

STATE FAILURE, YOUTHS DUAL VICTIMIZATION AND UNABATED TERROR OF INTERNET CRIME IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examines the impact of the internet technology on the increase in youth's socio-economic victimization that is consistently entrenched covertly by the democratic state. The social and psychological costs of the operationality of this medium remain excruciatingly high in the domain of crime with the youths always at the receiving ends either as a users or victims. To establish the core of victimization as propelled by the state, the paper utilizes two models and followed by this is the analysis of state omissions that are promoting the vulnerability of youths in the context of technological related crimes. Finally, the paper proffers solutions to state induceable factors that are promoting youth's vulnerability under the Nigeria's democracy.

Keywords: Youth, State, Victimization, Crime, Fraud, Internet

Introduction

Technology and socio-political developments in our modern society are inextricably knitted. There are myriad of technologies currently promoting social, economic, industrial and political growth globally and the most accessible in the recent times lies in the domain of the ICT. This domain is driven by the computer and the Internet technologies. Electronic computers were first introduced for commercial use in the United States in 1954 (Singleton and Singleton, 2010:176). However, the access of Nigerians to the Internet is closely linked to the global commercialization of the medium since 1988. Although the area and volume of coverage of Internet technology appears very limited at its emergence in Nigeria, its utilization and the impact factor remained more appreciable today than in the past. The urban centres and the administrative units of governments were the first set of beneficiaries of most ICT facilities and

sporadically with its gradual diffusion, it has gotten to the reach of many today but with socio-economic and psychological costs. The introduction and intention of Internet diffusion lie in the need to promote more authenticated methods and a system capable of supporting electronic commerce. But contrary to the general expectation, the medium became a ready channel of attracting a mass of unemployed youths in their quest for illicit private gains. The Internet environment then became the centre of risks to users and thereby generating social related problems. The conception of the Internet technology as a domain of social problem is closely linked to the existence of socio-economic challenges confronting the modern developing nations worldwide (Jegade et al, 2015). The macro problem common to all and mainly located in the economic structure has consistently paved way to myriad of crime activism in the examined area. Wall as cited by Hietanen (2009) group cyber crimes into three categories. First involves offences relating to the integrity of the computer system and the second, offences assisted by computer (online financial cyber crime inclusive), while the third represents offences which focus upon the content of computer. Majorly implicated in cyber related crimes are the youths in several developing countries where in most cases governments in this category are perennially finding it extremely difficult to reach out to and address the physiological needs of their citizenry. This factor explains the drive at which the youths are seeking alternative to conventional means of survival. In Nigeria, 2000 Population Census Report estimated those within 0-14 years at (54, 053, 337) 44% of the overall population of 123, 337, 822. Drawing inference from this figure, this category basically constitutes today Nigeria's youth and further making projection into what population profile of Nigeria might likely be before the end of year 2015 if calculated at the growth rate of 2.67, a good majority of Nigeria's population would be in their youth (Garcia and Fares, 2008). Contextually, the involvement of Nigerian youths in cybercrime and other anti-social behaviours have been found to be correlated with the diverse politico-economic predicaments that befell Nigeria both past and present(.). Consequently, a far reaching analysis of the state operation couple with the debilitating effect resulting from the consistently battered national economic in the sub-Saharan Africa explain to a large extent the surge in crime rate globally. A close examination of the interplay between the two variables will help situate the disconnect that is existing between governments capability in meeting the needs of the populace on one hand and invariably the expectations of the citizenry on the other hand. Both are accountable for within the gamut of factors militating against the essence of the modern state and which can be examined from two theoretical models—service delivery and social transformation models.

