The Trinity of Violence in Northern Nigeria: Understanding the Interconnectedness between Frustration, Desperation and Anger for Sustainable Peace

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Abstract

Violence is triggered by disagreements or contentious issues between two or more individuals, parties, regions or nations. The consequences of violence are often undesirable, leading to disease, malnutrition, starvation, moral decadence (deterioration), poor economic performance of governments, boundary disputes, tribal divisions, the wanton destruction of lives, properties and so on. This paper uses the principles of negative emotion to understand the concept of violence as it occurs in Northern Nigeria. The paper further derives theoretical explanations from the principle that individuals have the power to let peace prevail through a focused consciousness and common structures of intelligibility. The process was based on 10 principles of understanding violence, which were derived from 14 negative emotion indicators or factors of violence in the study setting. Subject matter experts (SME), including security agencies, private security experts, victims of violence and religious leaders, were consulted to determine the interconnectedness between these emotions in trends and patterns of violence. Social network analysis was used as a tool to map the dynamics of emotions, which identified three negative emotions: desperation, frustration and anger. These were ranked in order of their occurrence in conflicts and subsequent violence. The paper also suggests means to reduce violence and conflict by understanding this 'trinity' of violence in the region.

Keywords: violence, peace, negative emotions, Northern Nigeria

1. Introduction

Nigeria has been a theatre of war since the current democratic dispensation in 1999. From the Niger Delta struggle to the recent Biafra uprising, more than 30,000 people have lost their lives in one form of violence or another (Taft & Haken, 2015). In Nigeria, as in many other places, violence is motivated by political, economic or social grievances (Berber, 2013), and violence is mainly expressed as sentiment or feelings of antagonism (Taft & Haken, 2015). In Nigeria, the diverse interests of the population escalate and complicate the drivers of violence. With over 173.6 million people (NPC, 2013) Nigeria has one of the world's most ethnically diverse populations. With over 350 different ethnic groups, the country is one of the most volatile, violence-prone places in the world (Taft & Haken, 2015).

Similar to Taft & Haken (2015), Falola (1998) found that because sentiment drives violence, mono-causal explanations of violence in Nigeria are grossly inadequate: no single factor can explain the causes of violence. For example, disagreements between friends in a community can spiral into communal violence between different families and indeed inter-communal clashes if the friends belong to different communities or have religious differences. Similarly, local pressures can influence state and national trends to the same degree that national pressures can affect states and local governments. Moreover, political violence, as an outcome of an election, can ignite ethnic violence, in which people of differing ethnicities attack and kill one another. Furthermore, the negative reportage by media contributes to escalations of violence (Campbell, 2013). Violence also caused by disputes over the availability and use of resources or simply disagreements about the way in which the country is constituted (Suberu, 2001).

According to Falola (1998) and Taft & Haken (2015), uncomfortable emotional or sentimental states cause violence. To understand violence, therefore, it is essential to understand the conditions, factors and elements that lead to uncomfortable and negative emotional states. In a study on Nigeria, Falola (1998) listed and explained some of causes, including political instability and ethnically and politically fragmented systems. Other factors are militancy and religious fundamentalism, which lead to further fragmentation caused by the struggle for resource control or perceived religious persecution. Other elements include external foreign influence, poverty, ethnic diversity and failed attempts at modernization. Taft & Haken (2015) listed eight factors or indicators of violence each of which has associated sub-factors.

However, none of the factors and elements mentioned above explains violence. For example, militancy cannot alone explain the violence in Nigeria because only a small amount of violence is driven by the struggle for the control of resources. Similarly, religious fundamentalism alone cannot explain violence without proper analysis of inclusion/exclusion from social and economic participation as some fundamentalism is a fallout of such deprivations. Thus, to understand the violence that occurs in the Nigerian situation, it is important to consider the multifaceted relationship between several factors in the past, present and potentially the future. Furthermore, although several elements need to be considered, the manifestation of violence is a reality while the factors or elements that drive violence are formless states of uncomfortable and negative emotions in the agents of violence. The negative emotions cannot be measured and are thus unreal, the reality is the outcome of such emotion, appearance of violence. Thus, in addition to the interaction of the many factors and elements that drive violence, it is also important to understand the dialectical relationship between the manifest reality and the formless emotional states that drive it.

The primary aim of this study was to conduct a comprehensive analysis of violence in Northern Nigeria over a two-year period (2014 and 2015). In 1900, Northern Nigeria became a British colony. The Berlin treaty (1885) granted Northern Nigeria to Britain (Campbell, 2013). In 1914, the two protectorates of the north and the south were amalgamated into what is now known as Nigeria. After Nigerian independence in 1960, Northern Nigeria continued to fragment into provinces and states. At present, the region has 19 of the 36 states that comprise Nigeria.

