

Insurgency and the Failure of Liberal Democracy in Nigeria: A Philosophical Analysis

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Abstract: *In the real sense of the word, democracy entails participation of the demos (the people) not only in the due process of choosing those who represent them or in empowering the leaders, but more about the process of dialogue which see the people partaking in the legislation of the laws that govern them. It is in this primordial sense that we can truly say that democracy is the government of the people by the people and for the people. In essence, popular political participation lies at the core of democracy for without it no government can really claim legitimacy. So political participation becomes the defining characteristics of democracy. Accordingly, democracy is said to be practiced where political authority is used for the good of the masses in a polity. Regrettably in Nigeria, although theoretically it claims to be an example of a democratic society and as such its goals as enshrined in the constitution claims to ensure the maximal protection and promotion of the common good of all Nigerians, but the historical, existential and factual experience of its emergence and governance right from the 1914 amalgamation show that Nigeria cannot realistically lay claim to being a democratic society where political participation has been protected, promoted and preserved. Hence the Nigerian democratic experience is merely formal and a complete betrayal to political participation. The point of this essay is that Nigeria as a nation suffers from underdevelopment, high level corruption, insecurity, unemployment, poverty and other socio political and ethnic problems due to the people's (Nigerians) alienation and apathy towards political participation and this has made few individuals to dominate the Nigerian political scene. In Nigeria, the celebration that heralded the end of colonialism and then the inception of democratic governance in 1999 have gradually faded into muffled cries of despair. This obvious failure of democracy has brought in its wake socio-economic and political problems, indeed, it is difficult to divorce the rise in ethno-nationalism, the Niger-Delta agitation, the macabre called Boko Haram and burgeoning insecurity in Nigeria from misrule arising from non-participation in political process and governance of the bulk of the citizenry. This work is justified because it is timely and relevant to the current failure of leadership in Nigeria that has continued to sustain the seemingly incessant massacre of human lives, destruction of property and the impoverishment of Nigerians.*

Key Words: *Democracy, Participation, Leadership, Government and Legitimacy.*

I. Introduction

Since Nigeria returned to democracy in 1999, her socio-political life has been characterized by one insurgency or the other, ranging from the multiple ethnic militias, ravaging armed robberies, Niger Delta militants to the recent Boko Haram insurgency. All these insurgencies lead to wanton destruction of lives and properties and also threatening the survival of the nation.

Nigeria has degenerated to what can be likened to the Hobbesian state of nature where life is poor, nasty, brutish and short, a state characterized by lawlessness (i.e. anarchy) and war of all against all! This is due to the disappointments that Nigerians face after electing the politicians into public offices with the hope that they will live up to their promises of what is generally called "Dividends of Democracy", which include the following: good education, quality health care, political rights and freedom, transparency and honesty in leadership and so on.

Contrary to the principles of democracy which include human liberty, equality, rule of law, fundamental human right, priority of common good etc, Nigeria is currently faced with high level of poverty, corruption and dishonesty especially on the side of the politicians, electoral malpractices, lack of judicial independence etc. All these anti-democratic principles gave rise to the insurgencies we find in Nigeria today. Thus these insurgencies in Nigeria (the Niger Delta militants in the south south, the ethnic fratricide in the middle belt, and the Boko Haram in the North) are products of the failure of liberal democracy in Nigeria. Umar Udo views these insurgencies in Nigeria as basically, the result of failed expectations of "Dividends of Democracy" by way of improving the living conditions of the people under civil rule. Contrasting the personal and collective freedom and liberty of citizens ushered in through constitutional democracy with the failed promises and expectations of economic and social improvements of the standard of living of the citizens, one then sees clearly the seed of crises being sown in our society ².

Enumerating the ways and manner in which democracy has failed Nigerian Umar Udo lamented as follows:

The polarization and great disparity of wealth amongst citizens, the overt and insensitive corruption by public servants, the increasing widespread of poverty and deprivation within the vast majority of the people, the extreme forms of election frauds by incumbent leaders etc., the relation between the government and the governed invariably have to come under severe stress as it turned out to be, because our local civic cultures are unable to withstand the stresses and strains of these economic and political pressures, these naturally breed disappointment, despair and instability it then takes a little for civil resistance to go virulent. Here then lies the proper explanation of the vicious insurgencies.

Democracy is believed to have as one of its fundamental principles and characteristics, the protection of lives and property, for according to John Locke who happens to be the father of democracy: “the great and chief end, of men’s uniting into common wealth and putting themselves under government is the preservation of their lives, liberties and estates, which I call by the general name “property”.⁴ The failure of democracy in Nigeria as manifested in the lack of responsive political leadership, endemic institutional corruption, electoral malpractice, lack of rule of law, lack of sovereignty of the people etc. are believed to have caused the insurgencies that are threatening the corporate existence of Nigeria.