Theoretical Models on Persistent State Failure and Incremental Rate in Crime

Exploring the service delivery model in the analysis of state role towards its citizenry, it is quite appropriate to rate most Third World nations below the minimum benchmark required for human survival. The rising profile of international debt and invariably economic stagnancy affecting the majority of these nations explain the predicament of their citizens. A significant number of states in Africa (and Nigeria in particular) have consistently failed to attain statehood in both political development, economic progress and ultimately in their responsibilities to their citizens. Declining performance in the delivery of public goods such as crime control, provision of investible climate, proactive legal structure, manpower utilization cum employment generation, provision of infrastructural facilities and energy, social security, and market regulation constitutes an important yardstick for rating the countries in this category low. Further measuring the impact of these lacuna created by state failure lies in the rising rate in corruption and crime. Agbayere and Idada (2007) report that corruption is a hydra headed monster, which permeates all facets of the Nigeria society. This has resulted into the failure and inability of the public leaders to initiate and prosecute public policies sincerely, honestly and with an enviable political goodwill (p469).

Research has hinged this abysmal failure on the absence of institutional and political capacity in most developing countries (Khan, 2004). Overtly, there are political structures in place but quite unfortunate is the virtual displacement of the essence of such structures. Institutional lopsidedness that has bequeathed the current increase in crime and that fanning cybercrime problem in Nigeria can in part be explored from the existing contradictions endemic in both Nigeria's economic and democratic framework. While employment constitutes the epicenter of any consideration of the economics and social development of any country (Yesufu, 2000), political structure determines the flow of life giving support to the people. The political capacity relevant to this paper can be addressed from the failure of political leadership in Nigeria to transform the society into a form supportive of group and individual quest for socio-economic progress. Scholars argue that state failure is responsible for poverty in many developing countries (Dollar and Kraay 2001; Lal and Myint, 1996). This paper approach to state failure would be critiqued from Krueger's double error perspective—errors of omission and errors of commission (Krueger, 1990). Situating the errors of omission as conceived by Krueger (1990) in the context of the Nigerian state, these will include the

assessment of state failure in the pursuance of people centered programmes, failure to improve economic performance, lack of commitment to long term goals and several other inhibiting factors working against the transformation of modern society. Major indicators explicable of errors of commission in Nigeria as identified by Krueger include the institutionalization of corruption and deficient control mechanism, political abuse and recklessness, unemployment and poverty, deliberate creation of crime supportive environment and a host of other factors.

State Omission Promoting Cyber Crime in Nigeria

As earlier mentioned, most of the distortions observable as characteristic of failing state and depicting Nigeria's environment are related to the economy. This can be explored in its historical context and its consequences can be seen as further generating complex dislocations. In Nigeria, agriculture has historically been a key sector for employment generation. With the discovery of crude in commercial quantity in the 70s, the ratio of labor force into agriculture declined considerably thereby creating an opening for oil generated revenue and in the process promoting acute unemployment. Two factors became responsible for the growth of the oil economy in Nigeria in the early 70's; one is OPEC oil price increase during the period and Middle-East crisis which geared up the production level of Nigeria's oil output. The further incorporation of Nigeria as one of the capitalist nations became more intense at the period of oil expansion and it further placed the country at the mercy of oil multinationals who not only determine the direction of Nigeria's economy but also create avenue for capital flight and home grown corruption. This development in the crude dominated economy reversed the progress in the agro-allied sector of the economy. For instance, the contribution of agriculture and related allied industry, was 61.6 per cent in 1961-1962. By 1975, the share of agriculture had fallen to 23.4% and to 20.8% in 1980. This situation remains unabated today unlike the previous national experiences. Worse still is the declining interest of potential university applicants to pick up a career in the agricultural faculties of Nigerian universities. This unraveling scenario is clearly indicative of the probable extinction of the agricultural sector of the economy. Relatedly, for the oil sector of Nigeria's economy which substantially took the place of agro-allied industry, the share of oil in the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rose from 2.6 per cent in 1960, 25.32 percent in 1965 to 57.56 per cent in 1970. By 1975, the percentage share of oil in Nigeria's GDP was 95.88 per cent and in 1980 it was 96 per cent (IFS, 1992). Crude petroleum remained the major foreign exchange earner between 1981 and 1990, (96.89% in 1981, 97.11% in 1985, and 97.03 in 1990). Surprisingly, the oil share of the national GDP in 1991 stood at 96 per cent (Fashoyin, 1993). In 2010, the economy recorded a leap in the oil sector growth with the significant abandonment of other sectors of the economy. 4.56% growth was recorded within the period reviewed thus making Nigeria's economy oil dominated.

