

# Nigeria's democracy: the trilemma of herdsmenism, terrorism and vampirism

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*Since the 'invention' of democracy by the Greek City States in the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. and its popularisation after the American War of Independence in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, democracy has remained the most famous form of government. Indeed, today, the presence or absence of democracy in a country seems to be the 'standard' by which such a country is measured – while countries that practise democracy are patted on the back; those that do not are pelted with all sorts of negative descriptions and categorisations. This outward approval or disapproval has taken centre stage to the extent that little or no attention is paid to the analysis of the content and context of a country's democracy. Yet, this is important for at least three reasons: one, it will help to show how people in the sidelines in a specific geo-polity perceive democracy. Two, it will most probably reveal that not all forms of government operating in the garb of a constitution properly qualify as democracy. Three, and perhaps most important, a study of the content and context of a country's democracy would reveal the type of democracy being practised by it – whether it is surface democracy, pseudo- or quasi-democracy or the rule by many for many. This study examines the content and context of Nigeria's democracy with specific reference to its 'trilemma' and argues that Nigeria's democracy is assailed by three 'isms'. The study concludes that Nigeria's brand of democracy is a system which enables rule by the few for the few and that this has drained many Nigerians of psychic energy and socio-economic strength.*

**Keywords:** Nigeria, democracy, Africa, vampirism, Boko Haram, herdsmen

## Introduction and contextual discourse

Democracy and Nigeria are like Siamese twins; though conjoined, they are uncomfortable and under very intense pressure. While democracy, either as a concept or a system of rule, may not be strange to an overwhelming percentage of Nigerians, what may be strange to them is the brand of democracy that invests, first and foremost, in human and material resources for the purposes of political stability, economic viability, scientific advancement, technological breakthroughs, educational development and life-enhancing social services. 'Rule of the people by the people for the people' is supposed to solve the problem of the people, be it political, social, economic, environmental or technological. Thus, the safety, protection, happiness and the general wellbeing of the people should normally and continually take centre stage and be on the front burner in the rule of the people by the people for the people. In other words, the 'occupiers of the democratic space' should spare nothing in their pursuit of 'better life' for the citizens of their country. However, this is an hypothetical situation that has rarely been experienced in practical terms in Nigeria. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to examine the content and context of Nigeria's democracy. Data for this conceptual study was obtained through secondary sources and interviews with some individuals the author considered sufficiently knowledgeable about the content, context, practice and workings of Nigeria's democracy. In addition to the interviews he conducted in Nigeria, the author interviewed some Nigerians residing in the Russian Federation. The study employed the descriptive and

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analytical method of data analysis. For the purposes of clarity and in-depth analysis, this article is broken into five sections. This introduction and conceptual discourse is followed by a brief examination of the threat the grazing activities of herdsmen pose to Nigeria's rural and farming communities and by extension, food security and the national economy. This is followed by an outline of the activities of two deadly terror groups and their impact on the Nigerian state. This is in turn followed by a brief description of 'Nigerian democracy'. The section draws a line of demarcation between the gains of the occupiers of the country's democratic space and the pain of the citizenry. This is followed by the conclusion.

Of the five main terms contained in the title of this article – democracy, 'trilemma', 'herdsmenism' terrorism and vampirism – only two (democracy and terrorism) are probably commonplace and could be understood without any further ado. Therefore, the contexts within which the remaining three are used in this article require qualification so as avoid ambiguity, misconception or misinterpretation. In his opening address at the World Economic Forum on East Asia held on 19 November 2014 entitled "The three big issues facing East Asia", Atsutoshi Nishida coined the word, 'trilemma' to capture and underline the three pressing issues confronting East Asia, which according to him, required urgent solutions. One was securing economic growth and accommodating population expansion; two was working with increasingly limited resources in the face of rapidly expanding population; and three involved raising environmental awareness in order to deal with devastating weather events linked to climate change. More than Atsutoshi's East Asia's 'trilemma', today, Nigeria's democracy is assailed by a more devastating 'trilemma' (three problems) – 'herdsmenism', terrorism and vampirism.

There is no dearth of literature on the challenges facing Nigeria's democracy. Indeed, literature on national challenges like insecurity, Boko Haram insurgency, Niger Delta crisis, corruption, mono-resource economy, unemployment, etc. is massive. However, a very careful examination of these works would reveal that they either altogether neglect, or only mention in passing, the challenge posed by 'herdsmenism' and the grave political, demographical, security and economic challenges it poses to the Nigerian Federation. Given the magnitude of the challenge 'herdsmenism' poses to the socio-economic and political stability of Nigeria, it deserves more than footnote reference. 'Herdsmenism' in the context of this study refers to the rather unprecedented forceful and violent grazing activities of Nigeria's herdsmen that have now almost completely driven farmers off their farms and which, if allowed to persist for a few more years, have the potential of precipitating nationwide severe food shortages and turning Nigeria into a food-import dependent nation.

The subject of terrorism and its attendant consequences is no doubt a well-researched one in Nigeria. However, again, a vacuum or mis-contextualisation exists in the extant literature on the Boko Haram terror group. While it is true that today a large number of ethnic terror groups exist in Nigeria; the most famous and dreaded of them in the annals of Nigeria's history is the Boko Haram group.<sup>2</sup> To date, scholars and commentators have treated the Boko Haram terror sect as an upstart group without drawing connecting lines with an earlier sect. A juxtaposition of Usman dan Fodio (the leader of the 1804-1810 Jihad in Hausaland) and Mohammed Yusuf (the leader and founder of the Boko Haram sect) will yield instructive historical lessons and parallels that will help put the Boko Haram terror group in a clearer context and perspective.

