

Between the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Boko Haram in Nigeria: A Study in Political Islam and Democratic Consolidation in Africa

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Abstract

Democratic consolidation implies the internalization of democratic principles, culture, ethos and values. It also implies the strengthening of political institutions and structures in societies that aspire to sustain democracy. The activities of Islamic groups such as The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Boko Haram in Nigeria seem to negate these time tested principles in the democratic transition of their respective countries. This paper therefore examines in a historical and comparative manner the intervention and activities of these two Islamic groups in the democratic consolidation of their respective countries. It posits that the organizational effectiveness of the Muslim Brotherhood in the capture of political power is a lesson from which Boko Haram and other Islamist groups can learn and argues that irrespective of their seeming failures in engendering and expanding the democratic space in their respective countries, Islam has within its tradition prescriptions that can assist Africa’s democracy beyond the present dominant liberal democratic paradigm. It concludes that unless democratic governance consciously ministers to the needs of the majority by guaranteeing the happiness of the greatest number of people, the liberal democratic paradigm already imposed on African countries where people vote without choosing cannot subsist for long.

Keywords: Political Islam, Democracy, Consolidation, Fundamentalism

Introduction

For over two centuries and indeed more recently after the cold war, the West has waged an intensive and sustained propaganda war against Islam. The Islamic faith is often erroneously and derogatively equated with backwardness, primitiveness, fanaticism, fundamentalism, extremism, tyranny, theocracy and terrorism. So long, deep and pervasive is this Western disdain for Islam that Earnest Renan in his inaugural lecture at the College de France in 1862 opines that

Islam is the complete negation of Europe... Islam is the disdain of science, the suppression of civil society; it is the appalling simplicity of the Semitic spirit, restricting the human mind, closing it to all delicate ideas, to all refined sentiments, to all rational research, in order to keep it facing an eternal tautology: God is God. (cf. Kurzman, 1998:3)

This kind of assertion is either ignorant of the tenets, principles and philosophy of Islam or deliberately ignore Islamic traditions and jurisprudence that are opposed to theocracy, fundamentalism, extremism, terrorism and which invariably support democratic rights, guarantees the rights of women and non-Muslims in Islamic countries. These traditions also propagate the defense of freedom of thought, fundamental human rights, and social justice as a basis for human progress and societal emancipation. These are to a large extent the cardinal principles of democracy.

In the last two decades, democracy especially the liberal democratic variants have received accolades all over the world as the most enduring system of government which offers the best prospect for a participatory, responsive, predictable and peaceful governance. It has also been taunted as the only form of government that can guarantee human freedom and safeguard fundamental human rights through free and fair, regular, and competitive multi-party elections with universal suffrage.

Lofty as all of these encomiums purred on liberal democracy are, it seems to have produced the exact opposite in most African countries that have embarked on democratization. The dominant narratives of the democratic experiment in Africa are those of unbridled electoral competition characterized by electoral fraud such as rigging, vote buying, snatching of ballot boxes, violence, political repression and oppression, political intolerance, exclusion, vicious authoritarianism, pervasive and endemic corruption, excruciating poverty, decaying infrastructure and mass unemployment. But by far the greatest problem of 'liberal democracy in Africa is the partial displacement of state by informal communities, ethnic and religious groups as well as nationalities' (Ake, 1994:6).

The failure of the state is evident in its inability to provide basic needs and amenities such as eradication of poverty, gainful employment, food, shelter etc. The consequences are that it has provided the fertile grounds for ethnic militias, irredentist groups and fundamentalist religious organizations such as the Ikwaan ul-Muslimeen (The Muslim Brothers) and the Jamaati ahli Sunnah li dawati wa Jihad (Boko Haram) to recruit membership into their folds by providing these essential services which otherwise would have been provided by a truly democratically constituted state. For example, the Muslim Brothers success has come largely out of its 'ability to occupy the public space left vacant by failing state institutions such as schools and hospitals as well as its members' organizational prowess and willingness to sacrifice' (Crisis Group, 2008:3)

Properly conceived however, democracy should engender popular empowerment. It should aim at providing happiness for the greatest number of people. For it to be able to do this, it must emphasize the twin principles of participation and accountability from the rulers and the ruled. When people participate freely and actively without any overt or covert hindrance in the political process by demanding both vertical and horizontal accountability from elected officers, and ensuring that political actors and gladiators play by the rules of the game, democracy can then be said to be on the verge of being consolidated.

From the foregoing, the objectives of this paper are to examine the roles of The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Boko Haram in Nigeria in the democratization process in their respective countries and also to espouse notions of democracy that are embedded in the Islamic traditions that can assist to develop democracy in Africa beyond the present liberal democratic paradigm. The tentative assumption is that despite the claims of these two groups to political Islam, The Muslim Brotherhood differ from Boko Haram because since its inception, it has been a potent actor and factor in the political and electoral development of Egypt, unlike Boko Haram, whose trade in stock has been the senseless killing of innocent people and wanton destruction of property without any desire or preparedness to engage the political process and system in the manner which the Muslim Brotherhood has done. The rest of the paper is divided into three parts which are the conceptual and theoretical concerns of the paper, Political Islam and the dynamics of democratization, examination of The Muslim Brotherhood and Boko Haram's Democratic credentials as well as recommendations and conclusion.

