

Psychological Elements of Insurgents Strategies of Al-Shabaab in Kenya and Boko Haram in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examines the recurring activities of insurgents that have been at the core of security crises in Nigeria and Kenya arising from the activities of the Boko Haram (BH) and the Al-Shabaab adopting terrorist strategies and tactics. Data are generated from primary source through in-depth interviews with selected key informants and secondary sources with the review of relevant textbooks, journal articles, internet and other archival materials. The paper adopts content analysis of relevant literature and comparative analysis of the psychological elements of BH and Al-Shabaab groups in Nigeria and Kenya. It shows that insurgent activities have been a fundamental problem in Nigeria and Kenya in the last decade. The study identifies two psychological perspectives of insurgency - “syndrome” and “tool”. The paper also shows that, intimidation, chaos, provocation, attrition, virtual and cyberspace elements of terrorism strategies are common to Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab operations in Nigeria and Kenya. The paper concludes that individual African societies and the continent must address the syndrome factors to be able to combat terrorism as a tool in the hands of individuals and groups who disagree with states and see terrorism as an instrument to fight against perceived and/or real psychological trauma.

Keywords

Terrorism, insurgency, strategy, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab

Introduction

The activities of insurgents have been fundamental issues in the security lexicon of states across Africa in the past decades. Insurgents adopting terrorism strategies and tactics have been a recurring activity of individuals and groups who either disagree with the state or other groups in pursuit of their objectives. Cases in Somalia and Kenya where Al-Shabaab, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb-AQIM, Boko Haram and ISWAP in Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon and Chad, Tigrayan People’s Front (TPLF) and Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) in Ethiopia, ISIS in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mali,

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and Burkina Faso-ISIS, and the home grown Assaruol Islam, are few prominent armed conflicts and violence arising from insurgency and terrorism in the continent that has constituted insecurity challenges to the countries (The Global Terrorism Index, 2021).

Insurgents adopt varying pattern of operational strategies and tactics in their activities are often motivated by almost same objectives of attempting to sabotage, weaken the state, sabotage foreign support for their countries while attempting to secure same by actuating state abuse of human rights. Insurgents, be it revolutionary, reformist, commercialist, and resistance are characterised by protracted strategies, general lack of fronts, asymmetric warfare methods and unconventional military tactics-guerrilla and particularly adopts psychological strategies. In attempting to unearth the activities of Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram in Kenya and Nigeria this paper conceives that terrorism is a form of psychological warfare-provocation, chaos and intimidation, adopted by the two groups directed at frightening the citizen into panic and disorder in order to put pressure on governments/states to yield to their objectives, goals and demands (Adeyeye & Akinrinde, 2021).

This paper examines the recurring activities of insurgency and terrorism that have been at the core of security crises in Nigeria and Kenya arising from the activities of the Boko Haram (BH) and the Al-Shabaab adopting terrorist strategies and tactics. It argues that the consequences of insurgents' activities have been negatively severe regarding the many losses of lives and the developmental trajectories of these countries because violence and acts of terror impacts negatively on the political and socioeconomic fabrics of the society.

Methodology

Primary sources and secondary data were obtained through interview and survey of extant literature respectively. Books, journal articles, informed opinions in newspapers, magazines, and official documents were consulted and analyzed. Essentially, secondary data were used to compliment primary data obtained from the unstructured interviews conducted in Kenya and Nigeria. Relying on data generated from the primary source through in-depth interviews with selected key informants and secondary sources with the review of relevant textbooks, journal articles, internet and other archival materials, the paper adopts content analysis of relevant literature and comparative analysis of the psychological elements of BH and Al-Shabaab groups in Nigeria and Kenya. The reports of the paper are outcome of the study conducted in the two countries to examine the activities of the two prominent insurgent groups.

Conceptual and Theoretical Issues

Terrorism

Terrorism has been difficult to define in ways that holistically capture the various opinions of scholars. For instance, if viewed as a social construct (meaning and idea that has been created and accepted by the society), terrorism is defined by different people within the context of changing social and political realities (Schmid, 1992; Bayo, 2013; Cooper, 2001; Omar, 2008; Primoratz, 2004; Reveron and Murer, 2009). If the economic, cultural, and religious perceptions are considered in the definitional engagement, then the task of conceptualising terrorism becomes more complex. Terrorism has also been described as actions against the state by disgruntled individuals or groups. The position considers terrorists as irrational dissents with no ideological focus and concurs with psychological assumptions that terrorists are irrational and insane; however, it is the view of this paper that terrorists are highly rational and that terrorist acts are often informed by rational calculations. This is because despite the criminal nature of terrorism, as portend by the crime framework in the form of assassinations, kidnappings, hostage-taking and hijacking, there are usually several other issues underpinning insurgency and terrorist activities because terrorism is also a form of psychological warfare that is directed at frightening the target population (citizen) into panic and disorder in order to put pressure on governments/states to yield to terrorist groups' demands (Imobighe, 2006: 10; Adeyeye, 2017; Victoroff, 2009). These opinions are captured in the views of Chomsky (2002) that the efforts to clarify terrorism can be undertaken in two ways, adopting literal approach to the study of terrorism, and the propagandist method—analysing the term as a weapon that can be taken advantage of (strategy or tactics).

