
Politico-Religious Fundamentalism and Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria

Eke C. Chinwokwu, PhD
Department of Sociology,
Federal University Lafia,
Lafia, Nigeria
eke.chinwokwu@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper interrogates the nexus between political and religious fundamentalism and its implications on the socio-economic development in Nigeria. Fundamentalism in the political and religious arena has become strong tools for individuals and groups to make sense of their grievances in Nigeria. Fundamentalism, from its original conception has been misconstrued and thus misused by political and religious miscreants to achieve their personal or group interests. Nigeria, in recent times have witnessed and still witnessing various political and religious fundamentalist's agitations for change in the structure and governance of the country. The acts of terrorism, ethno-religious conflicts, and herdsmen wanton destructions have exacerbated in the scramble for political and economic space. These are detrimental to our nascent democracy and government efforts to take Nigeria out of our present economic quagmire. Taming the trends of extremists demand has been an uphill task for government. The paper posits that political and religious fundamentalism will continue to persists in Nigeria until government become a people oriented and driven governance, resulting to positive socio-economic development, and until political elites de-emphasis the use of ethno-religious fundamentalism to gain political power.

Keywords: *Politico-Religious Fundamentalism, Fundamentalism, Socio-economic Development*

1.0. Introduction

The contemporary world is garnished with different group of people with varying socio-cultural and political ideological beliefs or dogmas and behavioral patterns. The way and manner in which most people profess these belief systems may amount to extremist behavior. Indeed, the use of these extremist attitudes in pursuit of their interests or protections of their ideology results in most cases to the violation of the fundamental human rights of others. In other words, crisis or conflict situations arising from extremists approach to their needs and goals have severe impact on society. Nigeria has witnessed and still witnessing grave impacts resulting from crisis associated with political and religious fundamentalism or violent extremism. Political and religious fundamentalism has always erupted in Nigeria claiming thousands of lives and millions of Naira worth of properties. One can hardly put a clear mark between political and religious crisis resulting from fundamentalist groups in Nigeria. This is because politics and religion are so interwoven in such a way that whenever there is crisis, both situations seem present. The nexus between politics and religious violent extremism are so intricately interwoven that you cannot have one without the other happening spontaneously in any given political and religious extremism in Nigeria especially as witness in most crises in Northern Nigeria. Political and religious fundamentalism finds its vehicle in terrorism and various acts of violence not only in Nigeria but also in all modern

societies. It has become the fulcrum, which provides the springboard through which individuals and groups; exert their political agitations. Aside from that, it is a platform, in which many have used to ride to their political and religious height or dominance in the society. The aftermath has been massive destruction of lives and property. The manipulation of political and religious fundamentalism thrive as an instrument of violence to acquire cheap political recognition and relevance especially when explicitly utilized by disgruntled, hungry, and power thirsty individuals for political acquisition and power.

The phenomenon can best be describe as “double-edged swords” (Maregere, 2011 p.18), because it gives rise to terrorism, ethno-communal violence, political violence, ethno-religious and other forms of violent extremism. There have been various forms of political and religious crises resulting from fundamentalists’ agitations. For instance, the upsurge of the Maitatsine Islamic fundamentalists of the 1980-1990s; the outrage of Boko Haram onslaught since 2009, the Niger Delta Militant groups and currently the rising profile of Fulani herdsmen militia (Turaki, 1993; Adegba, 2001; Aliyu, 2004; Chinwokwu, 2012, 2013b, 2019; Ushe, 2015), have had great devastation in the socio-economic development of the country. Thus, there cannot be socio-economic development amidst political and religious crisis arising from fundamentalist’s agitations. Many scholars have described the social problems created by political and religious fundamentalism as religious conflicts (Ushe, 2015; Gofwen, 2004), Muslim-Christian conflict (Aliyu, 2001) in relation to national security and unity. We intend to deviate from their discourse to focus on fundamentalism as in political and religious realm and its implication on the socio-economic development of Nigeria because it has not been adequately articulated by scholars relative to Nigeria. Therefore, “there is no doubt that religious polarization and the spread of fundamentalism pose major challenges to Nigeria’s fledgling democracy” with grave impact on socio-economic development (Lewis, 2002 p. 2). The study is expected to add to existing body of knowledge on religious and political violent extremism in Nigeria with practical implications on how to combat the menace.

2.0. Research Methodology

The study adopted the secondary research data in gathering materials for this paper. Relevant books, journals, monographs and news print materials on terrorism, religious extremism and fundamentalism and national development were reviewed to articulate a comprehensive and broad view on the subject of discourse.

3.0. Conceptualization of Fundamentalism

There is no acceptable definition of the term “fundamentalism” because it is full of controversy and radically sensitive (Derichs & Fleschenberg, 2010). It is also subjective, depending mainly on who is defining it and could be use as a tool to criminalize perceived political enemies. It is often use interchangeably with concepts like extremism, radicalism, revolutionaries, conservatism, traditionalism, militancy and comparable to secularism (Okolie & David, 2017; Derichs & Fleschenberg, 2010). Thus across the globe there are various groups and associations that have been identified as fundamentalists. For example: al-Qaeda in Afghanistan which later spread to other parts of the world, the Tuareg of Mali, the Lord’s Resistance Army in Uganda and the Oromo Liberation Front and Ogaden National Liberation Front in Ethiopia, Islamic States of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Africa. Others include the Union of Islamic Courts (al-Shabaab, Hawiye Clan Fundamentalists and Anti-Ethiopian Fundamentalists) in Somalia; the Maghreb in Algeria; Mai Mai in Democratic Republic of Congo; Mau Mau of Kenya; African National Congress in South Africa the Palestinian

