his succession by Abubakar Shekau, Boko Haram referred to by themselves as Wilayat Gharb Ifriqiyya (Arabic), meaning Islamic State of West African Province (ISWAP) (Daily Times of Nigeria 2015) and Jammat Ahl as-sunnah lid-Dawah Wa'l-jihad (Arabic), meaning, group of people of Sunnah, for preaching and Jihad (BBC 2015; see Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (2015). Abubakar Shekau took control of the sect until May, 2021, when it was alleged that he died after detonating a suicide vest in order to avoid being captured during a battle with rival Islamic Militant group (Wall Street Journal, May, 2021). The remnants of the Jihadist group have organized themselves under a new leader Bakura Sahalaba (Wikipedia, 2021).

It will be recalled that before the colonization of Nigeria, Borno state and its capital Maiduguri, which constitute the stronghold of Boko Haram sect in Nigeria were under the Bornu empire that was ruled by the constitution of Medina (an Islamic holy city in Mecca). The territory was predominantly Muslim of Kanuri extraction, which emirate became part of the protectorate of Northern Nigeria under the British control in 1903. Consequently, the Northern protectorate and the colony and protectorate of Southern Nigeria became amalgamated as a single territory – Nigeria - in 1914 by the British colonial office in London.

Character/Activity of the Boko Haram Sect
At the early years of existence, Boko Haram conducted its affairs peacefully (i.e. preaching and conscientizing the people), and was patronized by politicians and perhaps, public officers. It is

widely believed that when the patronage from politicians became less or ceased, the group became uncontrollable and engaged in activities suspected harmful to the public. The politicians withdrew their patronage from this sect when they became uncomfortable with the groups strong positions and uncompromising demands which were considered threatening to peaceful living and public safety. The Police as a result arrested its founder and some members, ''and confiscated dangerous weapons and bomb making equipment.'' The incessant clashes and revenge clashes with national security operatives which often led to so many deaths on both sides, even on the side of defenseless people, have associated the group strongly with the character of militancy occasioning terror. After the death of its founding leader, Mohammed Yusuf in 2009, in detention and with its restructured leadership under Abubakar Shekau, the group has claimed responsibility of the following attacks and insurgency:

Selected Insurgent Attacks/Activities of the Boko Haram Sect in Nigeria Between 2010 And 2021, By Date, Location and Source

S/No	Date	Insurgent Attacks / Activities	Location	Source
1	September 2010	Broke into the Bauchi prison and freed about 105 of its members along with over 600 other prisoners	Bauchi	Ewi (2013) and the Guardian September 2012
2	June 2011	Launched a vehicle borne IED attacks killed 6 people at Abuja police headquarters.	Abuja	Ewi (2013) and the Guardian September 2012
3	August 2011	Bombed the United Nations headquarters in Abuja, killed 11 members of UN staff along with 12 others and more than 100 people injured	Abuja	Ewi (2013) and the Guardian September 2012
4	September 23, 2011	Carried out about 115 attacks and killed 550, people	Jos, Borno , Yobe And Niger	State of emergency in Jos, Borno , Yobe and Niger (The

				white head journal).
5	January 20, 2012	Attacked police building in Kano killed 190 people which include a TV-reporter	Kano	BBC News
6	October 11,2012	Killed an officer of the national security operative in Maiduguri which counter attacks killed about 20 to 45 civilians	Borno	Human Rights Watch.
7	April 2014	Kidnapped over 200 school girls from Chibok	Chibok	Tadeo 2014 Wilson 2014 , Cock 2014 , Wall Street Journal, 2021
8	November 2014	Attacked the central Mosque in Kano during Friday prayer, killed 120 people.	Kano	Wiki pedia
9	January 2015	Attacked Baga seizing it and the multi-national Joint Task Force military base, and killed 150 people	Baga	BBC News 2015 and Amnesty International 2015
10	October 2015	Attacked Nyanya in Nasarawa and Kuje in FCT, with bombs, killed 18 over and 40 wounded.	Nasarawa, FCT Abuja	Yahoo News 2015
11	November 2015	Bombed a Food Market in Yola, killing 32 people.	Adamawa	Yahoo News 2015
12	December 2015	Two Female Suicide Bombers detonated their explosives at a crowded market in Madagali, killed at least 28 people.	Madagali,	BBC News 2015
13	April 26, 2018	Killed at last four civilians and wounded 2 security officers in Maiduguri	Borno State	Vanguard