II. Insurgency And Democracy: A Conceptual Clarification

Insurgency: Insurgency according to O’Neill, “is a struggle between a non-ruling group and the ruling authorities in which the non-ruling group consciously uses political resources and violence to destroy, reformulate, or sustain the basis of one or more aspects of politics”⁵. By this definition, insurgency can be said to be a rebellion against an existing government by a group. It is always an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict or an organized opposition intended to change or overthrow existing authority. The ultimate goal of an insurgency is to challenge the existing government for control of all or a portion of its territory, or force political concession in sharing political power. Insurgencies require the active or tacit support of some portion of the population involved. External support, recognition or approval from other countries or political entities can be useful to insurgents⁶. For instance, the established connection between the Boko Haram insurgents in Nigeria and Al-Qaeda terrorist group explains the international network of modern insurgent groups.

Maccallister viewed the contemporary conceptions of an insurgency from an interpretation of the classic texts of insurgent warfare as is seen in the writings of past practitioners like Chairman Mao Tse-Tung who saw insurgent war as protracted and organized into three phases of organization, consolidation and preservation in which the insurgents build political strength; a second phase of progressive expansion as the insurgents gain strength and consolidate control; and a final decisive phase when the leadership commits regular forces culminating in the enemy’s destruction⁷.

Insurgency uses different strategies to achieve its goal, which according to Hassan include: Coup d’etat, revolution, guerrilla warfare, riot, terrorism and non-violent resistance. Terrorism is the most commonly adopted strategy and it involves the adoption of some methods such as bombing, kidnapping and abduction⁸. In all, insurgency is a premeditated, politically, economically or religious motivated violence perpetrated against the state or a regime by an aggrieved group, usually intended to influence audience⁹.

Democracy: The etymology of the word ‘democracy’ is from the Greek Words ‘demos’-the mob, a people etc and ‘kratein’- to rule thus a ruling by the people (Demokratic). Democracy in the 5th century BC was used by Herodotus as a rule by the people which was characterized by equality before the law. This equality emphasized here demonstrates the very character of democracy, which brings it down to the common man. No wonder then why people conceive of democracy as the best system of government since it appears to orchestrate freedom and independence. Man’s dire need for freedom necessitates the desire for democracy; a system where everyone is free to express himself/herself without fear of punishment.

Accordingly, democracy is said to be practiced where political authority is used for the good of the masses in a polity. It was based on this principle that pericles of Athens explained the Athenian constitution saying that it is “called democracy because power is in the hands not of the minority but of the whole people...”¹⁰.

Democracy is characterized by individual empowerment whether economic, political, social or religious. In a sense, the intrinsic freedom governing democracy makes it possible for individuals to participate freely and actively in the developmental process, be it religious, economic etc. Democracy is expected to lead the people to prosperity and socio-political excellence. Democracy in sum could be said to be best described by Abraham Lincoln as “the government of the people, by the people and for the people”.

This explanation by Lincoln and others before him may not be so simplistic as they understood it. As a theory, democracy is very wonderful and believably the best government suited for any group of people; even for Aristotle who stigmatizes it as rule by the mob, it (democracy) is the best of all perverted constitutions¹².

Nevertheless, the practice of democracy takes different dimensions. The nature of democracy is often mistaken for either oligarchy or autocracy. All the same, a well-practiced democracy ends up becoming an icon of unity, development and order. If the letters of the meaning of democracy is to be followed, that means the people will have the right to remove an unwanted government. This aspect of governance must be seen to supersede the popular Aristocracy, which is practiced as democracy in most democratic nations.

J.S. Mill presented us with the theory of representative government in which the sovereignty or supreme controlling power in the last resort is vested on the entire aggregate of the community, with every citizen not only having a voice in the exercise of the ultimate sovereignty but being at least occasionally, called up to take part in the art of governance¹³. Mill still insists on the active participation of the common man in the very major decision making of the state. Public offices also must be made open for the masses to join, to say the least, the people have the authority over their representatives who are servants to them¹⁴.

Many scholars like Mill emphasize popular participation for a system to be qualified as democratic. The electorate reserves the supremacy of power. These culminate in the respect of rule of law and human right, which represent a typical of democracy. If we speak of democracy, then we must be ready to accept the fact that the power and even the sovereignty reside on the people. If this is the case, the people reserve the right to alter or abolish any government that becomes destructive or that goes against the will of the people so as to ensure their safety and happiness. This removal can take any form. To be precise, John Locke in his *Treatise of government* advocated for revolution in a situation where any government begins to act outside the favor of the people. Often, revolution appears to be the very last resort to the problems created by a particular democratic system.

