

# Frantz Fanon's Theory of Alienation and Terrorism in Nigeria: A Study of Boko Haram

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## **Abstract**

This study specifically sought to establish the relationship between alienation and Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria. This is a qualitative study that employed the ex post facto, which examined the relationship between the independent variable (Frantz Fanon theory of alienation) and dependent variable (terrorism). This study adopted the Frantz Fanon's Theory of Alienation, which states that colonial state is alien, exploitative, violent and oppressive, which leads to alienation of the colonized peoples, and more fundamentally, activates the consciousness to enforce change through the instrumentality of the greater use of violence; while analyzing the relationship between alienation and the Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria. The findings of this study were that there is devastating socio-economic and political decadence in Nigeria, which has brought various forms of alienation amongst Nigerians; there is a cogent relationship between alienation and Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria; the Nigerian government efforts towards combating Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria has yielded low impacts; and the need for a deeper understanding of issues bordering on radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism in Nigeria. The study thus recommends that the government of Nigeria should endeavor to explore the Islamic intentions behind Boko Haram insurgence; there is need to reconsider the influence of the British on Nigeria; and the need to put corruption to check at every level of governance in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Frantz Fanon's Theory, Theory of Alienation, Alienation, Terrorism, Boko Haram

## **Introduction**

Historically, terrorism has been a feature of societies from time immemorial. In contemporary times, terrorism is associated with the evolution and consolidation of modern states. For example, Obi (2009) argues that in the course of the evolution of the modern French state, there was use of force and the mechanisms of fear to

bring the French into subjection. This was typified in the Jacobins era and the absolutist rule of Napoleon Bonaparte. The use of terror as a means of governance and state control was further exemplified during the authoritarian and fascist regimes of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini in Germany and Italy, respectively (Obi, 2009).

The modern states in Africa, Asia and Latin America were founded on the flagrant use of terror unleashed not only in the period of European conquest of these societies but also during the forceful subjugation of the African people in the violent years of colonialism when the people were ruled outside the norms of popular consent and enlightenment (Rosenau, 2009). In Africa, Obi (2009) maintains that taxation and labour were exacted by force, recruitment into the armies of the colonial masters was forcefully executed, and people were coerced to fight in wars they knew nothing about. The colonized were also forced into full scale cultivation of cash crops which served the industrial needs of metropolitan Europe; and it was on this foundation of terror and force that boundaries were set for colonial states in Africa and post-colonial African states were founded (Obi, 2009, p. 133). The forceful and violent manner through which many modern African states were formed has haunted their growth and adversely affected the conduct of these states in their interface with the populace.

At the turn of the 21st century, especially following the cessation of the ideological confrontation between the Western and Eastern blocs, terrorism has assumed a more horrendous and catastrophic dimension owing to the influence of globalization which has weakened state capacity and energized non-state actors. Terrorist attacks have become a daily phenomenon of the global political landscape (Imobighe, 2009). It constitutes a serious domestic and international security or developmental problem which is negatively affecting the United States, Europe, Africa, Latin America and Asia.

In this regard, Imobighe (2009, p. 14) hints at the peculiar character of contemporary terrorism by noting that:

Although terrorism has haunted the global political landscape for centuries, never in the entire history of man has it assumed the power and ugliness it displays in the present century. Terrorism has imposed a new strategic climate on the present global system by making every human a potential victim of its various forms. Nowadays, one could hardly have a day pass by without news of some acts of terrorism in one or other nations on our planet. If it is not hostage taking, it could be car bomb, suicide bombing, plane hijacking, kidnapping or assassination by an aggrieved person or persons, it is the indiscriminate bombing of selected targets by state authorities or agents.

In a nutshell, Imobighe (2009) expatiates that the world is now constantly being traumatized by continuous doses of terrorism, and as a result no one any longer feels completely safe whether at home, at work, walking along the streets or relaxation centres. Africa is also affected by the growing and prejudicial waves of new terrorism. In Nigeria, the colonial phase of terrorism has been replaced by economic, political and cultural terrorism carried out by state and non-state actors and this has caused many conflicts and violence. State terrorism is typified by violence and brute use of force by the police, the military and tacit support by the executive, legislative and judicial apparatuses translating into physical, psychological and structural violence. Non-state terrorism is presently being perpetuated by the Boko Haram terrorist group, which emerged on the Nigerian political scene in 2009 with serious socio-economic and political consequences.

Most worrisome is the fact that despite the world being awash with all sorts of efforts to address the problem of terrorism, it has not been abated in any significant manner. It suffices that the Nigerian government is yet to find out the root cause of the Boko Haram terrorism, which has ravaged lives and properties in the northern part of the country. In a bid to discover the root cause of terrorism in Nigeria, this study adopted the Blauner (1964) in Morteza (2017) assertion on alienation, where it was stated that

whenever individuals find their environment (either the work place or the whole society) unable to provide opportunities for the satisfaction of self-actualization needs through the expression of their potentialities, they become self-estranged – meaning that they tend to become alienated from the same environment they found themselves. This poses a great threat to that same environment. This is because the victims of this circumstance tend to get radicalized and become violent while trying to restore their own dignity. As such, terrorists do not just attack; they have motives, inducements and motivations (Ajayi, 2006, p. 133).

In like manner, the Blauner (1964) assertion on alienation and terrorism could be better understood through the understanding of Frantz Fanon's experience with alienation, which he depicted in his book written in 1952 and titled *Black Skin, White Mask*, in which he analyzed the alienated black from psychological, social, and philosophical perspectives extended from his experience in his own country, and which applied to the blacks who were exposed to white racists; and how they overcame this oppression of the Whites over the Blacks through violence. Thus, this study seeks to find out if the emergence and persistence of the Boko Haram terrorist group can be explained in terms of Frantz Fanon's theory of alienation.

### **Conceptual Problem**

Frantz Fanon in his theory of alienation, exposed the nexus between alienation and terrorism, how it informed the emergence of terrorism and its implication on Nigerian state. Frantz Fanon in his theory advanced that the alienation of a people, nurse violence in the mind of the people, which eventually unite a group of people of likeminds and push them into acts of violence, thus termed terrorism. This informed the establishment of various terrorist sects in Nigeria and globally. The Boko Haram in Nigeria, whose religion is predicated on social justice, rose in defiance of bad governance against the people and in defence of the people; having been exposed to so many socio-economic and political decadence in

the Nigerian society at the North eastern region. This has brought about lots of killings, maiming, destruction of properties and alike.

