

# **Beyond Terrorism and State Polity: Assessing the Significance of Salafi Jihad Ideology in the Rise of Boko Haram**

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## **Abstract**

This study documents and analyses the significance of historical legacies in the rise of Boko Haram and the threats the group poses to domestic and regional peace and stability. Hence, the study posit that: (1) the rise of Boko Haram is not a new phenomenon but rather a new phase of an alarming and forceful attempt at imposing a religious ideology that rejects theological innovation, and religious pluralism; (2) Jihadism in Nigeria dates back to the rise of the Fulani Jihad in 1804 that led to the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate in 1808 that would be later dismantled by the British colonisation; (3) while the rise of Boko Haram can be understood in historical legacies, a religious ideology is believed to be a motivating factor that incites people to action; (4) for Boko Haram, a religious ideology provides motivation, justification and a world view; (5) although the religious sensibility provides a breeding ground for religious extremism in Nigeria, prevailing economic dislocation and lack of political cohesion drives it; (6) it is believed that Boko Haram is an outgrowth of the Maitatsine uprisings that terrorised Nigeria in the 1980s, however, Boko Haram has geo-strategically evolved from being a local terrorist group to a major player in West African Jihadism, taking advantage of the process of globalisation to advance its aspirations; and (7) that given Boko Haram's growing strategic links with regional and global Jihadists, containing the group has become even more challenging.

**Keywords:** Boko Haram, Fulani Jihadi, Sokoto Caliphate, Maitatsine, Salafi Jihad Ideology, Religious Extremism, British Colonisation, Counterterrorism.

## Introduction

This research is essentially about the significance of Salafi Jihad ideology in the rise of Boko Haram. The key question is thus if Salafi Jihad ideology really does matter to account for the rise of Boko Haram. This research claims that the rise of Boko Haram is deep-rooted in Nigeria's historical experiences, narratives, critical events and ideologies. These experiences are reflected in Boko Harams' beliefs and vision similar to the one that guided the inception of Fulani Jihad in 1804. The research also acknowledges the fact that Boko Haram emerged in the absence of protective factors including, strong government institutions to promote political cohesion to discourage ethnic alignment, and social developmental mechanisms to promote robust economic development. Therefore, to answer the research question, and support the claim, the study critically examines historical narratives, experiences and critical events including the rise of the Fulani Jihad and the British colonisation. The study further discusses the conception and resurgence of Salafi Jihad ideology. The research then documents and analyses the rise of Boko Haram, threats the group poses to national security, geopolitical implications, and lastly outlines comprehensive counterterrorism measure.

## Background

Barna (2014, 5-23) notes that Mohammed Yusufu a *malam* (Islamic scholar) founded Boko Haram. He led a left wing of radical youth scholars in the 1990s that protested against Nigerian government corruption. Barna further explains that protests against the Nigerian government gave root to Yusufu's intention of creating an Islamic State that would be fair and just according to his interpretation of the Islamic law. Adesoji (2010, 100) agrees with Barna. He adds that the name Boko Haram is a combination of Hausa word *Boko* which means "book" and the Arabic word *haram* which translates to something forbidden, ungodly or sinful. Precisely, Boko Haram translates to "the book is forbidden", or the symbolic "Western Education is sinful". Aghedo (2014, 237) agrees with both Barna and Adesoji. He further adds that the meaning of Boko Haram had been consistent with Yusufu's position until after his death. However, the acting leader of Boko Haram *mallam* Sanni Umaru rectified its translation as "Western Civilisation is forbidden", which to a certain degree means the same thing.

Mauro (2014, 1-9) translates Boko Haram's official name *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad* as "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teaching and Jihad". He argues that this meaning reflects a selective use of the Islamic verse which states "anyone who is not governed by what Allah has revealed is among the transgressors" Mauro (2014, 1-9). Aghedo (2014, 235) also adds that Boko Haram existed as a peaceful movement since 1995 under different names including Yobe Taliban, *Yusufi yyah* and *Ahlusunna wal'jama'ah hijra, Sahaba*.

He further explains that following the arrest and killing of the founding leader Mohammed Yusufu in 2009 by the Nigerian government forces, the new leader Abubakar Shekau declared Jihad on the Nigerian government. It was then that Boko Haram began to internalise a set of ideologies and grievances, filtered in a coherent, meaningful way to appeal to the larger audience. The group also started promoting its aspiration of reviving an Islamic state in the borders where the Sokoto Caliphate existed (including parts of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and northern Nigeria).

Zenn (2014, 20-23) discusses Boko Haram's carnage since its rise. Zenn notes that in 2010 alone, the group murdered more than 4,000 Christians including government officials, Muslim leaders, and civilians in north-eastern Nigeria. In 2011, the group carried out 136 attacks killing 559 people and in 2012 killed about a thousand people. He further notes that Yusufu absorbed Al Qaeda's Salafi Jihad ideology, a Saudi Arabian medieval version of Salafism (Salafi Jihad), and the new leader Shekau operationalised Yusufu's thinking into Jihad insurgency. It is at this point that Aghedo, Zenn and Cook converge. Cook (2011, 3) clarifies that Boko Haram is a Salafi Jihad group that has transformed from being a localised terrorist group to a major player in West African Jihadism. Zenn is surely right to argue that the kidnapping of 200 girls from a girl's school in Chibok, a remote village in northern Nigeria in 2014 was a symbolic national security crisis.

Even more concerning is Boko Haram's feminisation of terrorism in most recent suicide attacks. On January 10, an innocent 10-year-old girl was strapped with a suicide vest that was remotely detonated outside the market in Borno killing ten people including the girl (Blair 2015). With the current increase in frequency and scope of terrorist attacks by Boko Haram, it is reasonable to assert that Boko Haram has grown even more dangerous. Moreover, the Nigerian government's counterterrorism policies have proved to be ineffective. However, the challenge of combating Boko Haram should not be underestimated. The Nigerian government occasionally deploys military task forces to combat Boko Haram. Regrettably, these forces have not only shown a lack of effective military coordination, but weak area denial capability, thus allowing the group to consolidate its state-like military capabilities.

## **Objectives and Significance**

The research objectives pursued in order to answer the research question are to (1) critically examine the significance the rise of the Fulani Jihad in 1804 and the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate in 1808 on the rise of religious extremists in Nigeria; (2) assess the impact of the British colonisation on religious, social and political structures in Nigeria; (3) examine the significance of Salafi Jihad ideology resurgence in the 1970s in the Middle East on the emergence of religious extremism in Nigeria; (4) provide a comparative analysis of circumstances in which the Fulani Jihad, the Maitatsine and Boko Haram emerged; (5) analyse threats Boko Haram poses to national security, geopolitical peace and security, and implications on global security; and (6) highlight effective, balanced counterterrorism measures that could enhance military capabilities to disrupt channels of arms proliferation, illicit trafficking, and cash flows from affiliate global terrorist groups and dispel an ideology that informs Boko Haram.

It is envisaged that this research will make a theoretical contribution to existing literature by providing a comprehensive historical analysis of religious conflicts in Nigeria. Also, explains how Salafi Jihad ideology was conceived to become a guiding principle for religious extremists in Nigeria. This research will not attempt to provide immediate short-term solutions to countering Boko Haram. However, it outlines practical holistic and coordinated counterterrorism measures that could enhance military capabilities to dismantle Boko Harams' strategic depth. It further outlines long-term measures that could dispel the ideology that guides Boko Haram.

## **Approach/Method**

This research being a sensitive topic, it requires cautious analysis of an ideology that informs Boko Haram to avoid creating hyperbole parallels with the Islamic school of thought and practice that promotes peace. Therefore, this research is developed under theory-guided process-tracing (TGPT). This methodology explains the outcomes of interest by going back in time and identifying critical events, processes and discussions that link the hypothesised causes with the outcomes. George and McKeown (1985) define TGPT as a method of within-case analysis to evaluate causal processes. Sociologist Ronald Aminzade (1993, 108) notes that theory-guided process-tracing allows the researcher to provide theoretically explicit narratives that carefully trace and compare the sequence of events constituting the process of interest. For this purpose, political opportunity theory is used as an explanatory theory to answer the research question. Hence, the study relies on analysis of theoretical and empirical literature on Boko Haram, sourced from journals, books, scholarly commentaries, and relevant materials from government and Think Tanks' websites.

