

SHIITE'S RESISTANCE IDEOLOGY AND NIGERIA'S SOVEREIGNTY: HOW COMPATIBLE

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Abstract

Relationship between the state and religion can take different forms and dimensions. However, the plurality of Nigerian state makes adoption of official religion impossible. In spite of the foregoing, Nigeria's constitution provides for freedom of religion for all citizens, while the state serves the role of neutral arbiter. Shiite as religious sect, however, has resistance as one of its major ideologies. The resistance ideology entails total allegiance to the leader of the 1979 Iran's revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini or his successor, and confronting any authority that challenges such allegiance. This, coupled with the fact that the major spiritual leader of the sect in Nigeria, Sheikh Ibrahim Yakub Zakzaky, has taken about 40 years nurturing unalloyed, loyal and resolute followers, put the Nigerian state in a dilemma whenever she pushes to stamp her authority on the sect. Often, this leads to loss of innocent lives, destruction of properties and above all disruption of peace and harmony. This paper therefore examines the Shiite resistance ideology and its implications on the Nigerian sovereignty. This is with a view of determining the possibility of the cohabiting of the Nigerian sovereignty and the Shiite resistance ideology in the same territory. Data were collected through Documentary sources and the indepth Interview Method of the Survey Research. Similarly, the Social Movement Theory was adopted by the paper as its guide. It was found that the Shiite doctrine being practiced by the Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky is only one out of the variety of Shiite in Nigeria. Again, unless the Sheikh Zakzaky-led Shiite mellow down their resistance ideology and respect Nigeria's sovereignty by recognising the constituted authorities, clashes of interest would continue to occur. The paper recommends, among others, the need for Nigeria to safeguard her sovereignty at all cost, as failure to do so may lead to anarchy and by extension the collapse of the country.

Keywords: Religion, state, Shiite, resistance, ideology, sovereignty, Nigeria

Introduction

Freedom and principle of equality define the nature of relationship between any given state and religion. Nigeria is one of those states that adopt secularism as guiding principle in its relationship with religious groups. By the virtue of Nigeria's 1999 constitution, as amended, religion is a private venture that citizens have right of choice without the interference of the state. Although there are three major religions in Nigeria - Islam, Christianity and Traditional religion – but they are further divided into sects, largely on account of the interpretation of the various religious scriptures and jurisprudences.

Nigeria, being a secular state, has no qualms with proliferation of religious sects provided they comply with the provisions of her constitution. These provisions, among others, include giving due regards to her sovereignty. Religiously inspired vices, especially terrorism, has however made secular states of the world, Nigeria inclusive, to pay more attention to the matters of religion.

Shiite is one of the religious sects that are being closely followed and monitored by the Nigerian state.

It is important to at this juncture emphasise the fact that there are many Shiite groups in Nigeria. However, the most pronounced is the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN) under the leadership of Sheikh Ibrahim Yakub Zakzaky. It is the Shiite sect that often had violent confrontation with the Nigerian state. The IMN started its public propagation under the banner of "Muslim Brotherhood". The initial ideology was deemphasising sectarianism and promotion of one Islam under the guidance of the Holy Qur'an and Sunna (tradition) of the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (pbuh), (Haruna & Adam, 2017).

Either by design or by accident, the activities of the Muslim Brotherhood got both inspiration and relevance from the 1979 Iranian revolution. Sheikh Zakzaky's prominence began at the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria where he was a student. The Sheikh's preaching every Friday before the commencement of the Juma'at (Friday) prayer was one of the high point of activities on campus in the late 1970s (Haruna & Adam 2017). The weekly preaching focused on the need for the formation of Islamic political system as a way of ensuring good governance in Nigeria and elsewhere in the world (Haruna & Adam 2017).

The foregoing development coincided with the Iranian revolution, led by Ayatollah Khomeini, which succeeded in overthrowing the then Iranian government. This further strengthened the position of Sheikh Zakzaky that the formation of an Islamic political system is possible anywhere in the world, especially in Muslims-dominated countries.

According to Sa'idu et al., (2018), Sheikh Zakzaky did not have any formal contact with the Iranian government until 1980. However, his activities in Nigeria had for long before then endeared him to the Iranian authority. Therefore, as Deputy President (Ameer) International Affairs of the Muslim Students Society of Nigeria (MSSN), Sheikh Zakzaky was invited to Iran for an Islamic function in 1980 and this marked his formal interaction with the Iranian government as well as marked the infiltration of Shiite ideology into the Muslim Brotherhood Movement (Sa'idu et al, 2018).

The resistance ideology of the Shiite was part of the pillars of the Iranian revolution. It demands the adherents to resist any state establishment that is not founded on Islamic principles, particularly those that have ties with "neo-colonialists" and "imperialists", who, according to the Shiites, are responsible for the injustices meted on Muslims throughout the world. By this ideology, the Shiites are not duty bound to respect the authorities of such states even at the expense of their citizenship status. Rather, their allegiance would be for the supreme authority of Iran under the Ayatollah Khomeini or anyone on his throne after his demise (Newman, 2000).

This resistance ideology is not unconnected with the Shiite's Imamate creed. The Imamate belief system entails a leadership philosophy where only twelve (12) progenies of the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (pbuh), are recognised by the Shiite as his only heir-apparent. The first of these twelve Imams is Sayyiduna Aliyu Bn AbiTalib (RA) to the last one Imam Mahdi, who, according to the Shiite, would appear at the end of times to bring justice to the world (Newman, 2000).