Principles/Features of Liberal Democracy

There are certain features or characteristics that make a democratic government what it is and also distinguishes democracy from other forms of government. Some of the features of democracy include the following:

i. **Sovereignty of the People:** Unlimited sovereignty in a democratic government remains with the people who have the normative power to void the authority of their government if it exceeds its constitutional limitations. Sovereignty itself implies the supreme power over citizens and subjects, unrestrained by law...perpetual...undelimited...inalienable and not subject to prescription¹⁵. It is the supreme power of the state which makes government and is of utmost necessity in the state. Referring to the importance of this sovereignty in a state, Sabin and Thorson maintained that "every well ordered state, must have in it somewhere, this indivisible source of authority"¹⁶. In a democratic setting, sovereignty is located in the people since government is held in trust only in service of the people. This sovereignty empowers the people to judge, monitor and or replace an erring representative as well as dissolve the entire government if found wanting.

ii. **Rule of Law:** The rule of law implies equal subjection of all before the law including those in government positions. Thus even the executive, legislature and judiciary are subject to the law. The rule of law is essential in any society where human rights are to be protected. It acts as a safeguard for human rights, first by guaranteeing them legally, and second by providing a means for redress when violation occurs. The rule of law, comprising the principles of equality and due process, exists in different forms in each country. It may be contained in the power of judicial review, the separation of powers, the doctrine of ultra vires (prevents state organs from proceeding beyond their scope), principles of equality and statutory interpretations¹⁷.

In Dicey's view, the rule of law means the absolute supremacy or predominance of regular law as opposed to the influence of arbitrary power. The rule of law, also means equality of all persons before the law or equal subjugation of all classes to the ordinary courts. In this sense, the rule of law means that no man is above the law and that everyman whatever his rank or condition is subject to the law of the realm and amenable to the jurisdiction of the ordinary tribunals.

An essential ingredient of a true democracy which John Locke endorses even in the state of nature when he said that "men being independent and equal, no one should be put out of his estate and subject to the political power of another without his consent"¹⁸ such equality was never dissolved by the contract to constitute a civil society and government as the people gave only the rights to enforce the execution of the laws of nature and not their equalities to the trustee (government). In this case, Locke agrees with Dicey in relation to the equality of all before the law. This further supports the supremacy of the law, as the equal men in Locke, jointly wield greater power than the trustee (government) thereby foreclosing the emergence of an arbitrary power or a tyrant in government. Again, Locke's consideration of human rights as natural agrees with Dicey's view that the human right is prior and fundamental to the constitution. In all, Locke laid down several principles of the rule of law as follows:

Firstly, the same law must exist for the favorite at court, and the countryman at plough. Secondly, laws should be designed for the good of the people. Thirdly the state cannot raise, property taxes without the consent of the people, fourthly, the legislative may not transfer law making power to any other body¹⁹.

iii. **Separation of Powers:**

In the 17th century, the doctrine of separation of powers was developed by John Locke, who saw in it a way of freeing mankind from the injustice and oppression which resulted from an absolute system of government. He urged that it would be unwise to give any arm of government power to do the duties of the others since they might use their powers to exempt themselves from the law they had made for their fellow citizens. Baron de Montesquieu however, contributed immensely to the development of this doctrine, and he did a lot to refine it so as to ensure justice and fairness in the running of the government. In his treatise titled *The Spirit of Law* he said: Political liberty is to be found only when there is abuse of powers, but constant experience shows us that every man invested with powers, is liable to abuse it and to carry his authority as far as it will go ...To prevent this abuse, it is necessary from the nature of things that one power should be a check on another ... when the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person or body-there can be no liberty. Again, there is no liberty if the judicial power is not separated from the legislature and executive-There would be an end to everything if the same person or body, whether of the nobles or of the people, were to exercise all these powers²⁰.

The doctrine then explains that it will be foolhardy to give law makers the power of executing the law because in the process they might exempt themselves from obedience and suit the law (both in making and executing it) to their individual interest.

However, many eminent writers have argued that Montesquieu did not mean that legislature and executive ought to have no influence or control over the acts of each other, but only that neither should exercise the whole or part of another's powers. Hence Abiola Ojo believes that: a complete separation of powers is neither practicable nor desirable for effective government. What the doctrine can be taken to mean is the prevention of tyranny by the conferment of too much power on anyone, person or body and the check of the power by another²¹. The separation of powers is often regarded as a second limb functioning alongside the rule of law to curb the powers of the government. In most modern nation states, power is divided and vested into three branches of government: The executive, the legislature and the judiciary. Thus, according to the doctrine, a person or body must not exercise more than one of the powers of government, one arm of government must not interfere with the other's function and one arm of government must not exercise the function of other. This is because, as Blackstone observes: In all tyrannical government, the supreme magistrates, or the right both of making and of enforcing the law is vested in one and the same man, or one end the same body of man, or one and the same body of men, and wherever these two powers are united together, there can be no public liberty²². Madison supporting the above view noted that: "... there can be no liberty where the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person or body of magistrates or if the power of judging be not separated from the legislative and executive powers"²³. In modern democracies, the rule of law relies on the presence of a judiciary or court system that can act independently of the executive and legislative powers, ruling on the basis of established law and not on the basis of arbitrary or politically motivated consideration. Separation of powers is thus essential to the rule of law. Locke saw the need to share government functions among different arms of government, which Omoregbe interpreted to mean that:

it would not be proper for the same people to be vested with the legislative and executive powers. For if the same group of people both make and execute laws, self interest would dictate both the making and the execution of laws²⁴.

