

Oil in the ‘Mix’ of Insurgency: Unmasking the Resurgence of Boko Haram Attacks in Nigeria’s Northeast

Philip Ademola Olayoku

Abstract

Nigeria’s mono-economic dependence on oil has been a paradox of an albatross on socio-economic growth and development, as the country grapples to secure a cure for its Dutch disease since the oil boom era of the 1970s. In inverting the dependency theory, as a conspiracy of the rich to make the poor dependent, this paper contends that the reverse is the case as the wealth of rich socio-political elites within the Nigerian context is solely dependent on the exploitation of the less developed oil bearing communities within an impoverished population. These communities perpetually live under hazardous ecological conditions in spite of their resources upon which the Nigerian state is dependent. It posits that the Boko Haram insurgency is an offshoot of this paradox while exploring the emerging dynamics of the oil factor amidst the resurgence of attacks in the Northeast. It thus advocates the need to rehumanize the Nigerian populace through Amartya Sen’s human capabilities’ approach, whereby socio-economic conditions are addressed through structural and institutional changes amidst a socially and environmentally responsible population.

Key Words: Boko Haram insurgency, oil-induced conflicts, human capabilities theory, mono-economic oil dependency

Introduction: Contextualizing the Perpetuation of Oil Dependency in Nigeria’s Mono-Economy

The oil-rich region in the South-South of Nigeria which borders the Niger were traditionally three states namely Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta states spanning about 70,000 km². By the year 2000, Abia, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Edo, Imo and Ondo States were added as oil-producing states constituting the Niger Delta region (Akpabio and Akpan, 2010).^{54 55} This inclusion reflected the regional incorporation of the South West (Ondo State) and South East (Imo State) with no representation of any state from the three Northern regions mainly (North East, North West and North Central).⁵⁶ While the search for oil in the Northeast

⁵⁴ See also Big Story: Origin of Militancy, Oil & Gas Vandalism in the Niger Delta Part I.

⁵⁵ The region is credited with the capacity of 2.6 million bpd and 90% of Nigeria’s income in foreign exchange (see Courson 2007, 11).

⁵⁶ Nigeria is divided into six regions namely the South South, South West, South East, North East, North West and North Central.

dates back to the 1970s, the recent desperation for oil discovery and exploration in the region is not unconnected with the approval of four Aje Oil wells in the Dahomey Basin of Lagos State which entitles another South West State to the 13% derivation fund⁵⁷ from August 2016 (see Akoni et al., 2016). The optimism towards the discovery of oil in the Northeast was reiterated by the Borno State governor, Alhaji Kashim Shetimma, who stated during an interview that the prospects of discovering oil in commercial quantity are high due to its location in the Lake Chad region, especially drawing from the successes of Niger and Cameroon's oil exploration activities.⁵⁸

This economic viability reflects the other side of the Lake Chad region, which has been noted for its volatile nature since the emergence of Boko Haram attacks in 2009. Magrin (2016) noted the interests in the Lake Chad by regional governments (especially by the Presidents of Chad – Idriss Deby and Niger – Mahamadou Issifou); who, latching up to the conception that terrorism was a causal effect of the drying up of the Lake Chad, requested that funds be provided for a “mega water project” to save the region. He, however, argued that the ecological reasons for the spread of Boko Haram in Lake Chad are over the top, as research observations have reflected that swamplands form a major part of the Lake and the water variations at certain seasons do not validate the drying up of the lake. He thus argued that the recruitment of the indigenous Yedina by Boko Haram was predicated on economic grounds, including the bid to expunge the Hausa immigrants who threaten their (the Yedina) control of land and fishing areas Magrin 2016, p. 7, 11). While Magrin (2016, p. 21) emphasized that the involvement of France in Chad had been through military support with a permanent military presence since the 1980s, Murphy (2017) was more emphatic on France's quest to protect its energy generation interests in the Sahel, from where it sources for oil and uranium. He alleged the complicity of France in the resurgence of the Boko Haram Insurgency by maintaining that Nigeria's Francophone neighbours provided both reinforcement and routes of escape for the insurgents; and that French Nationals apprehended in 2015 as mercenaries for Boko Haram did not face justice. Historically, the French involvement with separatist movements in Nigeria dates back to the Nigerian Civil War during which it openly sided with the Biafrans alongside Gabon, Tanzania and Ivory Coast. A recently declassified CIA file, however, noted that the French support was because of its vested interests in acquiring the British and American oil concessions in the region; and also in support of the Emergency Response Action Plan (ERAP), to which it committed about \$30 million (see Ini, 2017). The Shell-BP (a joint venture of the British and Dutch), in its own stead, also paid token royalties to the Biafran administration

⁵⁷ The derivation fund is the percentage of the oil generated revenue allocated with a sharing formula to the 36 states in Nigeria.

⁵⁸ Interview on Channels Television on 29 October 2017.

for their exploration activities to run smoothly during the war in Enugu and Port Harcourt (Uche, 2008; Raji and Abejide, 2013, p. 24). Oil was thus a very significant factor for the French-Biafran and British-Nigerian coalitions during the war.

Decades after the Biafran War, the Nigerian oil industry continues to be marred by corruption. The recent investigation by Nigeria's House of Representatives revealed a possible theft of about 1.492 billion oil barrels between 2011 and 2014, allegedly perpetrated by the Nigerian National Petroleum Cooperation (NNPC) along with some international collaborators. The fallout from this is a capital flight amounting to between \$15bn and \$17bn traceable to about 51 countries including the USA, China and Norway (see Ovuakporie, 2017). In addition to these, the country still gropes under the bleeding from tax holidays guaranteed under the 1990 NLNG Act, which it concedes to multinational corporations⁵⁹ amounting to around \$3.3bn. This covers a period of 12 years between 1999, when the NLNG started operations, and 2012, when it started to pay taxes (ActionAid, 2016, pp. 8-9). These instances validate the proposition of dependency theorists that national elites are as culpable as their international collaborators in the underdevelopment of their countries due to mutual benefits from liberal capitalism (Ferraro, 1996).

Thus, despite Nigeria being the highest producer of oil in Africa and the 6th highest in the world⁶⁰ in the recent past, the challenge of corruption has perpetually kept a significant part of its population unemployed, underemployed and poor. The National Bureau of Statistics in June 2016 reported that about 28.58 million of the labour force (between 15 and 64 years encapsulating about 108.59 million people) remain either underemployed or unemployed. Majority of these belong to the youth population between the ages of 15 and 34. The World Bank also reported an increase in the population living below the poverty line from 49.4% in 2015 to 50.2% in 2016, resulting from a steadily growing population and reduced GDP growth rate (Joseph-Raji and Timmis, 2017). Similarly, the figure of people living in extreme poverty is reportedly about 110 million (ActionAid, 2016, p. 4).

Consequently, the sustainability of Nigeria's dependence on oil for 90% of its foreign income and two-thirds of government revenue has contemporaneously been tested by economic recession resulting from the plummeting of global oil prices and the reduction in outputs linked to the resurgence of militancy in the Niger Delta. This led the federal government to propose diversifying the economy through an economic recovery plan that included improving on power generation and transportation to boost the agricultural and manufacturing sectors (Mbachu, 2017). Nonetheless, the attempt at curing Nigeria's Dutch disease has

⁵⁹ These include Royal Dutch Shell, Total and ENI who form part of the Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) Consortium.

⁶⁰ Big Story: Origin of Militancy, Oil & Gas Vandalism in the Niger Delta Part 1.

remained at the level of lip service with the government heavily investing in the search for crude oil in the Northeast. The timing of the search, however, seems questionable when one considers the attempts by nations in Europe and Asia to phase out the demand for fossil fuel by placing bans on the production and sale of petrol vehicles to curb air pollution. What is more, contrary to allowing the private sector driven exploration initiative, as was the case in the Niger-Delta, Anambra and Dahomey Basins, the NNPC led what many regard as a politically-motivated oil search in the Northeast (Alike, 2017), in what could be referred to as the continuation of Nigeria's mono-economic oil dependency.

