

## THE NIGERIAN STATE AND PROSELYTIZATION OF CRIMINALITY AMONG CONSTITUENT NATIONALITIES: FERTILIZING THE UNEXPLORED THESIS

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### Abstract

*The Nigerian State is in transition- evolving from pre-colonial through colonial to post-colonial acculturation. Meanwhile, state in Nigeria is fundamentally interventionist, overbearing and domineering. Again, the persistence of inchoate instruments of coercion largely predisposes the state to manipulation by parasitic dominant social forces who are surrogates to marketization predators. Thus, the tendency of these economic development soothsayers and melancholic technocrats to steer the ship of governance towards self- serving and ethnic/religious suppression of other ethnic nationalities implanted the seed of crime and predispose these constituent groups to resort to criminal vices as mechanisms for self-help and countering the menacing criminal state. We relied basically on documentary method of data collection and predicated our investigation on the theory of neo-colonial state as the theoretical framework. The central thesis of the paper is that the rabid use of state apparatus to commit acts of deprivation, segregation, alienation, domination and ethnic cleansing leads to regionalization of crimes and internalization of criminal vices as mechanisms for survival of ethnic nationalities. These acts proliferate conflicts and hate speeches among constituent nationalities*

**Keywords:** Nigerian State, Poverty, Proselytization, Criminality, Nationality

### Introduction:

In every polity the state remains a critical driver of socio-political and economic transmutation of the society. The state reflects man's innate values, developmental experiences and engagements as well as an aggregation of 'acceptable' cultural traits, values and norms harvested from the fundamental residues of secularization and social atomization. Thus, the

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character of the state reflects largely the historical antecedents, social relations of production and level of development of the productive forces.

As a corollary of the above, the character of the State is dynamic, transitory and expansive in substance and orientation across generations. Meanwhile, the State developed at a specific period of human history to resolve contradictions arising from property ownership, distribution and control. Thus, the State regulates interpersonal, group and societal relations. All through recorded history, the state manifests the material conditions of human existence and indeed constantly strives to bring social conflicts and antagonisms within tolerable level.

Moreover, the regulatory, productive and distributive capacities of the state is largely influenced by the level of sophistication of the means of labour; existing production potentials; state of refinement of the productive forces; and indeed, the prevailing pattern and intensity of social acculturation and accumulation. Fundamentally, appreciation of the intensity of cultural secularization and social atomization remains very critical in understanding the capability of the State to perform its primary functions in a society in a dispassionate fashion. When the level of *cultural secularization* is high, the given State benefits from numerous choices/opportunities which are overtime implicated on improved *social atomization*. Subsequently, both cultural secularization and social atomization instigate appreciable state autonomy which translates into responsible governance, industry and sustainable societal transmogrification.

Meanwhile, the state exists primarily to advance social welfare. *The State exists for man and for collective reproduction*. It has passed through different stages and phases in human existence; but the primary responsibility remains to provide platforms for social actors to produce and reproduce their material needs. Thus, the state ought to remain largely dissociated and differentiated from the existing inter-group and intra-group competitions. This is achieved only when the state has remarkable and discernable autonomy. Unfortunately, most states in Africa, Asia and Latin America have limited autonomy arising from historical antecedents. The factors of colonialism instituted the Nigerian State and efforts at forging potent strategies to hoist **State in Nigeria** have remained perfunctory. Therefore, the Nigerian State as presently constituted is substantially disconnected from the citizens thereby reproducing need saddled citizens who have limited filial attachment to the project of building nationhood and

rather get inducted into criminality as means of survival. Expectedly, most actions of the Nigerian State are geared towards sustaining this gulf. In this study we shall outline the basic factors that undermine the process of instituting 'State of Nigeria Project' and how these proliferate crimes and criminality in Nigeria.

### **Theoretical Perspective**

The paper adopted the Marxist theory of the neo-colonial state. The main attributes of a neo-colonial state as presented by the Marxist theory include:

1. The state as an instrument of class domination.
2. The centrality of the state and its apparatuses as the main instruments for primitive accumulation especially by the dominant class and their foreign collaborators.
3. The rentier or extractive nature of the state.