## Introduction of Islam to Nigeria

It is essential to begin by clarifying that Salafi Jihad ideology is a religious ideology. However, what makes it distinct from Islam is its central feature of ideological understanding and its conception of human nature; whereas the key feature of religious understanding is its concept of the divine (Adams 1989, 86-87). Muslims hold that Islam is a complete way of life. It is a guiding principle of morals, marriage, dress, prayer, personal finances and family life (Oba 2002, 819). Islam in Arabic means submission or surrender of an individual's will to Allah; for only through submission, one can find peace in life (Ball et al. 2009, 299). Nonetheless, within this divine concept, ideologies exist. From this perspective, it is reasonable to assert that religion does not only spread its precepts but ideologies that radically evolve into advancing political aspirations (Sodiq 1992, 86). Therefore, to understand the rise of Boko Haram we first need to know the history of Islam in Nigeria. It is, therefore, vital to trace and examine how historical religio-political narratives and experiences set a model for future political Islam in Nigeria and enabled the infiltration of Salafi Jihad ideology in the post-independent Nigeria (Onuoha and Temilola 2015, 3).

The exact year of when Islam was first introduced to present day Nigeria is not known. However, available literature indicates that Islam was first introduced to Bornu Empire northeast of present day Nigeria between the seventh and the eighth century by foreign *mallams* (scholars) and traders from *Hijaz*, present day Saudi Arabia (Adeleye 1971, 560). Islam later emerged in Hausaland northwest of the country. To be precise, Islam was introduced from two opposite directions, in Borno northeast of present day Nigeria and Hausaland northwest of the country. However, it is not clear whether the introduction of Islam in these two different directions carried the same tenets of Islamic law and practice. What is clear for certain is that Muslim scholars from the Middle East spread the knowledge of the Arabic language, alphabet and writing. Which shows that Muslim scholars did not only spread the Islamic school of thought and practice that was reflected in commerce and court rulings but Jihadist ideas and philosophies we see in Boko Haram today (Sodiq 1992, 86; Oba 2002, 818).

It appears that in the early years of the introduction of Islam in Bornu Empire, only a few native Africans embraced it until the first Muslim *mai* (King) Hummay (Hume) founded the Sefuwa Dynasty of the Kanem-Bornu Empire in 1068 which incorporated today's Chad, Niger, north-eastern part of Nigeria and later encroached parts of Cameroon. *Mai* Hummay ruled from 1068 to 1080. However, the Dynasty itself survived until the early 1800s. Under the rule of *mai* Idris Alawma from 1564 to 1596, Kanem-Bornu Empire reached a pinnacle of its power. *Mai* Alawma's forward-looking strategy impelled him to open educational centres and diplomatic links with other Muslim centres in Tripoli, Egypt and Turkey to enforce Islamisation of the region (Hiskett 1984, 59).

However, his relentless attempt at Islamisation of Kanem-Bornu Empire on a full scale faced challenges. Pre-existing African native beliefs, customs and ancestry religion hindered native rulers who converted to Islam to forgo these practices. Thus, they inherently preserved their native religious practices they were accustomed to prior to the introduction of Islam and mixed these beliefs with Islamic principles, thereby contaminating pure Islam. Native religionists were illiterate; their wisdom depended on a native understanding of life compared to the Arab Muslim intellectuals who depended on a theological understanding of life. Therefore, in the process of *mai* Alawma's enforcement of Islamic law in the entire Empire, Arab Muslims were advantaged by their literacy and knowledge of the Arabic language. As a result, they were appointed as *imams* (preachers), judges and advisors to the king (Sodiq 1992, 86; Brenner 1979, 161).

From this brief history, it is observed that Muslims were outnumbered by native religionists. Despite that, Muslim scholars' ascendance to key positions gave them political power and authority of not only applying Islamic law in public affairs but exert influence (Clark 1982, 71). It has been observed that from this time on, Islam became part of the intellectual, cultural, political and religious lifestyle in Kanem-Bornu Empire. However, even when Islamic law became a fundamental part of people's lifestyles, it did not create a radical transformation. Arab Muslims appeared to have developed a tolerant attitude towards natives who practised impure Islam as a way of showing respect to them for warmly welcoming Arab Muslims to the land without opposing the Islamic way of life. For this reason, Arab Muslims returned the same respect by not imposing Islamic law on natives. They regarded natives as friends and co-religionists, regardless of their worship of different gods. However, it could also be argued that Arab Muslims who at the time were the minority group may have developed a tolerant attitude to protect their political positions that they gained on the grounds of their literacy. Arab Muslims may have also become strategically flexible knowing that the only way for Islam to be influential on non-Muslims was to respect the natives' way of life (Sodiq 1992, 87).

### **The Fulani Jihad and the Creation of the Sokoto Caliphate 1804-1808**

The introduction of Islam carried with it not only precepts but culture, philosophy and ideologies. In Hausaland northwest of the country (also known as Hausa Bakwa, meaning seven states of Hausa, which included Kano, Rano, Katsina, Gobir, Zamfara, Zaria and Bauchi), Islam was also introduced by Foreign *mallams* (scholars) and merchants who were largely Wagara Arabs and Fulanis migrants from Futa-Toro area of Senegal in fourteenth century (Adeleye 1971, 560; Afe 2003, 23; Hill 2009, 8). Hausas were substantially pagans while the Fulanis were predominantly Muslims.

Such differences in the composition of culture and religion polarised religio-political ideas that resulted in the inception of the Fulani Jihad led by Shaihu Usman Dan Fodio (also spelt as Shehu Uthman Dan Fuduye). Dan Fodio, a Toronkawa tribe of Fulani descent from Senegal, born in 1754 was a pious *Sufi* educated in classical Islamic science, philosophy and theology. He became an articulate traditional Islamic scholar and reformist who is remembered as an exceptional intellectual of vivid eloquence (Olaosebikan 2011, 6; Hunwick 1966, 293).

Although Dan Fodio was heir to traditional *Sufism* (which broadly means an intensification of Islamic faith and practice), he followed Sunni *Maliki* School of Islamic Law (Olaniyan and Asuelime 2014, 93; Sodiq 1992, 92). *Maliki* School is one of the four major schools of *fiqh* (religious law within Sunni Islam) founded by Malik bin Anas in the 8<sup>th</sup> century (Kakoulidou 2015, 8). The jurisprudence of the *Maliki* School depends on the Qur'an and Hadith. *Maliki fiqh* also recognises the consensus of the people of Medina as the bona fide source of Islamic law, contrary to other Islamic *fiqhs* (Kakoulidou 2015, 8). Dan Fodio adopted *Maliki* precepts for his preaching work that took him to different cities of Hausaland. Fundamentally, Dan Fodio grew critical of how Muslims in Hausaland practised Islam. Hausa people mixed Islamic practices with idolatry and witchcraft, which first Muslim scholars respected. Natives seemed to have embraced both Islamic beliefs and pre-existing native customs, beliefs and cultural norms that were fundamental to their identity as the Hausa people (Al-Bili 2007, 50; Okene and Ahmad 2011, 80).

Dan Fodio perceived such practices as impure Islam and referred to Hausa Muslims as *Ulama-as-su* meaning “preachers of evil” (Sodiq 1992, 89). He also accused Hausa *sultan's* (rulers) of injustices for imposing excessive livestock taxes on largely the Fulani pastoral farmers (although some Hausa peasants were equally affected), extortion and corruption. Dan Fodio's displeasure of impure Islamic practices and lack of government institutions to implement what he called pure Islamic principles and social justice; compelled him to embark on a large-scale educational programme. His educational programme was aimed at not only promoting strict adherence to the orthodox Sunni-Maliki school of thought and practice. It was also aimed at creating awareness to Fulanis who were negatively impacted by Injustices (Crowder 1978, 72-76; Milsome 1979, 12). Creating awareness is the first core function of an ideology. The core function of an ideology will be discussed in detail in later.

It is believed that as the scope of Dan Fodio's popularity grew, his religious purification ambitions advanced, and Hausa ruler's resistance became inevitable. Consequently, tensions between Muslims who supported Dan Fodio and those who supported rulers of the states of Hausaland emerged. Proportionately, Dan Fodio's *jamaa* (loyal followers) increased in numbers by 1789. These developments prompted Hausa rulers to perceive Dan Fodio's assertiveness as a threat to the status quo (Al-Bili 2007, 50).

