

**State Fragility and the Reign of Terror in Nigeria: A Case Study of Boko  
Haram Terrorism**

**Being a Research Paper submitted in fulfilment of the requirement  
for the degree of Master of Arts in Conflict Transformation and  
Peace Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

**By**

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## **DECLARATION**

I, Benjamin Maiangwa, hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work and that all sources have been accurately reported and acknowledged, and that this document has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university in order to obtain academic qualification.

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## DECLARATION BY SUPERVISOR

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Regular consultation took place between the student and I throughout the study. I advised the student to the best of my ability and approved the final document for submission to the School of Social Sciences' Higher Degrees Office for examination by the University appointed Examiners.

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## **DEDICATION**

In memory of all the victims of Boko Haram terrorism, and to all other individuals who, each in their own way, have worked tirelessly to restore peace in Nigeria

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## **Abstract**

The Nigerian Islamist militant sect, Boko Haram, has come to increasingly and menacingly occupy the headlines, triggered by waves of deadly bomb attacks strategically directed at a cross section of public spaces. With the attacks getting more sophisticated, coordinated and deadly, there are growing concerns about the fast deteriorating security situation in Nigeria and its potential implications for regional and global peace and stability. Given the heterogeneous nature of the Nigerian state and the dismal socioeconomic and political conditions in which many Nigerians live, this study explores the contextual factors that might have given rise to the emergence and radicalization of the Boko Haram sect. Informed by the state failure and the frustration and aggression theses, the study argues that Boko Haram terrorist campaign in Nigeria is primarily triggered by the failure of state policies, institutions, and governance in Nigeria, which translate into widespread failure of leadership, history of repressed military rule, endemic culture of corruption, continued economic challenges, pervasive poverty, crisis of Nigeria's nation-building project, the porosity of Nigeria's borders, the proliferation of illicit weapons, rampant unemployment, and underdevelopment in northern Nigeria. The resulting security condition is also exacerbated by the global waves of religious fundamentalism and revivalism, which explains the binding ideology and potential affiliation of radical Islamist groups across geographical borders.

In what follows, the study will use the qualitative method of data analysis to probe into the Boko Haram phenomenon. This will entail a rigorous review and assessment of journal articles, books, newspapers, and media reports on the phenomenon. Subsequently, the paper draws from the lessons of the non-violence thesis to conclude that a process of transition from a violent society to a non-violent one is needed to build a new and refreshing perspective to the existing pedagogy of violence in Nigeria. This transition will require the conscious effort of the Nigerian government to tackle the causal efficacy of the conditions of state failure in the country that predispose people to violence and make others vulnerable to its devastating consequences. It is hoped that when the conditions of state failure in Nigeria are properly isolated and addressed, the likelihood of the discontented, aggrieved, and frustrated youth of northern Nigeria gravitating towards terrorism as an option would be significantly reduced or even eliminated.

# Chapter One

## General Introduction and Background

### 1.1 Introduction

Nigeria is an interesting nation to consider when observing its circumstances, including the combination of its internal security problems; its political position in Africa; its position as an oil-rich economy; its culture of endemic corruption; its pervasive poverty; its underdeveloped infrastructures; its history of chronic ethno-religious violence and military coups; and its, nonetheless, growing importance to the global economy (Kinnan *et al*, 2011: 2). Further complicating the situation in Nigeria is its large human population and complex mix of ethnic and religious groups. It is this ethno-religious diversity coupled with the mix of politically salient identities and history of protracted conflicts and political instability that qualifies Nigeria as the most deeply divided state in Africa (Blanco-Mancilla, 2002).

Since attaining independence in 1960, Nigeria has had intense ethno-religious skirmishes resulting in substantial casualties with about 17,000 lives lost (Lewis, 2011: 1). The net effects of these pervasive violent incidences have been devastating to Nigeria's effort at sustainable development and national cohesion. When Nigeria made the all-important transition to civilian rule in 1999, it was highly anticipated both nationally and internationally that the transition would bring grist to the mill and pave the way for greater respect for human rights, socioeconomic recovery, national cohesion, civil participation, and democratic reforms (Ikelegbe, 2005: 76). Democracy was expected to drive the final nail in the coffin of a long history of military rule and its corollaries such as repression, brutality, intimidation, sycophancy and debauchery (Yagboaju, 2011: 95). Unfortunately, the grand utopian idealization of Nigeria's socioeconomic and political recovery in a new democratic era that so many hoped for was dashed by the political developments that followed its momentous return to democracy. After only about a year of democracy, several northern governors launched a systematic campaign for the recognition of the Sharia legal code in their states. For instance, the campaign

strategy of the former governor of Zamfara state, now Senator, Ahmed Sani Yerima, was founded on this ideological position, which explains his frantic quest to implement the Sharia law on October 27, 1999 as a cardinal aspect of his government. Eleven other northern states followed suit in the ensuing weeks and months. Expectedly, this definitive move angered non-Muslims who feared that recognizing or even implementing the Sharia law in religiously mixed states in northern Nigeria might eventually lead to the Islamization of Nigeria and their exclusion in the country's political affairs. To avert this possibility, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), an umbrella body for all Christians in Nigeria, issued a statement enjoining all Christians in the various states, whose governors are considering implementing the Sharia law, to protest against the move. The protestation to counteract the implementation of the Sharia law in Kaduna state was preceded by violent confrontations repeated sporadically between Christians and Muslims in the year 2000. These religious riots led to hundreds of fatalities and spread violent ripples to neighbouring states (Adebajo, 2008: 6).

However, it must be noted from the outset that issues of religious fundamentalism, revivalism, and intolerance in Nigeria have some historical antecedents. To be sure, post-independence Nigeria saw the rise of many extremist Islamist sects calling for Islamic reform and purification of their societies. Some of these radical sects include the Derika, the Izala, the Kaulu, the brotherhoods including the Tijjaniyya and the Qadiriya, the Shiite, the Muslim Brotherhood, the Ahmadiyya, and the Maistatsine sect. These Islamic movements were united by their denigration of the West and modernity, and were also ready to assert their authority in the Nigerian state, which they deemed to be corrupt and unresponsive to their legitimate needs. Thus, they were resolved to replace it with an Islamic state governed strictly on the basis of the Sharia law, which they adduced as a panacea to the failure of the country's leadership (Akyeampong, 2006: 299). This compulsively excessive demand for the implementation of the Sharia law, coupled with the dismal socioeconomic and political conditions in Nigeria, have spawned the rise of *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad* (Association for propagating the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad), popularly dubbed Boko Haram in Hausa, which means Western education is a sin/forbidden (Marshall, 2012).

The rise of Boko Haram since its July 2009 violent uprising has marked yet another phase in the recurring pattern that violent conflicts and religious intolerance and politicization have assumed in Nigeria (Adesoji, 2010: 96). Although the Boko Haram crisis was not the first violent attempt to impose the Islamic law in Nigeria, it nevertheless escalated and radicalized the efforts of Islamic expansion and revivalism in the country (Adesoji, 2010: 96). As its mundane name 'Boko Haram' implies, the sect is unwaveringly opposed to what it sees as an inversion and desecration of Islamic societies in Nigeria by Westerners through globalization. But as it will be argued in this study, the sect is largely a symptom of contemporary socioeconomic and political grievances in Nigeria, which along with some historical antecedents in Nigeria explains why its violent ideology appeals to the common people in the northern part of the country (Forest, 2012: 1). In this context, Boko Haram has been able to launch a menacing campaign of audacious and coordinated bomb attacks never before witnessed in Nigeria. Thus far, the sect has swiftly bombarded police stations, the United Nations Headquarters in Abuja, hotels, immigration offices, Churches, Mosques, media houses, schools, and other social places that it deemed to be incongruent in Islamic societies. These attacks have led to mass casualties and have earned Boko Haram a repugnant and notorious reputation both within and beyond Nigeria (Forest, 2012: 1).

Considering the enormity of the situation, the background to Boko Haram's emergence, radical evolution, nature, philosophy, ideology, and modus operandi, needs to be carefully examined in order to clearly understand its activities and proffer useful policy recommendations to curb its excesses. Situating the analysis within the frameworks of state failure and the frustration and aggression thesis, this study argues that Boko Haram terrorism is primarily triggered by the failure of state policies, institutions and governance in Nigeria, which has translated into bad governance, underdeveloped infrastructures, lack of national cohesion/ideology, an endemic culture of corruption, pervasive poverty, massive underdevelopment in northern Nigeria, continued economic challenges, and rampant unemployment. The situation is further exacerbated by the brutality of the security forces in Nigeria and their failure to handle cases of violence. Taking the situation as one of state failure and frustration and aggression is useful in unravelling the phenomenon; this is because the benefits of democracy in terms of welfare, social services and security delivery to the Nigerian citizens by their leaders have remained almost non-existent

in spite of thirteen years of uninterrupted democratic rule. Democracy has been erratic in Nigeria. Four decades of military coups and dictatorships have had an adverse impact on the state-citizen relationship that can only be overcome with time on the one hand and a concerted effort on the part of the government to build trust among the governed on the other. In the economic realm, the country's high reliance on oil revenues had led to a retreat from investment in the agricultural sector, with the north worst hit by the impact. Also, there has been a lack of adequate investments in infrastructure – especially in the nation's power grid, and in education – which has cast doubt on an aloof state leadership.

These are core issues that both animate and frustrate the populace, especially the members and sympathizers of Boko Haram who resort to terrorism for economic, religious, and political gains, and who have come to hold onto the idea that the Sharia law can be a desideratum for good governance in Nigeria. Given the heightened insecurity, wanton killings and damages to property caused by the bombings of Boko Haram, the question then becomes how Nigeria can accelerate its quest to silence Boko Haram and minimize the trauma that the sect has left in the wake of its attacks. To attend to this question, it is proposed in this study that the transition from a violent to a non-violent society is imperative. This can be achieved through a conscious effort on the part of the Nigerian government to alter the conditions of state failure by: curbing elite corruption; improving health, social, and public services; creating job opportunities; undertaking security sector reforms; furthering development in northern Nigeria; and controlling Nigeria's porous borders. To attend to all these issues, the study is structured into seven chapters.

The introductory chapter presents the problem statement, research questions, research methodology, and a note on the significance and limitation of the study. Chapter two will define the relevant concepts that will be used in the study and explain how these concepts relate to the research literature in the field of state failure and terrorism in Africa and Nigeria. In chapter three, the study will be situated in the context of the state failure and frustration and aggression frameworks of analysis. In this section, the theoretical insights of the non-violence thesis will also be unravelled. Chapter four will examine the historical context of violence in Nigeria. This history provides a context for the emergence and nature of the Nigerian state and identifies key

factors that have interwoven to create religious instability and the rise of Boko Haram. This is followed in chapter five with a discussion of key grievances that are shared by most Nigerians. These grievances include a broad range of domestic factors within Nigeria's extraordinarily complex social, political, and economic milieu, characterized by an equally complex demography that constitutes the fault lines for the rise and radicalization of the Boko Haram sect. Chapter six focuses on the ramifications of the Boko Haram phenomenon, including in this instance - its origins; philosophy; modus operandi; membership; leadership; sponsors; adversaries; terrorist activities; radical resurgence; and foreign linkages. Chapter seven examines the measures that have been experimented by the Nigerian government to counteract the Boko Haram reign of terror. The chapter also describes multiple paths of curbing terrorism, particularly from a perspective of non-violence.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The research problem for this study has been formulated thus: first, that although the phenomenon of Boko Haram has attracted much commentary and academic research in journal articles, newspaper reports, opinion papers and news broadcasts, there is still a dearth of sufficient scholarship and understanding of the issue due to the unavailability of a comprehensive study on the phenomenon, which is slowing the quest to silence the menace. Second, that the exponential rise of Boko Haram and its alarming and changing patterns of attacks, involving hyper-violence and suicide bombings on media houses, schools, police stations, places of worships, and public places are grim, not just for Nigeria's stability but also for global peace and security.

Given the challenges posed by Boko Haram and the lack of sufficient clarity and analysis on the issue, there is an urgent need to undertake a comprehensive study that will offer a broad analysis with the view to finding remedies to curb the mayhem. In response to this need, this study intends to provide a comprehensive analysis of the Boko Haram phenomenon with a view to proffering suggestions on how to better manage the crisis caused by the sect in Nigeria.



### **1.3 Objectives of the Study: Key Questions to be asked**

The general objective of the study is to contribute to the emerging scholarship on the Boko Haram phenomenon in order to generate sufficient data that will provide the basis for understanding the sect's terrorist activities. To achieve this general objective, the following specific tasks will have to be undertaken:

1. To theoretically determine existing evidence and analysis of the links between state failure, frustration and aggression and the Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria, and then distil this information to enable policy makers, researchers, academics, and the Nigerian government to better understand the activities of the sect in order to address the impasse more effectively.
2. To provide motivation for non-violence in the effort aimed at extinguishing Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria.

**Six questions flow from the above research objectives:**

#### **Primary Research Questions:**

1. What are the origins, modus operandi, and objectives of the Boko Haram phenomenon in Nigeria?
2. What factors are responsible for Boko Haram terrorism, and which ones are predominant?

#### **Secondary Research Questions:**

- a) Is Boko Haram linked to any foreign terrorist movements?
- b) What are the challenges militating against forestalling the Boko Haram terrorism?

c) What can be learned of the Boko Haram phenomenon and how can this learning impact on the effort to establish a non-violent society in Nigeria?

d) What kinds of non-violent approaches are required for Nigeria to tackle the Boko Haram terrorism?

#### **1.4 Research Methodology**

Research strategy as a whole includes, as Searle (1998: 3) notes, the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings and motivations for choosing between methods when undertaking a particular study. The main requirement for an effective research design is to discern the kind of evidence that is needed in order to adequately address the research questions, objectives, and problem statement. A research method used for a particular study must also inform the kind of study that needs to be undertaken (Mouton, 2008: 49). For the purposes of this study, the research method that will be employed is a qualitative method of data analysis by way of a case study analysis. A case study analysis is chosen in order to make the research design more specific, manageable, credible, focused, and practical. In addition, the choice of a case study method will afford the researcher the opportunity to identify substantial resource materials for the study. Unlike other methods, case study method examines the relationship among all variables in order to provide a thorough understanding of a situation as much as possible and avoid the fallacy of generalization (Aliyu, 2007: 42). The findings of a case study research such as this one, can also lead to the specialization of the area under investigation.

The case study for this research is the Boko Haram phenomenon. Taking into account the fact that the Boko Haram phenomenon is an emerging trend in Nigeria, the researcher will not be able to obtain sufficient primary information on the issue. Interviews with sect's members and people with knowledge of Boko Haram would have enriched the study, but due to the risk involved and the general unwillingness of terrorists or their sympathizers to provide any useful information about themselves, the data that will be used in this study will mainly be based on

secondary sources, although the researcher will endeavour to speak with victims and some eyewitnesses of the Boko Haram attacks in Kaduna state, where Boko Haram has consistently carried out attacks on places of worships and public structures.

Generally, this research project will rely on reports and studies in academic journals and newspapers, publications by both governmental and non-governmental organizations, magazines, and news commentaries on the issue. Historical books on sectarian and religious violence in Nigeria will also be used to cast light on the Boko Haram phenomenon. Websites and national and international organizations with useful information on the phenomenon will also be accessed in order to enhance the validity of the findings of the study. To this end, many international global documents on Boko Haram and Nigeria such as those provided by The Fund for Peace, State Failure Index, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, *inter alia*, will be accessed and analysed. Viewpoints will also be sought from individuals, eyewitnesses of Boko Haram attacks and academics. Unpublished materials, like research papers, will also be used. The collected data will then be analysed qualitatively and critically in order to yield the most needed credible findings on the Boko Haram phenomenon.

### **1.5 The Significance and Limitation of the Study**

The phenomenon of Boko Haram is increasingly becoming an important focus of attention within Nigeria, and in the global community owing to the severity and targets of its terrorist activities. In Nigeria, a detailed picture of the scope, intent, dimensions, and objectives of the phenomenon is lacking. In fact, since Boko Haram emerged in the Nigerian public space in 2002, there have been a dearth of comprehensive and focused reporting and analysis of the issue. According to Salkida (2012), a lack of accurate information in the media and among academics is one of the major problems hindering a decent understanding of Boko Haram's war with the Nigerian state. To respond to this dearth of research and focused reporting on the issue, this study will be geared at providing a robust understanding of the phenomenon's ramifications. Thus, the study will contribute to the theoretical exposition of understanding the relationship

between state failure, frustration and aggression, and the raging terrorist activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria. In doing this, the study will join the existing body of research on frustration and aggression, weak, fragile and failed states (Zartman 1995; Esty et al. 1998; Goldstone et al. 2000; Debiel and Klein 2002; Rotberg 2003; Miliken 2003; Howard 2008; Chesterman and Chandler, 2009) in order to outline a discrete set of indicators of state failure that lay down the conducive ambience for the sect to swiftly engage in terrorism across northern Nigeria.

Through the prism of the state failure and frustration and aggression theses, the findings of the study will reveal that most of Boko Haram attacks occur in the least developed states in northern Nigeria, such as Borno, Sokoto, Kano, Kaduna, and Adamawa. Most of the victims and perpetrators of Boko Haram terrorism are also from these underdeveloped parts of the country where the stakes for terrorism and violence are high, arising from the dismal socioeconomic conditions, but also the politicization of religion by sinister actors in the region. The significance of the study in this regard is that it broadens the scope of understanding the emergence of Boko Haram within Nigeria's dismal socioeconomic and political conditions. The study will also contribute to the research on Boko Haram by proffering the non-violence thesis as a remedial framework to the pedagogy of violence in Nigeria.

Nevertheless, doing research on a terrorist movement like the Boko Haram sect in Nigeria has its challenges. One of the main challenges has to do with the difficulty in discerning how to distil credible information about the sect from the array of available secondary sources. Another challenge is that the researcher will be unable to carry out interviews with the members of the sect that would have contributed to the originality of the study. But documents made available by the sect on the internet and Nigerian newspapers regarding its intent and objectives will be used to cover this lapse. Hopefully, the study will stimulate a more robust scholarship and intelligence collection of the sect's activities in Nigeria. It is hoped that it will start a fruitful conversation that will help both specialists, scholars, policy makers, and the Nigerian government to better understand the activities of Boko Haram with the view to addressing terrorism in the country.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Conceptualization and Literature Review**

The purpose of this chapter will be to delineate some relevant concepts that will help to better understand the Boko Haram phenomenon. These include the concept of the ‘state’, the concept of the Nigerian state, and the concept of terrorism. In addition, the chapter will review existing literature on violence and terrorism in Africa in order to glean from them the most credible and relevant scholarship on the subject, so as to fill the existing gap in the emerging literature on the Boko Haram phenomenon.

#### **2.1 The Concept of the State**

The phenomenon of the ‘state’, like many other political science concepts, has been a subject of intense controversy among scholars. The debates surrounding it involve a number of wide-ranging issues including its definition, essence, central functions, mechanisms of transformation, and its historical origins and contemporary settings (Demetriou, 2003: 107). While some – mainly from the statist-institutional school – conceive the state as an autonomous set of institutions and agent of domination in the society, others – mainly Marxists, as well as neo-Marxists and post-structuralists – view it as an “institutional encrustation of power relations that emerge from society” (Demetriou, 2003: 107). This power-loaded feature of the state is in sync with the definition offered by Max Weber (1946) who asserts that the state is the only human community with the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within the designated parameters in which the community belongs (cited in Metropolitiski, 2011: 1). Weber’s definition of the ‘state’ is the most widely used in contemporary and comparative politics. Thus, the word ‘state’ is used in a Weberian sense by Beblawi and Luciani (1987: 4) to describe “the overall social system subject to government or power, and the apparatus or organisation of government or power that exercises the monopoly of the legal use of violence.” In a similar vein, Yates

(1996: 14) defines the state as “the structure of power and authority that exercises the attributes of sovereignty within a given territory or country.”

Furthermore, the state has been defined as a political association with effective sovereignty over a geographical area. According to Lenin’s definition (1976: 9), the state is not a power forced on society from without. It is simply “a product of society at a certain stage of development.” Similarly, Ajayi (1997: 69) defines the state as a “well-defined geographical and sovereign territory with human population and government.” According to this definition, the state is essentially autonomous, and secures the obedience of its population through its authority and legitimacy. Historically, the most important and influential argument for the emergence of the state has been that advanced by Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679). Writing at the time of the English Civil War, Hobbes claims that people would lapse into a situation of endemic violent conflict which would guarantee no one even the most basic security. So appalling was this prospect that people would naturally sign a social contract that will secure their safety and well-being by electing a sovereign ruler to maintain some sense of political order and stability. Thus, from the perspectives of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau, the state can be seen as the product of a contract between the citizens and the government established to serve their interests and ensure their liberty (Ajayi, 1997: 69).

Given these features, a state is then expected to be effective on all counts: establish strong and effective institutions; control and defend its territory; have a stable, loyal, and cohesive population; exercise sovereign and legitimate power within its territory, possess the resources to ensure the well-being of its citizens, and enjoy the recognition and respect of other states as a *bonafide* member of the global community (Osaghae, 2007: 692). This aside, the monopoly of legitimate power that states exercise allows individuals to escape what Hobbes labelled the “war of every man [sic] against every man” (cited in Fukuyama, 2004: 1; Uzodike and Maiangwa, 2012: 96). However, the same coercive power that allows states to protect property rights and provide public safety also allows them to “confiscate private property and abuse the rights of their citizens” (Fukuyama, 2004: 1). In this event, the social contract between the state and its

citizens is affected and in some cases the state is challenged by competing groups and internal pressures such as riots, bombings, protest, militancy (The Fund For Peace, 2012). In circumstances when the legitimacy of the state have been substantially compromised, Maley (2003: 163) argues that complex remedial policies are often needed to stir the delicate process of reconstituting political order in the state in question.

This study is mainly concerned with the African state - which some authors argue was never properly institutionalized - because it was never properly emancipated from colonization (Chabal and Daloz, 1999). As such, “its formal structure ill-manages to conceal the patrimonial and particularistic nature of power” (Chabal and Daloz, 1999: 3; Uzodike and Maiangwa, 2012: 96). This explains why African regimes are often described as “neopatrimonial,” so called because patronage-based clientelistic networks operate behind the rational-legal façade of statehood (Clapham, 1982). The net effect is that “the line between the private and public spheres is so blurred that notions of the public good and of independent civil society are ultimately absent” (Engelbert and Tull, 2008: 117; Uzodike and Maiangwa, 2012: 97).

In a neo-patrimonial state system, rule of law is feebly enforced and the state’s ability to implement public policy is weak. According to Lewis (1996: 99), “the personal prerogatives of the ruler typically eclipse the authority of laws and organisations, fostering weak and unstable institutions.” In some instances, as with the regimes of Sani Abacha of Nigeria and Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, neo-patrimonial systems stimulate what Evans (1989: 569) calls ‘predatory behaviour’, where one individual simply corners the bulk of a given society’s resources. In others, it merely amounts to rent-seeking activities— which describes the use of public resources to reallocate property rights for individual gain (Fukuyama, 2004: 16). Similarly, Sarah Berry (1989: 47) argues that state power in Africa is also used “to manipulate the rules of access to land, labour and capital by influencing legislation, administrative practices or the outcomes of judicial procedures” (Berry, 1989: 47). Time and again, accountability and probity in state’s finance are sacrificed on the altar of increasing budget demands of patronage politics (Lewis, 1996: 100).

Nigeria fits quite nicely into the foregoing description of states in Africa. In recent times, where the legitimacy of the Nigerian state is being challenged by minority groups, militants, sectarian violence, and the Boko Haram terrorism, it would also be crucial to examine the emergence of the Nigerian state and the key factors that have made it vulnerable to Boko Haram attacks.

## **2.2 The Nigerian State**

The history of the emergence of the Nigerian state is far too complex to provide a comprehensive summary here. For the purposes of this study, only its brief history will be reviewed, emphasizing political events which contribute to the high stakes of violence in the state and the fragile relationship between the Nigerian people and their government. The political entity known today as Nigeria was created through happenstance and colonial policies. One of such policies was the Lord Lugard's amalgamation policy of 1914. This policy was seen more as a 'marriage of coincidence' because it arbitrarily unified people of different ethnic, political, religious, and regional affiliations without paying cognizance to their age-old differences and grievances (Abdullahi and Arazeem, 2007: 28). Thus at independence, Ilesanmi (1997: 111) notes that the "historical memory of these people was limited only to the common experience of a single colonial ruler and their collective struggle for independence." This policy of colonial state formation in Nigeria was to make the establishment of harmonious citizenry extremely difficult in the post-independence years (Alao, 1999: 84).

Although post-independence Nigerian leaders recognized the potential crisis created by colonialism, they nevertheless failed to re-do the colonial boundaries, instead, they perpetuated themselves in power and exploited the primordial allegiances of their people (Alao, 1999: 85). Many Nigerians, for instance, found that colonial rule had simply been replaced by politicians' rule. Indeed, in the years following the lowering of the Union Flag in 1960, politics in Nigeria became the focus of resentment as it was identified with the corrupt and blatant enrichment of



the few at the expense of the many (Williams and Turner, 1978: 152). Such kind of national weakness, argues Fanon (1963: 118), owes both to the intellectual laziness of the Nigerian leaders and of the “profoundly cosmopolitan mould that its mind is set in” (Fanon, 1963: 118). The net effect has been the derailment of the prospect of national cohesion in Africa’s most populous and divided society.

It is no wonder that in recent times, there still remains widespread suspicion among Nigerian citizens toward their government, particularly because of the accumulated depredations of preceding rulers, manifested in the endemic extent of elite corruption, derelict public institutions, and political and sectarian instability (Lewis, 2006: 91). All these peculiar characteristics of the Nigerian state are quite important in appreciating the problem of state fragility in the country, especially from the leadership perspective. Grievances resulting from bad leadership lead many Nigerians to put their faith in unconventional governance, and rebel against a system of central governance that they view as grossly ineffectual (Forest, 2012: 30). Such leadership lapses, coupled with its inherited colonial features, have reduced Nigeria to a fragile state. In this context, Boko Haram has emerged, posing as *deus ex machina* to many of its impoverished members, promising them a better life in this world and in the hereafter.

### **2.3 Conceptualizing Terrorism**

The emergence of the concept of ‘terrorism’ could be traced back to the period when Jewish zealots resisted Roman oppression with extreme violence by executing many Roman soldiers and vandalizing their property. The phenomenon could also be located in the medieval era during the ideological war between the two main Muslim sects – Shiites and the Sunnis.<sup>1</sup> It was a period in the religious circle when dying in the name of God by eliminating the so-called enemies of God was perceived to be the noblest and most justified religious obligation (Bagaji and Etila *et al.*

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<sup>1</sup>The Sunni and the Shiites are the earliest known sects in Islam. Whereas the Sunnis believe in integrating religion and the state by adopting religious law into state structures, the Shiites seek to purify Islam from the corruption and ungodly practices of modern society (Danjibo, 2009: 5).

2012: 36; Rapport 1984). In terms of the modern development of terrorism as a political strategy, the French Revolution (1789) presents an exemplary model. During this period, Maximilien Robespierre, who was regarded as the most instrumental figure of the Revolution, introduced government-sponsored terrorism in order to maintain power, by suppressing his opposition and silencing his critics (Bagaji and Etila *et al*, 2012: 36; Hoffman, 1998). Another example where a political authority used terror to suppress the opposition was in the Soviet Revolution in 1917, during which Lenin and Stalin employed government-sponsored terrorism to safeguard and maintain full government control of the state against their opposition. These dictators systematically used the act of terrorism to oppress and instil fear in their people and created a tensed atmosphere in their societies (Bagaji and Etila *et al*, 2012: 36).

Despite its wider usefulness both as a theoretical political concept and as a political strategy, there still exists no consistent and widely held definition of either what constitutes ‘terrorism’ or at least, a sense of who an actual ‘terrorist’ is. This dearth of conceptual clarity can be attributed to various reasons. First, throughout Western political thought, Hübschle (2006: 2) contends that terrorism “has been associated with many forms of political violence, including repressive government brutality, armed rebel attacks, kidnappings, guerrilla warfare, suicide bombings, political assassinations, and hijacking.” Thus, it is particularly difficult to distinguish terrorism *per se* from other acts of political violence such as guerrilla warfare, armed rebel attacks, insurgency, or militancy. The conceptual difficulty is further compounded when acts like air piracy and assassinations are considered as terrorist acts.

The lack of a conceptual clarity on terrorism can also be blamed on the fact that most terrorists do not label their acts as terrorism. In fact, some justify their violent acts as means of achieving a ‘just cause’.<sup>2</sup> Such people use terms that encapsulate their ideological struggle such as freedom

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<sup>2</sup> The Postmodern Linguist, Ferdinand De Saussure, has argued that ‘meaning’ is something that is arbitrarily given to a person or an object. Thus, according to him, the concept of a ‘terrorist’ is merely a perception imposed on someone by people rather than actually describing what the person does (Desbruslais, 2009: 19). In this context,

fighters, separatist movements, activists, Jihadists, guerrillas, or revolutionaries (Bagaji & Etila *et al.* 2012: 36). Hence, on a conceptual level, a lack of consensus and clarification on the concept of ‘terrorism’ has been a challenge in international and comparative political studies. Due to this challenge, Christopher Hitchens dubs ‘terrorism’ “a cliché in search of a meaning” (cited in Kennedy, 1999: 4).

Although it is still being negotiated, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1566 of 8 October 2004 attempted a working definition of terrorism as:

Criminal and violent acts, including those against civilians, committed with the intent to cause death or serious harm, or taking of hostages, with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any acts, which constitute offenses within the scope of and as defined in the international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism (cited in Roberts, 2006: 102).

The foregoing working definition of terrorism will be adopted in this study because it encompasses some crucial elements of terrorism as variously defined (see for example Schmid, 1988; Robert, 2006). Some of these elements of terrorism include the threat of violence, violent acts that contravene national laws, a political motive, a legitimizing ideology (Roberts, 2006: 103), and the use of firearms, explosives and other sophisticated lethal devices to stir chaos, cause devastations, and intimidate civilians or government into submission. It is possible to draw a distinction between these acts of terrorism and other types of violence such as guerrilla warfare, air piracy or armed resistance (Roberts, 2006: 103). Although the definition given by the United Nations Security Council of terrorism does not explicitly refer to state or non-state groups, reference to both forms of terrorism is implicit in the UN definition and merits an analysis here.