14	May 1, 2018	Two suicide bombers killed dozens of people	Mubi	Human Rights Watch
15	January, 2019	Attacked Nigerian military bases in Magumeri and Gajiram and destroyed the IDP town of Rann	Magumeri and Gajiram	American Security Project June 24, Defense Post, January 17, 2019
16	June 16, 2019	Bombers killed 30 people in Konduga	Borno	American Security Project June 24
17	July 27, 2019	Killed at least 65 people at Nganzai who were walking home from funeral	Borno	Human Rights Watch
18	January 17, 2019	Killed 6 Nigerian soldiers and injured 14 during a raid at village near the army chiefs home , seized four vehicles and destroyed 2		American Security Project June 24
19	August 15, 2019	Killed some Nigerian soldiers in a gun battle in Maiduguri	Borno	Vanguard
20	January 6, 2020	Bombed a market in Gamboru and killed at least 38 people	Borno	Human Rights Watch
21	February 9, 2020	Killed at least 30 people in Auno road	Borno	Wiki pedia 2022
22	March 23, 2020	Killed at least 50 Nigerian soldiers in an ambush laid near Goneri	Borno	Wiki pedia 2022
23	May 18 2020	Killed at least 20 people and injured 25 others in Gajigana	Borno	Wiki pedia 2022

24	June 9,2020	Killed 81 villagers in a mass shooting an Gubio	Borno	Wiki pedia 2022
25	June 13 , 2020	Killed 20 soldiers in Maguno and about 40 civilians Ngazai		Wiki pedia 2022
26	July 29, 2022	Killed 5 people in the convey of the Bornu state governor, including 3 policemen	Borno	Wiki pedia 2022, Sahara Reporter, July 2019.
27	August 2, 2020	Killed at least 18 people in grenade attack in IDP camp	Nguetchewe	Wiki pedia 2022
28	September 6, 2020	Killed 4 civilians) in Kurmari and 6 villagers near Maiduguri	Borno	Wiki pedia 2022
29	September 20, 2020	Ambushed a military convoy, killed 3 soldiers at the place and wounded a colonel.	Borno	Wiki pedia 2022
30	September 25, 2020	Ambushed a military convoy, killed 15 (8 policemen, 3 Soldiers and 4 civilians) near mongonu Borno	Borno	The Punch, Telegraph, Vanguard
31	September 26,2020	Killed 30 people in the attack on the governors convoy and left many wounded	Borno	Human Rights Watch
32	November 1, 2020	Raided Takulashi village near Chibok, killed 12 people and abducted 7 others.	Takulashi	Macau business, 2020, Nov. 2
33	November 21, 2020	Ambushed a Nigerian military convoy between Jagiran and Monguno, killed 6 soldiers and about 26 people injured .	Borno	Vanguard, Wiki pedia
34	November 22, 2020	Ambushed the convoy of governor Bahagana Zulum of Borno state killed 7 Soldiers and 2 civilians.	Baga, Borno State	Vanguard, Wiki pedia
35	November 28, 2020	Massacred 110 farmers in Koshebe	Borno	

36	December 11, 2020	Abducted more than 330 Students of Government Science Secondary School Kankara.	Kastina	Wiki pedia, 2020
37	December 24, 2020	Killed 11 people , burnt a Church and kidnapped a priest in the Christian village of Pemi.	Borno	Wikipedia, 2020, BBC News, Dec. 25, 2020
38	December 25, 2020	Kidnapped about 40 loggers in Wulgo forest , killed 3, near Gumboru village.	Borno	The Guardian, December 26, 2020
39	December 26 , 2020	Raided Shafa , Azare and Tashan Alade villages and killed 10 people , burnt houses, shops , churches and police stations .	Borno	Human Rights Watch
40	December 28, 2020	Killed 4 Nigerian soldiers in Larothe Gomani village.	Borno	Wiki pedia
41	December 29, 2020	Killed 7 hunters and injured 9 others near Kayamla village.	Borno	Wiki pedia
42	February 21,2021	Beheaded five people in an IDP camp in Borno.	Borno	Wiki pedia , Naija news, February, 22, 2020
43	February 23, 2021	Killed 10 people in Maiduguri using rocket propelled grenades.	Borno	Wiki pedia
44	March 6, 2021	Killed 3 people and took away a tanker vehicle loaded with petrol in Rumirgo .	Borno	Wiki pedia
45	April 25, 2021	Killed 31 Nigerian soldiers in Mainok	Borno	Wiki pedia

Source: Derived from Wikipedia 2009, 2012, 2015, 2015, 2018, 2022.