As a result, they responded violently to denounce Islam publicly. The rulers went as far as enacting legislation that prohibited people other than Dan Fodio from preaching Islam and allowed only Muslims born to Muslim families to practice Islam. They also issued an ultimatum for all converts to revert to the native religion. Women were forbidden from covering their bodies in accordance with the demands of Sharia law. A failed assassination attempt on Dan Fodio's life forced him to flee to Degel where he assumed the title of *Amir al-munin* (Commander of the believers against unbelievers) (Gwandu, 1986, 11-12; Hunwick 1966, 296).

As Gobir rulers waged war, Dan Fodio declared *Jihad* "holy war", a revolution against Hausa dynasty in 1804 ( Olaosebikan, 2011, 2). The similar Jihad Boko Haram declared on the Nigerian government following the arrest and extrajudicial killing of the founding leader Muhammed Yusuf. However, Dan Fodio's defence for his *Jihad* was that it was waged to make the word of God supreme and suppress what he perceived as a tyrannical rule of the Hausa rulers. This thought echoes Boko Haram's stance on the Nigerian government. Dan Fodio's followers were dedicated and well-coordinated in fighting for what they believed was an act to protect fundamental beliefs of pure Islam, fairness and justice. After four years of the great *Jihad*, Dan Fodio and his followers emerged victorious from an all-out bloody war that brought an end to the Hausa dynasty establishment and inaugurated the Fulani hegemony in the Sokoto Caliphate in 1808 (Sodiq 1992, 90).

The Sokoto Caliphate is still regarded as the unprecedented sophisticated administrative machinery ever existed in the history of West Africa. It had a complex and diverse composition of cultures and ethnic groups that were unified under one substantial competent and remarkably effective federal administration (Mukhtar 2004, 2). Even if the Fulani Jihadists have not been identified as Salafists, their principles are not dissimilar. The principles of Shaihu Usman Dan Fodio's Fulani Jihad ideology were the suppression of theological innovation and sustenance of the orthodox interpretation of Islamic law. Similarly, Boko Haram's Salafi Jihad Ideology rejects theological innovation and advocates strict adherence to medieval interpretations of Islamic law (Moghadam, 2008, 1).

### **Implementation of Sharia law in Sokoto Caliphate**

Upon the establishment of the Sokoto caliphate, Dan Fodio reformed the legal system. He introduced the Islamic legal system that observed Sharia law (Sharia law means "the way to the watering place") in its operations (Oba 2002, 819). He also created three courts, Alkali's court, Emir's court and the appeals court which was headed by him. Dan Fodio urged adherence to the principles of normative teaching and practice based on Prophet Muhammad's interpretation of the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* (Sadiq 1992, 91).

However, Dan Fodio did not just reform the legal system; he became the supreme leader from whom all assigned judges sought advice. This strategy prevented judges' autonomy in their decision-making and reinforced loyalty to sustain the survival of the Caliphate and Dan Fodio's relevance as the supreme leader. It could also have been that Dan Fodio recognised that a sustainable legal system based on orthodox interpretation of Sharia law was pivotal to the effective function of his government. Dan Fodio's Islamisation of the legal system reflects the notion that religion gives spirit to life and provides a moral order in society (Juergensmeyer 2000, 243). Although Dan Fodio retired in 1815 as the Supreme leader to continue with his Islamic scholarship work, the Sokoto Caliphate survived until the onset of the British colonisation in the mid-1800s. After his death in 1817, Dan Fodio was succeeded by his Muhammed Bello (Al-Bili 2007, 50).

### **Effect of the Fulani Jihad on the Rise of Boko Haram**

The effect of the Fulani Jihad on the rise of Boko Haram is significant. After centuries of inter-state wars, the creation of the caliphate guaranteed political order and created a model that guides Boko Haram's aspirations today, as the statement Professor Abdullahi Smith made in 1979 suggests:

It is our business to inspire the young, to give them a glimpse of things worth fighting for, a vision of ideas which they should seek, rather than leave them to flounder in the terrible mental confusion of this corrupt society into which they have been born. If this is our duty, then i think it is here that we may find the chief value in our study of the Sokoto Jihad: in an appreciation of the ideals for which the leaders of the movement stood (Mukhtar Umar Bunza 2004, 2).

This assertion urges the importance for not only young people but all believers of the orthodox interpretation of the holy text to uphold values, principles and practices that Dan Fodio stood reinforced. Boko Haram radically sees itself as part of this equation. No available literature suggests that the Salafi Jihad ideology rooted from the Fulani Jihad. However, Fulani Jihad ideology is congruent with Salafi Jihad ideology. Both reject religious pluralism, theological innovations and promote strict adherence to the orthodox interpretation of the holy text. Both Fulani Jihadists and Boko Haram regard *Jihadism* as a holy war waged against unbelievers of pure Islam. Thus, Nigeria's religious extremist's constant attempts at re-establishing an Islamic state that would revive political Islam in Nigeria (Kepel 2002, 4). Although the cause of Dan Fodio's declaration of the great Jihad on the Hausa rulers was the propagation and maintenance of pure Islam, the political factor was also significant. Political opportunity theory provides that when members of society feel deprived of public goods and exposed to injustice, they direct their grievance at a system they perceive to be unjust and seek to change it.

As a result, they desperately use violence in an attempt to gain a shred of political power or influence (Juergensmeyer 2000, 5). The Fulanis were susceptible to the existing vulnerable political system that presented them with a political opportunity to change it. Politically and socially, the Fulanis felt they were treated as second class citizens in Hausaland even after being inhabitants for centuries (Adeleye 1971, 578). Arguably, the ideology to propagate and revive pure Islam was driven by Fulanis collective grievances and the Hausa establishment's vulnerability that presented a political opportunity for Dan Fodio to establish Fulani hegemony. However, Dan Fodio's use of force to change the status quo disregarded Prophet Muhammad's credence of "a holy war by the wise word and not the sword", means that *Jihad* in its original form is a peaceful cause to spread the word of *Allah* (God) to the masses (Al-Bili 2007, 50).

It is also important to emphasise that the ideological factor was pivotal to the success of the great Jihad. Dan Fodio spread the belief that a Muslim should not willingly dwell in the land of unbelievers, and if he has any means at his disposal should wage *Jihad* against unbelievers (Olaosebikan, 2011, 6). Such a belief justified the use of force as a necessary measure to abdicating not just impure Islamic practices but gain political power and control over non-Muslims and Muslims with diverging views. Tolerance of religious pluralism appears not to have been part of Dan Fodio's ambition. This view is reflected in his emphasis on absolute adherence to the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* and all practices that are not opposed to them. Although Dan Fodio allowed different *fiqhs* within Islam to coexist, he was against the inclusion of non-Islamic traditions (Sodiq, 1992, 92). It appears that Dan Fodio's awakening desire to purify Islam was on the one hand to enforce the orthodox interpretation of the holy texts and to impose it the rest of the population on the other. Having the knowledge and being a determined reformer with sufficient resources at his disposal, Dan Fodio successfully established a united spirit that consolidated Pan-Fulanis. This consolidation enabled the creation of the Sokoto caliphate that led to the emergence of the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group that even today continues to act collectively in pursuant of reshaping political dynamics in Nigeria along the orthodox line (Olaosebikan, 2011, 8).

It appears that Dan Fodio and his followers remained committed to the purification of Islamic practices in the Hausaland. They were also prepared to use force whenever they felt their fundamental beliefs were threatened, or an attempt at undermining efforts to the cause was imminent (Gwandu 1986, 12). For Dan Fodio, religion provided motivation, structure and justification to wage the great *Jihad*. Furthermore, the Fulani grievances provided a political opportunity to change the status quo and establish the anticipated Fulani hegemony that would be fair and just. Even so, the Fulani hegemony in the Sokoto Caliphate brought with it, social implications. Slavery was widespread in the Caliphate with more enslaved women than any other modern African state (Stilwell, 2000, 397).

Enslaved women were sexually subjugated through concubinage that the Caliphate encouraged under Islamic law. The influence of Islam on slavery was indicative of the economic dimension of the creation of the Caliphate (Banwo 2008, 139). The Caliphate became a primary source of an enslavement enterprise that were exported through the lucrative Atlantic trade and the trans-Saharan trade. Favourable exchange rates in these preferable trade routes sustained the Caliphate's economic growth (Tambo 1976, 187).