This study is thus designed to explore the ethno-political motivations for the unending mono-economic oil dependency in Nigeria, even as the government contends with the Boko Haram insurgents in the struggle for territoriality within the oil economy. This is so much so that the Boko Haram quest for territorial dominance within the present context is gradually drifting away from the creation of the caliphate to the control of oil-rich areas within the region. Data for the study was generated during four months of fieldwork between April and September 2017 in Abuja, Bayelsa, Borno and Yobe which included interviews with geologists, indigenes, internally displaced persons, members of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) and Operation Lafiya Dole. It also made use of related extant literature and videos recordings of interviews and documentaries. The study is divided into four sections with the first contextualizing Nigeria's unchanging oil dependency while the second details the historical linkages between oil and conflicts in Nigeria. The third explores the changing dynamics of the Boko Haram insurgency with the oil exploration activities in the Northeast by unpacking the implication of oil discovery and exploration for the Northeast as it transits into a post-insurgency context. The study concludes by projecting the need to drift away from an oil-dependent economy in preparing the country for the paradigmatic shift in energy generation in the coming decades.

Oil Dependency and Ecological Challenges: Nigeria's Niger Delta Context as a Prelude to the Boko Haram Insurgency

Apart from the political adoption of opacity as a governing principle in Nigeria's oil industry (See Klieman, 2012), the sector had also impacted on the ethno-political context of the country since oil was discovered in Otuabagiri⁶¹ - a community under the Oloibiri district populated by the Ogbia people - in 1956. An example of this is the ongoing indigene/settler court case (as of 31 October 2017) on land ownership between the indigenes of Oloibiri and the Ogbia. The claim to have

61 Otuabagiri is about 1.6 km from Oloibiri and there are contentions that the farmlands surrounding the oil well labeled Oloibiri Oil Well belongs to the Otuabagiri people. Nonetheless, the post-colonial contradictions of the validity of legal documentation makes it a bit difficult for the Otuabagiri to prove this claim.

been the original settlers in Otuabagiri, a position being contested by the latter.⁶² While opacity was mutually beneficial to both government officials (who became less accountable to the Nigerian public) and the multinationals (who were able to better manage their global supply) (See Klieman, 2012), the corruption which it bred negated the gains of the boom period as it became institutionalized under recurring military regimes in the country. The inherent contradictory effects of corruption within the Nigerian populace was succinctly captured by Odularu (2008, p.7) who noted that ‘the middle class produced by the oil boom of the 1970s gradually became disenchanting in the 1980s, and rebellious in the 1990s,’ and I dare say non-existent from the 2000s.

It is important to note that the disenchantment with the management of Nigeria’s oil sector predates the 1970s with initial agitations led by Isaac Adaka Boro (see Courson, 2007, p.11) as the reality of neglect of the main resource generating communities by the Nigerian government became too much of a burden to its inhabitants. As critics of the modernization theory proposed, the restriction of the poor to the periphery of developmental initiatives destabilizes the structures of socio-economic relations through an oversimplified linear projection of development (see Matunhu, 2011). These relations are worsened if the impoverished communities are indigenous to areas from which national resources are sourced, as the Niger Delta context reflects. While dependency theory projects different layers of power and control at national, metropolitan and individual levels - as the poor continually depend on the rich in economic, political and cultural terms (see Matunhu, 2011, pp. 68-69), Nigeria’s perpetual dependence on oil inverts the reliance curve in confirming that the sustenance of ‘dominant’ national elites is heavily dependent on the wealth of naturally endowed low-end minority communities.

A shift in emphasis of this reliance is very important in understanding the context of the struggle for resource control by actors in Nigeria’s Niger Delta. This is because it repositions simplistic narratives of the reversal of environmental degradation as fundamental to stemming the tides of pipeline vandalism and oil theft by locals in the region. As Akpabio and Akpan (2010, pp. 117-121) reflected in their study, the political suppression of dissenting voices by successive governments, the centralization of land ownership through the 1978 Land Use Decree, continuous environmental degradation and water pollution, and meagre allocation of ecological funds to the region form a complex of leading causes of underdevelopment in the Niger Delta; this, in spite of the creation of dedicated government agencies for the development of the region by successive governments.⁶³ The ethno-politics of the resource derivation principle in Nigeria,

⁶² Interview with a community leader in Otuabagiri, 31 October 2017.

⁶³ The Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) was created in 1960, before the oil boom, at the recommendation of the Sir Henry Willink’s Commission; and subsequently the River Basin Development Authority, the Oil Mineral Producing Area

as Eghweree (2014, p. 76) stated, is extant in the manipulation of revenue allocation by the dominant ethnic groups. To be specific, revenue allocation shifted from the 50% allocation to the three regions before oil discovery⁶⁴ to a gradual decrease of 25%, and then 1.5% during the military regimes of the 1980s. It, subsequently, never recovered beyond the 13% derivation formula which has been the status quo since 1999. Thus, the ethno-politicization of the compensatory principle by rent-seeking political elites bred corruption and thwarted developmental goals, especially in the Niger Delta region, which suffers from the continuous oil exploration activities (see Eghweree, 2014, p. 78).

As such, within ecological considerations, the region once described by Lord Lugard as ‘one of the wealthiest palm areas in Africa’ with rich vegetation, continues to suffer from environmental degradation, depletion of biodiversity, noise pollution and wastewater pollution, dating back to 1958 when oil exploration activities started in the area (Nworu, 2017, pp. 32-33). Nworu (2017, p. 34) similarly observed that the extensive but poorly maintained pipeline networks, flow stations and wellheads within communities in the Niger Delta remain causes of conflicts between the oil companies and indigenes, as leakages contaminate the soil and water bodies with petroleum waste streams.⁶⁵ There is also the challenge of gas flaring, which, apart from being a waste of an alternative source of energy generation, is detrimental to the COP21 dream of environmental conservation due to the daily emission of carbon from the activities of the oil companies. Oil exploration activities have also resulted in erosion due to shipping activities and the ‘canalization of salt water into fresh water’ (Courson, 2007).

The history of oil exploration in the Niger Delta has also been intertwined with the reactions against the fallout of environmental degradation from activists who have, in recent times, been branded militants. Their agitations against the Nigerian nation came to prominence on 23 February 1966, when Major Isaac Adaka Boro at age 27 led a group of 150 men to form the Niger Delta Volunteer Service (DVS).⁶⁶ The group set out to paralyze government activities for twelve days and declare the Niger Delta Peoples Republic (NDPR) (see Gab, 2011; Courson, 2007).

Since Boro, the relationship between the Nigerian state and conscious leaders of thought in South-South communities have strained to the level which Nkpah

Development Commission (OMPADEC) and the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) were respectively created.

64 61 The economy during this period depended on cocoa, palm oil and groundnut produced by the Western, Eastern and Northern regions predominated with members of the Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa extractions respectively (see Akpabio and Akpan 2010).

65 A study by the Commission of Nobel Laureates on Peace, Equity and Development (including Nigeria’s Wole Soyinka) reported in 2006 that about 4,000 oils spills had been witnessed in the region since the 1960s (See Courson 2007).

66 Some refer to the group as the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF), a name which was adopted after its resuscitation by Asari Dokubo in 2003.

(2011) described as ‘plasticity,’ whereby the social conditions imposed on the environment have necessitated the recourse to arms to press home demands. Niger Delta agitations have since been spearheaded by notable figures like Ken Saro Wiwa (leader of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People - MOSOP),⁶⁷ Alex Priye (commander of the Egbesu Boys), Tom Ateke (leader of the Niger Delta Vigilante) Asari Dokubo (the second president of the Ijaw Youth Council) and government Ekpemupolo Tompolo and Government Ekpemupolo Tompolo (a commander of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, who championed the amnesty process). These actors have often acted in coalition with other groups in the region to press home their demands. The major groups include The Aroma Militants, Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), Movement for the Survival of the Ijaw Ethnic Nationality in the Niger Delta (MOSIEND), the Egbesu Boys of Africa (EBA), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), and more recently the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA); all advocating, basically, for resource control and self-determination (Courson, 2007, p. 23).

