Why Organised Violence Thrives in Nigeria

Why Organised Violence Thrives in Nigeria:

The Problem of Elite Political Culture

By

Ebimboere Seiyefa

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing

Why Organised Violence Thrives in Nigeria:
The Problem of Elite Political Culture

By Ebimboere Seiyefa

This book first published 2020

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN (10): 1-5275-4511-3
ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-4511-3

This book is dedicated to my parents, Mr Matthew Seiyefa and Mrs Adenike Ajuyah Seiyefa, a great source of inspiration and strength.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to Almighty God, without whose support this book would not have been possible. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my family, who have always been my pillar. A special thanks to my parents, without your unflagging support and prayers, I simply would never have started and completed this book. I cannot thank you enough for all your encouragement and belief in me.

Many thanks to Dr Simon Massey, Professor Bruce Baker, Dr Dele Babalola, and Dr Hakeem Onapanjo. I have benefited from your ever-constructive criticism and feedback. I am extremely grateful for your support, guidance, and knowledge. Special thanks to all my friends and colleagues for being a sounding board and for your tolerance of all my never-ending concerns and questions. Special thanks to all my respondents from the various academic and security institutions. God bless you all!

ABBREVIATIONS

ACN	All Congress of Nigeria
AD	Alliance for Democracy
AG	Action Group
APC	Arewa People Congress
APP	All Peoples Party
ANPP	All Nigeria Peoples Party
ASUU	Academic Staff Union of Universities
AVS	Anambra Vigilante Services
CAN	Christian Association of Nigeria
CT	Counterterrorism
COIN	Counterinsurgency
DPP	Democratic People Party
DSS	Department of State Security Service also known as SSS
IPC	Igbo People Congress
IYC	Ijaw Youth Congress
JNI	Jama'atu Nasri Islam
LP	Labour Party
MASSOB	Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MOSOP	Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People
NCNC	National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroon
NDDC	Niger Delta Development Commission
NDV	Niger Delta Vigilante
NDPVF	Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force
NPC	Northern People Congress
NPN	National Party of Nigeria
NPP	Northern People's Party
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Conference
OPC	Oodua People Congress
PDP	People Democratic Party
PRP	Peoples Redemption Party
SCIA	Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs
SSS	State Security Service also known as DSS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The first suicide bomb attack in Nigeria was recorded on 16 June 2011. Mohammed Manga, a thirty-five-year-old member of Boko Haram drove a car outfitted with a bomb into the premises of the Nigerian police force headquarters in Abuja, the Federal capital of Nigeria. This was the first of many suicide bomb attacks that signalled a shift in organised political violence operations in Nigeria. Organised political violence in Nigeria is a prevalent and continuing aspect of Nigeria's independent history. This phenomenon manifests itself in diverse forms such as electoral violence, terrorism, and religious and ethnic clashes. The pervasiveness of this phenomenon ensures a continuous and expanding discourse on the root causes and dynamics of organised violent activities in Nigeria. These "root causes" identified in scholarly literature, whilst certainly present or linked to specific manifestations of organised political violence, do not, according to the findings of this book, essentially capture its core driving force in Nigeria. Instead, I will focus on examining the role of elite political culture, and in particular elite political culture's interconnection with politics and governance as the fundamental cause and driver of organised political violence in the country. I investigate how elite political culture has produced and sustained organised violent groups, in general, and, more specifically, the Boko Haram sect. I conclude that organised violence in Nigeria is the manifestation of the political elite's behaviour in adopting violence to achieve political goals.

The main argument

At the centre of my argument is the development and sustenance of organised violent groups in Nigeria as a result of the political elite either provoking violence or adopting violence to achieve political aims. The dynamics of intentional state governance activities designed to guide the flow of events is shaped by the political elite's desire to maximise state power and wealth. There is a culture of exploiting office for personal gain and denying rivals access to state power; where resistance fails, it is a

culture that will offer unsatisfactory dialogue. Ultimately, it is a culture that where all else fails will resort to violence to achieve their goals. As such, my core proposition is that elite political culture shaped by political elite actions and values generates organised violence for its own ends. However, scholars exploring the phenomenon of organised violence have isolated alternative rationales.

Since the emergence and sustenance of organised violence in Nigeria, there have been attempts by scholars and other stakeholders to explain this occurrence citing pervasive unemployment, rampant poverty, government corruption, colonialism, religion in the political environment, and the global jihad movement, amongst other factors. Within the Nigerian public sphere, scholars, commentators, and representatives of the state, such as security agencies, governors and federal legislators, have generally had recourse to the above explanations and have based their responses on these analytical frameworks.