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some people who believe that their violent activities toward the state or civilians are geared toward achieving some particular good, will readily subscribe to De Saussure’s idea of ‘meaning’.

State terrorism is an act of violence that is unleashed by a particular state on its opposition or some fractions of the state in order to maintain full government control of that particular state or to keep the opposition at bay. State terrorism can take the form of abduction, kidnapping, intimidation, and selective political assassination, and it is usually a feature of military regimes and one-party system of government (Bagaji and Etila *et al*, 2012: 37). Some striking illustrations include the Nazi regime's ethnic cleansing carried out against the Jewish population between 1939 and 1945, the Stalinist elimination of the peasant class of the Kulaks in Ukraine that led to the death of millions of civilians, and the repressive military regimes, and selective assassination of political rivals and human rights activists by former Heads of State Generals Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1993) and late Sani Abacha (1993-1998) of Nigeria (Bagaji and Etila *et al*, 2012: 37).

Non-state terrorism is usually carried out by aggrieved citizens who either feel excluded or alienated from their states. These individuals are contemptuous and weary of their state's policies and practices and often challenge its authority and legitimacy to rule using a variety of means, including, but not limited to terrorism. Non-state terrorists usually join forces with like-minded groups elsewhere. A good example of non-state terrorism in Nigeria was the Maitatsine violent movement of the 1980s and the perennial Boko Haram terrorism. Some of the factors that precipitate non-state terrorism are frustration and aggression, relative deprivation, greed and grievance and state failure. It could also be as a result of religious politicization and extremism (Bagaji and Etila *et al*., 2012: 37).

There is also another dimension of terrorism called transnational terrorism. Transnational terrorism cuts across national boundaries and is often a result of the cooperation and strategic coherence of non-state actors. A prime example of this kind of terrorism is that perpetrated by the Al-Qaeda terrorist network. Whereas non-state terrorism at the national or territorial level is easily identified and to a certain extent, addressed - in the case of transnational terrorism, it is somewhat difficult to scrutinize *dramatis personae* or to resolve the issue to a satisfactory degree without the cooperation and collaboration of other actors within the regional and international

system. This is because transnational terrorism involves an army of actors across national and geographic boundaries (Bagaji and Etila *et al*, 2012: 37).

Furthermore, there are many different kinds of contexts in which terrorism occurs (Forest, 2012: 4). Within each context there are varieties of conditions which create grievances that prompt violent activity by a terrorist group and its supporters. For instance, pervasive poverty, rampant unemployment, illiteracy, underdeveloped infrastructures and security apparatus are all obvious in Nigeria, but especially so in the northeast region where the activities of Boko Haram are prevalent. Moreover, Nigeria's colonial history, coupled with the pitfalls of her nationalists, and history of military coups and civil war have dealt a *coup de grâce* to the country's effort at sustainable development and national cohesion, thereby opening the space for the exponential growth and radicalization of the Boko Haram sect. Taking into consideration the United Nations adopted definition of terrorism provided above, which appears to clearly explain the modus operandi, intent, and ideological underpinnings of Boko Haram, the following sub-section will explore the literature on the history of terrorism in Africa and Nigeria in order to properly situate the Boko Haram phenomenon within the theoretical frameworks of state failure and frustration and aggression.

## **2.4 Literature Review**

### **2.4.1 The State Failure Argument**

Given the rise in the number of failed and failing states – particularly in Africa – scores of books, articles and reports published in the last two decades have usefully underscored the link between failed states and terrorism. By this, it has been substantially argued that the conditions of state failure such as political tyranny, loss of state legitimacy, bad governance, etc. predispose people to acts of terrorism and also create the conducive ambience for terrorist activities. Thus, according to Jackson (2007: 587), the incompetence and venality that have been the hallmark of many postcolonial African governments are partly the cause of the terrorist activities and violence enveloping the continent (Jackson, 2007: 587). On this note, Fanon (1963) argues that

Africa's experience after the liberation struggle shows that the corruption, brutality, and mismanagement exhibited by its leaders subjected the people to severe hardship, and in some cases, a lack of social transformation for the people resulted in some turning to terrorism (Ukiwo, 2003: 118).

#### **2.4.2 The Tyranny of African Leaders**

Indeed, the repressive regimes of some African leaders might have given rise to the situation where some of their citizens have embraced terrorism as an option and tactic for survival. Innumerable examples of despotic leaders in Africa include Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, Idi Amin of Uganda, Jean-Bédél Bokassa of the Central African Republic, Macias Nguema of Equatorial Guinea, Mengitsu Haile Mariam of Ethiopia, Charles Taylor of Liberia, Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha of Nigeria. Some armed opposition groups arising from despotic leadership resulted in the collapse of central authority in some countries like Somalia and Liberia (Vogt, 1999: 300). Similarly, in Sierra Leone, where the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) led by Fode Leone, carried out an extensive guerrilla war, the central authority of the country was severely challenged and a large number of the rural population were also displaced. Analogously, the Tuareg rebellion in Mali totally handicapped activities in many part of the country until a negotiated and a disarmament program was carried out by the international community (Vogt, 1999: 300). However, since the beginning of 2012 when the country witnessed a failed military coup, the northern part of Mali has once again fallen under the weight of religious insurgents.

#### **2.4.3 Anti-Colonialists Movement**

There are also examples of revolutionary non-state actors who employ terrorist tactics as part of their modus operandi. Some of these groups include the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in Algeria, the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) in Eritrea, and the armed wing of the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa under Apartheid (Forest and Giroux, 2011: 7). While some of these movements emerged in response to autocratic regimes or in some democracies, to the dominance of one ethnic or religious group over another, especially when issues of revenue and resource allocation are involved, others emerged in response to foreign occupation of their land. Examples of the latter groups include, the armed wing of the African National Congress (ANC)

in South Africa under Apartheid, the *mau mau* movement in Kenya, and the Irish Republican Army's (IRA's) resistance to British occupation of Ireland (Roberts, 2006: 106). The violent activities of these groups were geared at securing political power from the colonialist or forcing them to the negotiating table (Bolaji, 2010: 211).

#### **2.4.4 Anti-Globalization Movements**

Moving further, some contemporary and historical scholarship on terrorism in post-colonial Africa have also highlighted with particular interest the role of globalization in creating fertile spaces for conflicts and terrorism in Africa (UNRISD 1995; Osaghae 2005). These include the global context of Africa's integration into and location within the world capitalist system, the consequences of the slave trade, and the effects of Islamic intrusion in Africa (Osaghae, 2003: 28). The devastation caused by the slave trade for instance, was followed by the exploitation of colonialism, which subsequently paved the way for neo-colonialism and all its attendant consequences (Alao, 1999: 84). The link between terrorism and these globalizing factors are yet to be thoroughly investigated. Furthermore, Ayinde (2010: 64) argues that globalization is the "unexplored terrain of terror in Africa in which, as a result of Western influence, African values and traditional practices are gradually but progressively being overlooked."

Similarly, Juergensmeyer (2004) attributes some of the violent assaults on public and international order to the enthronement of an oppressive economic global order. According to him, this trend fuelled the growth of groups which appear to be violent terrorist sects but which, in principle, are actually anti-globalization guerrillas. According to Castells (1997), globalization furthered the advancement of an Islamic ideology that seeks a return to the Prophetic era and the unit of Muslims in the world. He believes that this violent trend is a 'defensive reaction' to the contradictions that accompany a neo-liberal world of globalization. He sees the root causes of fundamentalism in the Muslim world as an outcome of the 'failure of economic modernization in the 1970s and 1980s that 'could not adapt to the new conditions of global competition and technological revolution.' As a result, new social and religious movements are emerging as agents of anti-globalization, employing different violent techniques to challenge the so-called oppressive global system. Among these movements are the Zapatistas of Mexico; the Aum Shinrikyo of Japan and the American militia. To the

extent that Boko Haram claims to be fighting Western civilization, it can also be considered as an anti-globalization movement. But as it will be argued subsequently in the study, the forces of globalization do not fully encapsulate the phenomenon of Boko Haram and its radicalization into a notorious terrorist group in Nigeria.

#### **2.4.5 Islamic Extremism**

Since the mid-1970s, there has been an upsurge of Islamic fundamentalism in Nigeria, which is based on a puritanical, 'return-to-source' approach aimed to save Islam from syncretistic and reputedly “un-Islamic” practices. Some of these radical religious sects openly preach the Wahhabi brand of Islam, which is a kind of “stripped-down Islam that hates pretentious spirituality and that began less than two centuries ago and is violent, intolerant, and fanatical” (Mamdani, 2004: 220; Akomolafe, 2006: 23). This rapid rise of religious fundamentalism seems related to the political aspirations of certain members of the global Muslim Umma (community) to implement an Islamic theocracy in various parts of the globe. This phase, which began in the late 1970s with the Iranian revolution, saw the rise of extreme religious groups such as the Yan Izala, the Muslim Brotherhood, the Muslim Student Society (MSS); the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN); the Dawa group, and several other Islamic splinter groups (Adesoji, 2010: 4). Most of these groups are considered by many outside observers as part of the global rise of militancy in the Muslim world, which remain committed to Islamic religious purity and anti-democratic/capitalist/Westernized objectives (Forest, 2012: 76). It is partly due to the foregoing reason that the explanation of terrorism is often associated with some form of Islamic extremism, especially since the terrorist events of 9/11, when some Western governments have found the need to distinguish between “good Muslims and bad Muslims so as to cultivate the former and target the latter” (Mamdani, 2004: 253).

While it is true that puritanical tendency, whether in Christianity or Islam, creates new political actors who battle for the control of theological spaces in their countries, Ali (2002: 1), argues that such kind of attitude and its resulting tragedies is “conditioned by its setting, local and global”. Locally in Nigeria, this tendency was fuelled as a result of the socio-economic destabilizations coupled with the effects of the centralization of power that has led to many



feeling both marginal and impotent in the face of state dominance (Haynes, 1996: 169). It must be noted though that it is wrong to assume that only poor and disoriented people join syncretistic spiritualist groups. Such religious groups attract followers from all walks of life, including the middle classes and the politico-economic elite, “although it may be necessary for the latter to be secret members” (Haynes, 1996: 174). However, despite the waves of political Islam, the socio-economic conditions of people and the political tensions occasioned by sinister actors who are competing for power and resources are of fundamental importance in understanding the rise of religious groups. The same factors are of great analytical value when thinking about the rise of Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria.

#### **2.4.6 State Fragility in Nigeria**

While many in the West view terrorism as a symptom of Islamic radicalism, Ajayi (2011) argues that terrorism is precipitated by a complex web of issues, and that in Africa the roots of the problem lie in bad governance and religious politicization. This school of thought is corroborated by Ifeka’s contention that the primary cause of the unending cycle of violence which nourishes terrorism is not religion *per se*, but the failure of governance, which accounts for sub-altern resistance and reliance on violent repression (Ifeka, 2010: 45).

The foregoing informs the assertion of Alabo-George (2012) that greed and the lust for power by the Fulani aristocrats and political elites of the north of Nigeria are responsible for the situation in that region of crushing poverty and unemployment. This is to be sure, but the content of Alabo-George’s argument would seem to suggest that southern politicians are somehow different from their northern counterparts. To avoid such lopsided argument, it will be useful to fault the general failure of governance in Nigeria as the root factor instigating the surge of Boko Haram terrorism and instability in Nigeria. The foregoing claim is reinforced by the 2008 Global Trend Report which observes that the forces of violence and terror are likely to be preponderant and virulent in those countries that are likely to struggle with high populations of youth<sup>3</sup> and weak

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<sup>3</sup> Studies suggest that countries like Nigeria with a high ratio of males to females, and with young men constituting a large fraction of the population, are significantly more vulnerable to political instability of all kinds (Stern, 2003:

socioeconomic and political institutions. Examples of such countries at present are Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, Somalia and Nigeria (Global Trend, 2008: ix).

This study will thus be mainly situated within the literature of state failure as it pertains to the failings of the Nigerian state, whose post-independence prospects of achieving greatness and of becoming an economic powerhouse in Africa is faltering (Ikelegbe, 2005: 71). Although the study will focus mainly on the state failure-cum-frustration and aggression and terrorism nexus to explain the Boko Haram reign of terror in Nigeria, several other explanations for the rise of the sect have been provided and are worth exploring here. While some of the explanations arise from news briefings, newspaper reports, and commentaries on the issue, others are based on conspiracy theories, while others corroborate the thesis of this study.

One explanation for the rise of Boko Haram has it that the threat posed by Boko Haram is real and devastating, but as it is, the sect's activities are the handiworks of outsiders who are keen at Balkanizing Nigeria in order to taint its reputation (Duff, 2011). Other such confusing ideas of academics on Boko Haram abound (Mustapha, 2012). To cite three opposing examples, Professor Jean Herskovits trivialized the existence of an ideological and coordinated terrorist group called Boko Haram and argues that the sect was summarily eliminated in its July 2009 violent clashes with the police. According to her, what is now labelled as Boko Haram is only but the disjointed activities of criminal gangs (Herskovits, 2012). The Economist of London also suggests that Boko Haram sect represents the attempt by disenfranchised youths in northern Nigeria to demand for the same sort of amnesty funding and opportunities given to the Niger-Delta militants by the late President Umaru Yar'adua's administration (Mustapha, 2012). In southern Nigeria, the prevailing view is that Boko Haram is the proxy of northern politicians who are geared towards discrediting the government of a southern President (Mustapha, 2012).

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284). Nevertheless, the mere existence of a high ratio of males in Nigeria does not justify the scale of violence across the region. Young men can only resort to violence when they lack the most basic necessities of life like education, employment opportunities, and security. The absence of these essential political and social goods for many young men in northern Nigeria has made them restive and easy to be manipulated to fight wars.

Some Nigerian authors like Adesoji (2010) cites religious sensitivity as fuelling the Boko Haram violence, but adds that prevailing socioeconomic dislocations, party politics, and the ambivalence of some vocal Islamic demagogues are all contributing factors that are fuelling the menace.

Although Duff acknowledges the existence of Boko Haram, he fails to adduce any evidence to support his claim that Boko Haram is actually the proxy of outside powers. Herskovits also seems to be oblivious of the fact that Boko Haram has been claiming responsibility for several attacks since the July 2009 violent uprising. Of course her assertion that some criminals might be cashing in on the mayhem is valid, but the consistency and pattern of the terrorist attacks being witnessed almost on a daily basis in Nigeria point to the existence of an organized terrorist group. Adesoji on his part identifies the salience of religious ideology in motivating Boko Haram to fight. What he fails to make clear is how some illiterate and mischievous religious leaders play on the ignorance of their followers by convincing them into believing that they are fulfilling a religious duty by killing so-called 'non-believers' in the name of God.

While the foregoing analyses are important in understanding some dimensions of the Boko Haram phenomenon, it will be important to develop a robust analysis of the issue. Thus, it seems useful based on the preceding arguments of (Ikelegbe, 2005; Global Trend 2008; Ikeka 2010; and Adesoji, 2010), to link Boko Haram terrorism to certain conditions of state failure in the Nigerian society, which cause frustration and make some of the citizens to rebel against a state they deem to be illegitimate and inconsiderate to their needs. This position is reinforced by Haruna's (2011) contention that the problem with Nigeria is rooted in the ineptitude and the corruption of Nigeria's leaders at virtually all levels of the society, which constitute the fundamental conditions of state failure that have stoked up the terrorism of Boko Haram.

Commenting on the issue, Ahmad Sakilda, a Nigerian journalist who is known to have had direct contact with Boko Haram, argues that the emergence of Boko Haram and their insistence on the

full implementation of the Sharia law in Nigeria owes to the growing disappointment by the sect that the application of Sharia by some northern states in 2001 failed to address issues of bad governance, poverty, unemployment, injustices, and corruption (cited in Rice, 2012). Sakilda adds that if there had been a corruption-free environment and the absence of bad governance in Nigeria, Boko Haram would have been unable to take root and blossom the way it does (cited in Rice, 2012). It is for this reason that Aghedo and Osumah (2012: 861) argue that the terrorism of Boko Haram largely relates to the depth of feeling about socioeconomic injustice, marginalisation and human insecurity experienced by many Nigerians.

Onuoha (2011: 65) also concurs with the state failure argument by asserting that the terrorism of Boko Haram is a crisis that reflects the weakness of the Nigerian state. Indeed, so explosive is the weakness of the Nigerian state that the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Mohammed Sa'ad Abubakar III lamented, with particular reference to the Boko Haram crisis in northern Nigeria, that the crux of the crisis subsist in the pervasive poverty and underdevelopment of the region, which could be easily exploited to cause mayhem. According to the Sultan, the Boko Haram crisis is more than anything else, a symptom of socioeconomic deterioration rather than an outcome of religion (Duodu, 2012). Given this, the litany of social damages that result from state failure and frustration and aggression in Nigeria will be the lenses through which the Boko Haram terrorism will be viewed in this study. This study contends that without understanding the failure of the Nigerian state to discharge its obligations and live up to its potentials, it will be difficult to grasp the sense of hopelessness, despair, frustration, aggression, and grievance associated with the destructive acts of most terrorists, especially the unemployed, aggrieved citizens, and the have-nots in northern Nigeria where Boko Haram terrorist activities have been most prevalent.

Next, the study will attempt to develop a framework, which draws from the foregoing conceptualization and literature review, for a proper contextualization and understanding of the Boko Haram phenomenon by linking the notions of state failure and the frustration aggression thesis.

## Chapter Three

### Theoretical Frameworks of Analysis

As the Cold War ended, new theories were advanced to understand the scales of intrastate violence that replaced the interstate conflicts. Some of these theories include, frustration and aggression, relative deprivation (Dollard *et al*, 1939; Gurr, 1970; 2000), state failure (Zartman, 1995; Rotberg, 2002; 2003), resource curse (Collier and Hoeffler, 1998; Bannon and Collier, 2003; Collier, 2003) and, greed and grievance theory (Collier, and Hoeffler, 2000). Based on the literature review on the Boko Haram phenomenon carried out in the preceding chapter, this study advances two theoretical approaches to explain the phenomenon. First, the study looks at the issue of Boko Haram terrorism from the perspective of state failure. Second, the study explores the frustration that accompanies the conditions of state failure, which propels citizens, especially members of Boko Haram, to resort to terrorist activities. Finally, the study recommends the thesis of non-violence as a plausible means of doing away with Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria.

#### 3.1 The State Failure Theory

As earlier discussed in chapter two of this study, nation-states exist to provide political goods and social services for citizens living within their borders (Rotberg, 2003: 2). States can either succeed or fail in discharging these responsibilities. When states fail, it means that they are incapable of either delivering adequate political goods to their citizens or taking full control of their territories (Piazza, 2008: 470). Such internal challenges could also mean that the state has lost its monopoly over the use of force or is no longer guaranteed security by central sovereign leadership (Alao, 1999, 83). In cases of severe state failure, the state loses its legitimacy, and its capacity to safeguard its citizens and control its people becomes eroded (Alao, 1999: 83).

Rotberg (2003: 1) condenses the criteria of state failure into three main variables, viz., economic stagnation, political instability, and loss of state's legitimacy. In a failed or failing state, Rotberg argues that the economic sphere is hamstrung by a lack of public goods and services, the flourishing of corruption and rent-seeking, and financially precarious circumstances (Rotberg, 2002: 86). In the political sphere, leaders and their cronies subvert prevailing democratic norms, manipulate legislative laws, disregard the rule of law, compromise judicial independence, repress civil societies, and abuse security and defence forces (Rotberg, 2002: 129). Consequently, corrupt ruling elites engage in conspicuous consumption by building numerous duplexes and buying properties both at home and abroad, and stoking stolen funds in foreign bank accounts.

In the final phase of failure, the state loses its legitimacy (Uzodike and Maiangwa, 2012: 96-97). Once the state becomes illegitimate in the eyes of a reasonable proportion of its citizens, there is every reason to expect disloyalty and steadfast rebellion on the part of the aggrieved and acrimonious citizens. In some cases, citizens even transfer their unalloyed allegiances to clan and group leaders, who may opt to use them to advance their personal, political, religious, and/or economic interests. They further exploit the porosity of the state's borders and the general security deficiencies in the country to smuggle in ammunitions, to cause chaos and to disintegrate the state (Onapajo and Uzodike, 2012: 9). When this happens, failed or failing states become a huge threat not only to their own citizens, but also to neighbouring states, and in a highly globalized world; they constitute a huge security threat and danger to the international community (Kinnan, *et al* 2011: 9).

The Failed State Index published annually by The Fund for Peace is the closest taxonomy in measuring the conditions of state failure. The Index uses the following conditions to determine the extent to which a state has failed or is failing: (1) Loss of control of its territory or of the monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force; (2) Erosion of legitimate authority to make collective decisions; (3) Inability to deliver social services and political goods; and (4) Inability to maintain diplomatic ties with other states in the international arena (Adibe, 2012; Uzodike and Maiangwa, 2012: 96-97). Most states that have collapsed or failed are in Africa, "where the

historically weak state structures were further weakened by colonialism and the activities of the political elites that took over the mantle of leadership at independence” (Alo, 1999: 83). Among the twenty states listed in the Index to be at the verge of collapse, twelve are in Africa and Nigeria is currently ranked 14th on the list (Failed State Index, 2011). According to the capacity assessment of The Fund For Peace Report, Nigeria’s position on the Failed State Index makes it a weak state with the propensity for failure depending on which direction the leaders decide to take the country (The Fund For Peace, 2011: 3). The propensity for failure is all the more likely considering that despite several notable improvements, many deep-seated issues such as inadequate healthcare, unequal distribution of resources, pervasive corruption, inter-confessional violence, poverty, and lack of political will on the part of the leaders, continue to plague the nation and undermine the capacity of the state (The Fund For Peace, 2011: 3).

In other global rankings, Nigeria has also been poorly rated. For instance, Nigeria ranked 143 out of 183 countries in Transparency International’s 2011 corruption index (Marshall, 2012). The 2010-2011 Terrorism and Political Violence Map rated Nigeria No. 5 as a severely afflicted terrorist region, while the 2012 Global Peace Index for the rating of the most peaceful and the least peaceful countries, ranked the country at 146 out of 158 countries (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2012: 8). The country is also sinking to the bottom of the World Bank’s ‘Doing Business’ ranking, standing at 137 out of 183 economies (Norbrook, 2011: 16; Uzodike and Maiangwa, 2012: 96-97). Given this context of poor performance by Nigeria in most global performance index rankings, the country has been described as a nation that is likely to fail, and whose failure has the propensity to inflict enormous economic duress on the global community (Kinnan, *et al* 2011: 3).

State failure in Nigeria also has a direct connection to its high level of endemic corruption, the negative effects of which Ihonbere and Shaw (1998: 151) capture aptly when stating thus: “corruption has reduced the legitimacy of the state, eroded the credibility of political leaders, replaced meritocracy and hardwork with strong and complex patron-client relations, accentuated inefficiency, ineffectiveness and general disorder in the bureaucratic and security apparatuses.”

The repercussion of the deep-rooted culture of endemic official corruption and gross leadership incompetence over the decades has actually become too painful for many Nigerians to endure. Large numbers of Nigerians die of preventable diseases every year as a result of living in the edge of poverty and deteriorating environments; a lack of reasonable health care services; starvation; and destitution. The Fund For Peace (2011: 4) reported that many diseases such as cholera that has killed more than 1,500 people in 2011 alone, can be attributed to the lack of a coordinated program on public sanitation in Nigeria. In the face of sectarian violence, organized armed attacks by criminal gangs and insurgent groups, successive regimes in Nigeria have proven to be too fragile, complicit, and even helpless, lacking a sense of strategy and the political will needed to address these mayhems (Isa, 2010). As a result, many civilians are often killed, maimed, or displaced under the helpless watch of Nigerian government authorities and security forces in recurring spates of sectarian clashes across the country.

The failure of the Nigerian state to provide security to its citizens is also obvious in the wake of the Boko Haram attacks, which indicate that even the Nigerian security apparatus is itself vulnerable to the sect's attacks. The explosion by suicide bombers of St Andrews Military Protestant Church in the Armed Forces Command and Staff College (AFCSC), Jaji in Kaduna on November 25, 2012, which killed 11, indicates that even the supposed security hubs in Nigeria are themselves not immune to the terror of Boko Haram (Akhaine, 2012). Referring to this escalating security threat of Boko Haram, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)'s leader was once reported to have advised Nigerian Christians to defend themselves against the sect - a clear confirmation of the systematic failure of the Nigerian state to tackle pressing security challenges that are facing the country (Uzodike and Maiangwa, 2012: 99).

Situating the Boko Haram impasse within the context of state failure in Nigeria can thus be justified. Indeed, the foregoing myriad of vexing and intractable problems and challenges explain rather graphically the reasons Boko Haram could operate swiftly in the Nigerian public sphere. By providing security, solace, and basic services to its followers, Boko Haram hopes to gain greater public acceptance of its ideological agendas. The state failure theory, though widely



applicable in Nigeria, is particularly relevant to the Muslim-dominated northern region. In the 2012 conference on Nigerian Muslims and Democracy, many Muslims in attendance lamented the lip-service democracy that is exhibited by the country's leadership and noted with dismay the scale of underdevelopment in many Muslim majority states, which are characterized by high rates of maternal and infant mortalities, unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, and rising poverty (Bilkisu, 2012).

These are core issues in Nigeria that trouble the masses and antagonize its citizens, prompting some of them to resort to violence and terror as an option for survival, but also as a means to rebel against a state they deem to have failed them (Uzodike and Maiangwa, 2012: 96-97). Again, this is where Nigeria really becomes part of the grand scheme of Al-Qaeda's global war because Al-Qaeda counts on the vulnerabilities of weak and failed states to establish radical Islamism and terrorist bases (Akomolafe, 2006: 225). There is some evidence to show that Al-Qaeda might be holding sway in Nigeria. For instance, it has been reported by the New York Times that about one quarter of the 400 foreign fighters captured in Iraq are from sub-Saharan Africa, particularly from Nigeria, Niger, Mali, and Mauritania (Akomolafe, 2006: 226). Although there is much speculation that the Nigerian government is trying to internationalize the Boko Haram crisis by linking it to Al-Qaeda in order to gain financial support from the United State anti-terrorism scheme, it is indubitable that the weak state syndrome in Nigeria has forced a rethinking of how Nigeria fits into regional and global terrorism and security puzzle.

Notwithstanding the conditions of institutional fragility in Nigeria, it must be stated that Nigeria is not a failed state. Many countries facing serious socioeconomic and political issues have not failed. This is the case in some mature democracies like France, Greece, Italy etc. where the governments of those states have not been able to meet the legitimate aspirations of their people. However, in other words, the concept of state failure or collapse is a relative one. In this study the concept of 'state failure' as applied to the Nigerian state would be used to describe the different level of institutional and governance crises within the country that has handicapped the state to meet the aspirations of the people (Vogt, 1999: 301).

Next is a discussion on the frustration and aggression thesis, which can be seen as an upshot of the state failure thesis. This is because it is in response to the dismal conditions of state failure as enumerated in this section that some citizens become frustrated and aggressive. At least, this has proven to be the case with the Boko Haram terrorist sect.

### **3.2 The frustration and aggression Thesis**

The frustration and aggression thesis argues that the exhibition or occurrence of aggressive tendencies invariably presupposes the presence of frustration, which in turn leads to some aggressive acts (Johan and Dennen, 2005: 1). Being frustrated implies that one's access to a legitimate need or goal is thwarted by another party, or possibly by circumstances. This in turn leads to aggressive reaction from the individual whose access to essential goals or legitimate needs have been denied. This suggests that frustration can lead to an aggressive outburst, although it cannot be said that it is a necessary condition for aggression. Thus, frustration can be said to instigate a number of responses, one of which is an expression of aggression (Johan and Dennen, 2005: 1).

With particular emphasis on the Boko Haram terrorism, the argument here is that frustration – precipitated by factors such as severe poverty, unemployment, elite corruption, etc. – causes aggression within the affected group, who, feeling alienated and abandoned, either look to religion for succour or are manipulated to rebel against their perceived tormentor - such as the Nigerian government. However, when the source of the frustration cannot be directly confronted, the aggression can be channelled towards innocent citizens, who are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators (Schmid, 1988: 28). The foregoing does not in any way implies that Boko Haram is exonerated from its terrorist activities. To say that a movement is aggrieved over a perceived or real injustice is not to say that it is justified in resorting to terror, but it is to say

that the terrorist sect is a symptom of some major concerns bedevilling its society (Roberts, 2006: 109).

Increased frustration and aggression are also closely linked to other factors like growing religiosity and the politicization of religion in Nigeria (Uzodike and Whetho, 2011). When faced with a *mélange* of social, political, and economic challenges, citizens of unresponsive states often turn to religious-based solutions. As elsewhere in the world, such religious extremism is often associated with the failure of the state to meet people's most basic needs. This is evidenced by the adroit swiftness of Boko Haram to readily recruit and turn poor citizens in the slums of some states in northern Nigeria into terrorists (Jackson, 2007: 599). Ultimately, the call by Boko Haram for an 'Islamic state' in Nigeria demonstrates that many in the far north express political and social grievances through greater adherence to religion, and increasingly look to the religious canon for solutions to their socioeconomic and political problems (Africa Research Bulletin, 2011). Boko Haram's offensive on the Nigerian state is also motivated by the preaching of some religious authorities and leaders who manipulate some frustrated and aggrieved populace into believing that they are fulfilling a religious obligation by killing 'non-believers' and attacking the Nigerian state in the name of God.

From the analysis given above, both the state failure thesis and the frustration and aggression theory are useful for this study. The state failure thesis will serve as the independent variable for the study, because most of the issues that create the fertile breeding ground for Boko Haram terrorism including corruption; poverty; abusive security apparatus; continued economic challenges; crisis of Nigeria's nation-building project; and underdevelopment, are all conditions of state failure in Nigeria. In some sense, it can be argued that the frustration and aggression thesis is a variant of the state failure thesis because it is the absence of political, economic, and social safety net for the people that instigate frustration and aggression among the citizens, some of whom may become terrorists. Hence, the frustration aggression thesis will be adopted in this study as the dependent variable.

