LIVED EXPERIENCES OF NON-CAMPING INTERNALLY DISPLACED BOKO HARAM VICTIMS IN SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA

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Abstract

A remarkable resurgence of armed conflict by Boko Haram terror group has been witnessed in North-east Nigeria for more than a decade, leading to destructions of lives and properties as well as large number of internally displaced persons. Through in-depth interviews and focused group discussions, this study examines the lived experiences of non-camping displaced victims of Boko Haram who fled to south-west Nigeria in terms of their loss of live-livelihood, estrangement in host communities and construction of sense of belonging to the Nigerian-State. The study findings established a strong feeling of detachment towards national identity and loyalty towards the Nigerian state by non-camping displaced victims of Boko Haram who fled to south-west Nigeria. Findings also indicate a link between the absence of both familial and formal institutional support mechanism in host communities and negative perception of citizenship. The study concludes that non-camping victims of Boko Haram in south-west Nigeria are traumatized as a result of absence of social support systems. The absence of institutional and informal support mechanisms has affected their resilience leading to a negative perception of the Nigerian state. Consequently, the study recommends that government needs to institute support systems that can assist Boko Haram victims develop a more robust adaptive capacity to survive in south-west Nigeria.

Keywords: Boko haram, internal displacement, conflict, livelihood, citizenship

Introduction

Abundant empirical evidences that point to the fact that not all internally displaced persons (IDPs) end up in camp now exist (Davies, 2012; Brookings-LSE, 2013; Fielden, 2008; Harver, 2008, Duncan, 2005). We now know that many IDPs flee the conflict areas into urban settings and sometimes villages for temporary safety and subsistence (Nguya, 2019; Evan, 2007). The experience of violence, abuse and vulnerability

continue throughout IDPs' stay outside their places of habitual residence (Olanrewaju, Omotosho & Alabi, 2018; Evans, 2007) and do have negative impact on their health, psychology and livelihood (Dunn, 2018, Amusan & Ejoke, 2017). IDPs' sense of safety and security is generally linked to nearness to areas of conflict and violence leading most to continue moving towards more secure communities where they are likely to witness less violence and secure better means of livelihood (Carrillio, 2009). A recent study has found that inconsistent policies and inadequate humanitarian responses forcibly lead a category of IDPs back into the arms of insurgents in conflict situations (Ajayi, 2020). Whether in camp or outside of camp, the lived-experiences and social realities of most IDPs are characterized by vulnerability, insecurity and livelihood challenges.

Literature on refuge and internal displacement points to two defining characteristics – forced departure from one's home and remaining in one's country – as the key markers of Internally Displaced Persons (Nguya, 2019; Atkinson, 2018; Fielden, 2008; Phuong, 2004). In line with Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement it is noteworthy that while other categories of displaced individuals face similar risks and challenges, IDPs are often distinguished from refugees because they are largely non-border crossing people who have lost their homes or communities to one form of disaster or armed conflict (UNHCR, 2020). In the view of one O'Neil (2009), IDP population especially those caused by armed conflict have been on the increase because civilians rather than combatants have been the targets of modern intrastate conflicts. Nevertheless, Vincent (2001) has argued that both the use of civilians as military and political targets in conflict situations and the decreasing willingness of many countries to accept large inflow of refugees are the main explanatory variables for this phenomenon. In several studies, the nature of internal displacement and the humanitarian crisis engendered in Afghanistan (Willner-Reid, 2016), Colombia (Holmes & Gutierrez De Pineres, 2011; Carrillo, 2009; Riverandeneria, 2009), Sudan (Assal, 2004; Badri & Awadalla, 2010), and many other conflict-ridden societies are well documented.

In Nigeria, the enormous humanitarian crisis in the Lake-Chad Basin created in the wake of Boko Haram (BH) insurgency has also received both local and global attention. According to Brechenmacher (2019), both Boko Haram insurgency and the military counter-insurgency responses against it have caused several thousand human lives and rendered millions of people internally displaced. The armed conflict and

violence that characterizes it has been one of the most devastating forms of armed violence for ordinary people whose security, rights and livelihoods have been destroyed (Dietrich, 2015). According to a recent United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR) (2020) report, over 2.5 million people are currently displaced in Northeast with more than 3.5 million facing food and other livelihood insecurity. Among several other issues, the UNHCR (2020) report further states that the twin problems of deteriorating security situations and socio-economic precarity in the Sahel region have compounded the challenges of protecting the displaced persons.

Thus, the insurgency and the containment efforts of the military have led to other problems of humanitarian nature. For example, Kah (2017) discusses how the northeastern part of Nigeria and Cameroon are experiencing increasing scale of food insecurity as a result of the Boko Haram violence. The author noted that the marauding insurgents have caused many local farmers to abandon their farms leading to unsustainable reliance on international food aids. As the residents of various villages abandon their farms and markets because of the Boko Haram violence, to survive, they moved away from the conflict areas; some into IDPs camps and several others into neighbouring communities and towns.

As part of the Nigerian government's effort towards the protection of the displaced, IDPs camps have been created in several states (Adewale, 2016). While the establishment of IDPs camps has been one response to care for Boko Haram victims, albeit with a mixed results, many more victims especially non-indigenes in the axis of violence take a different course of action: emigration down south of the country. This migratory shift of people reflects victims' concern over personal safety, survival, and more importantly livelihood. A dimension of the exodus of non-indigene from the northeast is the heightened fear of ethnic and religious cleansing of non-Hausa/Fulani residence of the north. With little or no empirical evidence to explain the rising tension occasioned by Boko Haram, some writers claim that Boko Haram was created by a section of the country to target and harm others especially Christians from the south (Comolli, 2017; Imasuen, 2015; Adebayo 2014). Consequently, Boko Haram has been singled out as the current harbinger of destruction of inter-ethnic relations and threat to peaceful co-existence of Nigerians where concern over ethnic identities and religious cleavages overshadows the merits of national integration. However, much debate over Boko haram phenomenon has left several grey areas unattended to

creating a huge gap in scholarly understanding of the social currency of its impact at micro-agency level. Much of the everyday architecture of livelihood of the victims, especially that of those that have taken the decision to emigrate out of the conflict areas, and how this influences their perception of their relations with the state is largely left un-interrogated in the literature. In this article, it is my purpose to reflect on the interpretations of the insurgency that helps understand the micro-dynamics of the impact of the insurgent's terror activities on everyday realities especially on non-camping displaced persons.