The last term that requires some contextual clarification is vampirism. A vampire is a folklore being that subsists by feeding on a life essence, particularly blood. In European folklore, vampires were 'undead' beings that often visited loved ones and caused mischief or deaths in the neighbourhood they inhabited while they were alive. Vampires are described in various languages and forms in different cultures

2. Several ethnic militias perpetrated (and still perpetrate) terror acts in Nigeria. Since the country has a large number of ethnic nationalities and in view of the lopsided configuration of the Federation of Nigeria, generally termed the 'national question', youths of most of the ethnic nationalities often form themselves into terror groups – some sort of pressure groups to force the federal government to accede to their request which most often involved the allocation of more resources or positions to them.

depending on the region and cultural beliefs. However, generally, the character, characteristics and traits of vampires are the same in virtually all cultures – they cause death, suffering, ill-health, ill-luck etc. Indeed, they represent everything and anything that contradicts wellness and wellbeing. Vampirism is used in this article to denote living by preying on others; making a living from the misery of others; or “the draining of psychic energy from one individual by another” (Webster 2017). Indeed, it means the unscrupulous exploitation, ruin, dehumanisation and degradation of others. Across all levels and without any notable exception, this is who and what Nigeria’s political class is: a crop of vampires who, through their ineptitude, licentiousness, greed, obsession for material wealth and comfort, selfishness and utter disregard for human dignity, have not only ‘politically conquered’ and held their fellow Nigerians captive; but have brutally muzzled and cremated them economically. This assertion will be substantiated as this article progresses. Having attempted a brief contextual discourse of our major terms, we can now proceed to discuss each of them briefly and see how they individually and collectively impact on Nigeria’s democracy.

### **‘Herdsmenism’**

The term ‘herdsmenism’ is almost exclusively associated with the Fulani people of Northern Nigeria. While pockets of non-Fulani possess a few herds of cattle, Nigeria’s herdsmen are predominantly of Fulani, Peul or Fulbe origin and comprise a predominantly Muslim group scattered throughout many parts of West Africa, from Lake Chad in the east to the Atlantic Coast. Numbering between 20 and 25 million, they are concentrated principally in Nigeria, Mali, Guinea, Cameroon, Senegal and Niger.<sup>3</sup> They are said to be the largest nomadic people in the world and probably the first group of people to be converted to Islam in West Africa. The Fulani language, known as Fula, is classified within the Atlantic branch of the Niger-Congo family language. People of the Fulani tribe probably rarely ever use artificial birth control methods; consequently, the tribe is a very fertile one hence their population and vast presence in almost every state of the Nigerian Federation (Guide to Africa 2016:5). The most important possession in the Fulani society is cattle, to which many traditions, beliefs and taboos attach. The number of cows a person owns is a measure of his wealth. Apparently, an average Fulani loves and cherishes his cattle much more than the life of a non-Fulani. This, as shall be pointed out as this study progresses, is responsible for the brutalities Fulani herders had meted on farmers elsewhere in Nigeria who attempted to stop Fulani cattle from eating up the farms and crops they had laboured so hard to cultivate.

The problem posed by Fulani herdsmen to Nigeria’s political stability, economic prosperity and food security cannot be over-emphasised. This is because ongoing clashes between herdsmen and farmers have reached boiling point, with several thousands of farmers killed, maimed or wiped off their farms. This has drastically reduced the food producing capability of the country as well as creating mounting political tensions, particularly between the Fulani and other ethnic nationalities whose farmlands and crops are being invaded and eaten by Fulani herds daily. The Fulani/farmer clash is about two decades old; it is therefore not a new phenomenon in Nigeria. What is probably new is the vigour and intensity it has gathered in recent times. Initially, clashes between nomadic Fulani herdsmen and farmers were isolated events confined to the northern-most regions of the country, but due to the increasing desertification (to which Nigeria has not been able to respond, let alone attempt to tackle), overgrazing and lower rainfall; the nomadic herdsmen have been pushing farther and farther south and towards the middle belt in search of grass and water for their herds. In the course of moving from place to place and grazing their cattle, herders most times encounter cattle rustlers, consequently the herdsmen started to carry sophisticated arms. During their wanderings and journeys, herders frequently trespass farmlands owned by local farmers in their host communities, destroying crops and valuables. Attempts by farmers to safeguard their farms and prevent herders from feeding their herds on their farms are always met with stiff and violent

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3. Nigeria has the largest concentration of the Fulani with about 7.6 million; Guinea 2 million; Mali 2.5 million and Guinea Bissau 500,000.

resistance by herders. Most times, the farmers are overpowered, maimed, raped or killed and their houses or communities razed.

The most cursory glance at Nigerian newspapers and the social media will attest to the fact that 'herdsmanism' is probably the most pervasive socio-economic and security challenge facing the Federation of Nigeria today. This is because hundreds of farming communities have been sacked and thousands of people, mostly farmers, killed by herders. Chidi Oguamanam has rightly captured the socio-economic implication of 'herdsmanism' in Nigeria by observing that:

crop farmers produce more than 80% of Nigeria's food. Leaving this critical lifeblood of the country's economic and cultural life at the mercy of herders and their cattle is not an option.

Farmers, the majority of whom are women, constitute the bedrock of the country's informal economy. And the unofficial farming sector is the country's highest employer of labor. Now this key economic sector is under siege (*Newsweek* 13 March 2016:18)

Of course, it is absolutely impossible to compute the hectares of farms/farmlands that have been destroyed; the number of farmers that were maimed, raped or killed or the number of rural farming communities that have been sacked, pillaged and razed by herders. Today, due to the activities of herders in virtually all states of the Nigerian Federation, many farmers harvest nothing or only a miserable portion of what they sow. While an accurate computation of the demographical measurement of the psychological impact of 'herdsmanism' on Nigeria may be impossible; the headlines below, among several others, from both local and foreign newspapers and other publications, provide an insight into the colossal loss of manpower 'herdsmanism' has inflicted on the Nigerian state: "Drought worsens deadly battle between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria" (Akinwotu 2017); "Benue: Fulani herdsmen have killed over 500 [and] 300,000 displaced" (Opejobi 2017); "Fulani herdsmen increasingly militant in killing 22 Christians in Kaduna, Nigeria" (International Christian Response 15 November 2016:3); and "2 herdsmen allegedly tied two sisters on a tree, rape them" (*Vanguard* 23 June 2017:8). The traumatic impact of the last is better imagined than experienced. Indeed, Zonov (2017) chronicled 'five gruesome Fulani herdsmen attacks since January 2016'. These were in the delta area,<sup>4</sup> Oyo, Taraba and Benue.