The study will conclude by proffering the non-violence thesis as a framework of analysis to assess what is required to transit from a society in which killing is commonplace, to one in which it is eradicated. The approach is expected to guide policy and the cultural, political, and socioeconomic behaviours of individuals and institutions, towards creating a violence-free society in Nigeria where democratic reforms and sustainable development can be vigorously pursued. The non-violent approach, which in its original sense is called the 'non-killing approach'<sup>4</sup> is a remedial framework for research and action, in which concerted effort is made to appreciate practices, policies, institutions, cultures, politics, and behaviours that abhors killing in a society. The non-killing approach is expected to guide the cultural, political, and socioeconomic behaviours of individuals and institutions, towards transforming a beleaguered society into a non-violent one where socioeconomic recovery can effectively take root. Such a society should be characterised by the absence not only of killing, but also of political violence, injustice, corruption, unemployment, underdevelopment, and poverty. The non-killing approach is a relatively novel conceptual framework propounded by Professor Glenn D. Paige in his eminent work *Nonkilling Global Political Science* published in 2002. Therein, Paige (2002: 1) defines a non-killing society as “a human community that is, characterized by no killing of humans and no threats to kill; no weapons designed to kill humans and no justifications for using them; and no conditions of society dependent upon the threat or use of force for political change.”

Some religions, including Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, and Hinduism are founded on the non-killing ideals given their spiritual and humanist teachings (Paige, 2004: 6). Pim contends that non-killing and nonviolence also arose mutually in historical moments as strategies for social change as illustrated by the non-violence movement of Mahatma Gandhi (Pim, 2009: 13). Since Paige's publication of *Nonkilling Global Political Science*, some scholars have perceived non-violence as a key ingredient in the non-killing recipe (Natalia and Morales, 2004: 79). Other scholars have responded affirmatively to Paige's poser of whether a global non-killing society is

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<sup>4</sup> Both the 'non-killing' and 'non-violence' concepts will be used interchangeably in this study. This is because both concepts denote the absence of violence and argue for a peaceful society based on mutual respect, sustainable development, and the reduction of lethality.

practically possible. Notable among these scholars is Leslie Sponsel (2009: 35-73) who writes from an anthropological background, laying out extensive scientific data on existing societies that have lived peacefully without killing. The edited work, 'Towards a non-killing Filipino Society' is without doubt the first effort by a group of scholars to focus attention on the non-killing thesis (Abueva, 2004). The volume is an attempt to justify the idea of non-killing as a possible framework for research, analysis and action by applying its findings to a specific society like the Philippine. The study found that in the Filipino society, the sensitization for non-violence by all stakeholders has led to the security forces learning to apply tolerance during a number of coup attempts. The study also found that instead of their usual brutality, the security forces in the Filipino society are also learning to apply non-violent methods to observe peace during riots and civil demonstrations (Abueva, 2004: 39-40).

Some of the merits of the non-killing approach, especially its insistence that religions and patriotism do not sanctify killing, (Paige, 2004: 3), will provide a useful pathway to unravel and underscore the covenantal goods in Christianity and Islam, and how the harnessing of these goods can form the basis for promoting mutual co-existence among Nigeria's divided population. At the same time, Glenn Paige identifies other reasons which can be useful in supporting the non-killing transition in Nigeria. First, the highest percentage of people who ever lived have never killed; most religions are also based on respect and dignity of the human being; second, since the year 2000, twenty-three countries have abolished the death penalty while twenty-seven others have no standing army (Paige, 2004: 7).

Given these non-killing values espoused in the different religions and adopted by some countries, it seems possible that a non-violent society is possible in Nigeria, especially if the effort is made to understand the causal factors of conflicts and terrorism as well as the factors that can facilitate the transition from a killing-society to a non-killing one in Nigeria. If these causal factors are properly understood, then the Nigerian government, political leaders, policy makers, stakeholders, and all concerned citizens can unite to chart a pathway towards realizing a killing-free society in Nigeria where the Boko Haram terrorism will be defeated.

Having situated the study within these three frameworks of analysis, viz., the state failure theory, the frustration and aggression thesis, and the non-killing approach, it is quite fitting at this point to take an excursion into history in order to explore and glean the antecedents that have engendered and entrenched socioeconomic, political, and religious grievances in the Nigerian state; issues that are very much at the heart of the Boko Haram reign of terror.

## Chapter Four

### The Foundations of Violent Conflicts in Nigeria

The history of Nigeria with its recurring cycle of discord ... demonstrates clearly how, since independence, political leaders aspiring to national offices have found themselves torn between their need to transcend the country's social divisions and their inability to operate politically. Any serious analysis of the country demands that we take into consideration the complexities of the political interaction between the countless religious and socioeconomic sub-systems which constitute Nigeria (Chabal and Daloz, 1999: 28).

Since its emergence, the Boko Haram phenomenon has been viewed simply as a crisis that emerged in the post-9/11 environment. Notwithstanding any connection that Boko Haram might have with the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United State homeland, it is imperative that national and international scholars and observers understand the impasse as part of a larger historical backdrop in Nigeria. The main argument that will be proposed here is that Boko Haram is a product of Nigeria's colonial, socio-economic, regional, and political history, and that it is also tied to the broader Islamic expansion and revivalism as illustrated by the rise of fundamentalist Islamic groups in the country. The relevance of these historical factors will be explained within the state failure and the frustration and aggression theoretical frameworks of analysis.

#### 4.1 The Colonial Legacy

Prior to colonialism, Nigeria was a culturally diverse society without any major distinction among her over 250 ethnic and three major religious groups (Osaghae and Suberu, 2005: 10). The colonial legacy in Nigeria is what Kirk-Greene (1980) dubbed *damnosa hereditas* (burdensome inheritance), so named because the colonial administrators wove divisions – through happenstance and distorted policies – into the very fabric of the Nigerian state. One of

such distorted policies was the Lord Lugard's amalgamation policy of 1914. Boateng (2010: 15) contends that while Lugard and his cohorts envisaged that the amalgamation policy could mean violence, simmering resentment, and bloodshed, or worst still could eventually disintegrate the entity he was trying to form, he still gambled with it, hoping that somehow, the policy might work. However, Fayeye and Balagun (2012: 268) argue that, this forced merger of the northern and southern protectorates has undoubtedly reduced Nigeria to more or less a geographical entity in diversity. Many scholars and politicians in Nigeria have continued to blame the 1914 amalgamation policy for the divisive woes that confront Nigeria, and argue that the country is likely to disintegrate if a quick resolution to correct the mistakes and heal the divisive wounds of the 1914 amalgamation policy is delayed (Fabiya, 2012).

The ethno-religious and regional divide in Nigeria was further deepened by the introduction of the Arthur Richards Constitution of 1946. This Constitution recognized three major regions in Nigeria, namely the Hausa/Fulani in the northern region, the Igbo in the eastern region, and the Yoruba in the western region (Onuoha, 2008: 17). By so doing, Mustapha (2008: 43) argues that Sir Arthur Richard's regionalism caused the ethnic minorities in each of these regions to contend with the majority control of the administrative and fiscal structures of governance, which were highly steeped in ethnic politics. In reality, regionalism in Nigeria combined with the realities of the profoundly plural nature of Nigeria's socio-political structures to entrench destructive forces of regional political rivalry and, ultimately, created enmity among the ethnic and religious groups in the country (Whitaker, 1981: 3). This kind of entrenched ethno-regional and religious politics impeded the development of a national ideology and consciousness that would have given Nigeria some sense of national cohesion at the time of independence such that despite the euphoria that accompanied the celebrations of Nigeria's independence from British rule on October 1, 1960, many people in the country still remained Igbo, Yoruba or Hausa, and saw themselves as Nigerians only in a less fundamental way (Jackson, 2007: 587).

But how are all these colonial exploits related to the Boko Haram phenomenon? To answer this, it must be noted that in the vast north of the country, the majority Hausa-Fulani people



maintained a social institution that is based on the fundamental principles of Islam. Their degree of assimilation of the colonial civilization was extremely limited, ironically, in part because of some colonial policies like the indirect rule policy, which bestowed excessive leadership power to the Hausa/Fulani aristocrats (Whitaker, 1981: 3). The British administration also took proper care to avoid any form of resistance from the northern elites by ostensibly recognizing Islam as the predominant religion in the region. In fact, under the agreement between the colonial administration and the northern aristocrats, Christian evangelism was stymied in the north, and except for outsiders living there, almost the entire population was at least nominally Muslim (Aborisade and Mundt, 2002: 62). This further facilitated the wider application of Islamic law in northern Nigeria and strengthened the alliance between the British administrators and the Islamic aristocrats and their children (Bøås, 2012: 2).

But while this was going on, the British enacted a system of education in Northern Nigeria that was in line with Islamic civilization, but which was in every sense of the word, substandard (Barnes, 1997: 205). What became widely accessible to the people were the Quranic schools. For most northern parents, the Quranic schools served as a moral panacea to the socioeconomic conundrums that overwhelmed the country at that time (Thomson, 2012: 51). However, since Quranic schools exclusively dispense Islamic curricula that have no direct connection or linkages to the secular state, Baba (2010: 10) argues that they offer their students little by way of preparing them for the social challenges and economic life of the emerging modern economy. This practice was to set the stage for a pattern of modern school avoidance as well as the establishments of the Almajiri schools,<sup>5</sup> which perdure to date (USAID, 2003). The cumulative

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<sup>5</sup> The phenomenon of the 'Almajiri' is a popular old practice in northern Nigeria whereby children are sent to live and study under the guidance of renowned Islamic teachers. One study argues that the phenomenon of the Almajiri has four main features: children leaving their families to study under the guardianship of religious teachers; virtually all members are male; the curriculum revolves around the Quranic chapters; and each school is autonomous (Cline, 2011: 280). Unfortunately, most of these children – Almajirai – live and study in adverse conditions, which make them vulnerable to recruitment into extremist religious sects like Boko Haram (Onuoha, 2012: 3). In fact, Forest (2012: 62) argues that some teachers at the Almajiri schools have been known to abuse these children and in some cases recruit them as foot soldiers to fight wars. As of 2010, Nigeria hosts over 9.5 million Almajiris, with a

result of this legacy is the inevitable birth of a tensed environment in which radical extremist ideologues can thrive among communities that see themselves as deeply divided and as politically and economically disadvantaged and marginalized (Forest, 2012: 14). This age-old animosity between the north and the south in Nigeria, coupled with the economic and educational disparity, partly entrenched by the British in these regions, but taken to greater heights by successive Nigerian leaders, explains in part why Boko Haram might be averse to a southern president, and the region as a whole, which the sect had accused of facilitating the spread of Western civilization in the country. But for a holistic understanding of the grievances of Boko Haram, it will also be crucial to examine the expansion and revivalism of Islam in northern Nigeria, which predated the colonial era, but also ran concurrently with it.

#### **4.2 Islamic Expansion and Revivalism in Nigeria**

Religious expansion in general has to do with the rapid spread of religion and its scale of new conversions, while religious revivalism is about the renaissance of faith within a particular religious group. The expansion of Islam in postcolonial Nigeria is basically a mixed process of persuasion and consent, while “Islamic revivalism is sometimes a violent process of rediscovered fundamentalism” (Mazrui, 2009: 81).

The geo-political entity known today as Nigeria was part of the territories beyond the frontiers of the Islamic world of the seventh and eighth centuries. These territories were called the *Balad al-Sudan* in Arabic, meaning the land of the black people (Levitson, 2000: 63). These territories, early in the history of Islam, were out of bounds for the predominantly Arab-Muslim merchants of North Africa. The merchants kept their trade within the confines of their own Islamic domain. Levitson (2000: 63) figured that they might have been adhering to the injunction of the authoritative Islamic cleric, Ibn Abi Zayd, who insisted that trade to enemy territory and the land

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preponderance number coming from the northern region, where Boko Haram has been most active (Onuoha, 2012: 3).

of the black people was reprehensible. However, as Islam developed and grew in prominence in succeeding centuries, the trade boundaries were constantly pushed back until it eventually disappeared. Muslim merchants from North Africa made constant in-roads into sub-Saharan territories, such that in the eleventh century, prominent cities in present-day Ghana and Niger “were composed in part, of Muslim towns, which were separated from the royal town” (Levitson, 2000: 63). It was this commerce-driven enterprise of moving from city to city that facilitated the spread of Islam in territories south of the Sahara. Islam entered Nigeria through the Hausa kingdoms in the northern part of the country. The first of these kingdoms to be converted to Islam was the kingdom of Kanem. Islam in Kanem is believed to have been brought by Arab merchants that used the Tripoli – Lake Chad trade route. Kanem was one of the earliest African kingdoms and was situated on the northeastern corner of Lake Chad. Though originally composed of pagans who worshipped their king as the Supreme Being, Kanem became Muslim in the twelfth century under its Saifawa dynasty (Levitson, 2000: 80). By the thirteenth century, Islam had gained extensive following in Kanem (Maier, 2000: 149).

Kano and Katsina are two other entry points of Islam in Nigeria. Islam came to Kano in the thirteenth century – and about the same time in Katsina – through the machination of Wangara traders and clerics from Mali (Lapidus, 2002: 405). Both kingdoms rivalled each other for commercial dominance in Hausaland due to the presence of these Wangara traders. The advent of Islam in Kano coincided with the shift of the Saifawa dynasty from Kanem to Bornu. Kano’s proximity to Bornu facilitated its Islamic consolidation. Islam permeated the life of the people of Kano from the king to the common person and reached its peak in the fifteenth century. The consolidation of Islam in Kano is hardly surprising bearing in mind that the Islamic tradition recognizes and appreciates the practice of polygamy, which was already common among the peoples of Bornu, Kano, and other Hausa societies who see the importance of having a large family as a source of wealth and honour (Onapajo, 2012: 45). In contrast to the success recorded in the expansion of Islam in Kano and Kanem Bornu, the Hausa rulers of Katsina together with the Arab merchants from North Africa, were not so successful in their effort to turn Katsina into an Islamic state. They were strongly opposed by local people who held tenaciously to their pre-Islamic traditions and became increasingly suspicious of the emirs’ constant demands for the

establishment of pure Islam (Levitson, 2000: 84). Despite the stiff resistance, Islamic scholarship eventually grew in both Kano and Katsina due to the constant visits by Timbuktu scholars on their way to pilgrimage in Mecca.

As is the case with modern Nigeria, bribery, corruption, and illegal taxes gradually became commonplace in the newly converted Islamic states in Northern Nigeria (Maier, 2000: 149). These practices were to be challenged by the rise of the Fulani pastoralists in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, championed by the major reformer Shehu Usman Dan Fodio, who led a Jihad in 1802 to overthrow rulers he considered unjust and un-Islamic - forcing them to adopt the mainstream and normative form of Islam (Cline, 2011: 274; Cook, 2011: 4). Usman Dan Fodio (1754-1817) was a religious and political leader of Fulani descent. His lineage was known for their intellectual prowess and “he distinguished himself as a student, teacher, preacher, and author” (Robinson, 2000: 137). His avowed vision and mission was to reform the relaxed state of Islam in Hausaland through the Sharia law, and his eloquence attracted many disillusioned youths into fighting and supporting his cause against what they regarded as ungodly practices in the Hausa Land (Stride and Ifeka, 1971: 152).

The initial spark that spurred the Jihad was the rise to eminence of Yunfa, a former pupil of Dan Fodio, who cracked down on Islamic practices such as the wearing of the veil. By insisting on the salience of the Islamic law and deriding the corruption of the Hausa kings and aristocrats, Dan Fodio forged an alliance between the disgruntled Hausa peasantry and the Fulani to launch a Jihad in 1802 (Maier, 2000: 150). He weighed in on the Hausa rulers for their unjust rule that included manslaughter; violating their honour; devouring their wealth; and challenged them to accept and use the Sharia law as the only tool for governance (Levitson, 2000: 85). At their refusal, he overthrew them and established the Sokoto Caliphate – a federation of emirates covering what is now northern Nigeria (Kenny, 1996: 339). The Sokoto Caliphate included most of what are now the states of Sokoto, Kano, Kaduna, Bauchi, Adamawa, Niger, Kwara, and some

parts of Plateau.<sup>6</sup> Sokoto is the epicenter of the Caliphate as it was a multinational political community founded on Islamic principles, binding such diverse language groups as the Hausa, Fulani, Tuareg, Yoruba, and many Middle-Belt minority groups (Paden, 1981: 24). The Islamic Caliphate in Sokoto brought a regional system of administration and taxes, a police force, and the Sharia (Maier, 2000: 150). By 1812, much of the remaining Hausa states, including Borno – the oldest Islamic society in Nigeria and now the ‘headquarters’ of Boko Haram – were completely subdued by the Usmanians. The Yoruba states of Ilorin and old Oyo states were also conquered by Usman Dan Fodio and brought under the Sokoto Caliphate as well (Paden, 1981: 24). Thus, the Sokoto Caliphate remains a not-so-very distant and important reference point for most northern Nigeria’s Muslims and represents the powerful role that jihad and Sharia law played in uniting the northern region, rejecting corruption, and creating a semblance of prosperity under Islam.

However, by the mid-nineteenth century, there was the rise of Islamic revivalism in Northern Nigeria aimed at criticizing the Sokoto Caliphate for failing to uphold the tenets of Islam, especially the precepts of the Sharia law (Maier, 2000: 151).<sup>7</sup> This period witnessed the rise of Mahdism in Borno state (Warner, 2012: 38). Mahdism is an Islamic school of thought that believes in the reappearance of the *Mahdi* – Saviour – who is expected to purge Islamic societies of corruption, evil, and oppression. Understandably, this school of thought appealed to the poor, marginalized, and the discontent, and its widespread acceptance in Borno State was aided and abetted by the vocalized resistance to the political elites in the Sokoto Caliphate due to what they perceived to be a religious discordance (Warner, 2012: 38).

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<sup>6</sup> Incidentally, Boko Haram has so far waged attacks against the security forces, civilians and governments of these states. In so doing, the sect perceived itself as the modern jihadists, charged with the responsibility of cleansing Nigeria of infidels and of corruption, and by extension, re-enacting Usman Dan Fodio’s jihad.

<sup>7</sup> It is worth pointing out that besides dissention, and squabbling between emirate rulers and young revolutionaries, the Caliphate was eventually subdued by the British, led by Lord Lugard’s Frontier Force in 1903. The British invasion of the Caliphate also led to the killing of the Caliph and the destruction of what legitimacy it had left (Maier, 2000: 152).

The colonial administrators did all they could to resist Mahdism and, through the system of indirect rule, preserved all the existing formal and legal institutions of the Muslim rulers in the Sokoto Caliphate to bolster their substantial social and religious legitimacy (Warner, 2012: 38). This charade of an alliance between the colonial administrators and the indigenous elites managed to keep the Mahdist threat under check as most of its leaders were banished from northern Nigeria and many of its followers were also persecuted. But with the attainment of independence in Nigeria, the supreme power of the Sultan of Sokoto and Dan Fodio's purificationist agenda gradually faded due to further challenges to the Emirate rule throughout the post-independence period, championed by radical Islamist sects calling for reform and purification (Cook, 2011: 4). Some of these radical Islamist sects include the Derika, the Izala, the Kaulu, the Tijjaniyya, the Qadiriyya, the Ahmadiyya, the Shiite, the Muslim Brotherhood, the Ahmadiyya, and several other Islamic splinter groups. The Tijjaniyya and the Qadiriyya were the main basis of social organization of Islamic religious activities at the local level. These brotherhoods followed the mystical Sufi tradition, and had leadership structures that are not necessarily linked to the Nigerian state (Adesoji, 2010: 4). For instance, the Tijjaniyya leadership tended to be transnational, with some influence in Senegal (Paden, 1981: 25).

Around the 1970s, a 'back-to-basics' reaction to the brotherhoods came from the Wahhabi, which was largely associated with the legal/intellectual/civil service Islamic community (Paden, 1981: 25). This development in Islamic revivalism in Nigeria sets the scene for the rise of radical strands of Islamic movements (Onapajo, 2012: 48), such as the Muslim Student Society (MSS); the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN), led by Sheikh Ibrahim El-Zakzaki; the Dawa group; and the *Jama'at Izala al-Bida' wa-Iqamat as-Sunnah* (JIBWIS), established in 1978 by Sheikh Abubakar Gumi in Kaduna state (Onapajo, 2012: 48). These groups are considered by most outside observers as militant fundamentalist groups in northern Nigeria whose members remain committed to Islamic religious purity and anti-democratic/capitalist/Westernized objectives (Forest, 2012: 76). The rise and radicalization of these groups around the 1970s in Nigeria was given a welcome fillip by international Islamic events like the Iranian revolution of 1979 (Onapajo, 2012: 48). According to Haynes (1996: 236), the Iranian revolution gave radical Muslims in Nigeria two significant plugs of impetus: first, it gave them an immediately recognizable radical

programme for their own societies; and second, it offered them a political platform from which to launch attacks on incumbent Muslim elites, associated with some form of corruption or economic mismanagement.

Despite their differences, most of the Islamic revivalist movements in the post-independence period in Nigeria were united by their assertion of a new type of Islamic identity; one that is fiercely critical of the West and globalization, and one that seeks to solidify its connections – theological, economic, social, and linguistic – with the wider Islamic world like Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iran; it is also one that is ready to assert its political authority by insisting on the implementation of the Sharia law in Nigeria (Akyeampong, 2006: 299). Another expression of this kind of extremist Islamist movement, which some scholars (Adesoji, 2011) have related to the Boko Haram sect, was the Maitatsine movement. The Maitatsine movement was formed by an Islamic preacher called Muhammadu Marwa, who migrated from Cameroon to Northern Nigeria around 1945. It was his polemical sermons, aimed at both religious and political authorities, that earned Marwa the moniker 'Maitatsine' in Hausa, meaning "he who curses or damns" (Pham, 2012: 2). When Marwa first came into Nigeria in 1945, Maitatsine polemics against Islamic authorities in Kano state were condemned by the British colonial authorities, who found him an anathema. Maitatsine eventually returned to Nigeria after its independence and by the early 1970s, had succeeded in gathering a large militant following called the *Yan Tatsine*, which means 'followers of Maitatsine'. According to Pham (2012: 2), the followers of Maitatsine were mostly youths, unemployed migrants, and other Northern Nigerian Muslims who were mostly affected by the economic policies of the Babangida regime.

In solidarity with other revivalist sects in Nigeria as well as the league of Iranians, the Maitatsine sect demands among other things, the strict observance of the Sharia law, the elimination of Western practices, and the establishment of an Islamic state in Nigeria (Osaghae and Suberu, 2005: 11). Perturbed by the threat posed by the Maitatsine's violent religious activities in the 1980s, and in particular their heretical claim that Mohammed is not the Prophet of Allah (Walker, 2012: 2), the Kano state security forces engaged the sect in violent confrontations that

triggered a bloody religious riot, which claimed thousands of lives in Kano and its environs (Fawole, 2008: 103). The Maitatsine uprising of the 1980s was the first and, arguably, the most serious national security threat posed from within Nigeria both by indigenous and foreign religious extremists (Fawole, 2008: 103).

Against this backdrop, it can be argued that Boko Haram is a symptom of these historical socio-political and religious frustration and grievances about the deteriorating conditions of life as well as what they perceived to be a deviation from the actual Islamic practices in Nigeria. Hence, the sect's call for the establishment of the Sharia rule in Nigeria must be understood as a response to the decaying state of political and religious leadership and conditions of the Nigerian society in which they live. It is for this reason that Boko Haram has been insisting on the implementation of the Sharia law in Nigeria, or at least in the northern region, as an antidote to the social vices and leadership crisis of contemporary Nigeria. But precisely as to how the Sharia law might serve as an antidote to Nigeria's complex socioeconomic and political issues will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

#### **4.3 The Sharia as an Antidote to State Failure in Nigeria**

'Sharia' is the Islamic legal code. Its main sources are the Koran, the Sunna (the tradition coming from the Prophet Mohammed himself), the *Kiyas* (analogical deductions from other sources), and the *Ijma* (consensus among Islamic jurists) (Aborisade and Brundt, 2002: 226). The basic laws of the Islamic societies in Nigeria are derived from the Sharia, including precedents and opinions in the Sunni tradition. The law is interpreted by Imams or Emirs who are regarded as the principal decision makers and religious leaders, and is implemented by Islamic judges (*Khadi*). In the 1970s, a separate system of sharia courts and a grand *Khadi* for each state were put in place in Northern Nigeria. The Sharia courts investigate among others, cases of sexual immorality, gambling, theft, dress-code, especially for women, and allegations of corrupt practices against a public servant. Such practices could vary from over-invoicing, kickbacks, and other illicit



administrative practices. The punishment for such acts as enshrined in the Sharia law include among others, amputation and stoning to death (Mahmud, 2000: 173).

Given the philosophy of Islam as a complete way of life for any true practicing Muslim, many Muslims have also had the tendency to attach religion to politics in Nigeria, but more so in the Muslim dominated northern region (Onapajo, 2012: 46). To recall, the British administrators recognized and even endorsed the tenets of the Sharia law by taking action or encouraging the native Islamic authorities to apply the Islamic rules and punishment, especially as it applies to the misconduct of public officials (Ostien and Umaru, 2000: 12). In so doing, the Islamic law was given wide accreditation and was conceived especially in northern Nigeria as synonymous with the country's politics. Thus, during the drafting of the Nigerian constitution in 1976, there was a strong plea and even an actual desire by some northern politicians to formally include the Sharia law as a legal basis in Nigeria. In the constitutional debates leading up to the Second Republic (1979-1983), northern Muslims raised the issue of extending the status of Sharia courts from the state level in the northern region to federal courts across the country. The issue of establishing a federal court of appeal for Sharia cases was also raised but later dismissed. Instead, a constitutional assembly reached a consensus – although frowned upon by the northern delegates – under which three Islamic law judges could hear cases referred from the Sharia courts, while still being part of the Federal Court of Appeal but not independent from it (Cook, 2011: 5). These debates concerning the recognition of the Sharia law in the Nigerian constitution further polarized Nigerians along religious lines and engendered suspicion among the two major religious groups in the country (Adesoji, 2011: 100).

Shortly after Nigeria's transition to democratic rule in 1999, the perennial Sharia issue resurfaced, this time even more violently. Ahmed Bello Mahmud, the then Commissioner of Justice in Zamfara state, justified the adoption and implementation of the Sharia law during this period in this way: the adoption of the Sharia law by any state that professes the true Islamic faith is not a matter of choice. If anything, it is compulsory given the advent of democracy, constitutionalism, and a federal system of government that creates the favourable ambience

(Mahmud, 2000: 175). Nevertheless, Uzodike (2004: 296) argues that the bid to implement the Sharia law by some northern politicians only served to intensify and complicate the palpable religious climate in Nigeria. This was well demonstrated when Olusegun Obasanjo became president in 1999. Shortly after he was elected President, Adebajo (2008: 5) argues that some prominent members of an insecure political class in northern Nigeria latch on the Sharia law by way of reacting to Obasanjo's victory in the Presidential election.

The Sharia strategy as a political tool was popularized on October 1999 by Ahmed Yerima. Yerima was widely supported and accepted by the people of Zamfara state prior to his election as governor because he promised to implement the Sharia law as an antidote to the socioeconomic and political problems of the state when he eventually becomes governor (Onapajo, 2012: 51). In Kano state, the program of Sharia Implementation under Governor Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso was, by the standard of the citizenry, tremendously slow. Although Kwankwaso was pressurized to establish a Sharia court and a Sharia Penal Code, the effort was still not appreciated by the general citizenry in the state, who transferred their allegiance and support to Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau on the basis that he (Shekarau) would do much better in fulfilling the Sharia agenda in the state (Ostien and Umaru, 2000: 25). Not surprisingly, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau became the Governor of Kano state in 2003 because his main political manifesto revolved around the strict implementation of the Sharia law in the state. This strategy appealed to many Muslim Clerics and citizens of the state who believe that the Sharia law will herald the reign of a better life for them. According to Onapajo (2012: 52), Shekarau rewarded most of these people who supported his campaign by making them heads of several Sharia state agencies such as the Shura committee, Zakat, Husbi Commission and the Hisbah board.

Given the waves of Sharia implementation and enforcement in Zamfara and Kano states respectively, ten other northern states adopted the tenets of the Islamic law by 2001, raising the number of Sharia states to twelve. Lewis (2011: 11) asserts that besides the religious intoxication of these politicians, the move to implement the Sharia law in their states reflects a combination of populist frustration and regional assertion (Lewis, 2011: 11). One of the major contributing

factors for the implementation of the Sharia law was the allegations from the northern Muslims, led by the elites among them, that the Nigerian Federal Government had failed, as it were, to live up to its primary responsibility of maintaining law and order and providing welfare and security for the distressed populace. Another reason was due to the historic recognition of the law in the northern region.

Furthermore, it is important to bear in mind that not all the states that adopted the Sharia law in the period following Nigeria's transition to democratic rule in 1999 implemented the full weight of the law. For instance, Bauchi and Kaduna states only applied the law minimally because the Christian minority groups in the states were given the liberty to be administered under secular laws and courts while matters that concerned both Christians and Muslims were settled in the Magistrate Courts (Sodiq, 2009: 665). Nevertheless, Shariacracy generated widespread crisis across some northern states, particularly in Kaduna state where many non-Muslims felt that the implementation of the law would lead to their exclusion in many political processes and also constitute an impediment to their fundamental human rights. As a result, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) began sensitization seminars against the planned adoption of the Sharia law in Kaduna state. The peaceful demonstration led by CAN in the Government House of Kaduna state later turned violent when their Muslim counterparts violently attacked and killed some of the Christian protesters (Ukiwo, 2003: 125). This led to bloody confrontations between Christians and Muslims that claimed hundreds of lives in February of the year 2000 in Kaduna state and generated violent undercurrents across the country (Osaghae and Suberu, 2005: 19).

Hence, contrary to what the adherents of Sharia claim that the law will serve as an antidote to the socioeconomic and political issues in Nigeria, bad governance and corruption have not by dint of implementing the Sharia law disappeared. If anything, Christians and Muslims in religiously mixed states of northern Nigeria like Kaduna are gradually living in isolation from each other as a result of the Sharia crisis and Boko Haram bombings, with the Muslims occupying the northern parts of the state, and the Christians the southern parts. This is clearly a disaster to national cohesion in Nigeria, which also demonstrates rather graphically the dysfunctionality of the

Nigerian state and the erosion of state apparatuses. In light of this, the study now turns to look at the contextual factors that cause and breed this kind of dysfunctionality in the Nigerian state, which coupled with a renewed sense of religiosity, have contributed in no small measure to grist the wheels of Boko Haram's reign of terror in the country.