One of the most referenced documentation of their demands is the 1998 Kaiama Declaration issued by Ijaw youths from over 500 communities containing 10 major resolutions. The resolutions included their claims to ownership of land in Ijaw communities, demilitarization of Ijawland, withdrawal of oil companies from Ijawland, self-determination and the call for a sovereign national conference to negotiate a democratic federation in Nigeria.⁶⁸ The strategies of the activist groups to press home their demands have included blowing up of oil pipelines and hostage-taking. Their agitations have nonetheless had some challenges, for as Tantua and Kamruzzaman (2016) proposed, certain outcomes of negotiations between leaders of the groups and the Government/multinational companies reveal motivations of self –enrichment, a deviation from the foundational motives of self-determination and resource control. This is often worsened by the tendency of some Niger Delta indigenes to exonerate their political leaders of wrongdoing due to reasons hinged on their oppression by the Nigerian state, as exemplified in the cult hero status enjoyed by convicted ex-governors Diepreye Alamieyeseigha and James Ibori after serving terms for corruption.

Government response to the agitations has been a blend of carrot and stick approach with more of the latter through repressive policies of militarizing the oil communities (the latest of which is the October 2017 Operation Crocodile Smile II) which resulted in ‘extra-judicial killings, disappearances, state-orchestrated

⁶⁷ 64 The status of Ken Saro Wiwa as a hero of the struggle remains controversial as Kukah (2011) details in his account of the intervention of the Human Rights Violation Investigation Commission (HRVIC) in the crises between the Ogoni 9 (Ken Saro Wiwa faction) and the Ogoni 4 families. His group – MOSOP, however, launched the Ogoni Bill of Rights in October, 1990 to advocate for the Niger Delta cause (see Dibua 2005).

⁶⁸ See The Kaiama Declaration. Being a Communique issued at the End of the All Ijaw Youths Conference which was held in Kaiama on 11 December 1998. <http://www.unitedijaw.com/kaiama.htm> [Accessed on 5 November 2017].

communal conflicts...’ and the destruction of communities such as Odi in 1999 and Odioma in 2005 (Courson, 2005). On the other hand, soft approaches by the federal government include the commissioning of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to conduct an assessment of the environmental and public health impacts of oil contamination in Ogoniland in 2006. The 2-year study confirmed the hydrocarbon pollution of soil, air, groundwater, aquatic life and vegetation, and the destruction wrecked by unintended fire outbreaks due to oil spillage. All these had negative effects on the public health of residents; even as institutional challenges have continuously thwarted previous attempts at cleaning up the environment (United Nations Environment Programme, 2011). Based on a 30-year recommendation plan by UNEP, the federal government (under an Ijaw President Goodluck Jonathan) established the Hydrocarbon Pollution Restoration Project (HYREP) which was dysfunctional, leading to a probe by the Senate in November 2013 (see Shoraka and Okoro, 2014). Expectations were however higher when the Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo formally launched the Ogoni Clean-up Project in June 2016, in line with UNEP’s recommendations. However, a year after the launch of the Ogoni clean up by the federal government, there have been no improvements in the communities as ‘the oil slicks which blackened the waters, killed the fish and ruined the mangroves remain untouched’ (Agoi, 2017). In the same vein, the approach of tokenism adopted by Shell has been criticized by Amnesty International (2015, p. 15) as its bio-remediation project has proven to be ill-suited to the ecology of the region.⁶⁹

As of 3 November 2017, the Niger Delta Avengers had called off the ceasefire between them and the federal government reached in August 2016. Distrust was a major factor for this as the failure by some Niger Delta leaders and the federal government to abide by the terms of the agreement in finding lasting developmental solutions to the challenges from oil exploration in the Niger Delta led to the resumption of hostilities (Addeh, 2017). The Avengers, whose known signatory is Brig. Gen. Murdoch Agbinibo, came to the limelight in March 2016 after blowing up oil and gas facilities in the region during what they tagged ‘Operation Red Economy’. Their major demands encapsulated the immediate implementation of the 2014 national conference report, 60% ownership of the oil blocks by indigenes of the Niger Delta, take-off of the Nigerian Maritime University, reinstatement of the suspended amnesty programme and immediate release of the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) – Nnamdi Kanu.⁷⁰ The pronouncement by the Avengers has led to another twist as a Coalition of Niger Delta Militants on 4 November 2017, announced the resumption of ‘Operation No

⁶⁹ This is also known as remediation by enhanced natural attenuation (RENA) which involves the breaking down or dispersal of hydrocarbons through natural processes (evaporation or microbial degradation) (see Amnesty International 2015).

⁷⁰ See Everything You need to understand the Niger Delta Avengers And their Quest for Secession. <http://venturesafrica.com/everything-about-the-niger-delta-avengers-so-far-and-their-quest-for-secession/> [Accessed [Accessed on 5 November 2017].

Mercy' in consonance with the Avengers to ground all oil exploration activities in the region, as a reaction to the perceived threat of 'Operation Crocodile Smile II' by the government instead of expected investments in the development of the region (Nwachukwu, 2017).

The management of the oil and gas sector in Nigeria has also not been very efficient. As Odularu (2008, p. 9) observed, there are four refineries in the country which include two refineries in Port Harcourt, and one each in Warri and Kaduna. Nonetheless, all four are underutilized with poor maintenance of their facilities. As it stands, refineries which could produce a total of 445,000 bpd to cater for the nation's domestic needs reportedly operated between 11.69 and 25.52% capacity between January and September 2014 (Stakeholder Democracy Network, 2015). With this as the status quo, the Nigerian nation is inevitably dependent on the importation of refined crude oil products, even as the government continues to divert funds to subsidize the refined products at the expense of other capital projects. While there have been varied arguments on the pros and cons of subsidy (see The Centre for Public Policy Alternatives (CPPA), 2012, pp. 47-55), the controversy lingers on because of the underlying distrust of political actors, whose corrupt practices are yet to be adequately addressed. Suffice it to state that herein lies the need to revisit the argument on the policy and procedures for subsidizing fuel importation which advocates the adoption of incentives that grow other sectors of the economy rather than monetary compensation. As it stands, the underutilization of local content in the refinement and importation of oil (with the NNPC being only a part player in the latter) prevents an impactful subsidy regime within the Nigerian economy, especially if one considers the allegations of the diversion of petroleum to neighbouring countries.

Boko Haram, Territoriality and Nigeria's Oil Dependency

Drawing from the mismanagement of Nigeria's oil economy, one of the major reasons adduced for the emergence of the group Jama'atu Ahlis-Sunnah Lidda'awatti Wal Jihad,⁷¹ popularly referred to as Boko Haram, is the need to restructure the Nigerian political space by ridding it of corrupt actors and instituting a Sharia State (Walker, 2012). As such, corruption's outcome of high-level poverty and deprivation in Northern Nigeria, which as scholars argue, is among the highest in the country, is a major socio-economic factor underlying the sect's emergence (see Walker, 2012, pp. 13-14; Mohammed, 2014). The phases of its operations have been categorized into three overlapping periods by Mohammed (2014, p. 10). The first is the Kanama phase (2003⁷² -2005) which entailed a confrontation of the Nigerian state by a jihadi group led by

71 The group describes itself by this name meaning 'People committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad' giving a fundamentally religious background to its cause.

72 Some interviewees maintain that the group was founded in 2002 (Interviews conducted in Maiduguri, April 2017).

Mohammed Ali; the second is the proselytization (dawah) phase (2005-2009) during which its leader, Mohammed Yusuf, broadened its membership base through his charismatic preaching, by engaging in debates on the propriety of western influence (education) and the extravagant lifestyle of political elites amidst an impoverished population; and the post-Yusuf Phase (from 2009) during which its strategies became those of asymmetric warfare, after the killing of Mohammed Yusuf.⁷³ From then on, it began targeted assassinations, shootings, suicide bombings, deployment of improvised explosive devices, kidnapping and hostage-taking under a new leader, Abubakar Shekau (Mohammed, 2014, p. 9). While there have been sporadic attacks in the Federal Capital Territory - Abuja and some other states in the North, the Northeast region has been the most affected with concentration on Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States. Within the Lake Chad Basin, the neighbouring countries of Chad, Niger and Cameroon have also had to curtail and counter attacks from the sect, as what was initially regarded as an issue of Nigeria's internal security ⁷⁴led to the formation of a Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF).⁷⁵ At a point in early 2015, the Boko Haram reportedly controlled territories within the Northeast while it pledged allegiance to the Islamic State on 7 March 2015 (Blanchard and Husted, 2016). It had continued its activities on a regional basis with resurgent attacks recorded in Northern Cameroon, Niger's Diffa region and the border communities of Chad (UN Security Council, 2017). The Global Terrorism Index for 2016 reflected that the weakening of Boko Haram through counter-insurgency measures in Nigeria has resulted in the upsurge of its impacts on Chad, Niger and Cameroon with casualties in these countries rising by 157% in 2015. Despite the weakening of its activities, Boko Haram was still the second deadliest group responsible for 5,478 deaths in 5 of the 20 most fatal terrorist attacks of 2015, only surpassed by ISIL (see Institute for Economics & Peace, 2017).