Ironically, the dislocations in the economic sector of Nigeria began to manifest from 80's onward. The period witnessed a decline in oil resources due to the fall in oil price in the international market. Fashoyin (1993) claimed that the crunch came in the mid 1981 with the collapse of the international oil market. Prices and production plummeted simultaneously. Oil export fell from 2.2 million barrels per day in 1979 to around 1.0 million per day in 1981 to 1982 (Okongwu, 1987; Omoniyi, 1987). Foreign exchange earnings, which had peaked at US\$26 billion in 1980, fell to US\$17.2 billion in 1981 and US\$12.8 billion in 1982. Similarly, Olukoshi (1990) reports that the collapse of the World oil market resulted in Nigeria's oil earning falling dramatically from a peak of N 10.1 billion in 1979 to about N5.161 billion in 1982 with the consequences in retrenchment and unemployment. By 1996, foreign exchange earnings from oil amounted only to US\$5.2 billion (Fashoyin, 1993:80). Experientially, acute unemployment became the common feature of Nigeria's environment thus preparing the ground for the expected burst in crime related activities in the future.

In Nigeria, the accurate appraisal of the magnitude of unemployment may prove difficult for a singular reason owing to dirt of data. In the same manner, the size of Nigeria's labor force appears difficult to calculate because of the absence of accurate census data. Consequently, when evaluating the implications of oil dominated economy on employment cum unemployment, it is important to consider both trends. Nigeria labor force increased from 18.3 million in 1963, by 1981 it rose to 30.8 million and the unemployed population in the same year was 32.2 million people. The labour force was estimated to have increased to 29.4 million in 1983. By 1990, the total labor force for the country stood at 38, 462, 000 people of the total population. In 2001, the total labour force was puts at 51, 625, 000 people of the total population (World Bank, 2003). The number of the labour force recorded for Nigeria in 2003 by the World Bank stood at 54, 462, 000 people (World Bank, 2005). Drawing inference from the population growth rate of 2.5% per annum (NBS, 2011), the Nigerian labor force may probably be between 55, 823, 550 in

the year 2004; 57, 229, 138 in 2005; 58, 659, 867 in 2006; 60, 126, 354 in 2007; 61, 629, 513 in 2008; 63, 170, 251 in 2009; 64, 749, 507 in 2010; 66, 368, 245 in 2011 while it may be estimated to have reached 68, 027, 451 in 2012.

However, the national unemployment rate, estimated by the Office of Statistics was pegged at 4.3 percent of the labor force in 1985, increased to 5.3 percent in 1986 and 7.0 percent in 1987, before falling to 5.1 percent in 1988 as a result of measures taken under the SAP. In the year 1991, 47 per cent (20, 768, 548) of the active labor force was reported to be either out of job due to retrenchment generated by the introduction of SAP or could not secure job openings in any of Nigeria's economic sector (Yesufu, 2000). National unemployment data reveals 13.1% for 2000; 13.6 in 2001; 12.6% in 2002; 14.8% in 2003; 13.4% in 2004; 11.9% in 2005; 12.3% in 2006; 12.7 in 2007; 14.9% in 2008; 19.7% in 2009 and 21.1% in the year 2010 of the total labour force (NBS, 2011).

In his review of Nigeria's economic performance between 1993 and 1996, Peterside confirms that there had been no appreciable growth in GDP within the period and added that the plight of the average Nigerian had not improved at all in the years reviewed. Estimating how this affects Nigeria's youths progressively, Diejomaoh reported as far back as 1970s the high rate of joblessness among Nigerian youth with poor education and those lacking skill and experience. In the year 1980 the age structure of Nigeria's population between ages 0-14 was estimated to be 45.5 percent, while 15-64 category was estimated to be 51.7 percent and finally 65 and above was 2.8 percent of the total population. By the year 2003, ages 0-14 constitutes 44.0 percent; while those within 15-64 age bracket were estimated at 53.3% and finally, age 65 and above was 2.6 percent. The age distribution of Nigeria's population reflects some relatively significant portion of 0-14 group already crossing into the active labour section and fewer number of those in the hitherto active age also crossing into late dependent category in 2010. A large of people in the productive ages is left redundant due to non availability of industries and other absorbers needed in the economy. The absence of productive mediums to dissipate economic energies therefore portends high prevalence rate of poverty.

