Climate Change and Conflict in Nigeria: The Boko Haram Challenge

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Abstract

This paper presents a structural and empirical analysis of the agential of the raison d'être for Nigeria's unpreparedness to adapt to changing climate. Structures and strictures of renteir state, prebendal politics and people-unfriendly economic reforms have derailed the developmental focus of the state, and led to the emergence of self-serving, self-perpetuating political elites. This increasingly weakened the state's capacity and sovereignty across its territory, making room only for a narrow focus on a segment of the state—the southern region—due largely to its economic importance (rent generation). These three factors fueled unprecedented capital flight from Nigeria, engendered general apathy to climate change among political office holders, and drastically impinged on the state's capacity and willingness to pursue meaningful adaptation programs. Thus, Nigeria's legal, policy, structural and institutional adaptive mechanisms for climate change are anything but adequate. The net effect is exposure of the vast population of farmers in northern Nigeria to harsh environmental effects, consequently generating conflict. This article makes a case for government and private sector partnership in undertaking initiatives towards addressing challenges posed by global climatic change, as a measure to stemming the tide of youth radicalization and rise of terrorist groups like Boko Haram.

Keywords: Northern Nigeria, Market reform, Conflict and Inadaptiveness

Introduction and Problematique

Global climate change is one of the most debated issues in the global discourse. It has attracted attention of scholars, policy makers, the general public, and the international community. At the center of this debate are issues of societies' preparedness to respond to the challenges of climate change, and to address their vulnerabilities. This concern was enunciated at the "1992 United Nations conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) which developed the Framework for Convention on Climatic Change (FCCC) signed by 154 countries, many of whom now have a national plan to address the problem of climatic change"[ii].This concern is not unconnected with, for the most part, the shift in scientific community's perception of global environmental problems. To begin with, the previously held notion that the environmental system, in particular the earth's climate is resilient to human abuse has been upturned, and replaced with a new belief in earth's multiple local equilibria that are highly unstable[iii]. Also, the fact that a slight alter in climate system may result in complex environmental and social effects, which could potentially trigger social conflict of apocalyptic dimension, is well established. This paradigm shift in perception of the global climate finds overwhelming evidence in the discovery of the Antarctic ozone hole in the mid-1980s[iv]; the desertification of the 'Sudano-Sahelian' region and in the violent conflict emanating from northern Nigeria, and the Maghreb which now threatens global peace.

Nigeria's climate has been witnessing a sizable shift in temperature, rainfall, storm and sea level rise since the last century[v]. Recent study found that, there has been a gradual rise in Nigeria's temperature between 1901 and 2005. The study recorded a mean air temperature of 26.3°C between 1901 -1970, and an increase to 27.8°C from 1971 to 2005,[vi] apparently greater than the global average of 0.74°C[vii]. Also rainfall for the same period has been noted to be largely erratic. Taken together, these partly account for the increasing draught and desertification in several northern states (semi-arid agro-ecological zone) of Nigeria, of which forest vegetation is "receding at about 0.6 kilometers per year, due largely to fast depletion in the amount of surface water, flora and fauna resources on the land"[viii]. Thus, ratcheting up stress on these resources already in short supply, occasioning strife between nomadic and sedentary groups.

As the shift in Nigeria's climate continues, with its socio-economic effects, especially for the poor farmers in the north, Nigeria's capacity—and perhaps willingness—to effectively respond to the situation is called into question. For instance, by the mid 1960s, gradual drop in average rainfall culminated into a dreadful draught between 1972 and 1974, with consequent massive low crop yield, and death of farm animals. The result was acute shortage of food, which crystallized into famine at the very watch of the government. According to Mortimore and Adams:

Granaries were empty for months or years. People ate the leaves of trees and herbs, or sold livestock, valued possessions or productive capital in order to struggle to market to bid for tiny portions of ground cassava, the cheapest food on sale. Whole villages appeared abandoned; whole families went to the towns to beg, especially those of pastoral people whose starving herds had died. The mighty Nigerian economy, growing rich on the proceeds of oil, seemed powerless to help the 20 million or more people of its vast Sudano-Sahelian region.[ix]

Given its mighty economy, why did Nigeria fail to adequately adapt to variations in its climate? And why did its resilience falter? This brings to the fore the global debate on human capability to adapt to global climatic change. At the crux is whether free-market mechanisms may permit developing countries to minimize the negative effects of environmental degradation. Homer-Dixon suggests that policy makers would be less capable to respond to both population growth and progressing climate change. He argues that "policies of market liberalizations and structural adjustment promoted by financial and lending institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and World Bank are not effective ways to respond to present (and perhaps future)climatic change and environmental scarcities".[x] He also adduces that various social effects associated with climate variability, including hunger, poverty, and population migration could potentially lead to various forms of conflict.