Ahmed (2014) observed that the changing climatic conditions, which led to the displacement of a poverty-ridden population in search for a means of livelihood, also facilitated the recruitment of Boko Haram foot soldiers drawn from a population that boasts of high rates of illiteracy and illness, with about 70% living below the poverty line, i.e. on less than a dollar a day. The study by Chouin, Reinert and Aparad (2014, p. 234), based on the Nigeria Watch database, revealed an intra-religious contradiction that the civilian casualties of Boko

73 While there have been indications that the death of Yusuf was accidental, some interviewees maintain that the death is likely linked with the distrust that justice will not be served after the police were instructed to relocate him from Maiduguri to Abuja, Nigeria's Capital. Aisha Wakil, known as Mama Boko Haram in a video confirmed that the initial victimization and killing of young Boko Haram members, based on refusal to use helmet (albeit without proper sensitization by government), alongside the refusal of the government to apologize to them, were responsible for their transformation from being Yusufians - followers of Mohammed Yusuf - into a violent group. See Mama Boko Haram, Aisha Wakil Explains Her Relationship with Boko Haram | Pulse TV Exclusive. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gb6G4y_ZTAK [Accessed 5 November 2017].

74 Nigeria had reportedly rejected the involvement of the Security Council until 2014 when it intervened, as Nigeria failed to contain the violence within its borders.

75 The Multinational Joint Task Force comprises member countries of the Lake Chad Basin and Benin Republic.

Haram constituted about 62% with the majority of the victims being Muslims. This finding further advances the position on the need to explore alternatives to the underlining inter-religious arguments which are usually employed as the basis for the radicalization of potential members to attack non-Muslims. While it is important to note the diversity within Islam itself as a religion, as exemplified in the historical Sunni – Shiite conflicts; the Shiites have been targeted by Boko Haram fighters who regard their practices as ‘deviating from the true teachings of Islam’. Some Shiite members, however, consider the Boko Haram sect as a political construct of the corrupt Nigerian elites, which was created to distract Nigerians from fighting for their socio-political rights. For them, they (the Shiites) are victims of the conspiracy of the political elites who continue to persecute them because of the call on their members and ordinary Nigerian citizens to fight for their socio-political rights. The Boko Haram is thus one of the government’s machinations to achieve this.⁷⁶

While operations in the Lake Chad region concretely confirmed the international links of Boko Haram to groups beyond the Maghreb⁷⁷, it was the kidnapping of over 200 Chibok girls⁷⁸ that gathered the much needed international momentum through the #BringBackOurGirls (BBOG) campaign. This instance is one of the many that unravelled the links between terrorism, gender, theft and slavery within the dynamics of Boko Harams’ operational strategy. As an assertion of the group’s rejection of western education, the girls were kidnapped from the Government Secondary School in Chibok during the night of 14 April 2014; in what was recently revealed as an unintended consequence of a botched robbery operation by members of the sect.⁷⁹ Since their abduction, the federal government, in collaboration with security agencies, the military, the Switzerland Embassy and the International Committee of the Red Cross, has been able to secure their release in batches of 21 (October 2016) and 82 (May 2017) respectively, while the conditions of about 113 still held hostage are shrouded in mystery (Tukur, 2017). From the gender perspective, while the Chibok girls have had sufficient campaigns based on the BBOG advocacy, the abduction of 10 middle-aged women in a military/police convoy in June 2017 indicates the indiscriminate targeting of females by the Boko Haram, with several clearance operations by the military leading to the release of thousands of others held in their captivity.⁸⁰ Females, especially young girls, remain primary targets for abduction with the

76 Interview with Hussein, 5 October 2017. Hussein pointed at the continuous detention of their leader, Sheik Ibrahim El Zakkaky against court orders to support his claims.

77 A video was released in French targeted at the Cameroonian forces and President Paul Biya on 1 April 2017.

78 The figures of the kidnapped girls have ranged between 219 and 300 according to various reports.

79 See Our Kidnap by Boko Haram in 2014 Accidental – Chibok girls. Punch, Friday 18 August 2017. <http://punchng.com/our-kidnap-by-bharam-in-2014-accidental-chibok-girls/> [Accessed 15 November 2017].

80 Interview with a military officer under Operation Lafiya Dole (Peace by force) on 25 July 2017.

latest being the kidnap of about over 60⁸¹ school girls from Government Girls Science and Technical School, Dapchi, Yobe State on the night of 19 February 2018, almost four years after the kidnap of the Chibok girls (see Haruna, 2018). While the government was able to negotiate the return of the survivors back to Dapchi on 21 March 2018, the only Christian girl among them, Leah Sharibu, was not released, reportedly for refusing to renounce her faith.

The September 2017 Monthly Forecast of the Security Council documented that the resurgence in Boko Haram attacks were characterized by the feminization of the attacks with about 60 female suicide bombers involved in Borno State alone between June and July 2017 (UN Security Council, 2017). Interviews with some rescued victims confirmed that women have been utilized as spies both for the Boko Haram and federal agents before their operations, since they are not easily identified with any of the groups. This role further made them vulnerable to attacks from both sides depending on who was suspecting them.⁸² Interviewees from Magomeri (Yobe State) and Maiduguri Municipal Council confirmed that beyond the sect, these women and girls also suffer abuses from federal security agents, members of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF)⁸³, civil servants and camp officials – who demand sex for food - in the three states.⁸⁴ The abuse is not restricted to Nigeria as it was also reported that in Cameroon, there are discrimination, police violence and pre-trial detention of children linked with the Boko Haram sect; while displaced women and girls remain susceptible to forced marriages, sexual violence, forced prostitution and abduction by the sect across the Lake Chad region (UN Security Council, 2017).

Concerning the federal government's counter-insurgency measures, women have continued to perform minimal combatant roles in the fight against Boko Haram in the military, CJTF and other federal security agencies. In spite of this, there have been accolades for the outstanding contributions of 38 year old Aisha Bakari Gombi, also known as the 'Queen Hunter', who controls a group of between 15 and 30 men hunters collaborating with the military in countering Boko Haram attacks, which have so far affected about 14.8 million Nigerians (Collyer, 2017; Amnesty International, 2017). One other influential woman is Aisha Wakil known as "Mama Boko Haram", who is a collaborator with the National Human Rights Commission in helping to manage the insurgency context. Aisha is an Igbo lady from Enugu in the Southeast who embraced Islam because of her husband and has a referent power on both Boko Haram members and Nigerian soldiers. As

81 The figures projected are between 67 and 111 school girls as at 24 February 2018.

82 Interviews with Aisha, Bintu and Saudatu from Maiduguri IDP Camp, 22 October 2017.

83 As a child of necessity, the CJTF evolved in Maiduguri in 2013, with Cameroon and Chad initiating the Comites de Vigilance as its equivalence in 2014 and 2015 respectively. It constitutes civilian volunteers who provide support to the military with local surveillance, while also engaging in combat with the Boko Haram.

84 Interview with Aisha in Magomeri, 5 April 2017; Interview with Bilkis in Maiduguri, 6 June 2017.

such, she has been a central figure in the negotiations between the group and the government,⁸⁵ while also running an NGO known as Complete Care and Aid Foundation, Maiduguri, Borno State. On 24 December 2015, the successes recorded by the collaborations led the Nigerian government to announce the ‘technical’ defeat of Boko Haram even though this claim is continually met with criticism and scepticism in the court of public opinion.