Liberation Army in Palestine, Irish Republic Army in Ireland and many others. In Nigeria, we have such as Movement for the Actualization of Biafra, Indigenous People of Biafra, Arewa Youth Consultative Forum, The O’Odua People’s Congress, The Ijaw Youths, Niger Delta Volunteer Force, Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta, Mambila Fundamentalists, Boko Haram, Fulani Herdsmen, Islamic States of West Africa Province, Islamic States of West African Countries etc (Boas, 2009; Atta-Asamaoh, 2009; Oyeniyi, 2009; Botha, 2009; Oloo, 2009). Fundamentalism applies to political, religious and other socio-cultural phenomenon. This categorization makes it possible to link fundamentalism to both radical and gradual demand for dynamic socio-political and economic status quo in any given society. This categorization is very significant for us in Nigeria because we can observe vestiges or elements of fundamentalists rearing their heads in everywhere in Nigeria. In most cases, you cannot separate fundamentalists from the use of force in the form of terrorism to enforce their demand especially when such are politically and economically driven. The government on the other hand, can act in a radical way that may be describe as fundamentalist approach especially when it tends to foist its policies on the people violently. They can also create situations that could escalate fundamentalist agitations by their application of force, even in governance and political decisions especially in the President Muhammadu Buhari led APC government, most decisions and actions have religious fundamentalist coloration, especially in his appointments to sensitive positions in disregard to the federal character policy. In other words, there is application of politico-religious fundamentalism in government actions and body language as we have experienced in Nigeria during the dark years of military rule and as expressed under our present democratic dictatorship in which the activities of herdsmen militia seem to have government nod. The pretense that Nigeria is a secular state seems to be a mirage under President Muhammadu Buhari administration as demonstrated in the Islamization and Fulanization of appointments to key national institutions without any qualms. It is the highest level of clear exhibition of government participation and demonstration of politico-religious fundamentalism in Nigeria and the worst of its kind since Nigeria’s independence.

The Webster Dictionary define “fundamentalism” as a movement or attitude stressing strict and literal adherence to a set of basic principles or set of beliefs (Merian Webster, 2007). This implies that fundamentalists are bind by a common principle or beliefs, which may compel them to act or not to act in certain ways that may counter the general opinion. On one hand, Helie-Lucas (2004), notes that fundamentalisms are “political movements of the extreme right, which, in a context of globalization, for example, forceful international economic exploitation and free-for-all capitalism, manipulate religion, culture, or ethnicity in order to achieve their political aims” (cited in Claudio, 2010 p.16). Helie-Lucas presents a global dimension of the concept of fundamentalism by introducing economic exploitation and capitalism using religion as the manipulative platform. In other words, fundamentalism, finds it real manipulative strategy in religion. Thus, Karl Marx (1818-1883) argues, “religion is the opium of the people” (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008 p.399). However, it is vital to stress that certain fundamentalists drive have nothing in common with religion. For example, the Indigenous People of Biafra’s (IPoB) agitation is politically motivated because of economic exploitation and suppression of the region, so also is the Niger Delta militant agitations. Nonetheless, Dawkins (2006) argues that religious fundamentalism has to do with “a deep and totalistic commitment to a belief in the infallibility and inerrancy of holy scriptures, absolute religious authority and strict adherence to a set of basic principles (fundamentals) away from doctrinal compromise with modern social and political life” (cited in Liyanage, 2010 p. 27). This definition forms the original conception of the term ‘fundamentalism’ as

espoused by the orthodox protestant scholars. Nevertheless, the adulteration and its manipulation by power hungry politicians have made fundamentalism the devil and monster that every one dread to hear. This was further expatiated by Bartholomeusz and De Silva (1998) when they described fundamentalism in the following ways:

- a reliance on religion as a source of identity;
- boundary setting that determine who belongs and who does not;
- dramatic stories used to glorify a particular group; and
- dramatization and mythologization of enemies (cited in Liyanage, 2010 p. 10)

We may argue from the foregoing that contemporary fundamentalists are inclusive, organized and determined individuals or groups who are bound under a common creed and ideology to use force and violent extremism (if necessary) to achieve political and socio-economic dominance under the banner of religion at the exclusion of all others especially in relation to Islamic fundamentalism. The violent extremism and terrorism exhibited by Islamic fundamentalists across the globe is a clear indication of a group shielding themselves under religious doctrines and ideology to seek for political relevance, dominance and oppression. Thus, Chinwokwu (2013a p.1) queried “Is religious doctrines catalyst to terrorism?” Contemporary Christian fundamentalism fought on the platform of ideological manipulations rather than on violent use of dangerous weapons. This is why Christian fundamentalists have been accused of foisting and propagating individualism, capitalism, free trade liberalization and globalization on the entire universe (Claudio, 2010; Philips, 2006; Jennings, 2002). If modern fundamentalists struggle had been on the fulcrum of ideological maneuverings and manipulations rather than massive application of dangerous weapons and pillage of human lives, perhaps the death toll recorded globally in that regard would have been minimal. The world would have known peace and comparable to paradise where serenity abounds.

4.0. A Historical Origin, Misconception and Misapplication of Fundamentalist Principle

The word “fundamentalism” has its origin in the work of some Presbyterian Church scholars and seminarians at the Princeton Seminary University, United States of America between 1909 and 1915. It first found its identity in a series of published notes or leaflets entitled “fundamentals” which expressed some basic Christian ideological beliefs and doctrines (Tier Haar, 2002; Meyer, 2007; Derichs & Fleschenberg, 2010; Noll, 1992). These ideological beliefs and doctrines were so critical and pivotal to the subject matter of Christian faith. Members of the Christian faith who believe very strongly to the fundamentals (religious ideologies and doctrines) could lay down their lives to defend (if they need arises) in defense of these fundamentals. It was devoid of any physical conflict or altercation or meant to wrestle power from any one or group. In other words, it was a mere presentation of basic argument on the platform of logical inferences far from physical violence. It required an intellectual application in the interpretation and understanding of religious doctrines and principles rather than the struggle for political power or worldly recognition. The current narrative and connotation of violent extremism to the original fundamentalist principles was alien and inherent nature of man to manipulate noble ideas for selfish and political ambition.