Ideally, the relationship between government and citizens, especially in a democracy is defined in terms of mutual trust and reciprocal relations built on the principle of political obligation. A government that is responsible and responsive to the needs of its people tends to enjoy the affective support of its citizens. When citizens are satisfied with the performance of their government, they tend to give their support to and trust their government. However, it seems this has not been the case with Nigeria presently. It is apparent that wrong economic policies, mismanagement of the economy, ethnicity, religious bigotry and corruption, orchestrated and perpetrated by both military and civilian regimes have dashed the hopes for good governance and left millions of Nigerians acutely despondent, disillusioned, frustrated and alienated from the socio-economic and political system. Thus, this study advanced that it is trite that the root cause of Boko Haram terrorism be perceived and also considered, as that is the most significant measure towards enabling the government in curbing Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria.

### **Conceptual Clarifications**

**Alienation:** Melvin Seeman (1959), identifies five psycho-social pathologies associated with the concept of alienation. These are powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation and self-estrangement. According to Ndlovu (2017) Seeman views these psycho-social modes of being within the analytical framework of three other related concepts namely, 'reward value', 'behaviour' and 'expectancy'. Seeman (1959, p. 786) views alienation as a 'low expectancy', that satisfactory predictions about future outcomes of 'behaviour can be made". This view could be analysed as a condition in which the individual has lost control over the physical world as well as the understanding of social events, thus, his ability to act

appropriately in any given situation diminishes, therefore, resulting in him/her becoming alienated.

Furthermore, Overend (1975), analysed the concept of alienation in terms of its locutionary power. It is a distinction made between what the term refers to “being what the term denotes” and what “the term connotes” (Overend, p. 1975, 304). Thus, having analysed the various contexts (for example, in Theology, Philosophy and Sociology) in which the term has been used, Overend has developed the following identity statements:

- a. Alienation is the separation of man [humanity] from the citizen body.
- b. Alienation is the loss or derangement of mental faculties.
- c. Alienation is the universal saleability (Hobbes, Adam Smith).
- d. Alienation is the separation of mind from its essence, (Hegel).
- e. Alienation is reification, through religion, of man’s essence (Feuerbach).
- f. Alienation is the separation/estrangement of man from nature.
- g. Alienation is the separation/estrangement of man from himself.
- h. Alienation is the separation/estrangement of man from production.
- i. Alienation is the separation/estrangement of man from other men (Overend 1975, pp. 308-309).

Therefore, from all indication, Overend deduces that alienation is related to the following conditions: “separation’, ‘saleability’, ‘reification’, and ‘estrangement’” (Ndlovu, 2017). Furthermore, a popular conception of alienation emerged many years ago. This analyses alienation as separation or estrangement.

Alienation as separation or estrangement, has been a topic of discourse by diverse group of scholars. For example, Marx sees it as a useful way of conceiving of alienation, in that, it provides a general understanding from which other related concepts can be derived. The transfer of title to property, for instance, entails a separation of the owner from his property. The loss of control over

social events reflects the fact that the individual has lost the ability to enforce certain outcomes in familiar situations.

Thus, mental derangement, for example, involves an absolute separation of the individual from his ability to exercise his rational faculties. Buchanan's (1979) conception of alienation views the idea of exploitation as constitutive of alienation in Marx. At the heart of Buchanan's analysis lies the idea that bourgeois social relations in general are exploitative. He does not want to confine alienation narrowly within the production process but extends it to the broader society. Buchanan (1979) thus rejects as 'mistaken' commentaries that emphasise exploitation in Marx as limited only to 'the labour process itself'. For Buchanan, exploitation is central to bourgeois social relations in general and that on its own it does not constitute a form of injustice. However, what is disconcerting for Buchanan is that, in capitalist societies the owners of the means of production appropriate and exploit the creative energy of the working class for their own material gain.

This means that the ability to exploit (wage-labour) presupposes the possession of power by the capitalist over the worker, that is, the possession of coercive power. In other words, the workers are being compelled or forced to work since they are left with no choice but to submit to the capitalist who owns the means of production. Thus, exploitation, coupled with force and coercion, constitutes the necessary conditions for alienation which, according to Buchanan, underpins the labour process.

The view of alienation as separation is also supported by Richard Schacht (1970). He notes that for alienation to occur, a previous condition of unity must have existed. In other words, to be alienated, is to be separated from something, someone or a group of people. Therefore, we can deduce from Schacht (1970) that regardless of how the separation comes about, for alienation to occur, there must be disunity between things or beings that once belonged or ought to belong together. To some degree, this notion

is also present in Fanon's understanding of alienation as demonstrated in the discussion that follows.

Fanon's concept of alienation is also in line with many of the elements of alienation identified above. From the above discussion, alienation has been likened to separation (or estrangement) and exploitation. This view is particularly present in the Marxian critique of bourgeois society. However, for Marx, alienation becomes the separation or estrangement of the proletariat from the product of his labour, fellow workers, work activity itself and from himself. This is also the theory upon which both Buchanan (1979) and Schacht (1970) build their theories of alienation upon in relation to modern society. Fanon, too, becomes interested in Marx's theory of alienation as separation and as exploitation. But for him, the concern is with the alienation of the colonized black subject. This means that for Fanon, race becomes the focal point of analysis. Accordingly, Fanon (1963) observes that through the system of colonialism, blacks are separated or estranged from their potentials as complete human beings. Furthermore, through this system, blacks are economically exploited and the products of their labour separated from them as these are shipped to the colonial powers in Europe.

Fanon (1963) asserts that Europe succeeded in controlling the Third World through its military power and by denigrating the Third World so as to justify its own existence. It rebukes and depreciates all the Third World's civilization as one. It did not differentiate between one nation and the other (Hamel, 2011). For example, the Negro is a Negro, and the Arab is an Arab. It divided the world into two - the European world and the Third World. Colonialism created division through the control of the state, the economies, and the institutions, and it developed until it penetrated the individual. It possessed the state, resources, and institutions, and also determined and applied the constitution and the laws. It imposed a specific pattern on the colonized nation and affected deeply the internal structure of it. At the end it possessed the entire



infrastructure to create that pattern of the colonized state, that pattern of the colonized individual.

As a black radical intellectual writing at the zeitgeist of colonialism and metropolitan racism, Fanon's concern is primarily with the alienation of colonised Blacks and Arabs in the Third World, particularly in Africa. Alienation, particularly the type experienced by blacks, was his central preoccupation. He thus sets out on an intellectual endeavor to study and understand the situation of life as lived by colonized people in a white dominated world. In this endeavor, he produces four works, *Black Skin White Masks*, *The Wretched of the Earth*, *A Dying Colonialism* and *Towards the African Revolution*, which was published post-humously. The theme of alienation in these works features prominently. However, as noted above, literature on the notion of alienation in Fanon reflects a preponderance towards socio-economic alienation, psychological, cultural alienation or a combination of these. This is true of scholars such as Hussein Bulhan (1985); David Caute (1970); and Jock McCulloch (1983) to mention but a few.