The response of state agents through massacres, extra-judicial killings, incommunicado detention, torture, enforced disappearances and arbitrary arrests without trials have remained a major challenge of to the management of the Boko Haram insurgency leading to a lot of distrust of the agents by community members (Perouse de Montclos, 2014; Amnesty International, 2017). This is similar to the Niger Delta case discussed above as federal agents remain perceived threats in some of the communities they are meant to protect. Nonetheless, there have also been some soft approaches adopted by the government which entailed negotiation as in the case mentioned above of the Chibok girls. The federal government, for instance, has had to trade concessions, including the release of 5 Boko Haram commanders in exchange for 82 of the Chibok school girls. The effectiveness of this negotiating strategy, however, remains to be tested, especially with renewed threats to bomb communities and the Federal Capital Territory in a video by the freed commanders on 12 May 2017.

What is more, while the commanders returned unscathed, some of the schoolgirls have suffered from sexual abuse which sometimes resulted in having babies for their abusers. A more effective approach may be the federal government endorsed military initiative by 11 senior military officers tagged Operation Safe Corridor. This initiative is currently implemented as a post-demobilization multi-agency 16-week model of de-radicalization, rehabilitation and reintegration of surrendered ex Boko Haram fighters indicating a form of amnesty.⁸⁶ While amnesty has proven to be an effective measure only to some extent in the Niger Delta (especially with some implementation challenges), the complexities involved in negotiating with a fractionalized Boko Haram infers a different context. One reason for this is that the resurgence in the Boko Haram attacks have led to vehement criticisms of the amnesty initiative by traumatized communities who complain that they are being neglected to take care of the perpetrators of violence.

In a video released by Boko Haram after the kidnap of some staff members of the University of Maiduguri while on oil prospecting activities, the spokesperson of the abductees, Dr. Solomon Yusuf, criticized the combative approach of the federal government in dealing with the sect while admonishing for an alternative

⁸⁵ See Mama Boko Haram, Aisha Wakil Explains Her Relationship with Boko Haram.

⁸⁶ See Mama Boko Haram, Aisha Wakil Explains Her Relationship with Boko Haram.

approach. In his words:

...I want to call the attention of the Acting President; that we have seen the route we took, up to this position where we are recording this video right now. I want to advise that, the use of excessive force, it is not the solution... and it's not the solution. We want to call on the federal government, to meet these demands, as promised, they would release us immediately...

The revelation from the video may have informed the strategy of the federal government in negotiating for their release.

Previously in December 2016, the Ministry of Petroleum confirmed the discovery of oil in Borno and Lagos while presenting the 2016 petroleum scorecard.⁸⁷ By mid-May 2017, the NNPC gave a six-week notice for the commencement of oil exploration activities in the recovered territories of Lake Chad, while intimating that it was already deploying exploration equipment to the area after getting clearance from the military. The proposed expansion of the scope of NNPC's operation was to enable it meet a target of growing the crude oil reserves from 37 billion to 40 billion barrels (Haruna, 2017; Udo, 2017). With the benefit of hindsight, it is important to reconsider the reasoning behind the announcement owing to the volatile nature of the region, especially as this may have been the trigger for the Boko Haram attack which followed about two months after. Precisely on 25 July 2017, the Boko Haram ambushed an oil exploration team comprising experts from the NNPC and Geological Department of the University of Maiduguri near Jibi Village in Gubio Local Government Area of Borno State. The incident recorded the death of about 50 persons including members of the Nigerian Army, CJTF, and others, while some undisclosed number of persons were abducted (UN Security Council, 2017; Udo, 2017). The Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, however, insisted that appropriate security cover was given to the team with 200 security personnel including members of the military and the CJTF, with the latter's familiarity with the terrain supposedly an added advantage for reliable intelligence (Udo, 2017).

Conversely, an interview with a security expert questioned the securitization approach owing to the nature of the ambush, which indicated that a proper threat assessment was not done before the oil exploration activity began. According to Idris,

You cannot talk about emergency in security operations. The manner in which those guys were ambushed puts a question mark on the threat assessment before the operation; that is, if it was done at all. For instance, a proper scoping of the area would have revealed the risks of the road trip.

⁸⁷ See FG Confirms Discovery of Crude Oil in Borno. Nigerian Bulletin. Accessed from <https://www.nigerianbulletin.com/threads/fg-confirms-discovery-of-crude-oil-in-borno.229076/> on 6 November 2017.

Then you realize there is the alternative of airlifting the team. At least some NNPC staff visit locations with the helicopter...that would have made the ambush almost impossible. At least, until now, Boko Haram is not known to deploy anti-aircraft missiles...⁸⁸

Murphy (2017) specifically highlighted three key areas which differentiated this particular attack from the others in terms of territoriality, sophistication and resource control. Firstly, it was a major confrontational attack different from the hit and run approach - preferentially adopted by a weakened Boko Haram, to assert territorial control of the insurgents. Secondly, there was a display of sophisticated weaponry and sufficient territorial intelligence, and lastly, the creation of a caliphate had faded in recent Boko Haram rhetoric thus insinuating deeper motives beyond religious considerations. Interviews with a security agent in Maiduguri confirmed allegations that oil had been a major factor in the sustenance of the Boko Haram group as they are allegedly involved in oil bunkering across the Lake Chad basin.⁸⁹

The debate on the weakness of Boko Haram due to its fractionalization⁹⁰ assumed another dimension with the recorded successes against ISIL in Iraq and Syria. The relocation of the group to the troubled North African region has been projected, with some of its high ranking members already sighted in Libya during the first quarter of 2017, including Abu Luqman who controlled the Emni, ISIL's intelligence outfit (Almohammad and Speckhard, 2017). This aligns with SBM Intelligence (2016) prediction that Libya and Niger would be the new stronghold of ISIL in the bid to reinvent themselves by taking control of the Islamic State of the West African Province (ISWAP). The implication of this is the reinforcement of territoriality; more so, with the benefit of better technical expertise to further strengthen the hold on the region; even as the prospects of oil exploration provides the needed incentives. Thus, territoriality will be a prime factor for Boko Haram's strategy, even if early signs indicate its further fractionalization. Scholars like Jeremy Keenan posited that the earlier consolidation of Al Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) had targeted expansion to oil-rich regions, including countries such as Algeria, Chad, and Nigeria by giving militants technical training (Ahmed, 2014). With the allegation of a western conspiracy of inaction in curbing Algeria's influence on terrorism in the region - based on the protection of its energy interests (Ahmed, 2014), the additional presence of ISIL may begin a new phase of terrorism in which the civilian population would again be major casualties of the oil curse. With a possibility of a centralized influence of the AQIM on the

88 Interview with Idris, 4 October 2017.

89 Interview with Adamu, 6 October 2017

90 The 2016 appointment of Abu Musab Al Barnawi as the New Leader of the Islamic State of West African Province (ISWAP) by ISIL through Al Naba – an online magazine - and the subsequent antagonism between him and Abubakar Shekau, have been extant features of internal frictions between the sects

Niger Delta Militants and Boko Haram, the initial fear of the Boko Haram taking over oil infrastructure in Nigeria (see Foreman, 2017) will become validated since there is the possibility of them operating beyond the Northeast.

While the events that led to the ambush remain under classified information by the Nigerian military, the testimonies of three of the abductees which were recorded in an edited 3:25 minutes video⁹¹ released on 28 July 2017 indicates a possible strategy for dealing with them. All three were staff of the University of Maiduguri⁹² - two lecturers from the department of geology and a driver. Therein, they confirmed that they had been abducted by the faction of Abu Musab Al Barnawi. This confirmed the separation of operations between the two Boko Haram factions either led by Abukakar Shekau or Al Barnawi. The latter was presented as the spokesman of Boko Haram in January 2015, before the Islamic State adopted him as the new leader of the Islamic State of the West African Province (ISWAP) in August 2016.⁹³ He has been overtly critical of Shekau while condemning his indiscriminate attacks on Muslim targets including members of the sect, and his self-opinionated interpretation of the Holy Quran.⁹⁴

His calm demeanour in speeches confirmed an important point of the video, which was the willingness of his faction to negotiate with the government as they reportedly promised to release the abductees, and more importantly, to allow them continue their exploration activities in the region. While the demands of this Boko Haram faction were not confirmed, the desire to pursue the creation of a caliphate may not be one of its ambitions if it conceded to allowing activities that would boost the nation's economy.

