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URBAN VIOLENCE MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA

Aluko Opeyemi Idowu[9]

ABSTRACT

Violence is supported by forces that disintegrate the community. Forces that rebuild or disintegrate the society are always evident in every human interaction. The centripetal forces are forces that bind the community together while the centrifugal forces scatter the state. Urban violence is a common aspect of state development but it can be prevented. The way and manner to which this is carried out makes the difference among countries. The way and manner which the government manage the citizens agitations also determines whether the state will be pull apart or together. The research question of the study is how has Nigeria been able to address the factor that causes violence considering the centripetal forces of attraction and political settlements uniqueness? The Political settlement theoretical discourse is used to address the way settlements of violence can be achieved in a country. Recommendations are premise on the importance of mutual settlement of disputes in the country. The study concludes on the premise that mutual feedback coupled with political and economic will to develop a community is needed by the government so as to achieve sustainable socio-political and economic development.

Keywords: Centrifugal, Centripetal, Governance, Management, Political Settlement, Rule of Law and Violence

1.0.   Introduction

Every country in the world is faced with one form of crises or the other. This might be internal insurrections, external aggressions, protracted conflicts, ethno religion crises, political violence, economic crises and social conflicts of various magnitudes among others. The approach and magnitude of managing such violence is therefore the hallmark of good governance. A good and efficient government takes the issue of violence management important because it can jeopardise the entire success of the administration. In the past, many ways and approaches had been adopted to curb violence by various regimes. A few approaches had been successful while some others had failed (Aluko, Abdullahi and Balogun 2015; Aluko, 2017).

Success or failure of approaches depends on the peculiarity of such violence in the country. There are several factors or forces that lead to the onset of violence and make it peculiar. However, the success and failure of any regime in managing such factors depends on the interactions and the magnitude of the presences of two forces of actions. These forces are

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termed as 'centrifugal and centripetal forces'. The centrifugal forces are made up of factors that disturb the peace, growth and stability of a community and eventually escalate the violence to an uncontrollable one. A typical aftermath example of centrifugal forces is terrorism incursion and kidnapping erosion in many developing countries. The centripetal force comprises of the factors that supports and uphold the peace, growth and stability of a community and eventually binds the community together in unity.

Hoeffler (2008) and Aluko (2019) noted that urban violence is a prominent and an inevitable aspect of state development. In a democratic regime, the citizens' have the right to hold the government accountable so as to achieve an end. Civil disobedience is a step to measure citizens' prowess to agitate for their rights and benefits after performing their lawful duties. The management and control measures for the managing of such right to agitate are the major ways to mitigate the effect of the centrifugal forces and expand the influence of the centripetal forces. The way and manner to which urban violence is managed and carried out is a point of departure. That is to say, the way and manner the government manages the citizens' agitation determines whether the state will be pushed apart or pulled together.

This study addresses the question—how has Nigeria been able to address the factor that causes violence considering the centripetal forces of attraction and political settlements uniqueness? This seeks to get the way and manner the government has been able to curtail the centrifugal forces of separation through the use of centripetal forces of attraction in urban violence and political settlement interplays. This question is answered by theorising management strategies of urban violence. This paper adopts the managerial strategy models of Aluko (2018). The strategies identified include; Top-Down management strategy, Down-Top management strategy, Top-Down-Top management strategy and Down-Top-Down management strategy.

This study identifies that the centrifugal forces that causes violence and civil unrest are embedded in the Top-Down management strategy and the Down-Top management strategy respectively. The centripetal forces that enhance peace, stability and development are embedded within the Top-Down-Top management strategy and the Down-Top-Down management strategy respectively. The managerial strategies for urban violence either originates from the government (Top) or from other key actor (Down) which include civil societies, political parties, individuals and other elite groups such as religious and socio-cultural elite within the political settlement.