In fact the above collections represent only part of the numerous insurgent activities of Boko Haram sect, since 2010, as gathered from official documentation of local and international electronic and print media, various internet media sources and pages, international agencies report, official report of government departments and ministry of defense and counterterrorism, among others.

Objectives and Demands of Boko Haram Sect

To properly situate the Boko Haram insurgency as credible conflict formation in Nigeria, there is need to briefly highlight the sect's "goal, and interests in pursuit". The central objective or goal of the Boko Haram sect is to create an Islamic State that would become a recruiting ground for jihad. This goal can easily be drawn from their official reference to themselves as the Islamic State of West African Province (ISWAP) and Group of People of Sunnah for preaching and Jihad.

The major interests pursued by the Islamic fundamentalist group include to:

a.   Seek an end to western education in Nigeria; which it dismissed as fake and forbidden.

b.   Abolish western influences and westernization of Nigeria due to their tendencies towards sin.

c.   Stop the evil of "concentrating the wealth of the country among members of small political elite, mainly in the Christian south of the country"

d.   Seek strict and full application of Sharia law in the northern state of Nigeria without interference or interjection by other laws which only represent tools of western influence.

e.   Reject the "police and state corruption" and complicity of political leadership.

Neglect of Early Warning Signals

At a point the preaching's and public statements of the sect were suspected to be extreme and harmful to the susceptible public and might likely degenerate to violence or militancy. "The Council of Ulama, advised the government and the National Television Authority (NTA) not to broadcast Yusuf's preaching, but the warning were ignored. Alhaji Dibal the then deputy governor of Borno State had severally reported that "Boko Haram had ties with al- Quaeda global terrorist group" (see U.S Embassy 2009). The government response after some manifest militant character was the arrest of Mohammed Yusuf, the leader and the founder of the group. "Yusuf's arrest elevated him to a hero status". The BBC News (2009) reported that Boko Haram sect leader died in custody while trying to escape. The death of the sect's leader in custody endangered the efforts to prevent or manage the Boko Haram conflict. This dangerous situation of continuing insurgency on the nation by the sect is the outcome of neglecting the early warning signals given on its dispositions to violence and militancy.

The Analysis of Cultural Dimension of Boko Haram Conflict

The Boko Haram conflict in Nigeria is a culture-rooted, socio-political conflict of an extremist and militant religious sect. It poses credible threat to the harmonious existence of Nigeria and her

sovereignty. The political inclination of the sects struggle is drawn from her central goal of seeking to create an Islamic state that would become a recruiting ground for Jihad. In seeking this goal that is mitigated in strategic militancy, the sect's motivation and irredentive interest are culturally deterministic. There is visible discrepancy in the rich history and cultural heritage of the sect's local environment and the history, policies, duties as well as obligations as recognized by the national community it belongs; and to which the sect is expected to conform.

The cultural dimension of the Boko Haram struggle is manifest in the major demands of the sect; strict and full application of Sharia law; an end to western education and westernizing influences. It may be recalled that Borno state and most parts of Northern Nigeria where Boko Haram maintains strong base were before colonization of Nigeria, under the Salafist authority and were ruled by the constitution of Medina. The implication is that a set of pure Islamic rules of social conduct was well known to and assimilated by the people as definitive of their group life, and has been transmitted from generation to generation. These rules which are rich in Arabic values of culture teaching and learning became structured into a centralized political authority having distributive functional power. The sect believes that the Quoran is the only credible source of knowledge, dependable rules of social conduct and comprehensive articulation of patterns of life. It is based on this understanding that Boko Haram's rejection of Western education and its resultant influences finds a resounding root.