Taking a cue from Homer-Dixon, I contend that Nigerian's over dependency on crude oil rents, coupled with behavior of political elites and the people-unfriendly market liberalizations foisted on Nigeria by the World Bank and IMF derailed the developmental focus of the state, and increasingly weakened its capacity to adapt to changing climate, particularly in arid northern Nigeria. The net effect isthe insecurity in Nigeria occasioned by Boko Haram and other forms of Jihadi ideology, including herder-farmer clashes emanating from the north since 1980s. This is not to mean however that the havoc caused by Boko Haram and the likes, or the incessant, strife and killings between the nomads and the farmers in northern Nigeria are in anyway justifiable. But that state's unresponsiveness to changing climate resulted in increased draught and desertification. Their social effects—decreased agricultural production, economic decline; population displacement and disruption of legitimized authoritative institutions and social relations—may have possibly contributed in triggering and/or escalating conflict. This observation is indeed pertinent because the utterances of Boko Haram allude to this fact. Hence, given that Nigeria's response to climate change has hardly gone beyond legal and structural frameworks, it may be legitimate to talk about both the rentier political elites and people-unfriendly market reforms.

This paper intends a structural and empirical analysis of interaction between the character of the Nigerian state, the role of the political elites and market policies in limiting Nigeria's capacity to adapt to its changing climate. It situates the discussion within the context of contemporary governance, which is at the center of the raison d'état of the state. It focuses Nigeria and northern Nigeria on climate change perspective, and appraises government's response to climatic change.

This article is divided into five sections. The first section focuses on theoretical discourse. The following section expands on the issue of bad governance and market reforms in Nigeria. The third section examines market reforms in Nigeria and their debilitating economic consequences. The fourth discusses the gaps in Nigeria's adaptation readiness. Focus of the fifth section is on the effects of climatic change on the livelihood of northern Nigerians, and the consequent social effects. Also, attempt is made to make a connection between climate change scenario and livelihood in northern Nigeria and the raging conflict in the region. The concluding part outlines policy options for Nigeria.

1.0. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this inquiry builds closely on two theories: Beblawi's theory of renteir state and Richard Joseph's theory of prebendalism. Since the emergence of the state system through a negotiated peace of Westphalia, the state has been the cynosure of debates relating to human development and security. Its primary function according to Goran Hyden is to respond to needs confronting groups and societies[xi].To be able to fulfill this function, the state relies on revenue accumulated from tax extraction within its domains.

Thus, the state in Europe is largely an 'extractive state'. An underlining assumption of early European states is that, domestic extraction of resources is the chief sources of revenues for state sustenance. Thus, governments' capacity to function depends mainly on how much tax they extract from within their domain. On the contrary, the 'rentier state', an epithet which refers to the political economy of stateslargely dependent on rents takenon extractive resources from within its domain by multinationals for the bulk of the revenues needed for its sustenance.[xii]The rentier state thesis holds that, as extractive resources (oil) revenues increase to the point at which they trump government revenues sources from taxes, "the government evolves from an extractive state to a distributive one;"[xiii] whose bulk of the internal activities is concerned with distribution.[xiv] In most cases, the recipients of this booty dispensed by the governments are the political elites, and their foreign collaborators.

A corollary to the rentier state thesis is that, since the political elites have no need to extract taxes from the populace, they also have no need to represent them either, nor are they accountable to anyone[xv]. Thus, the political elites would become rent-seeking in themselves, appropriating public funds for personal gains as well as using state resources to placate those social groups that could challenge their activities and to reward political loyalists—often members of one's ethnic group. The theory of prebendalism posits a neo-patrimonial administration characterized by client-patron association. It explains "patterns of political behaviors which reflects as their justifying principle that the offices of existing state may be competed for and then utilized for the personal benefit of the office-holders as well as that of their reference or support group"[xvi]. With reference to Nigeria, while this gross mismanagement of public fund persists, with burgeoning rents from Oil Multinationals, the political elites engaged in borrowing funds from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) guaranteed by the World Bank to fund 'white elephant projects'. However, by 1980s, oil price plummeted, rents shrunk, same time debt service obligations were due.

To counterbalance this apparent financial constraint, and to meet their serviceable debt obligations, the government sought further borrowing. This later attempts at borrowing were met with strict conditionality from World Bank and IMF, including currency devaluation, trade liberalization and removal of government subsidies on fertilizer and other commodities.[xvii]This is what Larry Diamonds called *market oriented reforms*[xviii], while the IMF and the Babangida regime refer to it as Structural Adjustment Program (SAP). In a nutshell, market reforms presage minimal role for the state in economic planning and the creation of a competitive market as the panacea for developmental challenges as well.

Understanding of these factors and the manner in which they interact, influence each other and shape both political and economic activities within the post colonial stateis key to understanding myriads of challenges confronting Nigeria, attributed to its inability to fulfill its raison d'état, including adapting to shifts in its climate.