## Chapter Five

### Factors Conducive to the Rise of Boko Haram Terrorism

How can the rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria be properly situated? What events or contextual factors justify the rationale behind its terrorist attacks? These are the questions of contention in this chapter. For Adesoji (2010) and Onuoha (2011), what sustains the sect is its Islamic ideology, given the exponential rise in the activities of religious extremists in Nigeria since the attainment of independence in 1960 (Ibrahim, 1989: 71). Another argument, especially from the Western literature is that as the name Boko Haram – Western education is forbidden – denotes, the sect is averse to Western education and modern civilization and can therefore constitute a huge security threat to the United States homeland if its excesses are not checked (Meehan *et al*, 2011). These accounts on the phenomenon of Boko Haram, while useful to an extent, only constitute an over-simplified narrative of the phenomenon.

This chapter emphasizes the importance of placing Boko Haram within the complex web of contextual factors in Nigeria that have caused varying degrees of grievances amongst the Nigerian populace. It is within this hostile environment that Boko Haram thrives and enjoys the full support and sympathy of many others who deem it sufficiently justifiable to rebel and cause chaos against a state that to their reckoning has failed to cater for their needs. It is also within this context that Boko Haram's call for the Implementation of the Sharia law as a panacea to the failure of governance in Nigeria will be understood. By and large, assessing these contextual issues in Nigeria will be imperative in not only understanding the grievances and activities of Boko Haram, but in devising ways to tackle the causal efficacy of the conditions that predispose some Nigerians to acts of terrorism.

## **5.1 Widespread Underdevelopment in Northern Nigeria**

The fact that there is a development crisis and modernization lag in the north is frequently blamed on the northern aristocrats and the colonial administrators. Admittedly, agreements between British colonial authorities and the traditional Islamic rulers kept the Christian missionaries and their attendant schools, roads, and skills, at bay; the conservative mind-set of the northern aristocrats, coupled with deliberate colonial policies of delaying the establishment of modern schools in the region, led to the low level of social transformation in the northern region (Bienen, 1986: 120; Uzodike and Maiangwa, 2012: 100). This relative lack of contact with modern skills and technology did put the north at a disadvantage. Weak or authoritarian governments, poverty, aggression and alienation, all but combine to create an aggrieved and frustrated population in the region (Bienen, 1986: 120). Poor governance and inadequate protection of civil liberties have given Boko Haram ample space to grow in strength as it indicts the West and its globalizing forces as being responsible for the North's dismal failure to pick up the momentum of development alongside other regions in the country.

In addition to the slow pace of development in northern Nigeria, most residents in the region, especially in the areas where Boko Haram is most active, are not exposed to formal education and are generally poor. Despite Nigeria's economic growth averaging about 7.4 per cent annually over the last seven years, it is reported by the African Economic Outlook (2012: 2) that about two-third of the country's population lives on less than 1\$ a day. Poverty and unemployment are pervasive in the country, but more acute in the northern region where social indicators on health, employment, and education are generally weak. With regards to education, the Nigerian government has introduced some educational reforms like the Universal Basic Education (UBE) in order to improve the literacy level of the youths in the country, especially in the impoverished northern region. Since the introduction of this educational reform program, the share of education budget spending has also increased from 4 per cent in 2010 to 6 per cent in 2011. Even the literacy rate from the ages of 15-24 has improved from 64.1 per cent in 2000 to 80 per cent in 2008 (African Economic Outlook, 2012: 11). Notwithstanding these laudable efforts, the educational quality and opportunities still remain generally low and vary

considerably across the different regions in the country, with more poignant results in the north (African Economic Outlook, 2012: 11). For instance, it is reported by the National Population Commission that states in northern Nigeria are generally low on the literacy ladder in Nigeria. The report further stated that in Borno state, 72 per cent of children within the age bracket of 6-16 have never attended modern schools. The low educational statistics are also reflected in Yobe and Bauchi states, where the illiteracy rates stand at 58 per cent (*Vanguard*, 2011). Due to this low quality of education in Borno, Yobe, and Bauchi states, Bolujoko (2008) argues that a growing number of uneducated young people face a bleak future with many of them becoming pliable tools in the hands of politicians and religious demagogues who recruit them to fight wars.

To make matters worse, some of the children who do not attend modern schools in this region, either because they lack the money, or are obligated by their parents to only attend Islamic schools, constitute the millions of Almajiris, who are required to beg for alms daily – *almajiranchi* – in order to cater for their basic needs. While this system is primarily designed to brace the children for tougher times, in a context of increasing poverty and unemployment, the system is open to abuse by grandstanding politicians and mischievous religious leaders, who take advantage of the vulnerability of these children to conscript them for war, political thuggery, religious violence, and terrorism. The exploitation of the Almajiri syndrome is clearly manifested in the following anecdote: Danjibo (2009: 15) reports that shortly after one of the religious crises in Kaduna state, he visited a Catholic hospital where some Almajirai who were seriously injured during the crisis were admitted. One of the Almajirai who lost a limb admitted that he risked his life because of 200 Naira (just over 1\$). Upon further inquiry, the victim confessed that a large number of them were given some money to take part in the violence.

The foregoing is not an isolated incident. During the economic challenges of the 1980s, Kenny (1999: 369) reports that some of the unemployed youths who fought in the Kaduna religious riot of 1987 confessed – after they have been caught – they had been paid by religious extremists to wreak havoc in the state. Coupled with frustration emanating from their lack of access to the basic needs of life, many Nigerian youths have resorted to nefarious activities like suicide

bombings in the hope that such activities will send a warning signal to the government of their growing discontentment with the leadership of the country (Omede, 2011: 93). The teeming, impoverished youths harbour a “quiet rage over their falling living standards, their lack of clean water, decent schools, health clinics and job opportunities” (Maier 2000: 144). With millions of people in the north having no regular food, no access to safe drinking water or proper education, and often embroiled in sectarian clashes, it seems unfeasible that Nigeria will meet the Millennium Development Goal target of reducing poverty in the country by the United Nations 2015 deadline (African Economic Outlook, 2012: 12). Thus in the following years, the type of governance administered by the Nigerian state will surely determine whether the issues of violence, pervasive poverty, unemployment, armed robbery, and terrorism will remain or be eliminated from the country.

## **5.2 History of Repressed Military Regime and Human Rights Abuses**

We have had a very unfortunate history of military dictatorship in Nigeria going back to 1966. We sort of got ourselves trapped there, and it just got worse and worse. The last dictator – the late General Sani Abacha – from whom we were saved just by providence ... was really the most brutal in this line of soldiers. We now have a democratic government, but it is not something you switch on and off. The damage done in a year can sometimes take ten or twenty years to repair,

Chinua Achebe, *Failure Magazine*, June 5, 2001 (cited in Kevane, 2004: 7).

In many countries which have endured prolonged history of authoritarian rule, the transition to civilian rule tends to raise hopes for sustainable development, institutional reforms, and a greater respect for human rights (Ikelegbe, 2005: 76). Unfortunately for Nigeria, however, such high hopes were interrupted by a continuous spell of military coups and repressive regimes (Ikelegbe, 2005: 76). In Nigeria’s 52 years of independence, it has witnessed about 30 years of repressive



military rule. During these periods, most of the military rulers – Yakubu Gowon (1970-1974); Murtala/Obasanjo (1975-1979); Ibrahim Babangida (1987-1993); Sani Abacha (1995-1998); and Abdusallam Abubakar (1998-1999) – with the exception of Obasanjo and Abubakar – hijacked processes that could have led to a peaceful transition to civilian rule (Laremont *et al*, 2002: 272). To begin with, General Gowon promised a transition in 1976, and later dismissed it as unfeasible. Some elements of the military elite found Gowon’s dismissal of the transition process unacceptable and ousted him in 1976. He was replaced by General Murtala Mohammed who himself was assassinated before putting in place his proposed transition program. His deputy, General Olusegun Obasanjo became military head of state and carried out a successful transition program that brought Alhaji Shehu Shagari to leadership in 1979. No sooner had he become president than Shagari encountered political and economic profligacy that hampered the first experiment with democracy in Nigeria. Thus in 1983, the civilian regime of Shagari was dismantled by Gen Mohammadu Buhari who “instigated a new era of military dominance that proved more corrosive to state capabilities, economic development, and socio-political stability than its predecessors” (Lewis, 2006: 90). Thus in 1985, Buhari’s regime was toppled by General Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1992), who, on assuming power promised to dismantle the abusive regime of Buhari. For instance, the Babangida regime opened up cases of many Nigerian politicians and journalists who had been convicted by Buhari’s questionable military tribunals (Ibhawoh, 1999: 162). However, it was all a charade.

Where the Babangida regime had committed itself to promoting human rights, his policy of Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) severely questioned the legitimacy of his regime, especially by abandoning his declared position on human rights and responding to the people’s demonstrations with repression (Ibhawoh, 1999: 165). As well as this, less than a year after he pronounced himself president, Babangida was implicated in the assassination of the renowned journalist, Dele Giwa, who was killed by a parcel bomb delivered to his family home on October 19, 1986. It is alleged that prior to his death, Dele Giwa had been investigating a story involving the late former First Lady Mariam Babangida (Serino *et al*, 2010: 5). In 2001, Babangida blatantly refused to testify before the country’s human rights commission regarding his

connection with the death of Dele Giwa (Serino *et al*, 2010:6). Babangida also organized an election in 1993 – arguably the freest and fairest election in Nigeria’s history – which he nevertheless annulled (Laremont *et al*, 2002: 274). With no tangible reason given for the annulment of the elections, the period after the annulment “witnessed increased protests and violent actions by different segments of the civil society demanding equity and justice from a state they deemed to be pathologically flawed” (Ikelegbe, 2005: 85). The annulment saw Nigeria reverting to another despotic regime: the regime of Sani Abacha who came into power in 1993 after a bloodless coup that offset the interim government of Earnest Shonekan, which was arbitrarily set up by Ibrahim Babangida before he stepped down.

While military regime in Nigeria has always been associated with many cases of human rights abuses, the Abacha regime was the most ruthless and repressive in the entire history of the military era in Nigeria (Ikelegbe, 2005: 85). Similar to Augusto Pinochet of Chile (1973-1990),<sup>8</sup> Abacha ruled Nigeria as a brutal dictator (Laremont *et al*, 2002: 276). Abacha’s first duty as Nigeria’s Head of State was to dissolve national and state assemblies, state executive councils, local government councils, political parties, and the then National Electoral Commission (NEC). In fact, the late General dismantled all democratic structures in the country including the constitution (Laremont *et al*, 2002: 275). His regime “branded an entire region as the opposition and commenced a ruthless reign of intimidation, exclusion, corruption, and repression against them” (Ikelegbe, 2005: 85). Even slight disagreements with Abacha’s style of governance were perceived as unacceptable and punishable by death (Laremont *et al*, 2002: 275). Those who dared to oppose his regime were detained in prisons and tortured for several years without trial. Others were sentenced by many kangaroo courts and incarcerated without following legal process (Laremont *et al*, 2002: 275). According to Alao (2006: 72) the Abacha regime was also involved in the deaths of notable civilians like Kudirat Abiola, the wife of MKO Abiola who won the June 12 1993 Presidential election, General Shehu Yar’ Adua, a former Vice President, Alfred Rewane, an elder statesman, Shola Omotoshola, a senior government official, Ken Saro Wiwa, the leader of the Ogoni people, together with his compatriots (Alao, 2006: 72). Ken Saro

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<sup>8</sup> General Augusto Pinochet of Chile “used assembly resolutions to rally nationalistic support for his rule despite the gross violations of basic rights that he was overseeing” (Weiss *et al*, 2010: 187).

Wiwa and his compatriots were hanged despite international pleas and condemnation while others were assassinated by special military death squads.<sup>9</sup> Other cases of human rights abuses during Abacha's regime include closure of media houses, unfair detentions of civilians, intimidation, and extra-judicial killings (Aaron, 2005: 128).

Thus, by dint of coercion and repression, the Abacha regime terrorized, brutalized, and intimidated his people (Laremont *et al*, 2002: 276).<sup>10</sup> The subsequent siege mentality that resulted from the gruesome regime of Abacha was made manifest "in the resistance that produced the likes of the Oodua People's Congress (OPC), the Supreme Egbesu Assembly (SEA), and the Movement for the Survival and Self-Actualization of Biafra (MASSOB)" (Ikelegbe, 2005: 85). Despite the activism and militancy of these groups, Abacha still managed to commence a long-drawn regime of brutal repression against them through frequent and large-scale military pacification exercise, and in so doing, recorded the worst catalogue of human rights abuses in Nigeria (Ikelegbe, 2005: 85).

Just as Nigeria is learning to adjust to its situation of repression under the Abacha regime, the dictator suddenly died, and General Abdulsalam Abubakar, his Chief of Defense Staff, was sworn in as Head of State. General Abdulsalam Abubakar spearheaded a short democratic transition program and released prominent political prisoners, including former President Olusegun Obasanjo and Chief MKO Abiola, who was imprisoned by Abacha for insisting on his right as the acclaimed winner of the June 12, 1993 elections. General Abdulsalam created the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) that conducted an election that brought former president Olusegun Obasanjo back to power as a democratic President. At the

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<sup>9</sup> After the execution of Ken Saro Wiwa and his compatriots by the Abacha regime, the United Nations General Assembly responded with a resolution condemning the Abacha regime. The vote was 101-14, with 47 abstentions. Although it was one of the important human rights resolutions adopted during that session, it lacks the requisite proactive measures to stop Abacha from further repressing his people (Weiss *et al*, 2010: 186).

<sup>10</sup> Despite his record of human rights abuses, Abacha, ironically intervened militarily to suppress civil conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone (Hutchful, & Aning, 2004: 208). This informs Alao's (2006) avowal that the Nigerian military are "Peacekeepers abroad and Troublemakers at home."

inauguration of the democratic government in May 1999, many Nigerians “whose rights had been battered by successive military dictatorships had high hopes for their restoration” (Aaron, 2005: 128). The hope was kindled when Obasanjo established the Human Rights Violation Investigation Commission (HRVIC), headed by Justice Chukwudifu Oputa (Aaron, 2005: 128). In addition, Obasanjo tried to sanitize the nation’s security apparatus by retiring most of the top military officials (Fawole, 2005: 68). But whatever the merits of Obasanjo’s efforts, very little has changed since then. Nigeria’s fledgling democracy has increasingly shown signs of a possible relapse into its previous autocratic condition (Yagboyaju, 2011: 103). In fact, the spectre of authoritarianism, repression and excessive use of force in Nigeria still lingers on as the country’s security forces have shown a repeated tendency to act independently – and sometimes in clear defiance – of the civil authorities and to take extreme measures in settling conflicts (Hutchful and Aning, 2004: 212). Successive civilian regimes in Nigeria, just like the brass hats, lack the political will and the capacity to tackle these sources of political instability. Civilian rule has instead, become subject of public criticism especially with regards to issues of corruption, indiscipline, and abuses, thereby turning the state into a hegemonic tool for the marginalization and subordination of its vast citizenry (Ikelegbe, 2005: 86). It is thus yet to be seen whether the inchoate democracy in Nigeria will be free from heavy-handedness and human rights violations.

### **5.3 Security Deficiency in Nigeria**

The security of a nation is based on two vital pillars: first, it involves the maintenance and protection of socioeconomic and political order in the event of an internal or external threat; second, it entails the maintenance of international order, as well as the minimization or eradication of the threat to the core interests of the state and its citizens. Given these pillars, a well-secured nation can be said to be one that is guaranteed of a democratic and patriotic government, and that is safeguarded by its security powers (Omede, 2011: 92).

National security in Nigeria comprises two objectives: the first objective is to strengthen the nation and to advance its interest and objectives to contain instability, control crime, eliminate

corruption, enhance genuine development, and improve the welfare and quality of life of every Nigerian; the second objective entails the preservation of the safety of all Nigerians and the protection of the sovereignty of the country's integrity and its interests (Omede 2011 : 92). Over the years, successive governments, especially the military rulers in Nigeria, have failed dismally to render optimal security services to the nation. According to Fayeye and Balogun (2012: 270), the crisis of security in the country is probably because the Nigerian leaders do not prioritize security in any significant way.

The security deficiency in the country is manifested by the ruthless manner in which successive governments have dealt with the breakdown of law and order in the country. Examples include the Gowon regime's 'land, air and sea operation' against students demonstrating at the University of Lagos and the organized massacre of unarmed students in Ahmadu Bello University under the military regime of Obasanjo in 1978 (Ibrahim, 1989: 69). Also during Obasanjo's democratic government in 1999, Amnesty International (2002: 17) reported that about 250 civilians were killed by the Nigerian army in Odi, Bayelsa state in reprisal for the killings of 12 police men, allegedly by the civilians. Two years after this incident, Amnesty International (2002: 18) also reported that the Nigerian army under Obasanjo's Presidency killed approximately 200 unarmed civilians in Benue state in the pretext of resolving the raging dispute between the Tiv and the Jukun ethnic groups in the state.

In more recent times, this security deficiency and brutality in Nigeria is manifested in the way in which the security forces are handling the Boko Haram crisis. It must be pointed out from the outset that the security forces in Nigeria are operating in a somewhat dangerous terrain accentuated by the risky nature of the operation (Musa, 2012). But despite the challenges, the lack of social, moral, and military discipline among the security forces heighten their propensity toward committing more atrocities than addressing the issue on ground. This was manifested in the wake of the July 2009 violent confrontations between the sect and the Nigerian Police Force. Human Rights Watch documented 28 alleged extrajudicial killings committed by the police between July 28 and August 1, 2009 in Maiduguri while responding to the Boko Haram uprising.

Instructively, twenty-four of these killings occurred outside the front gate or inside the compound of the police headquarters (Human Rights Watch, 2012: 61). Clearly, these cases of extrajudicial execution by the Nigerian authorities constitute a crime under international law for which the offenders must be brought to justice (Amnesty International, 2012: 19). For many members of the sect, the circumstances surrounding the death of their leader and dozens of other suspected members in the July 2009 violent uprising, served to swell pre-existing antagonisms toward the government, especially the police force (Crisis Group Africa Report, 2010: 25).

What was also problematic and illustrative of the brutality of Nigeria's security powers was the way in which the police and other security outfits in the country were using their powers to parade terrorist suspects around children. In fact, according to Human Rights Watch (2012: 9), the Joint Task Force has physically abused people, stole money during raids, burned houses of Boko Haram suspects, as well as indiscriminately killed people they thought to have links with the sect. These killings, coupled with the Boko Haram casualties, have raised the overall death toll of civilians killed to more than 2,800 since the July 2009 Boko Haram uprising (Human Rights Watch, 2012: 9). Other reported abuses by security forces in Nigeria include harassment of civilians at checkpoints including beatings and punishments – the most common of which is frog-jump – as well as forcing or even beating bus drivers and wayfarers into giving bribes. These actions are often glossed over and seldom challenged because of an entrenched tradition of military brutality in Nigeria (Adesoji, 2011: 112).

Other factors that have encumbered the security forces in their attempts at curbing religious militancy include the politics of nepotism in the structure of the organization, poor intelligence gathering, and the absence of trust between the Nigerian populace and its security forces (Adesoji, 2011: 114). By and large, such kind of disproportionate and inappropriate counterterrorism tactics by the Nigerian state often leads to a cycle of mutual escalation between Boko Haram and the Nigerian security forces, which ultimately “destroys the village in order to save it” (Shafir *et al*, 2007: 178). A state that perpetuates this kind of act casts doubt on its

“national identity, and blurs the distinction in international relations between terrorist violence and defensive state terror” (Shafir *et al*, 2007: 178).

#### **5.4 Endemic Corruption in Nigeria**

As a country, Nigeria is generally suffering from the endemic culture of corruption, with the nation’s leadership the most culpable (Dada and Ejue, 2012: 237). Pervasive corruption throughout the country – from the corner policeman seeking bribes, to the clerk who charges an arbitrary fee for any permit request, to the country’s leading politicians, leaves the average Nigerian impoverished and frustrated (Uzodike and Maiangwa, 2012: 100). Even roadblocks set up to prevent the easy movements of hooligans, terrorists, and dissidents are quickly turned into avenues for police and soldiers to extract bribes from bus drivers (Walkers, 2012: 12). Jobs in the government are seen as the means to personal wealth, not as a means to serve the people or create a new, better future for them.

Furthermore, it is reported that of all the illicit financial outflows measured in Sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria has the highest cumulative outflow, with a whopping \$89.5 billion stolen and stoked in foreign accounts from the period between 1970 to 2008 (Global Financial Integrity, 2012). The extent to which such kind of corruption and money laundering has become normalized in Nigeria is captured succinctly by Chabal and Deloz (1999: 100) in this way: “the usual response by Nigerians to the charge that their country is deemed by some to be the most corrupt on earth is: this is how we do things in Nigeria.” Similarly, ‘The Financial Times’ once reported that due to the endemic culture of corruption in the country, most Nigerians have no problem misappropriating public funds to disperse favours to a cousin or to build a well for one’s village, as it is seen as an informal or polite means of distributing wealth (cited in Salisu, 2003: 179). Much of Nigerian corruption is driven by the ethics of dependency of relations, ethnic and religious loyalties and the tendency for greed and conspicuous consumption among the political elites (Salisu, 2003: 182). For the most part however, the general populace in Nigeria is usually

ignorant of the scale of corruption that goes on in the country, and because they cannot hold their government accountable, they are often placated or ignored.

The foregoing makes clear why Nigeria, the most populous and deeply divided country in Africa, has been described as a 'Gulliver', and its leaders, the Lilliputians "whose inhumane greed has prevented a wealthy nation from fulfilling its leadership aspirations and development potential" (Adebajo, 2008: 2). Since gaining independence in 1960, most of Nigeria's leaders have failed to demonstrate what Adebajo (2008: 2) calls a sense of the obligations of rank, and due to this, they have turned the country into their personal fiefdom. To be sure, "an estimated \$380 billion of the country's oil wealth was stolen by its post-independence leaders, which is equivalent to about two-thirds of all economic aid given to Africa during this period" (Adebajo, 2008: 2). Leaders in each of the 36 states of the federation receive up to 715 million Naira (\$4.5 million) per month as 'security fund,' with much of it stoked in foreign bank accounts or shared among their cronies and relatives (Forest, 2012: 33). Shockingly, both the past and present ruling elites, despite the money they have amassed – or even because of it –, have been out of touch with the concerns of the citizens. Nigeria's oil wealth has often been cited by some to be one of the main drivers of the pervasiveness of corrupt activities in the country (Salisu, 2003: 181). Thus, for instance, the Government of General Ibrahim Babangida (1985-93) was unable to account for \$12.2 billion of excess oil windfalls (Agbibo and Maiangwa, 2012: 23).

The chief of all the crooks was General Sani Abacha (Agbibo and Maiangwa, 2012: 23). According to Alao (2006: 74), the Abacha administration made looting of national treasury commonplace. Abacha was estimated to have accumulated a fortune of approximately US\$6 billion in just four and a half years of his rule, largely siphoned from the national treasury and oil revenue, while many Nigerians simmered in anger at their deepening poverty (Maier, 2000: 3). This accumulated depredations of the military despots laid a heavy burden on the civilian administration, which was manifested variously "in a depleted treasury; a huge debt overhang; underdeveloped public institutions; endemic corruption; simmering social antagonism; and ethno-religious clashes" (Lewis, 2006: 89-91). Up until the end of his second tenure in 2007,



Olusegun Obasanjo busied himself trying to recover some of the stolen money the Abacha family had stocked away in foreign banks. Even the one-year regime of General Abdulsalaam Abubakar was not spared of the corruption pathology in the country. Abubakar's government was alleged to have issued out spurious contracts during the brief period of his stay in power before handing over to retired General Olusegun Obasanjo in May 1999 (Alao, 2006: 74). Since coming to power in May 1999, former President Olusegun Obasanjo drafted an anti-corruption document in an effort to clean up the malaise in the country. To enforce the anti-corruption laws, Obasanjo established the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) to investigate cases of money laundering, corruption, and advance fee fraud. In spite of its noble objectives, the anti-corruption commission has made less impact in prosecuting offenders. Salisu (2003: 192) argues that the reason behind the ineffectiveness of the anti-corruption commission owes to the fact that the agency "lacks the courage to step on big toes".

Many citizens, especially those who live below the poverty line, are distressed at the rate at which the Nigerian leadership make fraud and corruption in the country to be commonplace (Duodu, 2012). The net effect of this is that corruption has arguably become a common trait in various forms of political violence, and is often cited by Boko Haram and its victims as one of the motivating causes of its campaign of terror (Forest, 2012: 6). Reacting to what it perceived as endemic elite corruption and moral decay, Boko Haram enunciated a wish to return to an Islamic state governed purely on the principles of the Sharia law, which it believes to be an antidote to the long-festering corruption impediment in the Nigerian state.

## **5.5 Bad Governance in Nigeria**

According to the United Nations, good governance is based on the principles of equity, transparency, accountability, participation, pluralism and the respect of the rule of law. A good government therefore, is one that promotes these principles in a manner that is efficient, effective, and enduring, in order to fulfil the economic, political, and social needs of the people

(Bolaji, 2010: 215; United Nations Global Issues, 2012). The greatest threats to good governance are corruption, rent-seeking activities, impoverished populace, lack of transparency, state brutality, sectarian and electoral violence.

Throughout Africa, and indeed, elsewhere in the world, one of the most common areas of a population's acrimony toward the state is the issue of bad governance. As articulated by William Reno (cited in Forest, 2012: 31), governance in Africa "has often been based on very narrow, parochial interests—including tribal, religious, clan, or family loyalties—to which collective interests of the general citizenry are subjected." Nigeria presents a clear example of this kind of governance deficiency as its political history typifies the ways in which ruling elites have brandished their disregard for the general citizenry whom they are meant to serve. In so doing, their actions and policy decisions have contributed to a loss of legitimacy among ordinary citizens, some of whom no longer trust the country's political, economic and legal institutions, and at best become restive (Forest, 2012: 31). Since the First Republic, which ended in 1966 with the intrusion of the military into politics, Nigeria's leaders have performed abysmally in discharging their constitutional responsibilities. For instance, the regime of the Second Republic led by Alhaji Shehu Shagari was mired by gross mismanagement, unparalleled graft, and continuing political and economic turmoil. During the Shagari regime, the economy plummeted by more than 8 per cent in an era that witnessed the fall in world oil prices (Maier, 2000: 15).

Albeit Nigeria appeared to be making headway toward democracy with the Third Wave in 1991, by 1998 it was listed among the 18 most repressive states in the world (Karatnycky, 1997). In particular, the military regime of Buhari (1983–85), Ibrahim Babangida (1985–93), Sani Abacha (1993–98), and Abdulsalami Abubakar (1998-1999) traced a downward spiral of repression, arbitrary rule, economic predation, and the erosion of such central institutions as the central bureaucracy, major social services, and infrastructure (Lewis, 2006: 90). The civilian rulers who followed the military era have also been culpable despite their promises that they would make quantifiable and progressive changes in the economic and political situation of the country. The administrations of Obasanjo (1999-2007) and Yar'adua (2007-2010) failed to resolve crucial

issues of governance and development in Nigeria. The Jonathan administration has not fared any better. In an article on *Daily Trust* Nigeria, a renowned columnist Adamu Adamu (2012) observes that even with the return to civilian rule in 1999, the dividends of good governance in Nigeria are still a far cry. According to him, former president Olusegun Obasanjo merely went the way he came, and President Umaru 'Yar'adua came the way he went; and although President Goodluck Jonathan came after them, Nigeria is yet to benefit from any major gains of governance. Instead, good governance has been receding into the midst of the distance faster than the leadership baton was being handed over (Adamu, 2012).

Notwithstanding the failure of the Nigerian leadership, it appears that the Nigerian populace is also culpable in heightening bad governance and conflicts in the country. Seeds of bad leadership, which have caused untold chaos and hardship in the country, were sown long ago through irresponsible and docile citizenship (Al-Ghazali, 2012). The first Nigerian coup in 1966 provides a chilling example of how civilians often support irresponsible governance systems. For instance, the success of the 1966 coup in Nigeria was due, in no small measure, to the support the military received from northern business interests, sectors of political society, and certain civil society groupings such as religious groupings and ethnic chiefs who thought that the military would perform better than the prevailing civilian leaders. Of course, the rest of the story is now history (Williams, 2005: 49). Ethnic solidarity is also used to justify bad leadership and corruption in Nigeria. As Guest notes, "Nigerians almost all say they frown upon corruption and bad leadership, but they tend to forgive or even applaud the perpetrator if he or she belongs to their ethnic group" (cited in Agbiboa and Maiangwa, 2012: 22). Given this blind loyalty, some of the citizens also become complicit and incapable of questioning their leaders' motives and tunnel vision (Al-Ghazali, 2012). In this regard, Okome (2006: 59) argues that the Nigerian citizens are failing to discharge their civic responsibility in a democratic polity by demanding that the business of accountable, transparent, and just governance is fully delivered (Okome, 2006: 59). In the space created by bad governance in Nigeria, Boko Haram continues to gain steady ground and following in the slums of Borno, Kano, Sokoto, Kaduna, and Maiduguri, especially among the unemployed and impoverished youth in the region (Adesoji, 2010: 98; Forest, 2012: 65).

## 5.6 Continued Economic Challenges

By the late 1970s, Nigeria had come to depend almost entirely on oil for 95 per cent of its export earnings and revenue. But in the early 1980s, the economy was dislocated due to the fall in the international oil prices, which engendered fiscal pressures and a debt burden that severely hampered economic growth for almost a decade. During this period, economic management in Nigeria deteriorated and inherent problems of revenue uncertainty escalated (Williams, 1999: 196). Several economic policies that were implemented by the military junta to ostensibly address the economic dislocation in the country saw many Nigerians marginalized and alienated from the state. In particular, the adoption of IMF and World Bank's Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in June 1986 by the Babangida administration brought in its wake high incidence of poverty, unemployment, rural-urban migration, corruption and economic mismanagement in the country (Omede, 2011: 93). As a result, tens of thousands of workers were retrenched, and basic services were not provided for most citizens. Instead, most Nigerians were urged to economize by spending less money (Mu'azu, 2011: 19).