These forms of alienation as enumerated above are addressed by Fanon, albeit in varying degrees, in all his major texts. For instance, he declares at the beginning of *Black Skin White Masks* that "The analysis that I am undertaking is psychological" (Fanon, 1967a: 4) and continues asserting that "This book is a clinical study" (1967a: 5), which suggests a strictly psychological treatment of what is to follow. This, however, does not restrict him from addressing alienation philosophically in the same text. For example, the chapter titled "The Fact of Blackness" is one in which Fanon employs existential phenomenological concepts to render one of the sharpest critiques of the situation or 'fact' of being black in a white man's world. This is later followed by the famous section: "The Negro and Hegel" in which as a response to Hegel, Fanon treats the problem of recognition in a profoundly philosophical frame.

The issue of racism, as Fanon experienced it, was a betrayal of the assimilationist ideology of French colonization. Despite his education in the metropolitan capital, he realized that he was nothing more than a black colonial subject constructed to serve the ends of the white colonizers: "I resolved," he wrote, "to assert myself as a BLACK MAN. Since the other hesitated to recognize me, there remained only one solution: to make myself known" (Fanon, 1994a). Fanon thought it wise that for him to be known was to remove the white mask of the so-called European norm and show his true face - a black face, the face of a man who would, like any other man, white or black, reject oppression, pain, and suffering. Race and the oppression associated with it were found with a number of other important themes in Fanon's work, including gender. Fanon indeed made a giant stride in focusing on the interrelationship of race, gender, and nationalism. Unlike many writers of his time, Fanon (1963) paid special attention to women's oppression under the traditional Algerian patriarchal structure, which was exacerbated by repressive colonial policies. For example, his explanation of the use of the veil by Muslim women is guided by his awareness of multiple meanings: on the one hand, the veil signals women's exclusion from political life; on the other hand, it served as a symbol of resistance in the struggle against colonial domination.

Frantz Fanon was able to note the radical implication of women taking up "the ha'i'k (outer gown covering the entire body), thus affirming that it was not true that woman liberated herself at the invitation of France and of General de Gaulle" (Fanon, 1994b, p. 62). And he was eloquent in his awareness of how women suffered in the war for independence: "In Algerian society stories were told of women who in ever greater number suffered death and imprisonment in order that an independent Algeria might be born" (Fanon, 1994b, pp. 107-8). In the end, Fanon's defense of women's agency was hamstrung by his residual belief in the constraining customs and norms of patriarchy.

Terrorism: According to Riley and Hoffman (1996) few words have been as promiscuously used or have assumed as pejorative connotation as terrorism. In their view, this is because “some governments ... label as terrorists, all violence committed by their political opponents, whereas anti-government extremists frequently claim to be the victims of government terror. What is called terrorism, thus, often seems to depend on one's point of view (Riley & Hoffman, 1996, p. 2). The second difficulty in defining terrorism is in agreeing on a basis for determining when the use of violence is legitimate. Therefore, conceptualizations of terrorism are inherently controversial because the use of violence for the achievement of political ends is common to state and non-state groups.

Ajayi (2009) also contributes to the debate by asserting that the difficulty in defining terrorism stems from the contradictory conceptualizations of the term terrorism by states, analysts and terrorists. The Author posits that to the state authority, “terrorism is the premeditated threat or use of violence by subnational groups or clandestine individuals intended to intimidate and coerce outcomes and inculcate fear among the public at large” (Ajayi, 2009, p. 112). With this definition, it could be deduced that terrorism is violent-related actions performed by some groups or a group while trying to enforce the actualization of their dreams or visions from states of the globe. On the other hand, analysts view terrorism as an antisocial behavior which poses great threats to peaceful daily life; in other words, the violent actions orchestrated during terrorism affects lives and properties. While terrorists see the word terrorism as a misnomer because they believe that their acts are justified, and that they are delivering a political message to the authorities. Just as the case of 11<sup>th</sup> September (an attack on the United States of America) by Osama Bin Laden. Therefore, terrorists are said not to see themselves as terrorists but as nationalists, liberators, freedom fighters, emancipators and revolutionaries. Aware of this partisanship in the conceptualization

of terrorism, this study shall review and adopt conceptualizations of terrorism that view ideas and violent acts by both the state and non-state actors as prejudicial to the wellbeing of society, whether these are propagated or executed inside or outside the borders of a state. The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 49/60 (adopted on December 9, 1994) titled “Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism” describes terrorism as:

Criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes are in any circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic religious or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them.

In a related vein, but hammering more directly at the physical consequences of terrorism, a UN panel on March 17, 2005 described terrorism as any act intended to cause death or serious injury to civilians or non-combatants with the sole intent to intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act. In a similar but more detailed manner, the 1999 Organization of Africa Unity’s Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism held in Algiers provides that a terrorist act refers to;

- a. Any act which is a violation of the criminal laws of a state party and which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to, any person any number or group of persons or cause or may cause damage to public or private property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage and its calculated, or intended to;
  - i. Intimidate, put in fear, force or coerce or induce any government, body, institution, the general public or any segment thereof, to do or abstain from doing any act, or to adopt or abandon a particular standpoint, or to act according to certain principles; or
  - ii. Disrupt any public service, the delivery of any essential service to the public or to create a public emergency; or

- iii. Create general insurrection in a state
- b. Any promotion, sponsoring, contribution to, command, aid, incitement, encouragement, attempt, threat, conspiracy, organizing, or procurement of any person, with the intent to commit any act referred to in a(i) and a(iii)

The European Union (2002) defines terrorism for legal/official purposes in Article 1 of the framework Decision on Combating Terrorism with a focus largely on serious criminal offences against persons and property domestically or internationally. The European Union States that given their nature or context, terrorist acts;

may seriously damage a country or an international organization where committed with the aim of seriously intimidating a population, or unduly compelling a government or international organization to perform or abstain from performing any act; or seriously destabilizing or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organization.

In the view of Riley and Hoffman (1996), terrorism is violence or the threat of violence calculated to create an atmosphere of fear and alarm. These acts are designed to coerce others into taking actions they would otherwise not undertake or to refrain from taking actions that they desire to take. The authors maintain that following are characteristic of terrorism;

- i. All terrorist acts are crimes and that many would be violations of the rules of war, if a state of war exists.
- ii. This violence or threat of violence is generally directed against civilian targets
- iii. The motives of all terrorist actions are political and terrorist actions are generally carried out in a way that will achieve maximum publicity.
- iv. The perpetrators are members of an organized group, and unlike other criminals, they often claim credit for their acts; and

- v. Terrorist acts are intended to produce effects beyond the immediate physical damage they cause by having long-term psychological repercussions on a particular target audience. The fear created by terrorists for example, may be intended to cause people to exaggerate the strength of the terrorists and the importance of their cause, to provoke governmental over-reaction to discourage dissent, or simply to intimidate and thereby, enforce compliance with their demands.

