

Combating Violent-Extremism and Insurgency in Nigeria: A Case Study of the Boko
Haram Scourge

By

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Combating Violent-Extremism and Insurgency in Nigeria: A case study of the Boko
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ABSTRACT

The most recent extremist group in Nigeria, Boko Haram, continues to grow, committing various extremist acts, such as sporadic suicide bombings and killing of innocent citizens and foreigners within the country. The current history of Nigeria is a combustible mix of violent extremism and thriving homegrown insurgencies. Rather than internally tackling the challenge, the Nigerian government perpetually seeks international interventions to assist with the rising crisis. The fabric of Nigeria's unity appears to be ripped by violent-extremism and homegrown insurgency. The missing link here is a clear focus on tackling the prevailing domestic factors that persistently fan the flames of extremism and insurgency in Nigeria.

This thesis examines the contextual factors that are indispensable in explaining the causes of violence in Nigeria and unravels the dominant factor driving violent extremism and insurgency in Nigeria. Specifically, it also provides a better understanding of the dominant insurgent group—the Boko Haram sect—and the effects of violence and insurgency on the oneness of the Nigerian State. It also suggests possible solutions which include traditional conflict resolution approaches to curb the menace of violent-extremism and insurgency in Nigeria.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	3
Hypotheses.....	4
Significance of the Study and General Outline	5
CHAPTER TWO DEFINITIONS AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.....	7
Historical Development of Violence in Nigeria	10
Theoretical Approaches	16
CHAPTER THREE EXTREMIST GROUPS AND EXPRESSED GOALS.....	20
Group Structure.....	21
Group Membership, Support and Resources	22
Escalating Acts of Extremism in Nigeria	23
CHAPTER FOUR RESEARCH FINDINGS	30
Oil	30
Oil and Widespread Corruption.....	32
Poverty and Social Frustration.....	34
Colonial Legacy	35
Weak State Structure	36
Media Effect On Boko Haram Crisis In Northern Nigeria.....	38
CHAPTER FIVE CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATION.....	42
References.....	46

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Despite the Nigerian government escalating military actions against the Boko Haram sect in Northern Nigeria, violent extremism and insurgency show no lasting sign of decline within the country. The most recent extremist group, Boko Haram, continues to expand and commit violent acts, such as sporadic suicide bombings and killing of innocent citizens and foreigners within the country. The current history of Nigeria is a combustible mix of violent extremism, and thriving homegrown insurgencies. Rather than internally tackling the challenge, the Nigerian government perpetually seeks international interventions to assist with the rising crisis. To merit the attention of the international community, the government often restricts its level of analysis to the state level and the dangers and threats extremist groups pose to the country and its allies. For example, the Nigerian President, Goodluck Jonathan, at the 2013 World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland noted, “if violent extremism is not contained in Nigeria, definitely it will spill into other countries in West Africa. . . . This is one of the reasons we have to move fast” (Maylie, 2013, p. 1). “Moving fast” in the words of President Jonathan, largely ignores a well-defined means of ending the crisis in Africa’s most populous country.

The spate of brutal killings and the numerous threats by violent extremist groups, particularly the Boko Haram sect, have called into question lasting peace and safety within the country for Nigerians and foreigners. Many Nigerians are now forced to live in fear, as they are subjected to unprecedented levels of chaos and havoc, which include indiscriminate bombings and killings, such as the country never witnessed before, even

during the 1967-1970 civil war. Hill (2012) attributed the Boko Haram scourge to Nigeria's state failure. Violent-extremism and homegrown insurgency appear to be ripping the fabric of Nigeria's unity. Insurgent groups have made several daring attempts to impose religious ideology forcefully, such as the practice of Sharia law on Nigeria's secular state. Despite the deployment of troops into the Northern states of Nigeria to tackle rising insurgency in Nigeria, the Boko Haram sect seems more resilient than ever, simply because the Nigerian government appears incapable of curbing the menace affecting the lives of its citizens.

Among notable Nigerians who have shown concern over the indiscriminate bombings and killings in Northern Nigeria by Boko Haram is the Nobel-winning author, Wole Soyinka. Soyinka struck a pessimistic note in 2010 by admitting that he did not rule out Nigeria breaking up, as that is what can happen to a failed state, one that has lost control over the majority of its territory (Howden, 2010). According to the Fund for Peace (2012), Nigeria is referred to as a failed state due to corruption and criminal activities occurring in the country as well as the inability of government to provide public services to its citizens. Nigeria's weak central government is closely bound to the existence and activities of insurgent groups, such as Boko Haram, that have defied all governmental approach to ending violence and mayhem in Nigeria. It is clear that the Nigerian government is deficient in exercising authority over parts of Nigeria, particularly in the northern and central regions where Boko Haram carries out its nefarious activities without exemption.

Statement of the Problem

Insurgent groups, particularly the Boko Haram sect, threatens the very existence of Nigerian unity and have aided in creating the vicious cycle of fear, thereby exposing the Federal government's failure to exercise control. Despite the Nigerian government's declaration of a state of emergency in the three most affected northern states, namely Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe, respectively, violence has continued with no sign of abating in Northern Nigeria. In recent times, the Nigerian government has deployed over 8,000 soldiers to combat insurgents in these affected states, but the absence of a specific Military Code of Justice to clearly identify intended targets and protect the civilian population has further increased the number of casualties in Northern Nigeria. For example, the Nigerian Army conducted a single deadly military intervention that caused wanton destruction of lives and properties of civilians in Baga, Borno State in northeastern Nigeria, on Sunday, April 21, 2013. The soldiers from the special operations team invaded the Baga community in Northern Nigeria to search for suspects believed to be members of the deadly extremist Islamic group Boko Haram and killed over 200 civilians in one day (Akande, 2013). It is evident that the Nigerian government lacks a clear program for dealing with the challenge of violent-extremism and insurgency. The missing link here is a clear focus on tackling the prevailing domestic factors that persistently fan the flames of extremism and insurgency in Nigeria.

Scholars have linked a number of factors, including endemic poverty, widespread corruption, weak state structure, social frustration, and mismanagement of resource endowment, as contributing to the scale of violent extremism and insurgency in Nigeria. This thesis examines the contextual factors that are salient in explaining the causes of

violence in Nigeria. Hill (2012) argued that Nigeria is a failed state because its writ of government does not extend to all areas within its boundary, and the federal government does not promote sustainable legal institutions. Other scholars have linked rising insurgent groups and extremism in the country to socioeconomic conditions, such as extreme poverty in the affected region of northern Nigeria, endemic corruption, mismanagement of the country's oil wealth, and weak political institutions. Whetho an Uzodike (2011) suggested that social frustration and aggression has triggered violent extremism and insurgency in Nigeria, especially in the northern part of the country.

Despite the ongoing debate over the major causes of violence and insurgency in Nigeria, this thesis will unravel the dominant factors driving violent extremism and insurgency in Nigeria. In explaining intrastate violence in Nigeria, three theories are examined in the Nigerian context. First is the resource curse (Bannon & Collier, 2003; Collier & Hoeffler, 1998; LeBillon 2005). Second is the failed state argument (Rotberg, 2002, 2003; Zartman, 1995) and, finally, the frustration-aggression theory (Dollard, J., Doob, L., Miller, N., Mowrer, O.H, & Sears, R., 1993; Gurr, 1970, 2000). In order to test these key theories (assumptions for the violence), this study compares the northern (non-oil producing) and southern (oil producing) regions of Nigeria and analyzes the pattern and trend of violence in the country. In addition, the study draws comparison between other peaceful regions in Nigeria and the violent ridden region of northern Nigeria.

Hypotheses

The main hypothesis for the resource curse is H1: Regions with greater resource extraction, such as oil, will experience higher levels of violent-extremism and insurgency. Thus, the research question: Is oil extraction the leading factor that promotes violent-

extremism and insurgency in most parts of Nigeria? The second hypothesis is the failed state. H2: Regions where the central government does not have the capacity to effectively police the regions and provide public services will experience higher levels of violent-extremism and insurgency. The second research question: Are weak central institutions the leading factor that promotes violent-extremism and insurgency in most parts of Nigeria? Finally, the frustration-aggression theory is based on socioeconomic factors and relative deprivation. H3: Regions with higher levels of abject poverty will experience higher levels of violent-extremism and insurgency. The third research question: Is the gap between the rich and poor leading to social frustration the leading factor that promotes violent-extremism and insurgency in most parts of Nigeria?