Therefore, even the Iranian revolution only revived the long existent resistance ideology of the Shiite, as it started with the leader of all the Shiite Imams, Aliyu Bn Abi Talib who resisted and fought what they called "autocratic" regime of Sayyiduna Mu'awiya Bn Abi Sufyan (one of the Muslim leaders after the demise of the Prophet) and later Aliyu's son, Hussain Bn Aliyu (RA), resisted another "autocratic" regime of Mu'awiya's son, Yazeed Bn Mu'awiya, in what is known

today as the battle of Karbala (Iraq) where Hussain was killed in the war that ensued (Newman, 2000). This event is annually celebrated by the Shiite as Ashura Day.

On the other hand, Nigeria's sovereignty entails total control of her territory and everything therein including the citizens. Nigerian sovereignty demands that the allegiance of her citizens should be for the Nigerian state and the constituted authority in the Nigerian state. Similarly, the United Nations charter, which Nigeria is a signatory, provides grounds for Nigeria to have diplomatic ties with all the member states, including the United States of America (USA), other Western countries and the Israel.

It is on the basis of the foregoing that this paper examines the resistance ideology of the Shiite in relations to Nigeria's sovereignty, within the context of relationship between state and religion, in order to establish whether resistance ideology of the Shiite can be compatible with Nigerian sovereignty. This is with a view of establishing ways of ensuring peaceful coexistence in Nigeria, especially among the adherents of the Shiite, other Nigerians and those in authority, particularly security agencies that have the constitutional duty of safeguarding the sovereignty of the Nigerian state.

Literature review

The review surveys and discusses available literature on the paper's subject matter. Therefore, this review focuses largely on literature written on relationship between the state and religion, status of sovereignty of the Nigerian state as well as the general ideology of the Shiite religious sect.

State and religion

States differ in the nature of their relationship with religion. On the strength of this vein, classical scholars of politics like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Karl Max, Hobbes, Locke et cetera, had attempted to identify different types of relationship that exist between the state and religion. These scholars postulated, in their approaches, the "appropriate" relationship the state ought to have with religion (Anifowose & Enemuo, 1999).

It is on the basis of the foregoing, scholars like Nieuwenhuis (2012), identified different models of relationship between the state and religion, which are largely informed by the state's philosophy, orientation and constitution. Some states, according to Lapidus (1996) and Nieuwenhuis (2012), are opposed to religion in its entirety. This is to say, adherents of religions are regarded as enemies or traitors of the state, hence religious practices and institutions are prohibited in such states. Albania, for example, was in this category especially in the 1970s through to 1980s (Nieuwenhuis, 2012).

Relationship of some states with religion is define by what Nieuwenhuis (2012) called "wall of separation". It is a situation where all state matters are separated from religion both in state's laws and in practical application of the laws as well as in the running of state machineries. In these states, all religious signs and symbols are barred in public places and public education. These types of states completely disassociate themselves with religion, but citizens are at liberty to practice their faith as a private endeavour. Here, the government of the state neither advance nor obstruct the practice of religion, it remains neutral.

Nigeria could have fit into this category, but for the obvious roles that religion is playing in the polity of the country. However, Nigeria can in theory be classified in this model, as the country's constitution had described Nigeria as state without official religion. On the other, the practical involvement of the Nigerian states in religious matters contradicts the theoretical perspective as

contained in the constitution. Contrary to the postulations of this model, religious symbols and signs are found in many public places and on many public structures in Nigeria (Yesufu, 2011).

In some states there is cooperation between the state and a particular religion, yet other religions are allowed to operate. For example, in Germany the government is having strong relationship with some recognised Christian denominations to the extent of the state being involved in the collection of taxes on behalf of recognised Churches. Some states operate theocracy where there is unity between the state and religion. The state here usually derives most provisions of its constitution from the scripture of a particular religion. The Vatican City, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Islamic Republic of Iran et cetera are good examples here (Nieuwenhuis, 2012).

On the basis of the above, the Nigerian state, as earlier established, is operating a secular system; a system without official religion but one that guarantees religious freedom. Similarly, Nigeria, as a sovereign country, has opted for herself to operate a democratic system that entails strict adherence to the rule of law. Therefore, every religious group or person has legal and constitutional right to practice a religion of choice. The caveat however is that the practice of any religion in Nigeria, Shiism inclusive, should be under the confine of the constitution and adherence to the rule of law.

Shiite's ideology

According to most scholars of Islam, especially Al-Majlisi (2007), Al-Musowee (2009), Barkat (2012), Najaar (2004), Abdulmalik (2013) and Bayyumi (2006), the ideology of Shiite emerged after the demise of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in 632. The disagreement over who should become Khalifah (successor) of the Prophet (pbuh) was said to have led to the formation of the Shiite sect who believed that Sayyiduna Aliyu Bn Abi Talib (a cousin of the Prophet of Islam) was ordained by the Prophet (pbuh) to become the Khalifah after him.

In this regard, Shiite creed became both political and religious movement with allegiance to Aliyu Bn Abi Talib and other household members of the Prophet (pbuh), especially the Prophet's daughter Fatima (RA) and her two sons Hassan and Hussain (RA). The Shiites, according to Al-Majlisi (2007), did not believe in the leadership of the first three Khulafah (successors) of the Prophet (pbuh), Abubakar, Umar and Uthman (RA), largely because, according to their belief, all these three emerged as successors to the Prophet (pbuh) illegally. This illegal act of the three first successors of the Prophet (pbuh), according to the Shiite, made them to go astray.