In attempt to clarify the concept, Sahito *et al.* (2013: 274-285) identify various types of terrorism with different purposes and/or objectives that they seek to achieve. These are state terrorism, nationalist terrorism, pathological terrorism, separatist terrorism, bioterrorism, cyber-terrorism, nuclear terrorism, and narco-terrorism, as well as right wing, left wing and religious terrorism. In all, a review of literature on the description of terrorism reveals different schools of thought, perspectives and various frameworks within which terrorism can and has been conceived. These includes crime; politics; warfare; propaganda; religion; social; economic; political; and other environmental factors. These opinions are categorised within different theories such as the psychological, sociological, economic, political, and cultural and globalisation perspectives. In this paper terrorism is viewed from the point of strategy and tactics of armed groups and insurgents. It approaches the description of

terrorism from the technical purview rather than from the moralistic angle. In doing this, the paper conceives that those who engage in terrorism do so for the purpose of causing violence-intention to physically, psychologically, physiologically, economically, politically, racially, ethnically and culturally hurt others, other than other reasons often advanced as informing or motivating terrorism by insurgent groups such as Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram.

Insurgency

Essentially, insurgency is acts of groups whose objectives and goals are to weaken and sabotage the legitimacy of state authority/government, and/or an existing structure, and push to increase their own ties with the people. The 2012 Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency published by the US government maintains that the objective of insurgents is to strive to achieve the following: Undermining the capacity of governments to make available to the citizen, public services and goods, welfare and utility, security and justice. They often try to do this by attempting to supersede the state through the provision of public utilities and welfare as alternatives to the government with the view to making it (government) appeared feeble and weak in the reckoning of the people. Evidence of this has been reported by BH in the northeastern Nigeria.

- Desiring to secure active or passive support of the people. Their attempt to do this is often not only through those who really sympathise and support them but also creating fear and panic in the minds of citizens and intimidating the general population.
- Instigating the country to abuse human rights to make the people go against the government, thereby driving the population to support them (insurgent groups) and cultivate the consolidation of the loyalty of the majority population.
- To sabotage external/foreign/international support for the country, and on their part, attempt to source for international attention, acceptance, and assistance.

Insurgency is described as an ethno-national group in which the loyalty of a considerable size of disgruntled population is sought by insurgents on one side and the government of states on the other. The success and/or failure of either party rest on the ability to persuade the people, especially in the ability to meet the demands of citizens or remedy the motivation of dissents in the society. It is obvious that a government that has failed to meet the basic demands of its population has little chances of convincing the people. This is why it is important for a country's government to apply caution in dealing with insurgents. Failure to do so may end up pushing the people to support insurgent groups. It is also important to emphasise that insurgent groups often have explicit objectives which usually reflect in their modes of operation even

though such goals are sometimes not very obvious and directly stated. In addition, most contemporary insurgent groups are characterised by protracted strategies, general lack of fronts, asymmetric warfare methods and unconventional military tactics-guerrilla (Okoli & Philip, 2014; Imassuen, 2015; Abdulahi, 2015; Reich, 2009; Johari, 2012; White, 2014; Cassidy, 2006).

Insurgency can be categorised into different ways using the following features: goals, tactics and strategies, size, region, duration, international significance, founding motives and the character of the regime being challenged (Gompert & Gordon, 2008: 61). In terms of the founding motives, armed insurgents can be categorised as follows:

- (a) *Reactionary insurgency*: This is a type of insurgency carried out in reaction to a certain situation or resulting from a reaction to something which the insurgent group members either perceive as affecting them, experience or that which members of the group identify with. This could be opportunistic in the sense that they take advantage of a subsisting political or economic opportunity to advance groups positions or power, or are founded to further ideological objectives (Hammes, 2009: 441). However, it is important to note that this categorisation is not mutually exclusive as insurgents sometimes exhibit a combination of these features or may evolve during their operations. The following five typologies of insurgents have been identified:
- (b) *Revolutionary insurgency*: This form of insurgency is basically carried out for the replacement of the political arrangement in existence or attempt to change the sitting government with another system or government. The objectives are revolved around the attempt at transformation of the socio-economic and political structures of the state. They are usually driven by ideologies, and often have efficient organisational infrastructures and military capabilities through which their ideologies are foster.
- (c) *Reformist insurgency*: just as the name implies, reformist insurgency is not directly interested in changing the existing political order or status quo subsisting within the state. Contrarily, the interest is in compelling government to change, review state policies or carry out socio-economic, political or religious reforms that are in line with their belief, value and aspiration.
- (d) *Commercialist insurgency*: is motivated by and interest in acquiring material resources and wealth. To these insurgent groups, political power is merely a means to an end (an instrument through which they can grip or capture and by so doing, aggregate, gain the control and means to wealth). Their objective is money. Commercialist insurgents are neither motivated by changing the political order nor want to change society or removal of government, but their operations can eventually lead to both. Preying on

the state resources and stealing is the focus of this category of insurgent groups. In fact, subsistence is often hinged on state resources which they steal. Since they loot from the resources and abundance gathered by the state, it is therefore the interest of these insurgent groups not to impede the working of the state and government in order not to destroy it because doing so will ultimately impacted negatively on their activities, capability, and survival. Pirates, drug cartels and Narco-insurgent and/or terrorist groups are some examples of commercialist groups (White, 2014; Cassidy, 2006; Underwood, 2009; Hoyt, 2009).