Riley and Hoffman (1996) further buttresses that terrorists differ from ordinary criminals because the latter uses short term terror to achieve his goals, be it brandishing a knife in front of a mugging victim or using a gun in a bank robbery. But the purpose of the criminal act does not go beyond the act itself or the acquisition of money and other valuables. The terrorist act is different in that the violence employed is not only in pursuit of some long-range political goal but is designed to have far-reaching psychological repercussions on a particular target audience.

To Ajayi (2009, p. 112) “the most prominent feature of terrorism is the use of violence, often accompanied by the wanton destruction of property, and maiming and killing of victims”. This view sees terrorism purely from the point of view of the use of violence and the negative consequences that it produces. Oloo (2009) views terrorism as violent acts against a civilian population by state or non-state actors irrespective of their political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic and religious motives or it is violence or the threat of violence, calculated to create an atmosphere of fear and alarm. This definition implies that terrorism is not just about physical harm and injury to property but also encompasses ideas that result into these acts. It also indicates that terrorism is carried out by diverse actors to actualize different motives.

The Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence (CCCEPV) (2018); (2016) uses the term terrorism to embody radicalization, radicalization to violence and

violent extremism. Radicalization is a process by which an individual or a group gradually adopts extreme positions or ideologies that are opposed to the status quo and challenge mainstream ideas. Radicalization to violence occurs when a person or group takes on extremist ideas and co-opt the use of violence to support or advance their ideas or beliefs. These beliefs could be traced from a wide spectrum of ideologies, including political and religious ideologies.

Violent extremism is a term describing the beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve extreme ideological, religious or political goals. The three concepts taken together imply that terrorism begins with radicalization of ideas and consummates with the actual use of violence against humans with the intention to cause death and create fear.

According to Imobighe (2009, p. 15), "terrorism represents the indiscriminate and random use of different levels of violence against an opponent or the ancillary interests of such an opponent with whom one has an adversarial relationship, in order to strike fear into the latter and impose one's will on the opponent or tailor the opponents' actions towards a desired goal". Imobighe (2009) further explains that there are four critical elements of terrorism. These are the environment of terrorism, the nature of the actions associated with terrorism, the target of terrorist actions and the objectives for such actions. Terrorism occurs in an environment of conflict and discord, and hence, it is a violent mode of response to a conflictual relationship. The target of terrorism is not limited to the parties directly involved in the conflictual relationship, but includes everybody directly or remotely associated with the principal actors or combatants. The objectives of terrorism are varied and not always political. In addition, Imobighe (2009) states that the practice of visiting the sins of a target enemy on the latter's relations or associates is what has made many innocent people the victims of terrorism.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This study adopted Frantz Fanon's theory of alienation in the analysis of the relationship between alienation and Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria. Fanon's theory of alienation captures the ontology of colonialism in the third world societies, the psychological crisis that the colonial project precipitated as well as the search for freedom through revolutionary violence. The theory states that colonial state is alien, exploitative, violent and oppressive, which leads to alienation of the colonized peoples, and more fundamentally, activates the consciousness to enforce change through the instrumentality of the greater use of violence.

In applying Fanon's theory of alienation to the analysis of alienation and Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria, it could be deduced that what connects Fanon's theory to the analysis of contemporary domestic terrorism by non-state actors is the fact that it theorizes the colonial state as alien, exploitative, violent and oppressive which leads to alienation of the colonized peoples, and more fundamentally, activates the consciousness to enforce change through the instrumentality of the greater use of violence. Thus, while Nigeria purports to be a democratic state, its credentials as a result of the attitude of the leadership or various administrations, approximate to the colonial regime which had little or no value placed on the people. What has therefore, happened since Nigeria's independence is the fact that direct foreign domination has ended while the ideology and praxis of contemporary democratic governance in Nigeria has continued to display the characteristics of the colonial state and its accompanying alienation. The persistence of this unfortunate trajectory makes imperative the need to find out if the current pathology of the Nigerian state accounts for alienation and by extension, Boko haram insurgency. The persistence of the contradictions of the colonial state into the post-colonial era, especially in the current democratic process and the proliferation of terrorist groups provides justification for the



appropriation of Fanon's theory of alienation in the analysis of terrorism and insecurity in Nigeria.

It became obvious that Nigerian leadership over the years has comprised of majority of self-centred elites who go after various positions of governance for their own selfish gains. Corruption became the order of the day. The nation's resources became a scramble for the more powerful. Thereby, robbing Nigerians of their essence of social contract with the nation. Thus this scenario explains the Frantz Fanon's theory of alienation with the emergence and persistence of Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria.

### **Alienation and the Rise of Terrorism**

Since the inception of global terrorism and the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States (World Trade Centre), terrorism has been seen as an evil perpetuated by the Islamic extremists. This is because terrorism research is highly politicized and is affected by various lies and propagandas, which emanated from the mainstream media, especially the government-owned media who obey and aid the actualisation of the aims and objectives of their masters. Thus, some scholars side with the mainstream media and emphasize the factors that are not important and turn a blind eye to factors that are actually significant (Morteza, 2017). The Islamic religion's role on greatly influencing the rise of terrorism, is one of the factors that have been extremely overemphasized; and this has downplayed the socio-economic factors that can be seen as one of the root causes of this dastardly act, over the years. Without doubt, the role of Wahhabism and Jihadism as ideologies behind violent Islamist extremism should not be dismissed but their role needs to be carefully examined. When these factors are regarded as the sole cause of terrorism and violent extremism, then this omits central or root causes (Morteza, 2017). Therefore, statements such as "when one has been nursed on the mother's milk of hatred and bitterness, the need for vengeance is bred in the bone" (Post, 2007, p. 37) do not help with understanding the issues of terrorism but

encourage securitization which, in turn, create further complications (Vermeulen, 2014). Thus succinctly put, the “blame it on Islam” approach is just a simplification of the homegrown terrorism and violent Islamist extremism.