Herdsmen's attack on the Agatu Local Government Area of Benue State remains among the most tragic.<sup>5</sup> Several villages and farm settlements in the area were invaded by Fulani herdsmen leading to the maiming and killing of children, women and the elderly. Conservative estimates put the number of the dead at between 300 and 500. According to Emmanuel Mayah

Between 2011 and 2014, herdsmen attacked dozens of communities in the four local government areas of Guma, Gwe-East, Buruku and Gwer-West ... burning houses, food barns and farmlands and killing scores in communities like Tse-Aderogo, Tse-Akenyi, Umenger, Angyom, Aondora, Anyiase, Adeke, Gbajimba, Tyoughtee, Gbaange, Chembe, Abeola, Abachoon, Tongov and Mbapuu ... Barely five days to the end of Governor Gabriel Suswan's administration in May 2015, over 100 farmers and family members were killed in villages and refugee camps located in Ukura, Per, Gafa and Tse-Gussa in Lago Local Government Area of the state (*Premium Times* 18 March 2016).

A conservative estimate by SBM Intelligence, an African-focused socio-cultural and communications intelligence agency, was that there were 389 incidents involving herdsmen and farming communities between 1997 and 2015. In its 2016 survey, SBM Intelligence found that

"pastoralist conflict is the most deadly threat with 470 victims killed as a result of cattle rustling and 1,425 killed in attacks involving Fulani herdsmen. The average number of fatalities per

4. About 23 persons, mostly rural farmers, were killed by herders during this violence. Indeed, the police recovered 20 AK-47; 70 locally manufactured guns; 30 double barrel guns and 1,000 rounds of live ammunition from the herdsmen.

5. Benue State is the Middle Belt of Nigeria, inhabited predominantly by the Tiv and Idoma peoples, speakers of the Tiv and Idoma languages respectively.

attack was high at 30 deaths per attack by Fulani herdsmen ... There were four times as many as attacks on communities by herdsmen than incidents of cattle rustling. Unlike Boko Haram insurgency, the majority of the deaths in the pastoral conflicts are not the belligerent herdsmen but residents of the attacked communities" (George 2017). These are very conservative estimates because, according to statistics provided by the Nigerian Institute for Economics and Peace, about 1,229 people were killed in herdsmen-related incidents in 2014 alone (Shuaibu 2016:4). An editorial opinion in one of Nigeria's most influential newspapers expressed grave reservations about herdsmen attacks on the country's rural farming communities thus:

Notably, the most gruesome killings by the herdsmen occurred in Agatu, Benue State, and Ukpabi Nimbo and Uzo-Uwani communities in Enugu, drawing anger from across the country. Despite the outrage over the activities of the herdsmen, however, there has been no let on their part. Indeed, their blood-letting has continued to rise in frequency and intensity in the land ... Barely a week ago, in Adamawa and southern part of Kaduna, some villages came under brutal attacks from the herdsmen in ways that left their victims in horror and the whole of Nigeria in shock. In Adamawa State, Kodomun was attacked and at the last count no less than 30 people were believed to have been slaughtered. Similarly, Southern Kaduna, traditionally at the receiving end of incessant attacks by herdsmen was again attacked with loss of lives in large numbers. Gada, Biyu, Akwa'a and Agwan Ajo villages were ... thrown into a theatre of killings by the herdsmen ... Recently, a traditional ruler, Lazarus Agai, the Saf Ron Kurele, in Bokkos town in Plateau State was killed while visiting his farm, by the same herdsmen (*The Guardian* 15 August 2016)

It must be pointed out that reprisal attacks and provocations exist on both sides. Cattle are sometimes stolen from herdsmen by criminal groups, and communities sometimes attack the herdsmen, assuming them to be a threat. The Nigerian economy has suffered immense loss due to the problem posed by 'herdsmenism'. As Mercy Corps has shown, Nigeria loses about \$14 billion annually to herdsmen invasion and destruction of crops and farmlands (Ogundipe 2016). Unfortunately, as massive as the demographical and economic impacts of 'herdsmenism' are, in their characteristic manner, successive Nigerian governments have failed to take measures that could address the multi-faceted threats posed by 'herdsmenism'. This is one of the contents of Nigeria's democracy. As Paul Unongo (2017) rightly pointed out, "a government's primary function is to provide security and protection and create an enabling environment, for citizens to lawfully maximize the realization of all their potential"; however, most often Nigeria's democracy fails to fulfil this important legitimacy role, thereby encouraging the 'self defence' syndrome. The outcome has been the accumulation of illicit private arms with very grave consequences for Nigeria's democracy.