Conceptual and Theoretical Concern

Political Islam refers to movements desirous of political change and believes that Islam is not only a religion but also a political, social, legal and economic doctrine which should be applied in the governance and administration of any political community. Rababa'a (2012:41) opines that political Islam can be identified as a group of thoughts and political objectives springing from Islamic law (sharia), used by a group of Muslims called "fundamentalist Moslems" who believe that Islam is not only a religion, but also a political, social, legal and economic order qualified to build institutions of a state. On his part, Demant (2006:89) observes that Muslims worldwide are generally returning to religion and within this trend exist a growing minority identified with a politicized, anti-western, anti-modern reading of their religion called Islamism.

Political Islam and Islamism are often used interchangeably. Among the Islamists further exists a minority who endorses the use of violence and terrorism against the West to attain their goal of establishing a caliphate with Sharia as its guiding legal and political principles. In their quest to establish Islam as a societal norm and political organization, political Islamist construct a counter cultural space that is progressively immune to state control and constitutes a recruitment ground for religious worship, exegesis and sometimes Islamic indoctrination rooted in the Sharia which is regarded as the totality of God's command that regulates the life of every Muslim in all aspects regarding worship, social relations, rituals as well as political and legal issues (Schacht, 1979: 392).

Fuller (2003:21) avers that political Islam refers to the 'support for (Muslim) identity, authenticity, broader regionalism, revivalism and the revitalization of the (Muslim) community'. More politically, it is understood as "an Islamic militant, anti-democratic movement bearing a holistic vision of Islam whose final aim is the restoration of the Caliphate". Political Islamists believe that the culture of Islam did not evolve nor was it created by the Muslims as a people. It is a divine guidance handed over to them by their creator. They therefore assume that the Islamic culture was put in place by Allah to distinguish Muslims from other religious adherents and to guide their attitudes, values,

traditions, politics and other related ways of life so that they do not go astray during their sojourn on earth.

For the non-Muslims however, it becomes difficult to understand this rigid and strict adherence to some 'archaic' injunctions. There is therefore not only a widespread ignorance about Islam on their part, there is also an entrenched reluctance to see Islam in a more positive and favourable way. People are thus often surprised when you explain to them that Islam is a religion of peace and that the Quran does not advocate the indiscriminate killing of people (infidel) or the propagation of the Islamic faith by sword. The unwillingness to understand the classical and pristine precepts of the religion has strengthened the image of Islam and Muslims as a religion and a people to be feared and fought. (Esposito, 2010:3)

Since Huntington (1991) published his seminal work on the "Third Wave of Democratization" intellectual engagement with the concept of democracy has increased tremendously. As military and authoritarian regimes in Africa and most developing countries began to give way to the idea of democracy, the task of understanding and properly conceptualizing the concept has become controversial as there are several variants of democracy. Tocqueville says that if democracy is not properly defined, people will live in an inextricable confusion of ideas; much to the advantage of demagogues and despots. Democracy has somewhat become a moral concept with regimes laying claim to it for the sake of survival without any commitment to its ideal. It therefore becomes very difficult for an agreement to be reached on the concept because of the diverse political regimes and systems that lay claim to democracy without being genuinely democratic (Owolabi 1999:4)

However, Ake (2000) argues that "the trivialization of democracy often occurred under the cover of clarifying a supposedly complex or confusing concept but he was quick to caution that there is nothing complex or confusing about the concept of democracy. In his view 'for a political concept, democracy is uncharacteristically precise' for him, it means popular power or government of the people, for the people by the people' (Ake, 2000:7). In a democracy (Dunn, 1993) opines that the people (The Demos), its human members, decide what is to be done and in so deciding they take their destiny firmly into their hands. The power and appeal of democracy comes from the idea of autonomy of choosing freely for oneself (cf. Jega, 2005:3). Meanwhile, properly conceived, democracy implies a system of government in which every individual freely participates in the process of governance either maximally as a member of the majority or minimally as part of the minority. Therefore, the principle of participation and accountability are the essential defining attribute of democracy (Owolabi, 1999:6)

However, over the years, the potency of democracy as popular empowerment of the people through political participation have been whittle down by the notions of representative democracy or liberal democracy with emphasis on electoral competition, rule of law, constitutionalism, safeguard of fundamental human rights and civil liberties. Dahl (1989) perceptively argues that "Democracy is instrumental to freedom in three ways". First, free and fair elections inherently require certain political right of expression,

organization and opposition and these fundamental political rights are unlikely to exist in isolation from broader civil liberties. Second, democracy maximizes opportunities for self-determination, for persons to live under laws of their own choosing” and third, it facilitates moral autonomy, the ability of each individual citizen to make normative choices and thus to be self-governing (cf. Diamond, 1999:3)

It is instructive to note that equating democracy with electoral, representative or liberal democracy can be misleading. Ake (2000:9) asserts that liberal democracy is markedly different from democracy even though it has significant affinities to it. He pointed out that:

Instead of the collectivity, liberal democracy focuses on the individual whose claims are ultimately placed above those of the collectivity. It replaces government by the people with government by the consent of the people. Instead of the sovereignty of the people, it offers sovereignty of law.