While the general citizenry tightened their belts, the corrupt elites on the other hand engaged in an 'embezzlement spree' with such impunity that not only angered the populace but also brought about widespread despair and profound mistrust in the Nigerian leadership (Mu'azu, 2011: 20). Over time, economic privation aggravated the problems of public services, unemployment, and deindustrialization that formed the foundation for violence and other social and political instability in the country (Lewis, 2011: 3). It was this economic turbulence and popular discontent within the Nigerian polity that clearly influenced military interruptions in politics in 1983, 1985, and 1993 (Lewis, 2011: 12). A further consequence of the economic crisis in the country was well manifested in the huge nationwide protests/strikes against the proposed complete removal of oil subsidy in June 2007, and its subsequent partial removal in January

2012.<sup>11</sup> With millions of people who have no regular food, no potable water, and no proper education, religion could easily be a salve to a better set of economic circumstances. The removal of the oil subsidy might have just provided more support for Boko Haram in the north; as it has done with other groups like the Niger Delta militants in the south (Ewi, 2012).

To complicate the economic challenges, Nigeria has failed to invest in agriculture and other sectors of its economy since the oil boom in the late 1970s. The failure of the country's leadership to diversify the economy beyond petroleum has made Nigeria highly reliant on the profits of petrodollars (Gourley, 2012: 12). The economy of the north has been hard-hit by this lack of economic diversification. With the collapse of agriculture and manufacturing industries, cotton, farm products, and textiles became scarce commodities (Thomson, 2012: 49). This leaves most areas of the country, especially the north – which generally depends on agriculture – impoverished with many youths unable to secure jobs. In the wake of this economic crisis, some northern Muslims have turned to the Sharia law with the hope that it can provide a safety net under which Muslims can unify as they have in the past and which can again provide a path toward enlightenment and economic prosperity (Thomson, 2012: 50). Clearly, Boko Haram is also a symptom of this state of uneasy economic stagnation in Nigeria.

### **5.7 Derelict Institutions and Infrastructures in Nigeria**

The large scale insurgency of Boko Haram graphically reveals another problem that typifies dysfunctionality in Nigeria: the dearth of infrastructural facilities. For instance, after the Boko Haram's onslaught on St. Theresa's Catholic Church in Madalla, Niger State, on December 25, 2011, reporters and bystanders were outraged at the slow response of the paramedics who, after turning up, complained of lack of ambulances to transport the hapless victims to hospitals (Maiangwa *et al*, 2012). The Nigerian government, under the presidency of Goodluck Jonathan

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<sup>11</sup> For most observers, the fuel subsidy removal is in principle a sound and necessary policy decision as part of an ambitious economic restructuring plan. But as Forest (2011: 38) argues, many Nigerians are of the view that the subsidy money would be misappropriated rather than used for their good.

has admitted, after the attacks in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, that they are simply ill-equipped, if not ill-prepared to deal with the Boko Haram terrorism. This is owing to the fact that Nigeria's infrastructures such as police stations, health facilities, and other state institutions are underdeveloped and highly susceptible to continuous terrorist invasions (Obayiuwana, 2011: 79).

The severity of the infrastructural and institutional problem is reflected in Nigeria's healthcare sector. Most hospitals lack requisite facilities to handle large scale emergency cases such as the ones precipitated by the Boko Haram attacks. According to Soyinka (1996: 123), this is because health services in Nigeria are practically non-existent or generally poor. For instance, mothers die in childbirth on a daily basis for lack of the most basic medical facilities (Soyinka, 1996: 123). It might also be because some physicians steal government equipment from public hospitals and take them to their own private clinics (Carling, 2006: 18). The crisis of the health sector in Nigeria is further captured by a 2010 report of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG), which stated that the maternal mortality rate in Nigeria was 545 deaths per 100,000 live births and the proportion of births attended by skilled medical personnel was only 39 per cent (African Economic Outlook, 2012: 12). Infant mortality has also reached epidemic proportions with 75 deaths per 1, 000 live births, with an under-five mortality rate of 157 deaths per 1, 000 births in 2010 (African Economic Outlook, 2012: 12).

Sanitary conditions in the country are also dismally poor. Access to government-sponsored sanitation has dropped from 37 per cent in 1990 to 31 per cent in 2012, resulting in an escalation of diseases such as dysentery, typhoid, cholera, etc. (*Aljazeera*, 6 December 2012). The situation has reached an acute condition such that the simplest and easily curable diseases like malaria, for example, worsen and kill millions of children for lack of proper treatment and sanitary practices. Commenting on the depth of this infrastructural and institutional crisis in Nigeria, a military governor – the very product and pillar of the establishment – once lamented that the hospitals in Nigeria had become mere consulting clinics (Soyinka, 1996: 123). Without a purposeful prioritization of healthcare and improved sanitation conditions by the Nigerian authorities, living

standards and general productivity level in the country will continue to dwindle, with women and children bearing the brunt of the crisis.

### **5.8 The Lack of Reliable Reporting on the Boko Haram Phenomenon**

The lack of reliable and intelligent reporting on the intent, evolution, and operations of Boko Haram has made resolving the issue something of a Herculean task. It is difficult to contemplate the successful resolution of the Boko Haram impasse if its *dramatis personae*, goals, and objectives are not properly and accurately comprehended. The conflicting accounts that the government and media continue to give on the issue have instilled doubts in the minds of the citizens as to the capacity and willingness of the government to surmount the impasse (Maiangwa *et al*, 2012). The reporting impasse was manifested in the way in which the media reported the issue of the failed attempt by the Nigerian and British government to rescue some foreign nationals captured by gunmen in Sokoto state. The gunmen were not only reported to have links with Al-Qaeda, but it also seemed acceptable and rewarding to the Nigerian government and media to conclude that the gunmen were spinoff of the Boko Haram sect. Whatever the case might be, this incidence brought more confusion and obscurity regarding the Boko Haram phenomenon to the general populace in Nigeria and beyond (Salkida, 2012).

Certainly, there is no gainsaying the fact that Boko Haram terrorism is a serious threat to Nigeria's stability. However, with the way the media has reported its activities, it would seem as if Boko Haram is the sole purveyor of terrorism and chaos in the country: the conclusion can even be mistakenly made that its targets are Christians and southerners and that Boko Haram is trying to ignite a religious violence in the country (Haruna, 2012). This kind of unbalanced and simplistic account of the phenomenon appears to be a way of indoctrinating a particular audience, but by so doing, it also exposes the Nigerian media more as a weapon of deception, than as a bastion of education and enlightenment on the complexities of the Nigerian state (Haruna, 2012). Also by focusing solely on the Boko Haram reign of terror, without paying

cognizance to the incredible venality manifested in corruption, mismanagement, and wasteful lifestyles of Nigeria's authorities, it will be difficult to isolate and properly deal with the threats confronting Nigeria as a country. There is thus a need to maintain and provide an accurate, balanced, and fair reporting on Boko Haram, especially in terms of its contextual causal factors, if the crisis is to be properly addressed.

### **5.8 The North-South Chasm in Nigeria**

The Boko Haram crisis is also illustrative of the deepening socio-political and economic divide between the seemingly advantaged south and the disadvantaged north, where poverty, unemployment, and gross underdevelopment have fuelled increasing dissatisfaction and frustration among the northern populace towards their southern counterparts. The various communal and ethno-religious groups in the north and south jockey for political power and jostle for a greater share of the country's socioeconomic resources with each region and religion feeling itself politically and economically marginalized and deprived (Wuye, 2005: 227). It is no wonder that most sectarian conflicts fought in the country are mostly connected to the issues of land, political power, and the uniquely Nigerian concept of indigeneity.

According to Atuanya (2012), the north appears to be lagging behind its southern counterpart in terms of education at all levels (Atuanya, 2012). This discrepancy is invariably seen as one of the unfortunate legacies of colonialism. The colonial administrators are usually blamed for deliberately refusing to establish modern schools in Northern Nigeria because they wanted to guard against any form of resistance to their rule, which they experienced with the establishment of modern schools in the southern region. But as Uzodike (2012) argues,

The context was that some northern political elites were opposed to interference in their control of the existing systems, which compelled the colonial authorities to rule the area indirectly. The northern leaders generally shunned Western schools, which rendered certain industrial activities difficult in the region. In fact, most of their initiatives



actually concentrated in the southwest with Lagos as the indisputable hub. Industrial activities and schools in many other parts were not as much the result of colonial authorities as they were the result of Christian missions and local ethnic communities (Uzodike, 2012).

The consequence of the foregoing is that there is now a huge educational and development disparity between the north and the south which feeds ravenously into the north-south divide in Nigeria. The National Bureau of Statistics' (NBS) latest employment data indicate that although unemployment in Lagos, and other south-western states like Osun is very rife, the states with the highest and alarming rates of unemployment are the northern states of Yobe (61 per cent), Zamfara (43 per cent) and the north-western state of Niger (39 per cent). In the poverty statistics, the north has not fared any better especially as the region's once flourishing textile industries collapsed in states like Kaduna and Kano. Coincidentally, these are the states that have largely contended with the on-going Boko Haram reign of terror (Atuanya, 2012). The level of insecurity in the north, and the frustration of some of the youths living there, can thus be appreciated. It is little wonder that when Olusegun Obasanjo became President in 1999, some northern political elites were embittered and responded by latching on to Sharia as a veritable tool to "win support from a population desperate for an end to years of frustration, corruption and, more than anything else, hopelessness" (Maier 2000: 144). The initial implementation of the Sharia enjoyed mass popular support in twelve northern Nigerian states because as Sanusi (2007: 185) observes, there was a general sense of political insecurity in the north, given that, like other Nigerians, "they were victims of a corrupt and mismanaged system that led to widespread poverty and unemployment across the region" (Sanusi, 2007: 185). In this context, resistance that included violent activities of Boko Haram were seen as necessary.

The north-south chasm once again manifested following the declaration on April 18, 2011 that Goodluck Jonathan, an Ijaw man and a Christian from the Niger Delta region, was the winner of Nigeria's presidential election.<sup>12</sup> There was a violent outburst in many northern states,

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<sup>12</sup> It is important to note that polarization between north/Muslim and south/Christian in Nigeria long predates the 2011 elections. British colonialism started it and the nationalist and post-independent forces – on both sides – have willingly exacerbated it for something like 7 to 8 decades.

orchestrated by the supporters of General Muhammadu Buhari – the perennial presidential aspirant and former military president. The Muslims regarded the presidential election results as a violation of Nigeria’s, or rather the People’s Democratic Party’s (PDP’s), questionable tradition of alternating the office of the presidency between a Christian and a Muslim, or a southerner and a northerner (Uzodike and Maiangwa, 2012: 101). In his diagnosis of the issue, Adesoji (2010: 10) argues that by advancing and defending their parochial interests, some northern political elite politicized religion in order to shift the attention of the people from their harsh living conditions and recruit them into their camps to make war against their political rivals (Adesoji, 2010: 10). As Bruce Hoffman aptly notes, terrorism can involve the “deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political power ... and to create power where there is none or to consolidate power where there is very little” (cited in Forest, 2012: 5).

Thus, even if Boko Haram is a reaction to what it refers to as the corruption and irresponsible leadership of northern politicians, it might also be the case that some politicians are facilitating the activities of the sect to also express their political embitterment (*Vanguard* 13 February 2012).<sup>13</sup> This is true of most seeming religious crises taking place throughout the world. Most of these crises have as their main causes not religious differences or hatred *per se*, but rather, entrenched socioeconomic inequalities and the purposeful actions of political actors who actively create violent conflicts by instinctually drawing on religion in order to portray it as some form of religious violence. If Boko Haram should continue its attacks, there is a prospect that the gap between the predominantly Muslim north and the majority Christian south will widen with deleterious consequences for the unity of all Nigerians. That is precisely what Boko Haram seems intent to accomplish, and therein lies the danger (Ibelema, 2012). To avert this ominous danger, Nigeria needs a core leadership that understands and appreciates not just the problems of arrested development (Norbrook, 2011: 3), but the necessity of building and promoting a common national identity.

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<sup>13</sup> Boko Haram might be a consequence of some northern politicians who are embittered about the re-election of President Goodluck Jonathan. Of course, there was the ‘it is still our turn argument’ because the Late President Yar’adua had not served two terms, but southern politicians are adept at that game as well.

## **5.9 The Crisis of Nation-Building in Nigeria**

Nigeria is today a deeply fractured and severely divided nation, whose ethnic, religious, sectional, and regional groups have produced pervasive feelings of tensions that have often flared up in sectarian clashes (Ikelegbe, 2005: 86). The crisis of division and disunity in Nigeria is partly linked to the colonial legacy in the country because the colonial administrators failed to foster unity and stability among the diverse ethno-religious groups in the country. In fact, it is argued that the colonialists dismissed the idea of a one and united Nigeria and ruled the country as merely a geographic entity, especially by way of their policy of regional exclusiveness which insulated and isolated the northern region from mainstream Nigeria (Ikelegbe, 2005: 79). In effect, “the inept, explicitly distorted policies pursued by the colonial authorities to (mis)manage diversity made the proliferation of conflicts somewhat inevitable” (Osaghae, 2001: 18). To compound matters, successive regimes in Nigeria have created more cleavages in the country through their competition for power, resources, and political ambitions. These unscrupulous practices of the Nigerian ruling elites shortly after independence were articulated by Horowitz (1985) in his narration of Nigeria’s nation-building crisis:

Thus began the march towards ethnocracy or exclusionary rule by and in the interest of a few elite ethnic groups. Public services, police, armed forces and universities were dominated by members of these groups, and development efforts were concentrated in their areas, at the expense of the development of other areas. The ascendancy of single-party and military government was conducive to this march (cited in Osaghae, 2001: 19).

This resulting ethnic politics is what is today known as the crisis of nation-building in Nigeria. The crisis of nation-building, which is also known as the National Question in Nigeria deals with the ways in which the ethnic, religious, and communal groups in Nigeria interact with one another, with each of the groups feeling a sense of belonging or exclusion from the Nigerian state (Obi, 2004: 9). Since the attainment of independence from the British in 1960, Nigeria has

been grappling with issues of national cohesion owing to its demography, complex mix of ethno-religious groups, but also the tendency of successive regimes to play on ethnic and religious identities for political gains. During the Second Republic in 1979, former President Shehu Shagari gave an inaugural address that showed a willingness to address the nation-building crisis in the country. Thus, Shagari confessed that the process of integrating the various ethnic and religious groups in the country, as well as creating a national government, bedevilled the First Republic and were still very much present in his time. Since national integration requires hardwork, Shagari calls for a committed leadership and citizenry imbued with faith and patriotism to cultivate a patriotic national feeling for one Nigeria (Stremlau, 1981: 49).

Unfortunately, the Shagari regime was unable to address the nation-building crisis for reasons that have already been discussed in the study. With the benefit of hindsight, successive regimes in Nigeria have also been unable to build greater national unity by overcoming deep regional, ethnic, and religious differences. Instead, these competing ruling elites have entrenched the politics of marginalization, exclusion, disadvantages, and alienation, which, in turn, heightens the nation-building crisis and intensifies social cleavages in the country (Ikelegbe, 2005: 71). This is especially so in the years following Nigeria's attainment of independence, when post-independence Nigerian leaders sacrificed the nation for race and substituted the state for the ethnic group (Fanon, 1963: 118). Although such kind of identity-based nationalism is not necessarily inimical to the nation-building project, it can however, become a social problem "when it is politicized and deployed to gain competitive advantage in the recurrent inter-elite struggle for power and resources" (Ikelegbe, 2005: 74). This exploitative identity-based nationalism is what Franz Fanon describes as a 'national weakness', which he blames on the intellectual laziness of the nationalist leaders (Fanon, 1963: 118). In other words, the state in Nigeria only serves the interest of those who had captured it. The people on whose behalf they had ostensibly intervened to save the nation were excluded from the nation in what became, in every practical sense, a project of Nigeria's national elites (Obi, 2004: 5).

The way the political elites in Nigeria manipulated the political space shortly after independence evinces two noteworthy issues: first is the deep divide within the different political elites along ethnic, regional, and religious lines; and the second is the lack of a vision or common ideology needed for the all-important nation-building project in the country (Obi, 2004: 8). Mustapha argues that Nigeria's nationalist leaders failed at the nation-building project because they lacked the types of nationalist leaders like Julius Nyerere, Kenneth Kaunda, Nelson Mandela, Kwame Nkrumah, and Leopold Senghor who, through their philosophical ideologies, were able to harness the ethnic and religious diversities in their countries and bring about some sort of national cohesion among their people (Mustapha, 2008: 42). The problem with the Nigerian nationalists, argues Obi (2004: 8), was that they defined themselves in, and "through access to state power and resources." The net effects of this tendency can be gleaned from the ravages of numerous conflicts, including the repeated military coups and the catastrophic civil war that engulfed the country between the periods of 1966 to 1970 leading to an estimated death of over one million people (Ekineh, 1997: 123). The Nigerian civil war was arguably the most extensive manifestation of the internal security crises that threatened the corporate survival of Nigeria shortly after independence. After the war, the government, under Yakubu Gowon, tried to reconcile the victims and perpetrators by way of promoting national cohesion and integration programs. However, Gowon's post-civil war Rehabilitation, Reconstruction, and Reconciliation program (RRR) was mired by the problem of absorbing the supporters of state secession into the wider Nigerian society - since stereotypes, resentments, and prejudices that had developed during and after the war still prevailed among the different ethnic groups in the country (Falola, and Njoku 2010: 333).

For the most part these groups have, since the 1980s, sought for the re-negotiation of the basis of the Nigerian nation in ways that promote their interests and basic citizenship rights (Obi, 2004: 9). But they have done so by insisting on their ethnic, religious, or regional rights rather than the national unity of all Nigerians. Thus, Ekanola (2006: 280) argues that instead of forging a united front to face the challenges of development in an increasingly competitive and globalised world, many Nigerians in the post-civil war era have been busy waging ethnic and religious wars, competing for control over resources, and resisting marginalization by dominant ethnic groups. The dominant ethnic groups comprising the Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba, have also organized to

prevent what each group claims is marginalization by the other rival groups as manifested in the rotation of the presidency between the three major groups in Nigeria. It is this absence of a national ideology that explains the rise of sectarian conflicts and divisions between the north and south or between the majority and minority groups, and even among the three major ethnic groups – Hausa/Fulani, Igbo, and Yoruba – and the two main religious groups – Christianity and Islam in Nigeria (Osaghae, 2003: 23).

In the 1990s, these divisive issues led to the agitation by different stakeholders for a Sovereign National Conference in which all the representatives of the ethnic, religious, and communal groups in the country will be afforded the opportunity to debate the basis of their citizenship (Obi, 2004: 9). The repressive military regime of that era did not allow for the debate to hold. However, the issue was again brought to the fore in the present democratic era, especially as the Boko Haram crisis was seen as constituting a huge threat to the unity of the country. Yet, a Sovereign National Conference still remains a distant cry as the Nigerian politicians lack the political will to put aside their ethnic and religious divisions and deliberate on the disturbing issues that confront the country as a whole. Thus, rather than subsiding, ethno-religious divisions and partisan politics have continued to threaten the continual existence of the country, leading to the rise of ethnic minority, religious, and secessionist groups whose conception of the Nigerian state is that of an outright enemy (Adibe, 2012). Among the more prominent ones include the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Oodua People's Congress (OPC), the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), the Bakassi Boys, among many others.

The Niger-Delta militants link their struggle with the broader national struggle “for democracy and human rights against militarism and authoritarianism” (Hutchful and Aning, 2008: 212). However, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the struggle of the Niger Delta people also “reflected the effects of shrinking oil revenues, the adoption of a Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), and increased economic hardship for the already marginalized Delta communities” (Hutchful and Aning, 2008: 212). The agitations of the Niger Delta communities and the resulting conflicts

suggest that far from building a state of national-coherence in Nigeria based on fair management and equitable resource allocation, the strategy of the political elites in Nigeria has been to “replicate ethnic and community divisions in order to create protected fiefdoms for sub-elites and to demobilize and confuse subaltern interests” (Hutchful and Aning, 2008: 214).

It is no wonder that the politics of state creation has continued to saturate the political atmosphere in Nigeria. With thirty-six states already crafted from the initial three main regions (Hutchful and Aning, 2008: 214), it might be that the politicization of micro-identities in Nigeria is on-going, and unless the trend is reversed, Nigeria may splinter along ethnic and religious lines. The Nigerian government will need to avert this trend if democracy is to be consolidated. Addressing the Boko Haram crisis, might be a good step in this direction.

#### **5.10 Transnational Crime and The Porosity of Nigeria’s Borders**

One of the most striking features of Africa since the end of the Cold War is the extent to which violence crosses borders (Chabal and Deloz, 1999: 88). It is not just the millions of refugees who flee the raging strife in their own countries and in the process cause a disturbance of some sort in the societies in which they settle, as in Sudan and the Horn of Africa or in Nigeria and in the Great Lakes region. There is also the problem in which conflict in one country may incite domino effect in others, as in Rwanda, Zaire, Burundi, or Liberia (Chabal and Deloz, 1999: 88). Indeed, as economic and social problems worsen, there is a strong tendency in many African countries to find foreign, or allegedly foreign, scapegoats. For instance, foreign workers in Nigeria or Cote d’Ivoire were forced to return to their home countries during the economic crisis of the 1980s. The movement of people in vast numbers across borders can provide boundless opportunities to expand and consolidate terrorist networks and trans-border crimes across many African states, especially those that are weak and volatile (Chabal and Deloz, 1999: 88).

Perhaps, the most spectacular example here is Nigeria itself which, since the Maitatsine followers invaded in the 1980s, has become by far the largest transit area and black hole for the most notable terrorist groups and criminal activities, from terrorism, drug trafficking, cross-border robbery, and the flow of illegal weapons into the country. This is well illustrated by Ahmad Salkida who reported that Mohammed Manga, the suicide bomber who executed Nigeria's first suicide bombing mission on the Nigeria Police Headquarters in Abuja was a business man who had travelled to Cotonou in Benin Republic and later Dubai frequently in order to buy all kinds of goods including ammunitions for the Boko Haram sect (Salkida, 2011). Such transportation of ammunitions as well as illicit movements of people in and out of Nigeria is possible because Nigeria's neighbouring countries like Benin, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon are relatively weak states with high rates of poverty, unemployment, and porous borders. It is this seamlessly permeable nature of Nigeria's borders that informs Emelonye's (2011: 15) assertion that sharing borders with the Republic of Benin, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger, Nigeria remains at the crossroads of Africa's most notable organised crimes.

Boko Haram appears to have taken advantage of these shared borders to have membership connections in Niger, Chad, Mali, and Niger, and it might also be that the sect has purchased weapons in some of these countries.<sup>14</sup> With Nigeria's borders largely porous, and given that Cameroonians, Chadians, Nigeriens, and Beninois can integrate easily into local populations in Nigeria, illicit movements and activities can go undetected by the country's deficient security apparatuses. This possibility is not unlikely given that some Cameroonians, who were the followers of Mohammed Marwa, the Maitatsine leader, formed the bulk of the Maitatsine fighters in the early 1980s (Fawole, 2008: 113). It is also under the circumstance of Nigeria's borders being this porous that Boko Haram might eventually begin to threaten its neighbours, while at the same time posing a huge regional and global security threat in collaboration with other like-minded groups like the Tuareg rebels in northern Mali.

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<sup>14</sup> At the same time, it is possible that globalization has encouraged the growth of parallel and trans-border activity of all types including illicit trade and terrorism. This weakening of the state as a result of globalization can lead to patterns of conflict associated with terror networks (Duffield, 2000: 76).



An addendum to the problem of trans-border crime and transnational terrorism is the issue of the proliferation of small arms across porous borders. A content analysis of about 11 daily national newspapers that featured on the International Firearms Injury Prevention and Policy (IFIPP) indicates that the Nigerian army and police officers have also acted unprofessionally by been complicit in illegal arms trading with militant groups across the country. The review confirmed that over 15 army officers and 30 police officers sold hundreds of AK-47s and Machine Guns to militants and rebels between 2007 and 2010 (Nwanolue and Iwuoha, 2012: 25). Also, a survey of a militant group conducted in Bayelsa state revealed that the majority of them received assistance from the police (30.4 %), the mobile police (14.7%), and the military (24.5%) in obtaining small arms to carry out insurgent activities (Nwanolue and Iwuoha, 2012: 25). In addition, the police in Lagos reported a discovery of about 8,000 pieces of live ammunition in 26 cartons hidden among bales of clothes in a military vehicle that was said to have been smuggled into Nigeria from Benin Republic (*The Guardian*, 18 July 2012).

There have been several other incidents that illustrate the extent of arms proliferation in the country. Soldiers returning from peacekeeping missions have been reported to have sold small arms on the black market, which might have given armed groups like the Boko Haram members access to the ready source of assault weapons in circulation (Nwanolue & Iwuoha, 2012: 26). Worryingly, state governors are known to also bolster the security situation in their states by providing arms, ammunitions and vehicles to the security officers of their states who have not been taught the logistics of lethality. Although it is not illegal to bolster state security forces, the lack of a coordination of practice and policy in relation to the arms and ammunitions that are being provided to the security officers of these states might leads to the abuse of human rights and the entrenchment of a killing society (*The Guardian*, 18 July 2012).

At the sub-regional level, the main legacy bequeathed to Nigeria and other African countries by the mobile dissident troops that operated during the Cold War is the proliferation of small arms

and light weapons (Alo, 2012: 77). All these lend credence to the various ways in which Boko Haram and a constellation of militant groups in Nigeria can easily access weapons through Nigeria's porous borders as well as the complacency of the Nigerian Security Forces and authorities. Given all these dismal socioeconomic and political conditions in place, the discussion will now turn to properly situate the Boko Haram terrorism within the main thrust of the study.

## Chapter Six

### The Rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria

Since the 9/11 attacks, there have been increased speculations that Nigeria might also become an ‘exporter’ of global Islamic extremism - especially with Al-Qaeda’s influence spreading from the Horn of Africa and from the African Maghreb to West Africa (Thomson, 2012: 46). Similarly, Lewis (2002: 9) had envisaged that the porosity of Nigeria’s borders, its culture of pervasive elite corruption, its deficient security apparatus, and its large economic challenges suggests that terrorist movements might seek a foothold in the country for logistics, finance, and possibly act against Western interests in Nigeria.” So far, the rise of Boko Haram has confirmed this speculation of a terrorist surge in Nigeria. This chapter will be guided by the following overarching questions: How did Boko Haram emerge? What is its philosophy and motivating ideology? Who are its members, leaders, adversaries, and sponsors? What are its linkages, if any, to other Islamist terrorist groups? And how is the crisis related to the state failure and the frustration and aggression theses?

#### 6.1 The Origins and Rise of Boko Haram

The precise date and circumstances under which the Islamist sect known as *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad*, meaning "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad" emerged, still remains unclear.<sup>15</sup> According to Ujah (2009), Boko Haram emerged around 1995 in various guises under the leadership of Abubakar Lawan, who later travelled abroad to study at the University of Medina in Saudi Arabia. Gusau (2009) on the other

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<sup>15</sup> In general, solid and comprehensive information on the Boko Haram phenomenon is hard to accessed (Walker, 2012: 6). The sect has made announcements about its goals that are contradictory, unrealistic, and unachievable. The water has been muddied further by the spates of political and sectarian crises in Nigeria, which the government and observers typically attribute to Boko Haram (Walker, 2012: 7).

hand attributed the emergence of the sect to the formation of an evangelical structure at the University of Maiduguri, mainly by some Muslim students who were disillusioned with the Western-style education offered in their universities. Despite these conflicting accounts for the emergence of Boko Haram, it is agreed by most commentators and academics that the sect originated in Borno state in 2002, under the leadership of Sheik Mohammed Yusuf and Mohammed Ali. According to a man named Abdullah, Boko Haram emerged in Borno state as a purely Islamic group with no bearing whatsoever in the Nigerian politics (The Economist, 2012). Another report by Sakilda Ahmed, shows that although Boko Haram emerged as an Islamic group, they however, started to sow seeds of religious intolerance that was contrary to the mainstream tenets of Islam (Sakilda, 2012). The leading clerics of the sect, Mohammed Ali and Mohammed Yusuf contend that Islam allows them to exist in a modern state like Nigeria but prohibited them from colluding or supporting such modern government in so far as it contradicts core Islamic beliefs and practices (Sakilda, 2012).

The Economist (2012) further reports that the founding members of Boko Haram comprise ethnic Kanuri fishermen of Borno state. The reason for the sect's emergence in Borno state is hardly surprisingly because unlike the other northern Muslim-dominated states, Borno state belonged to the medieval Kanuri Empire of Bornu, and is home to the Kanuri people who prior to the attainment of independence in Nigeria, were known to have led an anti-colonial struggle through the pan-Kanuri nationalist movement (Tanchum, 2012: 76). In present day Nigeria, Borno state is one of the poorly constituted states with high rates of poverty, mismanagement, illiteracy, child mortality, and unemployment. To alleviate the plight of the people, it is alleged that Mohammed Yusuf built a mosque and set up a disciplined sect that provided free education, food, and promises of a better future for his followers (The Economist, 2012). Through this act of benevolence, Mohammed Yusuf was said to have attracted a large following, some of whom have been colluding with other Islamist extremists in countries like Algeria, Niger, and Chad to plan and strategize attacks against Western countries (The Economist, 2012).

While Boko Haram might have had such humbling and peaceful beginnings, Tanchum (2012: 76), argues that the sect also represents the transformation of both ethno-nationalist aspiration and religious revivalism (Tanchum, 2012: 76). One of such revivalist movements is the Maitatsine. Some accounts link the rise of Boko Haram to the radical Maitatsine sect. Akin to Boko Haram, the Maitatsine movement believed that they were the only true Muslims and dismissed others as backsliders, and non-Muslims as infidels. They were also averse to Western civilization as well as the Nigerian constitution and democracy (Pham, 2012: 2).

Whatever its connections to the Maitatsine movement, it is still important to understand the gradual evolution of Boko Haram first and foremost as a matter of domestic jurisdiction. After the sect came to the scene as an Islamic sect poised at relieving the hardship of the people of Borno state, it gradually began to make connections with the Borno state politicians. In fact, it has been argued in some quarters that the former governor of Borno state, Alhaji Ali Modu Shariff used the support of Boko Haram to secure the governorship seat in 1999, but later abandoned the group without any acknowledgement or reward (Omipidan, 2009: 44). The anger and disappointment that Mohammed Yusuf and his group felt following their abandonment by Ali Modu Shariff might have prompted them into declaring Borno state in 2002 as unIslamic and intolerably corrupt. It was then that the sect migrated from Maiduguri to a sequestered village called Kanama in Yobe state, where it set up a strict Islamist community governed on the basis of the Sharia law. In Kanama, its members dubbed their new base 'Afghanistan' and also named themselves the 'Talibans' (Tanchum, 2012: 77).