### **The Onset of British Colonisation of Nigeria - 1903**

The other aspect of history that enabled the rise of religious extremism in Nigeria was the onset of the British colonisation (from 1852-1960). The British colonisation dismantled all the good the Caliphate brought with it and replaced it with a system that was regarded as chaotic (Utietiang 2014; Solomon 2012, 3). Chaotic in the sense that it was not the system the natives were familiar with, it was neither Islamic nor native. It was perceived as an unfair foreign system that created political, social and religious divides. It is believed that colonialists gave greater power to themselves and their agents (natives who worked with British colonisers) over regular natives (those who resisted colonisation). This division created classes. The upper class was for colonisers; the second class was for their agents, and the lower class was for regular natives. As a result, the British system became a source of conflict among locals that supported the British system and those that rejected it (Duke 2010, 66; Solomon 2012, 3).

Fundamentals of good governance in present day northern Nigeria were stable prior to the British colonisation, however, with one weakness was the overreliance on the enslavement enterprise for economic growth (Banwo 2008, 139). However, to claim that the British decision to colonise Nigeria was in the hope of ending the enterprise of enslavement would be an understatement of the real desire behind the invasion. It is, however, indisputable that the enslavement enterprise was a motivating factor in the British conquest of present day Nigeria, which the Berlin Conference of 1884 to 1845 reinforced (Falola 2009, 397). Like many other states in modern Africa, Nigeria is a creation of British imperialism. The British conquest in 1851 led to their taking full control of Lagos and the southern coast following the bombardment of Lagos that overthrew King Kosoko and reinstated Oba Akitoye the same year. Before the British intervention, Akitoye was overthrown in a coup by Kosoko with the support of Brazilian enslavers who were benefiting from the lucrative enslavement business (Ikime 1972, 254-255; School of Media and Communication).

As the British became "anti-slave trade", obviously as a measure to also control mass immigration to Britain, It was in their interest to reinstate Akitoye in an effort to end the enslavement enterprise. King Kosoko embraced the enslavement enterprise, and, therefore, he was unwilling to comply with the British terms of promoting legitimate trade in the region.

With the legislation to prohibit the enslavement enterprise passed in the Houses of Parliament in London and Akitoye's failure to enforce legitimate trade that the British hoped for, the British never hesitated to formally colonise Nigeria to take full control of the situation (Afigbo 1971, 436; School of Media and Communication). This swift move led to the British annexation of Lagos in 1861. Lagos became a British colony under the British Colonial "Treaty of Protection". Accordingly, the Royal Niger Company gained control of the Royal Niger region also referred to as 'Royal Niger Company Territories' (Duke 2010, 66). Linked to the grand apparatus of British colonial rule, European Christianisation was a success in southern Nigeria where Islam was unpopular. However, Lugard prevented Christian missionaries from extending western education to northern Nigeria to protect the British interest that rested upon indirect rule policy (Utietiang 2014). These included containing the spread of Islam to the southern part of the country, expand trade routes and enhance the British reach across Africa to secure natural resources that included land and minerals to enable their economic growth (Nwabughuogu 1981, 69-70).

### **Indirect Rule Policy**

In northern Nigeria, the British Colonisation curtailed the Islamic legal system powers and jurisdiction to exert influence and control. The intellectual aspect of the Islamic law diminished, its teaching narrowed as a result of the British enforcement of English law in both native and English courts under the legal harmony framework (Sodiq 1992, 96). The British may have perceived such a strategy in the context of fairness and serving the common good rather than a plan to curtail Islamic law, which was the initial reasoning. The British under Lord Fredrick Lugard who was High Commissioner to the protectorate of northern Nigeria provided a model of the British Colonial administration. Lugard implemented "Indirect rule policy" in 1903 to formally consolidate influence and control (Sodiq 1992, 97). Indirect rule policy was a strategy that was intended to gain control of the powerful Sokoto Caliphate and gradually disband it. Accordingly, the conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate amalgamated the north and the south protectorates into one Nigerian state in 1914 leaving Muslims with less political influence in the Nigerian state (Olaniyan and Asuelime 2014, 94). Even though the British declared a non-interference stance in native religion and legal systems, it was only a way to portray a positive gesture as a guarantee for indigenous autonomy. However, it appears that they had no concerns about potential threats to their interests at the time. Since the British had full control of the administrative machinery, all they did was create oblique laws to neutralise any imminent threats (Falola 2009, 26). However, when the British interests evolved, their interference became inevitable.

Regardless of Lugard formally respecting the existence of native legal systems, his real intentions did not take long to manifest. Lugard downgraded Islamic law to customary law which he would eventually replace with the British legal system (Sodiq 1992, 98; Rathbone 1971, 511). He also curtailed judicial powers by substituting the Alkali courts with English courts and placed Sharia courts under strict supervision. Displeased Judges were left with limited powers to assess, pass judgement or transfer any cases decided by native tribunals. Even Emirs were equally displeased with the British actions of intentionally undermining Islamic law. Emirs contended that what was decided according to Islamic law should not be subjected to review by non-Islamic courts (Sodiq 1992, 98).

Gradually, the British downgraded the legitimacy of Islamic law in Nigeria. These actions were reminiscent of the British perception of the spread of Islam as a threat to their interests (Raynolds 2001, 602). Nonetheless, Muslims stood firm to preserve political Islam and safeguard their autonomy. The British Imperial government appeased local pressure by appointing Muhammad Attahiru II as leader of Muslims and a British Mr Burdon as the Resident in charge of the administration of the Sokoto Caliphate (Sodiq 1992, 97). The imperial government also retained Emirates in the north to their initial positions, under the pretext of empowering locals to administer the affairs of the Sokoto people, while the British leaders acted as supervisors of the native. The indirect rule policy may have given the British leverage to sustain political domination that would significantly contribute to the rise of religious extremism in the post-independent Nigeria. Forasmuch as the People of northern Nigeria perceived indirect rule policy as a strategy meant to undermine the role of Muslims in politics and judicial system, they regarded those appointed by the British as agents of the imperialists (Owolade 2014). Thus, created division among Muslims, just as the divide and rule policy intended. The British favoured the Hausa-Fulani people whom they believed had leadership qualities over other ethnic groups. Consequently, the Hausa-Fulani people developed an attitude of authority over other ethnic groups (Nmar 2012 117).

What started as “indirect rule policy” eventually developed into a divide and rule policy that led to the British gaining full control of Nigeria. The British imperial government began to segregate indigenous people openly through the establishment of the infrastructure that only Europeans were allowed to access. Open segregation did not only disempowered natives politically but socially, and this compelled them to take up arms to denounce British rule. It is, therefore, reasonable to assert that the British actions created a political milieu that would become susceptible to the rise of religious extremists and the infiltration of external ideologies (Duke 2010, 68).

## **Anti-Colonial Wave**

After the end of World War II (WWII), nationalist sentiments in many parts of the world emerged, so where in Nigeria. More than 40 years of British colonial rule created significant implications for the future of Nigeria's political Islam. It created a polarised political culture that enabled political competition along religious lines (Bienen 1986, 50). It is indisputable that the British colonisation undermined the Islamic authority that sustained the Sokoto Caliphate establishment and guaranteed regional peace and stability for decades. At the ceremony marking 200 years anniversary of the Caliphate, former President of Nigeria Olusegun Obasanjo, a non-Muslim Nigerian contended that "we were a highly organised people before the arrival of the adventurers of colonisation, and thus, not too late to return to those values" (Mukhtar 2004,13). However, the supercilious British legacy would be impossible to dismantle in the age where constituent ethnic groups in Nigeria are still inherently supercilious.

The British divide and rule policy resulted in the rise of violent religious extremists who protested against colonial rule, and today inherently reject western civilisation. Muhammed Marwa, the Maitatsine leader, was exiled by the British Colonial government for his extreme views and preaching (Utietiang 2014). Withal, political and social repression also led to the emergence of non-religious anti-colonial movements. These included; West African Student Union founded in London in 1920 by Nigeria students, the Nigerian Teacher's Union which provided leadership training to natives, and Nigerian Law Association which comprised of Lawyers trained in Britain, among others (Metz 1991). As former President Obasanjo argued, political Islam thrived in Sokoto Caliphate before the British colonisation. This perception could be the reason religious extremists the Maitatsine and Boko Haram guided by Salafi Jihad ideology violently demanded a return to the medieval interpretation of Islamic law to restore political Islam in northern Nigeria.