How do Boko Haram victims that emigrated to southwestern part of Nigeria experienced livelihood loss to the insurgent's terror activities? Why does this group of IDPs decided to relocate to the southwest rather than move into IDP camps established in their habitual states of residence? What livelihood challenges are the Boko Haram victims currently facing in the states they now live? How are they coping with everyday social and economic realities? Given their current social and economic conditions, how would the IDPs interpret citizenship? How do they construct being Nigerians? The IDPs are likely to have strong feelings of attachment to the Nigerian state insofar as they are able to access institutional or familial supports or both; but they will feel a sense of loss and debased citizenship if not. Against this backdrop, I first examined how IDPs experienced the insurgency, the factors that propelled them to flee to other states and the resultant livelihood disruptions. Next, the paper tried to analyse whether and to what extent they (Boko Haram victims) have been able to rebuild their lives and livelihood. To this aim, the study focuses specifically on the presence (or absence) of both formal and informal institutional supports in their current states of residence. Finally, the paper attempted an understanding and articulation of the construction and reconstruction of citizenship for selected IDPs. Here, the paper employed Bellamy's (2008) three components of citizenship: sense of belonging to a state, rights and privileges attached to being a member and, participation in social and economic processes within the state. It relied on narratives and the subjective meanings the participants attached to these components to understanding how loss of livelihood influences their senses/feelings of attachment to the Nigerian state.

Boko Haram Insurgency and Internally Displaced Persons in Northern Nigeria

As the Boko Haram insurgency now span more than a decade there is an increasing number of scholarly interests to understanding its resilience. Albert's (2017:133) optimism that "Nigeria is winning the war against Boko Haram" may not be totally misplaced; given that "several of the communities in the hands of the terrorists, including a good part of Sambisa, have been taken back". Earlier in 2015, even former president Buhari enthused by the containment of Boko Haram to Sambisa Forest confidently declared that "I think technically we have won the war", his evidence of the victory was "because people are going back into their neighbourhoods" (BBC, 2015). However, empirical evidences and media reportage suggest that the armed conflict in the Northeast, Nigeria and its extension to the entire Lake-Chad region is far from over and rather appears to be unending insurgency. Indeed, many recent studies have shown that Boko Haram is resurging (Nyadera, Kisaka, & Agwanda, 2020; Onapajo & Ozden, 2020; Iyekekpolo, 2018; Olayoku, 2018; Pabst, 2017) and the title of a 2019 post by John Campbell published on the website of Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) put no one in doubt as regards Boko Haram resilience in the current armed conflict. Just recently, there was a report of Boko Haram marauding through and burning down numbers of villages in border communities between Nigeria and Cameroon (Foute, 2020). With a change of tactics and adoption of modern technology such as drones (Searcey, 2019) Boko Haram's presence is still much felt in the northeastern part of Nigeria. It may no longer control and hoist its flag in any more communities but the renew violence of the group has led to the demise of lots of persons and several hundreds of families displaced in recent times. Hence, given its resurgence, Boko Haram is far from being vanquished (Onuoha, Nwagwu &Ugwueze, 2020).

According to Human Right Watch (2022) as of July 2022, Boko Haram conflict had result in more than 2.2 million internally displaced persons in the northeast, Nigeria. The data supports the magnitude of the humanitarian crisis caused by the insurgency, emphasizing the imperative nature of immediate and sustained intervention (Olowojolu &Ettang, 2021). Additionally, this study also reveal that Boko Haram is a primary cause of displacement among the internally displaced persons in the North Central Geopolitical Zone, highlighting the pervasive influence of the insurgency on displacement patterns (Olowojolu &Ettang, 2021). Omogunloye, Iyasele, Olunlade, Abiodun, Salami and

Alabi (2023) have mapped the human displacement by Boko in Nigeria between 2009 and 2021. In their study, Omogunloye et al investigated the activities of Boko Haram during these years and showed how the conflict led to displacement of millions of persons in northeast region. The authors used data from the Armed Conflict and Location Event Data (ACLED) sourced from the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and Geospatial data from Diva-GIS. The authors found that Borno state experienced the highest frequency of Boko haram attacks followed by Yobe state. The study also shows that 2015 was the year recording the highest number of fatalities; with Adamawa state recording the highest number of fatalities despite the state being the least of all states susceptible to Boko haram insurgency activities. Borno state and its people was the most terrorized and host the largest of IDP camps.

The challenge of internally displaced persons in Northern Nigeria is a pressing issue that demands immediate attention and comprehensive solutions. As earlier emphasized, the Boko Haram insurgency has resulted in the displacement of millions of people, particularly in the Northeastern states of Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe. This has led to a severe humanitarian crisis, with significant implications for the affected populations, including children, orphans, poor women, the disabled, and jobless youths and men. Yayla & Yahaya (2023) have observed that people living in northeast Nigeria have had to struggle with dire humanitarian crisis since 2009. The authors estimated that by 2019, approximately 7.1 million people in northeast Nigeria were in dire need of humanitarian assistance including two million displaced by violence and living in refugee camp. Similarly, an earlier report by Human Right Watch (2022) also estimated the number of displaced persons at two million and that many of the IDPs have sought refuge in camps set up and run by state governments across the northeast region.