Similarly, those that support the first three Khulafah have deviated from the path of Allah and His Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), the Shiites believe. The Shiite postulated that Aliyu (RA) and his progeny are supposed to be the leaders of Muslims till eternity; hence any leader outside this order should be rebelled against. This is in accordance to the concept of the Imamate (Newman, 2000).

According to Ayatollah Khomeini, the leader of the Iran's 1979 revolution, in his book, the Islamic Government (Hukumatul Islamiyya), Shiites must have a global political order under the leadership of Iran. Therefore, the Iran of today is implementing the Khomeini philosophy by uniting all Shiite-dominant countries as well as those with significant number of Shiite adherents (Sa'idu et al, 2018). Iran is also working hard to increase Shiite adherents across the world and in line with Khomeini philosophy convert non-Muslims to the Shiite version of Islam (Sa'idu et al, 2018).

Shiism as a religious doctrine has a very long history as earlier established. From the reign of Aliyu Bn Abi Talib (RA) as the fourth Khalifah of the Prophet (pbuh) to the murder of his son, Hussain

(RA), at Karbala, in present Iraq, in October 680 up to the contemporary world, Shiites have established many dynasties (Newman, 2000).

However, after the demise of Hassan and Hussain (RA), two sons of Aliyu Bn Abi Talib (RA), their supporters split in the following of their offspring or descendants (Newman, 2000). One of the early prominent dynasties after the death of Hassan and Hussain was that of Isma'ili Fatimids that was established in North Africa in the early 10th century. After their capture of Egypt in 969, the Isma'ili established a dynasty in Cairo that lasted up to 1171. They spread to Persian Gulf and Druze in present day Syria, Lebanon and Israel (Newman, 2000, Lapidus, 1996).

A group, the Buyids, captured Baghdad in 945, hence their authority spread up to western and central Iran until they were defeated by Sunni Seljuq in 1055. Before their defeat, the Shiite Imamate flourished in Iran and Baghdad. During this period, works on Shiite theology and law began with collation of Hadiths of the Prophet (pbuh) through the chains of the 12 Imams of the Imamate Shiite. The defeat of the Buyids in 1055 led to the scattering of the Twelvers Shiites, according to Newman (2000).

Through their years under the rule of the Mongol up to 1258, Il-Khanids up to 1316, Sarbadar up to 1386, Safavid up to 1722 and Qajar Shahs up to 1925, Shiites, especially the Imamate, had their ups and downs in terms of support or otherwise of the different regimes. The Shiite, however, played a prominent role in protecting Iranian interest against the encroachment of the British and Russia during the reign of the Qajar Shahs, which led to the establishment of the parliament and constitution in Iran (Newman, 2000).

The Imamate influence continued up to the regime of Reza Shah and his son Mohammad Reza Shah and this led to the overthrow of the regime of Mohammad Reza in 1979 by Ayatollah Khomeini. This assisted in the growth of Shiism in contemporary world with population of the Shiites put at 10 to 13 per cent of the 1.6 billion global Muslim population. It was at about this period – 1979 - that Shiite Islamic ideology began to gain ground in Nigeria. Aside Nigeria, Shiites are found in many countries of the world like Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, France, Britain, and United States of America among many other states of the world (Haruna & Adam, 2017, Newman, 2000).

Nigeria's sovereignty

The Seventh Schedule of the 1999 Constitution, as amended, declared the Federal Republic of Nigeria as indivisible and indissoluble sovereign nation. Similarly, the country Nigeria, according to the constitution, would be guided by the 1999 constitution. This is why Chapter I, Section I, Sub-section II of the constitution described the 1999 constitution as the supreme law of the country and its provision are binding on all authorities and persons throughout the country.

Similarly, Chapter I, Sub-section 2 states thus: "The Federal Republic of Nigeria shall not be governed, nor shall any person or group of persons take control of the Government of Nigeria or any part thereof, except in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution." From the foregoing, it is clearly stated by the law governing Nigeria that the country's sovereignty is sacrosanct. Therefore, all citizens, groups and authorities must respect the sovereignty of Nigeria.

Sovereignty, according to Linstead, Fulop and Lilley (2004), refers to absolute legal authority over a certain territory and everything therein. Sovereignty is an essential element of the state that suggests no further or any other power exists on that state. This is to say Nigeria has both internal and external sovereignty. Internally, the Nigerian state exercises supremacy over all her citizens and the territory called Nigeria. In essence, all citizens and even aliens living in the country must

succumb to the whims and caprices of the Nigerian state as provided by the constitutions and laws of the state.

Again, on the external front, Nigeria as a sovereign country is free from external control. This external control can be political, economical or otherwise. In other words, Nigeria has legal sovereignty, because it has legislative power over the state, as it is the only entity that can make laws for the Nigerian state. Furthermore, it is only Nigerian citizens that can decide on the people to govern the Nigerian state, therefore popular or political sovereignty rest only on Nigerians and Nigeria.

Similarly, by the provisions of the 1999 constitution it is only the Nigerian state that has legal right to exercise power and authority. Every citizen and groups must accept this fact and ensure obedience as well as accept and respect the legitimate power of the Nigerian state to have total control on Nigerians and the territory. Therefore, any attempt to subvert any of the foregoing is a breach of Nigeria's sovereignty. States all over the world jealously protect and guard their sovereignty. States can go to war in order to safeguard their sovereignty. A state that loses her sovereignty is not qualified to be called a state. Sovereignty therefore ensures the continuous existence of any state.