- (e) *Resistance insurgency* is mainly about driving away or the withdrawal of occupying state military forces from a particular territory. The occupying armed forces that such group resist against can be the armed forces of their state or that of occupying forces. For instance, the Mujahideen against Soviet Forces in Afghanistan or Hezbollah against the Israeli Armed Forces in Southern Lebanon can be classified as resistance insurgent groups.
- (f) *Separatist insurgency*: is a form that is desirous of independence for a given region and the population occupying it from a country. It is possible in some instances that the region cuts across national boundaries of number of states. This is the case for the Kurdish people and their Separatist groups that seek national self-determination and separate state for the Kurdish living in the adjoining borders of Iraq, Syria and Turkey (Sources: US Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency, 2009; Annyssa, Giacca, and Casey-Maslen, 2011; White, 2014; Cassidy, 2006; Underwood, 2009: 17-27; Hoyt, 2009: 59-71).

Although the tend to present a clear demarcation of the various forms of insurgency, the classification did not appropriately consider the actuality of the modern international system and how the real world affects insurgency, especially the level to which globalisation and its politics affect the goals, purpose, types and wherewithal of insurgency. This is because globalisation affects all facets of the twenty-first century global political and socio-economic landscape, including the activities of armed groups and insurgency. In fact, insurgent groups take advantage and manipulate four major variants of globalisation (economic, technological, cultural and political) for the realisation of their objectives whatever it might be. Globalisation has encouraged the transformation of insurgent operations, thereby making them (insurgent) assume the status of international actors to the extent that they now pose threats to the sovereignty of nation-states (Bandyopadhyay & Younas, 2015). Under the subsisting regime of globalisation developed states are becoming stronger while the developing states are daily rendered weak making them unprotected, helpless, unguarded, and vulnerable. They are now likely and real sanctuaries for the operations of insurgents. (Adeyeye, Akinrinde & Omodunbi, 2021; Hanlon, 2009: 124). To this end, it is possible to locate local,

local-international, global-local insurgency and global insurgencies. In terms of organisation the politically, militarily, religiously, and culturally organised insurgencies have been identified.

Boko Haram

Boko Haram is also known as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad. In fact, the description of sect has attracted various views. According to Toyo (2011: 42-58), 'Boko' is a Hausa word often used to refer to many things ('fake' and a 'corruption of book'). 'Haram' is derived from Arabic which means to 'prohibit', 'reject', 'unacceptable' and 'unwanted' (Sani, 2011: 17-41). Boko is a derivative of Boka-sorcerer, a word in Hausa language used to describe Western education. Even though the group has come to be popularly known and has seemingly accepted the label 'Boko Haram', although at the initial stage there is no evidence to prove that the group actually christened itself as 'Boko Haram' but has been generally ascribed to the group because since 2009, the group has variously been addressed and named by the media (National and Western), academics and analysts to be the Yusufuya sect; others called it the Kwawaarji, Jamaatul Takfur WalHyra Ahlis Sunna and Jamaatu Ahlis Sunnah Lidda'awatiwal Jihad. In any case, whatever appellation or name given to the group, Boko Haram (BH) is the Islamic sect largely based in the Northeast region of Nigeria. The group has been successful in carrying out terrorist strikes and operations in the Northeast, Northwest and North Central Nigeria including Abuja, the federal capital (Adeyeye, Adedire & Babalola, 2023; Usman, 2015; Benjamin, 2013; Toyo, 2011; Omobuwajo, 2015; Sani, 2011: 19).

Al-Shabaab

Also referred to as *Harakat al Shabaab al Mujahideen/Harakat ash-Shabaab al Mujahidin/Xarakada Mujaahdinta Alshabaab* in Arabic and Somalia. Al-Shabaab refers to 'youth movement' or 'movement of the striving youth' (Guglielmo, 2011; Abdi, 2006). Al-Shabaab is one of the main actors in today's Somalia. The group gained prominence and increased its strength in the wake of the Ethiopian intervention and is currently controlling some parts of southern Somalia. Al-Shabaab has continued to carry out attacks inside Kenya in retaliation for Kenya invasion and military involvement in Somalia. The Westgate Mall attack and the one carried out inside the campus of Garrissa University in Northern Kenya close to the border with Somalia are prominent examples (Sabala, 2011: 110).

Theoretical Framework

The essence of this paper can be explained using different theories such as the psychological, sociological, economic, political, cultural and globalisation perspectives. No doubt, these theories adequately situate Al-Shabab insurgency in Kenya and BH in Nigeria. This is so because many factors can be advanced to be responsible for insurgency in Africa which falls within the premise of the above perspectives. The causes of insurgency in the continent just like elsewhere are complex and complicated in the way they relate to inspire insurgency. This is because they often have common areas and each of them provoke, aggravate and exacerbating influence one another. It is argued that domestic and exogenous factors contribute to a country's susceptibility to insurgency. Domestic factors focus on internal or local circumstances which often prompt and instigate dissents and the adoption of violence strategy in disagreement with the state. For example, the root cause theoretical argument argues that there are some complementary relationships between socio-economic, political, demographic, and psychological conditions which could make an individual or group to resort to taking up arms against the state (Kubai, 2010; Bjorgo, 2005; Forest, 2011).