Consequently, the kidnap led to the suspension of oil exploration activities in the region until there is security clearance to resume activities around Gubia Nugumeri, Mungono, Kukawa, Abdam, Guzamala and Mobar areas in Borno State (Udo, 2017). On 29 October 2017, Governor Kashim Shetimma of Borno State maintained that talks were ongoing to free the hostages kidnapped during the geological survey. He, however, mentioned the need to refrain from further comments in order not to jeopardize the lives of the kidnapped men.⁹⁵ After about eight months, precisely on 10 February 2018, the Presidency released a

91 See Boko Haram Releases Video of abducted UNIMAID Workers. <https://www.channelstv.com/2017/07/28/breaking-boko-haram-releases-video-abducted-unimaid-workers/> [Accessed 8 November 2017].

92 Four persons were reportedly abducted and one died from injuries sustained during the attacks [Interview with Idris, 4 October 2017]. The abductees identified as Yusuf Ibrahim, Solomon Yusuf and Haruna in the video.

93 See Boko Haram in Nigeria: Abu Musab Al-Barnawi named as New Leader. BBC News, 3 August 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-36963711> [Accessed 8 November 2017]. The name ISWAP had been adopted while Abubakar Shekau pledged allegiance to ISIL in 2015.

94 See New Boko Haram Leader, Al-Barnawi, accuses Abubakar Shekau of killing Fellow Muslims, living in Luxury. Sahara Reporters, 5 August 2016 <http://saharareporters.com/2016/08/05/new-boko-haram-leader-al-barnawi-accuses-abubakar-shekau-killing-fellow-muslims-living> [Accessed 8 November 2017].

95 Interview on Channels Television on 29 October 2017.

statement that the three men have been released alongside ten policewomen who had earlier been abducted through the facilitation of the ICRC after negotiations (Olowolagba, 2018). In spite of this remarkable success, the amount of money paid for ransom – purportedly running into millions of dollars, though unofficially disclosed, has led to questions on whether the Boko Haram’s financial base has not been strengthened to the detriment of the bid to end the insurgency. Beyond this is the fact of whether the government would have been willing to pay so much if oil was not involved. Finally, the ethical compliance of the exchange remains in question with allegations against the negotiators of turning victims into cash cows by making millions of dollars (see Ezimakor, 2018).

Nonetheless, the unending oil dependency of Nigeria’s mono-economy remains in spite of the projection of the 2018 budget that non-oil revenues, at 4.155 trillion Naira, would account for about half of a total expenditure of 8.6 trillion Naira.⁹⁶ A geophysicist - Aanu, in an interview, confirmed that the Ministry of Petroleum in 2008 commissioned the review of all sedimentary inland basins in Nigeria. This was because oil production in the Niger Delta witnessed a significant drop due to militancy.⁹⁷ This prospect of oil exploration beyond the Niger Delta is based on the fact that Nigeria has seven major inland sedimentary basins, namely: the Lake Chad, Niger Delta, Bida, Sokoto, Dahomey and Anambra Basins, and the Benue Trough.⁹⁸ The 2008 review, among other things, reflected that all the seven basins which are under-explored, have the potential to generate hydrocarbon as they contained cap rocks, reservoir rocks and the source rocks; they also had structural traps, which allowed for the formation of a petroleum reservoir.⁹⁹ As regards the Lake Chad Basin, the researchers found traces of oil exploration between the late 1970s and the 1980s during which about 23 oil wells were drilled. These were later abandoned on the infrastructural ground that the roads were inaccessible and there was no oil in the area.

Nonetheless, Aanu continued, the geophysicists commissioned to re-evaluate the area discovered that the initial geophysical surveys done were not detailed enough and the drilling was not deep enough for the depth required for oil discovery. The situation, however, was not improved when oil exploration activities resumed around 2009 in the area due to corruption. Some Chinese expatriates found on site confided that the drilling they embarked on in Borno was an exercise in futility as there were no indications that there was oil in that specific location. This is not to conclude that there is no oil in Nigeria’s axis of the Lake Chad

96 See Full Text of President Buhari’s 2018 Budget Speech. Accessed from <http://saharareporters.com/2017/11/07/full-text-president-buhari%E2%80%99s-2018-budget-speech> on 12 November 2017.

97 Interview with Aanu in Abuja, 4 October 2017.

98 See Geology and Petroleum Potentials of Nigeria Sedimentary Basins. Accessed from https://www.indigopool.com/nigeria/channel/pdf/GEOLOGY_OF_NIGERIA.pdf on 12 November 2017.

99 Interview with Aanu in Abuja, 4 October 2017.

basin but rather an elitist conspiracy to make some money off the government by drilling the wrong location. As their commissioned 2D regional survey showed, Aanu confirmed that there is oil in Bama, one of the worst-hit areas still under attacks by the Boko Haram. Also, the West Africa Rift System (WARS) shared with Chad and Niger indicates that Nigeria's Northeast could potentially produce oil in commercial quantity.

Beyond the Lake Chad Basin, the NNPC is also intensifying its efforts at prospecting for oil and gas exploration at the Sokoto Basin in the Northwest, with an initial completion of the interpretation of aeromagnetic data and geological survey of the area (Muhammad, 2017). This desperate oil search in other locations thus suggests that Nigeria's cure for its Dutch Disease is not yet in sight. With Alike (2017) corroborating the view that the search for oil in the North is politically motivated, it remains to be seen if the socio-economic and environmental conditions that breed oil-related conflicts are duly addressed to create a stable polity. For one, some observers maintain that oil discovery in the North may allow the political concession by northerners to the geographical separation of Nigeria since the North would then consider itself economically viable.

Conclusion: Amartya Sen's Capabilities' Approach and the Mitigation of Oil Dependency in Nigeria

The foregoing shows that Nigeria's mono-economic oil dependency has intricate complexities as the socio-economic challenge of inequality remains one of the major root causes of conflicts in the country, either in the Niger Delta or the Northeast. As such, while Williams (2017) advocates the need to deal decisively with allegations of the politicization of the Boko Haram insurgency (including that of the French support for Boko Haram in protecting its energy and economic interests in the Lake Chad region), care must be taken not to undermine the ideological dimension of the foot soldiers, especially the emotive contexts of people who are genuine adherents to the installation of the caliphate as a replacement for a 'corrupt Western socio-political order'. One major reason for their loyalty and easy recruitment, as reiterated during the fieldwork, is the promise and indeed experience of a better life under the rule of the caliphs. This further gives credence to the need to address the socio-economic base of poverty and inequality as root causes in the fight against the insurgency. As Aisha Wakil alluded, the reason why Yusuf Mohammed had referential power in Borno and acquired a large number of Yusufians was because he was able to minister to the socio-economic needs of the poor, who became susceptible to radicalization through a preaching that addressed the inequality they experienced. Also, interviews revealed that some women genuinely fell in love with Boko Haram

commandants after being abducted. These women openly assert that they had a better life while in Sambisa forest, and several of them even returned to the forest after initially being rescued.¹⁰⁰ More so, as the challenge of stigmatization of rescued abductees in local communities, including against children of unions between the Boko Haram and the abductees referred to as ‘Shekau,’ rages on.

With the reduction in the scope of operations of Boko Haram to some areas in Borno State (though with sporadic attacks at the outskirts of Adamawa and Yobe), there is need to create a sustainable de-escalation strategy that would create a platform for genuine reintegration of actors back into the local communities. As recommended by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2349, removing the root causes of terrorism in the Lake Chad region entails regional cooperation in combating ‘social, political, economic and gender inequalities,’ as well as environmental challenges. It is thus important to initiate the implementation of developmental blueprints, which in Nigeria’s case was identified as the ‘Buhari Plan’.¹⁰¹ Specifically, within the context of environmental challenges, care must be taken to manage the emerging context of the economic adventure of oil exploration in order to avoid replicating the challenges in the Niger Delta.