Nigeria, for example, fought a civil war in order to maintain her sovereignty. Nigeria had cause at different times to violently response to attempt by some of her neighbours that attempted to breach her territorial integrity and by extension her sovereignty. Nigeria is fighting the Boko Haram war for over ten years now in order to maintain her sovereignty despite the huge resources involve.

Theoretical framework

In order to have guide and direction, this paper adopts the Social Movement Theory. Social Movement Theory is an integrative approach with tripartite phases of mobilisation of resources, structuring of political opportunities and framing. According to Stabli (2010), the three interacting phases of the Social Movement Theory were postulated by Ted Gurr in 1970, Peter Eisinger in 1973 and Erving Goffman in 1974. The first of the tripartite phases of the Social Movement Theory was established by Gurr (1970). The first paradigms in any social movement are the mobilisation of resources, creation of political opportunities and framing. Therefore, the Shiite Movement, especially the Islamic Movement in Nigeria under Sheikh Zakzaky, engages in all of these paradigms. Social Movement approach also pays attention to commitment of members and recruitment mechanism of new ones.

Gurr (1970), as cited in Stabli (2010), postulated the mobilisation of resources phase of the Social Movement Theory. According to him, resources available to any social movement determine its capacity of mobilisation and sustenance of its propagation. The IMN in Nigeria rely on members for resources where every member makes donation either monthly or at a chosen interval. Although, there are indications of foreign support for IMN, but what is in the open is contribution made by the members for running of the movement's activities (Sa'idu et al, 2018).

Organisation of the Shiite numerous annual activities, for example, requires a lot of resources. For instance the annual Ashura brought together millions of the faithful to a particular selected city, which used to be Zaria, Kaduna State before the year 2015. This requires a lot of resources for organisation and mobilisation. Therefore, Shiite is classified under Social Movement, because it requires resources to flourish like any other Social Movement. The Shiite also depends on its committed and dedicated members as the human resource that leads its activities. Without these

material and human resources, Shiite, like any other Social Movement, would face a lot of hurdles and may find it difficult, if not impossible, to thrive.

Similarly, the Shiite movement is structured like any social group with professionals who coordinate their activities. They operate under well-structured leadership and command. Therefore, for them to sustain their activities for a long period of time, they must have a means of mobilising resources both human and material.

Eisinger (1973) contributed the political opportunity fold of the Social Movement Theory. He said the concept of political opportunity emerged as a way of placing movements in the wider political environment in which they operate. According to him, movements arise not only because they are able to successfully mobilize resources, but because overall political or social conditions are ripe for successful and sustained contention.

For example, the Shiite collective action in Nigeria was conditioned and fuelled by the desire of Nigerians, especially Muslims, to have an Islamic political system. This stemmed out of the desire to have good governance that would guarantee progress of the country and wellbeing of the citizens; as the existing systems had failed in those regards. According to Eisinger (1973), Social Movements also depend on the external environment in which it operates rather than solely internal processes. For example, the foreign moral and material support on the activities of Shiite is one of their greatest motivations.

The third fold of the Social Movement Theory was contributed by Goffman (1974). He postulated what he called framing in the study of Social Movement. Framing is used to justify the activities of any Social Movement group. Social Movement groups also use it for appeal and mobilisation of support. Shiite, like any Social Movement, makes claims that resonate with wider social narratives to gain popularity.

The media is central here for the achievement of successful framing. Media is used in the dissemination of information on Shiite activities. They use framing in the social and conventional media. This is why the IMN has a strong media team that propagates its activities not only in the local but international media (Stabli, 2010).

Although the resource mobilisation and political opportunities postulations of the Social Movement Theory have been criticized for being overly structural and leaving out cultural and relational factors (Stabli, 2010), the three folds content of the Social Movement Theory as stated above was found to be apt as a guide for this paper. The theory has provided the right framework that protected this research from been taken over by flukes, which is the most important attribute of theory to a paper like this one.

Methodology

Methodology, according to Babbie (2010), entails systematic way of investigation in order to discover facts that would assist in finding solution to certain problem. This research employs the Documentary Analysis and Survey Research Method in order to investigate the problem under study with a view of getting facts that would contribute in finding solution to the problem of the research.

The major sources of data for this research are the existing literature and interview conducted with Shiite and Sunni leaders. The content/documentary analysis of the existing literature was conducted with the use of judgmental sampling technique. Babbie (2010:192) justified the use of any of the non-probability sampling techniques where the use of probability sampling “wouldn’t be appropriate even if it were possible”.

Similarly, the Personal Interview Method of the Survey Research was used in interviewing one Shiite leader, one Jama'atut Tajdidil Islamy (a breakaway group of the Sheikh Zakzaky's IMN) leader and one Sunni (an Islamic group that is the direct opposite of the Shiite) leader. Obviously, the Shiite leader was interviewed in order to establish the Shiite resistance ideology, its goals and objectives; above all, to establish whether this ideology is not a threat to Nigerian sovereignty and peaceful coexistence.

The Jama'atu Tajdidil Islamy leader was interviewed in order to establish how the IMN was formed and how it metamorphosed to Shiism. Sunni leader was interviewed in order to establish the possible way out to the recurrent clashes between the Shiite and the Nigerian state, which usually leads to loss of lives and property. The interviews were conducted in accordance to the postulations provided by Babbie (2010) on Personal Interview Method of the Survey Research.