This paper was written in the interests of peace building and the avoidance of violence. It is based on the premise that in order to avoid violence, it is important to understand the ways that emotional factors interact to result in violence, as well as the relationship between manifest reality of violence) and the formless drivers of it. The paper is an attempt to provide pathways of understanding and to explore solutions to the many crisis situations in Northern Nigeria. In fostering the understanding of inter-communal crises in Northern Nigeria, points of convergence, rather than divergence, will be emphasized. Thus, the paper aims to address the following questions:

a.   What causes the key patterns and trends of violence in Northern Nigeria?

b.   What are the peculiar characteristics of the region that make it vulnerable to violence?

c.   What are key structural insights into the elements and factors of violence and their interrelationships?

d.   How do these elements and factors lead to violent outcomes and how can we resolve contentious issues?

e.   It is possible to link the contentious issues that lead to violence?

f.   Is it possible to develop local peculiarities that will ultimately be acceptable to the proponents and opponents of issues?

2. Literature Review

The relevant literature notes that violence is caused by negative emotions and its various manifestations. For example, (Van Soest & Bryant, 1995) found that violence occurs on multiple levels, and its structural foundation lies in poverty and drugs or substance use. However, (Krueger & Maleckova, 2002) established that there is no linkage between poverty, educational level and hate crimes. These authors found that violence is not related to income. Violence has also been linked to resistance to social dominance. Using USA and Lebanon as cases, the authors showed that violence stems from issues of counter dominance, indicating the existence of a relationship between the dynamics of violence and the status of the perpetrators of violence. (Stankov, Saucier, & Knezˇevic, 2010) studied the writings of several terrorist groups in order to analyse the negative sentiments in them. They found 56 negative sentiments, which were used to measure personality, social attitudes, values and social cynicism. A survey of nine countries produced three factors: pro-violence, vile world and divine power. (Kohn, 1999) also showed that violence stems from feeling of frustration and anger, especially in persons who desire feeling of connection. Therefore, factors and motivators of violence can be established by identifying the

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negative sentiments in the people dealing with violence.

2.1 Literature on Violence in Nigeria

The review of the literature on violence in Nigeria (including websites) provided comprehensive month-by-month data for only two years, 2014 and 2015. In order to fully comprehend the violence in this region, the period of study will be extend as far back as the 1960s. The seeds of violence in Northern Nigeria and throughout the country were sown at the onset of independence (Falola, 1998). Traces of violence continued over the years and the major causes of violence in Northern Nigeria were documented by Falola (1998) and Taft & Haken (2015).

2.1.1 Violence in Northern Nigeria

Figures 1, 2 and 3 indicate the total number deaths caused by violence in the 19 states of Northern Nigeria. Figure 1 shows the number of deaths until April, and the Appendix indicates the total over a 24-month period. The highest number of death was recorded in March 2014 (Figure 3).
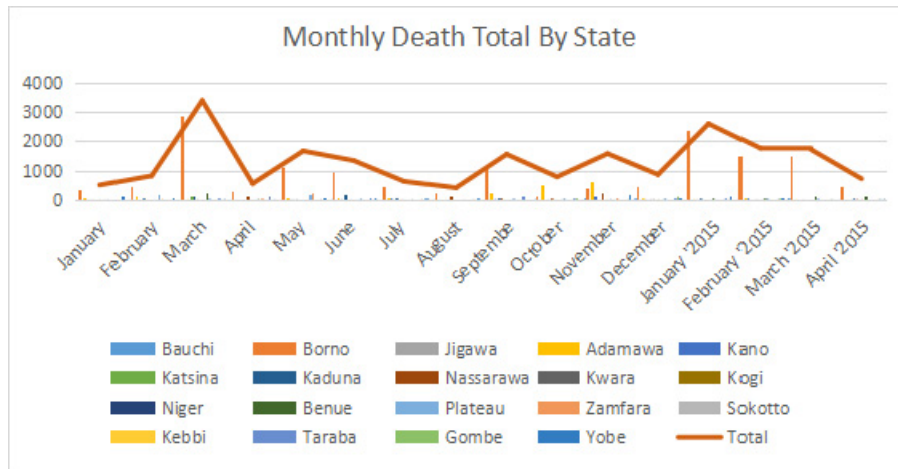

Figure 1. Monthly deaths due to violence

Source: Taft & Haken, 2015.

