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Reflecting on the Just War Tradition and the Discourse of Counterinsurgency in Nigeria

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Abstract
The aftermath of September 11, 2001, terror attack on the US opened a global floodgate of discourse, not only for scholars and media but also political actors, statesmen and stateswomen alike. The event left in its wake issues and contestations ranging from, but not limited to, terrorism, human security/insecurity, counter-terrorism, human rights abuse and violation, values, state's power, use of force, torture, violence and threats of violence, etc. At the core of these issues and contestations is the concern for whose security is at stake; the state or the individuals making up the state? Who is responsible for the safety and security of the state and its citizens? How or what is required to safeguard the state and or its citizens? Does state require more power to effectively protect itself and or the citizens? How can or should such power be justified? Addressing these questions require grounding in literature covering the broad intersection of these issues, with attention to the specific socio-historical context of the society concerned. In Nigeria, the reverberation of this global phenomenon is the burgeoning of literature on insurgency, terrorism and counter-terrorism, especially with the spread of radical activities of non-state actors across the country. This paper survey the terrain of insurgency/terrorism, particularly the activities of Boko Haram and how the Nigerian state is discursively responding to it drawing on the just war tradition.
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1. Introduction

Today, it has become clear that language is not neutral. Indeed, words do not just describe the world; they are the blocks with which the world is built. Language is never neutral and there is a sense in which language is employed to describe and make the world the way one likes (Fairclough, 1997; Wodak, 2001). Sociolinguistics and anthropologists agree that all language has binary structures built into them whereby, almost every noun, verb and adjective come in pair, direct opposite (Jackson, 2016; Jackson, 2005). This underlying architecture of language makes word usage a matter of choice i.e. the favouring of one term and devaluation of the other, so that the preference of the one over the other is deliberate as well as conveys a subjective sense in which language is employed.

Thus understood, language not only plays an important role in building or changing the world, it plays an active role in moulding perceptions, creating cognition, and affecting the strategic choices we make in (re)ordering society. Also, the non-neutral nature of words means that words have histories which they cannot be completely dissociated from, which makes choosing them deliberate and selective, and these meanings are precursor to the choices we make while choosing them. For instance, the use of term such as 'forces of good versus evil' cannot avoid invoking its recent predominance in the narratives following September 11 attacks, especially as employed by leaders such as George Bush and Tony Blair.

This approach to the phenomenon under investigation is premised on a number of crucial assumptions. First, it assumes that discourse as a form of social practice is both constituted and is constitutive of the social world. Second, it assumes that discourse shapes social structures and is in turn shaped by them. Third, there exists a dialectical relationship between discourse and social structures which makes them mutually reinforcing. And fourth, even of greater importance, CDA assumes discourses have an ideological character and discursive practices play a legitimising role in the (re)production of social relations in society. Specifically, the study draws upon notions of discourse as espoused by Foucault and Habermas and developed within CDA by scholars such as Fairclough (1981, 1992, 1997), van Dijk (1997) and Wodak (2000, 2001). Fairclough's perspective on CDA provides one of the most sophisticated methodology suitable for analysing and explaining the effects of adoption and assumption of certain kind of discourse over and above others.

The paper is divided into four broad sections, alongside this introduction: methodological issues, which laid bare the method employed in the study as well as the theoretical lens guiding; the third section, writing counterinsurgency, examined character of counterinsurgency discourse in Nigeria, with particular focus on dominant tropes in extant literature such as terrorism-as-threat to civilisation narrative, (counter)terrorism-as-war narrative, the innocent (good) Nigerian versus the guilty (evil) terrorist narrative, and the 'good' or 'just' war on

terror narrative; and conclusion.