In December 2003, while the sect was in Yobe state trying to establish its idyllic Islamic community, it collided with the Yobe State police following a community dispute regarding fishing rights in a local pond. Sect members subdued an army of police officers and seized their weapons. This confrontation led to a counter attack by the Nigerian Army who destroyed Boko Haram's Mosque and killed seventy of its members (Walker, 2012: 3). The remaining sect members got themselves entangled with the Yobe state government over the issue of implementing the strict version of the Sharia law in the state, until they were eventually

banished. The inhumane treatment they received from both the Borno and Yobe state governments corroborates the view that Boko Haram is locked in an increasingly raucous confrontation with local and state governments in northern Nigeria which, in the sect's view, operate an un-Islamic system of government (Tanchum, 2012: 77). Thus, the state governments, political elites, and local leaders in Yobe and Borno states respectively became the sect's 'legitimate' targets of attack. It was no wonder that at its initial stage, Boko Haram uprisings usually occurred in Borno and Yobe states, involving intense confrontations between the government authorities and the sect's members.

After their stint in Yobe State, the few surviving members of the sect returned to Maiduguri, where they settled down to mobilize for more members and acquire ammunition. Their leader, Mohammed Yusuf, then embarked on the process of establishing the group's mosque in Maiduguri, which was named the Ibn Taymiyyah Masjid (Rice, 2012). Despite having erected a mosque in Maiduguri, Boko Haram was apparently ignored by the Borno state government, and as a result, it gradually made inroads into other states, including Bauchi, and Niger and had its own cabinet members and a religious police force. The sect attracted a large following under the leadership of Mohammed Yusuf by providing food, clothing, hand-outs, and shelter to most of the despondent and deprived youths of northern Nigeria, who see in the sect a recipe for their daily survival (Walker, 2012: 3). Given its large following and embitterment with the political class and security forces in northern Nigeria, Boko Haram has been waging a campaign of terror since 2009. But before a voyage into these terrorist activities is made, suffices at this point to look at the sect's philosophy, intent, and objectives.

## **6.2 The Philosophy, Intent, and Objectives of Boko Haram**

The philosophy of Boko Haram is rooted in the practice of orthodox Islam, which frowns upon Western civilization, including the Nigerian democracy, constitution, and the civil service. Mohammed Yusuf claims that the Nigerian society has deviated from the principles of true

Sharia law and adheres to an evil civilization in the form of Western education (Walker, 2012: 6). This explains why the sect is dubbed “Boko Haram” by the general public, a name which literally means “Western Education is a Sin” (Onuoha, 2012: 2). In its broadest connotation however, it refers to Western civilization as a whole. According to Tanchum (2012: 76), the word ‘Boko’ has resonance with the word ‘Boka’ which, in Hausa and Kanuri, means a sorcerer or soothsayer; thereby endorsing the view that Western civilization is a necessary evil and should be abolished before it corrupts the Islamic societies in Nigeria. The sect regards the following practices in Nigeria as sacrilegious: to send one’s child to a government school; to read or study in Western schools; to accept the liberal-democratic form of government and the Nigerian constitution; to work in government establishments, to go to a club, to believe in the Darwinian Theory of Evolution, to believe in Western science, among many other practices that the sect deems as contradictory to Islamic teachings and beliefs (Ostien, 2012: 22; Salkida, 2012). Boko Haram ostracises and kills those who engage in these so-called ‘sinful’ practices.

After the death of Mohammed Yusuf in the bloody July 2009 confrontations between the sect and the police, the interim leader of the sect, Mallam Sanni Umaru clearly stipulated the philosophy and intent of Boko Haram as follows:

1. That Boko Haram does not in any way mean ‘Western Education is a sin’ as the infidel media continue to portray us. That Boko Haram actually means ‘Western Civilization’ is forbidden... In this case Boko Haram is against Western lifestyles, which include: constitutional provision as it relates to the rights and privileges of women, homosexuality, and sanctions in cases of terrible crimes like trafficking, child rape, and multi-party democracy in an overwhelmingly Islamic country like Nigeria, pornography, prostitution, clubbing, and the consumption of beer.
2. That Boko Haram is an Islamic Revolution whose impact is not circumscribed to northern Nigeria, but spreads across all the 36 states in the country, and that Boko Haram is an offspring of Al-Qaeda, which it aligns with and respects. That the sect supports Osama bin Laden, and shall carry out his command in Nigeria until the country is totally Islamized according to the wish of Allah.

3. That Mallam Yusuf did not die in vain because by virtue of his death, he has become a martyr. Thus, his ideas and teachings will live forever.
4. That Boko Haram lost over 1000 members killed by the gruesome Nigerian army and police mostly of southern Nigerian extraction in 2009. That as a result of this, the southern states, comprising the infidel Yoruba, Igbo and Ijaw will be the immediate target of the sect.
5. That the killing of Mohammed Yusuf and their members in a callous, wicked and malicious manner will not in any way deter them because they have lost their lives in the fight for Allah (*Vanguard*, August 14, 2009).

Having clarified its position and identity, Boko Haram issued the following objectives and threats:

1. That they have started a Jihad in Nigeria which no force on earth can stop. The aim is to Islamize Nigeria and impose the rule of the Muslim majority in the country. That it will teach Nigeria a very bitter lesson.
2. That from the Month of August 2009, it shall carry out a series of bombings in northern and southern Nigerian cities, starting from Lagos, Ibadan, Enugu and Port Harcourt. That the bombings will not stop until Sharia is implemented and Western civilisation is eradicated from Nigeria, and that it will not stop until these evil cities are reduced to ashes.
3. That it shall make the country ungovernable, and that it will gun down those who resist or oppose the implementation of Sharia law in Nigeria.
4. That it promises the West and southern Nigeria a horrible pastime. That it shall focus on these areas, which are the devil's territories, and have been the ones encouraging and sponsoring Western civilisation across the country.
5. That it calls on all northerners in Islamic states to cease adhering to the wicked political parties heading the country ... and join the struggle to establish an Islamic state in Nigeria that will be corruption-free, Sodom-free, and where security and peace will be guaranteed under Islam.



6. That very soon, it shall stir Lagos, the evil city and Nigeria's southwest and southeast, in a way that has never been done by anyone before.

Boko Haram concluded its pronouncement with the unsettling threat that either “you are for us or against us” (*Vanguard*, 14 August, 2009).<sup>16</sup> Ever since it gave these warnings, Boko Haram has launched some devastating attacks in the northern region, especially on security establishments, schools, churches, civilians, and other public places. It is yet to be seen whether the sect will be able to wage the same scale of attacks in the southern parts of the country. Next is a discussion on the membership of the sect.

### **6.3 The Membership of Boko Haram**

Most Boko Haram members are composed of mainly discontented and unemployed youths, especially the Almajiris. Since the 1980s the products of Islamic schools – the Almajiris – have been implicated in strings of religious violence in Nigeria. The uprisings of Maitatsine and Boko Haram demonstrate how Islamic schools can readily and easily provide the platform for the spread of its version of Islam that rejects Western education and ideas, modernity, the supremacy of the state or any of its institutions, and recruiting a loyal following to its cause (Baba, 2010: 11). Besides recruiting members from the Almajiri schools, there is also something about religious leaders that tends to attract some of their followers: their charisma. It could be argued that to some extent, the charisma and benevolence of Mohammed Yusuf endeared him to so many youths who later became his followers. This view is expressed by Abu Dujana, a senior member of the sect, who related how he was inspired by Mohammed Yusuf's preaching and teachings. More than anything else, he confessed that it was what Yusuf revealed to him about the Quran that convinced him to throw in his lot with the group, give up his job, and fight for the

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<sup>16</sup> There is a striking semblance between Boko Haram's threat of 'either you are with us or against us' and that of former US President George W. Bush, which he made shortly after the 9/11 attacks: “every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make ... either you are with us or you are with the terrorists” (cited in Akomolafe, 2006: 225). Boko Haram seems to have reversed Bush's statement to make clear its mission and warn those who will stand on its way.

cause of the sect. It was this blind loyalty to Mohammed Yusuf that kept him with the group even after Yusuf's death and that makes him want to kill for Yusuf's religious ideology of establishing Sharia in Nigeria (Walker, 2012: 9). Dujana's confession corroborates Popovski's (2009: 16) contention that "religious people are easier to manipulate and turn into fighters precisely because they more readily believe in the promises of the manipulators, who, ironically, would not themselves become martyrs in order to earn the rewards of paradise promised after their deaths."

Boko Haram membership also comprises Islamic clerics, professionals and students of tertiary institutions in Borno and Yobe states. Other members include school drop-outs, who opted to join the sect's Islamic schools (Aghedo and Osumah, 2012: 858). Also, Boko Haram has a lot of sympathizers among the populace, and a treasury of support from amongst the local politicians, government officials and from other neighbouring countries like Chad, Niger, and Mali where the sect often takes refuge to regroup and mobilize more support (Maiangwa and Uzodike, 2012b: 3). The members are also exposed to violent religious ideologies through easy travel, and media savvy, which are ways in which the sect may be connected to other transnational terrorist or Wahhabis groups. While there is little hard evidence to corroborate the link between Boko Haram and some northern political parties, it is argued that the sect received some modicum of support from key northern politicians in its early years. To be sure, the move by certain northern state governors to impose Sharia in their states validated the intense radicalisation of Islam in their societies (Ero, 2011). Interestingly, some Nigerian political elites, including a senator, have been charged for allegedly sponsoring the activities of the sect. Most of these politicians take advantage of the deteriorating and low living standards of Nigerian youths to recruit and arm them in pursuit of political interests (Aghedo and Osumah, 2012: 861). Further confirming the depth of Boko Haram's reach, president Goodluck Jonathan lamented that the sect has infiltrated his government; hence, it will not be surprising if some ministers, ex-service men, and state security agencies are also members or of the sect and help the group with training and financing (Aghedo and Osumah, 2012: 858).

There is also a spectrum of non-fighting supporters, including organizers, financiers, and families “who provide active support for fighters and those who look on with tacit approval” (Stewart, 2009: 11).<sup>17</sup> Based on what they perceived to be the injustice and corruption of the Nigerian government, coupled with the current brutal counterterrorism strategy adopted by the Nigerian state, the members of Boko Haram withdrew what loyalty they had for the Nigerian state and became dissidents (Gusau 2009). Given this background, Boko Haram members are fully convinced of the moral and social decadence that has wrought its way deep into the Nigerian society, and are resolved to migrate from such a ‘morally bankrupt’ society to a secluded place where they can establish an ideal Islamic society devoid of political corruption and moral deprivation (Akanji 2009: 60).

To differentiate themselves from others, Boko Haram members keep long beards and wear red or black headscarves – as often portrayed on YouTube videos – and reject the use of certain modern – often seen as Western – goods such as wristwatches and cars. Ironically, the sect’s members use Western technological products such as cellular phones to disseminate information among them and also use motorcycles, cars, and AK-47 guns that are derived from the West to carry out their terrorist acts (Isa 2010). It is important to also point out that some opportunistic criminals and hooligans have taken advantage of the Boko Haram crisis to perpetuate acts of vandalism in the name of the sect. This suggests that there is an endemic character about the experience of terrorism that although it is usually formed by hardliners, it gets exploited by criminals and drug-barons (Roberts, 2006: 108).

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<sup>17</sup> In resolving the Boko Haram crisis, policy makers and the Nigerian government must identify these shadow figures that provide Boko Haram with moral, ideological, and financial support. This is also important for conflict managers, because by identifying these shadow figures, they will be able to build a good knowledge of the many interests and personalities they might have to take into consideration when planning a peace process (Albert, 2001: 114). Importantly too, Albert (2001: 114) argues that it is sometimes possible to delegitimize a violence by ensuring that these kind of actors withhold their support to the insurgents.

## 6.4 The Leadership of Boko Haram

For many years after its purported establishment in 2002, Boko Haram was led by a young charismatic man, named Mohammed Yusuf, who was appointed the leader of the group by a committee of Sheiks. Yusuf later toppled the Sheiks who appointed him, on allegations of corruption and failure to preach and foster 'pure Islam' (Onuoha, 2012: 3). Yusuf had two deputies, and each state and local government where they operate also has its own Commander (Amir) (Da'wah Coordination Council of Nigeria, 2009: 14). Yusuf dropped out of secondary school but received Islamic education in Chad and Niger, where he was said to have been exposed to the Salafist ideology. He became known to the local people for his radical debates and ideas on Islamic issues expressed on local radio and television stations in which he often targeted Islamic scholars (Danjibo, 2009: 6). He also had little or no kind words for politicians, which is hardly surprising considering the fact that his group was abandoned by the Borno state political elites after they purportedly helped Ali Modu Sheriff to become governor (1999-2007).

Following the death of Mohammed Yusuf, Mallam Sanni Umaru occupied the reins of leadership of Boko Haram in an acting capacity. But over time, Sheik Abubakar Shekau assumed all the trappings of unfettered power and became the sect's leader and spiritual head, while Mallam Abul Qaqa became its spokesman (Aghedo and Osumah, 2012: 858). Ibrahim Shekau, was a devout follower of Mohammed Yusuf, who believed that an Islamic state is realizable through preaching and mobilization of the people to reject secularism (Suleiman, 2012: 41). While Mohamed Yusuf had a preference for mass mobilization, his successor, Abubakar Muhammad Shekau, has a preference for terrorist raids (Gourley, 2012: 9). Hence, the issue of the sect's preferred modus operandi usually ignite intense arguments between the late Mohammed Yusuf and Ibrahim Shekau, owing to the latter's relentless advocacy of armed struggle for the group to actualize its objectives. Yusuf was said to have initially been averse to any form of violence, insisting that it was against the teachings of Islam. But with the crackdown on Boko Haram members by the police in the July 2009 uprising, Shekau's advocacy of violence gained widespread endorsement among the membership of the sect as the classic Hobson choice available to save the sect and advance its cause (Suleiman, 2012: 41).

## 6.5 The Sponsors of Boko Haram

The source of Boko Haram's financial support at its initial stage of existence remains unclear (Walker, 2012: 3). But it has been widely alleged that Alhaji Buji Foyi, a former Commissioner in Borno state who was murdered after his arrest by the Nigerian police in 2009, was the prime sponsor of the sect during its early beginnings in 2002. Buji Foyi's selling of his properties and donating the proceeds to the sect was the height of his allegiance to Boko Haram's cause (Adesoji, 2010: 102). Another alleged local financier of the sect, is Senator Ali Ndume. In November 2011, Senator Ali Ndume of Borno state, who incidentally belongs to the ruling party – People's Democratic Party (PDP) – was arrested by the police and charged for financing Boko Haram. Ndume's arrest came after he was implicated by Ali Sanda Umar Konduga, a Boko Haram spokesman who had been arrested a week earlier, and authorities claimed that Konduga's phone records indicated several communications between him and the lawmaker (Forest, 2012: 98). In 2006, a northern businessman was also arrested by the State Security Services (SSS) in connection with his financial support to Boko Haram. The businessman claims that his support was purely based on an obligation for wealthy Muslims to give charitably to the poor (Walker, 2012: 4).

In addition to the alleged aforementioned sponsors of Boko Haram, members of the Borno religious establishment say that the late Yusuf also received funds from Salafist contacts in Saudi Arabia following two hajj trips he made while he was alive, and that it was from this treasury that Yusuf was able to sponsor the education of many youths in Borno state as well as provide them with food parcels. Other speculated sponsors include prominent northern religious leaders and politicians (Sani, 2011). Motivations for such support could include belief in the group's ideology, which might have drawn the sympathy of some local politicians and businessmen (Aghedo and Osumah, 2012: 858). The financial supporters could also be Yusuf's sycophants, followers, and secret admirers who may find the sect's message and membership useful for their own political agendas. The net outcome of such support has been increasingly deadly for the

Nigerian state and citizens. In effect, with their financial support, Boko Haram backers have become - covertly or overtly - a part of the conspiracy to instigate war against the Nigerian state and all its citizens (Adesoji, 2011: 107).

Despite tales of substantial financial backing, some sources claim that in its current formation, Boko Haram is struggling financially, partly because some politicians have stopped paying their usual protection money to the sect due to the increased violence and the grave consequences that their involvement in the activities of the sect might cause to their political careers (Thomson, 2012: 53). This explains why some bank raids in northern Nigeria are being attributed to the sect because it seems reasonable to think that if the sect's treasury is empty, it might carry out raids in order to consolidate its finances. To this end, Walker (2012: 7) argues that Boko Haram began robbing banks and cashing in on transit convoys in some northern states, where the sect has become notorious. However, one has to maintain the slightest caution in ascribing these raids to Boko Haram because as it has been noted, some of these attacks could easily be the handiwork of armed robbers operating under the guise of the sect.

## **6.6 The Adversaries of Boko Haram**

Given Boko Haram's philosophy, its mission entails the strict propagation of the Islamic Sharia law as the *bonafide* legislative law in Nigeria. In fulfilment of this mission, the sect has encountered numerous foes (perceived, fabricated, and imagined). This is indeed true of virtually every instance of terrorism: "enemies have to be invented if they do not already exist" (Juergensmeyer, 2004: 171). Simply put, one cannot have a war without an enemy. In the case of Boko Haram, its array of enemies is quite remarkable. First on the list is the Nigerian democratic government, which the sect claims is West-centred and therefore runs against the grain of Islam. The sect claims that since everyone is fully convinced that the Nigerian democracy and constitution is neither from God nor from his Prophet, the practices of democracy and the reliance on the Nigerian constitution is, *ipso facto*, a form of paganism and should be banned (Kenny, 2012). The sect has also included in its black book, schools, cinemas, music, and sports,

prostitution, pornographic films, beer consumption, and many related practices that seem incongruous in Islamic societies (*Vanguard*, 14 August 2009). Furthermore, Christians and many Muslims who do not share in the ideology of the sect are also included in the enemy list. In addition to killing Muslims, Christians, civilians, and security forces in northern Nigeria, the sect has also accused the southern states of facilitating the spread of Western civilization in the country (*Vanguard*, 14 August 2009). As a result, southern Nigeria and the West have become for Boko Haram the ‘axis of evil’, to use former U.S. President George W. Bush’s terminology for reputed terrorist countries.

Within the ranks of the Muslims, Boko Haram insists that any Muslim who cooperates with the Nigerian government and Christians in opposing or providing any useful information that will lead to the arrest of its members will be killed, despite their mosque attendance (Kenny, 2012). So far, Boko Haram has attacked some Islamic clerics. It is reported that Boko Haram assassinated Sheikh Ibrahim Ahmed just after he finished his usual Maghreb prayers at Gomari Mosque in Maiduguri, Borno state. Before he was killed, Sheikh Ibrahim Ahmed was known for his polemics against the sect. According to Solomon (2012), the intent for Sheikh Ibrahim’s assassination was to send a clear message to the other Imams in the country that the only credible interpretation of the Quran is a true Islamic one based on the strict observance of the Sharia law. Also, on July 13, 2012, a Boko Haram suicide bomber detonated his bomb just meters from where the state’s deputy governor and the Shehu of Borno – both Muslims – habitually undertook their Friday prayer. Although the duo escaped the attack, about 10 other Muslims lost their lives (Idris, 2012).

Boko Haram further impugned the Muslim political elites of Northern Nigeria for their cooperation with the Christian political leaders of southern Nigeria within the national structure of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Tanchum, 2012: 76). Further, Christian evangelism and academic research sponsored by the international community other than from Islamic countries are also perceived by Boko Haram to be part of the agenda of Western imperialism, and hence, despised (Danjibo, 2009: 9). Added to the foregoing foes of Boko Haram is a vague, generic

enemy, a sort of inchoate force of evil, represented by the Nigerian police, the news media,<sup>18</sup> and virtually anyone the sect thought might be opposed to its brand of Islamic ideology. The sect has also attacked a variety of key northern politicians and village chiefs. On a few occasions, Boko Haram has attacked prisons and mosques. The sect has also attacked civilians whom they deem to be engaged in un-Islamic activities like drinking beer or partying (Forest, 2012: 68).

**Table 1: Statistics of Boko Haram Attacks vis-à-vis its Target Categories**

<b>Target Categories</b>	<b>Political</b>	<b>Police or Military*</b>	<b>Religious</b>	<b>Educational</b>	<b>Other**</b>
<b>Number of Attacks</b>	22	44	27	5	42
<b>Estimated Casualties</b>	108	81	109	7	417

**Source:** (Forest, 2012: 68).

\* Includes other security powers like immigration officers, prison wardens, and vigilante groups.

\*\* Includes beer parlours, markets, hotels, banks, homes, and mobile companies (Forest, 2012: 68).

From the above statistics, the highest number of Boko Haram victims so far are those associated with organized religion. The data also show that contrary to Boko Haram's previous claims that

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<sup>18</sup> In the event of the Kano coordinated attacks on January 20, 2012, over 200 people lost their lives, including Eneche Akogwu, a renowned journalist with Channels Television. Akogwu had been filming a crowd gathered at the scene of one of the bombings, when he was shot at close range by armed men believed to be Boko Haram members (Obayiuwana, 2012: 6).



its primary enemy is the Nigerian authorities, the bulk of its victims since 2009 have been ordinary citizens (Forest, 2012: 68). On several occasions the sect has embarked on indiscriminate attacks with the aim of not only disintegrating Nigeria, but also of pitching Christians against Muslims in order to create a façade of a religious violence.

### **6.7 Boko Haram and the Reign of Terror in Nigeria: Timeline from 2009**

From 2002-2009, Boko Haram has engaged in low profile showdowns with the Nigerian police force in its headquarters in Borno state, and also in the villages of Geidam and Kanama in Nigeria's north-eastern Yobe state in late 2003. During this initial period, Boko Haram attacked police stations, killing about 30 people and stealing some ammunition for further rounds of destabilization. It was estimated at the time that Boko Haram comprised only about 60 members and all but seven were arrested and detained in prison where they received agonizing treatment from the Nigerian police (Cook, 2011: 9). The surviving membership and leaders of the sect, including the present leader, Abubakar Shekau, fled to Niger and Chad respectively to regroup and possibly mobilize for support from Chadians, Nigeriens and other Sahelian countries. This form of mobilization probably set the stage for "Al-Qaeda's augmentation of Boko Haram's capabilities as it reinvented itself in exile" (Tanchum, 2012: 80). By mid-2004, Boko Haram had fully recovered and acquired sufficient arsenals and the technical virtuosity to attack a few police stations in Maiduguri. In the attack, the sect killed some policemen and stole ammunitions. It was reported that 27 Boko Haram members were killed in the clash, while many others disappeared. Still in this initial stage of its violent uprising, Boko Haram attacked a convoy of 60 policemen at Kala-Balge on the banks of Lake Chad on October 10, 2004, and allegedly executed twelve of them (Cook, 2011: 10).

Boko Haram became a full-fledged insurgency on July 25, 2009 following an all-night onslaught waged by the sect on Dutsen-Tanshi police station in Bauchi state (Bamidele, 2012: 35).<sup>19</sup> Prior to the attack on the police station, Boko Haram members were reprimanded on their way to a funeral by a security outfit in Borno state known as ‘Operation Flush’ for not adhering to the law that demands every motorcyclist to wear a crash-helmet. The circumstances as to why the group confronted the police remains unclear, but a member of the group was reported to have fired on the police, injuring several officers. In the process, one of the sect’s members was shot dead, allegedly by the police (Walker, 2012: 4). The resulting clash led to the deaths of about 800 people including the Boko Haram leader, Mohammed Yusuf. Mohammed Yusuf was reported to have been executed, presumably, while still in police custody (Tanchum, 2012: 80). The death of Yusuf ushered in another phase of security forces ruthlessness in Nigerian history, and set the sect on a revenge mission against the Nigerian state and its security outfits (Bamidele, 2012: 35; Oyebode, 2012: 5).

Probably the most important question that could be raised concerning the July 26-31, 2009 Boko Haram uprising is whether it was initiated by the sect – and if so, for what purpose – or initiated by the Nigerian security forces. Both accounts exist. If Boko Haram instigated the July 2009 uprising, then most likely its timing was keyed to the holiness of the month of Sha’ban (as the attacks happened during the initial 15 days of the Muslim month of Sha’ban, which are said to be holy) (Cook 2011:12). Whatever the merit of these claims, if the Nigerian authorities thought that Boko Haram ‘met its Waterloo’ in the July 2009 violent uprising, they were dead mistaken.

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<sup>19</sup> A Nigerian News Reporter, Ahmed Salkida, who is believed to have had contact with the Boko Haram leader in 2006, claimed to have been alerted by Boko Haram leader Mohammed Yusuf that his group will wage mayhem in Borno state in July 2009. Salkida on his part divulged this information to the local authorities who he said showed no interest and dismissed the possibility of an amateur cleric ever waging a war on the state (Salkida, 2012).

## 6.8 Radical Resurgence of Boko Haram

After the July 2009 standoff between Boko Haram and the Nigerian security forces, sect members were reported to have fled to neighbouring countries like Niger to regroup, recruit and, possibly, have more training and even acquire more sophisticated weaponry for future attacks. It is alleged that while in Niger, the sect was supported by Droukdel, the leader of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), to rebuild the organization and augment its capabilities and, in so doing, alter its operational outlook to be in accordance with Al-Qaeda (Tanchum, 2012b: 2). After fortifying itself in Niger, Boko Haram resurfaced more fiercely on July 7, 2010, by storming a prison in Bauchi state and releasing over 700 prisoners, 100 of whom were its members. For the rest of 2010, the sect attacked many police and state officials in Borno and Bauchi states, and extended its reign of terror to anyone – particularly Islamic clerics and traditional rulers – perceived to be in cahoots with the secular Nigerian government. On October 21, 2010 Boko Haram placed posters at key road intersections in some states in Nigeria, cautioning the general public to refrain from siding with the Nigerian security forces in apprehending its members. Each poster bore the hallmarks of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and warned that “any Muslim that goes against the establishment of Sharia law in Nigeria will be attacked and killed accordingly” (United States Department of State, 2010: 22).

On June 16, 2011, Boko Haram adjusted its modus operandi when it conducted a suicide attack on the Nigerian police headquarters in Abuja, using Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIEDs). This is believed to be the first suicide attack in Nigeria. The attack was directed at the Nigerian Inspector General of Police, but instead killed two bystanders and destroyed several police vehicles. Despite its failed attempt to assassinate Nigeria’s Police Chief, the incident portrays a disturbing reality that far from being deflated, Boko Haram had adopted one of the deadliest accoutrements in its jihadist arsenal and had demonstrated that it is now capable of carrying out high-profile attacks even in the nation’s Capital, Abuja (Pham, 2012: 3). To further prove its capabilities, Boko Haram issued a statement after it bombarded the police headquarters in Abuja, boasting of having links to Al-Shabaab in Somalia and claiming that its

members arrived in Nigeria from Somalia where they received real training on war fare from the Al-Shabaab terrorist group which makes Somalia ungovernable (Pham, 2012: 3).<sup>20</sup> Such cross-pollination of weapons, training, and bomb-making expertise could bolster the capabilities of Boko Haram and extend its targets beyond the shores of Nigeria (Meehan and Speier, 2011: 14).

Furthermore, when Boko Haram attacked the United Nations office in Abuja in another suicide mission that killed about 25 people and injured 80 on August 23, 2011, many feared that the sect is now being supported by Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Al-Shabaab in Somalia to target international institutions.<sup>21</sup> In a video footage released by the sect in the week following the bombing of the UN headquarters, Boko Haram described the UN as an axis of ‘all global evil’ and claimed that the attacks were designed to send a warning to the United States President and other international ‘infidels’ who are bent on waging attacks against its counterparts in other Islamic countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq (Meehan, and Speier, 2011: 2). The attack also signalled a major shift toward the inclusion of international targets, as opposed to the sect’s previous focus on only Nigerian targets and also symbolizes a stronger resonance with Al-Qaeda’s operation, which incidentally attacked a United Nations office in Algeria in 2007 (Ero 2011; Cook 2011: 19). In fact, according to Cook (2011: 5), the “Boko Haram bombing of the UN headquarters in Abuja, is both reminiscent and symptomatic of the type of activities undertaken by other foreign terrorist organizations, like the suicide attack in Baghdad against the United Nations in August 2003. Suicide attacks of this nature, in many

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<sup>20</sup> Terrorist movements have traditionally sought sympathy and support within national boundaries or in neighbouring countries as a means to bolster their effort and outreach (Baylis and Smith, 2001: 489). Thus, it is useful to underscore that relations between Muslims and Christians within and across international boundaries are also affected by their external associations as well as by their differing symbolic orientations. The increasingly close connections between Nigerian Muslims and the central lands of Islam, especially through the hajj (pilgrimage) to Mecca, have undoubtedly influenced their attitudes toward the Western world (Chazan *et al*, 1999: 99). But it is not just Muslims that maintain this close connection with their allies’ abroad, Christian affiliations with international ecumenical bodies have also had an impact on the political situation in Nigeria. These forms of external religious ties certainly add a new dimension to sectarian conflicts in Nigeria.

<sup>21</sup> Mamman Nur, the Boko Haram member responsible for the suicide bomb attack on the United Nations headquarters, was said to have executed the attack after just arriving home from Somalia (Gourley, 2012: 7).

instances, usually mark the beginning of a new and advanced stage of terrorism that is connected to the Al-Qaeda franchise.<sup>22</sup>

## **6.9 Boko Haram's Potential Affinity to Foreign Terrorist Franchise**

While most Nigerians and other international observers initially dismissed the sect as a gang of ill-advised illiterates whose mission was totally unachievable in a diverse country like Nigeria, Boko Haram has gained a reputation that should leave no one in doubt of its strategic intent: which is to substitute the prevailing secular state in Nigeria with a Sharia law-based government. It is the absolute commitment of Boko Haram to the achievement of this strategic intent “that has motivated it to take major strategic steps such as the establishment of external linkages with ideologically-driven Islamic terrorist groups in Mali, Somalia, and the Islamic Maghreb” (Eyamozung, 2012). The potential links of Boko Haram to other like-minded groups across the world was validated in an Al Jazeera interview with Abdelmalek Droukdel, the leader of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). During the interview, Droukdel claimed that his “group would provide Boko Haram with the training and logistics needed to expand its reach and defend Muslims in Nigeria by stopping the advance of a minority of crusaders” (cited in Pham, 2012: 3).