Figure 2 indicates the total number of deaths in each of the 19 states. The Appendix provides details about the deaths in each state in the period considered. Figure 1 shows that Borneo recorded the highest number of deaths in the period considered.
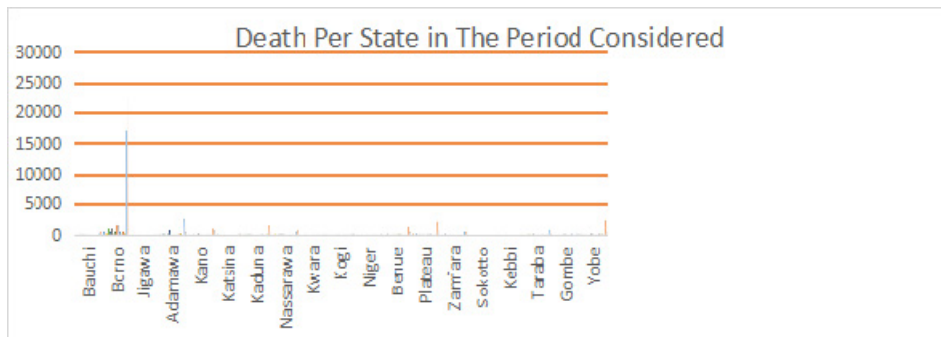

Figure 2. Deaths by state

Source: Taft & Haken, 2015.

Figure 3 presents the total number deaths per month in the two-year study period and in the two years prior to the study period. The figure shows that there were more deaths in the period from 2014 to 2015 than in the period from 2012 to 2013.
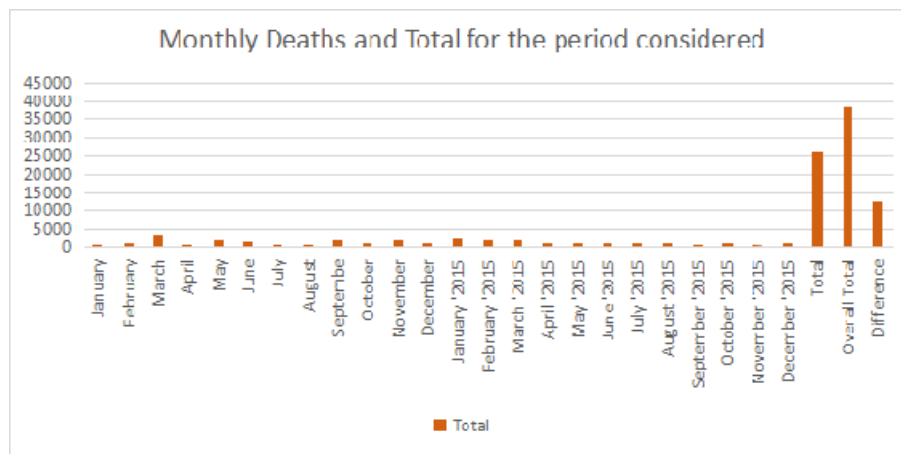
Figure 3. Total monthly deaths in four years

Source: Taft & Haken, 2015.

Based on the review of the literature on violence in Northern Nigeria, the sources and causes of violence were identified. Because websites are valid sources of information on violence in Nigeria, they were used as additional sources of elements that are relevant in understanding the dynamics of violence in Northern Nigeria.

3. Theoretical Foundation

Because of the diverse interests of the population, working and researching for peace in Nigeria has proven to be very complex (Taft & Haken, 2015). Those who are interested in promoting peace in Nigeria include security and other government agencies, civil society, governments at all levels, private sector, community leaders and the general populace. Their interests include resource allocation for security, the monitoring and evaluation of government programmes, the initiation of projects and activities, private investment and other economic activities. In addition to individual interests, stakeholders also become interested in other stakeholders. For example, because investors are interested in the security of their investments, are interested in the security agencies and the ways in which they conduct their activities. Similarly, because the security agencies are interested in the resources they obtain for their activities, they are interested in the taxed on private investment, which provide their funding. For these reasons, the systems theory was adopted as the theoretical framework of this study. This perspective recognises that the pressure from one level can affect another level by changing the magnitude and dimension of the consequences. However, any analysis of the need for peace at the community level that excluded peace efforts at the family level can distort or derail peace initiative.

Bossel (2007) defined a system as anything that is composed of elements that are connected in a manner such that a structure emerges. The system's structure and its elements perform functions in a particular environment to serve a distinct purpose. In communities, societies, nations and indeed the world, there are myriads of systems, each of which responds to the challenges of its environment and, in the process, co-evolves in interaction with other systems. These interactions and co-evolutions shape the environment, and their systems evolve into larger systems that form societies and eventually shape the structure of the entire world. Some systems behave simply, so their behaviours can be predicted easily. Other systems are more complex. Still others adapt their behaviour to different challenges and may even change their structure and behavioural characteristics in this evolutionary process. The concept of violence comprises several systems because of the multiplicity of interests involved. Indeed, earlier work (Van Soest & Bryant, 1995) indicated that violence is deeply rooted in culture and social systems that interact with the society's institutions and individuals, and thus it requires a systemic perspective to understand. Therefore, this work considers violence a complex system that responds dynamically to changes in the environment.