2. Methodological Issues

This study is anchored within the interpretivist paradigm, particularly constructivism, which sees reality as a product of social construction shaped by human experience (Stump and Dixit, 2011). It adopts relational approach, which espouses that the world as we know it and knowledge of the world are intricately linked in fundamental ways (Jackson, 2011). This approach dissolves the subject-object distinction, contending that there is no readily available data existing out there waiting for discovery by researchers. Rather, all data constituting "terrorism knowledge are historically situated and informed by cultural values and power relations" assembled and produced by researchers (Stump, 2016: 213). Jackson (2016) posits that relational approach to terrorism studies allow the researcher to connect the view of acting persons and the phenomenon in which they act as part of a single reality in which the process is constitutive. This relational approach posits that data acquires meaning within a given research framework, so that data are second-order and third-order interpretations framed within the context of the research (Geertz, 1973; Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012; Stump, 2016). According to Stump and Dixit (2011), this gives it a reflexive bent requiring researcher to reflect on their role in the making and interpretation of data. For them, researchers "should explicitly describe how they play an active role in producing their data" (Stump and Dixit, 2011: 209).

Thus, what this means in the context of this study is that, "the research question is what renders objects, acts, and languages as evidence" so that, the data for the study is not given but "created" by way of interpretation (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012: 79). To this end, Stump (2016: 214) argues that a relational perspective employed in terrorism discourse would rather concern itself with "ideal-typical interpretive practices" other than essential definition of what it is or is not. Drawing on this understanding, this study explores how the articulation of terrorism and its counter-measure are concretely communicated by interpretive communities or state-centric entities to "produce some effect, especially in terms of boundary-making, identity formation, and policy legitimation" (Stump and Dixit, 2011: 211). Accordingly, this study relied on extant literature on terrorism and counterterrorism, speeches, utterances and (official) documents emanating from state-related actors and institutions related to the subject-matter herein form the raw material of this study and the basis of its analysis.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in Just War Tradition. Just war theory often traces its theoretical foundations to St. Augustine's critical question in *Contra Faustum*: "is it necessarily sinful for a Christian to wage war?" and gained its theological elaboration in St. Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* wherein, like Augustine, Aquinas answered this question in the negative and provided three irrefutable moral basis for what is to constitute the requirements to wage a just war: "it must be declared by a sovereign or legitimate authority; a just cause for the attack must be present; and a rightful intention should guide the proceedings, so that the advancement of good [and avoidance of evil] is the sole purpose of going to war" (quoted in Butler 2003: 231).

In its classical formulation, a just war is the Will of God administered through earthly viceroy, a legitimate ruler, and to this end, the suffering and afflictions occasioned on the vanquished by the victor is God's punishment for evil. It is to this end St. Augustine averred that suffering is God's punishment for evil. Since God's will was not divisible and both sides cannot be just, then, the pains and suffering occasioned by a sovereign, that is - a legitimate or God-ordained ruler, is justified and expressive of God's will for evildoers. This notion, the indivisibility of God's will, however becomes its greatest shortcoming and, as Jokic (2012) puts it, "was too serious an impediment to the notion that war might be just for both sides engages in it" and as such requires restraint and moral observance in the pursuit of a just cause (2012: 94). Also, this serves as an indictment on the classical just war theory as it has little to say about conduct in warfare other than that, 'sufferings in war are punishment for sinners.'

The just war theory has, however, undergone prolonged transition from its original theological foundations to embody secular cum legal interpretations, and political and philosophical grounding of moral and normative ordering in the conduct of states with regard to war, externally and internally (Jokic, 2012). In its contemporary understanding however, it still draws heavily from its classical roots that, only a legitimate ruler could declare war properly understood. However, its modern connotations have shifted its grounding in the divine to human rationality that seeks to reconcile the inevitability of war and the imperative to retain some sense of humanity even in the face of grave provocation (Jokic, 2012; Khawaja, 2007; Baer and Capizzi, 2005). To this end, the consensus is that a just war must adhere to two basic principles: *jus ad bellum* (when is a war morally acceptable) and *jus in bello* (justice in war: how best to regulate behaviour of combatant during war). Thus, the just war tradition holds that both principles are sine qua non for war properly called (Khawaja, 2007; Moller, 2000).

Jus ad bellum consists of six requirements: just cause; right intention; legitimate authority; last resort; probability of success; and proportionality. It means the cause for embarking on a war must be right in the sense that it is in (self) defence against evil; guided by noble intention, not out of hate, irrational fear or desire to

revenge; and must be declared publicly by a legitimate ruler. Also, it must be as a result of having exhausted all other peaceful means of resolution, with conviction that the campaign will be successful with a view of minimising violence on its population, and the use of force must not exceed the good sought, so as to ensure the casualty resulting from such campaign does not outweigh the evil being avoided. In the context of this study however, since the Nigerian state is already at war with a section of itself, it excuses the study from the contentions of *jus ad bellum* and focuses on its conduct in the course of the war, *jus in bello*.