2.0. Rentier State, Politics of Prebend, and Market Reformin Nigeria

In its original design, colonial states everywhere were outposts of the European government's base for resource extraction. Mineral and agricultural resource extracted from the colonies formed a major part of the revenues for states, and provided the impetus for industrialization of Europe. The character of colonial states in some ways mimicked those of the European metropolitan states in its extractive tendencies, but differed only in the indiscriminate use of violence in facilitating resource exploitation, with obvious disregard for the wellbeing of the colonized. Thus, colonial states in Africa were apparatus of resource extraction par excellence, with every part of the machinery well oiled, and occasionally overhauled to enhance optimal performance and ensure maximal resource extraction.

Central to resource extraction of the colonial government in Nigeria was the agricultural sector, which promoted the cultivation of cash crops, such as groundnuts, cocoa, cotton and palm produce, and their eventual exportation to Europe. For this purpose the colonial state played a vital economic role through the establishment and maintenance of legal, administrative as well as regulatory institutions. "The key agencies in the expansion of the state's economic role in Nigeria were the marketing boards of the post-1945 era"[xix]. Through these boards and agencies, government provided various forms of support to farmers, including introduction of new and hybrid crops and new knowledge and better practices. This assistance as records show increased crop yield exponentially, and also guaranteed constant, and in some cases high flow of taxes from the farmers. These institutions also doubled as instruments "for collectivizing savings."[xx] In addition, colonial governments built infrastructure, particularly railroads to facilitate the movement of these agricultural produce from the areas of production, to the sea ports for exports.

Thus, in the three decades preceding independence in 1960, agriculture was the major contributor to the gross national product (GDP), contributing over 81%. This character of the state—resource/tax extraction and collective savings as well as developmental—was transmitted to, but not sustained by the post-colonial state. Two significant factors accounts for this: the discovery of crude oil and the character of the dominant political class.

First, in the eve of independence, in 1956 to be precise, oil was discovered in Oloibiri, now in Bayelsa state, southeast of Nigeria. Due to the interregnum, created by the civil war of 1967-1970, full exploration began in the 1970s, and with it came flowing 'petrodollars' which bloated the national treasury. It also displaced agriculture as the major contributor to the national GDP. As the global oil market boomed in the 1970s, so also did the rents and royalties accrued to Nigeria from oil multinationals. Given this huge revenue, the state became the major engine of development, while successive regimes became reckless in their spending. For instance, "between 1970 and 1977, federal revenues jumped almost ten-fold, from ₦756 million to ₦7,070 million. During that period, government expenditure multiplied to keep pace with the swelling treasury, with current spending increasing from ₦774 million to ₦3, 547 million and outlays for capital formation from ₦99 million to a sum nearing fifty times greater at ₦4, 913 million"[xxi]. It is important to note at this juncture that, "export proceeds were leveraged by foreign borrowing, as successive regimes sought to finance ambitious capital projects and to compensate for fluctuations in oil revenues"[xxii]. This transformation of Nigerian from an 'extractive' to a 'rentier' state has embedded in its belly seeds of self destruction, which would later manifest in many ways including as weak adaptive capacity.

Second, the economic and political life of post-colonial state came under heavy assault by the actions and inactions of the political class. Scholars have already identified some of these behaviors to include 'planlessnes', 'inefficiency' and 'squander mania'. Certainly, the burgeoning national coffers fueled self-aggrandizing, and self-perpetuating behavior among the bourgeoisie. It also reinforced clientelistic networks and fostered corruption as politicians utilized public funds to reward political loyalists, and appropriated some as well. "Thus a serious dilemma of Nigeria's second republic derives from the fact that its operating principle is the accession to position of state power by bourgeois and aspirant bourgeois elements who are often quite adept at milking the very source which they are historically expected to strengthen and fructify"[xxiii]This unpatriotic behavior of primitive accumulation by the political class, heightened state vulnerability, as well as facilitated the "multinational penetration and manipulation"[xxiv],of Nigerian state. Furthermore, it created a supper alliance between the political class and the international capital that collaboratively manipulate, exploit, and loot Nigeria's resources. The coups and counter coups that began almost at independence in 1966, up till the late 1990s are viewed both as a struggle for self perpetuation, as well as a voracious penchant of the bourgeoisie for personal accumulation. This institutionalized politics of prebend rendered impracticable the sustainability of the extractive character, and developmental goal of the state.

By 1980 however, while the gross fiscal mismanagement persisted, the international oil prices dipped sharply. "Export income fell by nearly a third within three years, yielding consequent declines in imports and national product".[xxv] "Meanwhile, debts incurred during the boom era became due, and were further aggravated by short-term borrowing to meet current commitments. A rapid bunching of external obligations led to balance-of-payments deficits, growing arrears, and a withdrawal of international lending"[xxvi]. To counterbalance this budget deficit, General Ibrahim Babangida sought to borrow more fund in 1983. By this time, the IMF prescribed market reforms as a precondition for a loan.