An important step in this direction is the prioritization of the advancement of human capabilities beyond the conventional human capital development as Amartya Sen advocated in his *Development as Freedom*. Sen’s (1999) summation on the mutuality of expanding the capabilities of individuals through public policy, and the determination of public policy through participatory capabilities, becomes relevant herein; especially as this could enhance socio-economic development. As he argues, prioritizing economic facilities, political freedoms, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and protective security within institutional frameworks is vital to building individual capabilities; and also guarantees the type of freedom, wherein individuals have the capabilities to do things which they have reason to value (Sen, 1999, p. 53, 56). Thus, a Senian approach to sustainable development in managing the post-insurgency context of Nigeria’s Northeast would go beyond the tokenism of meagre provision of relief items to developing a reconstruction and reintegration plan that guarantees viable

100 Interviews with IDPs in Maiduguri, 17 April 2017. Sambisa is a large expanse of land 60km Southeast of Maiduguri harboring Camp zero, the stronghold of Boko Haram.

101 The Buhari Plan is a document of four volumes released in June 2016 which lays out the blueprint for the redevelopment of the Northeast. This is to be overseen by the Presidential Committee on the Northeast Initiative (PCNI) and it entails the generations of livelihoods, infrastructural development, peacebuilding and provision of infrastructure amongst other things. See <https://pcni.gov.ng/the-buhari-plan/>.

social and economic conditions in the country. This is because, as Sen continued:

...through education, learning and skill formation, people can become much more productive over time, and this contributes greatly to the process of economic expansion... While economic prosperity helps people to have wider options and to lead more fulfilling lives, so do more education, better health care, finer medical attention, and other factors that causally influence the effective freedoms that people actually enjoy. These “social developments” must directly count as “developmental,” since they help us to lead longer, freer and more fruitful lives, in addition to the role they have in promoting productivity or economic growth or individual incomes. (Sen, 1999, p. 293, 295).

This implies re-humanizing a population that is currently undergoing unfreedom with reference to the quality of life they are living. As interviewees maintained, the current interventions in the Northeast by the government, development partners and civil society actors have led to a monetized social environment, which is adversely affecting the loyalty of the youths to cultural ethos. As such, there is the tendency for an average youth in Maiduguri to demand monetary compensation for tasks which would ordinarily have been performed pro bono (Sen (1999, pp. 296-7) on good. This is not likely to improve with the current trend of involving locals in Borno in oil exploration activities, taking a cue from the experience in the Niger Delta where the lack of social and environmental justice bred a mob of angry youths who adopted violent methods in seeking redress. Sen (1999, pp. 296-7) wrote about the importance of advancing the impacts of human capability beyond the economic to the socio-political in which public institutions are structured to enhance and sustain individual freedom. This is such that public policymakers are conscious of devising policies that promote and influence social and environmental responsibility. Thus, in maximizing the effectiveness of oil revenues that may accrue from the Northeast, it is important to have a morally responsible political class that will provide sustainable solutions to the age-long disagreements on revenue sharing formula, resource control and regional autonomy through an integrative social development agenda. This is a necessary step in ridding the country of endemic corruption.

With reference to environmental justice, Sen (1999, p. 269) advocated the need for environmental ethics to curb industrial pollution generated within the process of the provision of public goods, in which state control policies are juxtaposed with social values that induces a sense of responsibility from industrial actors. This is relevant within the projection of an oil economy in Nigeria’s Northeast; wherein local participation through ownership guarantees the legitimacy of the

process beyond the involvement of foreign actors who do not buy into sustaining a viable environment. In other words, the government should stringently follow the path of genuine development of the capabilities of the long disenfranchised Northeastern population by precluding an exploitative relationship of economic, political and cultural dependence of the rich on the poor. The diversification of the economy and provision of a context-specific skillset are important in reducing Nigeria's overreliance on oil to sustain its economy. Be that as it may, the question of whether the North will be able to initiate and push for a more decentralized fiscal regime when oil exploration begins in the Northeast subsists since oil remains a relevant indicator in projecting Nigeria's existence as an entity.

References

- ActionAid. (2016). *Leaking Revenue: How a Big Tax Break to European Gas Companies has Cost Nigeria Billions*. London: ActionAid.
- Addeh, E. (2017, 4 November). "N/Delta Militants call off Ceasefire, Threaten to Resume Bombings." *This Day*. Retrieved from <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2017/11/04/ndelta-militants-call-off-ceasefire-threaten-to-resume-bombings/>.
- Agoi, J. (2017). "Anger in Nigeria's South over Oil Spill Clean-up Delay." *Phys.Org*. Retrieved from <https://phys.org/news/2017-06-anger-nigeria-south-oil-clean-up.html>.
- Ahmed, N. (2014, 9 May). "Behind the Rise of Boko Haram – Ecological Disaster, Oil Crisis, Spy Games." *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/earth-insight/2014/may/09/behind-rise-nigeria-boko-haram-climate-disaster-peak-oil-depletion>.
- Akoni, O., Olowoapejo, M., EJOR, E., and Amarachi, C. (2016, 18 August). "Oil Producing States: FG Okays 13% Derivation Fund for Lagos." *Vanguard*. Retrieved from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/08/fg-okays-13-derivation-fund-for-lagos/>.
- Akpabio, E. and Akpan, N. (2010). "Governance and Oil Politics in Nigeria's Niger Delta: The Question of Distributive Equity." *Journal of Human Ecology* 30 (2): 111-121.
- Al Mohammad, A. and Speckhard, A. (2017). *Abu Luqman – Father of the ISIS Emni: Its Organizational Structure, Current Leadership and Clues to its Inner Workings in Syria & Iraq*. ICSVE Research Report. Washington: ICSVE. Retrieved from <http://www.icsve.org/researchreports/abu-luqman-father-of-the-isis-emni-its-organizational-structure-current-leadershipand-clues-to-its-inner-workings-in-syria-iraq/>.
- Alike, E. (2017, 22 October). "As World Seeks Alternative to Crude Oil, Nigeria Remains Fixated." *This Day*. Retrieved from <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2017/10/22/as-world-seeks-alternative-to-crude-oil-nigeria-remains-fixated/>.
- Amnesty International. (2017). *Amnesty International Report 2016/17: The State of the World's Human Rights*. London: Amnesty International.
- Amnesty International. (2015). *Clean It Up: Shell's False Claims about Oil Spill Response in the Niger Delta*. London: Amnesty International.
- Blanchard, L. and Husted, T. (2016). *Nigeria: Current Issues and US Policy*. Washington: Congressional Research Service.
- Chouin, G., Reinert, M., and Apard, E. (2014). "Body Count and Religion in the Boko Haram Crisis: Evidence from the Nigeria Watch Database." In *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, edited by Proulx de Montclos, Marc-Atoine, 9-32 Leiden / Ibadan: ASC/IFRA.
- Collyer, R. (2017, 8 February). "Meet Aisha, a Former Antelope Hunter Who now Tracks Boko Haram." *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/08/antelope-hunter-boko-haram-Nigeria>.
- Courson, E. (2007). "The Burden of Oil: Social Deprivation and Political Militancy in Gbaramatu Clan, Warri South West LGA, Delta State, Nigeria." Working Paper No. 15. *Economies of Violence*. Berkeley: Institute of International Studies.
- Dibua, J. I. (2005). "Citizenship and Resource Control in Nigeria: The Case of Minority Communities in the Niger Delta." *Africa Spectrum*, 40 (1): 5-28.
- Eghweree, O. C. (2014). "'Oil Politics' and Development in Nigeria." *Journal of Energy*

Technologies and Policy, 4 (12): 70-83.

Ejuwa, G. (2011, 24 July). "45 Years After, Isaac Boro's Second in Command opens up: 'Stark Realities of the N-Delta Motivated our Armed Rebellion'." Vanguard. Retrieved from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2011/07/45-yrs-after-isaac-boro%E2%80%99s-second-in-command-opens-up-%E2%80%98stark-realities-of-the-n-delta-motivated-our-armed-rebellion%E2%80%99/>.

Ekot, I. (2017, 1 July). "EXCLUSIVE: Real Reason France Supported Biafra during Nigerian Civil War". Premium Times. Retrieved from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/235540-exclusive-real-reason-france-supported-biafra-nigerian-civil-war.html>.

Ezimakor, T. (2018, 21 February). "[ICYMI] Release of Chibok Girls: How Swiss Agent, Govt. Officials Stole Millions of Dollars." Daily Independent. Retrieved from <https://independent.ng/swiss-agent-govt-officials-stole-millions-dollars/>.