The Marxist theory postulates that the state is the product and a manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms (Lenin, 1984). This state, 'which arose from the conflict between classes, is as a rule, the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which by this means also becomes the politically dominant class and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed' (Jakubowski, 1973, pp. 41). Again, Marx and Engels (1971, p. 38) amplified this point when they stated that "the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie". Thus, contrary to the claim of Western liberal or bourgeois scholars, the state is not class neutral, rather, it is implicated in constant class struggle within and between the various institutional groups that constitute the polity.

This peculiar attribute of the neo-colonial states can be traced to the colonial era. The colonial governments in their quest to achieve their economic interests discouraged the emergence of a strong indigenous capitalist class (State in Nigeria). This they accomplished by discriminating against African businessmen in the disbursement of bank loans, award of contracts and other business incentives. In the absence of indigenous capitalist class strong enough to establish hegemony over the state at independence, the neo-colonial state such as Nigeria became the main instrument for economic investment and economic development. Besides, the new indigenous bourgeoisie that inherited control over the neo-colonial state and its apparatuses had very weak economic base, and hence relied on

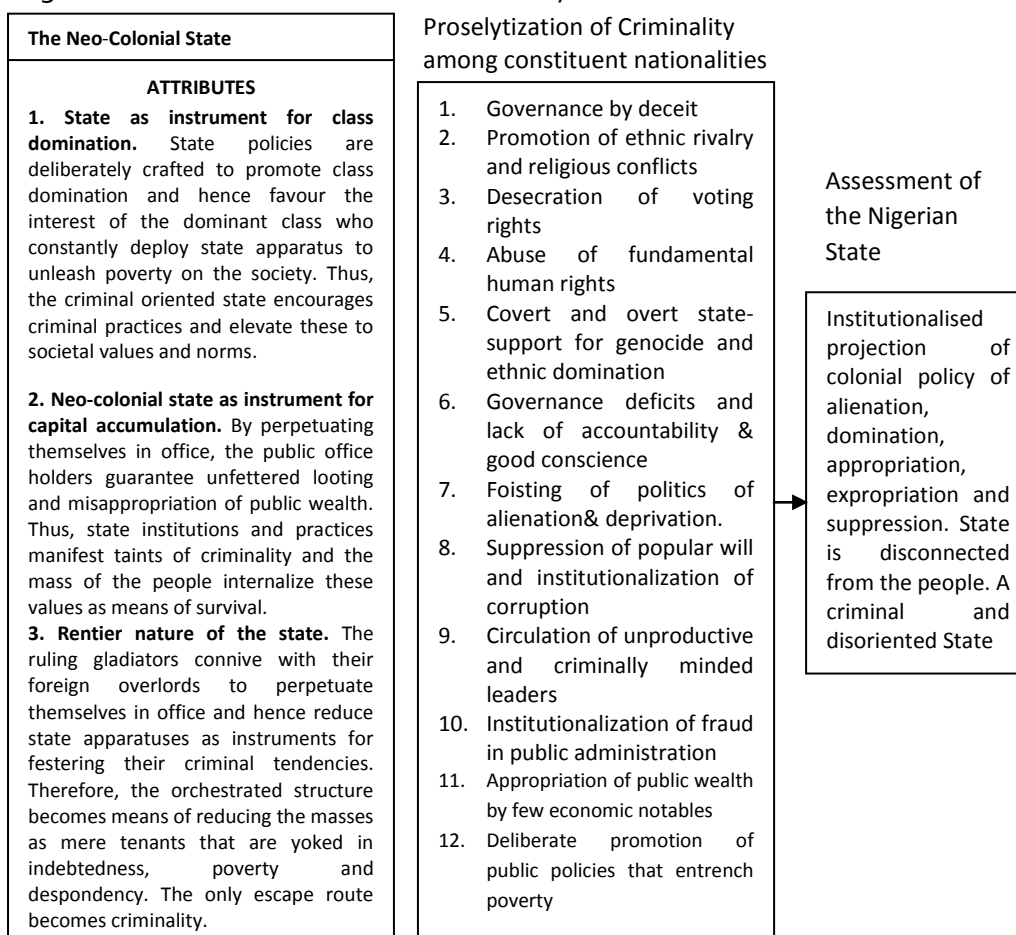
this control for its own capital accumulation. Consequently, the state and state apparatuses such as the bureaucracy, law enforcement agencies, public corporations and parastatals have remained the main instruments for the formation of an indigenous capitalist class. Hence in Nigeria, institutions of the State have collapsed into private establishments appropriated to further deepen grip on public offices and hence secure resource-security. Therefore, the seemingly only means of achieving resource appropriation is through the vicissitudes of hijacking the security, unleashing violence and deploying State machineries in committing acts of looting and criminality.