4. Research Methodology

This study followed pragmatic perspectives of systemic thinking in order to link the primary and secondary data. The secondary data were obtained from surveys of the literature and media reports on violence in Nigeria in general and Northern Nigeria in particular. The survey examined divergent paradigms in the areas of history, sociology, religious study, political science, economics and literature. These paradigms were conflated in a re-enforcing manner so that they provided support for the results of the study. The literature and the media often

differ in levels of analysis. The level often depends on stakeholders that have different focuses, such as national, state and local governments, communities and, in some cases, individuals. Because of the dynamics of violence in the region, other levels of analysis were added such that the dyadic and triadic levels that depended on the triggers or fault lines were identified.

To support the findings from the literature review and media reports, websites such as the Council for foreign relations, Nigeria Security Tracker, FFP's UnLock Project and Nigeria Watch were used as sources for the data. Furthermore, data from the Centre for Democratic Development Research and Training, Zaria (Kaduna State, Nigeria), which is a research institute in Northern Nigeria, were used for comparative purposes. This centre has several publications in the form of pamphlets and booklets with a range of information on religious and political violence in Northern Nigeria.

Comprehensive data were obtained for the two years between 2014 and 2015. The data were classified according to number of deaths because this number is often reported by the media and is easier to verify through a number of sources. Data coding was done according to monthly reports, state and mode of violence.

Relying solely on the literature and press reports on violence in the region had methodological limitations. Researchers tend to inject bias along religious and political lines. Moreover, some reports were not accurate, were absent in some cases or were official presentations, which may be distorted because agents of the government tend to escalate the violence. Therefore, data triangulation was used. Information was obtained from multiple sources, and comparisons were made. For example, for the data reported in a research work, backward referencing was used to obtain the original information to check for consistency in data, mode of violence, perpetrators, casualty figures, sources of information, and/or injuries sustained. Similarly, reports by multi-lateral and/or international organizations, such as Amnesty International, were used to validate some information that could not be traced to a publication or website.

In addition, ethnographic data were collected in three major cities in the north—Kano, Kaduna and Katsina. Victims of violence were recruited for the data collection, and interviews were conducted. The interviews focused on the number of casualties and the amount of material lost. Three interviewees were asked to suggest ways to end violence in the region. The aim of the question was to prompt responses that were in line with the theory used in this study. Fifteen direct victims and five dependents of deceased victims were interviewed. Twelve interviews (60%) were face to face while the remaining eight were conducted via the phone. The shortest interview was 2.30 minutes, and the longest was over 3 hours. Overall, there were more than 20 hours of interviewing time in a period of 30 days.

In addition, because the data were obtained from secondary sources, primary validation using expert elicitation was employed. The data were arranged in tabular form (see table 1 below). In the table indicators were arranged in rows and in columns. Experts were first asked to validate these indictors as true causes of violence in the region. There were then asked to indicate if an indicator is believed to be strongly linked (give value of 1), moderately linked (2) or weakly linked (3) to violence in the region. Five experts who were very knowledgeable in violence in the region by virtue of their direct involvement in violence over a long period of time (10 years or more) were assembled for this aspect of the research. Of the five, four belonged to one of the two security agencies (two military men and two police officers). The fifth expert was a civil society activist engaged in charity work for internally displaced persons. At the end of the discussion, 14 (see table 2 and figure 4) major or strongly linked indicators (score 1), 22 moderate indicators (score 2) and 44 weakly linked indicators were identified. In total, 80 indicators were identified. Using the 14 major indicators, the experts also identified the linkages between them, and they determined whether the linkages were reciprocal or not.

Table 1. Sample of Indicators of violence and their interaction

Indicators Violence	Poor Governance	Political Culture	Capacity of State	Resource Allocation	Social Fragmentation
Poor Governance					
Political Culture					
Capability of State					
Resource Allocation					
Social Fragmentation					

Source: Authors.

5. Indicators of Violence in Northern Nigeria

In Northern Nigeria, the violence indicators are more complex than in other places in the country and in the world (Taft & Haken, 2015). The following paragraphs briefly discuss 22 of the 80 indicators of violence in the region.Note that 14 majorly linked indicators are not listed in the 22. However, the14 top indicators are discussed in section six and are adjudged by the expert to have the strongest link to violence in the region by the experts.Although these 14 indicators were derived from the literature (Dell, 1989; Eisner, 2009; Falola, 1998; Krueger & Maleckova, 2002; Linstead, 1997) (including websites), they were validated by experts on security issues in Northern Nigeria.

1) **Poor governance.** Poor governance manifests in all three levels of government in Nigeria, which leads to grievances, lack of social amenities, citizens' frustration, anger and therefore to violence.

2) **Political culture.** Politics and political power are often misused in the region, which has led to a fragmented system and the lack of adequate coherent political structures that are self-sustaining. Because elections are won and political power is gained by the highest and strongest bidders, inadequate representation and corruption are rampant.