Morteza (2017) asserts that the “blame it on Islam” approach does not reject the role of Jihadism, but argues that Islam is not a root cause and root causes should be sought in social conditions that individuals, more especially those with immigrant background experience in their everyday life. This approach offers a complicated multidisciplinary framework by combining international relations, political economy, political sociology and political psychology. In exploring the root causes of terrorism, it was deduced that they are the factors that can both objectively and subjectively radicalize young Muslim immigrants who are excluded from the socio-economic activities of the very society they found themselves. Adopting Blauner (1964) in Morteza (2017) assertion on alienation, it is observed that whenever individuals find their environment (either the work place or the whole society) unable to provide opportunities for the satisfaction of self-actualization needs through the expression of their potentialities, they become self-estranged – meaning that they tend to become alienated from the same environment they found themselves. This poses a great threat to that same environment. This is because the victims of this circumstance tend to get radicalized and become violent while trying to restore their own dignity. Meanwhile, the term “radicalization” is the standard expression most scholars use to explain the process that distinguishes individuals who join terrorist organizations from the rest in their community (Morteza, 2017).

From the foregoing, it suffices that when an individual has a deficient relation to oneself, to others and to the world then that individual is alienated (Jaeggi, 2014, p. 5). An alienated environment is where individuals find their beings as insignificant, meaningless and impoverished. A place which is not their home,

they don't have any influence over it and they are merely passive objects of the external world (Jaeggi, 2014). Thus, it could be argued that "alienation is typically associated with isolation, hopelessness, powerlessness, loss, anxiety, frustration, despair, and/or loneliness. These sensations arise because the individual explicitly perceives and experiences some sort of disconnection between his perception of what/who he is and what/who he thinks he should be" (Rae, 2011, p. 1-2). It is obvious that the resultant effect of these sensations is violence, which could engender terrorism. To buttress this fact, Seymour Melman (2001) explored the idea that a root cause of terrorism was the terrorists' alienation, i.e. their relatively lack of power and their attempt to secure power, even vicariously, i.e. through promises of rewards in the afterlife or rewards to their relatives after martyrdom.

To further expantiate on the nexus between alienation and the rise of terrorism, this study has gone a long way in adopting some issues relative to this discourse. First of all, it should be noted that the United Nations have under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme, made consistent efforts in finding the root cause of global terrorism. One of the key 'unequivocal' findings of the UNDP Report of 2017 was that economic factors can be significant drivers, with economic exclusion, unemployment and limited opportunities for upward mobility leading to alienation or frustration, which can result in radicalization leading to violent extremism (UNDP, 2017, p. 5). High numbers of educated, frustrated young individuals without jobs, who developed the feelings of being disenfranchised, is an issue in many developing countries that may fuel grievances. Marke (2007, p. 7) while assessing young individuals not engaged in meaningful employment, determined that they are more likely to engage in activities that draw the attention of the political elite to their plight, with this argument being supportive of the position adopted by Ikejiaku who has argued that when youths can no longer cope with

their lack of basic needs, they display a higher tendency to react by engaging in violent extremist behaviour (Ikejiaku, 2009, p. 22).

Indeed, statistical data suggests the existence of a strong correlation between violence and income inequality (Dixon, 2009). Unemployment provides a fertile ground for recruitment by violent extremist organizations since they can provide a route out of poverty with economic opportunities that are not readily available through more legitimate means. For example, it is reported that Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) can pay (or at least offers to pay) its fighters US\$500 a month which can act as an attractive inducement to uneducated, unskilled, rural and unemployed men and women (UNDP, 2016), though in practice the actual payment received by recruits is often much lower (UNDP, 2017, p. 5). This fact aside, the basic premise is that economic deprivation acts as a major pull factor towards terrorism.

The World Bank's economics-based analysis, within its 2016 study, the Economic and Social Inclusion to Prevent Violent Extremism, on the supply of violent extremists, provides an interesting insight into the relationship between economic opportunity and terrorism (World Bank Middle East and North Africa Region, MENA Economic Monitor, 2016, p. 11). This study seemingly built on the work of Sandler and Enders, who utilized economic theory to argue that an individual would act as a rational person and decide to undertake violent extremist activity after weighing the costs and benefits of undertaking that action (Sandler & Enders, 2004, p. 301). In this regard, the World Bank went on to suggest that indicators of economic exclusion predicted higher rates of radicalization due to the associated low opportunity cost of undertaking violent extremist acts, and that those excluded would likely have more grievances with the State. Also, the UNDP Report (2017, p. 5) suggested that "if an individual was studying or working, it emerged that he or she would be less likely to become a member of an extremist organization", with employment being

the single most commonly raised 'immediate issue' for those recruited by violent extremist groups.

Furthermore, it would be incorrect to suggest that lack of educational or employment opportunities are the only factors at play or that they are always present. A number of the most high-profile terrorist attacks have been perpetrated by highly educated (e.g., graduates of university degree programmes and/or (advanced) professional training) individuals, such as the terrorist pilots who carried out the 9/11 attacks, in addition to the former leader of al Qaeda, Osama bin Laden, himself (Bangladesh Peace Observatory, 2017). Thus, there are other factors such as marginalization and discrimination.

Marginalization and discrimination have long been recognized as factors that can act as a driver towards violent extremism, as is illustrated by the 'troubles' in Northern Ireland between the 1960s and 1980s especially (Bonner, 1992, p. 173). Typically, as Silke identified in this context, before an individual was prepared to partake in violent activities, he/she first had to belong to a section of society which perceived itself as being marginalized. He further suggested that if such a marginalized group was discriminated against, "there will always be those within such communities who will be receptive to radical ideologies" (Silke, 2003, p. 39). Critically, marginalization may result in an individual losing his vested interest in the maintenance of that society, thereby resulting in such marginalization acting as a driver towards violent extremism. The United Nations Secretary-General identified gender inequality, marginalization, alienation and discrimination as primary drivers of violent extremism. Though diversity in and of itself does not make countries more (or less) vulnerable to violent extremism, when one group has exclusive control of political and economic sectors at the expense of other groups, this may result in increased intercommunal tensions, gender inequality, marginalization, alienation and discrimination. This may take different forms, such as restricted access to public services, job

opportunities, obstructions to regional development and freedom of religion, which may further fuel resentment on top of any existing frustrations attributable to other drivers such as socio-economic inequalities and deprivations (UN General Assembly report A/70/674, para. 26).