The psychological approach to BH and Al-Shabaab insurgency is viewed from the syndrome perspective which suppose that insurgency is a psychologically meaningful organisation and operation, that is, insurgents are typified and set apart from non-insurgents or those who are not their members, and that insurgency has root causes. Several studies have advanced causes of insurgency in Nigeria and Kenya. All of which are within the psychological, sociological, economic, political, and cultural and globalisation perspectives appropriate for this paper. These perspectives are the frustrations aggression and deprivation, state failure, political opportunism, poverty, and unemployment. Other theses through which insurgency in Nigeria and Kenya have been explained include political alienation, socio-economic corruption and governance problem, identity and religious factors, social inequality and exclusion, over-centralisation of the levers of power, lack of social justice, and political grievances (Usman, 2015: 90-92; Mills, 2014; Fukuyama, 2014; Erinosh, 2012). The tool perspective of psychological theory assume that presume that insurgency is a means that a person or group of individuals, agents or non-state actor could use as strategy in a conflict situation (Victoroff, 2009). This is applicable to the activities of BH and Al-Shabaab who see insurgency as strategy to for the attainment of their desired goals and objectives.

Interrogating the Insurgents and Terrorists' Tactics and Strategies

The two terms are used in this work to describe individuals and groups who are engaged in acts of insurgency. They are individuals or groups that overtly and/or covertly engage in the act of and, adopt terrorism as a strategy and

tactics in pursuit of their objectives. Insurgents and terrorists are used to describe people and groups who adopt violent means for the purpose of spreading panic and fear among people to realise pecuniary goals which could be motivated or triggered by political, economic, cultural, religious, and/or ethnic considerations. It could also be premised on social-revolutionary, ethno-national or religious ideologies. They mostly adopt violence not only as tactic and strategy to cause fear, panic and intimidate the society and population, but use it to relay their intended messages not only to their supporters but to their perceived foes too (Rogers, 2008; Hoffman, 2008; 2002; 1998: 94-95; 1995). Insurgents also employ terrorism strategy to accomplish their ends (Newman & Smith, 2005). Their modes of operation often include: (1) disorientation-alienating governments from the citizens, reducing effectiveness of governments in the eyes of the people; (2) target response to influence and stimulate their targets to act favourably to their cause; (3) to gain legitimacy: insurgents exploit the emotional impacts of violence to introduce alternative demands and messages (Abdulahi, 2015; Ibaba, 2011).

On the strategies and tact used by insurgents, it essentially means taking and using available material means to accomplish a desired end (Adeyeye, 2017; Simon, 2010). This represents forms of actions not embedded in spatial and temporal, or otherwise, situational structure of interaction. It is a type of situation and occurrence that involves many concrete forms, relying on when and where it is used. For example, propaganda, provocation, outwit, outbid and deceiving are all forms of strategies that could be adopted in waging political battles and in military battles. Lee (2008: 13-17) defines strategy as an organised plan of action put in place to accomplish a specified goal and objective. It is conceived here as the art of military and non-military commands within the context of the conduct of warfare by the groups under investigation (Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram insurgents) on the one hand, and the governments of Nigeria and Kenya on the other. It also includes political, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions. Strategy is summarily defined in this study as the planning, synchronisation and the overall focus of military and non-military operations to achieve the overall military and non-military objectives in battle whether in this instance military, warfare and counterterrorism operations.

Insurgents have two main tactics at their disposal: terrorism and insurgency. While insurgency is most effective when there is high mobilisation, terrorism can be effective with limited mobilisation (Wardlaw, 1989). Terrorism is a form of waging a war with peculiar features compared to other methods of struggle. It is a strategy adopted by insurgents with delineated techniques and plan of actions by which insurgents (adopting terrorism strategy) use to carry out and realise group and/or individual goals and

purposes. The strategies and tactics used by insurgents are often premised and conditioned by the environment and conditions of their operating environments (OEs). Instead of the option and decision by insurgents, whenever possible, concurrently use a variety of strategies of struggle. Terrorism, of course, is one of the easiest forms of insurgency and practically one of the modes of struggle (Wardlaw, 1989). Terrorism and insurgency are distinct rebel tactics. Insurgency is more responsive than terrorism which is inherently a clandestine activity. It does not require a high level of mass support like insurgency which during a civil war requires much more active support from the civilian population. Terrorism and guerrilla warfare are not the same even though many writers have over the years, used the two interchangeably as if they mean the same thing. One very important distinction rest on the fact that as opposed to terrorists, guerrillas aim at establishing physical territorial control. Practically, the terrorist military and non-military operational list or stock of preference is limited.

Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab Insurgent: Strategies and Tactics

Information gathered from the displaced persons, the Department of State Services (DSS), Police and the military and from Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchen's (2012) interview about Boko Haram Al-Sahbaab's strategies and tactics revealed that many young members (foot soldiers) of the group are desperate, poor and hungry. Affirming the above, Babagana Zulum (Governor of Borno State, Nigeria) (2023) while addressing the Northeast Development Commission (NEDC), affirm that the continuous existence of IDP camps serves as recruitment ground for BH as many of the people in the camps are prone to deciding to join the group. They are usually enticed either by little sums of money (usually in foreign currency) or are told that the battle is a heavenly one against the infidel worldly government that has no interest in their welfare. Reports from Kenya also reveal same. For instance, a 16-year-old former Al-Shabaab member revealed he was recruited in 2008 by the Kenya Muslim Youth Centre, Nairobi (KYMC), acting as Al-Shabaab outpost in the country's capital city. To confirm the forceful nature of the recruitment, the boy declared that his commitment has never been towards Jihadi ideology, but that he merely sought and obtained fellowship and comradeship within the Islamic organisation's leader, Ahmed Iman Ali and the followers (Ali later was responsible for the commissioning of the boys into Al-Shabaab). The former Al-Shabaab conscript revealed that the promise of money (Ksh40, 000 or \$470 per month) was the real factor that led many of them to join Al-Shabaab. A senior officer of the Nigeria DSS expresses that many of these young boys (mostly between 12 and 18) are fed with local concoctions immediately they are paid and enticed with paradise or forced to join. They are later threatened that if they renege or expose their activities, they will die. They are equally made to desert their homes and disown their biological parents. (Meleagrou-Hitchen, 2013; Andrew, 2015; Kagwanja, 2006).

Reports from the interviews conducted in Kenya and Nigeria revealed that they were taught how to fight in real life situations, communicate using radio transmission and use Morse code, how to signal in codes at night, using light, how to gather information about the enemy's plans, and how to spread false information to deceive and distract adversaries. They were also taught how to prepare ambush in mountains, cities and in rural areas, use camouflage to approach their targets, stage false attacks to draw enemies into traps, how to coordinate multiple groups for an attack (since they operate in groups), how to storm a house and how to defend such houses, how to kidnap and assassinate, and how to kill with hands without the use of arms (in order not to attract security forces and/or suspicion from people). Furthermore, they received lessons on how to evade arrest, escape in case they were captured, how to disarm enemy forces and use enemy weapons to kill, how to give medical assistance to wounded brothers on the field, and how to transport them off the field if there was a need to do so (Field report, 2017; Nasiri, 2006; Meleagrou-Hitchen, 2012).

The same sources revealed that in their camps, they received training from different trainers (different skills mostly from different camps in and outside of the operating environments). The training often stimulated real life situations that they may likely find themselves in. They were taught how to assassinate someone on a busy street, market, motor parks, and a moving vehicle. An ex-Boko Haram member succinctly described how to assassinate someone on a bust environment or street as follows: "I will sit at the back of a motorcycle which another member rides towards the target, as we get closer, he will slow down, I will jump down from the motorcycle, run towards the target, stop and fire my gun, then quickly jump on the motorcycle and we run away. It is very difficult because if I fail to time the target very well, it is dangerous" (Field report, 2017). He also stated that they often attack a moving target by crossing their target and hurriedly shooting at such target using the motorcycle and/or firing at their target from inside a moving truck or even a moving motorcycle. Also, insurgents are trained in specialised physical combats (hand-to-hand combat).

Also, findings reveal that activities of BH and Al-Shabaab operations include placing of explosive charges in public places, assassinations, assaults by small and medium arms on the entire society, taking hostages by abduction and kidnapping, barricade and construction of obstacles/barriers to keep themselves in their sanctuary or closed structures, hijack and forcible seizure of vehicles, airplanes, boats or trucks in order to rob or use them for other purposes, robbery and other criminal tactics (Falode, 2016; Onuoha, 2014; Field report, 2017).

Specifically, the objective of the psychological strategy adopted by these groups is to create psychical impacts and instilling fears in the psyche of people's intellect and consciousness, hampering the morale of government militaries/troops seen as 'enemy', and strengthening their own (insurgent measure of belief, self-confidence and encouraging desire) and volition of members to fight for a very long time are some of the activities carried out by terrorist. The main challenge of BH and Al-Shabaab insurgents in their use terrorism strategy is how to win the battle against state forces, which in most cases, and/or expectedly stronger, well-organised and well-equipped, and how insurgents attempt to bridge the chasm between their lean and deficient resources/wherewithal available to them relative to the state and their extreme goals they strive to achieve (though not in all cases because it has been proven that some insurgents are better equipped and funded than some states in Africa) (Merari, 1993; 2007, 1998; Lee, 2008). The elements and variations of BH and Al-Shabaab are as follows: psychological element; propaganda by deed; strategy by chaos; provocation; intimidation; and attrition (Field report, 2017).