The purpose of this study is four-fold. First is to determine the leading factor that most fans the flames of violent-extremism and insurgency in Nigeria. Second is to compare peace in other regions of Nigeria with the affected northern region of Nigeria. Third is to understand insurgent groups better, particularly the Boko Haram sect, and the effects of violence and insurgency on the unity of the Nigerian State. Last, the study recommends possible means of combating violent extremism in Nigeria.

Significance of the Study and General Outline

Due to its large population, rich cultural diversity, and growing economy, Nigeria is considered to be a powerful regional influence in sub-Saharan Africa, and a reliable ally for the success of American foreign policy and interests in Africa (Minabere, 2013). Findings from this study contribute to the literature on counter-insurgency. In addition, this study identifies measures and possible solutions for the Nigerian government that can bring lasting peace and unity to the country. A wide variety of audiences may be

interested in this research, particularly students who are interested in peace and conflict studies. Other academic disciplines that could be enriched by this research include history, political science, international and globalization studies, and military and security studies.

The analyses and research are formulated in the following chapters. Chapter Two defines violent-extremism and insurgency, with a brief overview of the history of Nigeria in its pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial eras. It also discusses the key variables and the relevant theories that explain violent extremism and insurgency in Nigeria. Chapter Three reviews the activities of the extremist groups, their expressed goals, interests, membership, support, and the types of violence committed by these groups.

Consideration is also given to the changing dynamics of these extremist groups and the factors that contribute to the exponential rise of extremist groups in Nigeria. Chapter Four tests the hypotheses to ascertain the relevance of theories to factors that persistently fan the flames of violent extremism in Nigeria. It also includes a critique of resource curse theory and the general linkage of natural resources to violence. Chapter Five concludes with policy recommendations and suggestions for further research. Chapter Six provides a social media perspective from the country's view and international view of Boko Haram.

CHAPTER TWO

DEFINITIONS AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

What is violent extremism and insurgency? The Resilient Communities of Australia (2013), the Australian government's community-based initiative on fighting violent extremism, defined violent extremism "as the beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals" (para. 1). All forms of violent extremism include terrorism, communal violence, and other forms of politically motivated violence. Also, the U.S. Counter-Insurgency Initiative (2009) has defined insurgency as:

the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge political control of a region. Insurgents seek to subvert or displace the government and completely or partially control the resources and population of a given territory. They do so through the use of force (including guerrilla warfare, terrorism, and coercion/intimidation), propaganda, subversion, and political mobilization. Insurgents fight government forces only to the extent needed to achieve their political aims: their main effort is not to kill counterinsurgents, but rather to establish a competitive system of control over the population, making it impossible for the government to administer its territory and people. Insurgent activity, therefore, is designed to weaken government control and legitimacy while increasing insurgent control and influence. (6)

According to Price and Morris (2011), "social scientists and policy makers alike repeatedly have underestimated the power of ideologies and deeply felt convictions as primary motivations behind numerous forms of violent extremism" (p. 21). In order to understand what truly drives militants into violent extremist groups, one needs to identify their motivations. Violent extremist groups are moved by self-interest, narrow grievances, the search for power or wealth, or the desire to advance a political agenda, as this certainly spurs them into violence (Price & Morris, 2011). In many cases, what

brings violent extremists together is their shared dedication to a particular vision of how society ought to be organized, and/or their strong questioning of the foundations upon which their societies are presently organized. Price and Morris (2011) explained that

this is true of many Salafi Jihadist groups today, just as it was true—in radically different contexts and on the basis of entirely different world views—of the left wing radical groups of the 1970s in West Germany (the Red Army Faction or Baader-Meinhoff Gang), Italy (the Red Brigades), and Japan (the Japanese Red Army). (23)

As such, the Boko Haram of Northern Nigeria is equally held by their belief in the imposition and practice of Sharia law in Nigeria.

In addition, firmly held religious or political beliefs play a critical role and need to be part of the analysis. For example, committed extremists or “true believers” tend to persist in the face of overwhelming odds. Though they are forward-looking in their plans, they strongly pursue inordinate objectives that may not be achieved during their lifetime. In other words, “their propensity to continue to fight—despite their realization that they will not experience the future political/social outcome—is greatly enhanced by adherence to transcendental values that trump self-interest, realpolitik, or cost benefit calculations” (Price & Morris, 2011, p. 23).

What is the moral justification for violence? Price and Morris (2011) argued that values and beliefs also matter to the extent that they can provide moral justifications for violence. In the USAID, Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism (2009) states,

The perceived presence of a compelling moral imperative often is required for individuals to convince themselves that it is acceptable—indeed, as they view it, necessary—to resort to cruelty towards others. It is not enough merely to focus on the presumed pressures or incentives created by the social, economic, and political environment in which violent extremists operate if one is to account for moral justification for violence. It is pertinent to take longstanding and recently forged norms and worldviews into consideration as well. (12)

According to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID, 2009), “violent extremists often are driven, in part, by culture based and culture specific perceptions of what is fair and unfair, just and unjust” (p. 12). Violent extremists’ motivations are usually derived from some basic social contracts between the state and citizens, and their view presumes that a breach of this contract justifies the use of violence. Perceptions of whether or not “underlying conditions justify the resort to violence often are far more decisive than those conditions themselves, and these perceptions do not develop in a vacuum; instead, they are strongly influenced by the prevailing cultural and ideological setting in which they emerge” (Price & Morris, 2011, p. 24).

In recent years, social scientists have provided useful concepts to simplify and analyze extremists. For example, some academics suggested individuals driven to violent extremism do so because of mere ideological fervor or zeal (USAID, 2009). It is imperative to note that religion or ideology usually conceals other struggles that are motivated by power or resource control. “Scholars justifiably have highlighted the role of grievances, greed, contextual socioeconomic and political factors, and group dynamics in driving many manifestations of violent extremism” (Price & Morris, 2011). At the same time, however, one also must recognize that, for Nigeria’s Boko Haram, the rage at the government embodies an order rooted in Sharia law, moral relativism, and punishing other people that are deemed un-Islamic.

Furthermore, the roles of religious beliefs in explaining violent extremism cannot be understated. Though religious beliefs have been identified to be the root cause of violence in some societies, but there are other causes of discontent that are unrelated to

religious beliefs. Juergensmeyer (2008) argued that there is an additional layer of complexity which religion can add to even conflicts that are primarily about competition over territory, power and/or resources. In such contexts, religion may not be the root cause of discontent; instead, it initially may be primarily a way through which grievances are expressed and individuals mobilized” (p. 13).

Historical Development of Violence in Nigeria

Many scholars have examined the political history of Nigeria to explain the present predicament of the nation. This section first addresses how violence and extremism evolved with Nigeria’s history. Sir Frederick Lugard’s forceful amalgamation of Northern and Southern Protectorates of Nigeria on January 1, 1914, is generally regarded as the birthdate of the Nigerian state.

What existed in the period before the establishment of colonial rule was a motley of diverse groups whose histories and interactions, interlaced as they were by external influences had nevertheless crystallized in three clearly discernible regional formations by the end of the 19th century. (Osaghae, 1998, p. 2)

As a matter of fact, there was no political entity called “Nigeria.” “Flora Shaw, who later married Lord Frederick Lugard in June 1902, was the first to propose the name ‘Nigeria’ in an essay published in *The Times* on January 8, 1897” (Hill, 2012, p. 128). Lugard later “served as High Commissioner of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria from its creation in January 1, 1900 until November 1906. He was later Governor-General of the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria from January 1, 1914 to August 8, 1919” (Falola, 2009, p. 30).

According to Toyin Falola (2009), a renowned professor of African history at the University of Texas at Austin, “colonization was achieved in Nigeria either by the use of war or by surrender because of the threat of war, and the imposition of colonial rule by

the British government created conditions for violence in Nigeria from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the early 1950's" (p. 1). British economic and political interests created the violent confrontations that led to the colonization of Nigeria. The purpose of their conquest was to inaugurate imperial control. The Royal Niger Company (1879-1900), a mercantile company chartered by the British government, had indicated that "colonial domination would be accompanied by exploitation and violence, including the excessive use of power and violence to pursue narrow economic objectives and transfer of wealth outside of Nigeria" (Falola, 2009, p. 6). According to Hill (2012), "Colonial rule did so much to perpetuate and extend divisions between a bewildering array of ethnic groups in Nigeria" (p. 1). The advancement of commercial interests began as early as the mid-nineteenth century, when the British sent troops and gunboats to the lower Niger for conquest. Later on, economic interests broadened into larger interests of imperialism, which had to be established by force.