iv. **Censorship Right and Impeachment:**

This implies that citizens have the right to abolish governments that do not protect the common good of the citizens. Locke emphasized the citizens' right to judge the performance of government since the very existence of the state and civil government depends on the consent of the people. Also, "... the natural right of life liberty and property to the individual limit the just power of the community"²⁵. This is because the people merely gave up their right to enforce the law of reason alone, for the preservation of their property. Since the government power is being held as a trust, the people desire to see government perform what they were entrusted to do. To ensure the effectiveness of government, Locke maintained that the people shall play the role of censoring their performance. Using his words; "...the people be judge"²⁶.

Locke by this gave the people a wider scope of political participation even to the extent of censoring the activities of their representatives/government. Locke declared that under natural law, all people have the right to life, liberty and estate, government is a social contract, the people could instigate a revolution against the government when it acted against the interest of the citizens and replace it with one that served the interest of

citizens. Therefore in some cases, Locke deemed revolution an obligation. The right of revolution thus essentially acted as a safeguard against tyranny. For Locke, the people have a right to remove erring representative(s) and or even dissolve a bad government. This is because for Locke, as Omeregbe rightly observes: The government derives its power from the people, a mandate to carry out the wishes of the people. If the rulers are not fulfilling the wishes of the people then the people reserve the right to remove them from power by rebellion and to elect new rulers who would carry out their wishes²⁷.

Locke supposed that the most likely cause of a revolution would be the abuse of power by the government itself. When the society unduly interferes with the property and interests of the citizens, they are bound to protect themselves by withdrawing their consent. When great mistakes are made in the governance of a commonwealth, only rebellion holds any promise for the restoration of their fundamental rights. Who is to be the judge of whether or not this has actually occurred? Only the people can decide Locke maintained, since the very existence of the civil order depends upon their consent. In Locke's view, then the possibility of revolution is a permanent feature of any property-formed civil society. This provided a post factor defense of the Glorious Revolution in England and was also a significant element in attempts to justify latter popular revolts in America and France.

Some philosophers argue that it is not only the right of a people to overthrow an oppressive government but also their duty to do so. Howard Evans Kiefer argues thus, "it seems to me that the duty to rebel is much more understandable than the right to rebel, because the right to rebellion ruins the order of power, where as the duty to rebel goes beyond and breaks it"²⁸. So the right of revolution (or right of rebellion) is the right or duty, variously stated throughout history, of the people/nation to overthrow a government that acts against their common interest.

Other principles of democracy include:

- a. **Political Participation:** This helps citizens to be part of what happens in their society or country by participating in decision making process on matters that affect them.
- b. **Equality:** This means equality before the law, equality of opportunity in the realization of individual capacities without regard to one's race, gender, ethnic background, religion etc
- c. **Political Tolerance:** Here the majority are to respect the interests of the minority. Opposition is also tolerated.
- d. **Accountability:** Here leaders are answerable to the citizens regarding their actions, decisions or indecisions during their tenure of office.
- e. **Transparency:** This means that the leaders should be open to the public on their policies and practices. Citizens are allowed access to information on what happens in public offices.
- f. **Regular, Free and Fair Elections:** This gives the citizens the opportunity to vote out incompetent leaders and elect leaders of their choice through free and fair elections.
- g. **Checks and Balances:** This helps to control the abuse of political power by leaders. Through separation of powers and creation of institutions such as the government ombudsman (i.e. inspector of government) that watches over the performance of government officials in relation to the agreed standards and ethics.
- h. **Human Rights:** Democracy strives to protect the rights and freedoms of its citizens from abuse. Some of these rights are: right to life, right to private property, freedom of expression, freedom of association etc.
- i. **Multi-Party System:** This gives room for more than two political parties to contest elections. This widens the pool for choice of the best candidate for political office; offers alternative view to government in form of opposition which acts as check on those in political office.
- j. **Neutrality of State Institutions:** State institutions such as the police, army and other security agents are to be neutral and not politically partisan.

Failure to Liberal Democracy in Nigeria

Having outlined the basic principles of liberal democracy, the absence of the above mentioned principles presupposes failure of liberal democracy. the failure of liberal democracy in Nigeria is due to a large part of the scramble for wealth by political elites that dominated Nigerian politics since independence. These politicians see the state as a source of personal wealth accumulation. The people in power and those who seek power use all means to attain their goal. This includes fostering ethnic sectarianism and political repression. Competition for control of the state is invariably ferocious and generates instability.