As a corollary of the above, the unique nature of the neo-colonial state such as Nigeria therefore lies primarily on the fact that it combines the function of serving as a major instrument for capital accumulation with that of being a direct instrument of class formation, alienation, domination and suppression. Thus, the Marxist theory of the state is very relevant to understanding and explaining the fundamental goal of the Nigerian State that dislocates the process of instituting the 'State in Nigeria' and hence proliferating citizens with criminal tendencies. In applying the theory, state as follows:

1. **The peculiar nature and role of the neo-colonial state of Nigeria as an instrument for capital accumulation.** This explains why the indigenous capitalist class represented by the ruling class, top government officials and related institutions connive to appropriate public wealth, alienate the masses and commit acts of criminality to further their appropriation and expropriation. These rapacious, rabid and unabashed looting proliferates poverty situations and predispose the masses to criminal tendencies as means of survival and self-reproduction.
2. **The class character of the Nigerian state.** The Nigerian state like in other peripheral capitalist states is not class neutral but locked in constant class struggle. Indeed, the character of this on-going class conflicts define the content and intensity of domination. Thus, instead of competition in production spheres, the actors promote intra and inter-ethnic and religious competition and contestations. Hence religious bigotry holds sway as the apparatus of the state are used to further ethnic rivalries, dissent and intolerance. Over time the State was dragged into criminal activities which further plunge the polity into the abyss of justifying criminality in state practices and praxis.

3. **The Nigerian state as 'rentier' or essentially "extractive" in nature.** The indigenous class, working in concert with global expropriators have reduced the country to a mere tenant that must redeem her rents to the global extractive actors through their local proteges. Thus, through well contrived public policies and programmes they pave way for seeming unending exploitation and slavery and hence unleash servitude and perpetual exploitation which predispose the masses to constant struggle for liberation from economic emasculation, political slavery and State-afflicted criminal tendencies as part of protests over discontent and civil disobedience. The postulations are better captured in the diagram below:

### Nigerian State and Affliction of Criminality



### **The Nigerian State in Perspective**

Numerous synoptic conceptions of the state abound in social science literature. Lin (1939) defines the historic state as "a territorial human society which exercises, through a government, supreme coercive power over individuals and groups within it for the purpose of regulating and maintaining a general hierarchy of social values and institutions". Other scholars who predicated their definitions of state from the materialist standpoint include; Ake, (1985:05, 1985b); Ibeanu, (1998); Lenin, (1976) etc. Ake (1985:105, 1985b:9) for instance defines the state:

as a specific modality of class domination; a modality of domination in which class domination is autonomized. By autonomization is meant that the institutional mechanisms of class domination are constituted in a way that they enjoy independence from....society such that they appear, following Engels (1987), as an objective force standing alongside society.

As clearly delineated in the online Etymology Dictionary, updated on 26 February, 2007:

The word state and its cognates in other European languages (stato in Italian, etat in French, Staat in German) ultimately derived from the Latin status, meaning "condition" or "status". With the revival of the Roman Law in the 14<sup>th</sup> century in Europe, this Latin term was used to refer to the legal standing of persons (such as the various "estates of the realm"-noble, common and clerical), and in particular the special status of the king. The word was also associated with Roman ideas (dating back to Cicero) about the "status rei publicae", the "condition of the republic". In time, Skinner, (1989) remarked that, the word lost its reference to particular social groups and became associated with the legal order of the entire society and apparatus of its enforcement.

Dictionary.com.<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/state>

Similarly, Online Etymology Dictionary noted that the word originates from the medieval state or regional chair upon which the head of state (usually a monarch) would sit. It maintains that "by process of metonymy, the word state became used to refer to both the head of state and the power entity he represented.