The humanitarian crisis caused by the conflict has been further compounded by the lack of access to essential resources and a high demand for healthcare, as the conflict has disrupted the region's infrastructure and livelihoods. In a report commissioned by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) published in 2019, it has been shown that the living conditions of displaced people in the region are continuing to deteriorate at an alarming rate due to inadequate and overcrowded facilities. According to this report, hundreds of thousands of people are living in overcrowded displacement sites far below international minimum standards and without proper access to latrines and clean water. To further highlight the deplorable conditions under which IDPs are

living, the NRC report states that more than 180,000 people are currently in need of shelter with many sleeping in open or in deplorable makeshift homes.

The impact of the Boko Haram insurgency goes beyond the displacement of millions of people. As highlighted in the above reports, the conflict has resulted in an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, lack of access to essential resources, and a high demand for healthcare. In study by Tafida, Tukur, Adebayo, Ndaghu, Onu & Momodu (2023) it was evidence that Boko Haram activities have had severe impact on vulnerable populations, including children, orphans, poor women, the disabled, and rural households. According to Tafida et al the insurgency has adversely affected rural households in Adamawa state; and remain an impediment to access to market and finance in the state making people in the state vulnerable. Similarly, with the aid of the Living Standard Measurement Study, an integrated survey on Agriculture (LSMS-LSA) data panel for Nigeria, Fadare, Zanello &Srinivasan (2022) examined the joint effects of Boko Haram terrorism and land access on livestock production decisions. The authors found that higher fatalities from terror activities reduces herd size irrespective of the size of land managed by households. Their findings further suggest a plausible land abandonment as a result of insurgency with a devasting effect on livestock production. Consequently, the repercussions of the conflict have permeated various aspects of life in northern Nigeria, exacerbating the challenges faced by the region's inhabitants.

The United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement emphasizes the significance of addressing the needs of internally displaced persons, particularly in situations of armed conflict and generalized violence (Cohen, 2001). The Boko Haram insurgency has led to a mass exodus of survivors fleeing to neighboring states for safety and livelihood, often residing in formal camps as internally displaced persons. This has placed immense pressure on the resources and infrastructure of these neighboring states, necessitating a coordinated and comprehensive approach to address the needs of the displaced populations. The intertwined nature of the crisis, characterized by inter-communal violence, banditry, and the displacement of millions, underscores the urgency of developing holistic solutions that address the multifaceted challenges faced by the affected communities. Additionally, the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on vulnerable populations, including children, orphans, and the disabled, demands a tailored and

targeted approach to ensure the provision of essential resources and support to those most in need.

Theoretical Framework

This article adopts Martha Albertson Fineman's vulnerability theory. The concept of vulnerability has been conceived in literature as a condition of human susceptibility as a result of hazard, disasters or any other human or natural calamity. According to MOVE (2011: 8) vulnerability refers to "the propensity of exposed elements such as human beings and their livelihood to suffer damage and loss when impacted by single or diverse hazard events". Fineman views vulnerability as a human constant, but also as an "essential and inexorable aspect of the human condition" (Fineman, 2021: 1). All human beings are (and can be) affected by the context of the society they live in. thus, vulnerability is experienced universally, from cradle to death. Nevertheless, Vogel and O'Brien (2004) point out that vulnerability is both multidimensional and differential. In the same vein, Alexander Kuran, Morsut, Kruke, Krüger, Segnestam, Orru, Nævestad, Airola, Keränen Gabel, Hansson, & Torpan, (2020: 13) stress that vulnerability may "vary according to the individual capacity to cope with and adapt to hazards or crises"

According to Fineman vulnerability theory, human beings embodied conditions leave them susceptible to incessant transformation in their well-being, and their embeddedness in social institutions and arrangements and the nature and operations of those institutions enable them to build and exercise resilience (Tafida et al 2023). In other words, the context of human existence (physical, social or spiritual) makes human beings vulnerable and be in need of societal frameworks for survival. The theory thus proposes that vulnerability is inherent in human conditions and that government therefore have a responsibility to respond affirmatively to that vulnerability by ensuring that all people have equal access to the social institutions that distribute resources (Kohn, 2014).

In the context of this paper, Boko Haram conflict is a socially induced crises that have subjected several thousands of people and communities in the northeast to unimaginable hardship and stress. The victims of the insurgency have faced (and some are still facing) conditions that have negatively affected their lives and sources of livelihood. The economic, social and political institutions in some of the affected communities in this region of Nigeria have been destroyed living the people vulnerable with little or no capacity for survival. Generally, many Boko Haram

victims have experienced forced displacement, psychological trauma, loss of livelihood, low mental wellness and loss of loved ones as a result of the insurgency. Tafida et al (2023: 20) note that both the insurgency and counter-action from the Nigerian Military have "simultaneously affected the livelihoods of the people of the area, and the coping mechanism that could be used to improve the livelihood is being weakened sustainably by the insurgency". Having lost their homes, friends/relatives and source of livelihood, many of the affected victims of Boko Haram are settled in camps; some have fled to neibhouring communities or out of their states where they are faced with communicable diseases, food insecurity, hunger, rape and metal health issues (Ekezie, 2022).

While some of the affected people are back to their communities, others – especially non-indigenes who fled the theater of conflict – are reluctant to go back. Several recent studies including Okoli (2022); Ikpe, Adegoke, Olonisakin & Aina (2023) have shown that both the returnees and those that are staying away have become vulnerable; struggling with low adaptive capacity, and with most victims requiring both familial and societal help to get back on their feet. Thus, the conflict has created chaos and trauma, leading to an increase in inter-communal violence and banditry, further contributing to a breakdown in social cohesion in the region. The repercussions of the Boko Haram insurgency have permeated various aspects of life, posing challenges that extend beyond the immediate displacement of individuals. It is evident that the Boko Haram insurgency has significantly altered the social fabric of northern Nigeria, creating a complex web of challenges that necessitate urgent attention and sustainable solutions.