For a clearer and proper conceptualization of democracy, it is important to indicate that what democracy is cannot be separated from what democracy should be. Democracy exists only in so far as its ideals and values bring it to being (Sartori, 1987:7). What then is democratic consolidation? Asiwaju, (2000) opines that democratic consolidation implies the internationalization of democratic culture and the institutionalization of democratic “best practices” by a polity that has successfully embarked on a democratic transition (cf. Babawale, 2003:212). It is a truism that democracy can only be consolidated when political actors restrain from unbridled and unconscionable challenge of the legitimacy of democratic institutions while not regularly violating constitutional and electoral norms, procedures, rules and laws.

Democratic consolidation refers to a deep, unquestioned, routinized commitment to democracy and its procedures at the elite and mass levels. It involves a reduction in the uncertainty of democracy, regarding not so much the outcomes as the rules and methods of political competition. Consolidation includes not only agreement on the rules of competing for power but also fundamental and self-enforcing restraints on the exercise of power (Diamond, 1999:69-70). Meanwhile, there are basically three challenges which all new and emerging democracies must confront and surmount. They are democratic deepening, political institutionalization and regime performance. Within these broad challenges, Diamond, (1999) identified economic performance, political performance in terms of freedom and order, state strengthening, political institutionalization in terms of representation and governance, political institutionalization in terms of horizontal accountability and the rule of law, decentralization, civil military relations, managing ethnic conflicts, civil society in terms of interest representation and civil society in terms of vertical accountability and democratic deepening (Diamond, 1999:73-116). Indeed, only when electoral outcomes are uncertain as they are unpredictable i.e. when today’s winners are tomorrow’s losers only then can we begin to talk about democratic consolidation in any society (Diamond, 1999).

In constructing a theoretical perspective, this paper adopts an eclectic theoretical framework focusing on Social Identity theory (SID), the Structure, Chance and Choice (SCC) theory, and the Marxist theory of state. The three theories are combined in such a way that one theory complements the identified limitations in the other so as to give a holistic analysis and explanation of the phenomenon under study. Herriot (2007) opines that “there appears to be no other theoretical perspective which offers an inclusive and powerful explanation for the whole range of fundamentalist phenomenon as does Social Identity theory” (Herriot, 2007:25). While this opinion sounds exaggerated, it is important to examine the main postulations of the theory. Social Identity theory asserts that “people define and evaluate themselves in terms of groups to which they belong”. To that extent, according to (Herriot, 2007:26) “they see themselves as having a social identity. Often times they will state assertively “I am a pious and faithful Muslim and God has chosen me to do His will. I am a Bible believing Baptist and God have reserved a place for me in Heaven”

Social identity has to do with human behaviour which relates to the formation of groups. Put differently, they regulate and motivate the behaviour of group members. Such behaviour may include conformity with the group and the cohesion within it, stereotyping of members of other groups; favouritism towards members of one’s own group and discrimination against members of other groups. For example, the typical fundamentalist movement requires a high level of conformity among its members to its behavioural, values and norms (BVNs) and its benefits from the cohesion that results. Fundamentalists treat members of the mainstream religion from which they emerged as faithless apostates. Members of fundamentalist groups regard themselves as uniquely blessed, and treat others as inferior (Herriot 2007). A born again believer for example, will perceive others in terms of their belief or lack of it.

The Social Identity Theory tells only one side of the story because the theory concentrates on explaining why people join or belong to fundamentalist groups without taking into consideration the historical development of a society in terms of the nature of state, the class relations within a society, the character of the ruling elite as well as the plural nature of the society which may lure people into ethno-religious groups. It is in this regard that we augment this theory with the Structure, Chance and Choice (SCC) theory put forward by Almond, Appleby and Sivan (2003), where they posit that there are three conditions under which fundamentalist group emerge and grow. They are first, long term contextual or structural conditions, two, contingent chance factors, and three, the particularities of human choice and leadership. By structural explanation, Almond et al (2003: 118) refers to large and long term contextual factors such as social class and status, wealth, income distribution, and social rank, the organization and penetration of the state such as education and its content and distribution, cultural and sub-cultural differences. By Chance, they refer to short-term contingent variables such as fluctuations in productivity, trade, international and domestic security etc. By Choice; they refer to the creativity of leadership (or their decline in creativity and to collective psychic responses of one kind or another. This approach designates “religious leaders” as the players in founding and shaping fundamentalist groups.