Falola explained that British violence occurred in two stages. The first stage used force to conquer or the threat of force to obtain voluntary surrender. "Force" here involved terrorizing kings and their subjects. These wars marked the end of independent and autonomous indigenous nations and groups. In the second stage, the British colonized the people through territorial governance. This involved the physical presence of police and the army. The British government regarded the use of force as legitimate and interpreted military success as a justification for imposing political authority. The British considered their need to impose imperial rule as a sufficient justification for the use of violence.

Before their invasion, the British government had surveyed the landscape of Nigeria and gathered useful information about people and places before they launched their attacks on Nigerians. The British attacked Ijebu-Ode in May 1892 and later invaded Ibadan in southwestern Nigeria in 1895 (Johnson, 1921). In 1898, the British established the West African Frontier Force (WAFF) with headquarters in Lokoja. Their goal was to conquer and control the peoples and nations located in the region. On Jan 1, 1900, Frederick Lugard hoisted the British flag at Lokoja, declaring a British Protectorate with himself as the first colonial officer to head the new colonial government.

Lugard, who served as the first high commissioner of Northern Nigeria from 1900 to 1906 was ruthless in the conquest of what became Northern Nigeria, and was fanatical in pursuit of the principles of indirect rule. Despite the violent resistance of the indigenous peoples, Lugard was able to use the more powerful British forces to overpower and subdue the areas (Falola, 2012). His views on the establishment of dominant colonial power were emphatic. Historians described Lugard as a trained soldier who wasted no time in moving against many emirates in northern Nigeria. He believed that, for his small wars to succeed, he had to ignore the Colonial Office in London, which he adjudged as timid, too concerned with public opinion in Britain, and too sensitive to the larger international politics of Europe. Lugard used force against the emirates of Kano, Sokoto, and Katsina between 1902 and 1903 (Falola, 2009).

Lugard replaced the traditional kings with his own, usually rivals of old. He strongly held that civilization of Africans would come only through violence and authoritarianism. Without force and violence, slavery and alcoholism and other vices would not disappear. In Lugard's views, the government should not be slow in taking

punitive measures when necessary (Osaghae, 1998). While violence created Northern Nigeria, the politics of indirect rule consolidated the colonial administration. Lugard was astute in his definition of indirect rule. Lugard placed the Fulani emirs in power, using their established indigenous political institutions to govern. Though he neither respected them nor found them worthy political leaders, this system saved money and avoided organized rebellions against alien rule. As long as the emirs established a chain of authority between him and their subjects, with him as the leader, they were doing their job (Osaghae, 1998). He used the emirs as powerful authorities to collect taxes and run other important errands for the colonial administration. As Lugard extended his ideas of indirect rule to the south, he began a process that altered the basis of traditional power and generated conflicts and riots in a number of areas (Falola, 2009).

Many Nigerian groups understood the aims of British imperialism and resisted through wars and by other means. The majority of the traditional rulers knew that British conquest would bring about a loss of power for them. Though the invading British troops had superior firepower and technology, this did not prevent various indigenous pressure groups from using locally made guns, rifles, and flintlocks to fight for their freedom and independence. Ad-hoc Nigerian armies sprang up from numerous tribes and lands and used spears, bows and arrows, and machetes against the more tyrannous and powerful British invaders with powerful Maxim and Gatling guns. The very essence of Nigerians' war of resistance against the British troop decisively shaped some of the actions of the British that followed in later years (Falola, 2009). Nigerians had to fight when the colonial invaders began to take actions. Falola contended that "to dismiss the wars of

resistance fought by Nigerians is to fall into a big trap: that of the failure to understand the complex roles of violence in Anglo-Nigerian relations” (Falola, 2009, p. 15).

Thus, Nigeria became a British colonial creation through a piecemeal and combined process of trade, monopoly, military superiority, “divide and rule,” and outright conquest. The various groups were brought together under the aegis of colonial authority (Osaghae, 1998). The forceful amalgamation of both southern and northern Nigeria had far-reaching implications for the Nigerian state and nation building. British acquisition of territories in Nigeria had three different strands, which roughly approximated to the regional formations of Western protectorate, Eastern protectorate, and Northern protectorate. According to Osaghae (1998), the question of how to structure and administer the colony and protectorates of the future Nigeria led to the setting up of northern and southern provinces. The Niger Delta protectorate became the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria in 1906, which existed alongside the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria until the amalgamation of the two territories in 1914.

With amalgamation

came the partial abolition of customs frontiers existing between the two countries, the unification of the railway system, adoption of a standard currency, universalization and systematization of taxation, a unified judicial system and integrated bureaucracy, extension of indirect rule to the south, the abolition of separate northern and southern regiments, and the adoption of a uniform time of 71/20 meridian and single weekly gazette. (Ngou, 1989, p. 9)

In spite of these changes, Northern and Southern Nigeria continued to develop along different lines, with British administrators employing different administrative methods in Northern and Southern Nigeria. Osaghae (1998) explained that “most parts of the North were shielded from Western influences, especially education and Christian missionary activities, in accordance with a pact Lugard was said to have signed with the

emirs, they were allowed to free reign in the South” (p. 33). This gave a head start to Southern groups not only in education but also in political development. The gap between Northern and Southern Nigeria was huge, because most of the schools in the country, during the colonial era, were established by Christian missions. North-South dichotomy was not the only structural flaw of colonial rule that had grave consequences for post-independence Nigeria. Regionalism, tribalism, ethnic divide, and the geographic concentration of the country’s economic development in the south all contributed to the uneven nature of progress between the Northern and Southern states of Nigeria (Osaghe, 1998).

The British diarchy of a relatively weak central authority and greater autonomy in Nigeria contributed to the colonial legacy of weak central institutions and relatively strong regional and local ethnic authorities. This not only hindered nationalism and unification of the country but also planted the seeds of regional discord and even violent extremism. The divide-and-rule nature of the colonial period did not allow institution building at the central level. Thus, tribalism and ethnic conflict were unable to be resolved through legal and institutional means. Instead, regional disputes were resolved through traditional (peaceful) mediation or violence.

Since the colonial era, the limited central capacity to regulate and mediate political power and territorial control institutionally has meant that violence has remained integral to modern Nigeria. The British wars of conquests were, for the Nigerians, wars of resistance. This struggle continued until October 1, 1960, when Nigeria gained independence from the British government. Thus, “violence serves political purposes in Nigeria: to dominate, to resist domination, to create conditions for negotiation, and to

target people and objects that symbolize oppression” (Falola, 2009, p. 9). Colonization led to the intentional establishment of weak state institution, as the British administration focused on economic exploitation at the expense of nation-building in Nigeria. The divide and rule policy of British led to the intentional creation of a weak central authority in Nigeria.

Upon Nigeria’s independence on October 1, 1960, the British deliberately handed over a disempowered Nigerian state over to a weak central government, composed of clearly distinguishable ethnic groups, in order to ensure further exploitation of a beleaguered country. The post-independence civil war in Nigeria between 1967-1970 became illustrative of the weak institutions left behind by the colonial masters that could not coherently sustain the unity of the ethnically-diverse Nigerian state. Good enough, the Nigerian state was able to survive the bloody civil war which was the first test on Nigeria’s unity, yet successive administrations in Nigeria largely ignored thorough reforms of these weak state institutions left behind by the British. Given the role of violence and insurgency in Nigeria’s history, it is unsurprising that extremist groups such as Boko Haram have appropriated these actions to overthrow the existing government.

Theoretical Approaches

Scholars have developed many theories to explain the scale of interstate violence. Notable among these theories are: (a) state-failure (Rotberg, 2002, 2003); (b) frustration-aggression and relative deprivation (Dollard et al., 1939; Gurr, 1970, 2000; Zartman, 1995); and (c) resource curse (Bannon & Collier, 2003; Collier, 2003; Collier & Hoeffler, 1998; Le Billon, 2005). These three approaches operationalize the causes of violence and extremism, as they explain whether or not the factors identified correlate with occurrence

of violence in Nigeria. First, the state-failure concept frames the absence of government's control over the length and breadth of its territory through the lenses of state incapacity. Second, the frustration-aggression theory accounts for the motivation that gravitates disgruntled, aggrieved, and frustrated Nigerian citizens toward terrorism. Third, the resource-curse theory provides a link between resource endowment and the occurrence of violence.

Beginning with the state-failure thesis, Hill (2012) argued that Nigeria is a failed state for two main reasons. First, the central government does not run the length and breadth of its territory. There are places within Nigeria that the Federal government does not have firm control due to the overwhelming activities of extremists. For example, the creeks in the Niger Delta region and the northeastern city of Maiduguri lie beyond the direct and continuous control of the federal, state, and local governments due to the activities of dominant insurgent groups. These areas are controlled by a range of insurgent groups, such as Boko Haram and Ansaru in the northeast and, in the Niger Delta, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the Niger Delta Vigilante Force (NDVF), and the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF).