In light of these complexities, it is imperative to consider the far-reaching implications of the Boko Haram insurgency and the resulting humanitarian crisis, as well as to explore sustainable interventions that encompass not only immediate humanitarian aid but also long-term strategies to develop the adaptive capacity and resilience of the victims of the insurgency. By delving into the depth of the crisis and understanding its varied ramifications therefore, we can take steps towards fostering enduring solutions that address the complex challenges faced by the displaced populations and contribute to the restoration of peace and stability in northern Nigeria.

Research Methodology

This article presents an analysis of the subjective interpretations of loss of livelihoods that 25 Boko Haram victims – mostly of Yoruba sub-nationality – who lived in the axis of violence of Boko Haram in northern Nigeria – experienced through BH bombing and killing activities and the subjective meanings to explain their displacement from their habitual places of residence. Between January and March 2020, I conducted in-depth interview sessions with 25 selected Boko Haram victims (displaced persons) living in the southwest part of Nigeria. Most in-depth interviews sessions were conducted in Oyo state (Ibadan 10, Ogbomoso 2). This is followed in terms of number of interview sessions by Osun (Osogbo, 8), Ondo (Akure, 3) and Ogun (Abeokuta, 2). It was challenging locating displaced victims of Boko Haram insurgency in the mentioned states. To locate them, I used my personal social network and referrals. The individuals located and those that comprised the sample were aged 30 years to 60years. Most of the participants have lived in the North for more than a decade. The sample includes 14 artisans, five traders/ entrepreneurs, three teachers and three civil servants. Two among the teachers and five of the artisans have lived in more than two states in the northeast. Two participants were living in Kano (at the time of the 2014 series of bomb explosions), a northwest state, one in a north central state, 11 were in Borno, seven in Yobe and four in Adamawa states. All of the artisans had their own workshops and the traders were mostly long-distant merchants in food stuff while the entrepreneurs have established business outfits such as well-structured primary schools. This article described these 25 victims of Boko Haram as vulnerable because their loss of means of livelihood to BH violent insurgent and their inability to reestablished adequate means of livelihood in southwest is the only common denominator as shared lived-experience.

I interviewed the 25 participants in their chosen locations. The process of data collection and analysis adopted grounded theory method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) a systematic inductive approach for conducting qualitative study (Charmaz, 2009). The in-depth interview questions were opened, totally unstructured and sought to explore the experiences, meanings and perceptions of participants about Boko Haram insurgency, displacement, loss of livelihood, estrangement and citizenship. The interview sessions conducted were emotion-laden as the memories of the events and processes of displacement brought about drop of tears on the faces of most of the participants. Many participants would rather "forget" and sharing their experiences was, in the voice of one of them, "like

opening an old wound". Each of the interview session was recorded in a digital device and lasted between one and one and half hours. The recordings were transcribed verbatim, studied and coded for thematic analysis and interpretations. The next sections present the findings and the discussion of the result.

Loss of livelihood and fleeing the conflict zones

The participants of the study had little challenges expressing the negative impacts Boko Haram violent insurgency and the subsequent forced displacement have on their social and economic lives. Everyone contends that they involuntarily moved away from the conflict zones and therefore abandoned their means of livelihood, properties and large portion of social connections built over the years. They generally expressed feelings of nostalgia about their former places of habitual residence and hope life were as before. All participants were more or less easily able to describe their lives, work, and social relations in the various part of the North where they were formerly residents before fleeing to the southwest. Their reflections on why they moved to the Northern part of Nigeria, what means of livelihood they engaged in and the loss of these means of livelihoods offer a fruitful foundation for succeeding thoughts on how their conceptions of citizenship and loyalty to the Nigerian state are marked by these experiences.

In thinking through the impact of Boko Haram on their sources of livelihood, my participants often construct with feelings of longing to the past a condition that can only be regarded as good life prior to the violent crisis caused by the insurgents. Indeed, Salmat[1], a 50-year-old level 9 community health practitioner who has been in Kano since 1995 and working as a civil servant in one of the Local Government Councils in Kano, claimed that

> "I had a permanent and pensionable job where I worked. As soon as I finished my study at the school of hygiene, which is now called school of science I was offered an immediate employment in *Fege* Local Government. I was a middle level officer with a very good pay. My husband was also a big and popular business man in housewares imported from China. We were very comfortable. Life was good for us over there" (IDI/Female/50yrs).

Andrew, who drew on his over 25 years of living and trading in Portiskum, Yobe state, expressed similar view:

> "you know, the North is a place where you can make a lot of money if you know what you are doing. You can buy and sell lots of things that are needed by the people. I was into electronics and house appliances. I had one large warehouse and two small shops. I have apprentices working and learning the business. I was living a quiet live with my family. Portiskum was peaceful town and the people were friendly before the attack on my businesses" (IDI/Male/25yrs).

Both Salmat and Andrew agreed that life in the North can be quite exciting because of little or no disturbance to other people's businesses. Other participants expressed similar sentiment about their lives in the North before the unfortunate escalation of Boko Haram's dastard activities. Titilayo, a 33years old secondary school English teacher who moved to Adamawa state with her husband who worked with Federal Inland Revenue) view's summarises the opinion of a focused discussants:

> "I praised God because everything I was engaged in then was very successful. I was a school teacher with one of the government girls secondary schools in Jalingo, but I also traded by the side to supplement my salary. We never lacked anything. My family could afford anything needed within our means" (FGD/Female/30-50yrs).

This view aligned with what Emmanuel, a 45years old private primary school entrepreneur in outskirt of Maiduguri, Borno state, calls a "life of contentment" in another focused discussion session. Emmanuel further quipped that:

> I owned a school that was doing well. As at the last count, the pupils were more than a hundred. I had teachers, cleaners and other domestic workers working for me. I was very comfortable (FGD/Male/30-50yrs).