Therefore, that a war fulfils the requirements of *Jus ad bellum* is not in itself sufficient; it has to be conducted in a just manner, which is the crux of this study, in accordance to the principles of *jus in bello*. Like its counterpart, *jus in bello* consists of six criteria: (i) a just (legitimate) authority that can be held accountable to avoid "free agents" or 'free for all' war; (ii) non-combatant immunity (extended to surrendered combatant); (iii) proportionality in the use of deadly force to target combatant that might be hiding amidst non-combatants with a view of minimising the impact on the latter; (iv) a list of prohibited targets in furtherance of (ii) and (iii); (v) a list of prohibited weaponry that are "evil in themselves" and capable of causing "unnecessary suffering"; and (vi) the absence of justification for breaking these criteria on the grounds that the enemy broke them (Baer and Capizzi, 2005; Crawford, 2003).

This study adopts the just war theory for at least three reasons. First, despite claims that might arise from realists that there is nothing moral about world politics and as such, moral evaluation of state's conduct in (war) counterterrorism is irrelevant (see Hans Morgenthau), they however would agree that - for better or worse, good or ill – normative concerns affect state's behaviour; if not in conduct, at least in rhetoric of counterterrorism. Second, up till date, the dominant ethical framework with respect to war – as embodied in international humanitarian laws and articulated in the curriculum of national defence academies - is the just war theory. Thus, it was no surprise the Nigeria's Chief of Defence Staff invoked, albeit subtly, the just war theory when confronted by a collection of parents and protesters of the school girls abducted by the Boko Haram sect. He notes:

> We have proved it. We were in Sierra Leone; we were in Liberia; we restored democracy in those places. In Nigeria, we fought the civil war and finished. What is happening now is that we are fighting our fellow brothers and we are not happy at all because we are killing our own kind and we are killing mostly youths. *We cannot afford to eliminate our youth; who are we going to hand Nigeria over to*? (2014, 15th May, Channels TV; emphasis not in original).

Without discountenance to the other principles in *jus in bello*, the above excerpt speaks directly to items (i) and (iii). The military averring to an intrinsic part of the just war tradition, the principle of *jus in bello* (justice during war, in particular) is, thus, an invitation to reflect on the plights of those in war-torn areas of the north-east and the just war theory is invoked to furnish understanding, not only in the prosecution of war on terror but also the imperative to reflect on the need to minimise, if not eliminate, terror in the course of trying to mitigate terror (Sakue-Collins and Mohammed, 2023). Third, the reports of Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and the Red Cross appear to situate Nigeria's war on terror in the context, proscriptions and categories of just war theory. Also, the dearth of connection in literature on counterterrorism raises fundamental concerns on the difficulty and or complimentarity of just pursuit (just war theory or tradition) and counterterrorism (just conduct or practice to liquidate terrorism). Thus, the just war theory is invoked to examine the discourse of counterinsurgency in Nigeria and its connection to just war tradition, and how the Nigerian state (and its security forces) have communicated terrorism and the corresponding state's effort, counterinsurgency, to mitigate it.

3. Writing counterinsurgency

The discourse of counterinsurgency and its accompanying rationalisation, just war theory, comprises a vast corpus of texts. From laws to policy documents, to speeches as well as beliefs and assumptions; texts provide the rhetorical and discursive strategies underscoring counterinsurgency in Nigeria. The current counterinsurgency operation in Nigeria, like its US counter-terrorism counterpart, draws heavily from the meta-narrative of 'good' versus 'evil' and its sub-plots such as 'civilised/barbaric', 'innocent/guilty', and 'just/unjust' frames, etc (Jackson, 2016). Nigeria's counterinsurgency discourse is backed by carefully articulated rhetoric espousing values, beliefs and actions aimed at triumphing 'good' over 'evil'. Here, insurgency or acts considered inimical to the interest of the state is akin to evil, while counterinsurgency or government's use of naked force to suppress such acts is likened to good. The discourse relies on a powerful mix of analogy, the Manichean frame of good and evil, and appeal to the ubiquitous sentiments of patriotism and nationalism.