Finding on the Psychological Strategies and Tactics of Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab in Nigeria and Kenya

Reports from the study conducted in Kenya and Nigeria shows that Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab insurgents adopts terrorism strategies. Essentially, terrorism strategy is a tactics based on impacting psychological injury on the enemy or opposing forces. Several scholars, writers and students of security studies have identified the significance of psychology and its roles in terrorism. No doubt, all types of warfare (conventional or non-conventional, symmetry or asymmetry) have significant psychological substance. The most important objectives of armed groups and insurgents are 'to create psychological effects and impacts; influence a population by instilling fear' and create panic with a view to advancing their political, socio-economic, cultural and religious agenda (Adeyeye, 2019: 29-31; 2017; and 2018 24-27; French, 2003: 16). Firstly, it attempts to hamper or impede the capacity of opposing forces and people's belief by instilling anxiety and apprehension among them, and secondly, it reinforces and fortifies the morale of its members.

According to Lee (2008), in virtually all large-scale wars, winners of battles often attack the psychology of the opposing forces in order to weaken their confidence before the actual fight commences. Armed and insurgent groups such as Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram extensively use psychological tactics (Merari, 1993). For instance, in February 2015, Boko Haram released a video showing the purported beheading of two men captured in Adamawa and Borno states (areas which government forces claimed to have taken over from insurgents) in order to create the impression that they were still in control of those areas and instil fear in the minds of the people. It is also on record that Al-Shabaab consistently releases video of their operations and make statements

robing their ego with the intention to create impression the group can match the state in combat (Adeyeye, 2017).

In terms of retaliatory tactics carried out to consequently cause emotional trauma on the target population, Boko Haram destroys and burn schools as a retaliatory strategy against the poor way Quranic school teachers and pupils are treated. It represents government character and western education ideas they lathe, detest and hate (Bamgbose, 2011; Sani, 2011). To them, attacks on schools represent retaliatory operations for the cruelty and acts of injustices committed by the JTF. In 2012, Abu Qaqa maintained.

“We attacked the schools because security operatives are going to Islamiyyah schools and picking teachers. We are attacking the public schools at night because we don’t want to kill innocent pupils. Unless (Islamic school teachers) are allowed to be, we would be compelled to continue attacking schools.” (*Daily Trust, February 29, 2012; Amnesty International, 2012:17*)

Al-Shabaab also has suddenly resort to attacking schools such as the case of Garrisa in February 2015 (when they attacked and killed over 150 university students) (McGregor, 2015). These objective of these of attacks are meant to cause psychological crisis in the minds of the pupils, students, and parents against western education.

Element of Psychology

In overall terms, terrorism as a strategy is premised on creating psychologically significant impacts on enemy forces. Scholars of terrorism, security and war have emphasised the fundamental significance of elements of psychology in terrorism. They conclude that the impacts created by psychology are the most important features of terrorism as a strategy (Merari, 1993; 2007, 1998; Lee, 2008; Wardlaw, 1989; Crenshaw, 1988: 13-31, 2001: 329-338, 2004, 2009). This is because all forms of warfare, conventional or unconventional (symmetry or asymmetry) has a significant substance of psychology that attempts to impede the capacity of the opposition to maintain belief in their goal and self-belief (esprit de corps) through planting of terror, fright and anxiety among them (enemy forces), and raising self-belief and ability of their own members (insurgents) in the battle (Lee, 2008; Falode, 2016; Jackson, 2003). According to Lee (2008), in virtually all major wars or conflicts in human historical account, ‘the winner puts the rival at a psychologically disadvantaged position ahead of the actual take-off of the clash’. Though

conventional wars are firstly heavy direct clash of physical/material forces, and victory is often through physical resistance capability of rivals, through the destruction of such rivalry or enemy powers and troops, economic foundation and basic facilities, the impacts of psychology of the essential stratagem, adroit and cunning/manoeuvre of indirect approaches derive from the belief of rivals based on material justification and rationale of resisting and resistance is good-for-nothing and unhelpful. Just like guerrilla warfare (surprise raid and unconventional warfare), terrorism represents one strategic approach based on protracted nature of battle or war.

Nevertheless, the element of psychology is an essential strategy rooted in material and physical clash. That stated modern theory experts emphasise the benefits of propaganda in guerrilla activities, particularly in the dissemination of the word and idea of revolution in the areas. By so doing, such ideas attract support from likely and actual sympathizers, revival of inactive rivalry and making available to them, plans and procedures of resistance; even though the psychological component remains secondary to guerrilla strategists (the battlefield against state military is the rural area) (Lee, 2008; Arreguin-Toft, 2001). However, Merari (1993: 213-251) states that the very idea of fighting the battle in the countryside, away from sight of the means and institutions for publishing and broadcasting information itself, weakens the importance of the psychology component. Whatever the argument, indubitably, psychology is a component of terrorism adopted by insurgents.