Nigeria's sovereignty and Shiite's resistance ideology: How compatible?

The relationship of Nigerian state and religion, as established earlier, is based on what Nieuwenhuis (2012) called "separation wall"; a situation where the state allows every citizen or group of citizens to practice their religion of choice but under strict compliance to the rule of law as required in democratic states. Therefore, the paper sought for different perspectives on how to resolve the glaring clash of interest between the Nigerian state and the adherents of Shiite in Nigeria. With the guidance of the Social Movement Theory, as established earlier, the paper seeks to determine whether it is possible for Nigeria to continue to safeguard its sovereignty while the Shiites implement their resistance ideology. Data presented below lead to the establishment of four perspectives that were used in drawing the paper's conclusion:

Shiite movement under Zakzaky

The movement being led by Sheikh Ibrahim Yakub Zakzaky had its root from the Muslim Students Society of Nigeria (MSSN) (Jama'atut Tajdidil Islamy Report, 2016, Interview, 2018). Zakzaky was an active member of the MSSN and became its Vice President International Affairs in the late 1970s. In 1980 when Iran organised one-year anniversary of the Ayatollah Khomeini's revolution, Muslim youths from different parts of the world were invited and Sheikh Zakzaky, being the Vice President International Affairs of the MSSN, represented the body. This was his first contact with the Iran (Sa'idu et al, 2018).

Not long after his return from Iran, the MSSN organised its routine Islamic Vocational Course (IVC) at Funtua, Katsina State, Nigeria. According to a submission made by the Jama'atut Tajdidil Islamy at the Judicial Panel of Enquiry set by the Kaduna State government to investigate the December 2015 Shiite/Army clash in Zaria, it was at the Funtua Forum that Zakzaky withdrew his allegiance from the Nigerian state. That had excited the teeming members of the Muslim Brotherhood who were mostly youths.

He therefore began the struggle for Islamic revolution and the evolvment of an Islamic state. This was why the Funtua event later became prominently known as Funtua Declaration. This was how the movement continued to grow and youths continued to join in numbers, largely because of the belief that Islamic state would bring justice to all Nigerians and would end the atrocities of leaders.

The activities of the movement were largely organised at the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, Kaduna State for the fact that most of the members were students. Therefore, Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN) was formed at the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, Kaduna State (Sa'idu et al, 2018, Jama'atut Tajdidil Islamy Report, 2016).

Books written by scholars of the Ikhwanul-Muslimuun (Muslim Brotherhood), Egypt continued to influence the activities of the movement. On the other hand, Zakzaky's contact with Iran influenced his allegiance to Ayatollah Khomeini. At that time, it was not clear whether Zakzaky's allegiance was in support of the Iran's revolution or a vow to make the Islamic Movement a Shiite one.

Iran's authorities continued their relationship with Sheikh Zakzaky and were sending Islamic Magazines to members of the movement. The prominent magazine from Iran then was the one called Mahajubah. A famous column in the Mahajubah Magazine by Taba'i Taba'i where ideologies of Shiite were discussed began to raise concern among members of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria, who were in the movement for the struggle of Islamic state not to convert to Shiism (Interview, 2018).

Despite that, the movement continued with their anti-establishment struggles and was being supported by Iran, especially its Nigerian embassy and Lebanese Shiite community in Nigeria. By 1994, the movement was divided into factions of the Sunni and that of the Shiite and eventually Zakzaky decided to go with the Shiite. This made the Sunni group to form the Jama'atut Tajdidil Islamy. This group split from the Islamic Movement in Nigeria, because of the introduction of Shiism into the movement (Interview, 2018).

As Sheikh Zakzaky's ties with Iran became solid, some of the members of his movement were taken to that country to receive military training, especially from the Revolutionary Guards of Iran. This gave birth to Sheikh Zakzaky's Hurras (Guards) who were the military arm of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (Interview, 2018).

The Hurras were responsible for the protection of Zakzaky, his family and other leaders of the movement. They also provide security to all the Shiite's gatherings and ceremonies even at the cost of their lives. Having established itself as a formidable organisation with allegiance only to the Shiite state in Iran, the Shiite began to have clashes with both the Nigerian state and the general public (Interview, 2018).

Before the December 2015 encounter with the Army in Zaria, Kaduna State, which led to the present detention of Sheikh Zakzaky by the Nigerian state, his first known confrontation with the Nigerian security apparatus was in 1984 when he visited Federal Government College, Sokoto. They "indoctrinated" some students of the college and these students stopped reciting the National Anthem during assembly. This led to violence and led to an encounter between the members of the movement and the police. Some members of the movement were arrested. This made other members to go to the police station insisting that those arrested must be released. This led to the arrest of Sheikh Zakzaky where he was tried and jailed (Interview, 2018).

Because of the orientation that the members of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria had of withdrawing their allegiance from the Nigerian state, members of the movement in the 1980s termed anything to do with the government as anti-Islam. Therefore, some members that were working with the government resigned. Others then undergoing their studies at different institutions dropped out, while others went to the extent of destroying their certificates (Interview, 2018).

Thereafter, members of the movement had the following clashes with the security operatives of the Nigerian state in Zaria, Kaduna State, being the headquarters of the movement and later in Abuja. They had other encounters with the security agencies and the public in other states of the Federation. However, the following table presents, though not exhaustive, few of the movement's clashes with the representatives of the Nigerian state and citizens.