Alternatively, growing diversity in an increasingly interconnected world can in and of itself arouse feelings of fear and anger, e.g., where benefits that were previously bestowed to a particular group or community are now distributed among larger groups which may be accompanied by a reduction of benefits compared to what was available previously (UNODC, 2018). This could be seen from the ongoing migrant crisis and in the Nigeria case, the 13% counterpart funding of the Niger Delta States in Nigeria. When some people feel that diversity threatens their interests or safety it can lead to intercommunal tensions resulting in the rejection rather than embracing of diversity. This is considered by some to be an at least partial explanation for the rise of far right-wing nationalist groups in Europe in response to the ongoing migrant crisis (Steinmayr, 2017, p. 24). Closely related to this can be a general sense of disenfranchisement from the societies that these people live in; sentiments that can be further heightened through factors such as little or no political inclusion, limitations on freedom of expression and shrinking civic space. Underdeveloped and inexperienced civil societies, such as those in 'transitioning States' (e.g., out of conflict or more authoritarian regimes), are often unable to adequately channel people's frustrations into constructive communication in response to such frustrations. Even in countries with a strong civil society, feelings of alienation by particular groups may lead individuals to reject available open platforms (safe spaces) to express their feelings and views in favour of alternative venues with 'like-minded' (frustrated) people, or else to live in isolation (UNDP, 2016, p. 20-21). The accompanying perceptions of disempowerment and disenfranchisement, especially when they develop over extended

time periods, can draw some towards terrorism (UNDP, 2016, p. 21).

Terrorist groups are masters at exploiting increasing global economic inequalities together with the sense of injustice stemming from the current socio-economic and political system. They offer ideological alternatives to the narrative of free markets, democracy and multicultural diversity, namely ones that offer empowerment, order and security, with violence as a tool for imposing this view on wider society (UNDP, 2016, p. 21). All this said, however, no 'hard' or fixed conclusions may be drawn regarding the effect of disenfranchisement on recruitment by these groups. For instance, as cases of terrorism committed in Myanmar and India reveal, these are often carried out by the majoritarian communities which do not generally suffer from such sentiments of disenfranchisement (McPherson, 2016).

Alienation could also be seen from the way the entire world approach counterterrorism attacks. This issue of counterterrorism has placed a stigma on the Islamic communities globally and thus have caused so much hatred towards them thereby igniting furious reprisals in the minds of Muslims. Vermeulen (2014) after conducting field studies in London, Amsterdam and Berlin, concluded that this counter-terrorism strategy has reverse effects and can possibly contribute to the growth of terrorism since it results in more exclusion, marginalization, and stigmatization because the entire Muslim community is treated differently from the rest of the society. Although neither the EU nor nation-states explicitly identify homegrown terrorism as a religious (Islamic) problem, creating suspect communities shows that they are unconsciously deploying this approach (Vermeulen, 2014). By focusing on failed integration as a root cause, it is trite to state that if European countries can achieve functional integration programs, then terrorism and violent extremism to a great extent can be prevented. The notion of exclusion is a key in this argument because, according to this approach, immigrants are economically,

socially and politically excluded from the societies globally (Newman, 2006).

## **The Relationship between Alienation and Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria**

Earlier in this study, it was disclosed that alienation is of two forms; the first form, being that an individual experiences a state of separation, ceases to identify with the social, political and cultural institutions, that it is not intentional and above all that it is rather imposed. This form of alienation has really been the major form of alienation that is characterized with terrorism. This is because, the person who it was never his intention to be alienated, will always choose the path of violence to restore himself back to his usual statusquo; and this is exactly the case with Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria. Meagher (2014) clarified this having noted that following alleged links with Borno State politicians in the run-up to the 2003 elections, relations turned sour when the elected governor failed to follow up on promises to implement full sharia law, leading to increasingly vitriolic and bloody clashes with the state (ICG, 2014). Thus, in the event of Boko Haram sect trying to establish their influence on the then government of the day, towards redeeming the nation they sought for violence when they feel alienated from the governance of the nation.

Several analysts have advanced the view that poverty, longstanding economic disparities within Nigeria Adesoji (2010); and structural violence Walker (2012), are key factors underlying the Boko Haram terrorism. Buttressing the aforementioned assertion, Olojo (2013) opines that one significant factor that has stimulated the drive towards violent extremism, recruitment and support for Boko Haram is economic deprivation. He further states that abject poverty and economic dislocation of livelihoods have drastically reduced the options of many young Nigerians in the northern region. Thus, individual and group grievances, such as poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, discrimination, and economic



marginalisation, can be used as mobilising instruments by sinister groups to find support and recruits for terrorist violence (Briscoe & Van Ginkel, 2013). For example, in May 2013, the Nigerian government released dozens of women and teenagers previously detained as relatives of suspected Boko Haram members. Among the youths were individuals who confessed to previously accepting payments of 5,000 Nigerian Naira from Boko Haram militants, who in turn provided them with kegs of fuel to set schools ablaze in Maiduguri, Borno State (Ibrahim & Matazu, 2013). Furthermore, according to Meagher (2014) "Yusuf attracted followers through his fiery rejection of the corrupt secular state while building a community based on sharia principles and the provision of basic needs. Boko Haram offered one meal a day, arranged low-cost marriages, and provided loans for petty commercial activities, thus offering basic social dignity to the poor and unemployed". This is indicative of the economic desperation expressed by thousands of youths who have been rendered vulnerable by the shortcomings of Nigeria's leadership over several decades.

Therefore, as the state has failed in the execution of her critical roles, citizens and communities have organised themselves and sought for ways towards providing these basic social services such as water and electricity for themselves, at least most of the time. There is so much insecurity of lives and property due to high violent crime rates. Neighbourhoods and communities provide their own security and safety, sometimes by hiring ethnic militia group members. Deepening poverty and lack of state support have frustrated citizens and driven some to crime. Many have also joined social enclaves based on religious fundamentalism, cultism, and banditry, primordial enclaves such as communal, ethnic, religious and regional groups, and political enclaves such as patronage and violent networks in search of platforms for social assistance (Ikelegbe, 2010). Moreso, the politics of exclusion and the use of the state mainly to demonstrate and deprive excluded groups of political participation and benefits have heightened ethnic

nationalism, self-determination struggles and identity conflicts, and produced ethnic militias in almost all regions, as well as violent and militia-based insurgency...since the late 1990; sufficient to induce resistance (Ikelegbe, 2010). This milieu is the context for, and the enabler(s) of the phenomena of Boko Haram in Nigeria.

Uadiale (2012) further reiterates that the emergence of a nebulous neo-militant Islamist movement in the eastern part of northern Nigeria in 2001, and subsequent transformation of this movement are linked with the dissatisfaction associated with the weak economic base of the contemporary Nigeria economy, which is characterized by poverty, deteriorating social services and infrastructure, educational backwardness, rising number of unemployed graduates, massive numbers of unemployed youths, dwindling fortunes in agriculture, and the weak and dwindling productive base of the northern economy. According to this movement, the current democratic enterprise had produced a set of political leaders who lead by deception and sloganeering of Islamic revivalism to mobilized and capture support by claiming to be re-introducing Islamic legal principles, despite a massive collapse of services, poverty, failed governance, absence of social justice and a fair electoral process that produced consensus candidates that lack legitimacy (Uadiale, 2012).