This paper offers a brief survey of some of the ways in which socio-political phenomenon of counterinsurgency is normalised and institutionalised through official discourse. In this brief survey, the focus is on the language of Nigerian government under President Goodluck Jonathan (2011-2015) and how, through discursive rendering, it attempted to shape and construct the identity of insurgents and the nature of response from responsible citizens in general and the government in particular. The government's policy pronouncements and programmes are imbued with ideologies, which refracts a prism of the social world as it wants it to appear

and what is expected of it.

Several broad ideological themes have been identified as prominent in the counterinsurgency discourse of Nigerian government: terrorism-as-threat to civilisation narrative; (counter)terrorism-as-war narrative; the innocent (good) Nigerian versus the evil terrorist narrative; the 'good war' or 'just war' on terror narrative; collective security as individual liberty narrative; human rights-as-inferior to national interest narrative; and the 'greater good' or 'lesser evil' on rights issue narrative, etc. However, for the purpose of this survey, the first four broad ideological themes: terrorism-as-threat to civilisation narrative; (counter)terrorism-as-war narrative; the innocent (good) Nigerian versus the evil terrorist narrative; and the 'good war' or 'just war' on terror narrative, form the basis of analysis. What follows is an attempt to consider each of these themes. In quoting official texts, some words, group of words or phrase have been italicised for emphasis and to indicate the basis of claims and analysis.

3.1 Terrorism-as-threat to civilisation narrative

On the legitimising vocabulary of the 'war on terror', especially following the events of September 11 in the US, scholars have identified a number of terms such as 'forces of evil', 'evil doers', 'axis of evil', 'the acts of the fanatics', 'the fight between good and evil', 'peace-loving versus war-mongering', etc., as part of a class of terms and concepts used in the strategy to legitimise and account for political decisions and actions", particularly in an attempt to appeal to universal values and situate the discourse within a morally justifying context (Raciu, 2010: 180). Each of these draws from a grand narrative which reduces terrorism as a struggle between 'good' and 'evil' (Wolfendale, 2016; Toros, 2016). For example, reacting to a bomb blast that killed over 120 persons in the city of Jos, Plateau State on May 20, 2014, President Jonathan stated that the:

> Government remains fully committed to winning the war against terror, and this administration will not be cowed by the atrocities of *enemies of human progress* and *civilization*.

An important feature of the framing of the counterinsurgency discourse is its organisation around the meta-narrative of 'good' versus 'evil'; at its sub-plots of 'we and them' and the Manichean frame, 'civilisation and barbarism'. The former, in each sub-plot, i.e. 'we' and 'civilisation' correspond to 'good' in society, of which the government is a representative, while the latter, i.e. 'them' and 'barbarism' refers to 'evil', representative of the actions of terrorists. Thus, the terrorist is a usurper of human progress and civilisation. These plots paint, as a requisite condition of, terrorists as people predisposed to atrocious deed, motivated by evil desire to inflict harm on others and, unaccustomed by modernity ('civilisation') hence, primitive and barbaric in conduct (Wolfendale, 2016; Stump, 2016).

Terrorists are at once designated as 'enemies' of humanity who are opposed to human progress and civilisation. This way it naturally identifies terrorists as enemies of the state since the state is the custodian of society's civilisation. Also, situating terrorism in the meta-narrative of 'civilisation versus barbarism' not only functions to strip the terrorists of their humanity, which would have been otherwise accorded them even in a war situation, but, more importantly, helps to depoliticize the likely basis of their motivation by reducing them primarily to agents in the service of evil and savagery. This way, as will be shown below, they are not worthy of any human consideration than to be *crushed* and *permanently destroyed*.