However, fundamentalism became a misrepresented, misinterpreted, misapplied concept when it was exalted into politico-religious fundamentalism; and used by Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran in 1979 to set up a political power based on modern theocracy of Islamic nature (Tier Haar, 2002; Meyer, 2007; Derichs & Fleschenberg, 2010; Claudio, 2010). It was Ayatollah Khomeini who in his struggle to consolidate and sustain his political ambition that

introduced and elevated religious ideological fundamentalism into physical violent religious fundamentalism expressed in the use of dangerous weapons for the enthronement and consolidation of state political power. It became a political tool and principle to chase out perceived opponents and to gain unhindered political relevance and authority. For, he greedily mixed religion in his struggle to gain political power and dominance and to remain life president of Iran. Following the footsteps of Ayatollah Khomeini, contemporary politico-religious fundamentalists have couched into this phenomenon as an easy ride to political dominance and indeed used it to cause devastating catastrophe across the world. African countries and indeed Nigeria has witnessed and still witnessing the massive effect of the use of religion to gain political authority and power by political elites and even in creating violent conflicts and completely keeping the people apart for personal and group interests. One cannot extricate religious fundamentalism from political violence and struggle for state control.

Fundamentalisms as in religious sphere have since assumed a violent and dangerous dimension across the globe, especially as espoused to gain socio-political and economic power over others. There is no religion this gravely manifest more than in Islamic religion. According to Meyer (2007 p.3), the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre, New York by Islamic fundamentalists ultimately illustrated the dangers faced by the world in the “form of a religious-based political terrorism”. More so, “the fundamentalist use of religion as part of a socio-cultural or political power strategy” is a grave menace that must be checked (Meyer, 2007 p.6). The neglect of fundamentalism, political or religious as the brainchild of ideological concept (fought in the realm of abstract beliefs and practices) rather than an expression of physical violence are the basis of myriad of divergent interpretations that have plunged the world into darkness of unimaginable cataclysmic proportion.

Contemporary interpretations of fundamentalism and its principles are stupendously linked with terrorism, struggle for power (economic, political and religion), expression of ethnic supremacy, violent communal conflicts, struggle for land space and the likes), which inadvertently manifest in wars and terror attacks across the globe. Thus, Chinwokwu (2013a p.7) argued that “Religions are basically and ideologically laden. They are not by themselves cause terrorism or violence, until they are invoked by individuals who want to use it to achieve political, economic, social or religious power”. This is because almost every incidences of terrorism has religious undertone. Hamilton (1995) was of the opinion “To say, however, that religion can be turned into an instrument of manipulation is no more to explain it than saying that because art or drama can be utilized for ideological purposes this explains art or drama” (cited in Haralambos & Holborn, 2008 p.401). Thus, man is a manipulative being, readily utilizing logic and philosophy to interpret concepts to suit his desire and interests; aptly demonstrated in the application of fundamentalism. In this regard Chinwokwu (2013a p.7) aptly expressed “Religion helps to produce a false class consciousness which blinds members of the oppressed class their true situation and their real interest” which the political elites manipulate to gain political ascendancy.

Paradoxically, democratic principles based on justice, equality and liberty have suffered the same fate as fundamentalism as democratic principles found expression in injustice, inequality and oppression. Governance supposedly people oriented found meaning in the hands of the few who oppress and exploit the people for their primordial interests. Thus, there is the tendency of the politico-religious ideology of the fundamentalists to articulate crisis or conflict over resources and grievance regarding political exclusion,

injustice, oppression and these form the basis of formation of organized violent resistance and protest in virtually everything as we have experienced in Nigeria (Meyer, 2007; Derichs & Fleshenberg, 2010). Religion has become an instrument for measuring political strength and gaining political relevance and power, where it is not used in peace time; it is manipulated to fan embers of extreme violence that may usher a leeway for political domination.

5.0. Why Political – Religious Fundamentalism Do Persists?

Scholars are worried as to the reason behind the persistence of political and religious fundamentalism globally in spite of efforts to counter it. In his own reaction, Greg (2013) argues that:

Fundamentalists react to the rise of secularism. Fundamentalists perceive the effect of secularism on religion and feel that they are being forced to the margins of society and political life, which they believe should be governed by religion. Secularism and fundamentalism are both ideologies, complex system of beliefs that aspire to shape political and social action. As such, secularism and fundamentalism are in direct competition with one another (cited by Dombong, 2017 p.6)

Greg brought out some basic assumptions in the above argument - the issue of secularism in conflict with religion and the issue of fundamentalism as an ideology. There is nowhere in the world where secularism and religion work in conformity with each other, there are always at polar ends. This antithesis forms the exclusion of religious practices in public in countries like Russia and Germany in the early days of the cold war. Fundamentalism is an ideology which when misinterpreted produce violent reaction in every society. Thus, the interpretations of religious and political ideologies provide the nexus in which fundamentalism find a breeding ground to manifest positively or negatively. For instance, Boko Haram sees Western education as offensive to their religious doctrine and ideology. The Boko Haram suicide bombers, based on their indoctrination see martyrdom as sure way to the acquisition of virgins in heaven. Hitler regards its Caucasian Aryan blood as superior to all other races in Europe. America considers its economic interests above all others and ready to war with any country against their common interests. The Maitatsine movement rejected and discriminated against other Muslims while maintaining their own separatist beliefs dependent solely on the Koran, they rejected Western education and at the same time rejecting the political authority of the Nigerian government. Boko Haram considered Western education as sin and rejected democratic rule based on secular principles, the Miyetti Allah under whose umbrella the Fulani herdsmen have been carrying heinous criminal impunities across the country claim the Fulani hegemony own the Nigerian state and its is their right from Allah to any place through force if necessary (Chinwokw, 2017; Smith, 2015; Ford, 2014; Onuoha, 2014; Chinwokwu, 2013b; Isa, 2010). All these examples demonstrate the importance of ideology as the moving force behind all fundamentalists' agitations.