The end of the 1980s is remarkable to scholars of development and political economy for two reasons: It shook to its foundation, and discredited the previously held notion and belief in development economics that "late developers were vulnerable to severe market failures which presaged a large role for the state in economic planning"[xxvii], and heralded the triumph of 'monoeconomic' claim[xxviii], to use the word of Hirschman. It also witnessed the ascendency of new ideas of 'state shrinking', 'liberalization and privatization' in the registrar of development policy[xxix]. Though the brainchild of the Washington Consensus (WC), it was promoted by the IMF and the World Bank as the only factor which guarantees economic development and political success. Developing nations, including those in Africa were encouraged by the international financial institutions and the G8 to toe this path of development, rather than inventing the wheel. This liberalization ideology was often attached by the World Bank and the IMF as a precondition to guarantee loans/credits from private banks to governments of developing nations.

This was the current in 1986 in which General Ibrahim Babangida approached the World Bank for a negotiation to re-open credit flow from private banks. To this end, the agreement reached by both parties required Nigeria to implement a reform program. According to Paul Mosley, "the essence of the strategy was to remove controls on the free movement of the exchange rate and imports and thereby above all remove the bias against agricultural exports"[xxx]Although, this ideal of market reform generated so much resistance within Nigeria, as students, traders and workers protested it's key elements, the government acquiesced to the conditionality. Thus, between 1986-1990 a total of $1.1 billion credit line was made available for the government of Nigeria. Given that "each country is invited to choose a variety of market economy different from the WC, with a view to achieving a society characterized by less inequality and better human development spending, especially for the poor"[xxxi], why then did the Nigerian political elites favor the variant of liberal market reform prescribed for them? It is because it served their interest—prebend and primitive accumulation. Having laid this foundation; I turn now to the incapacitating effects of the market reforms in Nigeria.

3.0. Market Reforms in Nigeria and their Debilitating Economic Consequences

To fully appreciate the debilitating effects of market reforms on Nigerian economy and its capacity to adapt to changing climate, it is perhaps essential to begin by asserting that according tothe institutional economists, administrative, legal and regulatory institutions are conditions in equanon for a functioning national market.[xxxii] These are clear imagery of the functions of state bureaucracy of traditional states in Europe, and the colonial state as well, while the neoliberal economic reforms are its antithesis. Thus Writers such as Kiren (1994) has demonstrated how such policy was designed for entrapment.

First, consequent upon the process of state creation in Nigerian which accentuated ethnic group differences, furthered inter-group competition, and stifled national unity: the operating principle within the Nigerian public realm is that of primordial sentiments. Given the above, unregulated market system is not an option for Nigeria. As Kiren argued, "national markets cannot function in context where primordial sentiments inform behavior in the economic realm or where overlapping ascriptive and occupational cleavages become exceedingly polarized"[xxxiii]. This may well explain why Nigeria "has never known a liberal *laissez-faire* state in economic matters, since such ideological strictures were often left behind in the European metropolis by the colonial officers".[xxxiv] Because "complex processes through which economic groups supersede ascriptive ones can only be a result of state policies and/or structural economic change that undercuts ascriptive identifications, such as kinship and sectarian ties"[xxxv]. Given the above, the prescription of liberal economic policy by the IMF and World Bank as the only panacea for the ailing Nigerian economy can only be misguided or misdirected, or both.

Furthermore, the paradox of the market orthodoxy is that, there is a marked difference between the "market-oriented systems in the west and post-cold war market-based reforms prescribed for Nigeria in particular, and many other developing nations. Absent that, there is no country in recorded history that has developed by adopting laissez-faire economics."[xxxvi] Nigeria's implementation of the prescribed market-based reform, even beyond what had been attempted elsewhere,[xxxvii] against Stiglitz's warning that "a country subjects itself single-mindedly to the discipline of financial markets only at its peril,"[xxxviii]is indicative of the convergence of two distinct yet intersected interests in a collaborative manner to rob Nigeria of its financial resources. First, it is now clear that the market reform policies of the late 1980s and 1990s foisted upon Nigeria were ploys of the Western World to recycle the 'petrodollars' back into their economy by any means necessary including using the IMF, the World Bank and Oil Multinationals.