I argue that these acceptable causes, whilst relevant to the rise of organised violent groups in Nigeria, ignore the core role of the political elite's style of governance grounded in a political culture of self-interest that is the primary cause of the persistence of organised violence in Nigeria. The other accepted causes are, in reality, symptoms and/or outcomes and not the fundamental rationale. Nevertheless, I concede that there is a relationship between the above-mentioned symptoms or outcomes and the emergence and sustenance of organised violent groups in Nigeria. Notwithstanding, I insist that the emergence of organised violent groups is attributable to the concentric rings of causative factors, and that these factors are not at the core but form the outer rings, enabling or amplifying organised political violence in Nigeria (shown in figure 1.1).

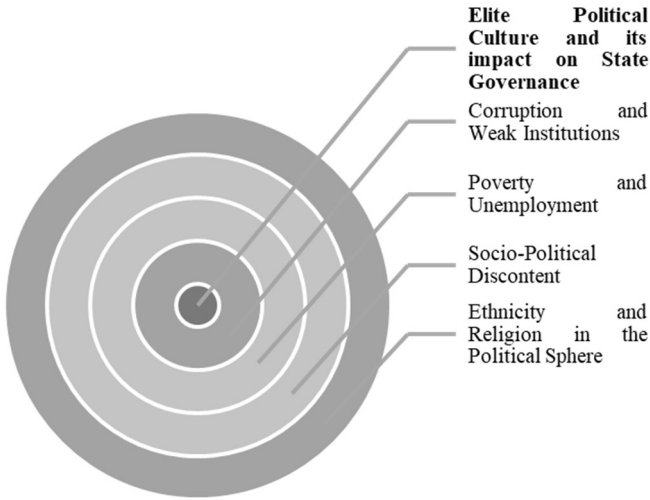

Figure 1.1. Illustrating the root cause and symptoms.
Source: The author (2019).

At the core of the rings is the political elite's approach to state governance and access to state power with resultant violent consequences. Hence, the predominant mindset of the political elite is one of seeking the attainment of political power not as a means to serve citizens, but as the chief end in itself. The political elite covets the grant of access to public funds for personal enrichment and the furtherance of preferred ethnic, religious, and regional interests. This "mindset" has hardened over the years, and has found expression in a chain of events leading to the incipience and concretisation of the identified concentric circles that have subsequently sustained organised political violent activities in Nigeria. Selected elements of the prevailing elite political culture mindset include a willingness to use violence, access to state power for financial rewards, and the politicisation of existing dissention by social groups.

It is pertinent to state that in this book elite political culture is depicted as influenced by the actions and agendas of the political elite. In essence the emergence of organised violent groups is deemed to be a consequence of the actions of the political elite, particularly in their approach to state governance. To reiterate, the book does not aim to replace wholesale alternative rationales for the propensity towards organised political violence in Nigeria, but rather to reposition these rationales in relation to the core causative factor, the prevailing elite political culture.

Book structure

Chapter 2 is broadly contextual, and reviews existing arguments related to the subject areas. It explores the bases of the crucial concept at the heart of the core proposition of the book, Nigeria's political elite and its inherent attitude to governance/government is predicated as a "culture." In this chapter, I examine the overlapping conceptualisations of organised violence, exploring how organised violence in Nigeria, whilst ostensibly driven by religious and/or ethnic factors, is essentially political in nature, as well as the nexus between political violence and terrorism. Chapters three and four analyse the emergence and sustenance of organised political violence groups in direct relation to Nigeria's political elite's approach to governance, elite political culture, and the development and sustenance of organised political violence groups. Chapter 3 specifically examines the development of the Nigerian political environment: the political elite's culture and how this affects its approach to governance/government, and its concomitant relationship with organised political violence in Nigeria; it stresses the fundamental role of the elite in generating and sustaining political violence. Chapter four focuses on analysing that aspect of governance and elite political culture that allows and encourages the use of religion and ethnicity by the political elite in the political sphere and how this has facilitated the emergence and sustenance of organised political violence groups. Chapter five addresses the emergence and transformation of Boko Haram, MEND, and the Bakassi Boys into organised violent groups and their links with elite political culture in Nigeria. Chapter six discusses the Nigerian state government's response to organised violent groups, with emphasis placed on the groups discussed in chapter five. Previous counterterrorism and counterinsurgency measures adopted by the state are examined in comparison to these groups' activities from their inception to their transformation into a terrorist organisation. This is carried out to examine the link between the government's response process, elite political culture, and the transition of social movement groups into organised political groups. Chapter seven concludes the book: it summarises the ideas and concepts developed and examined through chapters two to six. This includes the issue of Nigerian politics depicted as a zero-sum game: the idea that success in political competition arises from mobilising key social groups and the value that the political elite derive from politicising conflicts in the state.