Consequently, unemployment and poverty became rampant across diverse cultures. Several millions of Nigerian lives below poverty line and a substantial portion of the population live in extreme poverty. One half of Nigeria's youths suffer deprivation as a result of neglect and closure of opportunities (World Bank, 2007: Onibokun et al, 1996).

Using the GDP per capita, based on purchasing power parity indicator to analyze the incidence of poverty among Nigerians, it is estimated that between 1994 and 2002, 70 percent of Nigerians are living under 1US dollar a day and between the year 1984 and 2002 national prevalence rate of poverty was put at 34 percent of the population. It is equally important to note that 32 percent of urban dwellers and 52 percent rural dwellers were living below poverty line between 1991 and 1999. Analyzing Nigeria's income distribution, 40.8 and 55.7 percent of domestic wealth was controlled by the richest 10 and 20 percent respectively between 1989 and 2002. The poorest 10 and 20 percent Nigeria's population was estimated to hold 1.6 and 4.4 of national domestic wealth between 1989 and 2002. The worse affected are the youths. There is something inherent among Nigeria's youths predisposing them to crime. The social, economic and cultural situation the youths in Nigeria find themselves can vividly be attributed to the high prevalence rate of crime quite endemic in the environment. This is clearly enunciated in the theoretical anchorage of this study (Durkheim, 1951, Merton 1957).

Current dislocations can also be linked to the past prolonged military rule, bad economic policies, political leadership related problems, unplanned or mismanaged demographic structure, infrastructural imbalance, technological deficiency and the disillusionment of the populace generated by corruption (Aluko, 1998). In the area of military rule and bad political leadership, the impact of bad quality elite began to have its tolls on Nigeria's socio-economic arena during the early 80s. The mix-run of Nigeria's economy on import driven course from the 1970s not only opened the economy to vagaries of international capitalism but equally engendered the gross destruction of Nigeria's socio-economic heritage and invariably compromised her social development.

At the level of governance, the military rule contributed immensely to the socio-economic backwardness currently experienced in Nigeria. Reporting, Polgreen (2005) asserts that the military dictator who ruled Nigeria from 1993 to 1998 stole at least \$3 billion which he deposited in foreign bank accounts. Today cyber fraud youths probably took a cue from their extant political leaders who milked the country's wealth to the detriment of the generality. The affected category of youth registered their representation in technological driven crimes and in most cases cyber fraud.

A close examination of the nature of cyber fraud activism for instance in Nigeria will definite enrich our understanding of state failure—youths crime affinity. Looking at the nature of cyber fraud in Nigeria, the

perpetrators of cyber fraud assume diverse dimensions and the categories of persons involved vary by reason of state failure syndrome. In their various operations, the commencement point of youth's fraud intention through the Internet involves the sending and the receipt of unsolicited mails commonly referred to as spam letters. Spam letters vary in content, nature and import of messages. Such mails include petition, warnings, notification and in the case of e-mails associated with fraud the message takes the form of a request or an appeal for the recipient to do one thing or the other. There are a number of factors relating to both the content of the message and the context surrounding the message, of a forward e-mail that may explain its widespread circulation.

Fraudulent E-mails incorporate persuasive factors that is accorded with Aristotle's scheme of rhetoric: ethos, logos and pathos, where ethos refer to the persuasive appeal of the sender (stating a particular predicament of a rich man without heir), logos to an appeal based on trustworthiness of the information (citation of resource base either in a bank or existent in some other secure forms like a vault) and pathos to an appeal based on emotional response (persuasion of the hopelessness that may arise as a result of non-intervention of a person to liberate some hidden treasure or resources, etc.). Fraud or scam letters are formulated to trigger emotional response, paint investable climate and raise hope of breaking even once decision for participation is reached, and/or even at most the change of deplorable fortunes, etc. The completion of the cycle is triggered-off by the receiver's inclination to signify interest and to complement the interest of the sender of the idea. Scam letters always use the combination of flattery, promises and hope to arouse the emotions of fraud victims.