The underlying propelling force of political and religious fundamentalism is socio-economic and political domination that soars high on the wings of violence and terrorism. No wonder, there is increased tension across the globe due to terrorism, an offspring of political and religious fundamentalism especially by Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen militia. Most importantly, is the rising profile of political and religious fundamentalism based on Islamic ideology that has fueled the general insecurity around the globe? Therefore, there is the tendency to kill anyone who stands in the opposition of this force. This is because "fundamentalist Muslims share the belief that Islam will conquer the world and replace the

existing political ideologies in the Western world thereby bringing salvation to the entire world” (Taheri, 1987 cited in Nwankwo, 2015 p.294). This kind of mindset can be devastating when put into action for its realization, and that is the contemporary dilemma globally.

Ideologies outlive their originators and continue to foster in the minds of the living that persistently and avariciously employ it to achieve its original design and aim. Table 1 below indicates that some crisis erupts out of fundamentalists ideology of political dominance aimed at economic exploitation. The few cases of Fulani herdsmen outrage go far beyond what its physical manifestation portray. It is an expression of a sentiment warped in the ideology of born to rule (dominate), which entails suppressive and exploitative lordship above and over others. Each of the cases is ideologically laden.

Table 1: Some Crisis arising from Politico-Religious Fundamentalism across Nigeria 1945-2016

S/N O.	GROUP	Location	DATE/ PERIOD	REASON FOR CRISIS/ACTION	CASUALTY
1.	The Zikist Movement	Southern Nigeria	1945-1950	Against colonial rule and exploitation in Nigeria	No record
2.	The Arewa Youths	Northern Nigeria	1953 – 1954	Violent protest against the proposal at the parliament for Nigeria’s independence in 1954 and Northern bid to secede out of Nigeria. Many Southerners were killed	No record
3.	Northern Military Officers	Northern Nigeria	1966	Anti-Igbo leading to 1966 pogrom and establishment of Northern political dominance	Over 30,000 Igbo people were killed in the North
4.	Niger Delta Volunteer Force	South-South, Nigeria	1966	Against Nigerian oppression, injustice and environmental degradation and Niger Delta Republic attempt to secede out of Nigeria	No record
5.	The Biafra	Eastern Nigeria	1967-1970	Secession bid by Igbo people to establish self-independence outside Nigerian government	Over 3 Million people were killed
6.	Maitatsine/ Islamic Group	Northern Nigeria	1980 – 1985	Western education is sin, rejection of government rule and institution of government based on Shariah	4,000 people were killed

7.	Odua'a People's Congress	South-West Nigeria	1990s till date	Against military rule and maintenance of Yoruba Cultural/political Identity	No record
8.	The Niger Delta Militias	South-South, Nigeria	1999 to date	Resource control and environmental degradation	About 60 people killed
9.	Arewa Youths	Northern Nigeria	2000	Establishment of government based on Islamic doctrines and rules and destruction of Western culture	No record
10.	Arewa Muslim Youths	Northern Nigeria	2001	Against America action in Afghanistan	100 people were killed
10.	Arewa Muslim Youths	Northern Nigeria	2002	Against the hosting of Miss World beauty pageant in Nigeria	200 people were killed
11.	Boko Haram	North-East. Nigeria	2009 to date	Western education is sin, rejection of government under Christian rule and institution of government based on Shariah	Over 3,000 people killed
12.	Shiite Islamic Movement	North-West Nigeria	2009 to date	Strict adherence to Koran, rejection of innovations of Islamic doctrines and intolerance	500 people have been killed
13.	Arewa Youths	Northern, Nigeria	2011	Political dominance and failure of General Buhari to win the 2011 presidential election	3,000 people were killed
14.	Fulani Herdsmen	Agatu, Benue state	10/1/2015	Revenge and forceful acquisition of land for cow grazing	45 people were killed
15.	Fulani Herdsmen	Egba-Agatu, Benue State	15/3/2015	Economic exploitation and forceful acquisition of land for cow grazing	90 People were killed
16.	Fulani Herdsmen	Ukura-Gafa, Benue State	24/5/2015	Economic exploitation and forceful acquisition of land for cow grazing	100 people were killed
17.	Fulani Herdsmen	Agatu, Benue State	24/2/2016	Revenge, economic exploitation and forceful acquisition of land for cow grazing	300 people were killed
18.	Fulani Herdsmen	Agatu, Benue State	13/3/2016	Forceful acquisition of land for cow grazing	90 people were killed
19.	Fulani Herdsmen	Bali, Taraba State	13/4/2016	Economic exploitation and forceful acquisition of land for cow grazing	44 People were killed

20	Fulani herdsman	Ukpabi Nimbo, Uzo Uwani, Enugu State	25/4/2016	Revenge, economic exploitation and forceful acquisition of land for cow grazing	57 people were killed
21..	Fulani Herdsmen	Logo, Benue state	20/6/2016	Economic exploitation and forceful acquisition of land for cow grazing	59 people were killed
22.	Fulani Herdsmen	Southern Kaduna, Kaduna State	24/12/2016	Religious war, economic exploitation and forceful acquisition of land for cow grazing	303 people were killed
23.	Movement for the Actualization of Biafra	South-East Nigeria	2000 to date	Against injustice, economic exploitation, oppression and Northern political dominance	3,000 Igbo youths have been killed by government forces
24.	Indigenous People of Biafra	South-East, Nigeria	2013 to date	Against Igbo marginalization, injustice, oppression, economic exploitation and demand for self-independence	1,000 Igbo people have been killed by government forces
<p>Note: The reports are police estimates; the actual death may be far more than the official police record. The narrative is exclusive of the quantum destruction of farmlands, communities, homes, Churches, schools, hospitals, installations, and other social facilities worth millions of Naira.</p>					

Sources: Achebe, 2012, Michael, Inyang & Ukpong, 2017; Okolie & David, 2016; Lewis, 2002, Oyeniya, 2009; Chinwokwu, 2013b

6.0. What Enhanced the Prevalence of Fundamentalism in Nigeria?

Violence as in insurgency and terrorism found its base in political and religious fundamentalism. Many factors account for the prevalence of fundamentalism in Nigeria. The political elites use it to fuel their engine hatched in political thuggery, political violence, hate speech and religious bigotry.