The theoretical framework of Political Settlement Analysis (PSA) is utilised to further buttress the idea of amicable management of violence in human community. The term 'political settlement' is of fairly recent origin. One of the first traceable uses is in Melling's study of industrial capitalism and the welfare state (Melling, 1991); Khan (1995) used it in a development studies context to analyse the performance of institutions; it was later used by Fritz and Rocha (2007) and Whaites (2008). The PSA holds the view which is oriented

towards informal, long-running dynamics between political actors, especially the elites. It also focuses on specific, often formal renegotiations of political arrangements – through power-sharing deals, constitutional conferences, peace agreements among parties and the like so as to resolve chaotic situations.

The study is organised to review the concept of urban violence, theoretical discourse on political settlement analysis, review of the realities of urban violence in Nigeria and the urban violence management strategies. This study recommendation is directed to the government at all levels and the civil societies on the importance of mutual settlement of disputes in the polity. The study concludes on the premise that the state has a divine origin but the sustenance is the reaction of both human and divine. The management of violence is anchored on mutual respects by the parties to enhance peace and progress in the community.

2.0.   Urban Violence Conceptual Clarification

Urban violence is a notion that encompasses the entire facet of human community. It includes huge violence in the magnitude of war, armed violence, gender based violence, ethno religious violence, gang violence and civil unrest. It also includes minute crises at the domestic home levels and work place violence. The term urban in this study does not connote geographical location of occurrence of violence. It is a notion that connotes a form of modern and reoccurring violence in the neighbourhood. It is a common form of violence manifestation that is easily seen, reported across different climes or in some cases invisible violence which are underreported but still been perpetuated by different criminal syndicates in the community.

Felbab-Brown (2011) also opined that organized crime is one of the principal manifestations of the violence. Aluko (2016) remarked that political and electoral violence such as ballot stuffing and ballot snatching, vote buying and manipulations, political agitation, violent political rallies, flying fist, throwing stones and sharp object at a perceived target, tyre burning and political assassinations are urban violence.Urban areas pervaded by illicit economies, violent criminality, and inadequate state presence, are usually controlled by non-state entities, such as criminal gangs, drug trafficking organizations, or urban militias. The paradox of urban violence is such that the illicit economies proceeds are used to deliver otherwise absent socioeconomic goods and other public goods in their locality and thereby stepping into the stateless void of state of nature.

Adèle (2007) noted that urban violence is a form of armed conflict that results into casualties and injury in terms of refugees and internally displaced persons. Urban violence in the form of armed conflict and war rather than of armed criminality is the third biggest cause of human casualties. It leads to displacement of people from their homes, the loss of access to land, property, jobs, and traditional support structures. Other negative effects include the lack of access to health and social services, increased mortality and morbidity,

and increased food insecurity. In addition, displaced people become more vulnerable to infectious and communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis.

At the apex of all of these additional concerns, the resultant displaced people becomes vulnerable to more urban violence such as gender based violence where the women, boys and girls become sexually assaulted or forced to trade sexual favours for food, shelter or protection. Women faces an additional urban violence burden when returning to their homes which can include rejection by family and community members, the potential loss of a spouse and possible prohibition of future marriage, often leaving them destitute and without shelter or livelihood (Sharp, 2009; Jager and Marsha 2010).

3.0.   Political Settlement Analysis Theoretical Discourse On Urban Violence Management

The usage of the term 'political settlement' is of a recent origin. Melling's study of industrial capitalism and the welfare state has its first usage (Melling, 1991). Khan (1995) used it in a development studies context to analyse the performance of institutions. Fritz and Rocha (2007) analysis was in line with Khan and Whaites (2008) further emphasised on strategic settlements. But what, exactly, is a political settlement? There are two quite distinct ways of thinking about political settlements. One approach is oriented towards informal, long-running dynamics between political actors, especially elites. Another is focused on specific, often formal renegotiations of political arrangements – through power-sharing deals, constitutional conferences, peace accords, mutual agreements and the like. Each approach has its merits in substantive terms, and our approach balances them – focusing on discrete events that punctuate longer-running processes.