Ferraro, V. (1996). "Dependency Theory: An Introduction." Retrieved from <http://www2.fiu.edu/~ereserve/010029521-1.pdf>.

Foreman, B. (2017). *The Economic Consequences of Dependence on a Commodity: The Nigerian Oil Crisis*. Global Ecological Humanities Final Project, Duke University, North Carolina, United States.

Haruna, A. (2017, 15 May). "Nigeria Resuming Oil Search in Chad Basin liberated from Boko Haram 'Within Weeks'." Premium Times. Retrieved from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/business/business-news/231281-nigeria-resuming-oil-search-in-chad-basin-liberated-from-boko-haram-within-weeks.html>.

Haruna, A. (2018, 23 February). "How Boko Haram Attack, Kidnap of Dapchi School Girls Occurred- Residents, School Staff." Premium Times. Retrieved from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/259646-boko-haram-attack-kidnap-dapchi-schoolgirls-occurred-residents-school-staff.html>.

Institute for Economics & Peace. (2016). *Global Terrorism Index 2016*. Sydney: IEP. Retrieved from <http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2016.2.pdf>.

International Crisis Group. (2017). *Watchmen of Lake Chad: Vigilante Groups Fighting Boko Haram*. Africa Report No 244. Brussels: International Crisis Group.

Joseph-Raji, G. and Timmis, E. (2017). *Nigeria Bi-Annual Economic Update: Fragile Recovery*. Washington: The World Bank. Retrieved from <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/349511494584937819/pdf/114996-WP-P163291-PUBLIC-NEUNoFinalfromPublisher.pdf>.

Klieman, K. (2012). "US Oil Companies, the Nigerian Civil War, and the Origins of Opacity in the Nigerian Oil Industry." *Journal of American History*, 99 (1): 155-165.

Kukah, M. (2011). *Witness to Justice: An Insider's Account of the Nigerian Truth Commission*. Ibadan: Bookcraft.

Magrin, G. (2016). "The Lake Chad Crisis: Environment and Geopolitics." A Paper Presentation for the Second "Post COP21" Event: Ecological Crisis in Nigeria at Draper's Hall, Institute of African Studies, the University of Ibadan on 11 July 2016.

Matunhu, J. (2011). "A Critique of Modernization and Dependency Theories in Africa: Critical Assessment." *African Journal of History and Culture* 3 (5): 65-72.

Mbachu, D. (2017, 16 August). "Nigeria Seeks to Diversify from Oil with \$41Billion of Rail." Bloomberg. Retrieved from <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-16/nigeria-seeks-to-diversify-from-oil-with-41-billion-rail-plan> [Accessed 26 October 2017].

- Mohammed, K. (2014). "The Message and Methods of Boko Haram." In *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, edited by Perouse de Montclos, Marc-Atoine, 9-32 Leiden / Ibadan: ASC/IFRA.
- Muhammad, R. (2017, 20 September). "NNPC Begins Prospecting of Hydrocarbon in Sokoto Basin." *Daily Trust*. Retrieved from <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/nnpc-begins-prospecting-of-hydrocarbon-in-sokoto-basin.html>.
- Murphy, R. (2017, 8 August). "Is Oil the True Ideology of Boko Haram?." *Daily Trust*. Retrieved from <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/opinion/is-oil-the-true-ideology-of-boko-haram/209018.html>.
- National Bureau of Statistics. (2016). *Unemployment and Under-Employment Report (Q4 2016)*. Abuja: National Bureau of Statistics. Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/DR.ADEMOLA%20PC/Downloads/q4_2016_unemployment_report_-min.pdf.
- Nkpah, Y. (2011). "Using Hooke's Law of Elasticity to Explicate Trends and Dimensions of Crisis in the Niger Delta." *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 5 (10): 448-455.
- Nwachukwu, J. (2017, 5 November). "Why We're resuming 'Operation No Mercy' on Oil Facilities – Niger Delta Militants." *Daily Post*. Retrieved from <http://dailypost.ng/2017/11/05/resuming-operation-no-mercy-oil-facilities-niger-delta-militants/>.
- Nworu, O. C. (2017). "Ogoniland Clean-Up, Remediation and Satisfactory Environment Favorable to Its Development: Obligations of the Nigeria State." *World Environment* 7 (2): 31-41.
- Odularu, G. (2008). "Crude Oil and the Nigerian Economic Performance." *Oil and Gas Business*. Retrieved from http://www.ogbus.ru/eng/authors/odularo/odularo_1.pdf.
- Olowolagba, F. (2018, 10 February). "Boko Haram releases UNIMAID Lecturers, Police Wives." *Daily Post Nigeria*. Retrieved from <https://www.google.com.ng/amp/dailypost.ng/2018/02/10/boko-haram-releases-unimaid-lecturers-police-wives/amp/>.
- Ovuakporie, E. (2017, 22 October). "Oil Sector Scandal: Proceeds from Stolen 1.492billion Barrels of Crude Oil to be recovered." *Vanguard*. Retrieved from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/10/oil-sector-scandal-proceeds-stolen-1-492billion-barrels-crude-oil-recovered/>.
- Perouse de Montclos, M. (2014). *Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency? Addressing the Boko Haram Crisis*. Research Paper. London: Chatham House.
- Raji, A and Abejide, T. (2013). *Oil and Biafra: An Assessment of Shell-BP's Dilemma during the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970*. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review* 2 (11): 15-32.
- SBM Intelligence. (2016). *Nigeria in 2017*. Retrieved from http://sbmintel.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/201612_Nigeria-in-2017.pdf.
- Sen, A. (1999). *Development as Freedom*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.
- Shoraka, S. and Okoro, E. (2014). *Polluted Promises: How Shell Failed to Clean Up Ogoniland*. London: Platform.
- Stakeholder Democracy Network. (2015, August). *Nigeria's Fuel Subsidy*. Spotlight Issue. Retrieved from <http://www.stakeholderdemocracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/SPOTLIGHT-ISSUE-NIGERIA%E2%80%99S-FUEL-SUBSIDY-HC.pdf>.
- Tantua, B. and Kamruzzaman, P. (2016). "Revisiting 'Militancy': Examining the Niger

Delta.” Review of African Political Economy. Retrieved from <http://roape.net/2016/05/06/revisiting-militancy-examining-niger-delta/>.

The Centre for Public Policy Alternatives. (2012). Nigeria: Fuel Subsidy. LAGOS: CPPA.

Tukur, S. (2017, 8 May). “Red Cross Explains Role in Securing the Release of 82 Chibok Girls.” Premium Times. Retrieved from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/230681-red-cross-explains-role-securing-release-82-chibok-girls.html>.

Uche, C. (2008). “Oil, British Interests and the Nigerian Civil War.” *Journal of African History*, 49: 111-135.

Udo, B. (2017, 27 July). “Updated: After Boko Haram Attack, Nigeria Halts Oil Exploration in Lake Chad Basin.” Premium Times. Retrieved from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/238369-updated-boko-haram-attack-nigeria-halts-oil-exploration-lake-chad-basin.html>.

UN Security Council. (2017). “Africa: Lake Chad Basin.” Security Council Report. Retrieved from http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-09/lake_chad_basin.php.

United Nations Environment Programme. (2011). Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland. Nairobi: UNEP.

United Nations Resolution 2349 (2017). Adopted by the Security Council at the 7911th meeting, on 31 March 2017. Retrieved from http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_RES_2349.pdf.

Walker, A. (2012). What is Boko Haram? Special Report, 308. Washington: USIP.

Williams, A. (2017, 14 August). “Boko Haram 2: Crude Oil not Religion.” Vanguard. Retrieved from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/08/boko-haram-2-crude-oil-not-religion/>.

About the Author

Philip Ademola Olayoku is a senior research fellow at the French Institute for Research in Africa (IFRA-Nigeria) and a Development Consultant in Abuja. He holds a doctorate in Peace and Conflict Studies from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Previously, he has taught as an adjunct professor at the Institute for Peace and Strategic Studies and the Institute for African Studies at the same university. He is also a member of the Nigerian Army Resource Centre and currently working on projects for interventions in Northeast Nigeria.