Vulnerability Factors and the Incidence of Youth Crime Participation in Nigeria

One of the factors responsible for youth participation in crime in Nigeria is poverty caused by unemployment. Thus, unemployment and the wide gap between the have and have-not orchestrate the stage for youth involvement in various forms of crimes. Adesina (2013 cited in Joshua, 2014) argues that the greater number of unemployment is among the secondary school leavers and university graduates. It is important to note that there is a link between poverty and unemployment. This has been buttressed by Oseni et al (2012) that poverty is prevalent in Nigeria because new jobs are not been created, and even the few existing ones are been lost to factory closures, arising from high cost of production, leading to relocation of many factories to neighbouring countries which is detrimental to the Nigerian workers. This is in line with the argument of Okafor (2011) that the closure of some factories and shops has hampered the ability of the manufacturing sector to absorb more youths in the manufacturing sector. Okafor (2011) notes that in 2009, over 837 factories and shops closed down and some that are still operating are ailing.

Other factors noted as responsible for youth involvement in cybercrime as argued by Hassan, Lass and Makinde (2012) include: quest for wealth and weak implementation of cybercrime laws and inadequate equipped law agencies. Quest for wealth among Nigerian youth is responsible, partly for youth involvement in crime including cybercrime. The way corrupt politicians celebrate wealth and the disposition of the Nigerian society towards them by rewarding them with national awards, chieftaincy titles, inviting them to launch building projects in Mosques and churches serve as a motivator for youth to catch the quick wealth syndrome.

Weak implementation of cyber crime laws and inadequate equipped law agencies as mentioned before are another factors predisposing youth to cyber crime. Laws concerning cyber crime in Nigeria are too weak to discourage youth participation in cyber related crime. Unlike other crimes like armed robbery that attracts maximum penalties. Worst still is the lack of sophisticated hardware to track down cyber criminals. This scenario has been succinctly captured by Luara (2012) who argues that African countries have been criticized for their inability to deal decisively with cybercrime due to the fact that their law enforcement agencies are ill equipped in terms of personnel, intelligence and infrastructure. In the same vein, it is also quite disheartening that the private sector appears not to be doing much in this direction.

Negative Role Models has equally been seen as one of the factors responsible for the prevalence of cybercrime among youth. This has been well-captured by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) (n.d). This is because sometimes actors in movies play roles like illegal hackers or illegal coders and successfully outsmart ignorant and incapable secret service and are portrayed as heroes at the end cannot but serve as morale booster for youth who has inclination for such crime.

Desire for fame among youths amidst their peers has also been pointed out as another reason for youth participation in cyber crime/fraud. UNICRI (n.d) has thrown more light on this issue citing a case in which a reformed hacker once explained that youths are turning to cyber crime simply to become famous among their peer group. Many of them saw it as the in thing and they engage in it. Okeshola and Adeta (2013)

also corroborate this fact in their study that any youth that succeeded in hack software gains reputation among his/her peers.

The introduction of internet modems, blackberry and smart phones has given fillip and has conferred the ease required to perpetrate cyber related crimes on the youths.. Cyber criminals do not have to go to cyber café before committing crime. With a laptop and modem or blackberry phone a cyber criminal can perpetrated cyber crime at home. In fact, ordinary Nokia C3 can browse and with the reduction in the price of MB, internet access is made easily available to users who could divert it use to criminal activities (Okeshola and Adeta, 2013). Skill required for cyber crime is quite low and the tools used are at times at no cost. Comparing the skill required by armed robbers to successfully rob a bank to that of internet fraud. Nowadays, any novice user can download hacker tools with easy-to-use guides. This has led to increase in the rate of internet crime. It is also chagrin to discover that some of the tools use for internet crime like Zeus, Sploit and Fiestal can easily be obtained online at no cost at all (UNICRI, n.d). Other causes of youth involvement in cybercrime for example is enunciated by Omboto, Ondiek, Odera and Ayugi (2012) and these include lack of good moral upbringing from parents or guardians: youths from broken homes or dysfunctional families are often prone to various crimes associated with youths and cyber crime is one of them. Some of them are brought up by single parent or are living without parental care often finds it easy to get involved in such crime. Low rate of conviction, or even been caught or ease of perpetrating such act are equally responsible for increase in internet crime.