The reliability of the above conclusion is premised on the essential requisites of the fight and struggles of BH and Al-Shabaab. Perhaps, it could be argued that the weakest government anywhere in the world should have military troops bigger than insurgents and possibly gather more support than insurgents to the extent that state forces should be able to defeat insurgents (Sani, 2011). If the above assertion is correct, insurgents and terrorists ought not and cannot expect to physically conquer and defeat state forces in battles. It is argued that Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab), have hardly been sufficiently transparent to specify logically, well-ordered overall plans of action. Notwithstanding, one can possibly recognise different strategically thoughts and notions held by the group as crucial practical ideas of their struggle. However, these ideals are not exclusively mutual and reciprocal as terrorists often express them in a concurrent manner. These ideas and strategies include the following:

Intimidation as Psychological Strategy adopted by Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab insurgents

Intimidation is a salient psychological tactic used by Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab insurgents. It is based on the intention to spread fear among the perceived enemy. For instance, leadership of Al-Shabaab and BH have, at different times, published or posted threatening messages and information with the aim of intimidating not only the government and its military, but the

citizens as well. They have at different times, attempted to kill and or attack and kill government officials and presumed collaborators with authorities. Emirs, politicians, and citizens of north-east Nigeria have, at different times, been intimidated by BH. Also, as forms of intimidation, causing anxiety, fear and psychological stress for the population, insurgents use ruthless, savage, cold-blooded and brutal methods such as body mutilation, amputation of arms and legs, throwing of victims into rivers and allowing them to drown. At times, insurgents shoot the legs of victims after cutting their arms, slicing off their ears, chopping off their fingers, thoughtless and the indiscriminate massacre of innocent civilians by hanging them, slitting their throats and revealing the video on social media as a strategy to create anxiety, fear and intimidate the people (Field report, 2017).

Provocation Strategy of Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab

The strategy of provocation of Boko Haram is based on their assumption that resulting from their operational strategies and tactics, governments are left with no choice than to be fearful and become more intense in counter-insurgency operations (COIN) that will qualify for repression. This has shown in a way, as Nigeria has been accused of human rights abuses in the course of combating Boko Haram. Military operations from government forces which has become a routine operation all over the operational environment (OEs) of the terrorists, house searches, closing of streets, and declaration of states of emergencies, and arresting innocent persons and police holding suspects for a longer period have been variously tagged outcomes of frustration and provocation. The consequence is that on the one hand, citizens become disgruntled and as such, no longer work together and cooperate with government and authorities. The overall feeling rests on the assumption or real manifestation of state injustice, repressing and lacking the capability to solve the challenges of the people and providing security, to the extent that the state merely falls back to physical liquidation of its opponents (Tajudeen, 2012; Field report, 2017).

In this case, the Nigerian governments through their actions have often been accused of being guilty of human rights abuse. This however has been so partly because troops find it difficult to identify faceless insurgents hiding among the population to carry out operations. In an attempt to deal with the insurgents, innocent people are killed and/or injured. The military usually qualifies this as collateral damage. However, in some instances, the number far qualifies for collateral damage since there is a line between repression and human rights abuse and allowed accidents in law of war (O'Donnell, 2006). To this end, the government is accused of human rights abuse and seen to have erred within the UN regulation (such is the case of Nigeria). Insurgents in

Nigeria have been drawing repressive responses from the government which no doubt, affects a good number of people who are not associated with Boko Haram. It is no gainsay that these measures have the tendency to make government unpopular, especially in the Northeast, thereby, increasing support from the public in support of insurgents and their cause. On the other hand, when government counterinsurgency and War on Terror (WoT) actions are not draconian, but effective, anti-government sentiments will even become more prevalent.

Chaos Strategy of Boko Haram

This simply is an effort by Boko Haram at creating an environment of chaos to display, show and/or portray the government as unable to and as incapable of establishing or applying authority, law, and order and by extension, to guarantee security which is a basic responsibility of government (Lee, 2008). At every instance, the leadership of Boko Haram in trying to mimic revolutionary strategy and portray themselves as revolutionaries have portrayed the governments as ineffective and inefficient with a view of discrediting the government and hoping that under such circumstances, the public will demand that the ‘incapable, weakling governments’ be changed and substituted by another government (as in the case of Nigeria, a government based on Islamic injunction) (Field report, 2017).

Attrition Strategy of Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab Insurgents

Knowing that they cannot match state forces purely through direct physical combat, Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab resort to using attrition strategy, which in their judgement, will wear out governments and military forces. Attrition (physical and moral) seem to be the tactics that can be used to achieve success; realize their goal and become victorious, instead of a supplement or preface to other strategies. However, this does not mean that their operations are solely carried out through attrition because since they have become fluid, various tactics and operational methods are obvious in their operations. Although, Boko Haram are inferior in terms of resources, military and operational capabilities compared to government; they do not possess the power and technology, strong enough to defeat government forces through physical assault alone. However, they have shown elements of endurance and resistance against government troops. It is part of the rules of the group and which the message passed to their members that once the operation commences; there is no turning back (Field report, 2017).

Manipulation of Virtual Sanctuary, Cyberspace and Religion by Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab

The strategy by which Boko Haram flaunts their accomplishments, successful performances and sacrifices of leaders who fought in battles before them and those still fighting for their cause is a form of propaganda. They regularly post personal life stories (biographical accounts) of martyrs and present images glorifying the deaths of these martyrs to new members. Usually, BH and Al-Shabaab insurgents also emphasise the character of the martyrs of not usually willing to attempt escape, giving up or surrendering to enemy forces. Information gathered revealed that Boko Haram use videos of prominent commanders from Al Qaeda, Hezbollah, ISIS, among others (Field report, 2017; White, 2014). They also use websites and videos to recount the perceived suffering and carnage thrust upon Muslims by the United States and its western allies in Afghanistan, Iraq, the war in Gaza and Israeli occupied territories and apostate regimes in Islamic countries. These psychological strategies are meant to inspire, motivate and mobilise Muslim Ummah towards joining the war against western civilisation, culture, education and slam (White, 2014; Shultz, 2009; 2008). Boko Haram uses this method, particularly among the minority Muslim population in the country. They share the character of using propaganda (publicising their attacks and operations for the benefit of gaining competitive advantage either over groups equally fighting for global recognition or to spread fear on the people or authority forces).