CHAPTER TWO

CONTEXTUALISING ELITE POLITICAL CULTURE: THE LINK TO ORGANISED VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA

Introduction

The discourse on organised violence in Nigeria is dominated by various elements amongst which identity politics, corruption, and socio-economic challenges rank highly. The transfer of power from one government to another in Nigeria is shadowed by violence. The prevalence of organised political violent activities is not limited to electoral periods, or the period of military rule, but rather is a reflection of the political and social environment in Nigeria. Hence, organised violent activities are a consistent factor in Nigeria's existence. I argue that there is a direct link between organised political violence, governance, and elite political culture in Nigeria. Whilst the current events of organised violence in Nigeria record the adoption of terror tactics employed by other violent groups across the globe, it marks a shift in the extremity of political violence in Nigeria; this book argues that the causative and enabling factors remain the same. Hence, this chapter serves as the groundwork for an examination of selected elements of governance and elite political culture that facilitate the emergence and sustenance of organised political violent groups in Nigeria. In, addition this chapter provides the contextual and theoretical background of the book.

Defining the political elite

Elites as defined by Higley (2010) are "persons who by virtue of their strategic locations in large or otherwise pivotal organizations and movements are able to effect political outcomes regularly and substantially." Although Higley's definition of elites as he stated is indicative of political reflections, classical descriptions of elites depend largely on the political domination,

political capacity, and skills of these individuals within society (Mosca 1939; Machiavelli). In addition, current definitions of *elite* classify these individuals as a select group who control resources, control a large amount of power, and make and influence decisions affecting political outcomes without being immediately curbed. As such, elites are not limited to individuals who are superior in a specific field, as indicated by Bottomore (1990), but include individuals whose decisions and interests shape and influence political outcomes. In essence, these individuals are considered powerful and are often identified as the ruling elite.

Francis maintains that "all societies no matter their ideology or social structure are in fact ruled by a small group of individuals designated variously as political elite" (2011, 10). However, Zukerman (1977) argues that there are complexities involved in the interpretation of the concept of the political elite. He highlights the problem of recognising who the political elite are and the dynamics of their power influence within the political environment. Mills supports this assertion and identifies the elite as individuals whose interests are considered in political decisions in exchange for financial and non-financial resources in political campaigns. Furthermore, a state where religion or ethnicity is an influencing factor in the socio-political environment tends to identify influential religious or traditional leaders as part of the elite. This is currently captured in Nigeria's political environment. I acknowledge the diversification of the political elite and their differences in ideology in Nigeria (religious leaders, political leaders, traditional leaders, top government officials, and military leaders); however, I concentrate on two consistent ideals shared by the aforementioned groups: these are to access political power and to maintain control of political power.

Addressing Zukerman's observation on the dynamics of the political elite's influence within the political environment, Francis (2011) identifies the political elite as those who rule society, clearly recognising the impact of the political elite in shaping political behaviour in the state. This observation highlights the connection between political elite behaviour and its impact or influence in shaping the existing political culture. Key characteristics of any societies' political culture or behaviour are consequences of the characteristics of the political elite. Hence, the political elite not only have this power but apply this power in the political environment and by so doing shape the political culture. Higley (2010) identifies the political elite as members of the ruling class—people with large financial resources who influence those in power and are recognised by them. His identification of the political elite as members of the ruling class serves as the criteria for elite membership; thus, individuals identified as political elites are depicted as part of the ruling class. For this reason,

members of the political elites are composed of individuals within the ruling class—political, religious, or traditional rulers as portrayed within the Nigerian political environment. In addition, Kirfordu (2011, 27–28) argues that professionals or experts in specific fields might not be part of political elite networks in attaining and maintaining political power in the state. He maintains that there is a prevalent common political elite background in Nigeria. This background is indicative of "narrow interests perpetuated through informal networks for retaining political office positions and converting formal institutional roles to particular uses." This assertion is reflected in Nigeria where political elite structure relies on state resources (crude oil revenues) as a means for accessing political power and wealth.

I identify the political elite as powerful players who, although they may not belong to the same political network, share the same goals of exercising political power and the economic advantages of exercising power. I also investigate the impact of a tacit political elite culture on the incipient means and methods of social movements responding to the governance strategies of the political elite.