The centrality of religious leaders is germane to the germination of fundamentalism because, from their various privilege locations in the community they jettison certain interpretations of sacred texts and practices and legitimize others. Thus, a given leader inclined towards extremism thereby nurtures the characteristic traits and elements of fundamentalism within the sector(s) of the religious community over which he exercises authority. In addition, structural factors such as structural unemployment may create a pool of potential recruits while people who feel relative deprivation because of inconsistencies between status and income may express grievances through a fundamentalist movement. These may be joined by persecuted ethnic groups, dislocated people, victims of war, or migrants looking for identity and community. Chance influences the size and social location. For example, an area where a riot or strike has recently galvanized the population or some part of it will be a fertile recruiting ground for fundamentalist members.

Much more specifically, the importance of Western imperialism, slavery and colonialism cannot be overestimated in the explanation of the emergence of fundamentalist groups especially in the Third World. Fundamentalism appeals to those that are influenced by international events that create grievances such as wars and their aftermath, unfavourable terms of trade and global economic fluctuations which often harm Third World economies” (Almond et al 2003:132)

Although from the foregoing, the “Structure, Chance and Choice” theory offers a seemingly persuasive explanation of fundamentalism in the World, it is evident that this explanation is limited to the extent that it fails to underscore the critical role which the nature and character of a state can play in the growth of fundamentalism in any society. It is in this regards that we complement this explanation with the Marxist Theory of the state. The Marxist theory of the state pioneered by Marx and Engels assume that the state is a product of the “irreconcilability of class antagonism” occasioned by capitalism. Indeed, Marx and Engels argue that the state is “nothing more than the form of organization which the bourgeoisie necessarily adopt both for internal and external purposes, for the mutual guarantee of their property and interests” (cf. Hay, 2006:67).

From the extant literature on the Marxist theory of state, two main strands can be identified and they are the instrumentalists and the structuralists perspectives. For the instrumentalists, the state is nothing but an instrument in the hands of the ruling class for the preservation of their class interest and the domination of the masses. Sweezy (1942:243, Hay, 2006) strengthens this argument when he posits that the state is “an instrument in the hands of the ruling class for enforcing and guaranteeing the stability of the class structure itself” (Hay, 2006:61) This they often did either directly through the exercise of state power by people who wields such powers or indirectly through the manipulation of state policies in the interest of the ruling class. The state is also understood as the repressive organ of the bourgeois capitalist ruling class and function only in the interest, preservation and perpetuation of the class.

Still within the Marxian paradigm Alavi (1972) identifies three attributes of the post-colonial state and these are; its being overdeveloped relative to the society, it enjoys relative autonomy and intervenes widely in the economy. While Alavi’s argument of the post-colonial state being overdeveloped has been challenged on empirical and theoretical

fronts, Alavi's explanation offers an incisive insight into the workings of post-colonial states especially in Africa. In this regard, Ake (1996) opines that the state in Africa was unusually 'statist' and that this colonial creation with its attributes of 'absolutism and arbitrariness' were inherited by the ruling elites at independence. As captured by Ake (1996: 129)

In most African countries, there is really no state, liberal or autocratic. What exists is a public force that should be the state but that is nominally so, because it is essentially privatized... the so-called state is not able to rise above the struggles and conflicts of contending social groups. It becomes itself a contested terrain where contending parties vie for the appropriation of resources, including the power of the state

From the foregoing analysis, it is evident that the nature and the character of the state will to a large extent determine the nature of democratic practices especially as it relates to the contestation for power. The Social Identity theory offers insight into the twists and turns in the making of fundamentalist movements and organizations. The Structure, Chance and Choice theory when applied to Africa helps us to understand the history and structure of Africa and how this predisposes the continent to fundamentalist agitation taking into cognizance the structure of the state, the legitimacy of its institutions, the leadership composition, the level of political participation, the degree of partisan polarization and the nature of politics. The theory is also useful for our analysis because it recognizes the importance of situational variable which could trigger the rise or decline of fundamentalist groups. The limitation of the theory is that it fails to recognize the role which the state can play in the manipulation of religion for selfish or sectional interest. This is where the Marxist theory of state comes in handy in order to fill this gap and complement the two initially mentioned theories.

Political Islam and the Dynamics of Democratization in Africa

This section is devoted to understanding the roles which political Islamist organizations have played or are playing in the democratization and indeed democratic consolidation of their respective countries. The two organizations under study are The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Boko Haram in Nigeria. Right from its formation, in the city of Ismailia, Egypt in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna, the Muslim Brotherhood was unequivocal and made no pretenses about the fact that it was a religious and social organization. This is evident in the most frequently chanted slogan of the Brotherhood which is "Islam is the solution". Another well popularized slogan of the organization is "Allah is our objective, the Prophet our leader, The Quran our Law, Jihad is our way, dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope". The goals of the Brotherhood as elucidated by its founder are to "instill the Quran and Sunnah" as the sole reference point for ordering the Muslim life, the family, community and the state. It is also "to reclaim Islam's manifest destiny of an empire stretching from Spain to Indonesia".