This is vividly captured by Stiglitzthat: '*the Enron scandal exposed the limits of deregulation. Although the firm had been presented as the model of the new American enterprise, one that showcased the virtues, both of deregulation, and of how innovative American firms could help shape a more productive economy if only they were given the chance, Enron's profits were due to the manipulation of the market by its executives in a way which covered up the firm's liabilities whilst exaggerating its income. This prompted some perceptive analysts to argue that 'hidden theft had evidently been part of capitalism for a longtime*."[xxxix]

Second, "by buying into the deregulation mantra, the Nigerianstate/political elite knew exactly what it wanted: the hollowing out of the state' scommanding social purposes such that special interests could override the overarching public interest,"[xl]therefore permit further misappropriation of state funds.

The net effect has been the overriding of the social contract of the state with its people by the economic contract it has with the international financial institutions. This apparently demonstrates a general lack of political will to address issues of climate change in northern Nigeria, among others.

Consequently, much needed capital for national development including climate change adaptation programs was lost in capital flight. For instance, in one bank account in the US, General Abacha, Nigeria's dictator between 1993 and 1998 has over $500bn and many more accounts in the US and Europe. In the same vein, Atiku Abubakaformer vice President under President Olusiegun Obasanjo from 1999 – 2007, and his partner US Representative William J. Jefferson were indicted by the FBI on account of $90,000. Like their predecessor, Atiku and his colleague Chief Obasanjo are said to have several billions of Dollars stashed in various secret accounts in the US. In 2005, Mr. Diepreye Alamieyeseigha was arrested in London for money laundering at the tune of over £1.3m and many more put away in secret bank accounts in London, while James Ibori Delta state governor from 1999 - 2007 was convicted by London court in 2012 for money laundering at the tune of $79m.[xli]. Although, negotiations are ongoing between Nigeria and the US and some other European governments for the repatriation of some of these money, there are however so much more funds illegally taken out of the Nigerian economy by corrupt political elites and their Novo Richie local business partners, and international collaborators hidden in bank accounts in Europe and the US yet to be discovered. These warranted that successive Nigeria governments had both narrow interest in, and limited funds to invest in enhancing its capacity to respond to the effects of climate change within its domain. In so doing, abandoned the large population of subsistent farmers in northern Nigeria to their peril in the hands of worsening draught and desert encroachment.

4.0. Inadequacies in Nigeria's Adaptation Efforts at Changes in its Climate

Nigeria, the largest economy and the most populous Black nation is located in West Africa region, situated on the latitude 4º - 14º north of the equator and longitude 3º – 15º east of the Greenwich Meridian (approximately), and covers an area of about 923,200 km2. With a length of about 1100km, spanning from south to the north,Nigeria's climate varies more compared to any other state in West Africa.[xlii]

The tropical maritime (TM) air mass, the tropical continental (TC) air mass and the equatorial easterlies shape and determine Nigeria's climate. The first air mass (MT) originates from the southern high-pressure belt located off the Namibian coast, and along its way picks up moisture from over the Atlantic Ocean and is thus wet. The second air mass (CT) has the high-pressure belt north of the Tropic of Cancer as its origin. This air mass is always dry as a result of little moisture it picks along its way. The first two air mass (MT and CT) meet along a startingsurface called the Inter-tropical Discontinuity (ITD). The third air mass (equatorial easterlies)is a somehow erratic cool air mass, which comes from the east and flow in the upper atmosphere along ITD. This air mass penetrates occasionally to actively undercut the MT or CT air mass and give rise to line squalls or dust devils[xliii].

The northern region situated within Longitude 3º – 15º E and Latitude 4º -14º N, and covers about 719,000 square miles, constitutes about two third of Nigeria's land mass. Guinea, Sudan and Sahel savannas remain the dominant vegetation type, while the general relief of this region ranges between 300 and 900m. By political definition, the zone encompasses Kogi, Taraba, Sokoto, Kaduna, Maiduguri, Jos, Kano, Adamawa, Benue, Katsina, Kwara, Zamfara, Nassarawa, Jigawa, Yobe, Gombe, Kebbi sub-states and Federal Capital Territory (FCT).[xliv] Going by the 2006 national census which projects Nigeria's population at 170 million people, northern Nigeria is home to about seventy five (75) million people. While the agricultural sector maintains Nigeria's largest employer of labor, and second largest contributor to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 75 per cent of the food production comes from the north. Same time, more than 70 per cent of northerners depend on farming for their subsistence. Nigeria's immediate neighbors are Chad by the northeast, Niger by the northwest, and Cameroon by the east.

This region has been the hardest hit by the apparent rising air temperature and declining rainfall in Nigeria in the last five decades. It has also witnessed less than 10 inches rainfall within this period. Unfortunately, however, the level of the impact of climate change on this region remains largely unknown, due in part to inadequate or inexistent national country-specific analysis of changes in climate. Considering the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change which predicted less rainfall for West African interior, including Nigeria by 2100, the fate of people living in this region, in the absence of governments' intervention is gloomy.