## **Religious Extremism in Post-Independent**

The discussions above demonstrate that roots of religious extremism predate Nigerian independence. As aforementioned, religious extremism emerged from the nature of the British colonial rule that created an identity conscious culture along ethnic and religious lines, a culture that would become susceptible to radicalisation. Literature shows that the British colonial rule undermined fundamentals of political Islam that unified northern Nigeria's diverse ethnic groups and guaranteed regional peace and stability (Sodiq 1992, 96). Therefore, it is reasonable to assert that the colonial state structure, postcolonial state structure and the Eurocentric modernisation are variables that have created the notion that, Islamic law is in a state of decline. As a result, Salafi Jihadists upsurge to safeguard what they believe are fundamental beliefs of Islam (Moghadam 2008, 1).

Even though the British left power to the Muslim political elite after independence, Southern Nigeria's political and social outlook was inherently Eurocentric and remains so, whereas the north remains grounded in Islamic law. It is vital to note that Nigeria's membership in the British Commonwealth contributed to the Muslim ruling elites' decision for Nigeria to join the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Christians perceived the latter as a strategy to jeopardise Nigeria's secular status. Equally, Muslims perceived the former as a strategy to undermine Islamic law in Nigeria (Falola 1998, 100; Olaniyan and Asuelime 2014, 95). Furthermore, the setbacks that Islamic law suffered in the post-Independent Nigeria were initiated by the Federal government. Informed by the British system of doing things, the Nigerian government introduced the Islamic Pena Code in northern Nigeria in 1956. This policy was an attempt at replacing Islamic law injunctions that *Emirs* applied in criminal courts rulings. In condemnation of the Pena Code, Muslims based their argument on a democratic principle of majority rule in their efforts to maintain the status quo. Whereas their Christian counterparts were and still are disposed towards the biblical principle of separating the church from the state (Falola, 1998, 7-9; Sodiq 1992, 98-99). These diverging views leave Muslims with limited influence in the federal system, and it appears that these habitual differences fuel religious violence in Nigeria.

The Nigerian government justification for the introduction of the Pena Code was that it meant to harmonise the legal system in Nigeria. It is believed that the government's initial intentions were to limit the application of Islamic law in family matters such as criminalisation of adultery that resulted in imprisonment (Sodiq, 99). However, as these intentions proved difficult to implement due to *Emirs* opposition, Islamic law was recognised as one of the three legal systems in Nigeria. These laws included English, Native and Islamic laws (Mahmud, 2004, 85). In 2000, 12 states in northern Nigeria adopted Islamic law as the governing principle, whereas the southern part of Nigeria, which is inherently Christian, maintains the British system. An order the British deliberately enforced to create and nurture an identity consciousness society to advance their interests (Osaghae and Suberu 2005, 16-17). From this perspective, it is worth noting that Nigerians were united in the fight for independence; however, maintaining the same unity after independence has proved far more difficult, as evidenced by north and south schism.

### **The Conception of Salafi Jihad Ideology**

In his book, Kepel (2002) recounts that the Salafis he met in Europe in the early 1980s were totally 'apolitical', but by mid-1990s, these Salafis evolved from 'apolitical' to Jihadists. It is believed that Salafi Jihad ideology stemmed from the trial of political Islam in the 1970's in the Middle East (Kepel 2002, 132).

To be precise, Salafi Jihad ideology was conceived in the 1970s and gained momentum following the 1979 Iranian Islamic revolution led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini a Shiite (also referred to as Shia) cleric (Dumbe 2011, 88). Following the successful Islamic revolution, a Shiite-majority Iran developed international aspirations to unite politically and bring the Islamic world into its sphere of influence. Iran began to support Shiites outside of Iran as part of its regional *mujahideen* (fighters of God) (Rapoport 1982, 2096). These actions intensified traditional Shiite-Sunni tensions. In response, Saudi Arabia encouraged clerics to develop a Salafi Jihad movement, a movement that would be hostile towards Shiites. Iran's efforts to inspire minority Shiites in Iraq in 1980 after the symbolic Iranian Islamic revolution resulted in the eight-year bloody war that devastated both the sects (Rapoport 1982, 2096).

For Sunnis, however, an outside enemy was the Soviet forces that invaded Afghanistan in 1979. However, the Afghan war demanded a united front of all Muslims to join the *mujahideen* in Afghanistan to fight against the Soviet forces. Literature shows that Al Qaeda a Salafi Jihad terrorist group emerged from this *mujahideen* in the 1980s under the leadership of Osama Bin Laden. Al Qaeda's grand strategy was manifested in the 9/11 spectacle. Although Bin Laden's aspirations were to undermine the United States of America (USA or U.S.) interests abroad and revive political Islam in the Muslim world, his aspirations eventuated in his attacking of the USA homeland. Bin Laden's strategy was similar to Dan Fodio's mobilisation of the Fulani Jihad that led to the establishment of the Caliphate. Dan Fodio undermined interests of the Hausa establishment to further his agenda. While Dan Fodio's followers came from within the Hausaland, Al Qaeda recruits came from around the world including the Arab states, Sunni states in Asia, North Africa and Islamists in Western countries. Some Al Qaeda recruits served within the organisation others returned home to launch their *jihad* (struggle, holy war) as affiliated groups. Evidence shows that Osama Bin Laden invested about \$3 million in northern Nigeria to promote Salafist Islamism (Rapoport 1982, 2096; Moghadam 2008, 58; Mauro 2013).

### **Defining Salafi Jihad Ideology**

Although the ideology that guided the inception of Fulani Jihad has not been identified as a Salafi Jihad ideology, descriptions of its precepts, beliefs and core functions are not dissimilar. *Salafi* is derived from a term *Salafism*, a School of Sunni Islam that rejects theological innovation and advocates strict adherence to medieval interpretations of the Islamic school of thought and practice. The word "*Salaf*" is Arabic means "ancient one". It refers to early Muslims in traditional Islamic scholarship who died within the first four hundred years after the Prophet Muhammad (Anjum 2011, 345; Islamic Dictionary; Lauzie`re 2010, 370-371). *Jihad* traditionally means the spiritual struggle.

However, militant Islamists translate *Jihad* as a “holy war against unbelievers” (Juergensmeyer 2000, 81; Aly 2011, 246). Moghadam (2008, 1) argues that Salafi Jihad ideology is not a secular ideology like fascism, socialism or communism. It is a religious ideology congruent with certain extreme religious principles. It demands great loyalty and commitment to the cause. Salafi Jihad Ideology also demands verbal assent and complete control over thoughts, words and deeds of adherents. Unlike religion which supports existing orders, Salafi Jihad ideology is not merely an expression reflecting but a mission to show others what needs to be done to correct what is wrong to help them to that end (Moghadam 2008, 1). As a result, Salafi Jihadists do not just disagree with those they do not share their beliefs; they battle them (Lawrence 1995, 77).

Aforementioned, Salafi Jihad ideology is a religious ideology. Inspired by history, Salafi Jihadists embrace the aspirations of establishing an Islamic state that would revive political Islam, thus the rejection of western influence. They also reject nationalism and borders drawn by colonial powers. Salafi Jihadists appeal to all Muslims to fight for Islam, not the country (Byman 2013, 356). They describe themselves and their enemies in religious terms, such as “Army of Allah or Muhammad”, “the lions of Islam” and label enemies as infidels. In fact, one of Boko Haram’s demands was the resignation of former President Goodluck Jonathan if he did not convert to Islam. These views resonate with the Jihadists’ notion that Islam does not recognise “infidels” (Mustapha 2012). Salafi Jihadists also describe their strategy and mission as a religious struggle to return to the medieval interpretation of the Qur’an and social composition. Their primary tactic is martyrdom, which, unfortunately, depends entirely on terrorist activities. Salafi Jihadists also justify acts of violence with references drawn selectively from the Qur’an. Equally, Muslims who speak against acts of terrorism cite a number of verses from the Qur’an and Hadith that condemn violence and killing of innocent civilians (Avraham 2014; Hale 2001).

Ball et al. (2012, 5) define an ideology as a coherent and inclusive set of ideas that explains and evaluates social conditions. In other words, an ideology helps people understand their place in society and provides a program for social and political action. An ideology could also be understood in Moghadam’s four core functions of an ideology. The first function is to create awareness to a relative minority group that is less privileged and impacted by unfavourable extreme social, political or economic condition to which the group seeks explanations. The second function is to attribute blame for such condition to be imposed on minority groups by the majority group. The attribute of such blame on the majority group portrays a picture of the unfair treatment of the minority group. The third function is to create group identity and identify commonalities of its members and highlighting difference with those outside the group. The fourth function is to offer a specific action to create change or remedy the minority of the predicament (Moghadam 2008, 1-3).