Many of the participants in this study also claimed ownership to personal private homes and plots of land in their former locations in the North. They took decision to build houses in the North because they were of the belief that as Nigerians you can own properties anywhere in the country irrespective of your state of origin or other primordial sentiments. Salmat's comment represents the general pattern of thoughts of most of the participants: "we owned two houses in the North. One was occupied by us and the other one, built not too far from the house we lived in, was built later for rental business". Her response to my probing for the reasons

she and her husband had to build houses in the North knowing that they were non-indigenes shows her unmistakable believe in her rights to own properties anywhere in the country. But one participant questioned this position about homeownership outside one's state of origin. Bamidele, a curator who worked with the Federal Government's Centre for Arts and Culture in Borno neither own a house nor bought a plot of land because "since I know I will still go back to where I come from (Ilorin), I see little sense in buying lands or building houses in the state. Anyways, I was staying in one of the federal housing quarters. So I had no need to build personal house". Thus, while most participants articulate a firm belief in their rights as citizens to be happy and live a good live wherever they are in the country, few find this as irrational decision since the north was not where they came from. The idea of where "I come from" in Bamidele's narrative relates to what Abdullahi (2003) argues is the dichotomy between "ethnic and civic" which are vital to an "understanding of the notion of citizenship" in Nigeria and in many parts of Africa.

Much of the sources of livelihood and properties as detailed by the participants became loss through participants' experiences of Boko Haram violence. These entailed two related processes. One, the loss of the means of livelihood occurred through a direct attacks on the businesses of the displaced persons. Out of the 25 participants, 76% (N = 19) were artisans, traders or school proprietors. Only six were either civil servants or state secondary school teachers. Most of the participants thus claimed that their businesses or enterprises were involved in Boko Haram bombing activities. The following comments (in FGD session) by Charles, a businessman whose shops were located in one of the markets bombed in Kano in early 2012 illustrate how he loss everything to Boko Haram bombing:

> The attack occurred around 5pm in January 2012. I cannot remember the exact day 20 or 21 it was. A man approached me and asked me to close for the day. I asked why? He said "*yaa-ji aiki* – we want to work". So I hurriedly closed my shop and called my attendant at the other shop to also close. As soon as I walked out, not quite five minute I heard a blast in the police barracks nearby the shops and in less than one minute another loud blast with a huge tremor was heard. The second bomb was thrown or planted into our shops and everything came down. Unfortunately my wares/goods just arrived and everything that I sell got destroyed with the attacks. So many people died in the attack. If I had refused the order of the man I would have died along the others (FGD/Male/40yrs).

Shade, a Yoruba woman, married to a Hausa man from Yobe state whose husband was killed by Boko Haram was rather not that lucky. She claimed to be a full house wife only caring for her late husband and children. Her story offers a glimpse into her life and the killing of her husband in one of the attacks carried out by the insurgents "because my husband was an artisan, he had jobs from many clients. He started his mechanic work here (Ibadan) and also married me here before we relocated to his home town in Yobe state. Although he was not a rich man but we get by". Narrating how she lost her husband to Boko Haram she said "later Boko haram invaded us. They blocked all entrances leading into our community. They chased us all out of the house; threw bomb on our street. Then entered our houses and killed those who could not come out. In fact my brother-in-law was slaughtered like an animal. He was a civil servant". When asked about her husband she busted out crying and said "I cannot really recall how it happened because it was sudden. All I know was that I went into a comma; the next day I couldn't talk. I was in complete shock. I could not stand with my two legs. A nurse was invited and I was treated at home. I was later informed that he died while trying to protect us. They hit him with a machete on the head. That is why I had to flee for my life". The story of Shade illustrates one of the highlights of direct attacks by the insurgents on civilians. It also reflects, as her current state of well-being shows (a discussion on participants' resilience follows immediately), how loss of a breadwinner to a needless insurgency against the state can have devastating impact on the lives and livelihood of dependent; especially those with limited capacity which could make it almost impossible to move forward with life.

Second, the activities of Boko Haram also created fears on the lives of others who did not directly experience any attacks; hindering them from pursuing certain aspirations and ambitions. A case in indirect experience of the impact of Boko Haram on the livelihood of participants is the story of Bamidele, the curator, narrated in the following words:

> A friend of mine who was living in Ramat was killed by Boko Haram. Some other Yoruba people were also killed in bomb blasts or slaughtered by them. This made me to be anxious and brought pressure on me to relocate from Maiduguri. Although, the Federal housing/quarters where I lived was relatively secured, but what about the life outside the quarters? And there was subtle fear that my children could be attacked or be abducted. Then the other thing is that there was family pressure. My mum was alive and she kept calling and pleading that I should relocate back to the south. That is why I applied for transfer of service to Osun state to get relived from

> these pressures. Personally, it brought some disruption to some of the things I would like to do (IDI/Male/45yrs).

Like Bamidele, every participant mentioned safety and pressure from parents and closed relatives as explanations for fleeing from the conflict zones where Boko Haram was operating. Salmat, who we have already met above, recalls the decision to abandon her local government civil service job to also move to Osun, her state of origin. She noted that "my neighbors were attacked and my husband's business was also attacked". She also recalled that "because our monthly salary was automated, I was still being paid for three months after I had fled with my husband, my conscience couldn't accept that. I had to go back to my work. But my husband completely refused to go back with me". Salmat however only stayed at her job in Kano for two more years after which she also finally decided to move back to Osogbo as "bomb was still been thrown everywhere. Some people got hit by stray bullets. Nobody knew who was next to die. Everywhere was tensed. People could not move freely. Meanwhile, my husband and relatives started calling; telling me that I should consider my safety above money. At the end, I had to resign and move back to Osogbo".

Participants unmistakably feel deep sadness with the turn of events in their habitual places of residence with its consequence upon their fortunes. No one cling to a feeling of fatalism, though. Rather, like John, they all thought they took the right decision at that point. The decision to flee and secured their lives was based on hope and confidence in their ability and skills. They were of the belief that they could start small and gradually recreate the lives and livelihoods they were used to in southwest of the country. However, displaced people in this study appear to be experiencing limited adaptive capacity. The barriers in finding their feet at home were in the most confounding. They viewed their struggle to "be re-established" as "abandonment" or "neglect" by society. I go into this issue of imagining social neglect for the displaced people later. But, first, in the next segment of this article, I discuss livelihood challenges and supports from the familial institution and government that displaced people I interviewed had in their current host communities.