Furthermore, a 2010 poll conducted by the Pew Research Centre's Global Attitudes Projects on Muslim support toward Al-Qaeda showed Nigerian Muslims as rabid leading enthusiasts of the late Al-Qaeda leader, Osama bin Laden, and his operatives. The obtained data indicate that 49 per cent of Nigerian Muslims have a favourable attitude and express positive sentiments toward

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<sup>22</sup> To justify suicide attacks, radical religious leaders often twist the tenets of religion into a doctrine of action and hatred, where spiritual achievement occurs through destruction rather than personal enlightenment. In other words, suicide attacks offer the promise of immediate spiritual accomplishment and relieve the perpetrator of the burden of a lifetime of piety and positive contributions to the community (Baylis and Smith 2001: 495). Thus, Religious ideology remains central to Boko Haram members and provides them with a useful legitimizing tool. Precisely as to how this ideology could be transformed into peaceful purposes will remain one of the vexing challenges for the Nigerian government in its attempt to resolve the Boko Haram crisis.

Al-Qaeda. Compared to other Muslim dominated countries, Nigeria has the highest percentage of all countries polled. This result is surely emblematic of the sympathy given to Al-Qaeda's cause in the predominantly Muslim northern Nigeria (Thornberry, and Levy, 2011: 7).

Other cases of alleged alliance between Boko Haram and other foreign terrorist organizations abound. In fact, when Boko Haram started as a pro-Taliban movement in 2002, it was alleged that a certain Sheikh Muhiddin Abdullahi, a Sudanese Islamist, helped channel funds through his foundation from Saudi Arabia to the sect, which was then known as *Al Sunna Wal Jamma* or followers of the prophet (Akomolafe, 2006: 234). But despite these overwhelming alleged linkages, the existence of ethno-religious divide in Nigeria could thwart the progress of Al-Qaeda's intrusion and influence in Nigeria. To begin with, the strand of Islam practiced in Nigeria is Sufism, which is a far cry from the radical Salafism preached by Al-Qaeda. A clear distinction between the Sufi and Salafist Islamic tradition is presented here:

On the one hand, Sufism is a predominant strand of Islam that focuses on nurturing the soul. It also emphasizes internal spirituality and contemplation over strict interpretation of the Islamic text. On the other hand, Salafist Islam rejects the West and Western culture and adheres to a very strict reading of the Koran. It believes in direct action to both purify Islam of false believers and to re-establish Islam across the world Islamic community (Thomson, 2012: 51).

There is a widespread concern that while most Nigerians adhere to Sufism, others are more inclined to embrace Salafism as there is a growing sense that Sufism can no longer cure the social ills or bridge the inequalities between the rich and the poor. Even the ethno-racial divide present within Al-Qaeda itself could inhibit its influence in Nigeria owing to the level of distrust between black Africans and the group's Arab leaders (Thornberry, and Levy, 2011: 7). Another stumbling block to Al-Qaeda's influence in Nigeria could come from some Nigerian Muslim elites and rulers who have been outspoken in dismissing Al-Qaeda and its violent Salafist ideology. The hegemony of the Sokoto Caliphate may have also prevented the entry of recent and more radical Islamism into northern Nigeria. Al-Qaeda and its affiliates have had difficulty convincing locals in northern Nigeria to follow their radical, Salafist interpretation of Islam

because locals can look to the historical example of Usman Dan Fodio, the renowned jihadist, and the current remaining relics of the Sokoto Caliphate for evidence of Islamic authority that has been in place in Nigeria long before the emergence of Al-Qaeda. To be sure, the Muslims in northern Nigeria have resisted the revisionist worldview promoted by Al-Qaeda that downplays structures of traditional authority such as the Sokoto Caliphate. The relatively moderate nature of northern Nigerian Muslims, manifested by their less than wholehearted embrace of experiments to implement Sharia, has also prevented the establishment of a strand of radical Islamism in the manner of Al-Qaeda (Szrom and Harnisch, 2011: 10).

Nevertheless, Szrom and Harnisch (2011) identify the following common traits in Nigeria – in line with the thrust of this study – that can create a sanctuary for Al-Qaeda, as they have done elsewhere in Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan, Pakistan, and Algeria. These traits include underdevelopment, incompetent governance, and a citizenry disenfranchised by – or disillusioned with – the state government. An environment like northern Nigeria that has a chequered history of radical Islamism opens up an opportunity for Al-Qaeda to exploit. (Gourley, 2012: 9). Moreover, Nigerian Muslims also perceive themselves as part of the wider pan-Islamic community and have shown support for popular Arab positions. For instance, they favour the Arab nation's stance on the Israel-Palestinian conflict (Thomson, 2012: 51). Thus, there is still some form of ideological agreement between Boko Haram and Al-Qaeda, as well as an enabling environment which the Al-Qaeda franchise can easily exploit to have a foothold in Nigeria. What is less straightforward is the extent to which strategic or logistic collaboration exists between Boko Haram and Al-Qaeda. But the fact that Boko Haram was able to wage an attack on the United Nations headquarters in Abuja is a strong indication that the sect is also part of the global jihadist crusade. But whether Boko Haram has indeed embraced the global jihadist strategy and ideological stance, is something that remains to be seen (Forest, 2012: 81).

## 6.10 The Litany of Boko Haram Bomb Attacks: Timeline from November 2010

While it is beyond the scope of this study to provide a precise and accurate catalogue of all known attacks attributed to Boko Haram, the cases listed in Table 2 only illustrate the kinds of targets, locations and attacks for which the sect has acquired a dreaded reputation. The table also highlights the changing dynamics of Boko Haram attacks and its modus operandi. For instance, in its early stages, the sect mainly attacked security forces, hotels, and other government establishments using machetes and small arms, whereas by late 2010, Boko Haram had begun using highly sophisticated weapons including Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIEDs) to wage its attacks on churches, schools, Mosques, and several other public places in northern Nigeria. Below is the list of some of Boko Haram's most notorious attacks since 2010.

**Table 2: Litany of Boko Haram bomb explosions in Nigeria: Timeline from 2010**

<b>Date of Attack</b>	<b>Event/Location</b>	<b>Casualties</b>
5-09-2010	Attack on the town of Bama in Borno state on a motorcycle	A retired police officer was killed
7-09-2010	Attack on a large prison in Bauchi	Guards were overpowered and an estimated 700 prisoners were released, including at least 100 Boko Haram members or supporters who were awaiting trial
21-09-2010	Attack on Gwaidomari village in Maiduguri	Two people were shot dead; a local chief and a trader
1-10-2010	Attack on Independence day celebration in Abuja	12 were reported dead



6-10-2010	Attack on the house of Awana Ali Ngala, the national vice chairman of the All Nigeria People's Party. On the same day, unidentified militants riding motorcycles fired upon the house of Ali Modu, the speaker of the Borno state House of Assembly	Awana Ali Ngala was killed in his living room. A police officer was shot dead in front of the house of Ali Modu, the speaker of the Borno state House of Assembly
9-10-2010	Two unidentified Boko Haram militants attacked an Islamic scholar who was teaching in his home	The Islamic scholar, Sheikh Bashir Mustapha, was shot dead in his home
24-12-2010	Christmas eve; about five bombs exploded in the city of Jos	About 99 people were killed by the explosion
8-04-2011	Attack on the INEC office Suleja	About six people including youth corps members were killed
29-05-2011	Attack on Mammy Market Shandawanka Barracks in Bauchi	13 people reported dead and 40 injured
04-06-2011	Attack on Mammy market in Bauchi	13 people killed and over 40 injured
08-06-2011	Attack in Maiduguri	10 people killed
16-06-2011	Attack on police Headquarters in Abuja	10 people killed including the bomber

26-06-2011	Attack on a beer parlour at Dala Kabomti, Maiduguri	27 people were killed
03-07-2011	Attack near a police barracks in Maiduguri	10 people were killed
10-07-2011	Attack on an All Christians Fellowship Mission Fellowship Church, Suleja, Niger State	3 people were killed

05-08-2011	Attack in Maiduguri	Explosion killed 3
27-08-2011	Attack on the UN headquarters in Abuja	A suicide bomb attack killed 25 persons
13-09-2011	Attack in Bauchi	7 killed in a blast
02-10-2011	Attack in Maiduguri	22 died in an explosion
17-10-2011	Attack in Gombe	Explosion killed 4 persons
24-10-2011	Attack in Saminaka, Kaduna State	3 died in a bomb blast
31-10-2011	Attack in Maiduguri	1 died in a bomb blast
04-10-2011	Attack in Damaturu	100 people killed in a spate of coordinated shootings and bomb blast
04-11-2011	Coordinated Boko Haram bombing and ricocheting shootings on police facilities in Damaturu and Potiskum in Yobe state	About 180 person killed
26-11-2011	Shooting attacks in Geidam, Yobe State	Three police officers and a civilian were wounded. In addition, six churches, police stations, a pub, a shopping complex, a High Court, and

		Local Council buildings, and eleven cars were also burnt in the course of the attacks
04-12-2011	Attacks on police stations and two banks in Azare, Bauchi state	Two security officers and an unarmed civilian were killed
07-12-2011	Explosion at Oriyapata area in Kaduna State	Explosion killed 8 persons including a baby
11-12-2011	Attack in Jos	Three bomb blasts killed one and injured 10
13-12-2011	Bomb attack on a military checkpoint and gun duel with soldiers in Maiduguri	Ten people were killed and thirty others injured
17-12-2011	A shootout between police officers and sect members in Darmanawa, Kano State.	Seven persons were killed, including three police officers
22-12-2011	Attack in Damaturu	Multiple bomb blasts killed 62 persons including seven policemen and two soldiers
25-12-2011	Attack on St. Theresa's Parish, Madalla, Zuba, Abuja	Explosion killed 35 people, with over 70 others injured
30-12-2011	Attack on a military checkpoint in Maiduguri	Four Muslim worshippers were killed as they left the Mosque after attending Friday prayer

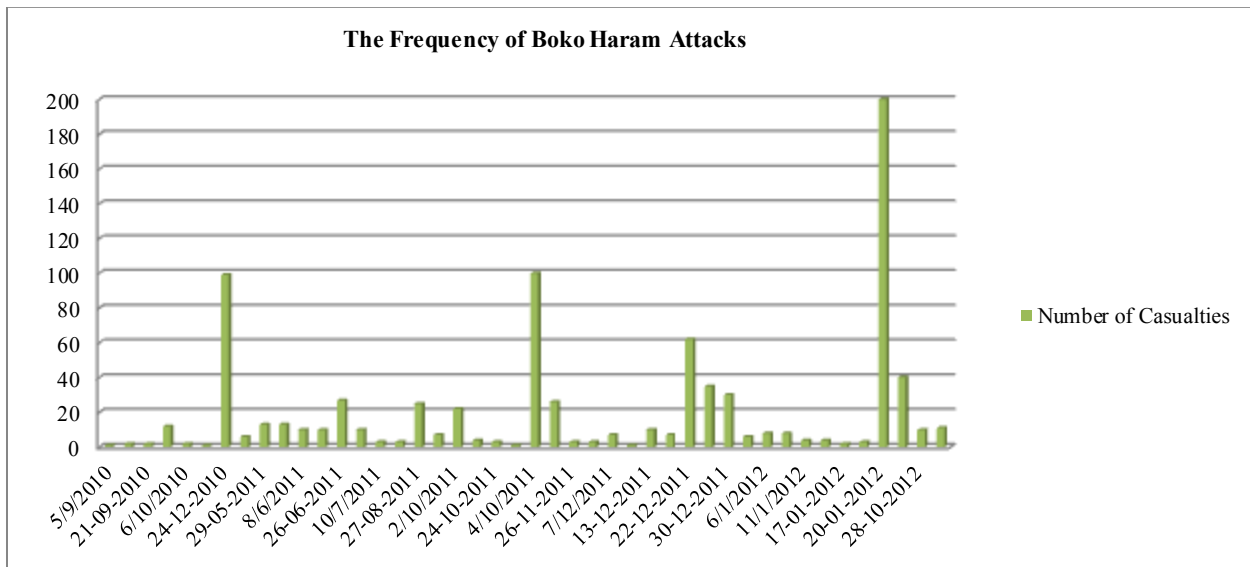
05-01-2012	Attack on a Church in Gombe city	Six worshippers were killed and ten others wounded
06-01-2012	Attacks on a Church in Yola	Eight worshippers were killed. Seventeen Christian mourners were also killed on the same day in the town of Mubi in Adamawa state
10-01-2012	Attack at a beer garden in Damaturu, Yobe State	Eight persons including five police officers and a teenage girl were killed
11-01-2012	Attack at a fuel station in Potiskum, Yobe State	Four Christians were killed
13-01-2012	Two separate attacks in pubs in Yola, Adamawa state, and Gombe state	Four people were killed including police officers, and two were injured
17-01-2012	Attack at military checkpoint in Maiduguri	Two soldiers killed
17-01-2012	Attack in Biu Town	Seven persons were wounded and three poker players were killed
20-01-2012	Coordinated bomb explosions in Kano	Over 200 people
8-04-2012	Kaduna Easter attack	More than 40 people killed, including wayfarers and motorcyclists
28-10-2012	A suicide attack on St Rita's	Four worshippers were killed

	Catholic Church, Ungwan/Yero, Kaduna	and more than 100 others injured
25-11-2012	Suicide attack on St Andrews Military Protestant Church in the Armed Forces Command and Staff College (AFCSC), Jaji, in Kaduna state	11 people were killed including high ranking officers and several others injured

**Source:** Author’s Compilation

These attacks yield important and shocking insights about Boko Haram. While other insurgent groups like the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) have carried out an extensive record of attacks prior to the violent emergence of Boko Haram, Boko Haram has been responsible for deadlier attacks with massive casualties than any other armed or militia group in the country since 2009. A report gathered by Human Rights Watch have confirmed that a total of 2,800 people have been killed by Boko Haram and the Nigerian Security Forces since the July 2009 uprising (Human Rights Watch, 2012: 9). Poignantly, many other casualties resulting from Boko Haram terrorism are being recorded almost on a weekly basis (Fayeye and Balogun, 2012: 269). Figure 1 shows a graphic representation of the changing frequency of Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria since 2010, with massive casualties in 2012.

**Figure 1: The Frequency of Boko Haram Attacks**



**Source: Author's Idea**

A careful examination of the above figure shows that in the period between September and October 2010, Boko Haram attacks were minimal. This is apparently because the sect had not acquired sufficient ammunition for the attacks and was still recovering after it suffered heavy casualty in the event of the July 2009 uprising. However, the figure shows that by December 2010, the sect had recovered and had started a new wave of attacks by attacking a prison and stealing some ammunition. This attack shows that Boko Haram has started articulating its positions and modus operandi. In the event of the attack, the sect released some of its members to bolster its strength. Hence from late December 2010 to the end of 2011, Boko Haram carried out sporadic attacks on police stations, schools, and churches. By this time the sect had acquired sufficient Vehicle Borne Improvised Devices and learnt the act of suicide bombing which it attributed to its links to other foreign terrorist groups like Al-Shabaab in Somalia. By the end of 2011 till the middle of 2012, Boko Haram shifted its campaign of terror to places of worship, killing many Christian worshippers, and assassinating some Islamic clerics. By far, the figure reveals that the most devastating Boko Haram attack with enormous casualties of around 200 people was the coordinated attacks in Kano on January 20, 2012.

Due to this increasing proportion and changing frequency of attacks, the Boko Haram phenomenon remains the most severe terrorist threat that Nigeria has contended with since its emergence as an independent nation-state in 1960. The snowballing effects have manifested in the killings of human lives and the destruction of properties and public infrastructures with the northern part faring the worst. The consequences for the massive loss of lives in the region are enormous. As the citizens of a country represent its productive workforce (Alao, 1999: 92), large-scale casualties resulting from Boko Haram attacks deprive Nigeria, especially the northern region, of those who can productively contribute to its economic development. There is growing evidence that substantial parts of the northern economy, especially in the northeast where Boko Haram is most active, have been deeply affected by the mayhem. To be sure, massive foreign investment and capital flight has taken place in the north. In addition, many southern business men and women who have contributed in boosting the northern economy were forced to flee the region due to the crisis (Baba-Ahmed, 2012). Other corrosive effects of the sect's terrorism include internal migration and displacement of people, creation of a climate of fear in Nigeria, and the conjuring up of images of chaos, repression, and terror about the country in the eyes of the international community. Given all these outcomes of Boko Haram's activities, the question that the next chapter will busy itself with is how the sect's terrorism can be defeated.



## **Chapter Seven**

### **Conclusion and Policy Recommendations**

The preceding chapters have analysed and described the ramifications of the Boko Haram phenomenon and its reign of terror in Nigeria which, according to the hypothesis of the study, is a profound reflection of the conditions of state fragility and an outcome of frustration and aggression in the country. Some of the conditions of state failure in Nigeria include the monumental failure of the Nigerian political elite to forge a true national consciousness; to fight endemic elite corruption; to provide a social safety net for the poor and unemployed; to curb rampant gangsterism; to strengthen the security apparatuses; to turn around derelict infrastructures and institutions; to reform an ineffectual judicial system; and to resolve ideological struggles within and between religious and ethnic groups. According to Sanusi (2007: 184), these are the key contributory factors generating violent Islamic extremism in Nigeria (Sanusi, 2007: 184). To effectively fight the menace, the Nigerian government will need not only to eschew the on-going efforts to externalize the problem, but also to target the efficacy of the causal factors directly (Uzodike and Maiangwa, 2012: 111). This section will examine the state responses to the Boko Haram impasse and conclude with some non-violent prospects of conflicts transformation in Nigeria.

#### **7.1 An Assessment of the Joint Task Force (JTF) Approach to Addressing Boko Haram**

Given the intensity of Boko Haram terrorism and its widespread devastations in northern Nigeria, the Nigerian government under President Goodluck Jonathan sets up a Joint Task Force (JTF), comprising the army, police, navy, and the state security service, to rein in the excesses of the sect's activities. But in their bid to counter the menace, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch issued out empirical reports that described how the JTF have abused the human rights of many innocent Nigerians who find themselves trapped, as it were, in the middle of a vicious cycle (Amnesty International, 2012: 3). The reports paint a grim picture of spiralling

violence, where terrorist attacks instigated by Boko Haram are countered by the security forces with abuses that only add venom to the problem which, as the reports claim, could also bolster the support of Boko Haram by pushing more and more youths toward the organization (CNN, November 2 2012). The human rights violations reportedly carried out by the Nigerian security forces are fuelled by the fact that the Nigerian state and its security institutions, is ill-prepared and ill-equipped to safeguard human rights standards.

One of the main difficulties faced by fragile countries experiencing terrorism is mostly in the area of capacity limitations, especially (in this instance) weak law enforcement agencies, lack of intelligence gathering, and financial constraints. Thus, it may be that the lack of social, moral, and military discipline, underfunding, and inefficient intelligent services among the security forces increase their propensity toward committing human rights atrocities and, in so doing, expose them to more attacks by Boko Haram. As Forest (2012: 91) observes, the lack of operational intelligence on the part of the Nigerian security forces is being substituted with a “wholly counterproductive willingness to use lethal force, which only serve to weaken government’s counterterrorism efforts.” But this security deficiency does not in any way exonerate the Nigerian security forces. If anything, it only reveals the weakness and inability of the Nigerian state (at all levels) to prioritize security in a significant way. Amnesty International points out that the failure of the Nigerian state to properly equip and train the police reduces their ability to ensure their own and other people's safety (CNN, November 12 2012). As a result, hundreds of police, military and SSS (State Security Service) have been selectively targeted and killed by Boko Haram since 2009. They have been shot and blown up in their stations, at roadblocks and in their homes. The killing of two Nigerian army men with an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) on the Ekene-Abuja road on Saturday January 19, 2013, confirms the fact that Nigerian security forces are themselves vulnerable to Boko Haram attacks (The Guardian, January 19<sup>th</sup> 2013).

That aside, the context of the crisis in which the security forces operate should also be taken into cognizance as it can be argued that “terrorist attacks by domestic groups would be more likely to goad a government into limiting certain human rights” (Piazza and Walsh, 2009: 144). As

provided for by international human rights conventions, states may legitimately limit the exercise of certain rights, including the right to freedom of expression, the right to freedom of association and assembly, and the right to freedom of movement (OHCHR, 2007: 22). But since these can raise practical human rights challenges for states, such limitations must be prescribed by law and tailored efforts must be made by such states to respect human rights. In the Nigerian context, such limitations must also be guided by democratic principles and the rule of law (Danjibo, 2009: 13).

Thus, if Nigeria must employ force in its campaign against Boko Haram, it must be done concomitantly with socioeconomic and political reforms, because relying on military strength alone can lead to gross human rights abuses - as recorded in the heavy-handed methods of the Egyptian and Algerian states (Devlin-Foltz, 2010: 6-7). For instance, in Egypt and Algeria respectively, their government's brutality serves to radicalize extremists, pushing them toward the line of groups like Al-Qaeda. With their moderate members excluded, prospects for domestic political gains grim, and their own passions hardened by conflict, imprisonment, and torture - extremists have more justified reasons to join in the global jihadist movements (Devlin-Foltz, 2010: 7). By contrast however, the case of Senegal presents a good example where a government response to terrorism and extremism actually worked. The government of Senegal provides the necessary conditions for Islamists to pursue their agendas within a transparent, democratic political framework. While Senegal has faced some largely externally-driven security challenges posed by radical Islamists, its security forces have reasonably refrained from indiscriminate use of force against extremist Islamists groups. This reinforces the credibility of the state, while ensuring that neither extremists nor state responses to their acts hamper the relationship between the moderates and the Senegalese government (Devlin-Foltz, 2010: 6-7).

The Nigerian government, besides creating a credible and reliable security force, must also bear in mind that military operations alone cannot address the issues created by state fragility. Indeed, such military operations without intermittent and sustained political efforts to rectify the conditions of state failure in Nigeria might prove abortive in the fight against Boko Haram. Thus, measures that are not strictly military should be experimented with, to see if peace could be

restored and whether the devastated economic life of the largest percentage of northern Nigeria could also be resuscitated (Onwubiko, 2012). The foregoing corroborates Shafir *et al* (2007: 180) claim that terrorism can only be temporarily suppressed by military campaigns, but ultimately diminished only when there is some viable political response to the grievances of the vanguards of terror. At best, if the military is to be involved in curbing Boko Haram, then the Nigerian government should adopt the civil-military coalition along the lines suggested by Rebecca Schiff, who proposes a ‘Concordance Theory’ of civil-military relations. Schiff argues that violence and excessive military force in intervention could be reduced if the army partner with the citizens and political authorities (Schiff, 1995: 12). Such a collaborative engagement of the military, political leadership, and the Nigerian citizenry could improve the image of soldiers in the country and help the security forces and the Nigerian government overturn a reputation for brutality, corruption, and arbitrariness (Dayil, 2009: 189). Needless to say that it will also help in many ways to improve, expand and consolidate the Nigerian democratic space that has so far been stifled by tyrannical regimes (Ukeje, 2005: 156).

## **7.2 Assessing the Declaration of a State of Emergency**

On December 31, 2011, President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in some local government areas of Yobe, Plateau, and Borno states following repeated cases of bombings in these states. Under the Nigerian Constitution, a state of emergency

Permits the president to confer additional powers to ‘duly authorized persons’ or make any order necessary or expedient for the purpose of maintaining public order, public safety, and securing peace in the emergency area and to derogate from particular sections of Nigeria’s Constitution .... Among the provisions granted by the constitution are the detention of suspects for justifiable reasons; the taking of possession or control of any property in the emergency area; the entry and search of any premises; and the payment of compensation and remuneration to people affected by the order (Amnesty International, 2012: 8).

Just a month after the state of emergency was declared in the flashpoints of Boko Haram; the sect extended its reign of terror to Kano state, and struck with unprecedented vigour and intensity. In coordinated attacks that targeted security forces and civilians, Boko Haram killed about 200 people and sent shockwaves to other cities in the state and beyond. Clearly, it seems that the declaration of a state of emergency in these flashpoints of Boko Haram attacks did nothing by way of ameliorating the violence. If anything, the state of emergency curtailed the freedom and privileges of the people living in those areas and gave the military the leeway to use excessive force at will. In fact, there are allegations that while the soldiers were sent to keep peace, some of them went into the volatile areas and aggravated the already tensed situation. The soldiers were reported to have destroyed houses, raped women, broken into shops and confiscated jewellery (Abbah *et al*, 2012).

In places like Maiduguri, Kano and Kaduna where Boko Haram has struck with awful savagery, the people have become more scared of the police and the army than they are of the sect, simply because of the nuisance that the security outfits constitute in those areas (Walker, 2012: 12). Thus, in spite of, or even because of the declaration of the state of emergency in the flashpoints of Boko Haram terrorism, the frequency of the sect's attacks and the brutality of the military and police are increasing exponentially with carnage spreading to Kaduna, Maiduguri, Kano, and Bauchi states. While declaring a state of emergency might be a short-term strategy in curtailing Boko Haram, it seems highly improbable that it will actually extinguish the menace in the longer term.

### **7.3 Political Dialogue and Amnesty**

A number of pundits, politicians, and members of the international community have proposed that if any success is to be made in resolving the Boko Haram bottleneck, the Nigerian government must open a dialogue with the sect. Taking a cue from this proposal, the Nigerian government attempted a *modus vivendi* with the sect in 2011. The negotiation was made possible with the inclusion of a middleman, Ibrahim Datti Ahmed, President of the Supreme Council for

Sharia in Nigeria. However, the dialogue was unsuccessful as the middle man – Ibrahim Datti Ahmed – pulled out, stating that he was shocked at the rate with which news of the talks went viral in the Nigerian newspapers, and that he was embarrassed by the development which has created doubt in his mind about the sincerity of the Nigerian government as the negotiation was supposed to be kept confidential in order to achieve the desired result (Walker, 2012: 11). This failed move to dialogue with Boko Haram was not the first of its kind. The democracy activist Shehu Sani attempted in September 2011 to broker peace talks between the former President Olusegun Obasanjo and Mohammed Yusuf’s brother-in-law, Babakura Fugu. Soon after the meeting, gunmen stormed into Fugu’s house and assassinated him (Walker, 2012: 11). It is difficult then to see how any meaningful negotiation could be carried out with Boko Haram, since it has variously slain its own members who have attempted to open negotiations with the government or grant interviews to the press.<sup>23</sup>

It is crucial to also note that some of Boko Haram’s stated demands are practically impossible to realize. For example, Boko Haram insists not only on dividing Nigeria into north and south, but also on implementing the Sharia law across the country. According to Obayiuwana (2012: 54) this demand by Boko Haram for the implementation of the Sharia law goes against constitutional provisions guaranteeing the secular, multi-religious nature of the country and cannot be met. In addition, it has been reported that Boko Haram may have even split into three factions: one that remains moderate and is open to end the crisis; another that wants a peaceful settlement; and a third that does not welcome negotiation and is only interested in the implementation of the Sharia law across Nigeria (Forest, 2012: 2). This cell-like structure of the sect, which opens itself to factions and splits, plays a negative role in the bid to fully understand the intent of all the members of Boko Haram - or even to negotiate with them.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> According to Hakeem Baba-Ahmed, (2012), the lack of strong political will on the part of the Nigerian government, rather than any other thing, is the main factor militating against any form of dialogue with the Boko Haram sect.

<sup>24</sup> If there is indeed a split among the main ranks of Boko Haram, it could accelerate the demise of the sect, as one faction turns on another in a whirlwind struggle of domination. However, it could also portend danger for the future. This kind of splintering among the main ranks of terrorist sects is not a new phenomenon: “the Irish Republican

With the failure to successfully hold dialogue with Boko Haram, it has also been proposed that the sect be granted amnesty by way of palliating the grievances of its members. This suggestion was premised on the fact that the amnesty program of late President Umaru Musa Yar'adua has yielded some level of success with the young militants in the Niger Delta, many of whom are now getting vocational training at home and abroad (Zorro 2011:10). However, the Boko Haram terrorism and the Niger Delta militancy cannot be juxtaposed. The Niger Delta militants are restive youths from the region that resorted to the use of violence to call attention to the deteriorating conditions of their environment - caused by corruption, oil mismanagement and spillage, and bad work ethic. The youths of the region became violent only when all peaceful means and agitations failed to bring the Nigerian government to intervene in their plight. Thus, in the case of the Niger Delta inhabitants, there is a deep-rooted history of neglect, alienation, exclusion, exploitation, and degradation of their land. Whereas, Boko Haram's Islamist agenda of implementing Sharia law in Nigeria and the violent means it has employed to make known its intent are all breaches of Nigeria's constitution and indicative of the fact that the sect is highly contemptuous of constituted authorities (Dada and Ejue, 2012: 242).

Having assessed the foregoing policy attempts used by the Nigerian state to extinguish Boko Haram terrorism, the overwhelming public view still remains that the government has failed in tackling the mayhem because it lacks a proper blueprint for action. In the wake of these concerns, Aghedo and Osumah (2012: 864) carried out an empirical survey, the results of which suggest that respondents in Nigeria strongly believe that proper security operations, employment generation, poverty alleviation, and restrictions on importations and/or use of illegal arms, rather than dialogue, amnesty, or excessive military intervention, are long-term measures of eliminating Boko Haram terrorism.

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Army (IRA) spawned several splinter groups like the Provisional IRA, Continuity IRA, and Real IRA, while the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, the pre-cursor to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, was a splinter group of the Armed Islamic Group in Algeria" (Forest, 2012: 86). A careful analysis of the foregoing cases evinces the fact that splinter groups are often predisposed to extreme violence, more so than the main group from which they emanate (Forest, 2012: 86).