Clashes of the IMN with representatives of the State and Citizens

SN	CLASH	PLACE	REGIME	YEAR	CASUALTIES
1.	Members of the IMN clashed with the Nigerian Army over processions and arrest of Sheikh Zakzaky.	Zaria	Late General Sani Abacha. Colonel Hamid Ali, Military Governor, Kaduna State.	1996	Many were killed or injured, while Sheikh Zakzaky was arrested and detained in prison.
2.	Members of the IMN clashed with the convoy of the Emir of Zazzau, Alhaji Shehuldris during Ashura procession.	Zaria	Goodluck Jonathan	2009	Many were injured, while many were arrested.
3.	Members of the IMN clashed with the Police during Quds Day procession at Kofar Doka.	Zaria	Goodluck Jonathan	2009	Many were injured, while many were arrested.
4.	Members of the IMN intercepted the then Kaduna State Governor, Mukhtar Ramalan Yero, from entering Gyellesu Quarters, where Sheikh Zakzaky's house was located then.	Zaria	Goodluck Jonathan	2013	Many were injured.
5.	Members of the IMN clashed with the members of the Gyellesu community over check points mounted by the members of the movement.	Zaria	Goodluck Jonathan	2013	Many were injured.
6.	Members of the IMN clashed with the Nigerian Army during Quds Day Procession.	Zaria	Goodluck Jonathan	2014	3 of Sheikh Zakzaky's sons and many others were killed, while many were injured and many arrested.
7.	Members of the IMN clashed with residents of Gabari over ownership of Juma'at mosque.	Zaria	Goodluck Jonathan	2015	Many were injured.
8.	Members of the IMN clashed with members of Salafiyya Group at Unguwan Dankali over preaching against the Shiite sect.	Zaria	Muhammadu Buhari	2015	Many were injured.
9.	Members of the IMN clashed with members of Gabari community over preaching at Gabari Juma'at mosque.	Zaria	Muhammadu Buhari	2015	Many were injured.
10.	Members of the IMN clashed with the Nigerian Army in front of their spiritual headquarters (Hussainiyya).	Zaria	Muhammadu Buhari	2015	Many were killed, while many were injured. Sheikh Zakzaky was arrested.
11.	Members of the IMN clashed with worshippers at Tudun Wada Juma'at mosque over preaching.	Zaria	Muhammadu Buhari	2016	Many were injured.
12.	Members of the IMN clashed with the Police and Army in different parts of Abuja.	Abuja	Muhammadu Buhari	2018	Many were killed, while others were injured. Many were arrested.

Source: (Sa'idu et al, 2018, Jama'atut Tajdidil Islamy Report, 2016, Haruna & Adam, 2017).

The tripartite phases of the Social Movement Theory had manifested in the formation, activities and some of the goals of the Shiite under Sheikh Zakzaky. Therefore, data presented above justified the choice of the theory as a guide for this paper in finding solution to the problem under study. It is also clear that some of the activities of the Shiite as enumerated above are in serious conflict with the interest and authorities of the Nigerian state; hence the relationship of the Nigerian state and the Shiite religious sect became sore.

Shiites other than Zakzaky's

There are other groups that are adherents of Shiism in Nigeria other than the group being led by Sheikh Zakzaky. These groups live peacefully with their hosts and the authorities despite their massive propagation of the Shiite ideology in the media and other public mediums (Sa'idu et al, 2018).

One of these groups is the one led by Sheikh Hamza Lawal under the name Darus Saqalain. Sheikh Hamza Lawal was formally with Sheikh Zakzaky before he formed his splinter group in the year 2000. In Kano, there is another prominent Shiite group by name Rasulul A'azam Foundation. Sheikh Sale Zaria is the leading preacher of this group. The latter group publically declared their allegiance to the Nigerian state. Contrary to the Sheikh Zakzaky-led Shiite, this group participates in all the Nigeria's electoral process.

According to Sa'idu et al (2018), there are certain innovations brought into the Shiite practices by the Sheikh Zakzaky group. One of these practices was the symbolic trek that the Sheikh Zakzaky group tagged Tattaki, which is one of the activities that the Nigerian state is not comfortable with.

Tattaki is an annual march that takes place to mark the end of the 40 days of commiseration of the murder of Imam Hussain Bn Abi Talib, a grandson of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and one of the 12 revered leaders of the Shiite. This event, before the 2015 Shiite/Army clash in Zaria, Kaduna State, used to bring Shiite followers from different parts of Nigeria and neighbouring African countries. On the account of this occasion, Zaria used to standstill, because of the high influx of the Shiite adherents into the ancient city. Tattaki is just one of the numerous anniversaries of the Shiites.

Shiite's resistance

Interview conducted with a leading member of the Shiite community in Nigeria, Isa Mshelgaru, a professor in the Department of Building of the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, revealed that the resistance ideology of the Shiite was revived for this generation by the Ayatollah Khomeini. He said Shiite groups all over the world share the resistance ideology.

Resistance ideology, according to Mshelgaru, entails fighting injustice and atrocities of leaders. In this generation, the ideology entails resisting the domination of the West and hegemonies of different governments. The following statement by Professor Mshelgaru clarifies the real nature of the ideology:

We also share the same idea of human resistance with Hezbollah. This resistance stemmed from the threat that we are facing from the West and hegemonies of different governments around the world. Hezbollah, for example, faces threat from Israel and others. Now Yemen is facing similar threat, so they have to resist otherwise they would seize their state. Before this threat in Yemen, there were no any strong ties between Iran and Yemen, but this threat strengthened the ties between them (Interview, 2018).