3) **Use and abuse of power.** Political leaders use their power at will in complete disregard of the rule of law. Similarly, because the official security system is inadequate in the provision of security to the populace, citizens resort to the use of private arrangements often with undesirable consequences.

4) **Capacity of states.** The states in the region have fewer resources and less capacity to provide welfare services, including the basic needs of the citizens. The states are also not able to provide security.

5) **Non-state actors.** Non-state actors include security and other services. The wealthy secure such services, which leads to increasing difference, disturbances and violence.

6) **Resource distribution.** There are claims that resources are not evenly distributed. Although there is a central resource-sharing formula, it is based on population and not resource derivation.

7) **Environmental degradation.** There is pressure on the environment because of over farming and over grazing. The resultant effect is less food and more struggle.

8) **Increased social fragmentation.** Social fragmentation is becoming increasingly complex. Different social identities may emerge within one settlement, with consequent increases in the diversity of goals and needs.

9) **Minority-majority divide.** Coupled with increased social fragmentation is the division caused by confusion about belonging to a majority or minority ethnic group. This divide promotes biases in political appointments and opportunities.

10) **Settler-citizen dichotomy.** In some societies within the region, citizens are grouped into original inhabitants and settlers. The allocation of privileges does not follow merit but emotional attachments related to the settler-citizen dichotomy. Because the area is porous, illegal migration is endemic, which led to the continuing existence of Boko Haram and cattle rustlers.

11) **Population demography.** Some places are more populous than others are and therefore most likely to have diverse groupings.

12) **Diverse ethnic groups.** People tend to be identified with their ethnic group rather than their nationality or residence.

13) **Low education citizenry.** The region has high illiteracy because of the low level of education in the populace.

14) **Unemployment/underemployment.** The number of people who are gainfully employed is much lower than in the southern part of the country.

15) **Poverty level.** The region has a high poverty level because of the large number of people and few employment opportunities.

16) **Rising street gangs/political thuggery.** In recent years, because of the desire for power at all costs, criminal activities have increased, which has been perpetuated by street gangs and political banditry.

17) **Cultism and gangsterism.** These grouped together because they are caused by rising substance abuse. The need to dominate other groups leads to violence.

18) **Militancy and religious fundamentalism.** Most religious organizations now provide a military or para-military wing, which perpetuates the fighting.

19) **Student activism.** Active student associations in tertiary institutions often promote violence. Students are often polarized along ethnic and/or religious lines.

20) **Confraternities.** Student groups often carry their militancy into adult life and form confraternities.

21) **Drugs and drug trade.** Street groups need drugs to survive, and different drug traders often engage in violent confrontations.

22) **Parental neglect/unwanted children/poor upbringing.** Some children grow up without parents or with parents who are too busy or too poor to care about them. These children gravitate to gang members and become gangsters themselves.

6. Evaluation of Violence Network Properties

The UCINET[R] social network software (Borgatti, Everett, & Freeman, 1999; Prell, 2012) was used to determine the relationships among the 14 indicators of violence in Northern Nigeria. Figure 4 shows the network representing the relationships among the indicators.
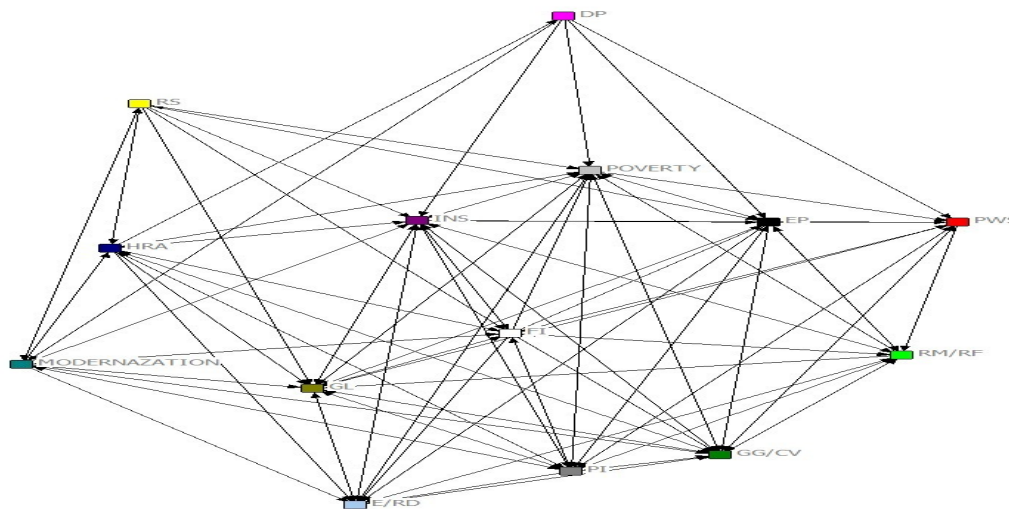

Figure 4. Network of negative emotions or violence indicators

Source: Authors.