However, contrary to the thesis of Marxian scholarship, state existed in the primitive communal era; the public power in pre-colonial Igbo Society that gave legitimacy to twin killings, execution of criminals, prosecution of inter and intra-communal wars, various human sacrifices, and consistently endowed in some elders the right to preside over village/town assemblies and to take binding decisions, was the state. Comparatively, given the critically low level of development of the productive forces, the character of the state in these societies was circumscribed and intermeshed under fossilizing productive forces.

To properly capture the state in Nigeria in its historical context the paper hereby re-conceptualizes the state:

as the public power that expresses the totality of instruments, structures, human and non-human elements as well as territorially designated social relations in a given polity. This manifest public power regulates human conduct through governmental apparatus, promotes and enforces shared societal values, norms and customary practices and more importantly projects and superintends over intra and inter-group transaction within the polity. Indeed, the character and intensity of these regulatory functions are largely influenced by the level of development of the productive forces. This public power effectively has monopoly control over available coercive instruments and uses same to regenerate itself and bring societal transactions within the specified bounds of order as determined by the critical actors.

Indeed, the basic problem of Nigerian state is not so much with its colonial history but with incongruence in development between the productive forces and social relations of production. Both remain essentially counteracting. While not diminishing or dismissing the saliency of colonialism, neo-colonialism and western capitalist expansion in the explanation of underdevelopment and low development of the state, it is our contention that Nigerian leaders, who appear to enjoy and benefit from the present low development of the state, consistently reproduce development policies that further vitiate the autonomy of states and hence make the evolution of the 'State in Nigeria' unassailable. Therefore, the basic thesis of the paper is that in so far as the Nigerian State retains its colonial proclivities, it will remain interventionist and averse to projecting the interest of the

masses. The basic task remains to stimulate the emergence of the evolving 'State in Nigeria'.

### Properties of the Nigerian State and 'State in Nigeria'

As indicated above there are fundamental differences between the Nigerian State as presently constituted and State in Nigeria. We shall outline these properties in the table below:

S/N	Measurement Indices	Properties of the Nigerian State	Traits/Manifest Behaviour	Properties of the State in Nigeria	Traits/Manifest Behaviour
1	Historical Origin	Product of colonialism, neo-colonialism and dependency	Dislocated and differentiated from the masses. It is basically interventionist & predatory	Built on the foundation of the values and norms of the people	The peoples' state whose governance framework derives from the will of the governed.
2	Autonomy of the State	Lack autonomy	Hijacked and used by the ruling class to deprive alienate and pauperize the masses	Enjoy high level of autonomy	Aggregates collective interests and projects collective welfare
3	Level of development of the productive forces	Critically low	Rely on external interventions to harness natural resources and endowments which are expropriated and appropriated. A captured state	Very high and consolidating	Thrives on autochthonous development models that harness internal resources for sustainable development
4	Level of cultural secularization and social atomization	Extremely low	Promotes centrifugal tendencies& ethnic and religious rivalry	Very high and ever increasing	Promotes a sense of unity and nation building as the centripetal forces are ever instigated
5	Pattern of production and distribution of material values	Emphasizes distribution rather than production. Proliferates consumption mentality.	Institutes beggar mentality and consumption of foreign commodities. Externally oriented	Emphasis is on production, healthy competition and reward for hard work	Development in outlook and orientation as enterprise, industry & creativity are institutionalized
6	Political Leadership	Neo-colonial in thought processes	Promotes external values and exhibit primordiality and	Nationalistic and patriotic in orientation/acti	Strives for sustainable development of



		and actions	prebendalism in actions	ons	the polity through home-grown initiatives.
7	Public Policies	Serve the interest of self-serving rulers and foreign collaborators	Recycle poverty and keep the mass of the people in seemingly perpetual servitude	Populist in substance and orientation.	Promote collective welfare and stimulate sustainable development
8	Governance Index	Thrives on perpetual governance deficits	Dislocated from the governed and thrives on blatant abuse of the rule of law and promotes ethnic jingoism and religious bigotry	Exhibits unceasing appetite for good and responsible governance	Promotes the peoples state with high residues for the rule of law, and promotes cultural secularization, social atomization and collegiate public administration
9	Response to Insecurity	Instigates insecurity and Domination by securitization of politics and politicization of insecurity	Promotes inter-ethnic rivalry and religious intolerance. Deploys state apparatus in support of ethnic deprivations and disposessions	Dounce security challenges by instituting resilient security architecture	Issues of insecurity and the incubators are promptly and swiftly handled in dispassionate manner
10	Programmatic Action	Sentimental and designed to criminalize the process of acquiring and retaining public office	Recycle poverty and retain power by deceit and criminal practices. Infest the society and institutions of government with criminality virus that pervade the political landscape.	Objective and promotes justice and inclusive governance	Reduces poverty and promotes credible electoral process that decriminalizes the polity and hence institute a just and harmonious political order.