## **Terrorism**

There are dozens of well-researched studies on terrorism in Nigeria, particularly since 2009, when Boko Haram first debuted. The origins, metamorphosis and activities of this terror group have been analysed by scholars. However, in addition to analyzing the impact of this terror sect on Nigeria's democracy; this section attempts to correct some misconceptions and wrong conceptualizations about the sect in proper historical perspectives. Since 2009, the Boko Haram terror group, like a tornado, has swept over north eastern Nigeria, damaging infrastructure and facilities; destroying properties and displacing hundreds of thousands of people with its attendant socio-economic challenges. In the annals of Nigerian history, apart from the 1967-1970 Civil War, Boko Haram's terrorist activities are probably the most important factor responsible for internal displacement and death of Nigerians. The group, *Jama'atu Ahlus-Sunnah Lidda'Awati Wal Jihad*, the Arabic meaning of which is 'people committed to the propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad', known all over the world as Boko Haram<sup>6</sup> is an extremist Islamic sect in Nigeria. It has caused or masterminded unprecedented dislocation and destruction of lives and properties in the north eastern states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. Its violent attacks on government offices,

villages, churches, mosques, schools, health facilities and other public utilities have led to the death of thousands of people and the collapse of hundreds of businesses (Walker n.d: 1 of 3). According to Amnesty International (Annual Report on Nigeria 2015/2016:3), the Boko Haram terror group has caused more than 10,000 civilian deaths since 2009; the abduction of more than 2,000 people mostly women and children and students including those from Chibok and Damasak; the forced recruitment of hundreds of men and the displacement of more than 2.5 million people in northeast Nigeria (Annual Report on Nigeria 2015/2016:3).

The impression one gets from some accounts on Boko Haram is that the sectarian movement was founded for the purposes for which it is now well known – terrorism. This view may not be entirely correct. The movement was founded in Maiduguri, capital of Borno State, north-east Nigeria, by Mohammed Yusuf, an Islamic cleric, in 2002<sup>7</sup> with the primary objective of establishing a state based on the strict application of *Sharia* law. The sectarian group launched its first attack in 2009, leading to nearly a week of fighting that ended with a military assault which left about 800 people dead. Yusuf was subsequently captured, imprisoned and killed when, according to the police, he was trying to escape from prison. Thereafter, the group went dormant for about a year only to re-emerge as a fatal and lethal Islamist movement; it has since caused widespread death and displacement in north-eastern Nigeria.

Perhaps the best way to conceptualize Boko Haram, an exercise which has not been considered by scholars before now, is by examining the convergences and divergences between it and the Usman dan Fodio's Jihad which swept through northern Nigeria between 1804 and 1809. It will be recalled that in 1876 Usman dan Fodio led a crusade for the revival of Islam and the establishment of a pristine state of Islam in northern Nigeria. An Islamic cleric and intiary preacher of high pedigree, Fodio condemned the anti-Islamic practices in the Hausa states; the prevalent corruption at the courts of the Habe kings as well as the various forms of oppression perpetrated by the Hausa aristocracy. Fodio's denunciation of the Hausa aristocracy appealed to his fellow Muslims, who sincerely desired Islamic reforms in Hausaland as well as the non-Muslim Hausa-Fulani reeling under the oppression and exploitation of Hausa kings. At this point, Fodio had probably not thought of taking up arms against the Hausa aristocracy as he felt that his preaching rather than violence would accomplish his mission and realize his dream of establishing a shari'a based government. Unfortunately, however, relations between him and the Hausa aristocracy deteriorated rapidly. Indeed, hostilities between the former and the latter climaxed during the reign of Yumfa, who attempted to kill Fodio in 1802. This forced Fodio to flee from Degel to Dugu. This flight, popularly known as the *hijrah*,<sup>8</sup> probably forced Fodio to the conclusion that violence, rather than preaching and attitudinal change, was inevitable, hence the declaration of the 1804 Jihad (Bugaje 1979).

Like Fodio, Mohammed Yusuf probably did not intend the initial version of Boko Haram to be violent and like him, Yusuf wanted to lead a crusade for the revival of Islam and the establishment of Quran-based (*Shari'a*) government in northern Nigeria "through preaching the faith (dawa'a) (American Foreign Policy Council n.d:1). Disillusioned by the massive corruption that characterized northern states (like their southern counterparts), in 2002, Yusuf and his followers embarked on a *hijra* by moving to Kanama, a village in Yobe State. In 2009, a seemingly trivial issue involving the enforcement of traffic rules led to violent clashes between the Nigerian security forces and Boko Haram members in the northern states of Bauchi, Borno, Kano and Yobe, leading to the death of many Boko Haram members. Yusuf himself was

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6. 'Boko' in Hausa language, means 'book' or more broadly 'Western education' and 'Haram' means 'sinful'. Thus, Boko Haram means 'Western education is sinful'.

7. Some accounts trace the inception of the sect to the 1990s. At whatever point it may have been founded, the fact remains that it was in the 2000s that it began to attract the attention of the authorities.

8. Also spelt Hejira or Hijra, it means the 622 CE flight or emigration of Prophet Mohammad from Mecca to Medina to escape persecution or death. Till date, the Hijrah remains a dividing line in the activities of Muslim clerics who intend to push for the establishment of the *Shari'a* mode of government. It is crossing the Rubicon – from a non-violent to violent disposition.

arrested, imprisoned and later “killed by security forces in a shoot-out while trying to escape from prison” (Smith 2010). The divergence between Fodio and Yusuf therefore is that, while the former escaped the attempt on his life, the latter was killed. However, just as the attempt on Fodio’s life marked the point of no return in his decision to declare and prosecute the 1804-1809 Jihad; the killing of Yusuf transformed Boko Haram from a non-violent to a fatally violent terrorist sect.