At this juncture, few cases of Nigerian youth involvement in cybercrime are considered below.

Ibikunle and Eweniyi (2013) have documented some cases of Nigerian youth involvement in cyber crime. Four Nigerians were caught operating a “419” scam on the internet which they succeeded in using to defraud unsuspecting foreign investors in Ghana. Their activities were believed to have led to the loss of several millions of foreign currencies by prospective investors. One Amadi was also caught after impersonating the Chairman of Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC). He was alleged to have set up a website that offered juicy but phony procurement contracts. Amaka Anajemba was alleged to have swindled a Brazilian bank to the tune of \$242 million. One Yekini Labaika from Osun State was also believed to have defrauded a 42 years old nurse working with one of the oil companies by promising to marry her to the tune of \$16,200 and lots of valuable materials. The authors added that a recent report indicated that Nigeria is losing about \$80 million yearly to software piracy.

Other cases of cyber crime in Nigeria among Nigerian youths have also been document Olaleye (2015). The author posits that cyberspace experts have warned Nigerians that Nigeria is at risk of losing \$15 million to cyber theft by 2020 except precautionary measures are taken to redress the trend. This is not unconnected with the revelation that Nigeria lost N 641 billion to cyber theft in 2013. Other catalogue of cyber crime theft involving Nigerian youth as documented by the author include the following: recently a House of Representatives member was defrauded of n 4.3 million and another fleece of N600 million. The MTN mobile telecom in Nigeria lost over N70 million in electronic recharge cards sent via email to a customer as it was intercepted by a cyber criminal in London and sent to another scammer in Nigeria for sale. The Central Bank has equally disclosed according to the author recently that some banks in Nigeria lost N40 million to cyber theft.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Governance should be guided by the desire to promote happiness of the entire citizenry. In other words, checking corruption will make more money available for developmental project that will arrest the trend of unemployment prevalent among youth in the country. The government should embark on mass job creation for the jobless youths. Effort in this direction will go a long way to discourage youth interest in cybercrime. The government should device means to identify youths with highly technical skills and are using the skills for cyber theft with the view of rechanneling their potentials to productive uses. This can be done through competition on how to analyze a hard drive with the aim of finding talented youths and harnessing their contributions to national technological sectoral growth. Another test may be directed at gaining insight into how best to fortify cyber network against the activities of potential hackers. At the end of such exercise, the affected youths should be re-orientated towards using their skills for positive means like picking a career in internet security with government or private organization instead of using such skills for negative purposes. The government should firm up laws on cyber crime in such a manner that the punishment will create fear in potentials cyber criminals. Government should carve out special unit from the security forces; train them and also equipped them to tackle cyber crime. There is need to factor into the Nigeria’s curricular of education ethics governing the use of internet from primary school to higher institution level. It can be introduced and sustained under general studies. There is need to also firm up

laws on censorship. Films in which cyber theft and fraudsters are portrayed as heroes or heroines should be discouraged or banned so as to reduce their impact in encouraging youth to participate in such cyber crime. From the study, it can be deduced that the introduction of internet originally was to promote more authenticated methods and a system capable of supporting electronic commerce. But contrary to the general expectation, the medium became a ready channel of attracting a mass of unemployed youths in their quest for illicit private gains. The high rate of unemployment in Nigeria is attributed to failure of governance, hence the need for government to check corruption and bring responsible governance to the front burner of politics. Curbing corruption will make money available that can be invested in projects that will absorb our jobless youths. It can therefore, be concluded that responsible governance and following the aforementioned recommendations will go a long way to curb the spate of cybercrime and especially fraud among youths in Nigeria.

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