Strangers in Familiar Environment: Livelihood Challenges, Coping and Institutional supports

How far do participants feel estranged with their 'new' environment, especially with respect to re-establishing their lives, livelihood and

accessing suitable accommodations? To what extent did state and non-state actors/agencies support them in the new locations? What challenges are they facing coping with day-to-day lived reality? The result concerning participants' feeling of estrangement in their new environment seems a bit straightforward. Many of the interviewees feel like they have become strangers in their own local/indigenous environments. All of the interviewees were born in the southwest and only migrated to the North in search of better jobs or greener pasture. They all claimed to retain some level of social contacts with siblings and other extended family members in the southwest while they were away in the north and were hoping to catch on these connections to re-establish their lives. None of them was born in the north. They all had their formative years in the southwest before their relocation. This generally affords them the rare opportunity to have some level of social networks of friends and relatives down south. Throughout the years of sojourning in the north they claimed to have kept in touch with people at home through voice calls. And they did sent money home occasionally to support family religious and social rituals. Hence, though they were displaced in their states of habitual residences, they all agreed that their current places of residence are familiar environments. One would therefore expect that re-connecting and integrating back to society would be easy by leveraging on their networks and social capital. The evidence available from my findings is however contrary to this expectation. For instance, most of the participants for the reasons that include but not limited to disorientation with familial and institutional frames of support expressed the feelings of estrangement. Many expressed initial surprises if not disgust at the little or no help garnered from friends and family members when they arrived. Some participants, like Salmat and John even felt irritated with some close relatives who were still expecting them to finance their lives and livelihood as they were hitherto doing while in the north. Charles captures his emotions in the following words

> despite my bad fortunes friends and family became distant when I could not offer to help them. I was running up and down in search of means to support my own immediate family and it seems to me that they care little about that (IDI/Male/40yrs).

Similarly, Salmat offers the following statements

> it is as if I do not know my own people again. You know, it is when you are faced with problems that you would understand those who care (IDI/Female/50yrs).

Also offering monologue about unhelpful familial institutions in his life while he returned home, Andrew asserts that:

> when I first arrived back here I had some money with me. I recall asking my brothers to advice on what I can engage in but none were able to offer any useful advice. So I was jumping from frying pan to fire. First I bought okada (motorcycle) it was badly used by the guy that was making use of it. Later I went into partnership with a friend and bought a bus for transport that was also mismanaged by my partner (IDI/Male/20yrs)

What is striking from these narratives is that while traditional filial relations engender various economic linkages and social bonding in times of bad fortune, the capacity to survive any kind of disaster as this study contends ultimately resides with individuals with or without familial help.

The general picture is that this category of victims of Boko Haram violence, who fled back to their ethno-geo-political region, is struggling with economic disturbances in this familiar region. Unlike the standard of lives they built for themselves while in the north, they are faced with livelihood challenges with little support getting along with life. Their seeming estrangement within this familiar environment is one of the explanations for the struggle with replication of 'good lives" they were accustomed with. For instance, Salmat, the local government worker, laments her struggles with life in her home state of Osun: "we are facing serious financial challenges. My husband is equally struggling. I have tried every means to get a job befitting my educational level with no success". I asked her to explain the efforts she made and she offered the following narrative:

> At last when I relocated to Osun I could not bring anything back except my education certificates because of the hurriedness of my leaving. On getting here, I went everywhere. I walked from one local government council office to the other in search of job. In *Abere* (the Osun state government secretariat) it was not even funny; everyone I met will ask me to go and find a strong political party member to plead my case with the governor. For more than a year, I moved from Ede south to Ede north to Ejigbo and Orolu local government councils. I could not find help. I even offered to accept as low as level 5 cadre if I could not be employed as a level 9 cadre officer with my experience. At that time a woman (name withheld) was the head of the civil service at Abere. I cried in her office and knelt down pleading to her being a woman to help me was to no avail. At the

> end, I started selling garri (local cassava flakes). I would go from *Sekona* to *Oko* and to other *oja oko* (village markets) at every market days to buy *garri* and bring back to Osogbo to sell with tin cups (IDI/Female/50yrs).

But, now as she recalls, she has secured a job as a hostel manager in a private school in Osogbo, but she still earns a pittance as take home compare to what she was earning in her previous job. Whether in camp or host community, displaced people are highly constrained. Integrating back into society becomes greatly challenging as a result of limitations to their capacity to solve a wide range of well-being issues (Vincent, 2001). This is obvious in the case of many of my participants. It has been difficult to replicate the quality of life they claimed they were used to in the north because of their inability to secure same level of livelihood as before. The artisans find it difficult to establish own workshops thus many are engaged occasionally as journeymen, with less than 'normal' wage. The teachers are engaged in private primary school establishments where they earn less than #15,000 at the end of the months. The entrepreneurs find it difficult to restart because of low financial capacity. All these are on the one hand due to the greatly contrasted national economy in general and to the labour market in particular. On the other hand, and as expressed by my participants, their vulnerability and challenges are due to low (lack of) enduring formal and informal institutional support base.

It is remarkable that the participants' experiences of livelihood challenges (occasioned by the Boko Haram violent insurgency) which certainly pushed my participants into the abyss of vulnerability are less considered an issue. Most interviewees place more stress on the supportive mechanisms provided by their government that helps citizens restore sanity after a storm. In the interview conversations, a loss of means of livelihood is viewed as temporary challenge. That can easily and quickly be resolved if there are existing institutions that provide welfare for insurgent victims and ease the process of reintegration back into the society. The point that a high premium is placed on is government's protection activities and assistance programmes. These are considered as central to citizens' coping strategy in times of disasters. The feelings were readily expressed by participants concerning the fact that no government institution or agencies are present to support daily struggles. Rather, like Shade, they found themselves asking "who does the government of Nigeria help and isn't the government people that even added to our problems before we fled? When I was in Yobe I recalled on

how the soldiers that were supposed to protect us were exploiting us. Taking money from us and sleeping with young girls that were hawking petty things". Shina, who worked as a car rewire and had lived in Mubi, Adamawa state, for fifteen years, asked some provocative questions in response to my probing on government support

what is government support really and why is it now important in my situations? Have they (government) ever supported any citizens of this country apart from themselves and their children?"