3.2 (Counter)Terrorism-as-war narrative

A unique feature of the public language of counterinsurgency is consistent description of actions of designated terrorist as 'acts of war'. This illustrates how language functions in the construction of social problems and the determination of public policies aimed at addressing them. This narrative functions in two form: first, it describes acts of terror, regardless of the scale of attack, as war; and second, it calls for government's response in a warlike fashion, especially through the use of military force. Following the 2011 Christmas Day bombings in Abuja, President Jonathan stated that "these acts of violence against innocent citizens are an *unwarranted affront* on our collective safety and freedom." The action of the terrorists is described as an offensive against the state which, by reason of such conduct, is an invitation to war.

On the other side of legitimising the war narrative, the president urged Nigerians and security forces to remain resolute and determined in the face of threat to the state: do "not be discouraged by the desperation of the *agents of evil*… The *war against terror* will surely be won", he asserts. Elsewhere the president had stated that the terrorists will be *permanently crushed* as "Nigeria remains fully committed to winning the *war against terror*" (Jonathan, May 20, 2014). The narrative's emphasis on *war* is to justify the deployment of, and reliance on, military-based approach since war is the purview of the military as opposed to civil unrest which normally calls for police intervention. Military-based approach, rather than criminal justice response, at once conferred on the government the monopoly of the use of force, which is the extensive power of the state reserved for wartime.

The need to legitimise the use of wartime powers is made inevitable since the state is faced with extreme danger or existential threat. This, Jonathan averred to when he argued that what the country is experiencing is "one of the *darkest phases* in the history of our nation" (June 25, 2014). Citing terrorist incident as an

extraordinary threat on the nation's integrity at once conferred on the government powers not ordinarily available to it in normal of 'peace' times, that is, the use of force as necessary to restore normalcy. The invocation of extraordinary threat bedeviling the state provides it with opportunity to deploy force with little or no question on the reasonableness of such force. Terrorist's act of bombing as a threat to collective security is heightened to a frightening proportion as one of the "*darkest phases*" in the nation's history. Thus, the state is brought under threat of terrorism and the precarious state of suicide bombing is made extremely dangerous as a means to solicit extreme measures to counter it.

Though scholars have argued that constructing fear and moral panic in the polity serve other mundane political functions such as "provoking and allaying anxiety to maintain social quiescence; de-legitimising expressions of dissent; elevating the status of security actors; diverting scarce resources into ideologically driven political projects; and distracting the public from more complex and pressing social ills" (Jackson, 2006: 171-2; cf. Hariman, 2003), hyping terrorism, however, furnishes the government with unquestionable disposition to use unlimited force. Under these circumstances, the danger of unleashing the excess power at the disposal of the state is replaced by the imperative of the state to act in defense of its integrity. Therefore, challenges to state's use of overwhelming force is eschewed and taken over by widespread public fear, so that the narrative "function[s] to justify a military-based rather than criminal justice response, and conferred on the state all the extensive powers reserved for wartime; in effect, the public language worked to thoroughly normalise a military response for society" (Jackson, 2006: 167; cf. Wolfendale, 2016; Stump, 2016).

3.3 The innocent (good) Nigerian versus the guilty (evil) terrorist narrative

Linguistically, the binary structure inherent in language itself provides for a dichotomy that instinctively suggests the opposite of words: 'civilisation' brings to mind 'barbarism', 'good' brings to mind 'evil', 'rational' brings to mind 'irrational', and 'innocence' brings to mind 'guilty', and so on (Toros, 2016; Stump, 2016; Wolfendale, 2016). This trope is used to pitch the public against terrorists, creating a 'we' versus 'them' feeling in public discourse, and finds frequent usage by President Jonathan in describing the activities of the terrorists. On 2011 Christmas Day bombings at Madalla and Suleja, Abuja, President Jonathan stated:

> The bombing of *innocent* citizens on a day millions of people all over the World are celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ was a *dastardly act* that must attract the rebuke of all *peace-loving* Nigerians. These acts of violence against *innocent* citizens are an unwarranted affront on our collective safety and *freedom*. Nigerians *must stand as one to condemn them*.