Findings also revealed that as part of propagandist strategy, Boko Haram have powerful incentives to exaggerate their activities and capabilities. Boko Haram engage in psychological warfare to demoralise their perceived enemies (Adeyeye, 2017). A flip side of the above strategies (inspiring and mobilizing Muslim Ummah to join their course) is the demoralising and coercing of the near and far enemies of their group in order to either convince and/or coerce them to give up the fight. These enemies, in the case of BH, cut across all strata of the society (including Muslims who are not their members), and in the case of Al-Shabaab in Kenya, Muslims, be they moderate or Salafi, are spared during attacks. For example, Al-Shabaab insurgents attacked a bus in Mandera, a border with Somalia, killing 28 non-Muslim's teachers (mainly Christians). Also, on 2nd December, 2014, Al-Shabaab gunmen attacked a stone quarry in Korney, 15 km from the north-eastern town of Mandera, near the Somali border, killing 36 people. The insurgents attacked the workers while they were asleep in tents at a quarry. Just like the November 23 attack, non-Muslim workers were shot dead after being separated from Muslims. Insurgents, have at different times, attacked Muslims and Islamic leaders they perceive as not sharing their ideology (*The Telegraph*, July 18, 2014).

Impacts and Effects of Insurgency

No doubt, violence, insurgency have had far-reaching domestic, regional and international repercussions, both on the states (Nigeria and Kenya), and on the citizen population and contributes greatly to the challenges and problems of human development faced by the societies. For example, insecurity has been a major issue in the northern region of Nigeria. Also, evidence from Kenya particularly in Nairobi and Mombasa maintain that Al-Shabaab activities have drawn the country further into an appalling situation with series of harassment, intimidation and fear, particularly in areas where Al-Shabaab has continuously carried out attacks. The insecurity issue has impacted negatively on the economy of the region and by extension the human and capital development and has negatively impact on the educational sector in the region.

Also, insurgent activities negatively influence the rule of law, the ability of the state to function effectively and has served as hindrances to the democratic political systems and structures in areas where violence pervades. Conflict and violence are traumatising and awful. Majority of people from communities experiencing violent conflicts undergo hardship, endure post-traumatic distress and strain. This is a situation that has largely brought about pitiable mental and physical health, impacted negatively by reducing qualities of life, and in many instances, creates significant obstacles in the workplace, educational and family life and increases violent behaviour. Citizens also suffer from emotional sensitivity and abasement, embarrassment, treachery, and betrayal, want of retaliation and revenge, desire to engage in violence which subordinates or persons of lesser ranks and authority assume positions of authority, engaging in excessive activities, imposing humiliation, degradation and debasement of people who treat them likewise.

Above all, the resources that could have been channelled into the development of the health, education, energy and related sectors and developmental policies are wasted on expensive internal peacekeeping operations, setting up of commissions of enquiry and security matters. (Omotosho, 2014: 2-22; Bandyopadhyay and Sandler, 2014a, 2014b; Albert, 2011: 57). Insurgency and terrorism disrupt production activities more in small and poor economies and scare off investors (Bandyopadhyay, Sandler and Younas (2015). It is believed that rich, large and diversified economies are better able to withstand the effects of insurgent and terrorist activities than the poor economies and the rich states have more and better resources to devote to counterinsurgency (COIN) and counterterrorism efforts. Nigeria and Kenya are classified as developing nations with specialisation in few sectors. They do not have the resilience to withstand the effects of terrorism; lacks specialised resources, such as surveillance equipment or technologically advanced police force or military that can be employed in COIN. This allows insurgent threat to persist thereby scaring away investors. For instance, respondents in Nairobi complained of the effects of Al-Shabaab on the tourist activities in Kenya.

Terrorism equally influences immigration and immigration policies of both countries.

Conclusion

This paper demonstrate that terrorism is a form of psychological warfare adopted by insurgents that is directed at frightening the target population (citizen) into panic and disorder in order to put pressure on the state to yield to insurgent groups' demands. It has also demonstrated that Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram are similar in their terrorism modes of operation. Fundamentally, Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram adopts terrorism strategies and tactics and conventional military type operations. The two groups in Nigeria and Kenya have prominently adopt psychological strategies for propaganda to create environments of chaos with a view to displaying and portraying the governments of the two states as unable and incapable of governance, intimidate and create fear in the people and the government by provoking domestic and external sentiments and sympathy by portraying the government as repressive. The two insurgent groups have also used the internet as sanctuary to flaunts their accomplishments, successful performances and sacrifices of leaders as a form of propaganda. This they do by constantly viewing stories of their leader as martyrs and by glorifying the deaths of these martyrs to entice new members for recruitment purpose.

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