Second, Hill (2012) further argued that “the Nigerian government does not provide Nigerians with the public goods or social services they have a reasonable right to expect such as law and order, basic healthcare, at least primary education, and impartial justice (p. 2).” Hill contended that the inability of the Nigeria state to provide citizens with these services has not only compromised the quality of life of millions of Nigerians today but also it is denying them crucial opportunities to improve their wealth and that of generations to come.

Adibe (2012a) argued that frustration due to factors such as severe poverty, unemployment, and elite corruption causes aggression within the affected masses. Citizens who feel alienated, frustrated, and abandoned either find refuge in their religious groups or are manipulated to wage insurgency against the state (Adibe, 2012b). Another argument within the frustration-aggression theory is that the reintroduction of the Sharia law by the federal government of Nigeria in the 12 northern states resulted in widespread disillusionment at the way it was implemented, and members of the sect simply tapped into that frustration (Adibe 2012a). Other Nigerians believed that Boko Haram represents the majority of unprivileged Nigerians who are being deprived of socioeconomic amenities such as schools, hospitals, and good roads.

According to Rotberg (2003), nation states fail because they are convulsed by internal violence and, as a result, are unable to provide security and positive political goods to their citizens. These political goods include security, education, healthcare, infrastructures, employment opportunities, and a legal framework for law and order (Rotberg, 2002). Once the state breaches the obligations it has to its citizens, it loses legitimacy to insurgents whose main ambition is to overthrow an existing government using a variety of violent and non-violent tactics to gain the support of the aggrieved citizens. Unfortunately, the lack of services and security has led to the rise of extremist groups in different parts of north Nigeria. Furthermore, conflict theories have shown that when a group's shared grievances about marginalization are combined with a strong sense of group identity, there is a tendency for the outburst of violent responses against the source of their marginalization, either real or imagined (Gurr, 1994). This situation well applies to the Boko Haram sect's undertaking in Nigeria.

Although there appears to be some correlation between increased frustration and disillusionment and the escalation of violence, much of the violence is associated with growing regional and religious fanaticism in Northern Nigeria. Nigeria's extremist Islamist group, Boko Haram, is causing havoc in Africa's most populous country and is fighting to overthrow the government and create an Islamic state through a coordinated wave of bombings. The Boko Haram sect has developed within the power vacuum in northern Nigeria and is connected with the colonial legacy of a weak central authority and more autonomous regions.

CHAPTER THREE

EXTREMIST GROUPS AND EXPRESSED GOALS

Boko Haram was born out of the regional violence and tension between Northern Nigeria and the central authority. The weak central capacity to mediate conflict in this region has brought about the existence of Boko Haram. Thus, it is important to examine the development and stated goals of the group. Over the past decade, the Boko Haram sect has persistently challenged and threatened the fragile unity of Nigeria. Boko Haram, loosely translated from the local Hausa language, means “Western education is forbidden.” Its followers are influenced by the Koranic phrase that says, “anyone who is not governed by what Allah has revealed is among the transgressors,” (Chothia, 2012, para. 1). Boko Haram promotes a version of Islam that makes it “haram” or forbidden for Muslims to take part in political or social activity associated with Western society. Several forbidden activities include voting in elections, wearing shirts and trousers, or receiving secular education (Chothia, 2012).

Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf, a charismatic Muslim cleric founded Boko Haram in 2002 in Maiduguri, the capital city of the Borno state in northeastern Nigeria. The sect’s philosophy is rooted in the practice of orthodox Islam and the group’s official name in Arabic is *Jama’atu Ahlissunah lidda’awati wal Jihad*, which translates in English to, “people committed to the propagation of the Prophet’s teachings and Jihad” (Chothia, 2012, para. 4). Boko Haram, along with a splinter group called Ansaru, has a mission to overthrow the Nigerian state and impose strict Islamic Sharia Law throughout the entire country. Boko Haram’s mission is to “sanitize the Nigerian system, which is spellbound by western education and ideals” (Onuoha, 2012, 136).

Boko Haram members are motivated by the conviction that the Nigerian state is filled with social depravities, and, thus, “the best thing for a devout Muslim to do was to migrate from the morally bankrupt society to a secluded place and establish an ideal Islamic society devoid of political corruption and moral deprivation” (Akanji, 2009, p. 55). As is common with nearly all insurgent groups, Boko Haram’s expressed goals are to overthrow the Nigerian government, incite religious tensions by acts of terror (i.e., suicide bombings), and eventually declare an Islamic state in Nigeria.

Group Structure

The erstwhile leader of the Boko Haram, Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf, did not complete his secondary school education, but later received Koranic education in the Chad and Niger republics, where he became radicalized and famous for his radical views on Islamic issues expressed on local television stations (Onuoha, 2012). The Koranic schools later became a recruiting ground for Jihadists who would take up arms and fight for the emancipation of an Islamic state. Before his death in 2009, Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf, the leader of the Boko Haram sect, had established a structure whereby each state had its own Amir (commander or leader), and local government area (which is synonymous to a county in the United States). The Amirs administer the local governments and report to their supreme leader. Below the local government are the remaining followers. Boko Haram organized themselves according to various roles, such as soldiers and police, among others (Dawah Coordination Council of Nigeria, 2009). Thus, the political vacuum that exists due to little or no impact of a central authority necessitates the structural leadership that Boko Haram provides in Northern Nigeria (Onuoha, 2012).

Group Membership, Support and Resources

The Boko Haram group draws its members mainly from unemployed youths, disaffected youths, and former Almajiris (known as street children), mostly in Northern Nigeria. The term “Almajiri refers to someone who leaves his home in search of knowledge in Islamic religion”(Purefoy, 2010, para. 15). These disaffected youths are apparently on the streets of major cities in Northern Nigeria. They are usually homeless and ask for alms from motorists and passersby in major cities. In addition, it is a popular practice whereby children from poor homes are sent to live and study under renowned Islamic teachers in cities in Northern Nigeria, such as Kaduna, Kano, Maiduguri, and Zaria, among others (Onuoha, 2010). Boko Haram offers means of livelihood to the almajiris and later offers them membership. These poor almajiris are exploited by the rich elite who are also members and sponsors of the Boko Haram sect.

Contrary to wide speculation about Boko Haram being faceless, the group has known membership and the support of some notable Nigerians including Alhaji Buji Fai, an ex-commissioner in Borno State; Kadiru Atiku, a former university lecturer; and Bunu Wakil, a Borno-based contractor (Onuoha, 2012). The Boko Haram group is alleged to have over 280,000 members across the 19 states of Northern Nigeria, Niger Republic, Chad, and Sudan (Oyegbile & Lawal, 2009).

It is important to note that, while most members of the Boko Haram sect are poor, their also supporters and members of the sect who are not poor. Boko Haram gets most of its funding from the contributions and donations of their affluent members. Members have to pay a daily levy of 100 naira (equivalent of US \$0.60) to their leader. This provides the basic source of funding for the group, in addition to donations from

politicians, government officials, and other individuals or organizations within Nigeria. The sect is also alleged to be receiving funds from outside Nigeria. Alhaji Bunu Wakil, a contractor and an indigene of Borno state, was alleged to be the main financier of the Boko Haram sect (Idris, 2011a). In January 2011, the Nigerian police celebrated what it described as a “landmark” achievement when security operatives arrested Alhaji Bunu Wakil and 91 other persons for sponsoring terror against the state (Mararna, 2011). In 2007, Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf and Mohammed Bello Damagun, a Muslim cleric who supposedly belonged to a group dubbed the “Nigerian Taliban,” were tried for terrorism-related offences. Mohammed Damagun was arraigned in a federal high court in Abuja on three charges: (a) belonging to the Nigerian Taliban, (b) receiving a total of US \$300,000 from al-Qaeda to recruit and train Nigerians in Mauritania for terrorism, and (c) aiding terrorists in Nigeria (Onuoha, 2011). Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf was later arraigned on five charges, including receiving money from al-Qaeda operatives in Pakistan to recruit terrorists who would attack residences of foreigners, especially Americans living in Nigeria (Onuoha, 2010a; Suleiman, 2007). Although Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf was arrested in 2008, he and other members of the sect were discharged and later found their way back into the Nigerian society.