Arabic education as well as its ways of life is the dominant regulatory principles of collective living among a people inhabiting the environment of Boko Haram's strong hold. The issue is clearer with their quest for creation of Islamic state in Nigeria, which reflects the resurgence of the forces of a people's primal root. The people have become conscious of these forces, and that their primordial values of shared living lack concrete expression in the entity and national community (Nigeria), where they were foisted. It is based on the same sect's belief above, that with other religious movements, it unequivocally advocates for strict application of the Sharia law in all the northern states. The call and movement for Sharia law received very popular support from the elements of northern extraction (from the masses to their spiritual and political leaders). This massive support for the sect's full implementation of Sharia law is to the extent that in the year 2000, the local authorities in Zamfara State, harkened to the call and "imposed" "strict form of Sharia in all official and unofficial relations in the state. Other states followed suit; before the end of the year 2000, a total of 12 northern states had shown objective compliance to the Boko Haram's call for strict form of Sharia" (See Wikipedia 2015)

The resilience of Boko Haram sect and the subsisting strength of its insurgency and mainstreaming violence lie in the popular psyche of a people's lifestyle. It lies in culture - the long imbibed values of existence and social forces of a people's primal root. Cultural forces are so lethal and corrosive, more explosive and mass-destructive, than the effects of most chemical, biological weapons and ballistic missiles, put together. Weapons of mass destruction have life that has no direction of its own, or "self-will" to act, but the use or misuse of which lies at the discretion of man. The efficacy of such use or misuse can only be dampened by, or made to receive an unending resurgent boost through a cultural steam.

The early warning signals received long before the sects preaching degenerated to violence failed to prevent a conflict situation. This is because the sect's teaching or preaching was not strange to its host environment; rather it was on what people know, what people believe, what people understand and take delight in as their way of life.

The content of Boko Haram's preaching is in the heart of the people, and has grown with the growth of the people as essential part of their living. Any other value or policy at variance with it is received with repugnance. This explains why the appropriate agencies could not act to prevent the conflict when they were ought to, and when they did after the situation has gone out of control, they did not follow a cultural track or culture-based mechanisms, hence the outcome of which we are living witnesses. Nigerians are living in endless fear of Boko Haram's continuing destructions of innumerable lives and property, since 2002, up to the date of this paper in 2022.

Findings of the Study

The paper accepts that there is culture neglect in socio-political conflict prevention and community harmony in Nigeria. The absence of an active national culture that is known to and accepted by the people is the missing link that led to the failure of the early warning signals and mechanisms to prevent or control the Boko Haram conflict. This is because the sect's host environment, centuries before colonization of Nigeria, had imbibed the Islamic rules of social conduct which are rich in Arabic cultural values. The same cultural values which are very popular among the people and leaders of the said environment represent the stolid anchor of Boko Haram's struggle and demands. A national culture that is strong is required with radiant values already known to and accepted by the people to override or subsume the influences (divergent interests) of the sub-culture or make such incongruent interests conform to the culture framed interests of the nation.

National culture recognizes an inherent set of culture-sensitive techniques, strategies and mechanisms for peace-building and conflict prevention even in the midst of component sub-cultures. It has clear understanding and definition of cultural conflicts without imputing extra-cultural motives: unless where such motives would serve complementary roles to cultural platforms. Again, the paper finds the preventive mechanisms in the Boko Haram conflict as a negation of the culture-dimension and techniques. The mechanisms in use responded to the sect's teachings and demands as pure act of insurgency and militancy which require military action. This culture-neglect definition of the set's movement and culture-neglect choice of preventive techniques escalated the conflict to a credible threat to harmony in Nigeria. The situation has confirmed the position that "culture is the bearing of every human action or aspiration. It determines what group's fight for to achieve development" (Smith 2006).

Culture can be deduced to mean an observable characteristics and knowledge of a sovereign nation by her language, religion, cuisine, social habits and genre. It represents the known common lifestyles, art and literary properties including values and belief systems that are accepted by the members of a sovereign nation as their inherited or acquired identity.

Significantly, national culture is common or known to all the entities or groups in a nation, where the nation has the same political experiences, the same ancestral history and the same cultural/traditional beliefs. The implication is that national culture in this regard may be active or

dominant and may override the local or regional community cultures when there are divergent interests through strategies or mechanisms already known by the people through their culture. The case may be different when there are component units (i.e. local or regional communities) with strong holdings in culture within a national community that has no common culture. Divergent interests may hardly be prevented from developing into a conflict; and conflict when it occurs can hardly be controlled or resolved. This is because discordant voices of cultural spaces and cultural traits will resonate irreconcilable values and practices of hate, which may frustrate conflict aversion and make community harmony impossible.