According to the IPCC, states respond to changes in climate by either mitigation, or adaptation or both. The later refers to “adjustments in ecological-social-economic systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli, their effects or impacts”[xlv]; “by building *a* climate-resilient society that is able to withstand or recover quickly from difficult conditions caused by the adverse effects of climate change”[xlvi],is most pertinent to Nigeria. It involves a complex set of actions that requires carefully designed and adroitly executed policies that coordinate economic-technological, political-institutional and structural-legal or informational structures of a state in a way that reduces its vulnerability, and enhances its capacity to overcome environmental challenges associated with changes in climate.[xlvii]

Nigeria’s adaptive capacity to changing climate has been a major concern to many and a focus of scrutiny in recent times.[xlviii]Reports indicate that, while there may be some adaptation policy initiatives, they are hardly developed, insufficient, and inefficient. For example, the framers of the Nigerian constitution assigned greater responsibility vis-à-vis climate change adaptation to the state and state actors. “Chapter 2, Article 28 of the Nigerian constitution stipulates that, the state shall protect and improve the environment and safeguard the water, air and land, forest, and wildlife of Nigeria”[xlix].This of course requires state actors to devote substantial resources, including administrative structures, legal frameworks, finance, knowledge, technology, information and administration as would necessitate accomplishing. But this has scarcely been so.

Though a constitutional framework, for realizing above stated goals, which allocates various responsibilities to each tier (federal, state and local government) and levels (executive, legislator and judiciary) of government exist, their activities are rarely collaborative or coordinated. Similarly, adaptive policies, including the ‘*National Policy on Drought and Desertification; Draught Preparedness Plan, 2007; National Policy on Erosion, Flood Control and Coastal Zone Management 2005; and National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, 2004’*[l], have at best remained well articulated on paper. Lacking both the technicalities and political will to create and support requisite institutional framework needed to carry out these policies, their activities have barely gone beyond mere rhetoric. The *Special Climate Change Unit (SCCU),* charged with the responsibility of coordinating the activities of *Inter-ministerial Committee on Climate Change;* with members drawn from various ministries, including Non Governmental Agencies (NGOs) and academic, including “Centre for Climate Change and Fresh Water Resources, Federal University of Technology Minna; Centre for Energy, Research and Development, Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife; and Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi”[li] remains the primary institution for adaptation in Nigeria.

However, lack of funds and gross mismanagement greatly impinged on the capacity of this institution to perform optimally. For instance, poor funding of the educational sector, including above mentioned institutions charged with adaptation responsibilities to climate change; brought the Academic Staff Union (ASU) of Nigerian Universities to open confrontations with the political elites in the 1990s. This caused ‘brain drain’, and decadence of the sector as some professors fled to the western world. The result is a dearth of knowledge, in particular those that relate to changes in Nigeria’s climate, and their implication as well as proper adaptation mechanisms to these changes; including developing indigenous, hybrid, draught resistant species of plants, and animals and technologies to meet the peculiar needs of farmers. Thus, Oladipo’s conclusion that “even the capacity of SCCU to drive and coordinate national climate change response is weak; and that there are very few people with proven competencies in the unit and facilities remain inadequate”[lii] speaks volumes.

As I noted earlier on, the trumping of tax extraction (primarily from the agricultural sector) by rents from oil multinationals as the source of revenue for the government also led to the total neglect of the agricultural sector. This neglect is most apparent in the share of the annual national budget allocated to the sector in the last three decades or more. For instance, Bello noted that, between 2001 and 2005, of average of ₦824 billion annual budgets, only about 1.8 per cent, amounting to ₦14.7 billion was devoted to agriculture.[liii] These were grossly inadequate to support subsistent farming in such a way that could cushion environmental effects of climate change— particular drought. Even as it has been reported that a nation’s agricultural adaptive capacity to climate variability is only meaningful to the extent at which irrigated agriculture is prominent, agricultural practices in Nigeria remain largely rain-fed compared to other developing nations like India.[liv]“The consequences are that the increasing frequency and severity of droughts are likely to cause, *as its been causing*: crop failure; high and rising food prices; distress sale of animals; de-capitalization; impoverishment, hunger, and famine”[lv], in northern Nigeria(emphasis added in italics).

Furthermore, not even funds in the form of grants or loans are made available to subsistent farmers. Previous attempts at providing funds for rural farmers through the establishment of agricultural and co-operative banks were mired in corruption and gross inefficiency. Undoubtedly, the exorbitant collaterals demanded by these banks made it exceedingly difficult for indigent, house hold farmers to access these funds. In so doing, it creates avenues for wealthy rural leaders such as traditional chiefs, land lords, local politicians, traders and businessmen to hijack the money.[lvi]This contrasts sharply with the United States policies of heavy investment in the agricultural sector; which facilitated innovative adaptive strategies, including new technologies, development of new improved drought resistant crops, new knowledge and farming practices, as well as disbursement of loans and subsidies to farmers, following the drought in the Great Plains in the 1930s.