Escalating Acts of Extremism in Nigeria

The escalating level of violence in Nigeria fits the description of a failed state, and the central authority’s lack of control to quell the wave of bombings and indiscriminate killings by Boko Haram strongly confirms the underlying hypotheses of a failed state. The Boko Haram sect first took up arms against the Nigerian state security forces on December 24, 2003 as police stations and public buildings in the towns of Giam

and Kanamma in the state of Yobe were attacked (Onuoha, 2012). The members occupied the two buildings for several days, hoisting the flag of the Afghanistan's Taliban movement over the camps. As a result, a joint operation of soldiers and police dislodged the group after killing eighteen and arresting dozen of its members (Suleiman, 2007). The nature of Boko Haram's violence became more worrisome in 2004 when students, especially in tertiary institutions in Borno and Yobe states such as the University of Maiduguri, withdrew from school, tore up their certificates, and joined the group for Koranic lessons and preaching (Lawal, 2009).

In July 2009, Boko Haram carried out a spate of attacks on police stations and other government buildings in Maiduguri. After the incidents, the Nigerian security forces eventually seized the group's headquarters, capturing its fighters and leader, Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf, who was brutally murdered in what appeared to have been an extrajudicial killing. In the aftermath of the incidents, though the state television service and security forces declared Boko Haram finished, its fighters regrouped under a new leader, Abubakar Shekau, in 2010 and attacked a prison in Bauchi State, freeing hundreds of the group's supporters. Boko Haram's trademark has been the use of gunmen on motorbikes, killing police, politicians, Muslim and Christian clerics, and anyone who criticizes their actions (BBC News, 2012). See Table 1 for a timeline of Boko Haram's alleged attacks and killings.

Table 1

Timeline of Alleged Attacks and Killings by the Boko Haram Group

Date	Targets	Description	
6 October 2010	Maiduguri (Borno State)	Police Sergeant NSCDC Corporal	Both security personnel were attached to the speaker of the Borno State House of Assembly
6 October 2010	Maiduguri (Borno State)	Awana Ali Ngala (Politician)	He was the immediate past chairman of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) in Borno State
6 October 2010	Maiduguri (Borno State)	Mallam Bashir Kashara (Islamic Cleric)	He was killed along with one of his members
11 October 2010	Maiduguri (Borno State)	Police Station at Gamboru (Borno State)	The sects set the police station ablaze, but were overpowered by the police. A member of the sect was killed in the attack
23 October 2010	Bara, Yobe State	Police Station at Bara	They attempted to set the station ablaze, but were overpowered by the police. A member of the sect was killed in the attack
14 November 2010	Maiduguri (Borno State)	Soldiers at 231 Battalion	The soldier was attached to the 231 battalion of the Nigerian Army, located in Biu. Also shot was his friend who had gone with him to a local restaurant to have launch Zannari
20 November 2010	Maiduguri (Borno State)	Mohammed and Salisu Jibrin Policemen and Soldiers	They were both killed around Dal bus stop while returning from work
24 December 2010	Maiduguri (Borno State)	Christmas eve bombings Several Churches in Maiduguri and Jos	At least 86 people were reportedly killed, while over 100 were injured during the Christmas eve bomb attacks and clashes. The Boko Haram claimed responsibility for the attacks
29 December 2010	Maiduguri (Borno State)	8 persons including 3 policemen were killed in five separate attacks in the city	The attack occurred near Baga road in Ruwan Zafi district of Maiduguri

(continued)

Table 1

Timeline of Alleged Attacks and Killings by the Boko Haram Group (continued)

Date		Targets	Description
1 January 2011	Maiduguri (Borno State)	Victory Christ Church	Suspected members of Boko Haram attacked the church at Gawo Mai Lamba Area of Borno state
4 January 2011	Yola (Adamawa State)	Prison break at Jimeta	At least 10 prison officials narrowly escaped being lynched by members of the sect and over 14 inmates were freed. Members of the sect were recently transferred from Maiduguri Prisons to Jimeta Prison
May 29 2011	Abuja	President Goodluck's inauguration day Abuja	Three bombs tore through a beer garden in a military barracks in the northern city of Bauchi, killing 13 and wounding 33. Boko Haram claimed responsibility.
16 June 2011	Abuja	Police Headquarters Abuja	A suicide attacker believed to be member of the sect drove a car loaded with Improvised explosive devices (IEDS) in to the Police headquarters in Abuja.
20 June, 2011	Kankara Katsina	Bank in Kankara Katsina	Seven people including five policemen killed in gun and bomb attacks on a police station and a bank in Kankara, Katsina State.
27 June 2011	Maiduguri (Borno State)	Maiduguri (Borno State)	Boko Haram's gun and bomb attacks on a beer garden in Maiduguri left at least 25 dead and dozens injure
25 August 2011	Adamawa	Adamawa State	Gun and bomb attacks by Boko Haram on two police stations and two banks in Gombi, Adamawa State, killed at least 16 people, including seven policemen.
26 August 2011	Abuja	United Nations Office in Abuja	At least 23 people were killed in the United Nations Office in the Nigerian capital, Abuja.
12 September 2011	Misau Bauchi State	Misau Bauchi State	Seven men, including four policemen, were killed by Boko Haram gunmen in bomb and shooting attacks on a police station and a bank in Misau, Bauchi State.

(continued)

Table 1

Timeline of Alleged Attacks and Killings by the Boko Haram Group (continued)

Date		Targets	Description
12 September 2011	Misau Bauchi State	Misau Bauchi State	Seven men, including four policemen, were killed by Boko Haram gunmen in bomb and shooting attacks on a police station and a bank in Misau, Bauchi State.
4 November 2011	Maiduguri (Borno State)	Maiduguri (Borno State)	The motorcade of Borno State governor Kashim Shettima came under Boko Haram bomb attacks in Maiduguri on its way from the airport to the governor's residence as he returned from a trip to Abuja.
4 December 2011	Azare Bauchi	Bauchi	A soldier, a policeman and a civilian were killed in bomb and gun attacks on police buildings and two banks in Azare, Bauchi State. Boko Haram opened fire at a wedding in Maiduguri, killing the groom and a guest.
7 December 2011	Kaduna City	Kaduna City	An explosion linked to Boko Haram killed eight in the Oriyapata district of Kaduna city
13 December 2011	Maiduguri (Borno State)	Maiduguri (Borno State)	bomb attack on a military checkpoint by Boko Haram and the resulting shooting by soldiers in Maiduguri left 10 dead and 30 injured.
22 December 2011	Potiskum (Yobe State)	Potiskum (Yobe State)	Boko Haram bombed in parts of Maiduguri killed 20. Four policemen and a civilian were killed in gun and bomb attacks on a police building in Potiskum, Yobe State. About 100 were killed following multiple bomb and shooting attacks by the sect's gunmen in ensuing gun battles with troops in the Pompomari outskirts of Damaturu.
25 December 2011	Madalla, Niger State	St Theresa's Catholic Church Madalla	39 People were killed in bomb were killed in the apparent suicide car bombing on Christmas day in St Theresa's Catholic Church.
20 January 2012	Kano State	Police Station, Immigration Offices	Boko Haram set Kano ablaze with multiple bombings and shootings, which claimed over 128 lives. The bombings targeted eight police stations and immigration offices, including a regional police headquarters and the state police headquarters.

(continued)

Table 1

Timeline of Alleged Attacks and Killings by the Boko Haram Group (continued)

23 January 2012	Kano State	Kano State	Kano city again came under a fresh attack as the Boko Haram sect bombed a police outpost at Sheka along Zoo road, close to the Shagari quarters.
February 2012	Jos, Plateau State	Church of Christ in Jos	Boko Haram bombers forced their way into the headquarters of the Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) in Jos and detonated explosives within the church premises, killing eight and injuring 35 people
07 July 13, 2013	Yobe	Schools in Yobe state	Boko Haram insurgent group killed 42 people, mostly students, in an attack on a secondary school in restive Yobe state.

Source: Author's Compilation

As can be seen in Table 1, Boko Haram attacked the Nigerian Police force on October 6, 2010. The group has also carried out several bombing attacks in different parts of Northern Nigeria, showing that it is establishing a presence across the region and fueling tension between Muslims and Christians. These attacks included (a) the military barracks attack on 2010 New Year's Eve in the northeastern city of Damaturu; (b) the 2011 Christmas Day bombings on the outskirts of Abuja; (c) the May 2011 bombing during Presidents Goodluck Jonathan's inauguration, and (d) the August 2011 bombing of UN headquarters in Abuja, which was also Boko Haram's first attack against a Western target and its only transnational attack.