Elite political culture within context

Reisinger (1995) stresses the difficulty of defining political culture and argues that the presence of similar elements in the concept of political culture does not necessarily explain the behaviours and orientation of individuals and the mass of the population towards politics in a society. Hence, Rosenbaum (1975, 6) and Almond (2006) propose the need to clarify the core components attached to political culture to address the implications of political actors' behaviours and orientations in the political environment. Likewise, Welch (2013) argues that while political culture does not explain the behaviour of individuals, it nevertheless focuses on the political outcomes of political actors, or in the case of my study the outcome or consequences of political elite actions and decisions. As such in this book, definitions and interpretations of this concept will be aligned to an examination of political elite actions and impact on the emergence and sustenance of organised political violence in Nigeria.

Welch (2013, 2) claims that, despite the diversity of approaches taken by scholars in the area of political culture, there seem to be a broad agreement to its impact on a state's political environment. Reisinger (1995, 2) describes political culture as "referring to the cross-national study of values" within a state that is "a key component of the entire political system." Political culture depicts the way each aspect of culture, including ethnicity, belief systems, and ideology, and significantly the representatives

of these subcultures, can affect or influence political behaviour at all levels of the state. In the same vein, Almond (2006) argues that political culture is the product of a "collective history" of the political system and individuals involved in the political system, rooted in the behaviour, values, and interests of the political actors. I agree with Almond, ultimately finding that political-elite values and actions shape or influence elite political culture, which affects the approach to governance and the population's response to governance outcomes. Furthermore, on the basis of my observation of the Nigerian political environment, I note Diamond's (1993, 8) argument that political culture focuses on elements of behaviour—that is, the behaviour of political actors (political elites), behaviour shaped by past events and cultural norms—and that the behaviour of political actors influencing governance policies is indicative of the political culture in Nigeria—for instance, that the religion, ethnicity, and personal interests of political actors shape and influence the selection and electoral campaigns of political leaders.

Almond and Verba, quoted in Chilton (1988), defined political culture as "a system of empirical beliefs, expressive symbols, and values which define the situations in which political actions take place." From their definition, I infer that the political actions of the political elite are inclined towards a consistent pattern of behaviour influenced by the personal interests and values of the elite. This is reflected in Nigeria's political history, where the behaviour of the political elite is the same in cases of electoral campaigns and in the approach to state governance. As such, collective and individual attitudes towards politics are expected to impact on the trends of political culture exhibited in the Nigerian political environment. Therefore, the political elite's approach to governance is strongly influenced by the values attached to the governance process consequent on the elite's understanding of access to state power. Baba (2015) has also argued that elite political culture is the driver behind the approach to governance of the political elite, which itself is the main reason for the establishment of social movements. I maintain that the political elite's approach to state governance, resulting in misgovernance, and the response of the population to this misgovernance, lies at the heart of the overarching argument. It is the wider population's "knowledge and beliefs about politics and feelings with respect to politics" (Almond 1990, 144) that gives rise to the social discontent and the formation of social movements. That section of the population that decides to rely on ethnic, religious, ideological, or social ties, by supporting social movements, as a means of communication with the governing authority, is a recognisable response exploited by the political elite. This pattern of behaviour is equally

reminiscent of the elite's behaviour in relation to political campaigns and patronage networks. Notably, the political elite's tacit consent to access to and maintaining of power either through violent or non-violent means is made possible by the support of existing sub-groups within the state. These sub-groups are in possession of different beliefs and values. The outcome is often the ultimate use of violence and the transformation of social movements into organised political violence groups.

Linking elite political culture to organised violence

Since Nigeria's independence in 1960, the country has a recorded history of political and electoral violence, which has persisted during both military and civilian regimes. Notable is the consistent calls for a move towards "good governance" to replace the misgovernance that has prevailed for much of the country's independent history. This is reflected in the frequent violent campaigns by organised groups in the state and the increased demand for good governance practices. The prevailing political violence is influenced by the decisions and behaviours of the political elite in relation to access to state power. I propose that the attitude towards governance by the political elite is grounded on identified elite political culture elements—zero sum politics, identity politics, and the politicisation of social cleavages—that have served as a catalyst for the emergence of organised political violence groups. These elements of the elite's political culture, shaped by decades of violence, ethnic and religious rivalries, low performance of the governing authority, politicisation of conflicts, and governance processes, have affected the approach to governance by the political elite.

Anazode, Uchenna, and Uche (2010) characterised Nigeria's history of ineffective state governance as a result of the prevailing political culture. Omodia (2011) referred to the negative perception of the government and its governance process by the populace as being the result of the interference of the political elite in governance processes. I contend that the Nigerian populace are involved in politics; their involvement in state politics is manifested in the emergence of social movement groups allied with political parties for political representation. The shortcomings of state governance have led to structural and institutional weakness and in response the establishment of social movement groups whose goals have been, at least ostensibly, to leverage change from the government at the state and federal level. However, the underlying elite political culture, as well as the elite's role in state governance, created an enabling environment that ensured alliances between these groups and interested members of the political elite. This line of thought is further explored in the next chapter.