What would seem clear from the above is the imagery of government/formal institutional neglect to rally round to assist this category of Nigerian citizens. Of particular interest is participants' construction of institutional failures as expressed by Shina in the following statements "If you are waiting on government to help you it means you know nothing about Nigeria" as it were echoing Charles' frustration:

> we are just struggling by ourselves doing things. Government has neglected everybody. To me they have not only failed to care for people like me; they have failed in everything education, health, think of it, government's failure is everywhere in our country (IDI/Male/40yrs).

Such emphasis on failure of government/institutionally arranged assistance to cushion efforts to survive was seen by participants to reflect the current states of government and governance in Nigeria. Assuming that societal institutions would have positive contributions on their lives as they moved out of the axis of violence, participants in the study hope they would be in better economic shapes even if they could not totally replicate their former pattern of life.

As a result of little formal and informal assistance many participants forcibly opted for lower standard of living. This was particularly detailed in the type of accommodation that most participants resolved to live in and the withdrawal of children from private schools into government schools. Although some like Shade do not have to search for where to live because as she said "this is where I live (location of the interview), it is my daddy's house" others like Salmat and her husband had to move from a three bedrooms apartment rented when they first arrived into a modest room and a parlour type accommodation in a face-me-i-face-you house as "we could not continue the payment of the flat. For like a year we could not pay our house rent, so the landlord threw us out. In fact we still owe him #80000 as rent". Hence, as the study shows, many

participants are coping with life sub-optimally with little support from the society.

Consequently, most participants strongly expressed regret fleeing down south giving their present conditions of living. Responding to a question on how she feels now being in the south and if she has any doubt concerning her decision to move out of the northern region where Boko Haram were operating, Temitope blustered

> "in fact, let me say I do have some regrets because it is not easy leaving everything we had worked for in life moving down to this place (Ogbomosho). And here we are with no job, nothing to rely on as support. So, ehnmm, yes sometimes I doubt if we made the right decision (IDI/Female/45yrs).

Another discussant said:

> it has been hell. To the extent that without having lost any money I will be like *Olorun je kinri owo eh* (lord let me find lost money) while walking on the street (shaking his head severally) (FGD/Female/30-50yrs).

A male discussant at an FGD session discussed two regrets that he has:

> number one I regret because I miss my business enterprise. Two, all my savings that I relied on to re-establish my business here have been frittered away on family issues. So I regret that here in Yoruba land where I should have better rest of mind I had to face different internal problems (FGD/Male/30-50yrs).

Although, all participants expressed some level of peace of minds regarding non-existence of BH activities in the southwest where they now reside, the majority expressed feelings of alienations and doubts about their decisions to flee. Nevertheless, one issue of broader significance is that all the BH victims interviewed pointed to the fact that their rights as citizens of Nigeria have been debased now and prior to being chased out of the northern part of the country by BH. We turn to this issue and its connection with participants' image of their identity as Nigerians and the questions of integration with members of other ethnic groups.

Construction of 'debased citizens' and attachment to national identity

For several decades, social scientists have stressed the importance of citizenships as precisely a two-way-pipe of rights and obligations.

Intriguingly, most governments of the third world societies have laid more stress on the latter. However, whether "individually or collectively", as Hyden, Court and Mease (2003: 2) put it, citizens need to feel that their government "cares about their welfare and security". In this final section therefore, I analysed how participants construct being citizens based on Bellamy's (2008) identified three components of citizenship: sense of belonging to a society, the collective benefits and rights associated with membership and participation in the community's political, economic and social processes. This led to an understanding of the degree of attachment of this category of displaced victims of BH to the Nigerian state.

In thinking through the influence of loss of livelihood to BH activities on their 'sense of belongingness' to Nigeria, my respondents often evoke Anderson and Taylor's (2005) claim that nations, as a source of social integration, often shape the rights and privileges of their citizens in unequal manners. Indeed, Yussuf, a 60 years old long-distant trader of beans from the far north to the southern region, claimed that "sometimes it feels difficult to believe that we also belong to this country. We are in a country that treats you differently if you are 'first class' citizens and in another way if you belong to the 'second class' group". Salmat agrees with this as she noted "you do know that in this country you need to be well connected to be favoured". According to Yussuf and Salmat, although the leadership of the country has been overwhelmed by different dimensions of ethnic and religious violence since independence, the Boko Haram insurgency has grander effect on the psyche of the entire citizenry. The unofficial recategorisation of citizenship into first class (the wealthy and well connected) and the second class (the masses and downtrodden) by my participants illustrates condition of meaningless illuminated by the perception of their social positions. Many participants also question the claim that all citizens can live safely in all parts of the country. Shola, a plumbing artisan experienced internal exclusions in the treatment of southern emigrants as "sometimes I may hear that some local community leaders and wealthy individuals are assisting people that have lost everything to Boko Haram, but I was never chosen to benefit in such largesse and sometimes I feel may be because I am not originally from Borno that is why I have not been able to get help". Yussuf goes further by saying that

> my sojourning in the north and my experience of the BH problem will not make me see the value of thinking of myself as a Nigerian, I mean my national experiences always make me feel smaller than where I come from (IDI/Male/55yrs).

Feeling of sense of belonging is a mix bag for Charles

> I love identifying myself as a Nigerian, no question about that. But I just don't like the ways the government makes you feel less human in this country (IDI/Male/40yrs).