Usman (2015) in a bid to theoretically drive home the scholarly postulations on the factors responsible for the violence attacks of Boko Haram on the inhabitants of Northern Nigeria, revealed inequity manifesting in Nigeria. According to him, there is tremendous concern over the unequal ownership and distribution of the means of production that bifurcated society into two antagonistic classes - the class of 'haves' and 'have-nots', the pauperized and the wealthy, the working class/proletariat and the bourgeoisie. He asserts that conflict, insecurity and instability such that depicts Boko Haram insurgency in northern Nigeria arises out of the life and death struggle between two dominant socio-economic classes. On one hand is the class of those who control the

means of production vis-a-vis the state power and on the other, those who rely on their labour for survival - the bourgeoisie and the proletariat or poor masses. While it is true that few wealthy people, have been identified of having links with the Islamic sect (the claim which has not been confirmed by any court of law in Nigeria), it has also been confirmed that quite significant number of Boko Haram members are drawn from those within the lower rung of the society (Usman, 2015). This point is reinforced by Danjibo (Obiyan & Usman, 2013) who, held the view that the Boko Haram crises broke out due to failure of governance in Nigeria to halt extreme poverty especially among the youths of Northern extraction. Buttressing this point, Mallam Hussaini Salisu, an Islamic cleric, cautioned that "the level of frustration and poverty among youths in the country is a fertile ground for activities of such groups; their conduct is totally un-Islamic but the whole problem boils down to the failure of government at all levels to make the welfare of the citizenry a priority. A nation that allows its youths to be idle is sitting on a time bomb because frustrated people seek relief in religion" (Usman, 2015).

Ted Robert Gurr, in his book, *Why Men Rebel* (Gurr, 1970) pointedly explicated that instead of an absolute standard of deprivation, a gap between expected and achieved welfare leads men to discontent and eventual violence. He argues that relative deprivation is the term used to denote the "tension that develops from a discrepancy between the "ought" and the "is" of collective value satisfaction, and that disposes men to violence". This gap between an individual's expected and achieved welfare results in collective discontent. To Gurr (1970) violence and extremism like the Boko Haram insurgency in the North is as a result of collective discontent caused by a sense of relative deprivation or alienation by the young people who contrary to believe that democracy will improve their living conditions worsened it off. In his assertion, Obi (2008, p. 7) noted that "the high expectations of the people that democracy would reverse decades of poverty, corruption and

underdevelopment have hardly been met by the new democrats". This ultimately created feelings of alienation and impulse to form a rebel group and undertake senseless terror attacks on both the innocent citizens and government.

Aristotle articulated the idea that revolution and other actions such as terrorism are driven by a relative sense or feeling of inequality, rather than a natural instinct (Richardson, 2011). In other words, the impulse to attack or desire terrorism by (young) people stems from a discrepancy between what people perceived are theirs or considered to be legitimately theirs but are deprived of getting by others. Invariably, Gurr (1970) believes that this perceived discrepancy between value expectations and value capabilities is what leads to discontent rather than seeing instinct to become violent as a natural reaction. This deprivation engenders frustration that eventually leads to aggression in form of terrorism and other violent conflicts.

In Gurr's analysis, the primary source of the human capacity for violence appears to be the frustration-aggression mechanism; the anger induced by frustration is a motivating force that disposes men to aggression, irrespective of its instrumentalities (Gurr, 1970). This view was supported by Dollard et al. (1939) who postulated that frustration leads men to act aggressively. Therefore, Richardson (2011) argued that while frustration is caused by relative deprivation, the resulting aggression is manifested as terrorism. He linked high unemployment rates and poverty with terrorism. To him, when a large group of highly or better qualified educated individuals enter the work force and levels of unemployment are high, the individuals may feel over-qualified for the nature of work being employed to do and disappointed with the remunerations thereof, as it is meagre when compared with what they expected to gain from their education. Presumably individuals pursue higher education with the expectation that additional studies or training will help them find better jobs. As a result, well-educated individuals may feel greater dissatisfaction

from unemployment than those who did not expect such grand employment opportunities. This socio-economic dissatisfaction, in turn, may result in political violence.

Similarly, Feierabends and Nesvold (1971) said that, "systemic frustration leads to aggression, that is, the frustration collectively experienced by the members of a polity and which is caused by the political system under which they live induces the tendency to resort to political aggression". According to this theory, if group of individuals experience any form of frustration collectively, and as such, this condition and state of mind is perceived to result from the policies and actions of the government, it may likely prompt them to challenge and perhaps remove the source of discontent. In this light, the contention of Feinberg in Ojo (2010, p. 45) who said "a world with equal rights is a more just world. It is also a less dangerous world, generally, a large army of unemployed vagabonds roam around the streets paying the dues of discipleship by begging and scavenging.

These are ready to get involved and even perpetrate violence for a token. I visited a Catholic hospital in Kaduna shortly after one of the religious crises occurred. I met some admitted Almajiri who had been seriously injured during the crisis. One of them who had lost his limb was in deep pain and was crying with the words: "why should this happen to me? Now I have lost my life because of N200". Upon further inquiry, the victim revealed that a large number of them (the Almajiri) were given some money to go perpetrate violence.

According to *Aljazeera* report cited by Danjibo (n.d) it was stated that the eruption of Boko Haram violence extremism is fuelled by the fact that Nigeria, one of the largest producers of oil in the world has its vast bulk of the population live below the poverty line of one U.S. Dollar a day. While the paper maintained earlier that poverty and unemployment have the entire country in their firm grips, it is apt to argue that Northern Nigeria, the enclave of dreaded Islamic sect called Boko Haram, is the worst hit.

Again, former governor of the CBN, and the present Governor of Anambra State, Prof. Charles Soludo, made no pretense about this when his statistics revealed that whereas the North-Central recorded 67% of people living below the poverty line, the North-West and the North-East recorded 71.1 and 72.2% respectively.

Instructively, while the tearing of certificates and renunciation of studentship from tertiary institutions by some graduates and students of University of Maiduguri, Ramat and Federal Polytechnics in Borno and Yobe states respectively (Onuoha, 2010; Danjibo, n .d) to join Boko Haram could be attributable to brainwashing of the affected people by extremists, the failure of Nigerian government to provide employment to many graduates among them who were (and are still) roaming the streets in search of unavailable job opportunities provide justification for this action. Although, there is extent to which one can emphasize the point on poverty and unemployment as reasons terrorist tendencies become attractive to many. This is because, there have been reported cases of those from wealthy background like Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab yielding to terrorist inclination. The emergence of Boko Haram in North-East Nigeria could also be as a result of alleged age-long quest of core Northern Nigeria to Islamize the entire Nigerian state. This line of argument was supported by Adesoji (2010) who remarked that the Boko Haram uprising was a manifestation of ambition of certain conservative elements in the core northern region of the country to achieve Islamic revivalism in Nigeria. He specifically said that "the Boko Haram uprising of July 2009 was significant in that it not only set a precedent, but also reinforced the attempts by Islamic conservative elements at imposing a variant of Islamic religious ideology on a secular state" (Adesoji, 2010, p. 95). This revival was fuelled by escalation of extremism of similar terror groups as being currently witnessed by Sunni Arabs in the Middle East and the Maghreb like the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Al-Shabab operating in Somalia and Kenya.