In 2012, the Ansaru sect, a Boko Haram splinter group, claimed responsibility for the kidnapping of foreigners in Northern Nigeria. In January 2013, the Ansaru ambushed a military convoy bound for Mali, and later abducted seven foreign nationals in Bauchi, Nigeria on February 16, 2013 (Stratfor, 2013). On January 20, 2013, in the city of Kano, the Boko Haram launched one of the nation's deadliest assaults, leaving one 185 people

dead. Boko Haram's tactics can be broken down into the major categories of suicide bombings (typically using vehicle-borne explosives) and motorcycle ambushes. Religious worship centers, police stations, military barracks, religious leaders, and political institutions are all targets for Boko Haram.

There have been wide variations and divisions in the literature over the agitations and desires of the Boko Haram group. Much of Boko Haram's indiscriminate killings of innocent Nigerians, including children, raise questions about any sincere purpose other than being an evil organization. The changing dynamics of Boko Haram's tactics are fueling speculation that it is not one group, but several. Both the breadth and speed of its transformation speak of an organization moving in multiple directions all at once. Indeed, it appears so dynamic that it is hard to imagine all these changes being instigated and directed by a small group of clearly defined leaders. It seems far more likely that it is a confederacy made up of broadly likeminded factions, each with its own fighters, leaders, agendas, and capabilities.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS

A number of factors promoting violence have been identified, including the colonial legacy (weak central state), widespread corruption, ethnic tensions, endemic poverty, social frustration, oil, and unemployment. However the evidence supports the weak, or failed state, hypothesis.

Oil

Oil contributes more than 80% of Nigeria's budgetary revenue and provides 95% of the country's foreign exchange (2013 CIA fact sheet). Figure 1 shows oil in Nigeria.

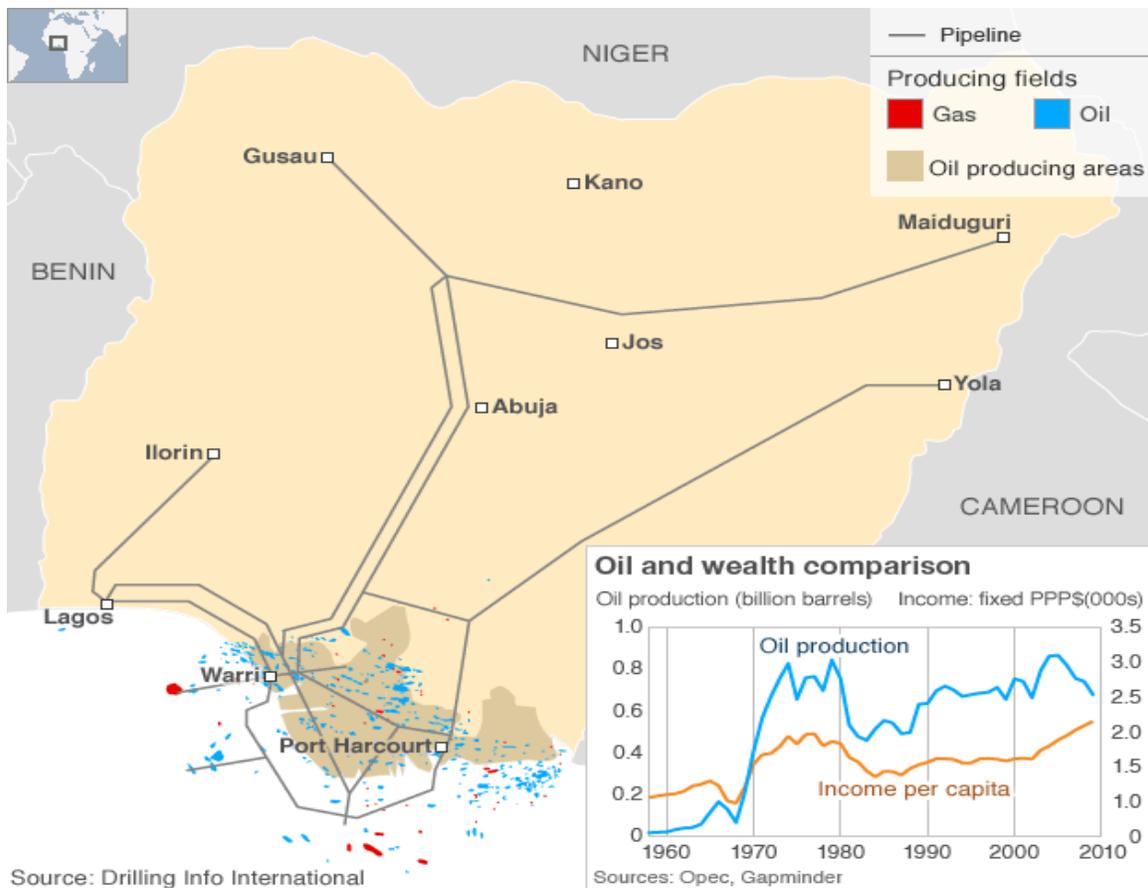


Figure 1: Nigeria: A Nation Divided - Oil

As seen in Figure 1, Nigeria's oil production in 2010 rose above 800,000,000 barrels (Source: OPEC). The booming oil price provides the Nigerian government with over 95% of its export earnings. Oil contributes to Nigeria's failure as a state in four major ways. First, its extraction and production undermine the quality of the living standards of Nigerians, particularly members of the oil producing communities such as the Niger Delta region and those living closest to the oil wells. Oil mining and gas flaring activities continue to deplete the ecosystem in this region due to lack of compliance with environmental standards. The cancer rates are higher in this area than the national rates, and respiratory ailments are plaguing the residents. There are regulations in place to protect the people, but no entity enforces them. Laws, guidelines, and standards put in place over 40 years ago are consistently ignored or implemented and interpreted loosely, which contributes to the extensive pollution that is not cleared up as required. Second, oil has helped to fuel the many insurgencies that are present in modern-day Nigeria. According to Hill (2012), "one of the main reasons the movement for the emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) took up arms was to win justice for the country's residents" (p. 66). Third, the oil sector has incapacitated much of the rest of Nigeria's economy, resulting in endemic poverty in many parts of the country. Every other sector in Nigeria depends on oil and its accompanying revenue in order to function appropriately. Fourth, oil proceeds are being used to sponsor insurgent groups, and much of the high level corruption that is taking place in the country occurs in the oil sector. The steady collapse of other economic sectors in Nigeria has resulted in overdependence on oil, which has brought untold hardships on many Nigerians.

There are armed groups in the Niger Delta that are interested in fighting for a fair distribution of the oil profits the government receives. These groups are fighting for the transfer of ownership of the oil rights from the Federal Government to the citizens of the Niger Delta (Hill, 2012). The Constitution states that the natural resources of the nation shall be used for all citizens of Nigeria. The government has failed the Niger Delta region and this failure continues to infuriate the oil producing communities (The Economist London, 2006). Citizens, especially the armed groups in the Niger Delta, want to share in the revenue from the sale of oil and are disenchanted with the conditions in which they live. Measurable and significant standards must be enforced to address the impoverished environmental conditions, otherwise kidnappings, secessionist movements, and the destruction of pipelines and burning of oil wells will continue (The Guardian, 2010).

Oil and Widespread Corruption

Oil revenue is facilitating the majority of the corruption in the country because it is the main source of the country's exported goods and foreign earnings. The economy is considered a rentier state, partly because much of the revenue comes from rents paid through licenses and royalties from multiple international petroleum corporations. Rents collected are primarily in the hands of the central government (Falola & Heaton, 2008, p. 183-184). The federal government does not depend on its citizens for revenue streams; therefore, the citizens' views, voices, and demands are ignored. This high concentration of wealth and economic power are in the hands of only a few citizens who abuse the democratic system. Some use it to influence votes and intimidate voters in the name of rigging elections (Hill, 2012). Figure 1 depicts the oil and gas producing areas in

Nigeria. The oil is produced in the southeast, and some militant groups there want to keep a greater share of the wealth, which comes from under their feet. Since the proceeds of oil, or oil money, makes up the significant portion of the ill-gotten wealth of senior public figures in Nigeria, the misuse of the money has significantly watered down the country's ability to wage any serious antigraft war.

As has frequently been debated in pivotal studies of the resource curse theory, Nigeria appears to be a prime example of the curse that natural resources can bring (Auty 1993; Collier & Hoeffler 2001; Le Billon 2001; Sachs & Warner 2001). It is sad enough that over 50 years of substantial oil production have not resulted in any meaningful sustainable socioeconomic development in Nigeria, which has an extreme poverty rate.