This failure of liberal democracy can be traced to cumulative effects of social, economic and political factors which are manifested in failure of rule of law, electoral malpractices; national culture problem, lack of checks and balances, lack of sovereignty of the people, lack of accountability on the side of the leaders etc. whereas democracy has some universal civil and political rights, free press, rule of law, accountable representation etc.

In all, we shall try to examine the failure of liberal democracy in Nigeria by accessing how functional the principles of democracy has been in Nigeria. Considering sovereignty, John Locke, who is regarded as the father of liberal democracy located sovereignty in the people. Government according to Locke is held in trust only in service of the people. But in Nigeria, although the constitution recognizes that sovereignty lies in the hands of the people, but in practice, the government is the actual source and influence behind the political scenario. Since the sovereignty in Nigeria is not located in the people, the masses that are not in government have little or no hand in governance. The level of poverty and underdevelopment in Nigeria, the level of marginalization of the various regions of the country and the spate of corruption among the rulers necessitate the need for relocation of sovereignty in the people.

Sovereignty in Nigeria has eluded the people from the colonial period to the present. During the colonial period, it was the few nobles who were close to the colonial masters that were favored in the governance of the land. Within the period of independence and the first republic power was manipulated by the few elites who were sectional minded and tribalistic. During the military era, the soldiers took total control of the land at the expense of the masses. The situation even became worse in the current democratic dispensation where few politicians dominated the exercise of political power at the expense of the people. There is wanton disregard for the people's will by the rulers as the elected representatives exercise political power solely to their economic advantages against the common good. Hence according to Igbo "corruption has become... a way of life for the more privileged and those in position of power and authority in Nigeria..."²⁸.

Another essential ingredient of a true democracy is the rule of law which has been greatly neglected in Nigeria. Theoretically, in Nigeria, the function of the rule of law is performed by a supreme court which ensures fair hearing of trials in all cases, and guarantees the preservation of rights through the subject of all classes and persons including government and its agencies to its provision. This seems not to be practically in force in Nigeria as government officials are often regarded as sacred cows and this makes them commit crimes and go free without being tried in the law court, even when tried, they are hardly punished.

Again, Nigerian laws are deliberately punctuated with loopholes so as to serve the interest of the ruling elites. The utter neglect of the rule of law in Nigeria is quite different from what obtains in developed countries. For instance, in 1997, the president of the United States of America (Bill Clinton) had to be dragged to court over a case of sexual harassment by his one-time secretary (Monica Lewinski). Clinton humbled himself as a respondent before the court in accordance with the practice of rule of law. One wonders if this could ever be done in Nigeria where even where a corrupt government official is brought before the law, the executive arm of government would influence the court proceedings and pervert the course of justice.

Besides, the executive arm often goes against the decision of the court, thereby violating the law instead of protecting it. Ganiyu Oladipo Vs Military Governor of Lagos State is an example, here the military governor disobeyed court decision and went ahead to demolish the property of the plaintiff. This case according to newswatch was expressing "the growing lawlessness of agents of the state. It is one of the many manifestations of the growing and worrisome assaults on the rule of law by agents who are sworn to protect the law and live by the constitution"²⁹.

The rule of law implies equal subjection of all before the law including the government officials. This means that even the executive, legislature and judiciary are subject to the law. In addition, prohibits unlawful arrest and detention of citizens, yet people are being detained without court warrants and timely trials for fair hearing. Nigeria is yet to become a democratic society where every citizen is equally provided for and protected by the law, this according Obi Nwosu:

"is because, from the formulation stages, the laws were skewed to favor successive leadership cabals and protect their local and international interests and institutions. These laws were deliberately punctuated with loopholes to enhance easy manipulation and multiple interpretations so that the same law can acquit a friend and convict a foe"³⁰.

On separation of power, under the 1979, 1989 and 1999 presidential constitutions, there was a greater separation of powers in a manner similar to that of the United States of America. Under the constitutions, section 4 vested legislative powers in the National Assembly, section 5 vested executive powers on the president and governors, and the powers subject to other constitutional provisions or laws made by the National Assembly, be exercised by them directly or through public service, and section 6 vested judicial powers in the courts established by the constitution³¹. regrettably, separation of powers in Nigeria is a misnomer because the legislature and judiciary don't have total freedom from the executive arm of government as the executive often try to manipulate them. The various arms and tiers of government are more accountable to the executive than to the people, and this creates undue fear and desire for executive gratification which influences the arms of government either directly or indirectly. From the above obvious negation of the principles of liberal democracy in Nigeria, it is glaring that there is a failure of democracy in Nigeria which has adversely affected Nigeria as a nation and Nigerians as citizens.