**Source: Authors Propositions**

### Exploring the Criminality Thesis

The United Nations (1992, p.3) and Odekunle (1992, p.47), define crime as 'any offence or unlawful activity punishable by law. It generally reflects the quality of life and development in society'. Similarly, crime refers to an action or omission which constitutes an offence and is punishable by law.

Again the Victim support group defines crime as a deliberate act that causes physical or psychological harm, damage to or loss of property, and is against the law (<https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/crime-info/what-crime>). In ordinary language, a crime is an unlawful act punishable by a state or other authority. The most popular view is that crime is a category created by law; in other words, something is a crime if declared as such by the relevant and applicable law. One proposed definition is that a crime or offence is an act harmful not only to some individual but also to a community, society or the state. Such acts are forbidden and punishable by law.

According to Oxford Dictionary of Sociology (2009), crime refers to an offence, which goes beyond the personal and into the public sphere, breaking prohibitory rules or laws, to which legitimate punishments or sanctions are attached, and which requires the intervention of a public authority. Arising from the above we infer that for crime to be known as such, it must come to the notice of, and be processed through, an administrative system or enforcement agency. It must be reported and recorded by the police (or other investigator); it may then become part of criminal statistics; may or may not be investigated; and may or may not result in a court case (Adebayo, 2013, p.351).

Similarly, Dambazau (1994) defined crime as an act or omission against public interest and which is prescribed by law enacted by the legislature in the overall interests of the society, and to which prescribed punishment is attached in the event of violation and it involves four major principles which are public wrong, moral wrong, law and punishment for the criminal. Crime is also seen as a violation of the rules agreed to be respected by all members of the society, and upon which the rest members of the society mete sanction upon those guilty of the violation. It is for the same reason that the legal system views crime as a public and moral wrong.

Crime is therefore an infraction of both the basic principles of law and order and the norms of civilized behaviour. All societies are infested by this social cankerworm, though the intensity and dimensions differ from society to society. Hence, Schmallerger, (2004); Terito, Halstaed, and Bromley, (2004); Adler, Mullier, and Laufer, (2001) state that crime refers to a conduct behaviour or an act which violates the criminal law or formal or written laws of a state for which a punishment is prescribed. According to Chinwokwu (2014), published crime statistics were probably grossly understated because most parts of the country were virtually unpoliced coupled with the issue of 'dark figures' (Igbo, 2007; Odekunle, 1981).

Nigeria is presently immersed in the web of crime dilemma which manifested in upsurge of both violent and non-violent crimes. The crimes grew from minor offences to robbery, murder, rape, cultism, Kidnapping, sea piracy and terrorism, thus generating a state of insecurity and threat to National security. According to Igbo (2000), violence appears to be the norm rather than the exception for armed robbery in Nigeria (cited in Igbo, 2007). Most alarming and terrifying is the present escalation of violent crimes and the barbarity, lethality and trauma the perpetrators unleash on the hapless citizenry across the country. Notable in this regard are the rising incidents of armed robbery, assassination and ransom-driven kidnapping which are now ravaging the polity.