However, the research findings did not confirm the underlying hypothesis that regions with greater resource extraction, such as oil, experience higher levels of violent-extremism and insurgency. On the contrary, there is relative peace in the oil producing region of southern Nigeria. The erstwhile insurgent group, Movement for the emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), in the oil producing region of the Niger Delta shunned hostilities against the government, and embraced peace with the amnesty program offered them on August 6, 2009 according to the Guardian Newspaper August 6, 2009 (Rice, 2009). Though oil remains essential to Nigeria's economy and stability, there is no substantial influence of oil on the present occurrence of violent extremism and insurgencies in Northern Nigeria. This is dissimilar to the resource-curse theory, which links the occurrence of violent conflicts to natural resources. On the other hand, mismanagement of Nigeria's oil wealth and the visible deprivation of social and human

capital in Northern Nigeria serve as a catalyst for the exponential rise of violent extremism and insurgency in the country.

Poverty and Social Frustration

High rates of poverty directly promote violence in Northern Nigeria. As a result, many impoverished, disenfranchised, and young, devout Muslims are becoming increasingly skeptical about a system that has brought them little benefits and has well served the interests of the established political elite (Isaacs, 2003). The absence of sustainable independent institutions to perform checks and balances of the elites in government have prolonged the socioeconomic and political development of the country. These independent institutions would be responsible for moderating public and governmental decisions that affect the citizens. Weakened institutions with no democratic philosophy have contributed to poor governance (Migdal, 1988).

According to the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Business and Rules in Nigeria, Senator Ita Enang, “eighty-three percent of Nigerian oil blocks are owned by Northerners” (Thisday Newspaper, Mar 7, 2013, para. 2). He urged the National Assembly to revoke and reallocate the nation’s oil blocks for equitable distribution of wealth in the country. Though the northerners own much of the oil blocks in Nigeria, this has not improved the lives of the majority of northerners.

Notwithstanding billions of oil revenue, Nigeria does not make responsible decisions for the citizens. Only half of Nigeria’s population has access to electricity.

According to Table 2, the living standards for the majority of Nigerians have slightly changed since 1970, and approximately 100 million citizens are living on less than one dollar a day (Campbell & Bunche, 2011). The poverty level consistently

increases, as shown in Table 2. Life in Nigeria is not easy for many of its citizens, especially those in the North.

Table 2

Nigeria's population in Poverty

Year	Population
1980	17.1 million
1985	34.7 million
1992	39.2 million
1996	67.1 million
2004	68.7 million
2010	112.47 million

Source: Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (2012)

The evidence does not fully confirm the underlying hypotheses that regions with higher levels of abject poverty will experience the highest level of extremism. Though poverty is generally pervasive in most developing countries, evidence in the research shows it is not the leading cause of violent-extremism and insurgency in Nigeria.

Colonial Legacy

Most of the problems facing Nigeria can be traced to the country's colonial heritage. Nigeria is a deeply divided country, largely stemming from the many ethnic groups that inhabit the country. This has halted the advancement of development across the country. In precolonial times, there were various opportunities for intermingling through commercial contact using waterways and caravan trade routes, through intermarriages, and through wars of conquest. The diverse setting allowed inconsistent colonial rule that further hampered attempts to develop Nigeria comprehensively. Bello

(1962), stated, “in spite of Nigeria’s common colonial experience, the record also emphasized the local differences in administrative practices going right back to the early years of this century. Up to May 1906, the British authorities had totally different administrative structures to the east, west, and north of the Niger.” Europeans commonly used the divide-and-conquer principles that led the way to constant shifting of relationships between rulers and collaborators.

Nigeria today is drastically divided along ethnic lines due to the colonial influences and greed for power. Before the British rule, Nigeria was more stable than it is today. Leadership from a strong centralized force was needed in the country to keep it united with all of the ethnic divisions amongst the many ethnic groups. This leadership emerged when the military became sufficiently powerful to keep the country together, which led to other, larger, problems (Osaghae, 1998).

Weak State Structure

The term “weak state” describes states whose governments have weakened to an extent that they are unable to provide basic public goods, such as security, health care, and legitimate institutions for their people (Wyller, 2007). The Nigerian government’s inability to perform the basic functions of a state, such as ensuring peace and stability within its borders, qualifies it to be a weak state. Weak states can threaten the progress and stability of other countries. The decisions a country with a weak state makes have inadvertent domestic and international consequences. Migdal (1988) provided the following characteristics of a weak state:

- Low levels of legitimacy
- Low capacity of independent analyses of their own development problems along with designing adequate strategies
- Low capabilities to collect taxes and spend government revenue in planned manner
- Administrative capacity insufficient to implement decisions taken along with policies adopted by the government
- Limited influence on the pattern of societal development within the country

Nigeria exhibits severe weaknesses that allow vulnerability to natural disasters, war, and economic deprivation. Unfortunately, other nations view Nigeria as a crumbling and fading enterprise and has been for over three decades. The government is limited and very few public goods and services are provided to its citizens along with protection from the law.

The research evidence shows the state-failure theory does confirm the underlying hypotheses that regions where the central government does not have the capacity to police the region effectively and provide public services will experience higher levels of violent extremism. The central authority in Nigeria still lacks combative measures to curtail the menace of violent extremism and insurgency. Though the Nigerian state appears to be one piece, its people, particularly the northerners, are not at peace. Nigeria's future may be hanging in the balance with the increasing tide of violence and insurgence in its northern region.

FMSO Report 2013 by Oluwatosin Babalola

Media Effect On Boko Haram Crisis In Northern Nigeria

This section is devoted to the Foreign Students Military Office (FMSO) report, and it analyzes the effects of local and international media reports on the Boko Haram crisis in Nigeria. What are the impacts of local and international media on violent extremism and insurgency in Nigeria and what are the implications of extremist violence on the future of Nigeria? Though both local and international media agree that Boko Haram's methods have become increasingly sophisticated and audacious over the years, they differ significantly on the group's affiliation with foreign terrorists such as al-Qaeda. According to a US Congressional report that was released in November 2011, "Boko Haram may be forging ties with al-Qaeda linked groups in Africa" (BBC News Africa, January 11, 2012, p. 2). After the bombing of United Nations Office in Abuja by the Boko Haram sect on August 26 2011 which killed dozens of people, Martin Plaut, an African analyst for the BBC News reported that, "the commander of the US Africa Command, General Carter Ham said he had several sources of information that Boko Haram had contacts with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, which operates in north-west Africa" (BBC News, August 26, 2011, p. 2). Most international media argued that the expertise involved in the waves of attacks carried out by Boko Haram further suggests its affiliation with larger terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda.

On the other hand, local media reports in Nigeria debunked Boko Haram's affiliation with al-Qaeda and described it as a "local terror group". Rather they argue that the Nigerian government has vested interest in affiliating Boko Haram with larger terrorist organization such as al-Qaeda in order to merit and attract the sympathy of

international community. Adibe (2012a) argued that “linking Boko Haram to al Qaeda will blunt criticisms against Nigeria government’s inability to contain the group- after all if the USA and European countries, with all their resources and capabilities have not been able to effectively contain al Qaeda, why will anyone see it as a sign of weakness that the government has not been able to defeat an organization and its sponsors?” (Adibe, 2012a). The local media portrays Boko as an Islamic militia that has taken up arms against the government in pursuit of an Islamic state and other religious motivated objectives. According to the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), “Boko Haram had become primary perpetrator of religiously- related and gross freedom violations in Nigeria” (Vanguard Newspapers, August 21, 2013, para. 2). Boko Haram attacks churches, people perceived to be Christians, Muslim critics and every other person deemed un-Islamic. The media in Nigeria portrays Boko Haram as a homegrown insurgent group that exploits the weakness and pervasive failure of the Nigerian government to exercise control over its territory.

Furthermore, some local media in Nigeria have linked endemic poverty and hopelessness in northern Nigeria to intra-state violence caused by Boko Haram. The lack of economic opportunities and inequalities are also responsible for the surge in violent-extremism in northern Nigeria. According to the former U.S. President Bill Clinton, Nigeria’s challenge of terrorism in the north is being fuelled by extreme poverty that increases by the day (Ekott, 2013). However, the international media has a different dimension to the cause of the violence in Nigeria. Jean Herskovits (a professor of history at the State University of New York) argued that the main problem in Nigeria is not Boko Haram but the Nigerian government’s insensitivity to the people. He contends that “since

Nigeria's return to civil rule in 1999, many politicians have used ethnic and regional differences, and most disastrously, religion for their own purposes" (Herskovits, 2012). Nigerians are indeed desperate for a responsive government that will guarantee security and welfare of the people. It is a widely held belief that many youths in northern Nigeria are outraged over the regions neglect and endemic poverty.