Some wrong conceptualizations have also been applied to Boko Haram. For example, Lanshie and Henry (2016:146) conceptualized Boko Haram as a fallout of the north/south or Islam/Christianity dichotomy. Obviously, as Lanshie and Henry rightly point out, what is generally referred to as the national question is a fatal reality in Nigeria. The lopsided nature of the Federation of Nigeria has not only exacerbated ethnic tensions but has prevented the two halves of the country from operating on the same political wavelengths since the 1914 amalgamation. However, the ethnic theory cannot be effectively deployed in the analysis of the violent and terrorist tendencies of Boko Haram, the most cursory glance at which shows that with the exception of a few attacks on targets in Abuja and Lagos, the sect’s violence has, by and large, been confined to the north where residents are predominantly northerners and Muslims. Although, two southerners have served as presidents since the emergence of the Boko Haram sect,<sup>9</sup> so far, the victims of its violence and terrorist acts are predominantly northerners and Muslims. Therefore, neither the ethnic nor the religious theory could be effectively deployed in conceptualizing or rationalizing the violent activities of Boko Haram, because, as the Northern Youth Leaders Forum recently opined, “Boko Haram killed without thoughts for their victims’ ethnicity, creed or geographical origin” (Asishana 2016). Apparently, in addition to a possible intention to rid Islam of heretic practices; the near institutionalized corruption that has robbed Nigerians of access to basic socio-economic facilities and the availability of a large army of unemployed youths who supplied (and still supply) the needed manpower for Boko Haram are some of the factors that gave birth and impetus to the movement. It is in this context that the violent activities of Boko Haram should be objectively and holistically understood.

Since it launched its first major attack on Bauchi Prison on 7 September 2010, the Boko Haram sect has carried out hundreds of fatal attacks on places of worship, public utilities, educational and health institutions, motor parks and residential areas, leading to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people. Amnesty International estimates that by October 2016 the Boko Haram insurgency had led to the death of several thousands of people and displaced well over 2 million persons in north eastern Nigeria.<sup>10</sup> This makes Nigeria home to the largest number of IDPs in sub Saharan Africa – 16 per cent of the about 12.5 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) on the continent. Of course, several factors could cause internal displacement of persons, amongst which are communal clashes and natural disasters. In the case of north-eastern Nigeria, the Boko Haram insurgency is clearly the most important factor responsible for internal displacement of people. The central place the Boko Haram insurgency occupies in the displacement of people in north-eastern Nigeria is evident in an assessment carried out by the International Organization for Migrations, Displacement Tracking Matrix Team in 207 LGAs in northern Nigeria between November and December 2015. It was found that while a geographically expansive and densely populated north western state like Kano had 3,331 IDPs, the comparatively sparsely populated three north eastern states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe had 1,434,149, 136,010 and 131,203 IDPs respectively (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2015:8). Of these, 12.6% were displaced by communal clashes; 2.4% by natural disasters, while 85% were displaced by the Boko Haram insurgency. Thus, at present, there are probably more than 20 IDP camps in north-eastern Nigeria with the full complements of the rather overwhelming and life-threatening challenges often faced by IDPs.

9. While Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, an Egba Yoruba, served as president between 29 May 1999 and 29 May 2007, an Ijaw, Goodluck Jonathan, was president between 6 May 2010 and 29 May 2015.

10. While Lanshie N. Edward and Henry B. Yenda (141-143) put the number of IDPs in north-eastern Nigeria at 3 million, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) estimated that there were approximately 2.2 million IDPs in Nigeria as at 31 December 2015.

The *Badoo* terrorist group, which debuted in the Ikorodu area of Lagos State south western Nigeria with the raping and killing of a Ghanaian woman on 5 June 2016, is a less well known but emerging security threat which the Nigerian government is still unable to tackle. The trademark of the group is the use of grinding stones in crushing the heads of their victims after brutally raping the female ones. Indeed, the gang's brutality is a step ahead of that of both the Fulani herdsmen and the Boko Haram sect. This is because the *Badoo* group often rips open the wombs of pregnant women and removes their foetuses (Usman & Undu 2017). This crude brutality apparently informed Adeleke's comparison of the operations of the group to those of Jack the Ripper who terrorised the largely impoverished areas of the Whitechapel District of London in 1888. Jack the Ripper made prostitutes living and working in slums of the east end of London his target, cutting their throats and mutilating their abdomens (Adesanya 2016). It has been estimated that the *Badoo* terrorist group killed 26 people in Ikorodu and its environs between 5 June 2016 and 27 June 2017 (Hanafi 2017). Like a lame duck, Nigeria's democracy is as yet unable to proffer a solution to this emerging security challenge; this terrorist group's heinous activities go beyond what the country's security outfits can curtail, as in the case of Boko Haram.

Ironically, as pointed out in the section below, while the occupiers of Nigeria's democratic space daily reap the gains of democracy far in excess of their fair share, the common man is daily subjected to the pain of a thoroughly inefficient system, ranging from herdsmenism and terrorism to corruption and vampirism. The Nigeria Police and the Army are poorly equipped. Indeed, a former Governor of Borno State (the hotbed of the Boko Haram insurgency) opined that the Boko Haram sect was better armed and better motivated than the Nigerian military (Onuoh 2014). This was corroborated by a former Lagos State Police Commissioner, Abubakar Tsav, who identified the outstanding features of the Nigerian state as insecurity ... corruption and waste of resources. The repudiation of these submissions by Nigerian Governments notwithstanding, a recent report has confirmed them. In its 2016 Report, the World Internal Security and Police Index International (WISPI) rated the Nigeria Police Force as "the worst globally in terms of its ability to handle internal security challenges".<sup>11</sup> In a survey of 127 countries, "Nigeria failed in all four parameters of capacity, process, legitimacy and outcomes," thus coming last behind African countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya and Uganda. According to the Report, Nigeria "is fourth on the political terror scale" as "terrorism remains one of the greatest threats to internal security. Terrorism has increased dramatically in the last three years, with more than 62,000 killed in terrorist attacks between 2012 and 2014. The biggest rise [in the world] last year occurred in Nigeria" (Adepegba 2017).