Arising from the foregoing, the paper notes that the major crimes in Nigeria include rape, kidnapping, murder, burglary, fraud, insurgency, terrorism, robbery, cyber-crimes, bribery and corruption, money laundering etc. In 2016, the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics recorded that Lagos, Abuja, Delta, Kano, Plateau, Ondo, Oyo, Bauchi, Adamawa and Gombe States made the top ten list of States with high number of crimes. The situation is degenerating as the country now slide to the abyss of precipice. The upsurge and seemingly degeneration of crimes largely blamed on the failure of the state in Nigeria to institute good and dispassionate governance template. This point was vividly captured by Oparaku, Nwaneri and Egbe (2017, p.40) who, *inter alia*, argue that:

...the Nigerian state has exhibited weakness in most if not all the indices of state performance. It has perennially manifested an inability and unwillingness to provide the political goods to majority of the citizens which Rotberg (2013), categorized as safety and security; rule of law and transparency; participation and respect for human rights; sustainable economic development and human development. The bottom line is that the state exists primarily to provide the political goods or what is popularly referred to as the common good, to its citizens, the most fundamental being safety and security of lives and property and economic well-being and the extent to which it is able to do this defines the nature of its relationship with the citizens. The weak performance profile of the state in meeting the basic expectations of the citizens has earned for it, the distrust of the governed with its consequence of legitimacy crisis (Ogundiya, 2009a).

For presentation of crime rates in Nigeria, as presented by NUMBEO 2019 ([https://www.numbeo.com/crime/country\\_result.jsp?country=Nigeria](https://www.numbeo.com/crime/country_result.jsp?country=Nigeria)) see table 2 below:

Level of crime	68.32	High
Crime increasing in the past 3 years	59.52	Moderate
Worries home broken and things stolen	62.76	High
Worries being mugged or robbed	68.15	High
Worries car stolen	60.64	High
Worries things from car stolen	65.97	High
Worries attacked	61.72	High
Worries being insulted	55.85	Moderate
Worries being subject to a physical attack because of your skin colour, ethnic origin or religion	46.68	Moderate
Problem people using or dealing drugs	64.10	High
Problem property crimes such as vandalism and theft	69.52	High
Problem violent crimes such as assault and armed robbery	73.04	High
		Very
Problem corruption and bribery	85.0	High

These data are based on perceptions of visitors of this website in the past 3 years. If the value is 0, it means it is perceived as very low, and if the value is 100, it means it is perceived as very high.

### **Proselytization of Criminality Among Ethnic Nationalities**

Crimes are not only acts committed by individual actors. States in several climes have been implicated in festering crimes. According to Green and Ward (2005) state crime refers to 'illegal or deviant activities perpetrated by the state, or with the complicity of state agencies.' State crimes are committed by, or on behalf of nation states in order to achieve their policies. These can be categorized as:

- **Crimes by security forces** – e.g. genocide, torture, imprisonment without trial and disappearance of dissidents. Recently in Nigeria, peaceful ethno-regional agitators were criminalized and proscribed while blood-letting war mongers (killer herders) from a section of the country

are treated with kid gloves and supported to appropriate ancestral lands through violence and acts of genocide. The operation python dance was orchestrated to clamp down the south east and suppress agitations arising from visible alienation. Also, the Nigerian State committed acts with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, targeted some ethnic, racial or religious groups, such as killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction. This also entail militarization of peaceful ethnic nationalities and exclusion of other ethnic nationalities from the security architecture of the country.

- **Political Crimes – e.g. censorship or corruption.** This takes various forms and assume deepening dimensions. Presently in Nigeria, the EFCC, ICPC and the Code of Conduct Bureau are presently being used to harass political opponents and incarcerate potent and perceived oppositions from contending ethnic nationalities. Political crimes also entail exclusion and marginalization as well as entrenchment of electoral fraud and governance by deceit.
- **Economic crimes – e.g. violation of health and safety laws.** These include orchestrated state sponsored economic deprivations, alienation and slavery. Use of state power to promote economic suffocation and shrink business opportunities. Proliferation and glorification of poverty, instigation of rising unemployment index, servitude and propagation of high incidence of human insecurity.
- **Social and cultural crimes – e.g. institutional racism.** These state sponsored acts of criminality contravene the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as stated below:
  - Article 4 – No one shall be held in slavery or servitude
  - Article 5 – No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
  - Article 20 – Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association
  - Article 24 – Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable working hours and holidays with pay.
 The orgy political, economic and social scenario activate and impel ethnic nationalities to live in mutual suspicion and fear. In the midst of negligence by the State to protect individual rights to life, property, and overt support of group domination and annihilation, most nationalities

resort to self-help as survival strategy. Basically, the Nigerian State propagate criminality among ethnic nationalities in these outlined ways:

1. By appearing unconcerned about the spate of killings, banditry, murder and on-going annihilation constituent ethnic nationalities resort to arm build up by proliferating small arms and light weapons (SALWs).
2. By alienating some of the ethnic nationalities in the governance of the country and depriving them their constitutionally assigned roles in utter violation of the Federal Character Principles, the affected ethnic nationalities resort to various criminal acts to avoid being totally annihilated or consumed.
3. By alienating some ethnic nationalities from their ancestral resources and committing acts that sustain despondency and penury within the resource-bearing nationalities, the affected people naturally resort to arm struggle and civil disobedience to press home their demands for better living conditions.
4. By deliberately imposing government that abstract from the mandate of the governed the people withdraw their support, the legitimacy matrix is decimated and the people gradually resort to criminal vices to survive.
5. By appearing supportive of ethnic cleansing through covert and overt support of ancestral lands and destruction of livelihoods of the people, the disadvantaged group resort to reprisal criminal actions to preserve and protect their collective living conditions.
6. By proscribing legitimate and harmless ethno-regional and religious organizations such as the IPOB and Islamic Movement of Nigeria while consolidating armed and criminal groups from the President's ethnic extraction, the mass of the people has started to perceive the state as criminal, their actions as criminal and the leaders as criminal groups. These have far reaching consequences on the psych of the masses who see criminality as a way of life and criminal acts as means of survival.
7. By promoting rabid abuse and disregard of the rule of law, justice and due process in favour of violence, suppression and governance by deceit, the disadvantaged ethnic nationalities thenceforth resort to building strong micro-nationalism and hence commit acts that undermine the Nigerian Project. Hence the proliferations of ethno-regional dissent, conflicts and hate speeches.

8. By focusing on the opposition in the anti-corruption fights, the targeted group activate their constituencies in protecting themselves. This entails but not limited to assassinations, sabotage, sponsorship of criminal groups and kidnapping. These vices have come to become the means of earning a living by the hapless and unemployed youths.
9. By sustaining and deepening the incidence of unemployment and hopelessness the Nigerian State mere expand the reservoir of 'criminally oriented soldiers' who perpetrate criminal vices as means of earning a living.

The above contribute in making the country unsafe and replete with spate of conflicts and insecurity. Indeed, the spate of killings, banditry, ethno-regional rifts, armed robbery, extra-judicial killings, crop farmers-nomadic herders recycled conflicts, Boko Haram invasion, and other forms of insecurity are resoundingly escalating and reaching intolerable elastic limit. Fundamentally, the occurrences of conflicts in the six geo-political zones of Nigeria have known no territorial or geo-political bounds; variously, from insurgency and militancy as well as a variety of other cross-cutting, forms of inter-group and communal conflicts, including conflicts borne out of youth restiveness, sundry crimes against humanity, political conflicts, ethno-religious and inter-faith, intra-faith conflicts, conflicts across the North-Central, North-East, North-West, South-East, and South-West, to occurrences of pure, oil-based insurgency, militancy, and inter-identity or sub-identity conflicts in the South-South, including the virtually ubiquitous, and often violent conflict between herders and farmers – as further manifested across the country. These conflicts are essentially induced by the Nigerian State.

Worse still, the official government responses have been largely militaristic and administrative. Militaristically, security men are typically often deployed to settings of conflicts; while administratively, commissions of inquiry are set up to look into the remote and immediate causes of such conflicts and to make recommendations towards preventing reoccurrence.

### **Conclusion**

The paper explored the role of the State in inducing and entrenching criminality among the constituent nationalities. It observed that the root

cause of these conflicts is located within the ambit of the state whose leadership constitute personality cult and promote governance by exclusion, suppression, domination and demonstrated ethnic genocide. Governance is characterized by fundamental deficits ranging from ethnocentrism to religious fundamentalism. These tendencies promote dissent, decimation of legitimacy as the mass of the people perceive Nigerian State as a criminal state. The trend can be reversed when Nigerian converge and negotiate the terms of the nationhood. Government must re-establish trust among the people by promoting justice and respecting the rule of law and collective rights to live, compete and reproduce their respective material existence.

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