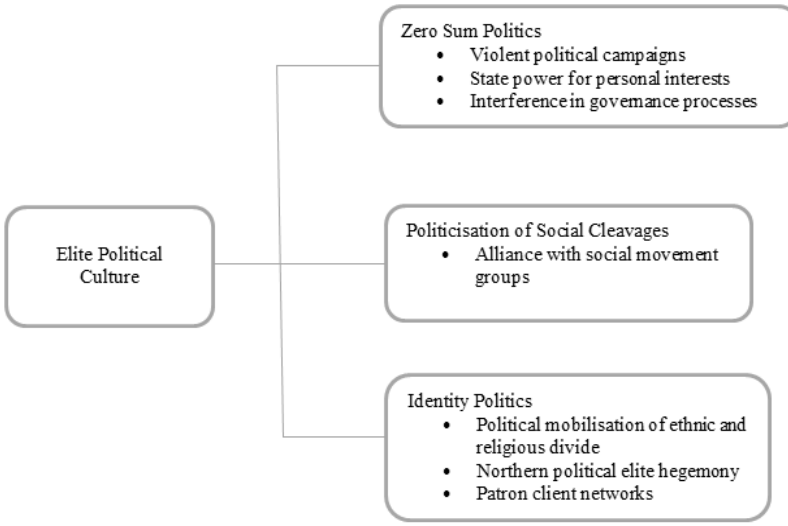

Figure 1.2. Key elements of elite political culture.
Source: The author (2018).

The political elite's attitude towards state governance, embedded in its political culture, has created space for organised political violence in Nigeria. Gurr asserts that, given prolonged extreme frustration with the government, people will eventually resort to violence (Gurr 1970, 24). Likewise, during an interview with me, Shola Omotola argues that:

> If you go through the history of Nigeria, you discover that any strategy outside violence in your engagement with the Nigerian state is like entering into a dialogue with the dead, because over the years successive governments have demonstrated their low appreciation for dialogue in resolving issues, until groups resort to violence in their demands, either legitimate or not, they hardly get any government attention and there are so many examples . . . (Interview, Omotola 2013)

Omotola's observation is reflected in the case of the Niger Delta crisis, where subsequent calls for socio-economic development through non-violent and administrative channels were ignored by the government. The implementation of violent strategies by Niger Delta social movement groups finally secured the attention of the government. The same was also reflected in the eastern and western parts of Nigeria, although the challenges were limited to insecurity and political inclusion, respectively. Another

crucial aspect is the impact of the existing culture of violence and zero-sum political elements of elite political culture. Okeke and Chukwuka (2005) assert that the influence of military rule affects the political orientation of the political elite. Mr S, a senior state security officer during an interview, supports this assertion:

> Under the military era there was no active involvement of the people, a lot of governance was done by fiat. There was no participation of the people . . . and where dissent was expressed it was forcefully put down. (Interview, Mr S 2014)

The presence of the same military elite in the current political system is significant, as is the impact of this elite's political values on state governance. Hence, despite the advent of civilian rule, elements of the military style of governance persisted. These elements include the dictatorial culture of the political elite, access to political power through violence, especially during elections, and a refusal to relinquish power as evidenced by the presence of retired military officers in key government positions. I interpret the above-mentioned details as values of the political elites. In particular, the military style of governance is reflected in the pervasive use of violence by the government to achieve its stated objectives or as an expression of communication. Key examples include the use of political thugs—which is a constant during elections at the different levels of state governance—and the wider use of violence to suppress dissent, for example, the 1999 Odi massacre during former president Olusegun Obasanjo's civilian administration, and the use of violence by social movement groups to influence government decisions or policies. In the same vein, Hayes and McAllister (2005) argue that the dependence on the use of violence by the governing authority ensures the survival of this phenomenon. Nigeria's history of political violence gives credence to this observation: the centrality of violence to elite political culture coupled with a record of unsatisfactory state governance creates the perfect scenario for the creation of an enabling environment for the emergence and sustenance of organised violent groups.