To achieve prevention of socio-political conflicts for community harmony, the understanding of a group's culture helps to know the circumstances which may lead to conflict and its possible escalation involving the group, so as to accumulate knowledge of the group's attitudinal values and lifestyle. The knowledge that is gathered through a people's culture, about their temperament and likely reaction to any issue, decision or treatment considered vehemently harmful and irreconcilable to their cherished values, would help to know how to avert potential conflict situations. Due consideration to the ''spirit of culture'' in a multi-ethnic or multi-cultural national community like Nigeria for instance, can foster harmony in coexistence. The knowledge that the Hausa/Fulani man can hardly tolerate any sharp disagreement or perceived harm to his religion which is embedded in his culture will serve as a guide to understand potential conflict situations and make clear the path to possible peace and harmony. In the same vain, the knowledge that an Igbo man can hardly compromise any sharp disagreement involving his 'liberty and industry' or perceived harm to the fact of his origin, will help to understand likely areas of conflicts with him and the path to peace.

Conclusion

Conflict and harmony are indeed contradictory values of social and political progress through change. In a quality interplay, where the former leads to the latter, development is a sure outcome in the community; local national or international. In a community, where both concepts assume an asymmetrical stance, the resultant effect is retrogression or backwardness. The reason for this resultant condition which make conflict prevention strategies respond to harmony or not may be found in the nature of both conflict (socio-political inclusive) and harmony, and the nature of stimulus injected into conflicts.

No longer can modern communities and nations undermine the potency of culture and cultural resoluteness in shaping community or national life. The power of cultural strongholds in multi-cultural societies to determine the course of behaviour, or action, survival or progress even retrogress therein is not in doubt. The greatest danger facing communities at all levels - local, national, regional or international - which consciously or otherwise ignore, undermine or shadow the culture dimension to socio-political relations of conflict within or without; is unending, or at least not near-ending instability, conflicts and disharmonious living; even an outright dismemberment. The paper's philosophical assumption is hereby confirmed thus: a strong cultural

community will resort to confrontation or violence in defense of its tacitly held values perceived to be threatened in a national community that has no dominant national culture. And the possible conflict there from will hardly be prevented, controlled or resolved in a short while or even in a lifetime of that national community, if the response mechanisms undermine the potency of cultural path-ways.

Recommendations

Certain immediate and short term measures to resolve the Boko Haram conflict should not be ignored, especially now that the damage is already done.

- There is need to stop further loss of lives, confrontations and arrests by national security operatives which have not resolved the conflict, but the government should embrace qualitative culture-based conference diplomacy.
- Government should dialogue with the Boko Haram sect on their demands and make them see reasons to accept Nigeria's position to secure her national interest and territory. This would require genuine intention to reintegrate them into the Nigerian national community through a set of confidence-building programmes of rehabilitation, reconstruction and development of human and environmental pedigrees of the host environment. Significantly there is need for culture-sensitive mechanisms for peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution.
- For long term remedy, there is need to evolve a Nigerian national culture that would revolve around a Nigerian National Indigenous Language which would be strong and acceptable to all the component units.

References

Abiola, Oladipo (2021). "Boko Haram beheads 5 persons in Borno IDP camp, others missing" http://www.naijanews.com/2021/02/22/boko-haram-beheads   -5-persons-in-borno-idp-camp- others-missing/. Retrieved February 24, 2021.

Agu, S.U & Okeke, V.O.S. (2013). The African Union (AU) and the challenges of conflict resolution in Africa. *British Journal of Arts and Social Sciences.* 14 (11): 280-290 http://www.bjournal.co.uk/BJASS.asps.

Aliyu, T.U. (2014) "An in-house survey into the cultural origins of Boko Haram movement in Nigeria". Discourse 261. http://www.gamji.com/tilde/tilde99.hmt. Retrieved July 24,2014.

Akanle, O. (2012). The legaments of culture and development in Nigeria. *International Journal of Applied Sociology.* Doi:10.5933/j.ijas.20120203.02.Vol.2 (3): 16 – 21

Amnesty International (2015). "Boko Haram at a glance" https://www.amnesty.Org/en/latest/news/2015/01/book-hram-glance/. January, 2015.