The international media firmly believes that Boko Haram group enjoys the backing of some officials within President's Jonathan's government and security agencies. According to President Jonathan, "of the Boko Haram sympathizers, some of them are in the executive arm of government, some of them are in the parliamentary/ legislative arm of the government, while some of them are even in the judiciary, armed forces, the police and other security agencies" (BBC News, January 8, 2012, para. 6). Similarly, the local media affirms Boko Haram enjoys the support of many influential Nigerians.). These influential Nigerians include Alhaji Buji Fai, an ex-commissioner in Borno State, who was murdered after his arrest in 2009, Kadiru Atiku, a former university lecturer; and Bunu Wakil, a Borno-based contractor- they are all known to be members of the sect (Onuoha, 2012). Much of the supports given to the group by Nigerians are religiously motivated, which attracted the sympathy of local men, women and children in northern Nigeria. Other speculated sponsors include influential northern religious leaders and politicians (Sani, 2011).

Both the local and international media agree that the Boko Haram sect is more audacious and sophisticated in their acts of terror against the Nigerian state. Boko Haram militants are using more sophisticated military tactics and ammunitions, which make them more dangerous to the people. The increasing spate of killings and bombings in

some parts of northern Nigeria is illustrative of the sustained weakness of the Nigerian government to exercise control within its territory. In the absence of capable and strong institutions, such as robust armed forces, committed religious and political leaders, Boko Haram exploits the weakness of the Nigerian state and enjoys the loyalty of disaffected youths in northern Nigeria. “They exploit the porosity of Nigerian borders and lackluster security apparatus in the country to smuggle arms and sophisticated ammunition to destabilize the state (Onapajo & Uzodike 2012).

Since 2009, Boko Haram group have attacked several churches, mosques police stations, prisons and other government establishments across northern Nigeria, killing over 3,000 people in more than 700 attacks. They have also attacked, kidnapped, and killed foreigners for huge ransoms within the country. With scores of changing tactics and strategies, the Boko Haram sect appears resilient even as the Nigerian government reacts with brute use of military force and countless arrests of its members. The Boko Haram crisis negatively impacts the social and economic development of northern Nigeria as many business and offices have moved out of the affected areas.

From the research findings, the media appears divided on the methods, changing tactics of terror, and the alliance of Boko Haram with larger terrorists groups, particularly al-Qaeda. The implications of not curbing the Boko Haram crisis in Nigeria threaten the unity and socio-economic well-being of one of Africa’s largest democracy. The Nigerian government has to become responsive to the needs of the citizens and reform the weak institutions to help overcome the challenges of extremism and insurgency in the country. The unity of Nigeria must be preserved, as it is a reputable and strategic ally of the foreign policy interests of the United States of America in Africa.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATION

This section evaluates some measures already taken by the Nigerian government in tackling the Boko Haram crisis in Nigeria. It also suggests possible solutions that will help curb the menace of violent extremism and insurgency in Nigeria. In the past, the Nigerian government has resorted to the use of brute military force against insurgent groups and deployed over 8000 troops into affected parts of northern Nigeria with no clearly defined Military Code of Justice for the operation. An example of an unclear military objective executed by the Nigerian Army is the mindless killing and invasion of Baga community in Borno state on Sunday, April 21, 2013. The Nigerian soldiers in a single operation killed over 200 civilians suspected to be members of the Boko Haram sect in the aftermath of an attack. With countless arrests and killings of innocent civilians, suspected members and sponsors of the Boko Haram group, tensions continue to escalate with no sign of abating in troubled parts of northern Nigeria.

The Nigerian government also considered the option of dialogue with the members of the Boko Haram sect but this opportunity has not been carefully harnessed. According to a Rand report that made systematic examination and comparison of 268 groups using terror tactics from 1968 to 2006, several approaches have been shown to be much more effective than mere reliance on military responses at eliminating future attacks. This approach includes criminal justice responses and other attempts to address the well-being concerns of both combatants and the broader populace that might support them. The study revealed that 40% of the 268 groups were eliminated through intelligence and policing methods; 43% ended their violence as a result of peaceful

political accommodation; 10 % ceased their violent activity because they had achieved their objectives (“victory”) by violence; and only 7% were defeated militarily. Refer to Figure 2 for effective methods used against terror attacks.

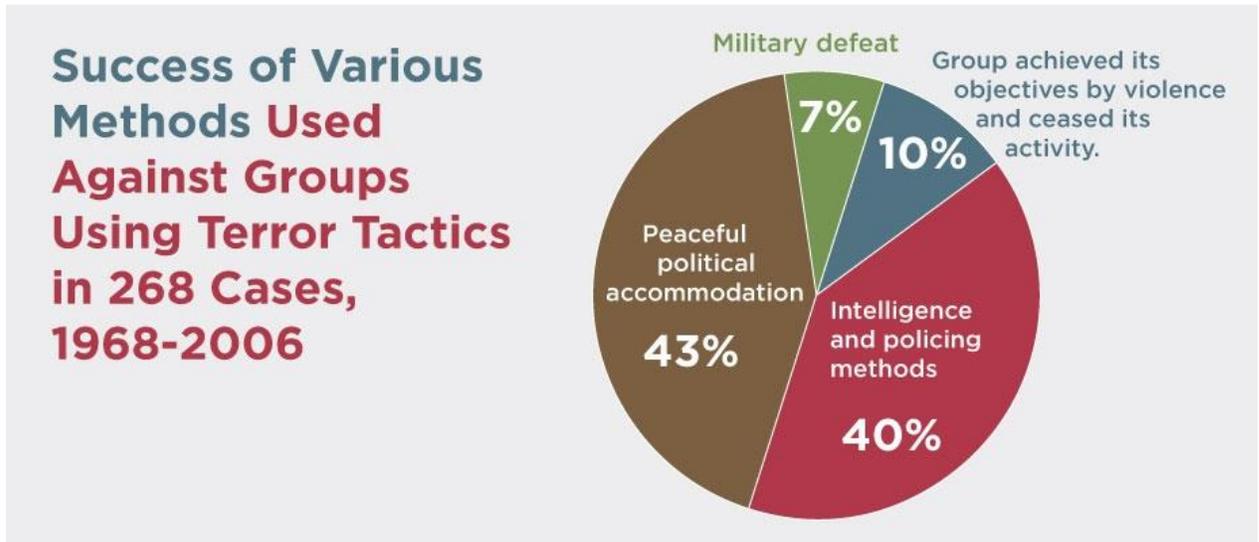


Figure 2: Successful Methods Used Against Terror Tactics 1968-2006. Source: Rand Report 2008

Military responses have often created more extensive violent response and terrorism against the civilian population caught between the two opposing forces. In addition, wars often create the conditions for additional violent conflicts over the new resources and new political alignments created by an initial invasion or occupation. The civil wars and criminal violence that erupted in both Iraq and Afghanistan are examples of this phenomenon.

In the Nigerian case of combating extremism, military necessity cannot be underestimated to quell terrorism, given the escalating incidence of terror attacks in the country. However, over-reliance on the use of force on the government’s part appears to be a shortcut to sustainable peace and security in the affected region. General Carter Ham, Commander of the United States African Command (AFRICOM), has cautioned

African governments not to rely solely on the use of excessive military force to fight the war against terror in Africa. He said that “though there is perhaps some necessity for some military action, the solution lies in the non-military solution and activities that would address the underlying causes of the dissatisfactions which include good governance” (Onuorah, Guardian Newspaper, February 1, 2013). Ultimately, the continuous use of military force seems preferable in dousing the tension of extremism in Nigeria, but protracted military effort is not going to eradicate the long-term problem, as this is capable of leading Nigeria to yet another civil war. It has been proven that violent extremism and insurgents thrive in an environment charged with hopelessness. The Nigerian government needs to be more responsive to the socioeconomic well-being of the people, and further engage systematic means of mediating disputes without recourse to the protracted use of armed insurrection.

The Nigeria government needs to carry out structural reforms that will further strengthen the nation’s weak institutions. The nation’s armed forces need to be developed to higher capacity such that can protect and defend the sovereignty of the country. The nation’s armed forces need to pay more respect to the citizen’s right to live and adopt a clear military objective which provides adequate protection for the civilian population. Furthermore, the Nigerian government needs to adopt traditional approaches to conflict resolution which is more cost effective to the government than the brute use of force. The government can take advantage of the culturally rich traditional approach to peace making and nation-building to end the crisis.

Lastly Nigerians need to rise above the challenges of ethnic polarization and embrace the strength in the country’s diversity. Nigerians need to accept the

responsibility of breaking away from the shackles of ethnic differences which has held the country spell bound for so many years. There is an urgent need for the government to become more pro-active in all features of conflict management and guarantee the well-being of all Nigerians regardless of ethnic plurality.

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