It is in the light of the above that one would begin to appreciate recent study which showed that small house hold farmers in Kano, northern Nigeria, bemoan lack of funds, and inaccessibility of drought resistant seeds as the primary cause of their vulnerability. In the words of Ekpoh, "many of the respondents claimed that they lost much of their seed stock during the drought years of early 1970s, 1980s and 1990s and has not recovered fully since then".[lvii] Thus, in what seems like echoing the debilitating consequences of rent-seeking political elites and people-unfriendly market reforms on the adaptive capacity of Nigeria, Bello concluded as follows:

Consequently, all the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) were under funded as macro-economic reforms are implemented by governments. The consequence of this is low new agricultural technologies transferred to the smallholder farm families for adaptation compared to developed countries. This inevitably could cause serious challenges for agricultural adaptation to climate change[lviii]

This lack of knowledge and technology transfer to smallholder farm families' creates a quagmire in which the farmers and nomads "are trying to escape the desert, but because of their land-use practices, they are bringing the desert with them"[lix]

5.0. Linking Conflict to Climate Change in Nigeria

There is no gainsaying that the twin effects of climate change—drought and desertification—which has continued unabated; encroaching at an alarming rate in northern Nigeria, partly contribute to gradual decline in crop yield and high animal mortality rate since 1970s.[lx]Since agricultural sector constitutes Nigeria's biggest employer of labor, on which over 75% of northern Nigerians depend for their subsistence, low yield in crop production and high mortality rate of farm animals results in loss of livelihood and hence poverty. Given these conditions, disaffection for farming and massive population migration in two distinct directions ensues. First, southwards migration of Fulani herdsmen and their animals in search of greener pasture and water. Scholars have attributed the recurring herder-farmer conflict in Plateau state, northeaster Nigeria to the above. Second, rural to urban migration of the youth farmers in search for better life. This rural-urban migration is cardinal to an understanding of the conflict in northern Nigeria and the emergence of groups like Boko Haram.

To begin with, these migrant youths lack formal education and skills vital for survival in the urban areas. In addition, state capacity and sovereignty across its territory has been weakened. "This capacity weakness affects the ability (or impetus) of the state to provide basic social services."[lxi]Therefore, there are only a few industries, with limited capacity to absorb these migrant youths in this region. One would expect that Nigeria with huge crude oil revenue should diversify its economy to agricultural and manufacturing sectors, therefore establish agro-based industries in northern region. But this is not the case. As a result, almost all the youths are unable to gain employment in the blue kola sector, thus, are thrown into poverty on arrival at the urban cities. This later poverty situation is exacerbated by the absence of provision for social welfares by the Nigerian state. Eventually, the social groups, in particular religious groups—Churches and Mosques—step into these gaps.

The latter rather than the former provide a clear perspective of the conflict, resulting from the rural-urban population migration. For one thing, the Mosques and their resident Imams provide basic needs, including shelter, food and clothing for the new arrivals, thus serve as both centers of succor for their physical needs, and guardian of their soul. In this manner they reinforce the affection at economy of the Dan-Fodian Caliphate. For another, it presents ample opportunities for discontented religious bigots to indoctrinate this poor, uninformed, ill-educated army of youths with anti-state, anti-Western semantics. This way, they create an army of mindless terrors waiting to be unleashed unto Nigerians and the global community.

6.0. Conclusion

In contributing to the global discourse on climate change, this article tried to demonstrate that the globalization of transnational capital has a propensity to shape and influence state behaviors especially the developing ones. This influence is even felt more by states that lack clear unique development agenda, whose political class depend on, and collaborate with transnational capitalists to defraud. In the guise of the neoliberal agenda, these states loose huge vital resources needed for development, including responding to climate change. For Nigeria to weather the storm of recurring conflict within its shores, particularly in the northern region, comprehensive people-centered economic development policies, adroitly coordinated in collaboration with the international community, civil society, and the private sector (both local and transnational) is needed. Given the strategic importance of Nigeria vis-à-vis African development, the global economy and peace, a long-term, sustainable, bottom-up economic and political restructuring is imperative. To this end, two strategies need be emphasized. First, the outburst of militancy, including the Biafran attempt in 1967-1970, the Niger-Delta insurgency and the Boko Haram challenge must be seen as a sign of manifest democratic struggle. Through which deprived Nigerians demand for more inclusive participation in, and restructuring of both political and economic life of the state, long dominated by the political elites and their collaborators—international capital. Thus, rather than ethno-nationalistic bifurcated struggles, Nigerians should coalesce to push for a commongoal—true liberation of Nigeria.