Arefina, A. (2015). "National cultural context of organizational implementation of change initiatives of multinational corporations in their Russian subsidiaries". Bamberg: University of St. Gallen, Difo- Druck, GMBH.

Ball, A.R. and Peters, G.B. (2000). *Modern politics and government.* Macmillan Press Limited. 6th edition. http://www.macpress.com.

Barber, N. (2012). "The human beast: Why cultural determinism is not science". *http://www.pschologytoday.com/blogthe-human-beast/2012/why-cultural-determinism-is-not- science*.

BBC News (2009). "Nigeria's sect head dies in custody". Retrieved July, 30, 2014

BBC News (2015). "Nigeria's Boko Haram pledges allegiance to Islamic state". http://www.bbc. co. uk/nes/world-africa-31784538. Retrieved March 7, 2015.

BBC News (2015). "Nigeria's Chibok girls seen with Boko Haram in Gwoza". Retrieved, April 29, 2015.

BBC News (2020). Boko Haram kills villages in christmas eve attack" https;//www.bbc.com/news/world- africa-55448105. Retrieved January 10, 2021.

Berhe, Y. (2012). *An assessment of indigenous conflict resolution mechanism of Mezard in rural Alamata Woreda, Tigray national regional state. Ethiopia: Munich, GRIN Verlag, http://www.grin.com/en/e/e-book/214145/an-assessment-of-indigenous-conflict-resolution-mechanism-of-mezard*.

Blanchard, L.P. (2014). "Nigeria's Boko Haram: Frequently asked questions" (PDF), *Congressional Research Service*. Retrieved August 3, 2014.

Brian, V.I. and Dauda (2011). 'African Union, conflict and conflict resolution in Africa: A comparative analysis of the recent Kenya and Zimbabwe conflicts*" International Journal of Development and Conflict.* 1 (1): 61-83

Cocks, T. (2014). "Cameroon weakest link in fight against Boko Haram". Retrieved August 7, 2014

Daily Times of Nigerian (2015). "Boko Haram changes name to West African Province of the Islamic State", April, 23.

Deutsch and Coleman (2000). Cited in Berhe, Y. (2012). An assessment of indigenous conflict resolution mechanism of Mezard in rural Alamata woreda, Tigray regional State". Ethiopia: Munich, GRIN Verlag. *http://www.grin.com/en/e/e-book/214145/an-assessment-of-indigenous-conflict-resolution-mechanism-of-mezard*.

Egwemi, V. (2009). "The interrelationship between culture and national development in Nigeria" *Continental Journal of Social Sciences.* 2 (1): 12-20 *http://citeseerex.ist.psu.edu*

Ford, J. (2014). "How a fanatical militant group grew to terrorize Africa's most populated country, wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

France- Press, Agence (2020). "Boko Haram kidnaps 40 loggers and kills three in North-east Nigeria" http://www.the Guardian.com.com/world/2020/dec/26/boko-haram-kidnaps-40-logers-and-kills-three-in-north-east-nigeria. The Guardian. Retrieved January 10, 2021.

Goodhand and Hulme (1999). "An assessment of indigenous conflict resolution mechanism of Mezard in rural Alamata Woreda, Tigray regional State. Ethiopia: Munich, GRIN Verlag.*http://www.grin.com/en/e/e-book/214145/an-assessment-of-indigenous-conflict- resolution-mechanism-of-mezard*.

House, et al. (2004). In Globe; cited in Arefina (2015). "National cultural context of organizational change: Implementation of change initiatives of multinational corporations in their Russian subsidiaries". Bamberg: University of St. Gallen, Difo-Druck, GMBH.

Juma, L. (2007). "The war in Congo: Transnational conflict networks and the failure of internationalism". *Gonzaga Journal of International Law*. 10 (2): 97-163

Kelly, F. (2019). Shekau Boko Haram Faction claims attack in Rann, Nigeria" https://www. thedefencsepost.com/2019/01/17/Nigeria-boko-haram-Shekau-faction-claims   -rann-attac video/. Defense Post Archived http://web.archive.Org./web/20190224231534/ http://thedefensepost. com/2019/01/17/ nigeria-boko-haram-shekau-   faction-claims-rann-   attack-video/ from the   original   on 24 February 2019. Retrieved February 24, 2019.