6.1. The Struggle for Economic Space

Karl Marx (1818-1883) espoused the importance of economy as the main building block of every society. According to Marx (1848 p.3), ‘The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle’. This class struggle is not based on economic innovative ideas or technological supremacy but on the acquisition of the means of production primarily land. In this case therefore, land (for economic dominance) has greater interests. Chinwokwu (2016 p.31) observes that “Most of the conflicts we interpret as religious or ethnic in nature are in reality hinged upon struggle for economic space and survival”. Scholars (Fasona et al, 2016 Muhammad, Isamila, & Bibi, 2015; Okolie & Atelhe, 2014; Audu, 2013) are of the view that most of the crises in Nigeria result from struggle for economic space and dominance. The Boko Haram hoisted its flag in Gwozar after sacking the police and claimed 21 Local Government Areas in Borno state in 2014. They also established their Islamic state until in 2016 when the Joint Military Task Force technically sacked them. The struggle for economic space and governance is the very root of most politico-religious

fundamentalist agitators across the globe. Extant literature (Ikuteyijo, 2009; Oyeniya, 2007; Rotimi, 2001; Olukoju, 1997; Ahire, 1993; Ohonbamu, 1972) argue that the scramble for Africa by Europe in the 18th Century hinged on economic control of the continent and this was aggressively pursued by colonialists through various acts of terrorism, which neo-colonialists and imperialist have expressly embraced for their economic dominance. The issue of Fulani herdsmen militia and their killings has become clearer as they have taken over and occupied most of the land and communities they sacked with their cows, thereby indicating that their killings were for economic dominance and territorial expansion.

6.2. Greed for Power and Satisfaction of Group Interests

The government in Nigeria since 1960 is been governance of exclusion and of the few in which corruption is the main tool of the game. The people have been far away from the centre of policy formulation and implementation of government agenda. Government consciously sidelined and completely ostracized the people from its policies and programs. The main stakes of governance, which ought to be people, are completely alienated from the benefits of government policies. The primary focus of every responsible government is the peoples' welfare. However, in Nigeria, those appointed by the people to represent them are the focus of government. Various scholars (Sule et al., 2015; James & Jenifer, 2011) believe that there is a relationship between violent crisis and corruption. John (2009) argued that the "concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a very few, with nepotism and tribalism as key factors" of corruption (cited in Sule et al., 2015 p. 39). It is in that kind of situation that anger, frustration and fundamentalists' agitation arouse that "citizens tend to resort to the use of force and self-help making outbreaks of violence a real possibility" (Yusuf, 2011 cited in Sule et al., 2015 p.39). The various manifestations of agitations across the country speak volumes of this fact.

6.3. Arrogance and lifestyles of Political Elites

The flamboyant lifestyle and fragrant display of wealth by political elites in the midst of hunger, poverty, unemployment, starvation and economic depression is a rape on the sensibility and feelings of the downtrodden in Nigeria. Political office holders and legislators are representative mouthpiece and servants of the people. In Nigeria, these calibers of officials have turn themselves lords, whose purpose to serve the people have metamorphosis into greedy and personal acquisition to the detriment of public good. These acts put pressure on the deprived and marginalized poverty mad driven masses to engage in fundamentalist's struggles, which usually culminate into violence. This is most devastating and dangerous when these categories of people find their place in the hands of men who are power drunk and whose aim is to change the socio-political and economic equation. The members of the national assembly in Nigeria earns over ₦15,000,000.00 (Fifteen Million Naira) monthly at the glaring eyes of unemployed and poverty ridden youths. This is an insult on the sensibility of the Nigerian masses, which elected them to represent their constituencies.

6.4. Relative Deprivation and Injustice

Relative deprivation and injustice seem to be an underlying factor in the emergence and sustenance of political and religious fundamentalism across worldwide. There is nowhere this is very apparent than in the Southeast and the Niger Delta areas of Nigeria. There is complete lack of federal presences in these zones, depicting failure of governance. The neglect of the Niger Delta area by government in terms of infrastructural development account for the proliferation of militia groups in the area. In the same way, the rise of Boko Haram insurgency came as a result of the injustice meted to their leader. Thus, Lewis (2002

p.2) is of the opinion that “Dissident Islamists are a significant force in countries such as Nigeria, where there is a ready social foundation, deep inequities, and a broad failure of governance”. The Almajiris in Northern Nigeria are ready foot soldiers for Boko Haram insurgents’ results from injustice, inequality and failure of governance.

6.5. Poverty and Unemployment

Poverty and unemployment are great pivots on which fundamentalism stands. This has been associated with terrorism, insurgency and various kinds of violent crimes globally. The emergence of Boko Haram and other militia groups in Nigeria have been attributed to poverty and unemployment, which provide the ready and willing foot soldiers for these groups (Chinwokwu, 2013b; Sule et al., 2015; Okemi, 2012). Lewis (2002 p. 2) succinctly puts it that the “Conditions that foster radicalism - poverty, unemployment, social dislocation, cultural polarization, and a large pool of disaffected young men - are evident in abundance” especially in the emergence of militancy and insurgency in Nigeria. Odozor (2011) argues”

A cruel irony in Nigeria is that as the country discovers more and more oil fields, a sizeable proportion of the population sinks more deeply into poverty. The concomitant decline of investment in the education and economic well-being of people, especially the young, makes the latter easy prey for religious fanatics or lunatics who promise them something greater than themselves, whether in this world or in the next (p.229).