In networks such as the one shown in Figure 4, a structural pattern emerges. Neighbours are clustered such that a pattern is observed, in which where a large proportion of ties is highly clustered together. Nodes are densely grouped around related nodes, such that a 'clique-like' phenomenon evolves within the network. This phenomenon is known as clustering. In order to determine the extent to which the nodes are closely related or are neighbours, an examination is conducted to determine the local neighbourhood of an actor, the actors that are directly connected to an actor and the actors to which it can connect. Using UCINET, the clustering coefficients of neighbouring actors is determined. These actors or emotions are likely to fuse with or mutate to a compound emotion, indicating the overall neighbourliness of all the actors or emotions. The overall coefficient is an indication of how closely related all the actors or emotions are. The closer the value is to 1, the closer the actors.

The results showed that the overall graph-clustering coefficient or the average density of the neighbours of all the actors was .631. This result indicated that all the actors were closely related. The average density (.628) was determined by weighting the actors within closely related neighbourhoods. This result indicates that the indicators were embedded in dense neighbourhoods, that is, the indicators were easily connected with one another, resulting in compound indicators or the increasing complexity of the causes of violence.

The neighbourhood of each indicator was examined by using the clustering coefficient of each actor. The table below provides a summary of each actor, the clustering coefficients and the number of neighbours each actor had. For example, Poverty had 66 neighbours (possible linkages) to which it could connect. Of these, only 40 actors (58.3%) were connected to it.

Table 2. Indicators, clustering coefficient and number of neigbours

Indicator	Clustering Coefficients	Number of Neighbors
Human Rights Abuse	.611	45
Demographic Pressures	.500	21
Insecurity	.545	78
Economic Pressure	.627	55
Group grievances	.664	55
Government Legitimacy	.621	66
Public/Welfare Services	.722	36
Refugee Services	.667	21
Political Instability	.645	55
Poverty	.583	66
Ethnic/Religious Diversity/Divisions	.733	45
Modernization	.583	36
Foreign Intervention	.636	66
Resource/Religious Militancy	.689	45

Source: The authors.

The information in Table 2 was used to determine the relationships among the indicators. Each indicator was treated according to its complexity, and the indicators were then categorized accordingly different classes or categories. This categorization is in line with the grouping of negative emotions (Gaves, 2012) that can lead to violent actions. Indicators with the highest number of linkages (up to 70% or more than 60 neighbours) were placed in one category, **anger indicators**. Those with connections less than 60% and those between 60% and 70% were categorized separately as **desperation indicators** and **frustration indicators**, respectively.The table below presents the categories and the number of indicators in each category.

Table 3. Classification of negative emotions

Frustration Indicators	Clustering Coefficient	Desperation Indicators	Clustering Coefficients	Anger Indicators	Clustering Coefficients
Demographic Pressures Modernization	.500 .583	Human Rights Abuse	.611	Public/Welfare services	.722
		Economic Pressure	.627	Ethnic/Religious	.733
		Group Grievances	.664	Diversity/Disturbances	
		Refugee Services	.667	Insecurity	.545
		Political Instability	.645	Government Legitimacy	.621
		Resources/Religious	.689	Poverty Foreign	.583
		Militancy		Intervention	.636

Source: The authors.

Table 3 shows that two indicators had clustering coefficients of less than 60% and fewer than 60 neighbours. These were categorized as frustration indicators. The second category included six indicators with clustering coefficients above 60% with fewer than 60 neighbours or possible linkages. These were categorized as desperation indicators. The third and final category included six indicators each of which had more than 70% of linkages with their neighbours or more than 60 neighbours. These were categorized as anger indicators. In the next section, these indicators will be discussed according to the categories in which they were placed.

7. Pathway to Understanding Indicators of Violence

If we can devise means of communicating the differences between individuals and bridging the fine line between reality and imagination, our heart's desires can be achieved. If we desire violence, we pursue violence and it manifests. If we desire peace, we can attain it. In other words, we can transform potentiality into reality. If the desired reality is beneficial, we can transform our potentiality into reality. Reality is form, whereas potentiality is formless. In contrast, if reality is not beneficial, such as violence, destruction or disease, we can stop the potentiality from becoming reality. In the next sub-section, Bracken's (1995) methodology of inter-religious dialogue is briefly explained because it forms the pathway to understanding violence in Northern Nigeria.

7.1 Common Structures of Intelligibility

In contemporary society, contentious issues often result in violent confrontations among people with diverse opinions or views, so various approaches are employed to understand and appreciate diverse perspectives. One approach is to listen to other views and observe other rituals, symbolic activities and practices. Over time, this approach has been found to be effective in promoting respect for the diverse practices of neighbours and others who are different (Bracken, 1995).