It is the belief of Hassan al-Banna, that contemporary Islam had lost its relevance and social dominance because most Muslims had been corrupted by western influences therefore as its influence grew in Egypt among the people, the Brotherhood began to oppose British rule in country since 1936 (Brynjar 2006:53). The Brotherhood thus aim at the introduction of the Islamic Sharia as "the basis for controlling the affairs of the state

and society and secondly, to work assiduously to unify Islamic countries and states, mainly among the Arab states and liberating them from foreign imperialism

The Muslim Brotherhood generates funds through contributions from members who are required to allocate a certain percentage of their income which they donate to the purse of the organization. From this quantum of resources, the Brotherhood engages in Islamic evangelism including rabid preaching of Islam, establishing humanitarian and even philanthropic activities such as educating the illiterates, building and setting up of hospitals, schools and creating employment by engaging in profitable and flourishing commercial enterprises (Brynjar, 2006:53).

The history of Boko Haram is not as long and chequered as that of The Muslim Brotherhood, even though it has been suggested that this group (Boko Haram) draws a lot of inspiration from the Muslim Brotherhood. Unlike the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt however, the Boko Haram has a recent history. Formed around 2002 with no discernable ideological agenda by Mohammad Yusuf who hails from the village of Nai'yah in the Yunusari region in Gashua Province of Yobe State in Northern Nigeria, have been preaching Islam in the Northern part of the country ever since (Murtada, 2012:5).

Prior to the formation of Boko Haram, there existed another group called the "Muslim Brotherhood" known in local Hausa parlance as (Yan Brotherhood) under the leadership of Ibraheem az-Zakzaky in 1980. The Brotherhood had mass appeal amongst the youths of Northern Nigeria. Mohammad Yussuf, who later became the leader of Boko Haram was one of them. Zakzaky's movement was known for his "emotional rhetoric's and enthusiasm against the Nigerian state in the name of Islam". The Muslim Brotherhood in Nigeria fractured into several groups and this encouraged Mohammed Yussuf to become associated with another group known as the Jama'atu ul-izalat al-Bida wa-Iqamat us-Sunnah (Society devoted to the extermination of innovations and the propagation of Sunnah).

The disagreement in this group now encouraged Mohammad to continue his preaching with a group of students and followers until they formed the now known Jama'atu ahli-Sunnah li dawati wa Jihad popularly known as Boko Haram (Murtada, 2012:6). The name Boko Haram is derived from a combination of the Hausa word 'Boko' which means 'Book' and the Arabic word 'Haram' which means 'something forbidden, ungodly or sinful'. Literally translated it means "Book is sinful", but its deeper meaning is that Western education is sinful, sacrilegious, or ungodly and should therefore be forbidden (Adesoji, 2011:106). Little wonder that the sect was not only opposed to, but out rightly rejected western education, western culture and modern science.

It embraced and advocated the propagation of and strict adherence to the teachings, tenets and doctrines of Islam by everyone. Its objective was the adoption and imposition of Sharia in Nigeria. The Boko Haram group received financial supports from within and outside Nigeria. Unlike the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt which had an organized system of revenue collection from its members, the Boko Haram in Nigeria rely on handouts from businessmen, prominent politicians and their wealthy supporters or

sympathizers. One of the most prominent financiers was Alhaji Bugi Foi, a former commissioner in Borno State. The motivation for the support they received from their financiers includes belief in the group's cause, given the level of persuasion, the desire to promote and propagate the religion and sowing for future goodwill (Adesoji, 2011:107)

It is important to point out that the fierce and uncompromising teaching of Islam and his evangelistic activities pitched Mohammed Yussuf against some powerful individuals within the state. His unassailable anti-western and anti-state stance was also well known. Between 2006 and 2009 the relationship between the group and the state had broken down irretrievably. Thus, the Boko Haram uprising started in Bauchi on the 26th of July 2009 and within four days, the crisis spread to the neighbouring states of Borno, Yobe and Kano. The inability or failure of the police to put down the uprising led to the order by the President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua to the army to crush it.

The Army did, but in the process between 800 and 1000 persons mostly innocent civilians were reportedly killed. Among those killed were the sect's leader Sheikh Mohammad Yussuf, his deputy Abubakar Shekau, his father-in-law, Baba Fugu Mohammed and the sect's Chief financier Alhaji Bugi Foi, a former commissioner for Religious Affairs in Governor Ali Modu Sherif's Borno State government.