Elite political culture is linked to the high concentration of power at the executive level, the strong influence of religion and ethnicity instigated by the political elite in the political sphere, and the ideology of financial reward. Nigeria's political history records a high concentration of power at the executive level and this is a deliberate move by the political elite to maintain or control state power and by extension state resources. This is reflected in issues of limited political participation and the recycling of top government officials and leaders in the state. These contentions not

only highlight the values of the political elites but also indicates how these values shape the prevailing elite political culture. Hill (2012, 53) identifies this phenomenon as the precursor of conflicts and clashes between social groups. Hill's observation, while highlighting the dynamics of ethnic and religious conflicts as a result of political competition, draws attention to the negative outcome of Nigeria's current political system that concentrates power at the executive level meaning that decisions are taken at the executive level, a level wholly dominated by members of the political elite.

Furthermore, the influence of ethnicity and religion in the political sphere is fostered by the political elite's recognition of these social groups as tools for political mobilisation and, in some cases, political legitimacy. A senior state security officer in northern Nigeria, in response to the politicisation of religion for political mobilisation by the political elite states, states:

> There is a correlation between religion and politics and that is why we have problems dealing with violent groups . . . one of the things which has caused this violence is [that] there were certain political forces who were benefiting from this movement mandate. (Interview, Mr K 2013)

Mr S shares the same view as Mr K:

> people have always appropriated religious sentiments to further their political interests in this instance too, that was clear in the case of the alliance between [the] Borno state governor at that time and elements of Boko Haram. (Interview, Mr S 2014)

In effect, Nigeria's pre- and post-independence period records the entrenching of ethnic and religious divisions as a means to access or garner popular support by the elite. This pattern of political behaviour, whilst evident in other polities, has proven a reliable and egregious source of violence in Nigeria. Examples include the eruption of inter-ethnic clashes in periods leading to elections in the Niger Delta region and religious clashes in northern Nigeria during and shortly after the elections. In essence, the creation of an environment conducive to violence is made possible by the importance of violent coercion for elite political culture.

The ideology of reward-seeking as a synonymous part of exercising power is a core element of elite political culture. Various scholars and analysts, both domestic and international consistently highlight the predominant trait of corruption and lack of transparency in the governance process, fuelled by patronage networks. These observations are further validated by reports of missing funds and institutional challenges. As such,

the political elite's approach to state governance has resulted in a backlash given concrete form by the establishment of social movement groups. This observation is supported by Baba (2015), who asserts that the formation of social movement groups in Nigeria is a direct response to popular frustration. Likewise, the transformation of these social movement groups into organised political violence groups is catalysed by the adoption and manipulation of these groups' goals by the political elite.

Governance

Governance as a concept has shifted from the legitimate authority to administer state affairs to a more particular idea relating to perceived "goods" such as transparency, accountability, and efficiency. Hence, the ubiquity in policy papers of the phase "good governance" as an end that is often cited but is an ill-defined and contentious measure of whether these "goods" are actually delivered. I describe *governance* as the process, and *government* as the individual(s) legitimately authorised to direct that process at federal and state level. Accordingly, the process of governance is subjected to the government or the ruling authority in a state. Overlapping power relationships between the political elite and government lie at the heart of my argument.

The recent scholarly and practical preoccupation with the idea of governance has led to an extensive and diverse literature. Peters (2011) contends that governance "can be shaped to conform to the intellectual preference of the individual author." Therefore, the process of state governance varies from state to state. Different governments adopt, adapt, and formulate governance approaches suited to their respective needs or, in the case of this book, the needs of the political elite and government officials. As such, the governing authority develops an understanding and representation of governance dependent on its preconceived notions or the precedents of its governance processes. This indicates a pattern of governance behaviour that changes depending on the ruling authority and the political elite's perception of governance. Rhodes (1996) argues that, while governance is an administrative tool for the government, the process involved is not dependent on the government or ruling authority. He maintains that governance refers to "self-organizing, inter-organizational networks." The government is not necessarily involved in all aspects of the process but relies on networks, for example as part of the privatization and contracting of public services. In contrast, studies on governance by Fukuyama (2013), Peters (2011), and Mayntz (2001) identify governance as a tool used by the government for the administration of their affairs and

the extension of government to include non-state actors in state management. For the most part, the process of governance is not limited to the ruling authority but spans across networks comprising relational non-state actors whose interests in state affairs coincide with the government. In particular, the governance process in Nigeria is centred on the ruling authority. The inclusion of networks in this process is limited to the discretion of the political elite and their patronage networks.