**Table 3: Respondents' Views on How to Address the Boko Haram Menace**

<b>State's Response to Boko Haram Terrorism</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents in Support</b>
Amnesty	<b>38%</b>
Dialogue	<b>46%</b>
Increased Security Operations	<b>76%</b>
Monetary Compensation for Victims	<b>22%</b>
Employment Creation	<b>88%</b>
Poverty Alleviation	<b>90%</b>
Checking Influx of Illegal People	<b>78%</b>

**Adapted from** (Aghedo and Osumah, 2012: 864)

Significantly, the above data highlight the weakness and brutality of Nigeria's security apparatus, the porosity of Nigeria's borders, the pervasive poverty, and the increasing unemployment rate, especially among Nigeria's burgeoning youthful population. Most of the respondents interviewed were unanimous in their answers that attending to issues of employment creation, poverty alleviation, and checkmating the influx of illegal people across the borders of Nigeria can play a significant role in quelling the Boko Haram terrorism. The survey results also allow the inference that disciplined security operations should inform Nigerian government's effort in tackling the menace posed by Boko Haram. However, Boko Haram terrorism could well be minimized if the Nigerian government attends to the threat posed by increasing youth unemployment and poverty. Against this backdrop, this study recommends that since the northern region – where Boko Haram has its stronghold – is relatively the poorest and most underdeveloped region in Nigeria in terms of socioeconomic indices, there is every need to address the apparent sources of Boko Haram grievances by addressing issues of socioeconomic inequality and impoverishment that breed insecurity and religious politicization in the region. To



do this, this study proposes that the Nigerian government adopts a counter-ideological narrative that will bring about positive changes to the northern communities, without making recourse to violence, because counteracting the ideology of Boko Haram with violence will only undermine the prospect of a violence-free society in the country. This is where Glenn Piage's non-killing thesis as discussed in Chapter Three of this study is crucial. Applying the non-killing thesis in Nigeria will entail the adoption of a pragmatic approach that will involve institutional reforms and socioeconomic changes premised on the principles of non-violence, rather than the usual 'jungle justice' approach and heavy-handedness that have been exhibited by the Nigerian government thus far in its fight against Boko Haram.

#### **7.4 Towards a Non-Violent Society: Policy Options for the Nigerian Government**

This section will be based on Glenn Paige's idea that a non-killing society is possible in Nigeria if political leaders and citizens challenge the assumption that killing is commonplace in the country and commit themselves to solving the pathologies that create the context of a violent society. In order to achieve this, the Nigerian government must take the forgoing on board: promote a culture of religious tolerance; promote good governance; address issues of underdevelopment in northern Nigeria; reform its security sector, and control its porous borders against the influx of small arms and terrorists.

##### **7.4.1 Promoting a Culture of Religious Tolerance**

Based on Paige's informative data that found 47 societies around the world capable of demonstrating the capacities for non-violent peacefulness (Paige, 2002: 47), the Nigerian government must, as a matter of extreme urgency, begin to recognize and celebrate the peaceful nature of its diverse religious groups. The story of Christians and Muslims coming together to protect each other during national protests or sectarian crises should be encouraged and publicized. The following examples are noteworthy:

In the metropolitan city of Kano, Muslim clerics attended Sunday Church services as a show of faith and tolerance. The leader of the delegation, Bashir Ishaq Bashir, stated that they came to the Church to deliver a message of hope, peace, and solidarity.... Also in Minna and in Lagos, Christians joined hands to protect Muslims as they prayed during the nationwide oil subsidy removal strike on January 1, 2012. Christians and Muslims have also been united in protesting against bad governance and corruption .... In the wake of recent security challenges, Christians have shielded Muslims from any potential attack during the weekly Friday Jumat prayers in major mosques. Similarly, Muslims have provided the same protection for their Christian brethren around major Churches during Sunday services. These hands of fraternity, solidarity and fellowship should be continued and sustained on a regular basis until divisive agents of violence and lawlessness are dealt with (Ensign 2012).

As these examples illustrate, there are some covenantal goods in both Islam and Christianity that could be the foundation for a non-killing society in which mutually productive alternatives are available for diverse individuals in Nigeria. The recognition and championing of the goods in both Islam and Christianity can motivate people with diverse interests to co-exist in multiple, overlapping jurisdictions of varying geographical scopes and can go a long way in building a non-killing community, where religion can play a role as a force for harmony, truth and equal justice. Also relevant in this regard is an effort to consolidate the interfaith comradeship in the country by engaging more religious leaders to interact with potential and identified members of radical Islamic sects such as Boko Haram.

Indeed, the agency of the clergy will be crucial in shedding light not only on peacebuilding and mediation, but also on violent movements and terrorists organizations like Boko Haram (Sandal, 2011: 929). Since religion is a powerful tool for legitimacy and an important source of identity for many Nigerians, religious actors in Nigeria must become heralds, advocates, and institution builders in addition to their role of providing spiritual leadership. As the case of Northern Ireland and that of Apartheid South Africa have shown (Sandal, 2011: 936), faith leaders have a well-established and pervasive influence in their communities, which they must not abuse but must

use to bring about constructive changes in their societies based on a respected set of religious values, and reconciling conflicting parties and mobilizing support for peaceful processes. Already, some faith leaders in Nigeria like Cardinal John Onaiyekan, Bishop Mathew Hassan Kukah, Sultan Mohammed Sa'adu Abubakar III, among others, have all shown exemplary leadership in their communities, through their preachings, writings, and participation in national reconciliation processes, which could go a long way in impacting on conflict transformation in Nigeria. Thus, the role that faith leaders play in bringing their theological knowledge to bear on national policies and the politics of conflict in Nigeria will be crucial in the overall effort to address the Boko Haram crisis in the country.

To bolster the effort of faith leaders in Nigeria, civil society organizations, such as the Interfaith Mediation Centre that operates in Kaduna, can also be established in other volatile cities in the country. Interestingly, the Interfaith Mediation Centre in Kaduna state was founded by James Wuye, a Pentecostal pastor, and Muhammad Ashafa, an Imam – both indigenes – who led conflicting community groups, but who have reconciled and joined forces to bring about peace in the state. The Centre aims to re-establish relationships damaged by violence, minimize the likelihood of the recurrence of religious violence, and organise projects that will involve both Christians and Muslims, such as cultural events and peace workshops (Crisis Group Africa Report, 2010: 24). Furthermore, the Centre addresses issues of sectarian violence by preventing the occurrence of violent conflicts and contributing to raising the level of trust and tolerance among Christians and Muslims in Nigeria (Wuye, 2005: 228). With trust, tolerance, and the absence of violence, reconciliation can begin through the development over time of collaborative relationships and cohesive peace constituencies in both communities (Wuye, 2005:228).

To further the strides made by the Interfaith Centre, non-killing civil societies and spiritual councils should be established at every level of government in Nigeria (Paige, 2004: 19). The groups should comprise lawyers, educated clerics, community and youth leaders, who will represent every faith and ethnic group in their particular region. Their responsibilities will be to affirm and endorse the respect of human rights and dignity of all persons as well as organise

peacemaking, and post-conflict reconstruction programs. The presence of lawyers in the group will be pivotal in prosecuting those found guilty of abusing the fundamental right to life of all citizens in the jurisdiction and beyond. The clerics and spiritual leaders should be charged with the responsibility of advising the youths and general populace in accordance with the doctrines of their religious books. Indeed, special attention is to be accorded to the youth who are, in most cases, fiercely passionate about their faith and easily used on that basis by politicians and religious demagogues to fuel instability and perpetrate acts of violence. It seems then that any program of change or theory of non-violence and conflict transformation without due regards to the role or place of the youths, clerics, community leaders, etc. as instruments of change in their societies, is unlikely to yield the desired results.

#### **7.4.2 Addressing Poverty and Unemployment in the North**

The impoverishment of the north, especially in the base of Boko Haram – Borno state – should be uppermost in the minds and policies of northern leadership, because excruciating poverty and youth unemployment have helped the sect to build a cult-like anti-government following that is bent on killing anyone and destroying anything in the name of God (Obayiuwana, 2011: 35). To set in place any meaningful development plan in northern Nigeria, the populace must be educated and gainfully employed. The Nigerian government should by all means see the need for a new thinking on resolving conflicts and restoring peace without recourse to their usual heavy-handedness. This new thinking on conflict transformation should be framed in the non-killing framework and should entail the creation of job opportunities for the now-teeming number of unemployed youths. When jobs are provided for these restive youths, conditions that predispose them to robbery, armed violence, and suicide bombings will be massively reduced. Hence, the Nigerian government, especially the northern Governors, will have to reverse the economic and social degradation that has created a killing society in the region. What the government can do is to resuscitate the agricultural sector and the textile industries in the north, which have lain dormant for many years. If the Kaduna and Kano state governments resuscitate their once flourishing textile factories, unemployment could be massively reduced and the creation of more

employment opportunities could see many restive youths resisting any killing tendency and focusing on transforming their lives. Besides, an economic revolution that the refurbishment of the textile factories might bring out could make the northern environment attractive to domestic and foreign investment once more.

Equally relevant in this regard is to set up viable civil society institutions that will promote democracy and challenge the corrupt and hostile authorities in the north who often manipulate the restive youths in the region to kill their political opponents and stir disturbances during elections and other political rallies and social events in the country (Zorro 2011:11). This was clearly manifested when youths launched protests against President Goodluck Jonathan's election victory in May 2011 by setting fire to properties belonging to the Vice-President Namadi Sambo in Kaduna state (Zorro 2011:11). If the populace in northern Nigeria is to be prevented from rising up in anger and attacking the state, then the leaders in the country will have to heed to the crying need of virtually all Nigerians by providing adequate educational and health facilities, decent housing, clean water supply, and steady electricity for the people (Duodu, 2012). The gloomy reality is that Boko Haram is likely to intensify its wave of unrest and terror, and it seems clear that without the prospect of economic improvement for millions of poor and unemployed people in northern Nigeria, mostly youths, the security situation will deteriorate further.

### **7.4.3 Strengthening Security Capacity**

The extrajudicial killing of Mohammed Yusuf in the July 2009 violent confrontations between his sect and the police has provided his followers with a valuable recruitment tool and reason to kill both police and civilians who had nothing to do with the killing of the sect's leader. (Crisis Group Africa Report, 2010: 25). To compensate for the extrajudicial murder of the Boko Haram leader along with some of its members, late President Yar'adua set up a Commission of Inquiry

to look into the matter. The reports of such commissions are hardly, if ever, published (Albert, 2001: 107). Successive governments in Nigeria had always adopted the 'Commission of Inquiry approach' any time a violent situation erupts without any proper follow-up. According to Albert (2001: 107), the refusal to publish these reports gives room for rumour-mongers to boast of possessing insider knowledge of the contents of the reports. In most cases, the warring party that thinks itself disadvantaged by the report would therefore regroup to wage another attack, considering that its grievances cannot be addressed through any official government intervention. It would not be surprising if the same sentiment is also shared by Boko Haram since it clearly expresses little confidence in the legitimacy of the Nigerian state and its ability to redress the grievances of its members.

Furthermore, the security apparatuses in Nigeria are simply ill-equipped and far too corrupt and reckless to handle serious cases of violence or insecurity in the country, and as such, they have lost the confidence of the general population whom they so often punish, beat, and harass at checkpoints. Given this, the Nigerian government will have to make a conscious effort to give first class and robust counterterrorism training to its security forces in accordance with the following counterterrorism strategy of Kofi Annan:

Our strategy against terrorism must be comprehensive and should be based on five pillars: it must aim at dissuading people from resorting to terrorism or supporting it; it must deny terrorists access to funds and materials; it must deter states from sponsoring terrorism; it must develop state capacity to defeat terrorism; and it must defend human rights

Kofi Annan, In *Larger Freedom* (2005: 26).

Among other things, the fulfilment of Annan's strategy will entail providing non-lethal equipment, and helping the Nigerian security forces to be more precise and courteous in their use of force and to accept the role of custodians of human rights (Obayiuwana 2011 :79). To intensify its efforts, the Nigerian government as a signatory of several international human rights treaties

is obligated to open speedy trials on the detained members and suspects of Boko Haram, and if possible, prosecute the perpetrators of the extrajudicial murder of Mohammed Yusuf and other Boko Haram members in the July 2009 uprising (Human Rights Watch, 2012: 11). To effectively counter Boko Haram and security abuses in Nigeria, the Nigerian government will certainly require “a judicial branch that holds corrupt governments and military officials responsible for their actions, an accountable and effective police force, and a political process that is inclusive of all groups, regardless of ethnicity, religion, education, gender, or economic status” (Young, 2002: 260).

Bearing in mind that the Nigerian Security Forces have lost credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of many citizens, it will be important for the government to garner the people’s trust and confidence in the security forces because without this close alliance between the security forces and the citizenry, information about perpetrators of violence will be hard to come by. Based on this, the security forces in Nigeria should work closely with community and religious leaders to collect information on activities around their jurisdiction. Of course, the gains of such an approach may not come immediately but, if vigorously pursued, community policing can create the enabling atmosphere whereby the security forces in the country can be more responsive, more professional, more effective, and more service-oriented. Thus, rather than anti-terror police, or increasing military budgets, it is this kind of quiet revolution in approach that is capable of delivering the optimal result of preventing future generations of Nigerians from taking up arms and killing innocent civilians and attacking the state in the name of God (Forest, 2012). By and large, adhering to these prudent approaches – which rely less on the imagery of war – would mark a departure from certain major aspects of what have been done so far in the so-called global ‘War on Terror’ (Roberts, 2006: 124), and can go a long way to not only quell the Boko Haram terrorism but to also make the West African sub-region more secure and stable.

#### **7.4.4 Weak Border Control and Regional Policing**

Arguably, the proliferation of ammunition and other weapons of mass destruction in Nigeria have contributed to perpetuating a killing society in the country. Boko Haram has used Nigeria's porous borders and the limited capacities of neighbouring countries to its advantage. There are allegations that the sect received ammunitions and explosives from Al-Qaeda affiliates in the Sahel region. Thus, greater cooperation and intelligence-sharing between states in the region need to be encouraged and facilitated by regional and international agencies (Pham, 2012: 7). At the sub-regional level, it is imperative for the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to establish its own sub-region-led police force in order to checkmate the activities of criminals and terrorists across the sub-regional borders. But security itself cannot be sustained or promoted without a corresponding counterbalancing strategy of promoting legitimate politics, peace-building, institutional building, sub-regional courts, and democratization processes as catalysts for sustainable development in the sub-region. If and when all these are done in the right manner, then it is unlikely that Boko Haram in Nigeria and other extremist Islamist groups in Mali will carve out niches for themselves across the sub-region. Additionally, Nigeria should collaborate with others at the global level to combat regional and global trafficking networks that could be exploited to help finance and sustain terrorist groups in the country (Forest, 2012: 88).

The recommendations proffered in this section are seen as the core mechanisms for creating a non-killing society in Nigeria. The recommendations that will follow are indirectly connected to the non-killing framework of analysis.

#### **7.5 Underscoring the Secularity of the Nigerian State**

To effectively fight the Boko Haram menace, the secularity of the Nigerian state must be underscored. Boko Haram insists on the unitary view of the Nigerian society with no distinction between state and religion, and is also demanding the Islamization of the country, or at least the



application of the Sharia law in the northern region (Adesoji, 2010: 102). According to Boko Haram, secularism amounts to a cultural affront to a significant portion of the Islamic societies and reduces them to the status of second-class citizens. However, some structural problems embedded in the campaign for the implementation of the Sharia law in Nigeria abound. For instance, Cook (2011: 7) argues that the introduction of Sharia Penal Codes may in some areas be in conflict with the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria, which prohibits the adoption of state religion in the country. Hence, the call for the Islamization of the northern states by Boko Haram is diversionary and unconstitutional, with grave implications for the nation-building project and the secularity of the Nigerian state (Dada and Ejue, 2012: 237). It is thus arguable by supporters of Nigeria, as now constituted, that improvements in extremists' understanding of the meaning of citizenship and the importance of personal liberty are crucial to achieving peace and consensus on divisive issues in a deeply polarized country like Nigeria (Sanusi, 2007: 186). Similarly, Ibelema (2012) calls on all Muslims to use moral and religious suasion to help Boko Haram members see the light and to be made to understand that they are a discredit to Islam.

Equally important is for the Nigerian government to revisit the idea of organizing a Sovereign National Conference (SNC). Stakeholders in Nigeria have agitated since the 1980s for the use of SNC as an avenue for resolving or (at least) discussing the divisive issues that have stalled harmonious relationship among the different religious and ethnic groups in Nigeria. Although the military regime of Babangida did not allow the conference to hold in the 1980s, it is important for the present crop of Nigerian leaders to revisit the potential significance and benefit of organizing a SNC. But for this to happen, there ought to be a strong political will and readiness of the people to put aside their ethnic and religious divisions and "freely debate, negotiate, and design the nature of their society and their common future" (Rashid, 2004: 388). Beyond this, the political parties in the country will have to articulate their policies on the basis of patriotism and work towards building national philosophies rather than advancing ethnic or religious ideologies that incite wars or election violence. Many Nigerians are fond of voting on the basis of ethnic and religious affiliations because they are being encouraged and mobilized by their leaders to do so. To be successful in securing a national ideology and building patriotic citizens and harmonious relationship among them, politicians must stop inciting social groups on the

basis of ethnicity or religion to win elections. Where political parties become non-partisan by dissociating themselves from identity ties, the country can correct the wrongs of the colonial and postcolonial leaders who played critical roles in mobilizing for political participation on the basis of identity and regional lines in the struggle for central government power and resources. Insofar as the foregoing is guaranteed, Nigeria will be able to engage more meaningfully in the tasks of nation-building and political stability, which would make the flourishing of groups like Boko Haram much more difficult and risky.

### **7.6 Creating Alternative Schools for the Almajiris**

In countries like Nigeria where some states lack modern educational structures, the best policy for the Nigerian government may be to help develop alternative modern structures of education, and provide the opportunities for some kids, like the Almajiris who roam the streets, to also benefit from modern education. In Pakistan, for instance, many children end up at extremist schools not of their own accord but simply due to the inability of their parents to afford the necessary finances needed to enrol them in the alternative modern schools (Stern, 2003: 287). In many instances, children who attend public schools may have to buy books and uniforms, or pay for housing and board (Stern, 2003: 287). Government assistance in developing modern schools, especially in northeast Nigeria, that can successfully educate youth to participate constructively in modern society and so keep away from civil disturbances, can be a useful effort, whatever its long-term impact on countering Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria.

### **7.7 Strengthening Governance**

Ultimately, the long-term difficulty of managing the Boko Haram reign of terror in Nigeria is to improve governance capacity. Nigerians can begin to reap the dividends of democracy and live in a peaceful and sustainable environment if their leaders shun corruption and utilize the country's resources for their benefit. Good leadership characterized by the virtues of honesty,

trust, transparency, and integrity, are basic ingredients needed to eliminate the Boko Haram terrorism. The process of providing good governance in Nigeria should focus on the following imperatives, as clearly spelled-out by Ojo (2006: 8):

1. The reasons for being a Nigerian should be uniformly developed and accepted by all throughout the country. This must be articulated and sustained through consistent government programs and institutions. It must be grounded in the constitution and directed toward building people's trust in government. This populist approach to governance should be seen by all to be in the interest of all Nigerians in order to build trust through actions and policies in the interest of every Nigerian.
2. The economic policy of the government must be reflected in an attainable economic reform, which should prioritize food production. This reform should be based on the principle of investing in people as its foundation. It should also be linked to a social policy that depoliticizes ethnicity and religious affairs. In addition, the government must seek constitutional and legal mechanisms for addressing the ethnic and religious crisis in the country. The government must also provide good road network, constant electricity, fresh water, and affordable healthcare for people, especially those in the deprived regions of the country.
3. All the above attributes of good governance can be achieved through the support of a viable, responsible and depoliticized civil service, and committed and well-informed civil society (Ojo, 2006: 8).

Surely, good governance in Nigeria requires the provision of economic, social, political, and security goods by the Nigerian leaders to its vast citizenry who have been enduring festering injustice and neglect due to bad governance (Ikelegbe, 2005: 77). Providing these legitimate political and social goods to the citizens will be a crucial step in the right direction towards addressing instability and creating an atmosphere of cooperation and trust between the government and the citizens.

### **7.8 Global Coalition against Boko Haram**

Nigeria has long been viewed as the ‘giant of Africa’ and most foreign countries have also perceived it as a strategic state in the West African sub-region because of its large demography, ethno-religious diversity, and rich natural resources. As the most populous country in Africa, and geopolitically at a nodal point of Commonwealth communications, Britain also solicited for solidarity with Nigeria at the time of independence, for political, strategic as well as economic reasons (Jackson, 2007: 594). Since the 1990s, foreign countries and investors still recognize the strategic role that Nigeria plays in Africa, especially its involvement in initiatives such as the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), its contribution to peacekeeping missions, as well as its support for US counterterrorism initiatives (Crane, 2006; Jackson, 2007: 594). It is thus indisputable that an ailing, insecure, and unstable Nigeria is bound to have adverse consequences throughout Africa and beyond. Hence, Nigeria’s search for solutions to its problems is quintessential for Africa and the global community, but whether it can do this alone is another matter altogether (Jackson, 2007: 600).

Taking into cognizance the severe and long-lasting challenges – not least the Boko Haram terrorism – facing the country since 2009, the role of the international community will definitely be crucial in bringing to an end the downward spiral of Boko Haram terrorist activities. Already, the United States Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Johnnie Carson, has offered to consolidate Nigeria’s effort in fighting Boko Haram by training local security forces in forensic investigation and other military counterterrorism tactics. To deepen their effort, the U.S

Department of Defence has also provided more than \$8 million to Nigeria for the development of a counterterrorism infantry unit (Forest, 2012: 107). A possible model for this kind of foreign assistance includes Yemen, with whom the US built an effective intelligence-sharing partnership. While this relationship continues to pose challenges, it has achieved some level of success as manifested by the execution of Anwar al Awlaki,<sup>25</sup> in Yemen (Meehan, and Speier, 2011: 24).

The United States had also exerted pressure on the Nigerian government to tackle issues of socioeconomic development and to foster investment in northern Nigeria. Such pressure is “a significant starting point” and should be sustained (Meehan and Speier, 2011: 26). Given this open display of concern and support, the Barack Obama administration has also promised to tackle socio-economic issues that are providing the fertile breeding ground for Boko Haram in northern Nigeria. However, most Nigerians at home and abroad think that labelling Boko Haram a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) will be a better way of popularizing the sect’s activities and gaining more international support to curb its excesses. Nevertheless, combating corruption is crucial in the fight against terrorism in Nigeria, because as Akomolafe (2006: 242) argues, Nigeria is potentially more dangerous than Afghanistan or Iraq because of its notorious reputation for corruption. Thus, Boko Haram terrorism would most likely escalate if Nigeria’s economic and corruption impasse are not addressed in good time.

The Nigerian diaspora can also play a key role by investing in the country and keeping a close touch with its politics, and its socioeconomic activities (Okome, 2006: 61). If this is combined with other external investments as engines of economic growth, certainly Nigeria will be *en route* to economic recovery, which can create the sustainable environment needed to foster development. But in the final analysis, while regional and international coalition is needed to fight Boko Haram, it is at the national level within Nigeria that Boko Haram will eventually be crushed. To this end, the Nigerian government, led by President Goodluck Jonathan, must be convinced that the time has finally come to deal with the underlying socioeconomic and political

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<sup>25</sup> Anwar al Awlaki is a radical American Muslim cleric of Yemeni descent, who was linked to a series of attacks and plots across the world - from 11 September 2001 to the shootings at Fort Hood in November 2009 (BBC, 2011).

challenges associated with the emergence and radicalization of Boko Haram and must be seen to be committed to addressing these issues.

## **7.9 The Prospective Future of Boko Haram**

There are three possibilities for the future of Boko Haram. First, Boko Haram could splinter into several factions. Second, it might collaborate with other like-minded external sectarian groups, thus becoming a full-fledged transnational terrorist organisation akin to the al-Qaeda core. Third, the group might eventually be defeated by the Nigerian government. The first possibility has already materialized. To be sure, disagreements among Boko Haram members over assassinations of Muslim leaders, mass casualty attacks that kill Muslim civilians, and negotiations have been cited as contributing factors to the emergence of a splinter group called Ansaru, which translate roughly as supporters of Black Muslims in the land of Sudan (Zenn, 2012). According to a videotaped monologue produced by the group's emir, Abu Usamatul Ansar, Ansaru differs from Boko Haram in three notable ways: first, that the group does not kill innocent non-Muslims, only on the grounds of self-defence or if they attack Muslims. By contrast, Boko Haram considers all non-Muslims, and particularly Christians, as enemies who must be killed. Second, that Ansaru condemns the killing of innocent security operatives, and would not order attacks against them unless they attack the group or its loyalists. Third, unlike Boko Haram which focuses much of its efforts against non-Muslims in northern Nigeria, Ansaru is geared at defending the interests of Islam and Muslims throughout Africa (Ousman, 2012: 23).

Ansaru has claimed responsibility for the killing of two Nigerian army men with an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) on the Ekene-Abuja road on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2013. The group claimed that the attack on the soldiers is in retaliation against the offensive waged against its loyalists in Mali by the French and West African troops (*The Guardian*, January 19<sup>th</sup> 2013). The group also claimed responsibility for the kidnapping of seven foreigners from the compound of the Lebanese construction company Setraco in northern Nigeria's Bauchi state. While this incident was still attracting international condemnation, another group of seven French Nationals

were abducted in Cameroon and taken into Nigeria (*Aljazeera*, 22 February 2013). Although no group has taken responsibility for this act, all fingers are pointing to Boko Haram, which earlier on had indicated its discontent with the French invasion of Islamist groups in Mali.

While it is not clear that Boko Haram is linked to the Malian radical Islamists, its demand for the implementation of the Sharia law resonates with that of the radical Islamists in Mali and could lead to a strong alliance between the groups to form what can be a vicious terrorist organization in West Africa. As Asa-Asamoah, (2007:22) argues, “with the existence of a binding ideology, domestic groups are able to morph into transnational entities that threaten and operate with a wider target than their initial focus”. In the case of Boko Haram and the Malian insurgents, there are indications to show that the groups can combine to pose a transnational terrorist threat. In a recent report by the Wall Street Journal, it is discovered that Timbuktu, in Mali, served as a training ground for hundreds of members of Boko Haram (Hinshaw, 2013: 1). A Malian reported that Boko Haram learned to fix Kalashnikovs and launch shoulder-fired weapons in Timbuktu, but have now deserted the area since the French onslaught on the Islamists in the country. This recent development serves to corroborate recent speculations among regional and Western scholars and officials that West African countries have become incubators where al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) is training and mobilizing Africans for jihad (Hinshaw, 2013: 1). This portends danger for the peace and stability of the West African region and beyond and calls for an urgent need for collaborative counterterrorism response from the Member States.

With regards to the third possibility for the future of Boko Haram, it is possible that the sect will be eventually crushed by the Nigerian Joint Task Force (JTF) just like the Maitatsine sect in the 1980s. But in order for this possibility to materialize, the Nigerian government must be willing to back up military response with other political and socio-economic reforms. According to Walker (2012: 12), the sect can also be defeated under some constructive political process where the more radical elements would be isolated and the moderates integrated into the mainstream Muslim communities (Walker, 2012: 12). But if Boko Haram should continue its attacks, there is a prospect that the gap between the predominantly Muslim north and the majority Christian south

will widen with deleterious consequences for the unity of all Nigerians. That is precisely what the sect seems intent to accomplish, and therein lies the danger (Ibelema, 2012). Hence, understanding how religion offers rational sources for religious/political actors in the context of state fragility in Nigeria and beyond is important not only in providing a nuanced understanding of the Boko Haram terrorism, but also in informing a prudent and coordinated counterterrorism response that can have the greatest positive effect.

### **7.10 Summary**

The study started by giving a general introductory background to the political and religious landscape of the Nigerian state and how that has precipitated the emergence of the Boko Haram phenomenon. Subsequently, the study underscores the relevance of some pertinent concepts like terrorism, the concept of the state, and the Nigerian state. Literature on violence and terrorism in Africa was also reviewed to distil information that will foster a more nuanced understanding of the Boko Haram phenomenon. A historical excursion was also made in the course of the study to show how the coalescence of the colonial legacy, Islamic expansion and revivalism, as well as the heated Sharia debate, contribute to incubate and sustain the Boko Haram terrorism in the country. More than any other factor, the study emphasized the conditions of state fragility in Nigeria and its corollary, frustration and aggression, as the most pertinent causality of Boko Haram's ferocious terrorist activities. The findings of the study evince that the conditions of state failure, including in this instance, political instability, widespread underdevelopment in northern Nigeria, endemic corruption, pervasive poverty and unemployment, underdeveloped infrastructures and institutions, and security deficiency are still rife in Nigeria, despite the transition to democratic rule in 1999, and provide a safe haven for Boko Haram terrorism.

Subsequently, the phenomenon of Boko Haram in terms of its origin, philosophy, membership, leadership, sponsors, violent crackdowns, radicalization, and its potential linkages to Al-Qaeda and similar terrorist networks like Al-Shabaab in Somalia and Tuareg rebels in Mali was properly situated in accordance with the thrust of the study. This clears every doubt that the



Boko Haram phenomenon is both deeply-rooted in Nigeria as well as transnational in nature. To defuse the menace, the study recommended that a transition from a killing to a non-killing society in Nigeria is a categorical imperative. But prior to proffering its recommendations, the study assessed the past policy options that have been undertaken by the Nigerian government to address the crisis. These include, the declaration of state of emergency in the theatres of Boko Haram, the Joint Task Force (JTF) security approach, and an attempted negotiation process with the sect.

Given the deficiencies of these approaches, which outweigh their benefits in the effort to address terrorism in the country, the study proposes some policy recommendations premised on the non-killing thesis. These recommendations include security sector reform, interfaith dialogue, poverty eradication, creation of job opportunities, securing Nigeria's porous borders, organizing a Sovereign National Conference (SNC), and the provisions of the principles of good governance. The study underscores that the implementation of these recommendations can facilitate a smooth transition to a non-killing and peaceful society in Nigeria where human rights will be highly regarded and respected. However, with the changing dynamics and incessant attacks being executed by Boko Haram, the study also recommends that Nigeria must demonstrate a strong sense of commitment to addressing the immediate as well as the more indirect causes of the Boko Haram terrorism by joining forces and resources with the regional and international community.

On a final note, Nigeria may be said to be a country that is still badly divided and institutionally weak, but certainly not doomed to failure. Nigeria must also be defined by its reservoir of potential, especially its natural wealth and the apparent giftedness and creativity of its people, which are celebrated worldwide. Its potential is huge and its abundant oil wealth, if properly utilized and managed, holds out the hope that a stable government could release "the pool of energy and talent that pulsates through the country's rich ethnic and religious mosaic" (Maier, 2000: xxiv). With such dedication and commitment to selfless service by the Nigerian ruling

elites, and corresponding cooperation by its citizenry, it is possible that Boko Haram terrorism will soon be in the history books.

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