Mshelgaru further added:

This resistance is an ideology that is not limited to Muslims alone. Here in Nigeria, we have Christian section of IMN. When you go to Lebanon, some of the members of the resistance movement of Hezbollah are Christians. You would find the same thing in other countries of the world. Our relationship with Lebanon and Hezbollah is that of ideology and it is global relationship with every Shiite. This relationship is drive from the position of the Ayatollah Khomeini to the Shiite; he is the overall leader of all Shiites (Interview, 2018).

He said the Shiite groups that are respecting Nigeria's constituted authorities have compromised the true Shiite ideology. He said as follows:

We are different with other Shiite groups in Nigeria, because ours is a resistance movement not completely Shiite per se. You can practice Shiite without taking the ideology of resistance. When Imam Khomeini fought the revolution, the people then in Iran were mostly Shiite, but they have been corrupted more than what is happening in Nigeria now. Therefore, the other groups that you are talking about only concentrate in spreading Shiism, but ours is resistance movement. These groups have compromised, because all the Imams (leaders) of Shiite died in the cause of this resistance. The question you should ask is why is it that these groups are not engage in the resistance since Imam Hussain and the other Imams are the leaders of all Shiites. If you said you would practice Shiite without resistance, then you are doing something else (Interview, 2018).

Mshelgaru said the Nigerian government is afraid of their movement, because it has the capacity to reawaken the citizens of the country, irrespective of religion, to stop the atrocities of the leaders. Nigerian government is also aware of their numerical strength, he said, and how it is increasing by the day. He cited a 2016 Saudi Arabian report that indicated that the Shiite has about 20 million followers in Nigeria with five million sympathisers. This, he said, is what is frightening the Nigerian government, saying that there is no level of killings that would stop them from practicing their religious beliefs as Nigerians with equal rights.

The mobilisation and political opportunity phases of the Social Movement Theory have manifested in the Mshelgaru's interview. It is clear that the Shiite under Sheikh Zakzaky rely heavily on the mobilisation of its members to have numerical strength that is instrumental in the achievements of their political goals.

The Perspectives

The constitutional perspective

As stated above, the Seventh Schedule of the 1999 Constitution had declared the Federal Republic of Nigeria as indivisible and indissoluble sovereign nation. Similarly, the country would be governed by the provisions of 1999 constitution. Chapter I, Section I, Sub-section II of the constitution had also described the 1999 constitution as the supreme law of the country and its provision are binding on all authorities and persons throughout the country.

The implication of the above is that any attempt to resist the authorities of the Nigerian state over the control of her territory and citizens is a direct assault on the sovereignty of Nigeria. Therefore,

the 1999 constitution is employing citizens to first of all recognise the supremacy of the constitution before their rights contained therein can be guaranteed.

The Shiite perspective

For the Shiite, according to Mshelgaru and literature reviewed above, the way out from the current clash of interest between the sect and the Nigerian state is for the Nigerian government to know that resistance is part of Shiite religious belief and they have right to practice their belief. The rights that Nigerian government should also guarantee for the Shiite, according to Professor Mshelgaru, should include procession and the use of government properties like roads during their processions.

He further stated:

Unless government realises that we have rights, our protests would continue. They can kill as many as they wish and that would not make us to compromise our religion. All our Imams, including Hussain, died in this path of struggle (Interview, 2018).

The Jama'atut Tajdidil Islamy perspective

One of the leaders of the Jama'atut Tajdidil Islamy, the first splinter group that withdrew from the Sheikh Zakzaky's movement, interviewed by this research advocated for the banning of the Sheikh Zakzaky Shiite group. He said unless that is done, there is the tendency for Nigeria to, in the nearest future, witness the type of crisis playing out in countries like Yemen, Syria and Lebanon.

He said:

Shiite does not cohabit in a country where majority of the Muslims have strong resentment to their beliefs, especially the desecration of prominent Islamic personalities. This is a recipe to violence and if government doesn't like violence, all the Shiite groups with these provocative acts should be banned. We made submission to the Judicial Panel of Enquiry set by the Kaduna State government over the December 2015 Zaria incident and we said that the anti-state activities of Zakzaky group and their violent approach are enough reasons for government to take urgent steps of curtailing these, otherwise Boko Haram would be a child's play (Interview, 2018).

The Jama'atut Tajdidil Islamy leader, who craved for anonymity, also wants the Nigerian state to investigate the involvement of some Lebanese in funding the Shiite activities. He also called for closed watch on the activities of the Iranian government in Nigeria for peace and unity to continue to flourish.

The Sunni perspective

Muhammad Kabir Asgar, PhD, of the Arabic Department of the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, Kaduna State, said it is a must for Nigeria not to compromise her sovereignty in her relationship with the Shiite. He said if what the Shiites are doing are against the laws of Nigeria, the laws should prevail.

He said thus:

The government should ensure that the law of the land remains supreme and every citizen should subject himself to the law. A situation where government

allows any group to feel that it is above the law, then Nigeria is in trouble. From what the Shiites are writing, this is their first step in their efforts of taking over the government of the country. These confessions are all over. Their ultimate goal is to continue these confrontations up to the time they would seize the Villa. Their goal is to set up a Republic like that of Iran. Government should not underestimate the threat of the Shiites (Interview, 2018).