III. Brief History of Insurgency in Nigeria

- a. **Declaration of Niger Delta Republic:** This is the first known insurgency in Nigeria. It was championed by major Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro. Who was at then a student of university of Nigeria Nsukka. Boro was aggrieved by the total exploitation of the oil and gas resources of the Niger Delta by both the federal and regional governments in total disregard of the citizens of the area. In reaction to the above grievance, Boro formed the Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF), which was an armed military group made up of 150 of his kinsmen. This NDVF group declared the Niger Delta Republic on February 23, 1966. After twelve (12) days of the declaration of the Niger Delta republic they were overpowered by the military forces and Boro was arrested together with his followers, tried and imprisoned for treason. But they were later granted amnesty in July 1967 when Nigerian civil war began, Borno joined the federal forces to fight against the Biafran forces.
- b. **Nigerian Civil War:** The Nigerian civil war began with the declaration of the Republic of Biafra by colonel Chukwuemeka Odimegwu Ojukwu on May 27, 1967. The war lasted from July 6, 1967, to January 15, 1970. The war resulted from January 15 1966 coup de tat which was seen by northerners as an attempt by the Igbos to dominate the federation due to the pattern of killing in the coup which eliminated prominent leaders of the North like Tafawa Balewa and Ahmad Bello.. this resulted to a counter coup in July 29, 1966 led by northern officers. This counter coup was followed by wanton massacre of thousands of Igbo people in the north which prompted hundreds of thousands of them to return to the south east where increasingly strong Igbo secessionist sentiment emerged giving way to the civil war.
- c. **Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB):** This movement led by Ralph Uwazurike, having a strong root in the five south eastern states of Nigeria, started more than twenty (20) years after the end of the Nigerian civil war. Report has it that MASSOB has introduced Biafran currency as legal tender in the south eastern states and also displayed the Biafran flag in the south east political zone. In its official statement issued in 2009, MASSOB predicted the disintegration of the Nigerian state by 2013 which never happened. It is obvious that MASSOB is a follow up to the failed activities of the Biafran soldiers.
- d. **Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND):** This was another armed protest against the federal government and the companies engaged in the oil industry of the Niger Delta, aimed at redressing the Denial of benefits from oil operations and the related injuries to the people and their environment. This movement led by Ben Okah emerged over 30 years after the death of Isaac Boro and it spread across the entire Niger Delta region. It is regarded as the resurgence of the Boro led declaration of Niger Delta Republic, and both groups were fighting the same course.
- e. **Oodua People's Congress (OPC):** This was a Yoruba based movement founded in 1997 and headed by Dr. Fredrick Fasheun, and Ganiyu Adams who headed the militant aspects of it. This group seeks the secession of the Yorubas from Nigeria to form a sovereign Oodua Republic. This movement followed the death of Moshood Abiola the acclaimed winner of the annulled June 12, 1990 Presidential election³².
- f. **Jama'atu Ahil Suna Lidawati Wal Jihad (Boko Haram):** Boko Haram promotes a version of Islam which makes it "haram" or forbidden, for muslims to take part in any political or social activity associated with western society. This includes voting in elections, wearing shirts and trousers or receiving a secular education. Boko Haram regards the Nigerian state as being run by non believers. The group's official name is Jama'atu Ahli Suna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, which in Arabic means "people committed to the propagation of the prophet's Teachings and Jihad".

Since the Sokoto caliphate, which ruled parts of what is now northern Nigeria, Niger and southern Cameroon, fell under British control in 1903, there has been resistance among the area's Muslims to western education. Many Muslim families still refuse to send their children to government run 'western schools', against this background, the charismatic muslim cleric, Mohammed Yusuf, formed Boko Haram in Maiduguri in 2002. He set up a religious complex, which included a mosque and an Islamic school. Many poor Muslim families from across Nigeria, as well as neighboring countries enrolled their children at the school. But Boko Haram was not only interested in education, its political goal was to create an Islamic state, and the school became a recruiting ground for Jihads to fight the state. In 2009, Boko Haram carried out a spate of attacks on police stations and other government building in Maiduguri, and since then till date, it has been one attack or the other both in Borno, Yobe, Kaduna and other states.

Some causes of Insurgency in Nigeria

- i. **Inequality:** Most of the insurgents in Nigeria cite inequality or unequal treatment as one of their reasons for creating havoc in the country. Equality being an aspect of human nature, any group that is denied equality can use any means to get it including revolution. Inequality fosters anxiety and frustration which is capable of degenerating to insurgency, if it has to do with a group or ethnic group in a country. This Mailafia rightly pointed out when he wrote:

deepening inequalities are, on their part, fostering new forms of anxiety and frustration among disposed groups, especially in the developing world...such as oil-rich Nigeria, where the gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen in the context of an increasingly desperate young, educated and unemployed urban youth, we have a ready army of people who can easily be mobilized for ethnic or religiously inspired violence³⁴.