6.6. Expansionists and Oppressive Tendency of Dominant Political Ethnic Groups

The recent outrage of transhumance nomadic Fulani militia across North Central and Southern Nigeria has put a smack on government sworn oath to defend all citizens. This is especially true when all the outcry of criminal impunity of the herdsmen militia draw no serious condemnation or action by government. Thus, Chinwokwu (2017 p. 30) observed that:

The politics being played out by the present APC government regarding various acts of violent crimes – murder (killing of innocent citizens); criminal damage (unlawful entering of another person’s farm, destruction of farm crops, destruction of homes, Churches, schools, arson); sexual offences (rape, sexual assaults and molestations); abductions, armed robbery and kidnappings being carried out by Fulani herdsmen across the country remain unchecked and on the upsurge.... These acts of criminality and the way they have been glamorized by those who are placed in authority to defend the unity and security of all Nigerians depicts a complete failure of government in its onerous and constitutional responsibility.

Although, scholars (Lewis, 2002; Odozor, 2011; Chinwokwu, 2013b; Okolie & Atelhe, 2014; Muhammad, Ismaila, Bibi, 2015; Fasona et al, 2016) have articulated different versions for fundamentalists agitations ranging from poverty, unemployment, resources control, relative deprivation, injustice and disregard to rule of law and resources control to search for arable land for grazing. However, it is imperative to stress that the activities of Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen militia depicts expansionists tendency as communities were chased out (conquered), flags hoisted and lands taken over from the original owners. It is still being muted that the Islamic jihad and the promise of dipping the Koran in the Atlantic ocean in Southern Nigeria is still ongoing especially with the ways in which Fulani herdsmen were going, with government showing no concern to contain them. This expansionist perspective has been given credence by former President Olusegun Obasanjo who stated that

Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen killing are agenda for the “Fulanization of West Africa and Islamization of Africa” (Vanguard, 2019; PM News, 2019). The agenda is the same for Nigeria going by the massive evidence on ground of their activities.

7.0. Implications for Socio-Economic Development

Political and religious fundamentalist’s activities impede socio-economic development by creating fear and insecurity in the society. Political elites consciously and tacitly collaborate with fundamentalist’s elements to heighten the state of insecurity for their selfish and group interest. The case of the emergence of Boko Haram is very relevant. More so, political and religious leaders exacerbate conflicts as they collaborate in corruption and mismanagement of the economy through their failure to challenge injustice, nepotism, disregard to rule of law and bad governance.

7.1. Capital Flight and loss of foreign investment

Nigeria, is bless with abundant natural tourism centers that can boost our economy. In Northern Nigeria for example international tourism centers like Yankari Games Reserve, the Mambila Plateau, the tomb of Othman Dan Fodio and the Argungu fishing festival have virtually comatose due to incessant activities of fundamentalists. It is worthy to note that these tourism sites provide financial investment and gains that boost the Nigerian gross domestic product (GDP) (Chukwurah, Eme, & Ogbeje, 2015). At the time being, the political environment presage great danger for both domestic and foreign investors as violent conflicts and terrorist activities have made the country investor unfriendly (Chukwurah et al., 2015). Aside from that, human capital and foreign investment in solid mineral are scarce due to insecurity in the country. Most manufacturers’ industrial companies closed down their companies due to government unfavorable economic policies and inability to source foreign exchange. There is brain drain as Nigerians move in their droves to foreign countries in search of greener pastures as unemployment and underemployment bite harder.

7.2. Lack of infrastructural development

Social basic facilities in the country have been destroyed due to activities of fundamentalists groups. The activities of fundamentalists especially Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen have quantum impact on homes, communities, Churches, hospitals, schools, farms, and other social amenities. According to Chinedu (2012), “73% of businesses owned by Igbo indigenes in Northern Nigeria have been shut down due to insecurity and fear of victimization” (cited in Chukwura et al., 2015 p.376). Sedentary farmers in all Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen affected communities have abandoned their farmlands and crops to cows, thereby heightening food security in the country. Today a bag of garri is costlier than imported 50kg bag of rice. Political agitation and demand for democratic restructuring of governance in the country has intensified. More than ever before, things that kept Nigeria together have greatly polarized the country and Nigeria seems to be an orphan nobody wants to claim.

7.3. Increased insecurity and huge spending to combat crisis

Never in the history of Nigeria have the unity and sovereignty been threatened as currently experienced across the country. There are heightened agitations for secession by different ethnic groups due to injustice, inequality, marginalization and failure of governance. The country is further polarizing on ethno-religious dichotomy with intense rise of hate speeches that deepened the divide line. Sometimes this polarization, hate speech and acts of fundamentalism and intense insecurity are sustained by the state and political elites through

their actions, comments, aids and body language. The Dasukigate saga illustrates how government is spending on fighting the menace of terrorism in the country, although a chunk of that fund ends in personal pockets (corruption). The war against insurgency in Nigeria is taking a great toll in the budgetary allocations of government, thereby rendering other sectors of the economy comatose. In 2013 government allocated ₦950 billion for national security with the military receiving ₦364 billion (Sule et al, 2015). The budgetary allocation to fight insecurity and crisis resulting from fundamentalist's agitations since then has followed this trend with no sight for its end.

8.0. Forging a Way Forward

How can we contain this phenomenon in order to ensure sustainable peace and development in Nigeria? Forging forward, demands commitment, political will, sincerity and patriotism on the part of governance to ensure that the purpose of government is realized. These monsters cannot be contained with a hidden agenda of ethno-religious pursuit; if truly we want Nigeria to exist as one. The following suggestions are articulated as framework to stem fundamentalism in order to boost economic growth and development in Nigeria.

8.1. Government must avoid politics of parochial interest and ethnicity

Government must shun parochial political interest with sincere desire to end crisis arising from fundamentalist group agitations in Nigeria. This can be achieved if government acts as umpire for genuine peace and conflict resolutions rather than autocratic and tyrannical leadership camouflaged in ethno-religious agenda. Dialogue and people driven governance remain the veritable political option to deal with crisis and conflict in the society. In a situation where the people are neglected in political decisions and policies, then pockets of fundamentalist groups are bound to emerge to demand or cause problems that may affect economic growth and sustainable development. After all, what is economic growth and sustainable development without positive effect on the people?