President Jonathan makes (desperate) appeal with a view to mobilize and unify the populace by invoking virtues that speak to the broader public: 'peace-loving Nigerians' and 'innocent citizens.' Attempt to amplify these virtues is meant to provoke public sentiment and mobilize support against the 'warmongering' and 'guilty' others. The statement already made it obvious that the *act* is not only condemnable but Nigerians "must stand as one to condemn them", the insurgents as injurious and threat to collective safety. In this act/agent schema, the nature of an action precedes the character of its agents: the action is reprehensible and immoral as such individuals that step in to fulfill that agency are ignoble and immoral – they murder innocent people because they aspire to do evil and are therefore agents of evil. With the demonization of an act already achieved and the ascription of agency suggestive, the discourse not only enlists the citizens to rally together to protect their collective security but at once sides the people with the government as their active agent in ensuring the agents of evil pay for their dishonourable deeds.

The repetition of '*innocent'* emphasizes the importance to note that the perpetrators of this '*dastardly act*' should not only attract rebuke from well-meaning citizens, but that the fact that such attack was directed at innocent citizens makes its perpetrators *guilty* and enemies of freedom. This 'guilty' verdict is also suggestive that conclusion has already been reached in the determination of the act of terrorism, prejudicially. Besides guilty, describing the act as *dastardly* also ensures to strip the terrorists of any vestige of nobility in conduct, and their action base and evil.

Jonathan stated that these acts of violence constitute an affront on collective safety and security which must be condemned by all; because, as he affirms in subsequent texts, they are the handiwork of 'agents of evil'. And, as Habermas writes on 'militant democracy', "no freedom for the enemies of freedom" (Raicu 180), so the President's call on Nigerians to condemn those who deny others freedom and, possibly, deny them freedom, can be likened to what we might provisionally term: counterinsurgency discourse, a legitimising discourse in which what insurgents wished for others can be equally reciprocated to them.

3.4 The 'good' or 'just' war on terror narrative

Wars generally, and particularly in a democracy, require social and political consensus to prosecute. As a rule, not explicitly stated though, virtually every war in modern times has sought some sort of justification to make it legitimate (Toros, 2016; Jackson, 2016). Jackson states "all projects of political violence, including counter-terrorism campaigns, require significant levels of social and political consent – which in turn necessitates a

carefully structured public communications strategy by policy officials" (2006: 163-4). The common refrain is to make appeal through the 'good war' narrative or what has been referred to in some quarters as the just war tradition. Countering terrorism or the war on terror is no different in this regard. The discourse on counterinsurgency is scripted and articulated to fit within a just war narrative. Jonathan legitimized the war on terror by describing the activities of the terrorists as an "affront on our collective safety and freedom" which calls for self-defense and stands justified as legitimate response, under national and international laws, as the right of state to defend itself against internal subversion and external aggression.

States possess sovereignty and sovereignty by its very nature is indivisible. Internal subversion, like aggression in international law, is by definition wrong and a challenge to state's sovereignty. Again, like self-defense in international law, self-preservation is justified and states lay claim to it when dealing with insurrection. The traditional practice of states is to assert their right to just war by appealing to the imperative of self-preservation. Hence Jonathan declared "I want to reassure Nigerians that terrorism, strife and insecurity in any part of Nigeria are *abhorrent* and *unacceptable* to us" (Jonathan, February 26, 2014). Terrorism is objectionable to the Nigerian state and detrimental to its continuing survival as one indivisible entity. Therefore "We will continue to do *everything possible* to permanently eradicate the scourge of terrorism and insurgency from our country", including going to war.

Another common way of legitimizing counterinsurgency operation is to couch it in the language of justice. The discursive rendering of war on terror as justifiable under international norm and domestic laws is insufficient if it does not seek to bring justice to those who have wronged the state. In this context, Jackson (2006: 181) asserts that a "discursive strategy for constructing counter-terrorism as the pursuit of the quintessential 'good war' is to define its purpose as nothing less than the pursuit of justice". Speaking about the Nyanya bomb blast which killed at least 19 and wounded many others, President Jonathan stated: "perpetrators of Nyanya bomb blast will not go unpunished" (May 1, 2014). On another occasion, the attack on Bunu Yadi, Potiskum Yobe State, where 43 students were killed, he reaffirmed the government's commitment to justice: "Federal Government will ensure that all those responsible for the senseless murder of so many promising youngsters and the continuing acts of terrorism across the country are brought to justice and made to pay for their atrocious crimes" (Jonathan, February 26, 2014). Justice in this sense acquires a limited status and losses its universal acclaim: it does not apply to those who, having been presumed not to share in the 'values' of justice, have sort to destroy justice. In other words, those who engaged themselves in 'dastardly act' of evil, in unjust conduct, are liable to experience its logical binary, call it injustice if you like. Injustice thus becomes justice for the 'haters' of justice. And, more importantly, to bring justice to those who hate justice, a 'just war' has to be waged against them in tandem with the just war tradition. This, however, disregards the fact that the greatest threat to justice is not the actions of individuals or groups and not even the dishing of (in)justice to 'non-believers' of justice, but rather it is the unilateral determination of what is just and unjust by political leaders.