- ii. **Marginalization:** People are marginalized when they are excluded from positions or activities like employment, trade profession, exclusion of people or group of people from political activities, in the distribution of political office or when they are deprived basic infrastructural amenities. Ethnic minorities often suffer marginalization and this sometimes lead to insurgency as a protest e.g. the Niger Delta Insurgency.
- iii. **Poverty:** Poverty according to Madafia is a major factor explaining the current wave of terrorist insurgency as adequate plans were not put in place to provide basic facilities for the increasing population. A hungry man they say, is an angry man. Poverty can make people or group of people not to be happy with the government and this can cause revolt against that particular government. It also makes people to loose value for their life and be ready to do anything even if it will cost their life. This goes to explain why over 80% of the people that perpetrate violent activities in Nigeria are from poor background. In the words of Mailafia, The prevalence of poverty makes it easier for extremist groups to mobilize disenchanting mobs in pursuit of their own political goals. In Northern Nigeria, where over 70 percent of the population lives under the internationally defined poverty line, it is easy to see how any demagogue or religious extremist can mobilize the poor and destitutes as instruments for his own political goals³⁵.

This is very common in the northern part of Nigeria where the endemic poverty and hopelessness in Nigeria is more severe. Jean Herskovits noted that “It was clear in 2009 when the insurgency began that the root cause of violence and anger in both the North and South of Nigeria is endemic poverty and hopelessness”³⁴.

- iv. **Unemployment:** An idle mind they say is the devil’s workshop. In addition to poverty and frustration, the resultant idleness from unemployment can make one to engage in any anti-social activity just to keep busy. Since in the context of widening inequalities, joblessness and poverty, it is inevitable that social tensions-most of which are exploited by politicians-will tend to find expression in ethno-religious conflict³⁶. Even the Niger Delta militants cited unemployment of their youth as one of their grievances. Of course anybody that is gainfully employed will not get involved in anything irrational as the person’s job will be taking his time.
- v. **Ethno-Religious Rival:** This is very much evident in Nigeria. The rival is always between the Hausa-Fulani Muslims and the Igbo Christians, this rival is made more manifest in politics as the Nigerian politics is so characterized by ethnic and religious sentiments that one begins to wonder how real is the “one Nigeria” slogan. Some times, this sentiments degenerate into ethnic and religious crisis in form of riot, and so on. Mailafia rightly observed that even the Boko Haram insurgence has Christians as their main target of destruction.
- vi. **State sponsored Vigilante Groups:** This state sponsored vigilante groups often metamorphose into insurgent groups. Because these groups are well armed by the state government, growing into insurgent group will not be a problem for them since they already have the necessary arms needed for their activities. For instance, greater percentage of the MASSOB members were drawn from the Bakassi boys in Abia, the Onitsha traders organization and the Anambra State Vigilante Service. The existence and importance of this vigilante groups is not necessary since we have security agencies in each state.

Insurgency as a Product of Failure of Liberal Democracy in Nigeria

Having examined the history and causes of insurgency in Nigeria, it became convincing that the insurgency in Nigeria is due to the failure of liberal democracy. This in turn is due to the violation of the principles of liberal democracy in Nigeria.

For instance, equality is one the principles of liberal democracy, here everybody or group is supposed to be treated equally in terms of resource allocation, infrastructural development, employment opportunities etc. But because some of if not all leaders are sectionally minded, they tend to favor their own people more than others. Ake rightly observed that the African state (Nigeria inclusive) rather than being a public force tends to be privatized, that is, appropriated to the service of private interests by the dominant faction of the elites³⁸. Ake’s view goes a long way in supporting Leopold Senghor’s description of politics in Africa which I think painted a clear picture of Nigeria politics in particular, using Senghor’s words:

Politics no longer is a question of the art of governing the state for the public welfare in the general framework of laws and regulations. It is a question of politician politics- not even

ideological tendencies-to place oneself, one's relatives, and one's clients in the *cursus honorum* that is the race for preferment-the image of personal rule³⁹.

This attitude of our leaders no doubt fosters inequality among equal citizens of Nigeria which in turn results to frustration, grudge, envy, anxiety, violence and mistrust. The neglected group may resort to insurgency as the state automatically loses its legitimacy and becomes irrelevant to the marginalized group. MASSOB is a good example of marginalized group.

Political tolerance being another principle of liberal democracy had gone amiss in Nigerian politics. No political party is ready to tolerate the other, that is why Nigeria is always experiencing one political crisis or the other especially during political campaign and election proper. Even after election, no party or group accepts defeat in good faith, this inability of opposition party to accept election result in good faith is what gives room to post election violence as the case with the April 2011 general election, as is witnessed in the North which I still believe contributed to the escalation of Boko Haram insurgency in the Northern Nigeria.