## Vampirism

'Vampirism' in Nigeria refers to how Nigeria's political elite suck the country's economy dry through their lavish lifestyle, outlandish salaries and allowances. Nigeria's democracy is probably the best in the world with respect to elaborate investment in the comfort of the holders of the structural framework rather than in national development and human and material resources (Oghonna 2017). While the ordinary or average Nigerian may lack access to power, health care, employment, education, potable water, good roads and other basic amenities, Nigeria's political leaders at all levels live in El Dorado (Aloma 2017). One or two examples will suffice to illustrate the democracy of waste and vampirism practised in Nigeria. Each year, a high percentage of budgetary estimates are allocated to the Aso Rock Villa (the official residence of the President) and the State Houses in the various states. Nigeria probably has the largest Presidential Air Fleet (PAF) in the world (Ajayi and Ojo:2014). While Ghana and Algeria each has only one aircraft in their Presidential Air Fleet and Japan and the Netherlands each has two, Nigeria has ten.<sup>12</sup> The cost of the

<sup>11</sup> International Body Rates Nigeria Police Force Worst Globally", *The Punch*, 12 November 2017. Singapore was ranked first in the Report, followed by Finland and Denmark. Botswana, which ranked 47th globally was the best in Africa followed by Rwanda (50th globally). Other African countries surveyed included Algeria, Senegal, Tunisia, Egypt, Burkina Faso, Ghana, South Africa and Mali.

<sup>12</sup> These are 1 Boeing Business Jet (Boeing 737-800); 1 Gulfstream 550; 1 Gulfstream 500; 2 Falcons 7X; 1 Hawker Sidney 4000; 2 Agusta Westland AW 139 helicopters and 2 Agusta Westland AW 101 helicopters.

aircraft in the PAF, which is larger than those of three Nigerian airlines combined, is estimated at over \$390.5 million. Furthermore, it is estimated that about \$58.5 million is spent annually on running the aircrafts in the PAF (Adetayo, Abioye, Falayi et al. 2013). Closely related to the above is foreign travel. In 2012, about \$1.7 million was budgeted for President Jonathan's foreign travels, while over \$3 million was earmarked for the same purpose in 2013 (Inyang 2012), whereas following nationwide protest against the fuel subsidy removal in 2012, the President had promised to reduce his foreign trips. On the contrary, foreign travels allocations to Nigerian Presidents continued to increase. Indeed, the Presidency's total allocation in the 2014 Budget of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was 33 billion (\$110 million) whereas all Nigeria's federal roads got a paltry 100 billion (\$33 million) (Nigerian Tribune 25 December 2013:12). Nigeria's political vampirism was only surpassed by Zimbabwe's. In 2016, President Robert Mugabe spent more than \$50 million on foreign trips, double the amount allocated to the upgrading of Zimbabwe's hospitals and health facilities (Muller 2017). President Mugabe and his family's domination and control of the country's economy and wealth, however, came to a surprising halt in November 2017 when the military forced him to resign as president. A careful perusal of the 2017 budget of the Federal Republic of Nigeria indicates that 17 budget subheads with enormous allocations are directly linked to the Presidency. Yet, the Nigerian Airways – which once had 28 aircraft – is now defunct and is yet to be resuscitated.

Members of the Nigerian Parliament are probably the highest paid in the world. There are 109 and 360 members in the country's Senate and House of Representatives respectively. While a Senator in the United States of America earns \$174,000 per annum and a member of parliament in the United Kingdom earns about \$64,000 per annum; a Senator in Nigeria earns \$80,555 per month, translating into well over \$8.4 million annually, while each member of the House of Representatives earns more than \$6 million per annum. While the US President earns \$400,000 per annum; the Vice President earns \$231,000; Members of Congress \$174,000; Governors between \$70,000 and \$190,000; state legislators \$81,078 (full time) and \$19,197 (part time) (Murse 2017). Before the February 2014 marginal wage increments, the Canadian Prime Minister earned \$327,400; Senators earned \$135,200 per annum while the other members of Parliament earned \$160,200 annually (Raj 2014).<sup>13</sup> In Sweden, the monthly pay of lawmakers is \$7,707. This implies that a Swedish lawmaker will have to work for over 12 years to earn what a Nigerian Senator earns per month (Olufemi & Akinwumi 2014). In a recent public lecture, Nigeria's Chairman of the Presidential Advisory Committee Against Corruption, Itse Sagay, pointed out that, in addition to their basic salary, Nigerian Senators receive 15 categories of allowances.<sup>14</sup> He concluded his lecture by observing that "one common thread that runs through the attitude of [Nigerian] politicians borders on greed, avarice, self-service and accumulation of wealth at the expense of the country" (Sagay 2017).

The same culture of waste is replicated at the state and local government levels with respect to outlandish salaries and allowances of political office holders. One implication of the above, as pointed out by Isola Olomola and Julius Ogbonna when they were interviewed on 11 August and 5 September 2017 respectively, is the fact that well over 40% of Nigeria's annual budget is allocated to the payment of public officers' emoluments, yet the country probably has the largest number of people who live on less than \$1 a day. While the minimum wage in the USA and UK is \$1,257 and \$1,883 respectively; that of Nigeria is a diminutive \$50. Thus, as Animasaun (2013) has pointed out, "no one deserves that much money while ordinary people are scavenging to make ends meet. Nigeria has got a magnitude of deprivation, high infant mortality rate; maternal mortality rate; malnutrition; inadequate healthcare and transportation and lack of electricity; high crime rates; high number of young people not in education, employment or training ...