These explanations show that the beliefs and core functions of the Fulani Jihad ideology is congruent with the Salafi Jihad ideology that guided the Maitatsine and guides Boko Haram today. All the three Jihadist groups have been guided by the precepts and belief of religious revivalism to which only the Fulani Jihad successfully created a Caliphate. Literature reveals that ideologies are links between thoughts, beliefs and myths on the one hand, and action on the other. Ideology also appears to be a tool for preserving beliefs or gaining power as the events of the 19<sup>th</sup> century have shown. The Fulani Jihad ideology was instrumental in the avoidance of theological innovations, revival and preservation of pure Islam. From the late 20<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Salafi ideology has not only been an instrument in reviving the medieval interpretations of Islamic law but of competition and conflict (Moghadam 2008, 1-3).

### **Resurgence of Salafi Jihad Ideology: The Maitatsine Uprisings in 1980-1985**

At the time when young intellectuals in northern Nigeria were yearning to distance themselves from the European system of doing things, which they associated with colonialism and imperialism, the 1979 Iranian revolution became a contemporary model for reviving political Islam in Nigeria (Kepel 2000, 131). The 1980s surge of Islamist enthusiasm in Nigeria was not only attributed to the successful establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate by Dan Fodio in 1808 through *Jihad* but the Iranian revolution as well. However, although the Maitatsine was a Salafi Jihadist group, they were inspired by the Shiite movements to which even Boko Haram founding leader Mohammed Yusuf was intrinsic (Gourley 2012, 4). It is important to note that *Salafism* and *Sufism* (Intensification of Islamic faith and practice) exist in both Sunni and Shia sects. A Muslim can embrace *Salafi* tradition or *Sufi* rituals or vice versa. However, majority Salafists are Sunnis (Four schools of Fiqh Islamic Law; Olaniyan and Asuelime 2014, 93; Voll and Ohtsuka).

The Maitatsine *Jihad* uprisings ten years after the Nigeria-Biafra War 1967 -1970 (Civil War which was triggered by ethnic and religious tensions between the Hausa-Fulanis of the north and the Igbo people of the Southeast of Nigeria) was the second largest religious conflict in Nigeria. The legacy of the most powerful Sokoto Caliphate in the history of West Africa and the Iranian Islamic revolution became models for religious extremists including, Mohammed Marwa also known as *Maitatsine* (one who curses), Muhammed Yusuf and Abubakar Shekau (Heertern and Moses 2014, 169; Simon 2014, 164). Marwa was a Salafist radical preacher educated in Islamic theology in Niger and Chad. He migrated from northern Cameroon to Kano Nigeria in 1945 where he became an Islamic zealot dedicated to reviving Dan Fodio's ideology. Although Marwa was originally exiled by the British Colonial government, he returned after Nigeria gained independence (Adegbulu 2013, 265).

Unlike Dan Fodio, Marwa exhibited radical religious sentiments. He did not only denounce western influence but rejected the *Hadith*, *Sunnah* and the prophethood of Muhammad (Owolade, 2014). Marwa went as far as rejecting certain parts of the *Qur'an* and allegedly replaced the name of Prophet Muhammad with his own copies of the *Qur'an* – proclaiming himself as the Prophet. He also prohibited his follower from attending school or reading books other than the Quran. Marwa labelled all Muslims, who disagreed with his beliefs as *infidels* and those that accepted all aspects of modernisation as hell-bound pagans (Nmar 2012, 121).

The Maitatsine revolt in the 1980s, also referred to as Muslim *Schwarmerei* (excessive sentiments) was guided by the Salafi Jihad ideology and driven by the federal government's failure to provide public goods. However, in contrast to Dan Fodio's ideology, the Maitatsine were harassing people and preventing girls from going to school in Kano City where Marwa established an enclave (Hiskett 1987, 209). Before Marwa went rogue, he enjoyed political influence in Kano state. Thus, containment of his group appeared to have been politically difficult (Aghedo 2014, 236). The police attempt at preventing the group from preaching in public places resulted in bloody clashes. With no backing from the federal police, Kano police were overpowered by Maitatsine fighters. These clashes led to vandalism and of police vehicles and killing of four officers. The group terrorised Kano City, burned down mosques, markets, police stations and schools (Elaigwu 2005, 741). Within a short period violence escalated, and rioters increased in number. This upsurge made containment of the group by Kano police even more challenging until the Nigerian army forces were brought in to quell the violence that killed hundreds of people with only a few members of the Maitatsine killed. Marwa himself was wounded in the military attacks and died shortly after. His remains that were hastily buried by his followers were immediately exhumed by the Nigerian authorities and publicly cremated to prevent his burial site from being used as a shrine (Hiskett 1987, 209).

Crackdown on Maitatsine militants forced some members to escape to other cities in northern Nigeria where they continued the violence. Consequently, in October 1982 riots erupted in Bulamkutu and Rigasa, in February – March 1984 in Jimeta-Yola, and in April 1985 in Gombe. Perpetual riots led to government's swift move to outlaw the sect in Kano and arrested many Maitatsine followers. However, in the effort to decongest prisons in Nigeria, former President Shehu Shagari granted amnesty to 1000 Maitatsine convicts. Unfortunately, these men re-joined others and continued the violence (Aghedo 2014, 235). There is no doubt that Marwa was motivated by the desire to purify Islam based on his selective interpretation of the *Qur'an*, although his views were extreme compared to Dan Fodio who stood for what was perceived necessary and just.

However, the goal for both the Fulani Jihadi and the Maitatsine was revolutionary, and in both jihadist events, followers engaged in armed conflicts. Also, collective grievances that existed in the Hausaland existed in the post-independent Nigeria (Sodiq 1992, 89; Crowder 1978, 72-76; Adeleye 1971, 578).

Comparable to Dan Fodio's strategy, Marwa took advantage of diminishing economic situation in Nigeria and used it as a vehicle to advance his Islamic revolution ambitions. The Maitatsine movement attracted a large following of commoners who were feeling the impact of economic disparity and widespread poverty (Falola 1998, 138). Followers who could not afford basic necessities of life became formidable patriots to the group. Furthermore, the Maitatsine allegiance to the anti-western Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khomeini and former Libyan Leader Muammar Gaddafi was reflective of the belief that their despair was a result of the Nigerian government acceptance of western civilisation (Aghedo 2014, 236; Nmar 2010, 121).

### **Conditions Wherein Religious Extremism Thrives in Nigeria**

In the case of religious extremism in Nigeria, Salafi Jihad ideology is a motivating force and an identity maker, whereas, the conditions (social inequality, poverty and government corruption) in which religious extremism thrives are just a vehicle that drives the ideological discourse (Agbibo 2013, 66). Salafi Jihadists reinterpret these conditions to increase the legitimacy of their argument and violent actions. Such a strategy appears to help counter any information that could potentially weaken the ideology. Nonetheless, effects of economic dislocation, government repression, and lack of political freedom are historical contributing factors that Boko Haram cites and reinterpret to legitimise their cause (Adesoji 2011, 99).

The Fulani Jihadi emerged in socio-economic injustices that still exist in post-independent Nigeria. The Fulanis regardless of being citizens of Hausaland for centuries, they were disenfranchised and subjected to injustices. In the 1980s, similar conditions sustained the Maitatsine revolt. The Maitatsine also emerged in the economic downturn and political corruption. At the time when food prices were high, social decadence among political elites increased, especially in northern Nigeria (Aghedo 2014, 243). Today, the rise of Boko Haram has been sustained by similar socio-economic conditions, poverty and government corruption are widespread. Although Nigeria is now the largest economy in Africa and 26<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the World with gross domestic product (GDP) of US\$ 509 billion as of 2013, and among the six fastest growing economies in the world, the Nigerian government has failed to address economic disparities that contribute to the recurrence of religious extremism in the country (Forest 2012, 6; World Bank 2014, 3).