What is instructive is that when the Boko Haram insurgency first came to light in 2009, it was a weak, poorly organized inchoate movement. Since then the sect has been transformed into a powerful organization posing serious threat to national security with an impressive strategic strike capability such as bombing of the United Nations Office, the Police headquarter, the This Day Newspapers headquarters all in Abuja, other military and prison formations as well as churches and other places of worship. The group's transformation has been made possible by a more determined, better educated and committed leadership within the Islamic group.

Political Islam and Democratic Consolidation in Africa: An Analysis of the Muslim Brotherhood and Boko Haram

Egypt like Nigeria is yet to achieve democratic consolidation. The two countries, like most African countries are largely in deficit when it comes to issues of democratic deepening, political institutionalization and regime performance. In terms of democratic deepening, the two countries have long histories of military rule and some form of military dictatorship and their democratization process, the two of them are yet to be free from the vices of electoral manipulation, vote buying, electoral malpractices, violence and contested electoral outcomes. In terms of political institutionalization, state institutions are also yet to be accepted as legitimate in the two countries, as the principles of role differentiation and role routinization is yet to be achieved. As for regime performance, mass poverty, decaying infrastructure and high unemployment rates in the two countries remain eloquent testimonies of the failure of the successive regimes in the both countries.

The woeful performance of these regimes in the two countries has increased fundamentalist agitations as depicted by the activities of The Muslim Brotherhood and that of Boko Haram. These Islamic groups are of the opinion that if the secular democratic arrangements can fail to guarantee happiness for the greatest number of people, then there is the need to seek divine intervention through the struggle for the enthronement of an Islamic state governed by the Sharia. They therefore sought the replacement of the liberal democratic paradigm with notions of democracy within the Islamic tradition. What then are the democratic prescriptions that can assist Africa in its democratization process?

The first is that, Islamic democracy thrives on the notion of *Shura* which refers to consultation and consensus. Given the sharply divided nature of African societies along ethnic and religious lines, a democracy founded on consensus which is akin to consociation would better serve the interest of Africa better than a democratic system founded on the logic of competition and winner takes all. Secondly, the mandatory payment of *zakat*, the poor due, which is one of the fundamental pillars of Islam, will help reduce social inequality, poverty and unemployment. The idea behind the payment of *zakat* in Islam is to redistribute wealth in such a way as to provide for the down trodden and the less privileged in the society. Thirdly, democratic notions in Islam emphasize the collective embedded in the *Ummah* rather than the individual as is the case in liberal democratic paradigm. It prescribes popular empowerment, egalitarianism and social justice. This is made possible because of the subjugation of state sovereignty to the sovereignty of God. In the words of Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, the qualities of an Islamic state are;

To take care of the citizens, to deal kindly with the subjects, to dispense justice in the affairs of the people, to avoid taking anything from the people's property in an improper way and to adopt moderation.... to safeguard public peace, to enforce rule of law, to propagate education, to produce energy, to arrange for the safeguard of the public health, to take care of public interest, to increase investment, to save property and wealth being wasted, to build character of the people on righteous lines and to spread the message (cf. Hawwa, 1985:56)

Although, both the Muslim Brotherhood and the Boko Haram groups have been declared terrorist organization in their respective countries despite the Muslim Brotherhood's insistence that it is a peaceful organization, alluding to its participation and winning democratic elections, its leaders have consistently renounced and condemn violent acts. In terms of its democratic credentials, the Muslim Brotherhood supported the Egyptian Revolution of 1952 but was implicated in the assassination attempt on the Egyptian president. The organization was banned; some of its members were arrested, tried and jailed. The Brotherhood suffered the worst form of repression during this period.

During the era of President Hosni Mubarak, the Muslim Brotherhood was the single largest opposition group that made demands for Islamic reforms and the

democratization of Egypt. According to the Middle East/North Africa Report published in 2008, the Society of Muslim Brothers participated in the 2005 elections for the People's Assembly. The report avers that "the Society of Muslim Brothers success in the November-December 2005 elections for the People's Assembly sent shock-waves through Egypt's political system. In response, the regime cracked down on the Movement, harassed other political rivals and reversed its fledgling reform process" (Crisis Group, 2008:1). In the same report, the Group pointed out that:

The society emerged the uncontested strategic victor in the People's Assembly elections, winning 88 of the 180 seats it contested (out of a total of 444). Over five times the seventeen it had won in 2000. It achieved this despite considerable security interference, fraud in the polls' second and third rounds (as well as) mass arrests of campaign staff (Crisis Group, 2008:1)

During this period, the Muslim Brotherhood was very active in the parliament, it was credited for its attempt to transform the Egyptian parliament into a real legislative body that represented the genuine interests and aspirations of the citizens and kept the government accountable. More recently during the Arab spring a euphemism for the political uprising which started in Tunisia, a small nation of less than four million people. The uprising was sparked off by "rising food prices, mass youth unemployment and political repression" (Fafowora, 2011:64). The irony was that while the Tunisian economy was growing rapidly during this period, the poor could no longer afford the new prices of bread, just as the middle class had come under severe economic pressure. Indeed, the failure of the Ben Ali's government to redistribute the wealth of the country and tackle the vast income disparity between the poor and the emerging rich political oligarchy, were at the root of the uprising.