The study aligns itself with the views of other scholars that PSA is focused on arrangements between elites to resolve an urban violence, but this is emphasized that the broader state/society should not be viewed as separate from relations in which elites are embedded. OECD (2010; 2011), perceived political settlements as an agreement, principally between elites, but often connected to social groupings on the balance and distribution of power and wealth on the rules of political engagement and on the nature of the longer-running and contested political process that connect state and society. This definition excessively focuses on the impact of the elite groups and relegates the informal networks of the local forces and other actors.

Political settlements are maintained in several different ways so that the ruling coalition typically establish, consolidate, or are strengthened. The most basic or first is 'coercion'. The ultimate form of coercion is to amass the capacity to use or threaten to use physical force against any object of violence or the perpetuators of violence. This generally means securing control of the major security sectors such as the police and military forces. In extremely fragile conditions (for example, a situation of state collapse), for an elite coalition to prevail, it must assemble enough military power to defend against (or defeat)

competing coalitions (Parks and Cole 2010). More generally, coercion includes actions by the ruling coalition to impose their interests on other groups, including excluded elites that might challenge it.

The second method for sustaining a political settlement is through 'co-optation' of potential threats from powerful excluded elites. This is often done by giving these elite groups a role in the political settlement, which then may be formalized in, for example, in a new coalition government. The third method to 'consolidate' the position of a ruling coalition, and ultimately the most important for the long-term viability of a political settlement, is through building and maintaining the legitimacy of state institutions established and shaped through the political settlement.

The fourth method through which political settlements are maintained is through the actions of the 'international community'. International actors may exert a stabilizing influence through a wide range of mechanisms (Parks and Cole 2010). One obvious method is through the presence of external security forces, which are able to extend or reinforce the capacity of the ruling coalition to keep potential competitors in check. Massive foreign assistance transfers in terms of intelligence gathering may also strengthen a political settlement, especially in so far as the ruling coalition is able to capture most of the benefits.

4.0.   Urban Violence In Nigeria

Urban violence in Nigeria is a phenomenon with multiple outlets of operations. Political violence is an outlet organised by state and non-state actors perpetuating violence, using: Guerrilla conflict, Political assassinations, Paramilitary conflict and armed conflict. Economic violence is another outlet of organized crime syndicates, perpetuated by business interests groups, delinquents and robbers using intimidation and violence as means of amplifying or resolving economic disputes, Street theft, non armed robbery and crimes, kidnapping, armed robbery, small-arms dealing, drug-trafficking and other contraband activities (Aluko, Abdullahi and Balogun 2015). Other assaults in the urban violence terrain of Nigeria include; killing and rape in the course of economic crimes, trafficking-in-prostitutes and conflict over scarce resources in the community. Economic or social violence perpetuated by gangs, street children (boys and girls), ethnic violence, territorial or identity-based "turf" violence, robbery, theft, Petty theft and Communal riots (Aluko 2014; Aluko, Isiaq and Aremu, 2018).

Social violence in Nigeria is most prevalent and silent in nature. It is in most times organised by intimate partners, violence inside the home, sexual violence (including rape), and child abuse. Other forms of social violence in Nigeria include the inter-generational conflict between parent and children, gratuitous or routine daily violence using physical or psychological male–female abuse, physical and sexual abuse, particularly prevalent in the case of stepfathers or uncles, incivility in areas such as traffic, road rage, bar fights and street confrontations and arguments that get out of control. Institutional violence is another

outlet of violence manifestation perpetuated by violence of state and other 'informal' institutions, including the private sector using: extra-judicial killings by police, physical or psychological abuse by health and education workers, state or community vigilante-directed social cleansing of gangs and street children (Aluko, Abdullahi and Balogun 2015; Omede, Okoroafo, Ngwube and Aluko, 2018).