## **Economic Dislocation**

It is significant that the rebased gross domestic product (GDP) numbers show improvement in a number of key economic indicators. Government budget deficit has dropped to 1% of GDP; the fiscal space arguably looks larger - placing national debt down to 10.6% of GDP and consolidated government expenditure at 15 percent of GDP (World Bank 2014, 3). Despite this rigorous economic growth, wealth has not trickled down to benefit the poor Nigerians (Adesoji 2010, 100). Even though the federal government of Nigeria points to the annual economic growth of about 7% over the last ten years, growth has not created jobs or transformed income disparities in the country. Economic disparities between the moderately developed south and the relatively poor northern Nigeria are stark.

In northern Nigeria, the poverty level is above 72% compared to 27% in the south and 35% in the Niger Delta (Nigeria's economic centre of gravity) and ethnic conflict-stricken region (Agbibo 2014, 406). Northern Nigeria's economy accounts for 70% of revenues from the agriculture sector. However, lack of modernising the agriculture sector negatively impacts on food and beverage productions. Energy supplies are inconsistent, and deteriorating infrastructure cannot withstand contemporary climate change. Overall, southern Nigeria remains the source of national revenue in its oil and gas ventures in the Niger Delta. However, even with a meaningful, balanced source of revenue, agriculture in the north and oil and gas in the south, national poverty level rose from 54% to 60% in 2010 with no sign of a possible drop in 2014 (Barna 2014, 15; Salaam 2012, 150).

As Boko Haram continues to destabilise northern Nigeria, Niger Delta ethnic violence perpetuates. Ethnic minorities have repeatedly mobilised and violently protested for greater political power, economic development and control of natural resources in the region. Minority groups in Niger Delta constitute about 15% of Nigeria's total population (Bob 2002, 396; Simon 2014, 162; Newsom 2011, 4; Tonwe and Eke 2013, 233). These minority ethnic groups feel segregated by the dominant majority groups in the Nigerian Federation. As a result, they have taken matters into their hands to demand a fair share of profits from local resources. In the post-independent Nigeria, the Niger Delta became not only a source of revenue but conflict as well. In early 1990, tensions arose between foreign oil firms and the Niger Delta minority ethnic groups, particularly the Ogoni and the Ijaw. While dwindling in widespread poverty, these two ethnic groups developed a sense of exploitation, thus, created militia groups in the region (Pavsic 2012; Aminu 2013, 815; Aghedo and Osumah 2014, 210). Oil in the Niger Delta was discovered more than 40 years ago. In 2010, the United States Intelligence Agency placed Nigeria as the 10<sup>th</sup> world largest oil producer.

Since then, Nigeria extracts about 93 metric tons of oil annually, which accounts for about 2.9% of world's total production. Oil production in the Niger Delta accounts for 90% of Nigeria's revenues. Niger Delta hosts several foreign oil companies including, the Anglo-Dutch Shell Petroleum Development Company which holds the largest share of about 42% of daily oil output, Mobil, Elf Aquitaine, Chevron and Agip (Pavsic 2012).

Regardless of all the wealth, Nigeria is ranked among 15 poorest countries in the world. Even with recent positive developments and abundant natural resources, the federal government has woefully failed to lift people out of poverty or provide alternatives incentives to addressing people's grievances. The 2014 regional divergences report in the quality of life shows that youth literacy between the ages of 5-16 years old is 18% in northeast Nigeria compared to 70% in southern Nigeria. Access to clean water in northern Nigeria is 47% and 80% in the south of Nigeria (Aghedo 2014, 245). The political elite has been accused of having uncontrolled access to national resources through what Aghedo (2014, 245) calls a well coiled patron-client system that enables the embezzlement of public resources.

### **Weak Government Institutions**

Like many other post-colonial countries, Nigeria inherited weak institutional foundations that even efforts to rebuild efficient and cohesive structures that existed in Sokoto Caliphate are almost impossible (Lewis 2011, 99). Wistfully, the federal government has continued the trend of failure to provide public goods including water, sanitation, health, education, and infrastructure that have increased social inequality and aggravated social divisions. These disparities undermine government legitimacy and revive historical grievances that have continued to generate instabilities such as riots, revolts, religious extremism, insurgencies and organised crime (Campbell 2014). The Hausa-Fulani ethnic group inherently regard government corruption as a form of oppression (Agbibo 2014, 407). Thus, they look to religion for answers and, therefore, become vulnerable to radicalisation. The Nigerian governments' failure to address historical grievances provides an opportunity for religious extremists to mobilise against modernity, which they believe has undermined political Islam (Juergensmeyer 2000, 225).

Rampant corruption in the north is often blamed on the failed rule of law and bad federal government policies. These policies include the displacement of peasant farmers in Kano state in the 1980s in the effort to construct dams. The government did not take responsibility to compensate affected people or provide alternative jobs. The government instead left displaced people to secure alternative jobs to sustain themselves.

Furthermore, irrigation scheme by the Chad Basin Authority displaced two hundred thousand people in the northeast. Another irrigation project in Balkdori in Sokoto State displaced about one hundred thousand peasant farmers (Imobighe 2012, 317-340; Aghedo 2014, 243). Displaced people were left to fend for themselves, falling vulnerable to jihadists who provide alternative solutions to their despair. With widespread corruption, a significant number of impoverished, marginalised and disenfranchised young men who are devoted to religion find resonance in Boko Haram's ideology (Elaigwu 2005, 741).

Ethno-religious identities are also essential to understanding the prevalence of religious extremism in Nigeria. After independence, the federal republic of Nigeria was made up of 36 states that forcibly joined conglomerate of various ethnic groups with a little cohesive factor of nationalism. The constituent ethnic groups remain the primary entities to which the Nigerian people identify (Barna 2014, 17; Salaam 2012, 148). Historical instabilities and violence including the Biafra War are associated with the notion of ethno-religious characterisation of 'us' versus 'them' based on their geographical locations (Bagaji 2008, 6). Nigeria consists of about 350 ethnic groups and 400 languages. The Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo make up 68% of the national population and partially concentrated in the north-west, south-west and south-east of the country. These groups see each other as competitors for political dominance. Religious identities are equally polarised. 50% of the total population is Muslim, 40% Christian and the remaining 10% adheres to various native faiths (Aghedo and Osumah 2014, 209-210; Solomon 2012, 2). It is observed that the lack of strong government's institutions to promote political cohesion to discourage ethnic and religious alignments also contribute to the rise of religious extremism.

Institutional incapacities and deficiencies signify state failure; however, it would be inaccurate to place Nigeria on that level as the federal government exercises a level of political and social control. However, there is no question that Nigeria has failed as a nation and an economy given abundance resources it is endowed with. Lewis (2011, 7) argues that institutional deficiencies stagnate a fledgeling democratic system including electoral machinery, political parties and the legislature, thus, fosters political oligarchy rather than a cohesive political system. Proof of this is the tainted past elections by fraud and corruption that show alleviation of certain groups of people to power at the expense of others. It appears that the most affected are politicians in the north that call for 'zoning' and advocate for the rotation of political candidates among ethnic groups during successive elections. Whether, the recent election of a Muhammadu Buhari, a Muslim from northern Nigeria will reshape a political milieu is yet to be seen (Lewis 2011, 1).

## The Rise of Boko Haram

Boko Haram can be understood as a terrorist group motivated by Salafi Jihad ideology and its existence accelerated by the historical discontent of socio-political conditions as discussed. In simple terms, Salafi Jihad ideology is believed to be the motivating factor to the rise of Boko Haram. It is the unifier, the mobiliser and the legitimiser of the group's existence (Simon 2014, 164). It is reflected in the group's philosophy and modus operandi. Boko Haram rejects religious secularism and advocates for a return to the medieval interpretation of Islamic law. This stance points to the group's ambitions of re-establishing a Caliphate along the borders of the historical Sokoto Caliphate through violent means to restore political Islam. It is essential to note that Salafi Jihadism is more akin to an ideology than the religion. It is utilised as a means of offensive opposition to the outgrowth of modernity that Salafists believed is challenging traditional religious and social structures (Moghadam 2008, 1). Thus, Boko Haram's regard of Western ideas and institutions un-Islamic, and, therefore, seeks to impose the medieval interpretation of Islamic law on a secular Nigerian society.