Just like the Tunisian economy, Egypt Gross National Product (GNP) had doubled during the Mubarak years this was not unconnected with huge financial and economic assistance from the West especially the United States of America who had remained a strategic ally to Egypt in the Middle East. It is instructive to mention that barely a few days after the collapse of the Ben Ali's government; a similar bloodier mass revolt erupted in Egypt, a country reputed to be the largest and most powerful Arab nation.

The scale of the uprising was unprecedented in the annals of Egypt such that the Egyptian Police had to be pulled off the streets in the three major Egyptian cities of Cairo, Alexandria and Suez. They were replaced by the military with armoured personnel carriers rumbling through the streets of the three cities where the revolt had been intensive. As in Tunisia, the objective conditions for a mass revolt existed because for decades, the growing wealth of the country was not used to improve the lot of the people, the vast majority of which remained poor, with growing mass unemployment especially among university graduates, many of whom were not absorbed into the national economy. The poverty rate had increased in Egypt from 39% to 45% during the Mubarak regime. The gains of the economy have been appropriated by the country's Oligarchy

leaving millions of educated Egyptians in penury and abject poverty. Despite repeated promises by President Mubarak to introduce the much required political and economic reforms; this had not materialized leading to widespread frustration in the country.

As indicated earlier, the Muslim Brotherhood has been in the forefront of opposition to the regime's repressive and authoritarian rule. They therefore demanded for the widening and liberalization of the political space, socio-economic reforms and some form of Islamic rule in Egypt. However, the Muslim Brotherhood has also been accused of propagating anti-democratic and illiberal views in a country with a large non-Muslim minority. But, Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Brotherhood avers that there is nothing wrong if the (Muslim Brotherhood) seeks co-operation from the non-Muslims, when needed and that there is a possibility that The Muslim Brotherhood may enter into a suitable pact with non-Muslims of every region and as a result, further action may be taken on getting power, and The Muslim Brotherhood should observe this agreement as the Prophet had made an agreement with the Jews in Medinah (cf. Hawwa, 1985:59)

The above scenario depicts the context within which Mubarak was swept away by the 2011 revolution in Egypt. Following the revolution, the Muslim Brotherhood launched a new political party called the Freedom and Justice Party which won 235 of the 498 seats in the 2011 parliamentary elections. The Muslim Brotherhood candidate also won the 2012 presidential election. However, the mismanagement of the Muslim Brotherhood's victory in the governance of Egypt led to what has been described as 'democratic reversal' since he could not consolidate the popular mandate he got at the polls. Little wonder therefore that within a very short time, the Egyptian society was largely divided between President Morsi and Muslim Brotherhood supporter and a coalition of Muslims, Coptics and Christians who opposed him. Following another mass uprising President Morsi was dethroned, arrested and detained. While his trial was on going, the military had gone ahead to organize another election for which the head of the military who overthrew Mohammed Morsi contested and won. According to Hafez, (2003: xv):

Muslims become violently militant when they encounter exclusionary state that deny them meaningful access to political institutions and employ indiscriminate repressive policies against their citizens ... political exclusion and state repression unleash a dynamic of radicalization...

Meanwhile, for the Boko Haram group in Nigeria, there is no record of their ever floating any political platform nor any political organization with the semblance of a political party with a view to contesting political power for the advancement of their stated goals and objectives. It is also doubtful whether the organization nurses this kind of ambition either now or in the nearest future. Indeed, since the extra-judicial killing of their leader Mohammad Yussuf, the group has waged a war of attrition against the Nigerian state through suicide bombing, terrorist attacks on strategic buildings and military formations including churches, mosque, newspaper headquarters and prisons.

Recommendations and Conclusion

From the foregoing expose on the democratization process in Egypt and Nigeria, it is clear that both the regime and political actors have not imbibed democratic ethos and precepts especially in dealing with political Islamic groups like the Muslim Brotherhood and Boko Haram. Democratic consolidation also involves the ability of new and fragile democracies to confront the three challenges of democratic deepening, political institutionalization and regime performance. On all of these score, Nigeria and Egypt have performed woefully because the shallower, exclusive, unaccountable and abusive of individual and group rights, whether they are religious fanatics, fundamentalist or Islamists by the incumbent regime whether elected or otherwise, the higher the crisis of legitimation and hence the less tendency for democratic consolidation in the society.

Therefore, if democracy produces nothing other than political repression, exclusion, poverty, unemployment, hunger, wanton corruption, hopelessness, violation of fundamental human rights and violence like any other regime, then the peoples' interest and confidence in the democratic arrangement is only a matter of time. According to Ake (1994:1) asserts that

Africa is democratizing but the democratization occurring in Africa does not appear to be in the least emancipatory. On the contrary, it is legitimizing the disempowerment of the ordinary people who seem to be worse off than they used to be.