Accountability is also essential principle of liberal democracy, which is missing in Nigerian democracy, Rotberg observed that the economic sphere is characterized by deteriorating standards of living, a lack of public goods and services, the flourishing of corruption and a pervasive economic stagnation. In the political sphere, some leaders and their allies readily work to subvert prevailing democratic norms by coercing legislatures and bureaucracies into sub-service, compromising judicial independence, stifling the emergence of civil society or space, and abusing security and defence forces for parochial ends⁴⁰. This attitude has given room to all kinds of corruption both on the side of the leaders and the general public which in turn weaken the state and render it vulnerable to insurgency. For according to Mailafia, is equally true that unjust and corrupt governments provide a fertile ground for terrorism. Some would argue that non-democratic governments breed conditions that terrorists can exploit in furtherance of their own objectives⁴⁰. He went further to argue that:

In fledgling democracies where corruption is rife and institutions are weak, there is a higher likelihood of terrorist activities emerging...and if particular section of the country feel short changed politically in the context of a state apparatus that is considered weak as well as corrupt and where there is widespread social alienation due to poverty you have a tinderbox waiting to explode⁴¹.

This was exactly what happened in the Northern part of Nigeria when Good Luck Jonathan took over the leadership after the death of President Umaru Musa Yar'adua, during which there were series of violent activities including the 2009 Independence Day Celebration bomb blast in Abuja.

Again Nigeria has not been able to conduct free and fair election since independence as all their election are always marred with one malpractice or the other. This has been a major challenge to liberal democracy in Nigeria as the three phases of election-pre-election phase, election phase and post-election phase are crises ridden, especially the election phase which is characterized with all sorts of violence and malpractice ranging from thuggery, intimidation of voters and opponents, snatching of ballot boxes etc. All these violent activities incubate insurgency in Nigeria.

These electoral malpractices which result in election rigging, promotes the forceful imposition of a candidate as leader on the people without taking their consent which is expressed by voting into consideration. This goes contrary to John Locke's emphasis on the importance of consent in forming any government. For "Men being...by nature all free, equal and independent, no one can be...subjected to the political power of another without his own consent"⁴². It is the consent of the majority as expressed in every free and fair election that can make any government lawful. Thus, by implication, all the governments Nigeria has been having since independence can be described as unlawful and lacks legitimacy.

Generally, liberal democracy sees the interest of the people as a priority, but in Nigeria, the interest of the leaders are priority and this selfish attitude of the leaders most times causes insurgency because according to Rotberg:

Once the state's capacity to perform in an expected manner recedes, there is every reason to expect disloyalty to the state on the part of the disenchanting and aggrieved citizens. Logically many transfer their allegiances to their clan and group leaders, some of whom gravitate towards terrorism as they strive to secure communal mandate. Mobilizing support from both external and local supporters, the terrorists seek out havens in the more remote and marginalized corners of failed states where they blend in, more comfortably in the prevailing chaos associated with the state failure⁴³.

The above view explains exactly how Boko Haram and other insurgent groups started and thrived today due to failure of the acclaimed liberal democracy in Nigeria. However, this failure of liberal democracy in

Nigeria has negative impacts/influence on not only the insurgent groups, other people and groups are equally influenced by this ugly incident. In the words of Adibe:

...the Nigerian state, contrary to the media hype, is regarded as the enemy, not just by Boko Haram, but by several Nigerians and groups, each attacking it with as much ferocity as Boko Haram's bombs, using whatever means they have at their disposal.: Politicians entrusted to protect our common patrimony steal the country blind, law enforcement officers see or hear no evil at a slight inducement, government workers drag their feet and refuse to give their best while reveling in moonlighting, organized labor, inducing university lecturers in public institutions go on indefinite strikes on a whim while journalists accept 'brown envelopes' to turn truth on its head or become uncritical champions of a selected anti-Nigerian state identity. What all these groups have in common with Boko Haram is that they believe that the premise on which they act is justifiable and that the Nigerian state is unfair to them, if not an outright enemy⁴⁴.

Everybody tries to find out his or her own way of surviving since the country takes little or no care of them.

IV. Conclusion

Having identified the socio-economic factors like unemployment, poverty, unequal treatment of citizens by the government, marginalization, corruption, electoral malpractice etc as the causes of insurgency in Nigeria, and having established that all those socio-economic factors are after effects of the failure of liberal democracy in Nigeria which implies that insurgency in Nigeria is a product of the failure of liberal democracy in Nigeria. I therefore recommend that democratic practices has to be put in place at all levels of government (both federal, state and local levels) to control insurgency and resolve security challenges in Nigeria to enable us have a stable country. Again, government has to address socio-economic deprivation in all regions of the country especially in the North where it is most severe. Also religion has to be separated from politics and governance, the crises of poverty, unemployment, inequality, and corruption has to be address. The armed forces has to be adequately funded to enable them protect the lives and properties of Nigerians.

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