Second, given that the Nigerian state remains the central institution for policy decision and implementation[lxii], efforts at political restructuring must center on creating a political class with a vision and the notion of a new state, whose institutions and structures are devoted to people-friendly policies. This political class supported by the new state institutions and structures would be able to articulate lucid, unique, and sustainable development agenda devoid of external manipulations by international financial capitals. Such development agenda that would position Nigeria to compete favorably in the global economy must include clearly defined and properly executed climate change adaptation strategy.

End Notes

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[ii] John Smithers, and Barry Smit. (1997) ‘Human adaptation to climatic variability and change’ Global Environmental Change. Vol. 7. No.2. Pp. 1.

[iii] This new belief is consequent upon the development ‘chaos theory’. See Thomas Homer-Dixon, (1991), “On the Threshold: Environmental Changes as Causes of Acute Conflict” International Security, Vol. 16, No. 2. Pp. 76-116.

[iv] Ibid.

[v]Bello O. B. et al., “Evidence of Climate Change Impacts on Agriculture and Food Security in Nigeria,” *International Journal of Agriculture and Forestry* 2, no. 2 (April 9, 2012): 49–55, doi:10.5923/j.ijaf.20120202.08.

[vi] Bello O. B et al. (2012). ‘Evidence of climate change Impacts on Agriculture and Food Security in Nigeria’. International Journal of Agriculture and Forestry. Vol. 2(2). Pp. 49-55

[vii]Ibid.

[viii] Ibid.4

[ix] Michael J. Mortimore and Williams M. Adams. (2001). “Farmer adaptation, change and crisis in the Sahel”, Global Environmental Change 11. Pp. 49-57

[x] Ibid.

[xi]Hyden, African politics in contemporary perspectives, cited in GbemisolaAnimasawun and Luqman Saka. “Causal analysis of radical Islam in northern Nigeria’s Forth Republic” African Security Review, 22.4, 2013, 216-231.

[xii] The renteir state thesis has been discussed extensively and have been applied by some scholars to analyze loss of state capacity (see, Forest, 1993; Karl, 1997; Delacroix, 1980 and Beblawi and Luciani, 1987).

[xiii] Benjamin Smith. Oil Wealth and Regime Survival in the Developing World, 1960-1999”. American Journal of Political Science, Vol. 48, No. 2. (Apr.2004), p.2322-246.

[xiv] See Delacriox, 1980. cited in Benjamin Smith. Ibid.

[xv]Ibd.

[xvi]Richard A. Joseph, “Class, State, and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria,” *Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 21, no. 3 (1983): 21–38.

[xvii] See for instance (Peter Lewis, 1996; AdekunleAmuwo, 2009).

[xviii] Larry Diamoncd , 1991; cited in AdekunleAmuwo. “The Political Economy of Nigerian’s Post-military Elections, 1999-2007” Review of African Political Economy, May 13 2009.

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[xxi]Ibid.

[xxii]Peter Lewis, “From Prebendalism to Predation: The Political Economy of Decline in Nigeria,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 34, no. 1 (March 1, 1996): 79–103.pp 81

[xxiii]Richard A. Joseph, “Class, State, and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria,” *Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 21, no. 3 (1983): 21–38. Pp 81
[xxiv]Richard A. Joseph, “Class, State, and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria,” *Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 21, no. 3 (1983): 21–38. Pp
[xxv] David Bevan et al cited in Lewis, “From Prebendalism to Predation.”pp 81
[xxvi]Ibid.pp 81
[xxvii]Kiren Aziz Chaudhry, “Economic Liberalization and the Lineages of the Rentier State,” *Comparative Politics*, 1994, 1–25. Pp. 1
[xxviii] Albert Hirschman, cited in Ibid. Pp. 1
[xxix]Ibid.
[xxx]Paul Mosley, “Policy-Making without Facts: A Note on the Assessment of Structural Adjustment Policies in Nigeria, 1985-1990,” *African Affairs*, 1992, 227–40.
[xxxi]Adekunle Amuwo. "The Political Economy of Nigeria's Post-military election, 1999 - 2007" Review of African Political Economy No. 119:37-61. pp. 41
[xxxii]Chaudhry, “Economic Liberalization and the Lineages of the Rentier State.” Comparative Politics, Vol.27, No.1 (Oct., 1994). Pp. 2
[xxxiii]Ibid.
[xxxiv]Joseph, “Class, State, and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria,” 1983. Pp. 22.
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[xli] See for example “Nigeria Governor to Be Impeached,” *BBC*, November 23, 2005, sec. Africa, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4462444.stm. Opinion Lifestyle Radio & TV 08/08/2014
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[xliv]Abdulkadir et al. “An appraisal of the Eco-climatic Characteristics in Northern Nigeria” African Journal of Environmental Science and Technology. Vol. 7(8), pp. 748-757. Aug. 2013
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[xlviii] See for example, Ikuomola, 2010; Oladipo, 2010; Aaron Sayne, 2011; and Bell et al, 2011.
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