In this connection, the people of Africa and especially political Islamist groups like the Muslim Brotherhood and Boko Haram perceive this kind of democratization as a march towards what they call a "second independence" this time not from colonial masters but, from their incompetent and exploitative indigenous rulers (Ake, 1994: 2). In addition, the liberal democratic paradigm with its emphasis on multi-party electoral competition which the West, especially the United States of America and Britain foist on African countries is antithetical to the socio-cultural milieu of the continent. The continent is a plural society sharply divided along ethnic, racial and religious lines. Therefore, multi-party electoral competition appears to be the continuation of civil war by other means. Rather than producing credible, competent and selfless leaders, elections often tend to not only create enduring conflicts; it often tends to exacerbate it. The crisis and wounds that flow from party nominations, electoral campaigns and the aftermath of the election often lingers on with devastating effects for the polity. It is in this connection that we opine that the consultation, consensus and consociational paradigm found within the Islamic tradition can help build enduring democracies in Africa.

On the international scene, liberal democracy cannot also be seen to be in cohabitation with dictators in one part of the world or even in the same region, while condemning and undermining its form in others. The perspective in the Muslim world is that Western governments that pride themselves as the chief advocate of self-determination, freedom and democracy need to demonstrate by their statements, policies and actions that they respect the rights of any and all movements and political parties, whether religious or secular to participate in the political process and win elections in their respective countries. Exposito (2010:148) opines that:

Western hypocrisy demonstrated by the failure to respond to the subversion of the electoral process in Algeria, Tunisia and Musharraf's Pakistan, the attempt "to manage" the process of democratization in post Saddam Iraq, the refusal to recognize democratically elected Hamas government in Palestine and the surreptitious support for the outright removal or subversion of democratically elected governments in the world must be avoided, if the West and America in particular is to avoid the charge that it operates on a clear double standard. Indeed, respect and support for democratic process and human rights have to be seen as truly universal.

Religious fundamentalism is the inevitable product of long period of neglect of the African people by their own rulers; this is accentuated by widespread ignorance, poverty and indoctrination. Africa therefore needs a combination of political and economic programme that should aim at eliminating past social and economic injustice. This may include the redistribution of wealth, reduction of inequality and alleviation of poverty through the institutionalization of the payment of zakat or poor due in line with the dictates of Islam. In this connection, the state in Africa needs to be transformed to wean it of its colonial statist nature just as the political elites shamelessly pride itself on its dependence on the industrialized West for almost every aspect of its pampered existence. Needless to say that such a negative mindset must be jettisoned if Africa is to develop politically and economically. If Africa is to get itself out of the perennial crises that continue to confront it, it must fashion out a development paradigm that enables it to focus on its own efforts. The continent must substantially increase its levels of industrial development, and support it with a well-educated workforce, efficient infrastructure and transparent regulations. To achieve this, the continent's elites will have to be far more patriotic than they are at the present.

Very few countries in Africa seem to have the visionary leadership that is able to clearly enunciate an acceptable notion of national developmental goals and identify the best ways of mobilizing the people for achieving them. This is where cadres from the Muslim Brotherhood and Boko Haram can help in changing the world view of these African leaders. When they shun violence, they would be in a position to advance the cause of their respective people. At a more concrete and fundamental level, more needs to be done to substantially reduce poverty, joblessness, socio-economic and political exclusion that makes it so easy for religious militant groups to recruit followers. The vacuum created by poor governance and widespread corruption is inevitably filled by the rise of religious fundamentalist group. Indeed, peace, tranquility and harmony will certainly be alien in rich countries like Nigeria and Egypt where over seventy percent of the populace lives in abject poverty while the so-called leaders continue to feed fat at their expense.

Finally, Africa must fashion out a democratic paradigm consistent with the peculiarities of Africa such as consensus building, instead of accepting hook line and sinker the liberal paradigm being glorified by the West and its promoters. In this connection, Ake (1994:3) suggests inter alia:

social democracy which goes beyond abstract political rights and takes concrete economic and social rights seriously. It will be a democracy of empowerment which invests heavily in the upliftment of ordinary people so that they can participate effectively in governance and be more competitive in promoting their material interests.

This is consistent with the Islamic notions of democracy with its emphasis on social justice, equity and egalitarianism. Islamic notions of democracy and leadership succession are consensual, consociational and emancipatory with its particular concern for the poor, the needy, the down trodden, orphans, widows and the socially excluded. Indeed, concern for the general well-being of the political community has been a major Quranic theme and is the sole aspiration of most political Islamist, their seeming unorthodox method of achieving these notwithstanding. What violent political Islamist groups and oppressive regimes the world over should realize is that “violence on the basis of religion can terminate lives. It can destroy properties and ruin cities and towns as well as cause dislocations and relocations of people and settlements. But it can never win hearts nor change conviction” (Abbas, 2014:42)

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