Stoker (1998) defines governance as "ultimately concerned with creating the conditions for ordered rule and collective action." Stoker further observes that governance activities are concentrated on the development of institutions by the government and the inclusion of non-state actors in state governance, which is in line with the core premise of my argument that the nexus between political elite culture and the government has an impact on governance, which generates violence. For example, *Hisbah*—the Islamic police located in the northern majority Muslim states, a quasi-autonomous non-governmental agency—plays a contentious role in maintaining Islamic religious laws, but is also accused of provoking violence between the diverse religious communities in the areas in which it operates. Stoker's depiction of governance identifies a departure from the ruling authority being exclusively responsible for governance, and the inclusion of the private and non-governmental sectors in governance. However, Finer's (1970, 3–4) definition of governance confines governance to being the responsibility of the state: he defines governance as "a condition for ordered rule . . . those people charged with the duty of governing or governors." Both definitions highlight the element of "ordered rule." It follows that an environment conducive for ordered rule, in essence "national security" is an essential outcome of governance therefore giving consideration to national security. Stoker (1998) argues that state power, despite the blurring of lines between public and private sectors in the business of governance, is concentrated within the ruling authority or political elite. This corresponds with C. Wright Mills's study on the relationship between "special interest groups," analogous with "social movements" in Nigeria, and government in which he accepts that links exist between the two, but finds that government always maintain primacy in this relationship.

Fukuyama's (2013) definition of governance focuses on the additional element of "the performance of agents in carrying out the wishes of the principals." He identifies agents as the governing authority and principals as the citizens or electorates. Fukuyama is not concerned with the political system of governance, but rather concentrates on the outcomes of governance. That is, the quality of services and the process itself. Therefore, Fukuyama argues that governance, with inclusion or exclusion of non-state

actors, should be a balance of capacity and autonomy. Thus, the governance process should include professional bureaucratic staff with an expectation of positive outcomes and its existence should not be dependent on the particular political system practised by the state, specifically the inclusion of the political elite and their patronage networks as reflected in Nigeria.

Governance applied in this book is not focused on the legitimacy of the political system adopted or the merits of the combination of state and non-state actors in governance operations. It is focused on the actual outcomes of the governance process on the emergence and sustenance of organised political violence groups in Nigeria. Emphasis is placed on the government and the influence on governance of political-elite patronage networks and the resulting violence.

Political elite attitude towards governance in Nigeria

In 1999, state governance by the military, which had been the norm for much of the country's independent history, was replaced by civilian rule, prompting the anticipation of a more effective system of governance and a more substantive role for civil society and non-state actors. Good governance became the zeitgeist. This was a vital juncture for the political elite in Nigeria. The political elite, formerly consisting largely of uniformed officers, expanded to include not only former soldiers but also aspirant and proto-elite individuals from other sections of Nigerian society. The key priority at this juncture for would-be members of the elite was to put themselves in a position to exercise authority. Thus, a primary area for elite involvement was the manipulation of the electoral process. Rhodes (1996), Arowolo, and Aluko (2012) claim a link between zero-sum politics, the absence of "good governance," and political violence. This was the case during the period of military rule, when military rulers used violence to access and maintain power, consequently creating an environment where violence became a form of communication between the government and the populace. I maintain that the constant use of violence by the political elite and government officials at the local, state, and national level for political benefit has not only encouraged violence but also created a market, or an illicit industry, for organised political violence activities. In addition, this also shaped an elite political culture that depends or capitalises on violence for access to state power. This phenomenon is indicative of the role of political thuggery in federal and state elections, and is organised and encouraged by the political elite. Power is concentrated within this set of individuals, which negatively affect state governance. This departs markedly from "ordered rule": a key outcome of governance whereby

violence is only justifiable when it is used by the legitimate government for national security in the interest of the populace and not for the elite's personal interests.

Higley (2010, 161) highlights the difficulties in demonstrating the political elite's complicity in political violence in order to explain the prevalence of political instability and organised violence in states. However, he argues that disagreements within political elite networks can create an opening for violence. The political elite view political power as their right to wield; simultaneously, they depend on organised violent groups for support. This is reflected in Nigeria where rivalries between members of the political elite are invariably expressed through violence. Political parties, such as the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) have been recorded having alliances with organised violent groups to secure electoral victories or political objectives. Thus, the members of the political elite discovered that in stirring up popular discontent and social movements against, for example, rampant corruption, their own malpractice might be turned to their advantage with violent elements within these social movements co-opted to provide thugs to manipulate the electorate. Mr B, a senior security officer in northern Nigeria during an interview with me, argues:

> Organised violent groups who use terror acts like Boko Haram are as a result of an agitation against the elite, failure of government to meet the needs of the people . . . along the line, politicians found these groups as a conduit in fostering their ambitions. (Interview, Mr B, 2014)

Mr B's assertion is reflected in the political violence activities of the Bakassi Boys and Niger Delta Militants. I discuss in succeeding chapters how the elite co-opt specific community causes and their respective social movements, established as platforms to protest against misgovernance.