Aluko, Abdullahi and Balogun (2015) gave three ways whereby urban violence transforms and manifests to remain prominent and unmanageable in Nigeria. These sustainability measures are Frog Dimension, Goat dimension and Pig dimension of Sustenance. They opined that conflicts in Nigeria are restless and translate from one form to the other. Urban violence in the frog-like phenomenon jump from one position or stage to another and "*at any resting phase, it only gathers momentum to change it course from one form of violence to the other*". Also the pig sustenance dimension portrays the political economy of urban violence as a big dirty business outfit perpetuated by some prominent government syndicates who are either the pioneer or are at the receiving end of these activities. They opined that;

> *This piggy dimension of urban violence in Nigeria had made violence to be sustained in such a way that it had been institutionalised as a tool of organizing temporal state abandonment of due process so as to get financial largess with vote of emergency or executive order (*Aluko, Abdullahi and Balogun (2015:34)

Urban violence sustenance is regarded as goat dimensions because it had defiled various government policies. Several potent policies had been made impotent by this stubborn urban violence nature. A few include the constant upward review of fund strategy to the military by Nigeria government so as to combat this menace.

5.0. Urban Violence Management Strategies

This paper adopts the managerial strategy models identified by Aluko (2017). These models identified four major types of managerial strategies. They include; Top-Down management strategy, Down-Top management strategy, Top-Down-Top management strategy and Down-Top-Down management strategy. He posited that the centrifugal forces are embedded in the Top-Down management strategy and the Down-Top management strategy while the centripetal forces are embedded within the Top-Down-Top management strategy and the Down-Top-Down management strategy.

These managerial strategies for urban violence and political settlements either originates from the government (Top) or from other key actor (Down) which include civil societies, political parties, individuals and other elite groups such as religious and socio-cultural elite. The centripetal management strategy makes use of centripetal force of actions and the centrifugal management strategy makes use of centrifugal force of actions. The centripetal

forces are embedded within the Top-Down-Top management strategy and the Down-Top-Down management strategy. The centrifugal forces are embedded within the Top-Down management strategy and Down-Top management strategy.

The first strategy discussed under the Centrifugal model is the Top-Down management strategy. This force of action creates a division and ideas of instability which originates from the government. The government is at the top of the affairs, it initiates the idea and sells, propagate and transmit it to the people. The government as the source of the policy or managerial idea onset in this case allows the people to evaluate the ideas, the peace talk and the settlement terms and conditions all but to some extent. The people usually the affected community and allies critically assess and evaluate the available information and policies that emanate from the government.

However, due to the absence or inadequate presence of the feedback mechanism from the government to the people coupled with the inadequate or lack of political will, social will and economic will on the part of the government and the people, these centrifugal forces drives the implementation of the policy or the ideals into several fragments and imbroglio. There is no or where available inadequate communication between the government and the concerned people. Therefore the aftermath is sustained violence and poverty. The sustained violence is a direct effect of the centrifugal force which drives off implementation of the policies and breaks down the terms and conditions of peace.

The second strategy discussed under the Centrifugal model is the Down-Top management strategy. This force of actions in the down-top management strategy further creates a division and ideas of instability that originates from the people. The people are at the top of the affairs; they initiate the idea, sells, propagate and transmit it to the government. The people as the initiator of the policy or managerial idea allow the government to evaluate the ideas, the peace talk and the settlement terms and conditions but to some extent the people have the implementation power. The government governing the affected community critically assess and evaluate the available information and policies that emanate from the people.

Due to the absence or inadequate presence of the feedback mechanism from the people to the government coupled with the inadequate or lack of political will, social will and economic will on the part of the government and the people, these centrifugal forces drives the implementation of the policy or the ideals into several fragments and imbroglio. Both the people and the government are not committed to the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Therefore the aftermath is sustained violence and poverty. All of these two models results in more violence and misunderstanding in the community. Therefore, there is a need for centripetal upholding force in the state.

The first strategy discussed under the centripetal model is the Top-Down-Top management strategy. Centripetal is a force that pulls or binds a set of things together to form a compact and progressive unit of one another. This force of actions that settles and mitigates ideas

originates from the government. The government is at the top of the affairs, it initiates the idea and sells, transmit and propagate it to the people. The government as the source of the policy or managerial idea onset in this case allows the people to evaluate the ideas, the peace talk and the settlement terms and conditions. The affected community and allies critically assess and evaluate the policies that emanate from the government.