In Bracken's (1995) methodology, specific points of agreement or disagreement are sought, such as points of comparison between different views or between different goals. The objective is to find grounds for mediation between different concepts, practices, rituals, traditions, religions or viewpoints. Bracken is referred to this process as building common structures of intelligibility. This structure enables the understanding of the differences that parties otherwise consider alien. The underlying philosophy is that the conception of another viewpoint is extended, abstracted and purified to serve as a ground for comparison.

In order for the built common structures of intelligibility to be effective, they should strive to offer neutral points of comparison between contentious issues. They can be tailored to provide a focus of conversation between the proponents of rival views. One view can become a subject of discussion, and then another and so on. Discussion stimulates the understanding of both explicit and tacit knowledge, and it enhances knowledge of the subject matter through the interaction between the two (Nonaka & von Krogh, 2009). In addition, the validity of the common structures of intelligibility lies in the possibility of opening access to other people's worldviews, which enriches their opponents with new knowledge, allowing them to move in the direction of objectivity. This new worldview might be rejected as unsuitable or inferior to the opponent's known views or it may yield fruitful and stimulating insights, thus providing a philosophical framework for the further investigation of different views. If it is accepted as providing insight into issues of contention, it will be understood and conflated with the dominant views, evolving into a single worldview held by all.

Bracken (1995) suggested two common structures of intelligibility: creativity and extensive continuum. These two structures can be distinguished, but they form inseparable aspects of the universe. The difference is that creativity is the basis of all becoming. The interconnectedness of the actuality of existence is called extension. In this paper, creativity is used to provide a means of understanding and countering the indicators of violence in Northern Nigeria.

In religious conceptions, names such as the great one and the great void refer to the origin of reality. This is similar to the energy principle that forms dynamism, in which entities emerge from nothingness and then become linked to one another. Here, the great one, God or the Godhead does not refer to a person, but to a ground of belief or dynamic source of personal being. By extending this concept to the indicators of violence, they may be regarded as potentialities that if not countered may result in reality.

In the following ten points (Bracken, 1995a), an attempt is made to understand violence by using the common structures of intelligibility, thus answering the research questions posed in section one.

1)   Deep perceptions of reality view the form and the formless together. In this case, violence can be viewed as both the indicator and its reality. The indicator or interactions between indicators may result in violence. Emotional states that result in conditions that propel indicators from one level to another, such as from frustration to desperation, may be understood by the level of interaction. Thus, the need arises to see whether the formless indicators result in the form of violence. It is thus important to be sensitive to the presence of the formless and devise means to prevent it from becoming reality.

2)   It is also important to determine the nature of the formless that is revealed in the form of reality. The formless may not be a reality or an entity but can be an activity or the effect of an activity, such as human rights abuse. Thus, the two are separate things only potentially, not actually, that is, reality (violence) exists only in relation to its drivers (indicators such as anger) and are linked from the onset.

3)   It follows that because the finite (violence) is caused by the infinite (several indicators), the indicators contain and transcend all that is in reality, whether good or bad. Thus, violence results from the dialectical relationship between the formless (indicators) and the ultimate form of destruction and killing. It should be indicated here that as shown in (Coser, 1957), violence can also be functional, or it could be used to solve certain contentious issues. This view of the infinite as a determinant of the finite concept is qualitatively better than the finite because it gives birth to the finite. Hence, understanding and resolving the indicators of violence are necessary to resolve violence.

4)	Indicators are formless, whereas the consequences of violence have form; therefore, they are not simultaneous. One gives birth to the other, or one is a consequence of the other. However, as drivers to violence, these indicators, which are the resultant effects of negative emotions, manifest in current or even future periods because of the evolution of interactions to violent outcomes. Taking a systemic view of the possible outcomes of interactions between two or multiple indicators, could lead to understanding how to counteract future manifestations of violence. Therefore, although understanding individual indicators is essential, mapping possible combinations of indicators, factors or elements is also important. Therefore, understanding the elements and factors that combineand manifest in violence is as important as the violent outcome.

5)	Understanding the driver (or combination of drivers)-violence relationship is needed to prevent or counter violence. The finite can only be because the infinite exists. Thus, in the relationship, one is dependent on the other. It follows that the finite achieves its identity simply because of the existence of one or a combination of the infinite. The form of violence exists because of the infinite formless negative emotions that are indicators of it. Even when the form is independent of the formless, it is in existence because of it and its future is affected by it. This point is also important because regardless of the dynamics of violence, or how it manifests, it is related to the original formless indicator.

6)	It follows from point 5 that within the dialogical situation, both the formless and the reality combine to transform the context in which they interact; consequently, they change or re-shape the environment or context. Therefore, both the form and the formless and the context and the environment result from their interaction. Thus, the two now relate within their transformed or resultant context in which they exist separately. Reality (in this case, violence) as a manifestation of the infinite (in this case, indicators or negative emotions) and the transformed (in this case, destruction and killing) is the creation of their interaction. Thus, the infinite is an activity or resultant effect of an activity, which was asserted earlier.