In addition to ensuring the evildoers '*do not go unpunished*'; terrorists are also portrayed as plague that has to be eradicated at all cost: "We will permanently crush Boko Haram in Nigeria. We will continue to do everything possible to permanently eradicate the *scourge of terrorism* and insurgency from our country" (*ibid*). The use of medical metaphor such as '*scourge of terrorism*' depicts the terrorists as sub-human. More explicitly, it portrays them as parasites whose continued existence poses a threat to the wellbeing of its host, the Nigerian state. This depiction of terrorists as parasites is not only meant to strip them of their humanity but also an extension of the demonization process of terrorists as beings who are essentially predispose to function in evil capacity. Indeed, such non-human entity capable of nothing other than inflicting pain on humanity is worthy of being crushed and severed from human collective or society. This particular language presents terrorists as dangerous organism and one devoid of any human quality, as their actions are both irrational and horrible. The attribution of non-human quality to terrorists is to render them as undeserving of any human consideration because, while it is within human rationality that an enemy or enemy solder (or combatant) be treated humanely, such considerations do not extend to non-human entity such as a scourge, a parasite, or blight. A scourge and threat to a people must be severely dealt with, even it be with impunity. After all, it is evil, dangerous, and inhuman, and to whom humans owe no human obligation or consideration.

4 Conclusion

The way we understand the world we live is not only socially constructed; how we set out to deal with it and even alter it depends on how we grasp it, and these relate to the discursive construction of that reality. The implication is that the security of citizens, whether in terms of terrorism or attempt to counter it, is discursively constructed. This means while the determination of what terrorism is or is not is a product of interpretation, the attempt to counteract and combat terrorism is itself a function of interpretation; yet both interpretations largely stem from the state, the historical guardian of society. Although the state defines what is, what ought to, and what is not or ought not to, its own conduct cannot be completely absolved of what it seeks to counteract as constituting threat to society. That notwithstanding, the state's claim to competent jurisdiction in determining

what it considers wrong and therefore sets out to counter draws from ancient philosophical tradition which positioned the state as the only legitimate authority morally imbued to wage just war against evil so perceived. The determination of a just war i.e., war against terrorism, rests on jus ad bellum and jus in bello, with the latter's emphasis banking on the legitimacy of the state and its commitment to avert graver evil or prevent unnecessary suffering of the populace. The Nigerian state, like most other states dealing terrorism of one form or the other, discursively situates her counterinsurgency operation in this tradition. In dealing with threats of terror, the Nigerian state have variously represented its non-state adversary as the axis of evil that needs to be civilised. To hone home this point, the Nigerian state has designated the perpetrators of terror as enemies devoid of humanity and, more so, an evil entity that needs to be crushed and permanently destroyed, hence the imperative for war. To do this, the state, acting through erstwhile president Goodluck Jonathan discursively re-imagined that what the country is experiencing is "one of the darkest phases in the history of our nation" in order to invoke the war-time powers of the state to deploy force as necessary. More so, the need for moral justification underlined the positioning of the state as a victim of some concerted evil plot that needs the citizens to rally around the state in order to halt it for the good of all in society. This is another way of advancing the state as the vanguard of good in a relentless pursuit to crush the evils of terrorism. In the end, the support and or otherwise the state gets from its citizens regarding security flows directly from its discursive rendering of 'terror', 'terrorism' and measures to counter it, 'counterterrorism.' Terror and counterterrorism are discursively constructed, with the state as the key actor.

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