8.2 Government must avoid politics of vendetta and exclusion

Exclusive governance and politics of vendetta is the undoing of any government that wants to make positive impact on the governed. A responsible, purposeful and result oriented driven government must embrace politics of inclusion and avoid vengeful mission and policies that are anti-people. It must be open to constructive criticisms from oppositions, which is the bedrock of democratic principles. When government try to please those whom they consider as 'ours', and exclude those of them that are 'theirs'; it creates room for the formation of fundamentalist groups that may cause severe damage to economic development and security. Government must embrace all political opinions in order to build a united front against fundamentalists uprising. Nigeria has never been polarized so much on the basis of religion, ethnicity and interests as demonstrated in the current APC government. These fan the embers of terrorism and religious extremism.

8.3 Government must leverage on justice and fairness

The principles of justice and fairness must be the foundation of any government that wants to impact positively on the people. Until government understands that opposition to fundamentalism does not depend on the muscle of the gun and oppressive rule, it will not maintain good governance. Good governance that brings food to the table of every person thrives on the Plata of justice, equality and fairness. The moment this is violated, crisis will give way to disaster that may cause severe upheaval to economic development. The various agitations across the country for re-structuring of the polity and secession are all vestiges of

over bottled injustice and unfairness that have eaten deep in the society. Government of impunity and strong handedness, and suppression of political opponents and opinions leads only to a buildup of contending forces that may manifest detrimental elements in the society. State use of power to oppress and suppress the public may not be the best for economic development and governance.

9.0. Conclusion

Government needs the support of the people to govern effectively, but where government interests run contrary to the welfare of the populace, the essence of governance becomes counterproductive. There is no responsible government that will allow fundamentalism it can control to generate into a full-blown catastrophic menace, but in most cases government have allowed little headaches to become severe cancers. In Nigeria, the issue of Boko Haram, Fulani herdsmen, the Niger Delta Militants and the likes are allowed to escalate when they would have nib them at the bud. Fundamentalism is not something that develops in one day; it takes time and effort to manifests. However, government must seek for solutions in the root cause of the problems rather than chasing shadows or hiding under some kind of manipulative laws to suppress a wide fire that is just waiting to spread. Politics in Nigeria must be played in such a manner that it does not affect the fundamentals of our national interests and unity. Parochial interests and petty politicking of national issues must be viewed as a serious crime against our collective conscience and commonwealth. The executive order recently signed by President Muhammadu Buhari to withdraw all licenses relating to firearms possession in Nigeria must be enforced holistically without ethno-religious bias to reduce the sentiment that is already build around the theory of the “fulanization” of Nigeria.

References

- Achebe, C. (2012). *There was a country: A personal history of Biafra*. London: Pearson
- Ahire, P. T. (1993). Native authority police in Northern Nigeria: End of an era. In T. N. Tamuno et al. (Eds.). *Policing Nigeria: Past, Present and Future; Panel on Policing Nigeria Project*. (pp.255-267), Lagos: Malthouse.
- Audu, S. D. (2014). Freshwater scarcity: A threat to peaceful co-existence between farmers And pastoralists in Northern Nigeria. *International Journal of Development and Sustainability*, 3(1), 242-251.
- Bartholomeusz, T., & De Silva, C. (1998). Introduction: In T. J. Bartholomeusz and C. R. de Silva (Eds.), *Buddhists fundamentalism and minority identities in Sri Lanka* (pp. 1-5), New York: University of New York Press
- Chinwokwu, E. C. (2012). Trend and Pattern of Violent Crimes in Nigeria: An Analysis of the Boko Haram Outrage. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Development*. 1(11),383-402.
- Chinwokwu, E. C. (2013a). Is religious doctrines catalyst to terrorism? *International Journal of Social Science Tomorrow*, 2(2), 1-9
- Chinwokwu, E. C. (2013b). Terrorism and the Dilemmas of Combating the Menace in Nigeria. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 3(4):265-272
- Chinwokwu, E. C. (2016). The question of identity in Nigeria: Challenges of ethnicity, race and citizenship. *Religious Forum Academia: The National Journal of Contemporary Issues*, 16, 21-53
- Chinwokwu, E. C. (2017). Glamorization of Fulani herdsmen’s criminality and its implications on national security in Nigeria. *Online Journal of Arts, Management and Social Sciences*, 2(2), 29-51