Macau Business (2020). "Boko Haram kills 12 in raid near Nigeria's Chibok https://www.thedefensepost.com

Nathan, L. (2007). The making and unmaking of the Dafur peace agreement, *In De Waal, A. (ed.) War in Dafur and the search for peace.*

Oche, O. (2006) *From dispute to dialogue: Essays on conflict and conflict resolution*. FOG ventures.

Odunga, .A.F (2013). "Preventing socio-political conflicts and building peace block: The role of music": *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. 4 (2): 703-708.

Olutayo, A.O. and Akanle, O. (2007). "Modernity, macdonaldisation and family values in Nigeria". *The Nigerian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology.https://www.researchgate.* 5(1): 45-62

Onuoha, F. (2014). "Boko Haram and the evolving Salaf jihadist threat in Nigeria", In Perouse de Montclos, Mac-Antoine. *Boko Haram Islamism, politics, security and the state in Nigeria (PDF).* Leiden: African Study Centre, 158-191. Retrieved May 14, 2014.

Otite, O. and Albert O. (1999). *Community conflicts in Nigeria: Management, resolution and transformation*". Spectrum Books Ltd.

Parkinson, Hinshaw and Joe (2021). "Boko Haram leader responsible for Chibok School Girl kidnappings, dies https//www.wsj.com/articles/book-haram-leader-responsible-for-chibok-schoolgirl-kidnappings- dies -11621608392. Retrieved May 21, 2021

Sahara Reporters (2020). "Breaking: Boko Haram attacks convey of Borno Governor, Zulum in Baga" http: www.saharareporters.com/2020/07/29/breaking-boko-haram-kill-1`2-in-raid-near-nigeria- chibok/0. Retrieved January 10, 2021.

Searcy Dionne (2019)." Boko Haram is back with Better Drones https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/13/world/africa/nigeria-boko-haram.html. Retrieved April 3, 2020

Smith, J.H. (2006) "Snake-driven development: Culture, nature and religious conflict in neoliberal Kenya". *Ethnography.* 7(4): 432 - 459. Doi:10.1177/1466138106073144.

Spiro, M.E. (2001). "Cultural determinism, cultural relativism and the comparative study of psychopathology". *American Anthropological Association* 29(2): 218 - 234. Ethos:http://doi.org/10.1525/eth.2001.29.2.218.

Study Com. (2016). "Cultural determinism: Definition and theory". (http://study.com/academy/lesson/cultural-determinism-definition and theory"

The Centre for Advance Research on Language Acquisition (2015). "What is culture/definition of culture". live science contribution. *http://www.livescience.com/21478-waht-is- culture-definition-of-culture.htmlsthash.A2nkv2bs.dpuf.*

Thurston , A. (2019). *Search result Boko Haram: The history of an African jihadist movement https://www.google.com/books/edition/boko-haram/KCMXDWAAQBAJ?*

Hl=en&gbpv=1&dq+wilayat+Ifriqiyya&pg=PA17&printsec=frontcover. Retrived March 8 2021.

UNESCO (2002). "Culture and development" Wikipedia. *http://www.metisnation.ca/wp-content/upload/2011.mentis-traditionalknoweldge.*

US Department of State: Bureau for Counter Terrorism (2013). "Country reports on terrorism 2013". Retrieved August 7, 2013.

US Embassy (2009). "Nigeria: Borno State residents not yet recovered from Boko Haram violence". Wikileaks.

Wallensteen, P. (2011). *Understanding conflict resolution: War, Peace and the global system.* 3rd edition, Sage publication limited.

Wang (2010). In Odunga A.F (2013). "Preventing socio-political conflicts and Building peace block: The role of music". *Meditteranean Journal of Social Sciences.* 4(2): 703-705.

Wikipedia (2019). Boko-Haram insurgency https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boko_Haram_insurgency#2019.

Wikipedia (2022).Boko-Haram.https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boko_Haram#Maidugri_bombings.

William, P. (2008). "Keeping the peace in Africa: Why African solutions are not enough". *Ethics and International Affairs.* 22. (3): 309-329 *DOI https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-7093.2008.00158.X.*

Wilson, G. (2014). Cultural determinism. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. *http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/cultural-determinism*

Yahoo News (2015). "Boko Haram claims Abuja bombings". Retrieved October, 8

Zimmermann, K.A. (2015). "What is culture/definition of culture Live Science". Htmlsthash. A2nkV2bs.dpuf.