Though, none of my participants mentioned anything about ethnic identity, they all had the feelings of alienation that appears to debarred them from fully participating in social, economic and the political activities in their former habitual residences. Thus the logics of politics of identity, based on the contention between national identity and other localised identities were acknowledged by most displaced people in the study (Bond, 2006). The promotion of certain primordial sentiments and the increasing feeling of detachment flowed freely through the conversations with the participants. Less cheerfully after recounting her narrow escape from BH killings, Shade does

> feels that Yoruba, Hausa, Ibo are just pretending to be one. We are not. I don't understand why. But the country is less united than it was at the independence (FGD/Female/30-50yrs).

Then she adds a clincher,

> while in Yobe state there was always something that reminds me that I don't belong there. Boko haram now came to make the feeling worse. Nobody that experience what I experienced will ever think of the country as one (FGD/Female/30-50yrs).

Temitope recalled vividly an experience of feeling of exclusion in an encounter with a civil servant while she was looking for job "one time I submitted my CV at one of the local government councils in the northeast and the man on citing my names said 'haa hee say your name' and I said it to him. He asked 'what is Temitope? *Wanna ga Yarubawa ni* (this one is a Yoruba)'. Then I realised we have a big problem in this country. I often feel like the government does not know I exist. So I live my life as if I don't belong here".

As Simonsen (2017) cogently argued subjective feelings of attachment and identification are necessary requisite to navigate the context which comprises national sense of belonging and thus citizenship. The displaced victims of BH in this research also realized that they have loss substantial part of their beliefs in the capacity of the state to ensure their rights and privileges as citizens. They acknowledged that being citizens of Nigeria offer them identity and "assign obligations" but few enforceable "rights and privileges" (Iwuagu, 2015).

Consequently, one sentiment shared by virtually all participants is that both Federal and state governments have failed in their duties to protect their rights as Nigerians in other parts of the country. The inability of government to ensure equal privileges and access to the economy and live chances opportunities for all citizens in the north was often mentioned to demonstrate the feelings of debased citizenship.

All in all, I did notice that participants constructed narratives that were devoid of sense of shared attachment to a single national identity. Instead, they often surrendered to a feeling of marginality; a detached sense of citizenship that was unequivocal. To a certain extent, such feelings also informed participants' perceptions toward constitutional duties, civic responsibilities and even attachment to the country. Suleiman for example doesn't think he is loyal to Nigeria because "well, sir, I don't know what you mean by loyal. If you mean can I die in the course of service to the country my answer will be no, capital no. You need to reason along with me, sir. How do you think anyone can be patriotic to the cause of the nation with the ways they treat us"? I then I asked if he performs any civic duties to the nation especially in the election period. To which he responded "I only have my voter's card. I would not vote. Sir this is *Nigerian cake*, they are sharing it. So if they say okay this is your share then may be ehnmm I will vote". Salmat's social condition has forced her to consider abandoning her citizenship for another country "I can change my nationality. In fact, I will not think twice before I do that, may God forgive me, because nobody remembers the poor and the vulnerable people. If I have the opportunity, I will move to a country that will appreciate my skills". Charles and Andrew experience a sense of low degree of attachment with national orientations. Charles' frustration with the larger society is apparent with a state of mind that stressed personal gain than societal benefits "I have told you earlier it is no longer about the country it is about the individuals. It is about me and my family now. I will engage in whatever I think is going to benefit me. I am not for one Nigeria or anything. If government brings about a law that favours me I am in. If not, I will find my ways around it in order not to be caught by the law". Andrew was more worried with "what is happening in my locality now than what is happening nationally. I am known in my neighbourhood, everybody speaks the same language with similar environmental concerns".

Conclusions and Recommendations

This article focuses on the lived experiences of 25 Boko Haram victims – who fled from the centres of Boko Haram terror activities – in southwest, Nigeria. It attempts to understand how these displaced Boko Haram victims' loss of economic livelihood intersects with their perception of citizenship. In real terms, the study shows the micro-dimension of the impact of Boko Haram insurgency on the cognitive and normative re-interpretation of the concept of citizenship through the nature and process of livelihood disruptions experienced.

The result of this study reveals the experiences of internally displaced persons that fled to southwest of Nigeria as a result of Boko Haram insurgency. Many of the IDPs fled the axis of violence because they experienced direct attacks on their lives, spouses or means of livelihood. Those that experienced direct attacks were mostly artisans, traders and entrepreneurs working within the informal economy. Decision to relocate to the southern part of the country and not into IDPs camps was not clear. I can only speculate that their decision may be based on the fact that they were from the south and may have believed in the strength of informal/familial support mechanism to help them back on their feet. The study also found that participants are struggling to eke a living in the south as they have not been able to replicate their former lifestyles and livelihood in their new locations as result of loss of means of livelihood, properties and important social networks. However, none of the participants working with either state or federal government as civil servants experienced direct attack but took decision to relocate merely base on fear of attack and pressure from the significant others.

By and large, the displaced persons expressed shock at the enormous challenges and the hurdles they faced when attempting to explore various familial and institutional networks to re-start their lives in their new locations. While they considered their new locations familiar environments, they also expressed deep feelings of estrangement with their inabilities to make ahead ways to recreate sustainable means of livelihood. Hence, unlike the standard of lives they built for themselves while in the north, the displaced persons studied face livelihood challenges with little supports getting along with life. Their seeming estrangement within this familiar environment is one of the explanations for the struggle with replication of 'good lives" they were accustomed with.

Finally, the IDPs' low attachment to the Nigerian state – exemplified by low identification with the state – resulted from their assessment that the state seems to largely neglect them by not offering necessary institutional support to achieve social and economic integration. They lack the capacities to re-establish sustainable means of livelihood, and acquire desire lifestyles. They realized that both institutional and familial mechanisms of support were absent in their struggle even in the southwest of Nigeria where they originated from. This perception also explains how and why the displaced persons respond to issues of national importance such as obeying laws and voting as civic responsibilities.

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