- Chinwokwu, E. C. (2019). Herdsmen terrorism and criminal justice in Nigeria: Implications for social order and development, *International Journal of Management, Social Sciences, Peace and Conflict Studies*, 2(1), 25-45
- Chukwurah, D. C., Eme, O., & Ogbeje, E. N. (2015). Implication of Boko Haram terrorism On Northern Nigeria. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(3), 371-379
- Claudio, S. E. (2010). Sanctifying moral tyranny: Religious fundamentalism and the political disempowerment of women. In Derichs, C., & Fleschenberg, A. (Eds.) (2010). *Religious fundamentalism and their gendered impacts in Asia* (pp.13-26), Berlin: Friedrich Ebert-Stiftung
- Dawkins, R. (2006). *The God delusion*. London: Bentham Press
- Derichs, C., & Fleschenberg, A. (Eds.) (2010). *Religious fundamentalism and their gendered impacts in Asia*. Berlin: Friedrich Ebert-Stiftung
- Dombong, J. N. (2017). *The impact on and the response of the ECWA to the violent activities of Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria*. Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of master of theology (Missiology) in the Faculty of Theology Stellenbosch University (Unpublished). Retrieved from <http://scholar.sun.ac.za>
- Fasona, M., Fabusoro, E., Sodiya, C., Adedayo, V., Olorunfemi, F., Elias, P., Oyedepo, J., & Oloukoi, G. (2016). Some dimensions of farmers'-pastoralists' conflicts in the Nigerian savanna. *Journal of Global Initiatives: Policy, Pedagogy, Perspective*, 10(2), 87-108
- Gremillion, J., & Ryan, W (Eds). (1978). *World faiths and the new world order*. Washington: Interreligious Peace Colloquium
- Helie-Lucas, M. (2004). What is your tribe: Women's struggles and the construction of Muslimness. In S. Masters (Ed.), *Dossier 26: A collection of articles* (pp.24-35). London: Women living under Muslims laws. Retrieved from <http://www.wluml.org/english/pubsfulltxt.shtml>
- Ikuteyijo, L. O (2009). The challenges of community policing in Nigeria. *International Journal of Political Science and Management*, 11(3), 285-293.
- Isa, M. K. (2010). Militant Islamist groups in Northern Nigeria, militias, rebels and Islamic militants. In Okumu, W & Ikelegbe, A. (Eds.), *Human insecurity and state crisis in Africa*, (pp.313-340), South Africa: Institute of Security Studies
- James, J. F. F., & Jenifer, G. (2011). Terrorism and political violence in Africa: Contemporary trends in a shifting terrain. *Perspective on Terrorism: A Journal of the Research Initiative*, 5(3-4), 63-80
- Jennings, K. (2002). The American dreams. In S. Maasik and J. Solomon (Eds.), *Signs of life in the USA: Reading on popular culture for writers* (pp.640-645), New York: Bedford/ St Martins
- Lewis, P. M. (2002). *Islam, protest, and conflict in Nigeria*. African notes number 10, Washington D. C. Centre for Strategic and International Status
- Liyanage, K. (2010). Sinhala Buddhist nationalism 'fundamentalism' and its impact on gendered political participation in Sri Lanka. In Derichs, C., & Fleschenberg, A. (Eds.) (2010). *Religious fundamentalism and their gendered impacts in Asia* (pp.27-45), Berlin: Friedrich Ebert-Stiftung
- Meyer, T. (2007). *Religion and politics: A revived area of conflict*. Berlin: Friedrich Ebert-Stiftung
- Michael, C. E., Inyang, M. E., & Ukpong, M. J. (2017). Non-vulnerable against the vulnerable: A socio-criminological analysis of herdsmen attack on vulnerable population in Nigeria. *Online Journal of Arts, Management and Social Sciences*, 2(1),

89-109

- Muhammad, I., Isamila, A. B., & Bibi, M. U. (2015). Assessment of farmer-pastoralist conflict in Nigeria using GIS. *International Journal of Engineering Science Invention*, 4(7), 23-33
- Noll, M. A. (1992). *A history of Christianity in the United States and Canada*. Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans.
- Nwankwo, B. O. (2015). Rhetorics and realities of managing ethno-religious conflicts: The Nigerian experience. *American Journal of Educational Research*, 3(3), 292-300
- Odozor, P. I. (2011). Africa and the challenge of foreign religious/ethical ideologies, viruses, and pathologies In Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator (Ed.), *Reconciliation, Justice and Peace: The second synod (pp.214-225)*, New York: Orbis Books
- Ohonbamu, O. (1972). The dilemma of police organization under a federal system. *The Nigerian Law Journal*, (6), 73-87.
- Okemi, M. E. (2013). Boko Haram: A religious or terrorist organization. *Global Journal of Politics and Law Research*, 1(1), 1-9
- Okolie, A. C., & Atelhe, G. A. (2014). Nomads against natives: A political ecology of herder/farmer conflicts in Nasarawa state, Nigeria. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 4(2), 76-88
- Okolie, A. C., & David, A. N. (2016). Militancy and the dilemma of petro-rentier criminality in the Niger Delta. *Online Journal of Arts, Management and Social Sciences*, 1(1), 219-237
- Olukoju, A. (1997). Nigeria: A historical review. In F. U. Okafor (Ed.). *New strategies for curbing ethnic and religious conflicts in Nigeria*. (pp.12-39), Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- Onuoha, F. C. (2014). *Why do youth join Boko Haram?* Washington D. C: United States Peace Institute 2301 Constitution Ave.
- Oyeniya, B. O. (2007). A historical overview of domestic terrorism. In Wafula, O & Botha, A (Eds.), *Domestic terrorism in Africa: Defining, addressing and understanding its impact on human security* (pp.27-40). Pretoria-South Africa: Institute of Security Studies and Research Program.
- Philips, K. (2006). *The emerging republican theocracy: Beliefnet*. Retrieved from http://www.beliefnet.com/story/192/story_19277.html
- PM News. (2019, May 19). *Boko Haram, herdsmen fighting to islamise Nigeria, Africa – Obasanjo*, Retrieved from <https://www.pmnewsnigeria.com/2019/05/19/boko-haram-herdsmen-fighting-to-islamise-nigeria-africa-obasanjo/>
- Rotimi, K. (2001). *The police in a federal state: The Nigerian experience*. Ibadan: College Press Limited.
- Sahgal, G. & Yuval Davis, M. (1994). The use of fundamentalism. *WAF Articles*, 5, 7-9 Retrieved from <http://www.gn.apc.org/j5p7.html>
- Smith, J. (2015). *Muslim-Christian relations: Historical and contemporary realities of religion*. London: Oxford Research Encyclopedia
- Sule, I.Z.O., Singh, R.S.A., & Ottman, M. F. (2015). Governance and Boko Haram insurgents in Nigeria: An analysis. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4(2), 35-43
- Turaki, V. (1993). *The British colonial legacy in Northern Nigeria: A social politics in Nigeria*. Jos: ECWA Headquarters
- Ushe, M. U. (2015). Religious conflicts and education in Nigeria: Implications for national security. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(2), 117-129
- Vanguard. (2009, May 24). *Fulanization: We are hundred percent behind Obasanjo*

Christain elders. Retrieved from <https://www.vanguardng.com/fulanization-we-are-hundred-percent-behind-obasanja-christain-elders/>

Yusuf, H. O. (2011). Rule of law and politics of anti-corruption in a post-authoritarian state the case of Nigeria. *Kings's Law Journal*, 22(1), 57-83

Acknowledgement: The Author wish to appreciate all the various authors referenced in this paper for their inspirations and in-depth effects in my knowledge of this subject.