13. The marginal wage increment raised the annual wages of Canadians MPs to \$163,700 and \$138,700 respectively.

14. Itse Sagay, "The Many Afflictions of Anti-Corruption Crusade in Nigeria". Lecture Delivered to the Nigerian Society of International Law, 5 September 2017, p. 4. These allowances are Hardship, Constituency, Furniture, Newspaper, Wardrobe, Recess, Accommodation, Utilities, Domestic Staff, Entertainment, Personal Assistant, Vehicle Maintenance, Leave, Severance and Motor Vehicle Allowances.

ordinary Nigerians have been severely short-changed, cheated and insulted". Indeed, the annual budgetary allocation to Nigeria's Parliament surpasses the annual budgets of 21 of Nigeria's 36 states (*Quartz Africa* 4 June 2015). Thus, while the ordinary Nigerian lives on \$1 per day; the Nigerian Parliament remains the poster-child of waste. Yet, apart from the Report on the Nigeria Police referred to above, another Report recently rated two Nigerian airports – Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos (Nigeria's best Airport) and the Port Harcourt International Airport, Omagwa – among the worst 20 airports in the world. In a survey (2017) by the Sleep in Airport website ([sleepinairports.net](http://sleepinairports.net)), Lagos Airport was ranked the fifth worst in the world while the Port Harcourt Airport was ranked the third worst globally. The criteria used by the site included comfort (gate seating and availability of rest zones), services, facilities and things to do, food options, immigration/security, customer service, cleanliness, navigation and ease of transit and sleepability. According to the Report, these airports "have the capacity to truly offend travellers ... in some cases, passengers are made to stand or sit on the floor as they await their flights. In others, the bathrooms don't have water, toilet paper, or any semblance of cleanliness" (Eze 2013).

To all intents and purposes, Nigeria's political leaders are political vampires who feed amply on the ordinary taxpayer who is in turn left economically emasculated and cremated. As the Editorial Opinion of *The Guardian* of 25 December 2009 rightly pointed out, while "many Nigerians are hungry, homeless and jobless", the political class daily expends billions of dollars on its comfort. It is in this context that the Emir of Kano's description of Nigeria's political class as selfish could be properly grasped. According to the Emir (Mohammed Sanusi II), "the bane of leadership in Nigeria is that the leaders are selfish, they only think of [themselves and] their families" (Kilete 2017:). Sanusi's view tallies with those held by about 98% of respondents interviewed by the present author. Of the 44 Nigerians interviewed in Nigeria and the Russian Federation at different dates and places, 42 held the view that the Nigerian political class has, through its selfish and greedy tendencies, underdeveloped the country and inflicted grievous socio-economic hardships on Nigerians (Ajose, Olorode, Olomola, Abegunde, Tolani et al. 2017). Unfortunately, in addition to the excessive wages they receive, Nigeria's political leaders still siphon billions of dollars of state funds annually. This has inflicted enormous financial haemorrhage on the country resulting in all-facet stagnation and cyclical underdevelopment. For example, China's GDP in 1980 was \$341 billion, while that of Nigeria was \$143 billion. Today, China's GDP is \$12 trillion; thirty times bigger than that of Nigeria (Adisa & Oderemi 2017). This probably informed the submission by Second Republic Governor of Kaduna State, Balarabe Musa (undoubtedly one of Nigeria's few political leaders who has served the country in the strict sense of that word) that he could only "single out three leaders of all the heads of government Nigeria has had – the First Republic Prime Minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, former Head of State, Yakubu Gowon and the late Head of State, General Murtala Mohammed" (*Nigerian Tribune* 1 October 2017:7). Since only the first was democratically elected<sup>15</sup> – the others being military heads of state – in Blalarabe's reckoning, weighed in the balances, Nigeria's democracy has not been beneficial to the ordinary citizen.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

This is probably the first appearance in print of three of the terms used in this study – 'trilemma', 'herds-menism' and 'vampirism' to capture and underline the gain of the occupiers of Nigeria's democratic space and the pain of the ordinary Nigerians who are daily confronted and tortured by challenges to which the Nigerian state does not appear to have solutions. The challenge posed by herdsmen is so enormous that thousands of hectares of farmland and crops are destroyed daily by the increasingly militant and warlike Fulani pastoralists. This is apart from hundreds of rural farming communities that have been pillaged,

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15. Tafawa Balewa's party, the Northern People's Congress, NPC, obtained 148 seats in the 12 December 1959 'independence election' while the Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe-led National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons, NCNC and Chief Obafemi Awolowo's Action Group, AG, won 89 and 75 seats in the Parliament respectively. The NPC and the NCNC eventually entered into alliance and formed the federal government.

sacked and razed. Evidently, ‘herdsmenism’ has led to the death of several thousands of farmers and villagers in several parts of Nigeria. As pointed out in the paper, the Nigerian economy loses about \$14 billion annually to herdsmen’s invasion and destruction of crops and farmlands while the psychological trauma of women subjected to vicious rape by herdsmen is beyond comprehension. Since 1999, Nigeria’s democracy has yet to find solutions to these challenges.

Nigeria has had an upsurge in terror activities since 2009 when the Boko Haram terrorist group debuted. Thousands of people have been maimed or killed while more than two million persons have been displaced, particularly in the north-eastern part of the country with the usual overwhelming and life-threatening challenges often faced by IDPs. In addition to several other armed militia terror groups in the country, the *Badoo* has added a dangerous dimension to terrorism in Nigeria not only by crushing the heads of their victims with grinding stones but also by ripping open the wombs of pregnant women and removing their foetuses. While other countries of the world have made substantial progress in the fight against terrorism in their homelands, Nigeria is still at a loss. Recently, the Federal Government entered into a ‘swap deal’ by which very notorious Boko Haram commanders were released in exchange for some of the now famous Chibok girls, apparently because the government does not seem to possess the military and tactical machinery to defeat the Boko Haram sect. Nigeria’s democracy is as yet unable to tackle the challenge of terrorism, ‘herdsmenism,’ a scarcity of water and shrinking grazing fields because of the absence of the political will and a functional national development framework. With a lack of technological innovation, it is able to allocate a substantial percentage of the national wealth to political office holders. Across the length and breadth of Nigeria, the supply of power is erratic – almost unavailable, pipe-borne water is a rarity, health and educational institutions are in a shambles, roads are in an abject state of disrepair while the national minimum wage stands at \$50 per month, thereby turning an overwhelming percentage of Nigerians infrathuman. For all intents and purposes, Nigeria’s brand of democracy is the rule of the few by the few for the few. This has drained many Nigerians of psychic energy and socio-economic strength: this is exactly what folklore vampires do.