Nonetheless, it is not unlikely that those educated youths who tore their university degree certificates and withdrew from institutions of higher learning to demonstrate their loyalty to the sect, could have done that out of frustration. Supporting this line of thinking, Danjibo (n. d) observed that,

One can imagine the frustration for a young man or woman who had graduated from the university and could not secure job years after graduation. For such a person, Western education will ever remain valueless. As a matter of fact, such youths live in a country where education is treated with much disdain and where the educated are insignificant, but where uneducated political bandits are assigned status privilege.

Corroborating Danjibo's viewpoint, Wright (2006, p. 123), writing on incidence of rising extremism in the Arab world, argued that,

Radicalism usually prospers in the gap between rising expectations and declining opportunities. This is especially true where the population is young, idle, and bred; where art is impoverished; where entertainment - movies, theatre, music - is policed or absent altogether; and where young men are set apart from the consoling and socializing presence of women. Adult illiteracy remained the norm in many Arab countries. Unemployment was among the highest in the developing world. Anger, resentment, and humiliation spurred young Arabs to search for dramatic remedies.

Today, considering the vast number of educated graduates roaming the streets in the country, education which hitherto promised greater future and opportunities to many has lost its relevance because to them, it failed to provide jobs to them. In this regard, the argument of Teshome (2008, in Ucha 2010) who contended that "education, once seen as the surest, undisputed gateway to employment, no longer looks so certain" juxtaposes this thinking. Arguing from this premise, Ucha (2010, p. 127) noted that:

The fact that you are an educated Nigerian is no guarantee that you will be employed...Unemployment-induced poverty tends to increase the crime rate and violence in the country. Most unemployed youths resort to crimes such as armed

robbery, kidnapping for ransom, internet fraud and other forms of fraudulent activities. The reservation wage they get from these activities is typically barely enough to take care of their basic necessities.

Perhaps, the above reasons explain the terrorist attraction to many young people in the Northern part of the country. It is no doubt that unemployment and poverty are conspicuous in Nigeria especially in the Northern Region. To this end, Ucha (2010, p. 128) argued that "in Nigeria, widespread and severe poverty is a reality. It is a reality that depicts a lack of food, clothes, education and other basic amenities. Severely poor people lack the most basic necessities of life to a degree that it can be wondered how they manage to survive". He went further to posit that,

Many graduates in Nigeria wander the streets without anything reasonable to do for a living. The government is capable but unwilling to provide jobs for them. Employment in Nigeria is usually not based on merit but depends on how connected you are with people that have power. This leaves many highly qualified people in poverty as seemingly no one cares to know what they are capable of achieving. These people are missing out on the income they would have got if they were employed. The number of quality jobs in the economy is low and many government resources are misallocated.

In his submission on the susceptibility of Northern Nigeria to the garb of religious extremism and fanaticism, Usman cited in Danjibo (n.d), averred that economic hardship and denial of basic necessities triggered by bad governance are responsible. Commenting on the resort of the young people to terrorist persuasion, Salisu reasoned that,

The level of frustration and poverty among youths in the country is a fertile ground for activities of such like Boko Haram... Their conduct is totally un-Islamic but the whole problem boils down to the failure of government at all levels to make the welfare of the citizenry a priority... A nation that allows its youths to be idle is sitting on a time bomb because frustrated people seek relief in religion (Usman, 2015).



In the second form of alienation, the individual himself surrenders or transfers his rights to someone else. "It involves a conscious surrender with the intention of securing a desired end: namely, unity with the social substance" (Schacht 1970, p. 36). It is imperative to note that many conflicts are linked to local issues and often exploited by the political and sometimes religious elite for selfish ends (Uadiale, 2012). These local issues include; political differences, economic deprivations and disputes over ownership, management and control of natural resources, have played the most important roles. Indeed, there are many who are of the opinion that economic deprivation is often at the centre of many of these conflicts and that politicians have only exploited the whole situation to their selfish advantage (Alao, 2010).

The major issue in this form is the alliance between this group and the politicians in the country. It is believed that members of the Boko Haram group are closely connected to state governors and that the resources sustaining their activities came from the state (Uadiale, 2012). The leaders of these groups are normally loyal to one or two powerful political figures that are rich. They are used as pawns in political power games. This group (Boko Haram) was well known to government officials since its formation in 2002. They are not secret societies and they preach openly in their mosques. However, successive governments chose to ignore them (Alao, 2010). So, like the Maitatsine before it, the Boko Haram group had informal links with key politicians who assist their activities. For instance, after Mohammed Yusuf was arrested, he was later killed in a police custody on the ground that he was trying to escape. This has, however, been contradicted by other reports. What is widely believed in the country is that he was killed because his powerful friends in government would have ensured his release if he were to be spared and put in jail (Uadiale, 2012). As there had been previous cases of arrest and detention which ultimately resulted in his release because of his powerful connection with those in government (Alao, 2010).

## Conclusion

It is worthy of note that systemic frustration leads to aggression. Thus, the acts of terrorism perpetuated by the Boko Haram sect, although not justifiable, was provoked by gross negligence and incompetence of the Nigerian government. This was exactly same scenario with the Frantz Fanon's era; during which the Blacks were subdued by the Whites and subjugated to tremendous hardship – even in Africa.

Thus, it suffices that when a group of individuals experience any form of frustration collectively, and as such, this condition and state of mind is perceived to result from the policies and actions of the government, it may likely prompt them to challenge and perhaps remove the source of discontent. Therefore, it could be seen from this study that there is a cogent relationship between alienation and Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria.

It suffices that Boko Haram which means “western education is evil” was instituted to curb the leadership ills or failures in Nigeria. It became obvious that Boko Haram terrorism firstly targeted their fellow Islamic faithfuls as a result of the fact that the attitudes of these Islamic elites flout the fundamentals of Islam, which is based on social justice. Thus, the emergence of Islamic fundamentalists to curb corruption, leadership and social ills, etc. Therefore, this study recommend that, the government of Nigeria should endeavor to explore the Islamic fundamentals of social justice and bring it fore into Nigerian leadership.

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