For Nigeria to continue to safeguard her sovereignty from external assault, Muhammad Kabir Asgar called for a review of the diplomatic ties among Nigeria, Iran and other countries that have link with the Sheikh Zakzaky-led Shiites. He said Nigeria must strengthen her apparatus of intelligence gathering to be able to curtail the activities of groups with sinister motives.

Discussion of findings

From the literature reviewed, it is clear that the Shiites have their own leadership structure in accordance to the postulations of the Social Movement Theory. There is a hierarchy of 12 Imams who are seen as saint and who must be recognised, respected and obeyed by all the adherents of the sect. Similarly, after the 1979 Iranian revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini emerged as the Shiite leader for this generation and after his demise those that took over his exalted seat became the leaders of the Shiite worldwide. The allegiance of the Shiites is with the supreme leader, Ayatollah Khomeini or his successor but not the state of their residence. This position was clearly stated by Newman (2000), Haruna & Adam (2017), Sa'idu et al (2018) and Jama'atut Tajdidil Islamy Report (2016).

Again, the interviews conducted established that resistance ideology of the Shiite is seen as a major element in the belief system of the sect. It entails anti-state, other than Shiite state, struggle and actions. It is a belief jealously cherished by the Shiites and they can therefore sacrifice everything, including their lives, to defend it. The Shiite are of the believe that all their sacred Imams, the 12 of them, except the last who is yet to appear, all died in the cause of struggle, therefore anti-establishment resistance is part of the major creed of the Shiite. Literature reviewed from Newman (2000), Haruna & Adam (2017), Sa'idu et al (2018) and Jama'atut Tajdidil Islamy Report (2016) corroborated the position of the interview.

States across the world, including Nigeria, do everything to safeguard their sovereignty, which is seen as the authority of a state to have total control over citizens and territory without interference from within or without. This was as postulated by Linstead, Fulop and Lilley (2004). However, the resistance ideology of the Shiite is a direct contrast to the assumptions of sovereignty. This is why Nigeria, according to Jama'atut Tajdidil Islamy Report (2016), is having serious challenge and resistance whenever she attempts to exert her authority over the Shiites.

Iran is seen as the spiritual headquarters of the Shiite. Therefore, explicitly or implicitly, Iran is giving moral and other support to the Shiite movement in Nigeria and other parts of the world. Iran therefore has agenda of territorial expansion through the spread of the Shiite ideology. The interviews conducted by the research as well as Newman (2000), Haruna & Adam (2017) and Jama'atut Tajdidil Islamy Report (2016) have established this.

Similarly, from the interviews conducted and postulations of Linstead, Fulop and Lilley (2004), it was established that Nigeria's sovereignty must be protected for the interest of all Nigerians. The Nigerian state must take all the necessary action on the persons or groups that attempt to assault her sovereignty either internally or externally.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The sovereignty of states is the pillar that guarantees their continuous existence. This is why states take all decisive measures necessary to safeguard their sovereignty. Nigeria has demonstrated before that she knows the worth of her sovereignty. She fought a civil war in order to protect her sovereignty. Nigeria had violent confrontations with her neighbours over her sovereignty. Presently, the country is fighting other battles that are threatening her sovereignty. All countries of the world take similar measures in protecting their sovereignty, including Iran that is the global headquarters of the Shiite.

Therefore, the resistance ideology of the Shiite is bound to face stiff resistance from the Nigerian state and even Nigerians if it is seemed to be challenging the sovereignty of Nigeria. Any challenge on Nigerian sovereignty is a recipe to anarchy, as if such challenge is left unchallenged, it may result to total collapse of law and order, which may lead to the collapse of the Nigerian state.

The collapse of Nigerian state is a disaster that may affect the entire globe; hence the necessity to confront any attempt that may lead to that head-on. Religions and their adherents are supposed to strengthen peaceful coexistence in their relationship with states. Religions are supposed to promote unity, integration and orderliness. Religions encourage respect of law and order and discourage promotion of acts that may lead to anarchy and bloodshed.

From the foregoing, while it is necessary for Nigerian state to guarantee the freedom of worship and association for the adherents of Shiite, it is also incumbent on the Shiites to subject themselves to the laws of the country by respecting constituted authorities and legal orders. Therefore, cordial relationship between the Nigerian state and Shiite as a religious sect largely depend on how each party subject its whims and caprices to the instrumentality of the rule of law. The Shiites must realise that citizens rights are not limitless and rights are guaranteed when they did not violent those of others and the law.

Nigeria must take measures that would ensure the conformity to laws of the land by adherents of all religions and sects. This is a panacea to the recurrent religious unrest witnessed in the country. Failure of the Nigerian state to demonstrate her ability to deal with deviants would spell doom for the state, as it would lead to total breakdown of law and order. In other words, Nigerian state must safeguard her sovereignty from assault from any quarters.

Security agencies in Nigeria should be well-equipped and motivated to be able to handle any assault on Nigeria's sovereignty. The area of intelligence gathering should be strengthened for prompt and accurate response on any activity that has the tendency of breaching the sovereignty of the country and by extension destabilise the peace and security of the country.

There is need for Nigeria to critically review its diplomatic ties with states found to be breaching her sovereignty. Nigeria shouldn't take it lightly with any state of the world that sponsor uprising against it. Nigeria should withdraw its diplomatic ties with such countries if they fail to rescind from actions that amount to assault on her sovereignty.

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