7)	The indicators, that is, the formless may also be regarded as being within the form, that is, reality. In addition, although this may be the case, the two must be understood to exist independently of one another. Thus, the consideration of the formless as the real is restricted to accepting the dynamic relationship between the two.

8)	It follows that the formless and the form constitute a non-duality, that is, they are distinct entities. One entity is limited in the manifestation (violence) and the other is unlimited (indicators) in the number it can individually or in combination with others manifest into a reality or a form.

9)	The formless could also be ranked or classified hierarchically. The highly ranked are regarded as more likely to be individual drivers or as more likely to become form. However, although the formless could move to form, it is not likely to result in form. Thus, it is also important to consider the transition of drivers from lower levels to higher levels such that a threshold is established, which becomes indicative of the highest point at which violence results. Thus, the formless, whether it is an individual action or an interaction in a dynamic relationship, changes and with it the possibility of violence. Using network science a hierarchy of the formless and the possible transition to form a hierarchy was developed. In this hierarchy, the indicators are anger, frustration, and desperation in that order. Although the three indicators are negative emotions, they are not equal drivers of violence.

10)	The problem now is the identification of the formless as a distinguishable activity that can be explained and analysed. In order to enable such analyses, the formless could be thought of as a measurable entity. The means of measuring these entities and establishing their levels could then be devised. It is also important to keep in mind that an indicator must be known in order for it to be measurable.

8. Conclusion

This paper used the concept of a bridge between inner emotions, feelings, experiences, beliefs and the external world to understand an intractable social issue in Northern Nigeria. The issue of violence has persisted despite several attempts at solutions by governments, civil societies, donor agencies, religious groups and individuals in Northern Nigerian society. Individuals have the power to choose peace through focusing on their consciousness to build peace. Individuals need to focus on what is needed in order to achieve it. In order to build peace, thinking must move away from a level that promotes negative emotions and violence.

(Bracken, 1995b) common structures of intelligibility were used to arrive at 10 principles of understanding the trinity of violence in Northern Nigeria: desperation, frustration and anger. However, in order to understand violence, (i) the trends and patterns of violence, (ii) the negative emotions that lead to violence and (iii) the dynamics of these emotions must be identified.

In future work, the ideas presented in this paper will be expanded to develop measures to counter violence in Northern Nigeria. The findings of this study will contribute to future research that will build a mathematical model of the hierarchy of the negative emotions that lead to violence in the context of any study.

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Appendix. 24 months Violence figure in Northern Nigeria
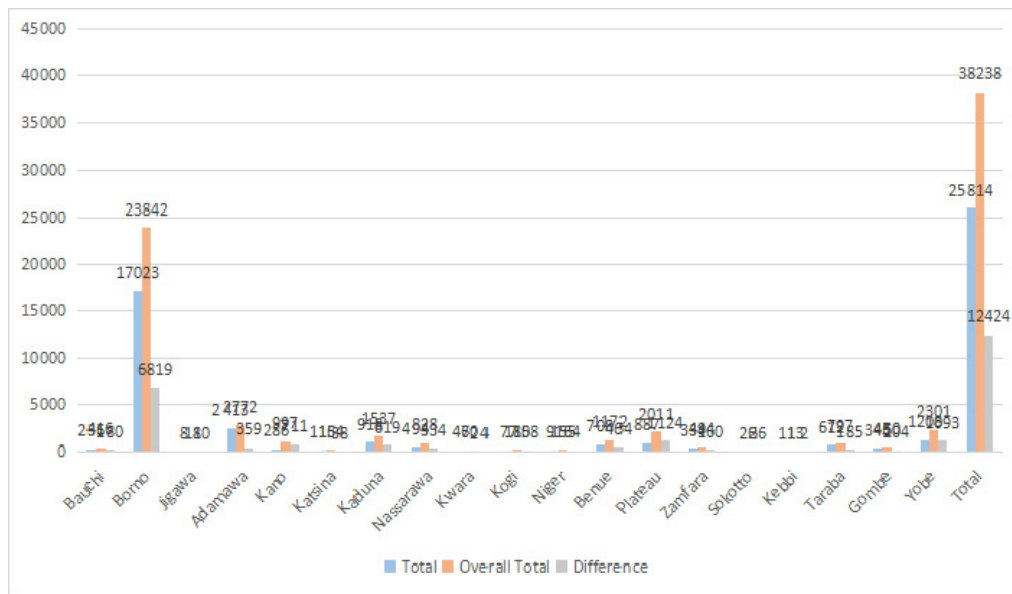
Source. Taft & Haken (2015).

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