Due to the presence of the feedback mechanism from the government and the people coupled with the utilization of political will, social will and economic will on the part of the government and the people, these centripetal forces drives the implementation of the policy or the ideals as a single unit. Both the government and the people are committed to the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Therefore there is increase peace, reduced violence and reduced poverty.

The second strategy discussed under the centripetal model is the Down-Top-Down management strategy. Unlike the top-down-top management strategy, the centripetal force of actions settles and mitigates ideals here originates from the people. The people are at the top of the affair; they initiate the ideal and sells, transmit and propagate it to the government. The people as the source of the policy or managerial idea onset in this case allow the government to evaluate the ideas, the peace talk and the settlement terms and conditions. The government usually governs the community, critically assess and evaluate the policies that emanate from the people.

Due to the presence of the feedback mechanism from the people and the government coupled with the utilization of the political will, social will and economic will on the part of the people and the government, these centripetal forces drives the implementation of the policy or the ideals as a single unit. Due to the presence of the centripetal forces in the polity, both the people and the government are committed to the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Therefore the aftermath is also increase peace, reduced violence and reduced poverty.

To some significant extent, the large presence of socio-political tensions in Nigeria indicates that the managerial strategy mainly used by the government and other stakeholders falls within the centrifugal strategies of top-down and down-top models without regular mutual feedback system coupled with inadequate political will, social will and economic will on the part of the people and the government which are the centrifugal forces of violence. The centripetal strategies of top-down-top and down-top-down models are much more compatible for multiethnic and religious polarised communities as Nigeria. The centripetal forces utilises regular mutual feedback system coupled with adequate political will, social will and economic will on the part of the people and the government

6.0.   Recommendation

The following recommendations are directed to the government at all levels, the civil societies and the community at large. The government at all levels will perform better if it ensure a good and adequate feedback sent to the people or the concerned groups per time base on the policy at hand and at the same time they should seek the mutual settlement of disputes in the polity. The whole idea may originate from the people or from the government, whichever way, the feedback at the onset of the peace talk or policy is important just as the feedback from the implementation of the ideas.

The civil society are also admonished to pursue plans and policies which resonate from the people and sell it to the government with full socio-political and economic will for the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people. This should be done with the aim of carrying along all the groups concerned for feedback and implementation purpose. The use of force of habit to pursue their agenda is usually accompanied with centrifugal forces so this should be jettison for a continuous follow-up of plans initiated until the adequate implementation is achieved.

The community at large will achieve a greater happiness if the policies that emanates from the governments are thoroughly evaluated and analysed. This should not stop at this stage but they must communicate the result or their opinions on the policy or terms and condition back to the government as feedback. This will assist the government to know the need and the opinion of the community on the plan, policy or actions embarked on. In the final analysis, the government policy will become the peoples' policy and the full socio-political and economic will for implementation will be exerted. This will definitely result into increased peace and development in the community.

7.0.   Conclusion

This study concludes on the premise that the state has a divine origin but the sustenance is the reaction of both human and divine. The political settlement analysis advocates that all stakeholders involved in the discussion should be recognised as an actor regardless of the magnitude of their contribution to the magnitude of the conflict or the settlement. This paper has identifies that there are various kinds and forms of violence in Nigeria. It described it manifestations as in form of goat, frog and pig which signifies a changing dimensions which are not palatable to the growth and development of the country.

Urban violence can be reduced to its lowest ebb in any society when the centrifugal forces of disintegrations are suppressed with the use of the centripetal forces of integration. The centrifugal strategies of top-down and down-top models without regular mutual feedback system coupled with inadequate political will, social will and economic will on the part of the people and the government are prone to dictatorship and urban violence. Therefore, the centripetal strategies of top-down-top and down-top-down models that utilises regular