While Higley's view on the political elite's overwhelming influence on politics and governance downplays the power of the masses, Walker (1966) maintains that "citizens at large" do understand the governance process. Findings by Afrobarometer (2008, 2009, 2013) indicate that 80% of the Nigerian population understand the political system and know what to expect from the governance process. Moreover, a large percentage of the population expressed distrust of elected government officials at all levels. Correspondently, these negative conclusions are reflected in the establishment of social movements or groups whose activities are geared towards influencing governance policies to address these many complaints. Mr S observed that:

> With the advent of democracy in 1999, there was a feeling of freedom amongst the people who came out to express their dissatisfaction with the government and try to actualise their demand through the formation of social movement groups . . . it has been convenient for politicians to use those groups. (Interview, Mr S, 2014)

Specific examples of these movements include the Bakassi Boys, a vigilante group formed in response to widespread criminality, MEND (Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta), an umbrella group formed for the socio-economic emancipation of the Niger Delta region, and the Oodua's Peoples Congress, formed in response to the limited political participation of the Yoruba tribe at the national level. The political elite perception of governance is grounded on the existing system of political corruption. This observation is supported by Ikejiaku (2013), who argues that political elite complicity is a result of financial interests. Hence I contend that "incompetence" in state governance ensures high levels of political corruption consequently leading to high levels of poverty and insecurity. In essence, state governance should be shielded from political interference, and the need to maintain a high level of professionalism. The absence of accountability spurred populace discontent leading to the establishment of social movement groups prone to transmute into organised violent groups. In a discussion with Professor Oche of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, he states:

> I perceive [that] the Nigerian state is primarily controlled by an elite that is disconnected from the masses of the people that does not take cognisance of the basic needs of ordinary people . . . and when groups result to violent activities . . . it is actually a consequence of contradictions of governance stirred up by the political elite. (Interview, Oche, 2013)

Defining organised violence within context

Organised violence is dynamic in nature and no longer limited to interstate conflicts, civil war, or traditional methods of warfare. Kaldor's (2007, 2) new war theory, advanced in 1999, focuses on conflicts generated internally, conflicts linked to transnational dynamics, and claims to power on the basis of identity, including religion, and ethnicity. As such, changing patterns in organised violence are acknowledged and reflected in recent global terrorist activities. Not all scholars share Kaldor's view, for example Smith (2004) and Kalyvas (2001) argue that the basic causes of "new wars" remain unaltered. Notwithstanding, Snow (1996, 109) asserts that contemporary warfare *methods* and *tactics* are different. This observation is

reflected in current violent terror activities globally and in Nigeria, in particular.

Cockayne (2006) acknowledges changes in organised violence, citing the privatisation of organised violence and the declining monopoly of violence by the state as indicators. This is evident in the growing number of militias and violent groups fighting for, or against, the state. Recent examples of these sustained wars involving militias/terrorist groups include conflicts in Liberia, Libya, Sierra Leone, Mali, Somalia, and Nigeria. The diversity of organised violent activities ensures a consistent flow of policy and scholastic definitions. Different subjective and interpretative classifications are given to contextualise organised violence. An understanding of organised violence within the context of this study is dependent on an examination of the definitions of political violence and terrorism. This is because the terms *political violence* and *terrorism* are used interchangeably with *organised violence* in policy papers and scholarly literature in reference to violent activities and violent groups globally; nevertheless, the term *organised violence* is understood to be a broad term for violence perpetrated by a group of people ranging from armed robbery, rape, war, and electoral violence to terrorist activities. The identification of political violence and terrorism as variations of organised violence sums up the type of violent activity discussed in this book.

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (1996) defines organised violence as a form of violence committed by a group, government, or institution against persons or a group of people. This definition identifies the perpetrators of organised violence as a group, and not individuals, although motive is not implied. Intended victims are classified as more than one person or a group, a form of violence is labelled *public violence*. The notion that this violence is political in its motivation is implied. Clausewitz who contends that violence perpetrated by a group is the continuation of "political intercourse" shares this view. Moreover, the element of legitimacy is conspicuously absent, organised violence could either be a criminal offence or legitimate depending on the authority of the actors involved.

In Smith's (2004) study, organised violence is termed *armed conflict* and is described as "open, armed clashes between two or more centrally organised parties, with continuity between the clashes, in disputes about power over government and territory." Smith considers organised violence to include violence perpetrated to attain and sustain political power. Likewise, Shaw (2009) equates organised violence with political violence and terrorism, identifying political and social ideological themes as traits of the perpetrators of organised violence. Shaw asserts that