With a substantial political will, considerable cut-down on selfish tendencies and conscientious planning, the three ‘isms’ assailing Nigeria’s democracy could be redressed. Apparently, the herder/farmer crisis in Nigeria demonstrates the reality of climate change which is not peculiar to Nigeria. As pointed out earlier, one of the ‘trilemma’ that East Asia was confronted with was how to deal with devastating weather events linked to climate change. That part of the world has since made substantial progress in that direction. The scarcity of water and shrinking grazing fields in the arid north are forcing herders southwards – to the grasslands of the savannas and forests. Like elsewhere in the world, a national strategy based on solid research and technological innovation, rather than stark anti-grazing laws<sup>16</sup> will provide solutions to weather-related problems in Nigeria. The establishment and maintenance of ranches throughout the Federation will not only supply enough grazing fields for herdsmen; it will reduce farmer/herder conflicts to manageable proportions; safeguard food security and boost the nation’s economy.

One of the factors that have fuelled terrorism in Nigeria is intractable unemployment. With a conservative estimate of an average of about 250,000 graduates from 129 universities and hundreds of

16. In response to the fatal herder/farmer crisis, described by Paul Unango as ‘earthquake of hostilities ... and massive killings’, several states have enacted laws prohibiting open grazing by herdsmen in their respective domains. Ekiti State (south-west) was the first in the Federation to pass the law titled ‘Prohibition of Cattle and Other Ruminants Grazing in Ekiti’. In Benue State (middle belt), the law is titled ‘Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law’ while its variant currently before the Federal Parliament is titled ‘National Grazing Reserve (Establishment) Bill’. However, the Maiyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association, the umbrella Association of Nigeria’s herdsmen, has consistently repudiated and rejected the anti-open grazing laws across the Federation, describing them as ‘inimical, ill-intended, discriminatory ... a dangerous gambit ... oppressive and negative, a misplaced priority and an agenda designed to destroy [their] means of livelihood’. Indeed, in Taraba State (north-east) the Association threatened that “there would be breakdown of law and order” should the law be implemented.

thousands from intermediate colleges, polytechnics and colleges of education entering the job market annually, Nigeria's job market is probably the most crowded in sub-Saharan Africa. It is therefore not surprising that the army of jobless Nigerians who have become socio-economic liabilities to themselves, their families and the nation at large engage in sundry illegalities and antisocial acts. Thus, there are enough unutilised or underutilised able-bodied men for politicians to recruit as thugs; others take to kidnapping-for-ransom while several others readily swell the ranks of Boko Haram and other terror groups. Indeed, a former Inspector-General of Nigeria Police opined that unemployment and poverty are responsible for the widespread insecurity in Nigeria. This view agrees with that of former British Prime Minister, David Cameron, who, while commenting on the increase of job opportunities in Britain said, "more jobs mean more security, peace of mind ... for the British people" (Dominiczak 2014). Nigerian Governments should enact appropriate legislations that would provide jobs for the teeming unemployed. The starting point, however, might have to be a substantial improvement on her present appalling and ridiculous level power generation and distribution. Stable power supply will lead to a resurgence in production and industrial activities, and the more industries spring up, grow and expand, the more manpower will be required to man them. This will divert the attention of hitherto terror gang members from gangsterism and terrorism to profitable and productive ventures.

Nigeria's democracy of waste needs a complete overhauling, while its culture of corruption requires a considerable if not major reversal. As Kabachi, Chukwu, Olorode and Babajide (2017) all pointed out when interviewed, the present arrangement that ensures that a significant proportion of the nation's resources is expended on the payment of the wages and allowances of the occupiers of the "structural frame" is the very antithesis of national development and fair play. Indeed, it has remained the harbinger of trouble in the Nigerian state. Only recently, the Chairman of the Committee on Media and Public Affairs of the Nigerian Senate, Aliyu Abdullahi, said that despite widespread public outcry for it, the Senate "cannot disclose its salaries and allowances" (Akinkuotu 2017). Yet, several non-governmental organisations have urged the leadership of the National Assembly to remove the tight lid on the income of the 'representatives of the people' while two have obtained court rulings compelling the National Assembly, by virtue of the Freedom of Information Bill, to make the salaries and allowances earned by its members public.<sup>17</sup> However, despite these rulings, the National Assembly is yet to comply – another feature of Nigeria's democracy. Chapter V, Section C(70) of the 1999 Constitution provides that "A member of the Senate or of the House of Representatives shall receive such salary and other allowances as the Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission may determine." The Constitution, rather than a politically-inclined body, should determine and fix the remuneration of political office holders. As pointed out by Yewande Tijani when she was interviewed on 23 August 2017, among other things, Nigeria should have a people-centred constitution and resource allocation formula that clearly prescribes moderate wages and allowances for political office holders, who preferably should be elected to serve on a part-time basis. This will not only make public office less attractive; it will engender rapid socio-economic development and judicious utilisation of public resources.

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17. On 3 February 2015, in Suit No. FHC/ABJ/ES/336/2013, the Legal Defence and Assistance Project, LEDAP, obtained a Federal High Court judgement compelling the National Assembly to disclose the monthly salaries and allowances of its members within 7 days. Also, the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project, SERAP, obtained another Federal High Court's 'order of mandamus' compelling the Senate President and Speaker of the House of Representatives to 'disclose the monthly income and allowances of each senator and member'.

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