As discussed, the rise of Boko Haram can also be understood in the Islamic history of Nigeria discussed above. The Fulani Jihad legacy of reviving pure Islam in Hausaland and the establishment of a Caliphate that was grounded in Islamic law remains an inspiration to Boko Haram today (Azumah 2014, 33). Although the Fulani Jihad, the Maitatsine and Boko Haram are separated by time, commonalities in their message are notable. The Fulani Jihad fought to revive pure Islam and suppression of theological innovation, the Maitatsine rejected secularism, and ironically some tenets of the *Qur'an* (Aghedo 2014, 236; Nmar 2012, 121). Equally, Boko Haram inherently rejects Western civilisation that promotes secularism and freedoms and urges a return to the orthodox interpretation of the holy texts.

The time of Boko Haram inception is unclear; however, it is believed that the group is an outgrowth of the Maitatsine. In the early 1990s, Boko Haram was known as Yobe Taliban (a radical left-wing group of youth scholars) with prominence in Yobe and Borno, two of northern Nigeria's twelve states governed by Sharia law. According to existing literature, Boko Haram started out as a peaceful movement that had the support of northern Nigerian leaders. However, after the falling out with Yobe leaders, the group was pushed out of the state by Yobe State Council for its radical views and engaging in battles with local people. Although the group died out, the ideology remained and later grew in strength in what we see in Boko Haram today. Yobe Taliban's retaliatory attacks on Christmas Eve in 2003 that targeted state government officials and the state police was not only symbolic; it set precedence for Boko Haram's future attacks.

Boko Haram has symbolically evolved from being a northern Nigeria terrorist group to a major player in West African Islamic revivalism. The group's evolution began following the extrajudicial killing of the group's leader Muhammed Yusufu in 2009, which impelled current leader Shekau to declare *jihād* on the Nigerian government (Olaniyan and Asuelime 2014, 102; Animasawun and Saka 2013, 218; Aghedo 2014, 235; Tanchum, 2012, 77).

It appears that Boko Haram began by internalising a set of ideologies and grievances to give resonance to the larger audience before its insurgency. In other words, Boko Haram adopted an ideology that would not only unite adherents but motivate and incite them to action. Therefore, it would be naive to assume that Boko Haram would have remained a peaceful movement had the Nigeria forces not killed Yusufu, considering that he was a leader of the left-wing radical youth scholars in 1990s that violently protested against the Nigerian government. Literature shows that Yusufu got inspiration from global Jihadists. Yusufu did not only adopt the name from the Afghan Taliban; he imitated their dress code, philosophy and most importantly adopted Al Qaeda's ideology and *modus operandi* (Barna 2014, 5-23).

The original vision of Boko Haram is reflected in its ideology, philosophy, tactics and strategy. The group has expanded its areas of operation; its tactics are no longer hit and run, they are hit and hold. Boko Haram has taken advantage of territorial claims among ethnic groups in northern Nigeria and has innovatively created parallels of Jihadism with the territory (Adebanwi 2009, 35). The group successfully attacks and takes control of government facilities, launches attacks on military facilities, schools, villages, religious buildings and public places. So far, Boko Haram has shown a state-like military capability to project its power. It employs multifaceted violent tactics such as targeted assassinations, random drive-by shootings, ambushes and prison breaks, kidnappings, burning of villages, suicide bombings, and use of female suicide bombers among others. Since Boko Haram came to prominence in 2009, the group has caused over 12,000 deaths (Onuoha and Temilola 2015, 3).

Even more concerning are the reported Boko Haram splinter groups *Yusufiyya* Islamic Movement and Ansaru or *Jama' atul Ansarul Musmina fi Biladis Sudan*, which translates to a vanguard for the protection of Muslims in Africa south of the Sahara. Ansaru has in the recent past claimed responsibility for the kidnapping of foreigners in Cameroon and Nigeria. While *Yusufiyya* Islamic Movement denounces Boko Haram as evil, on one hand, it embraces the legacy of Boko Haram founder Mohammed Yusufu on the other (Agbibo 2013, 149). Existing literature also reveals that Boko Haram is not a monolithic entity with a unified purpose. It is believed that there are existing separate factions within the movement that have different functions and mostly disagree about tactics and strategic direction of the group.

These factions sometimes compete for popularity and dominance. Local observers have even categorised these groups along ethnic lines; Kogi Boko Haram, Kanuri Boko Haram and the Hausa-Fulani Boko Haram (Forest 2012, 121). In validation of these observations, a 2011 report presented to the U.S. House of Representatives revealed that one faction of the group might be focusing on domestic issues and another group on global issues. Boko Haram's recent declaration of allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) attests to that assertion (Agbibo 2013, 149; Agbibo 2014, 405; Forest 2012, 2).

Boko Haram radical evolution ideologically and operationally can be understood in three phases. Boko Haram began by castigating state authority from 2003 to 2005. In the second phase from 2006 to 2007, the group ended the Kanama revolt and embarked on intensive recruitment, indoctrination and radicalisation of its members. The third stage was the resurgence of the group in retaliation for the extrajudicial killing of its Yusufu. Boko Haram began targeting symbols of authority, random shooting, kidnappings and suicide bombings and began to expand its operational links to international Salafi jihad terrorist groups (Aghedo 2014, 235). As earlier noted, Boko Haram has been a staunch Al Qaeda-affiliated group and closely linked to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). However, the group's recent formalisation of the alliance with ISIL is the game changer. It signifies Boko Haram's willingness to expand its reach to other global jihadists that could enable sharing of resources, personnel expertise and tradecraft (Oluwaseun 2013, 415; Ewin 2015; Rosen 2015).

Boko Haram's declaration of its allegiance to ISIL did not come as a surprise to the international community. The U.S. National Counterterrorism Centre detected communications between the two groups way before ISIL's rise to prominence and predicted a potential undertaking between the two groups (Sergie and Johnson 2015). Boko Haram-ISIL allegiance also stands true to Cook's (2011, 2-25) warning in his 2011 paper. Cook warned that Boko Haram demonstrated willingness to establish connections with international jihadist groups that pose threats to USA interests and global peace and security. These links are also indicative of Boko Haram willingness to embrace internationalism (Sergie and Johnson 2015).

### **Effects of Globalisation and Technology Revolution**

Transnational links among Salafi Jihad terrorist groups can be linked to the effects of globalisation. Scholars argue that globalisation may have promoted transnational links of terrorist groups. Although this claim appears to have no substantial proof, changes that have come with globalisation are notable. Globalisation has changed the way people identify themselves. People no longer identify themselves just by the way they look, but by the way they think and their beliefs.

However, globalisation has also brought with it many positive outcomes such as the creation of global markets that are enhancing social and economic developments in developing countries (Aly 2011, 101). Adverse effects are also notable. Globalisation has created new Diasporas that are facilitating international links for terrorist groups. Research shows that sympathisers of terrorists in the diaspora provide moral and material support for terrorist groups back home (Sheffer 2006; Ann Aly 2011, 101). In the case of Boko Haram, the easing of national borders through the protocols of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has relaxed trade and travel restriction among member countries. Although these protocols are positive for economic development, they appear to facilitate organised crime and insurgency posing threats to state sovereign and security. Religious extremists in member states have taken advantage of these protocols to create strategic depth, new avenues to enhance logistics and movement of resources from one place to the other.

The other aspect of globalisation that appears to have expanded transnational links among terrorist groups is technology. The technology revolution has closed communication gaps between nations (Ann Aly 2011, 223). Boko Haram embraces technology (the only aspect of western civilisation they seem to have accepted) and incorporates it in its operations to infiltrate new frontiers in the region. Through technology, Boko Haram has also amplified its propaganda machine to communicate with the larger audience and to show solidarity to its affiliated Salafi Jihadist groups including, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), AQIM, Al Shabaab and ISIL. The purpose of the expansion of the group's propaganda efforts appears to be an attempt to legitimise the relevance of its actions on the world stage and to increase resonance (Agbiboa 2014, 409).

Global Jihadists have taken advantage of technology revolution to communicate, sometimes in real time. Boko Haram leader Shekau expresses a deep bond that exists between affiliated jihadist groups and Boko Haram via technology. It has been observed that Shekau uses Arabic in his online videos, which is suggestive of a deep bond with affiliated global jihadists. This bond is also validated by Shekau's 2010 online video in which he offered not only condolences for the deaths of two Al Qaeda top operatives, Abu Ayyub al-Masri and Abu Omar al-Baghdadi who were killed by the USA-Iraqi coalition forces during a raid in the western province of Anbar; he called them brothers. He also praised Al Qaeda's resilience to the cause. In another video two years later, Shekau offered his support for the ongoing jihad in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kashmir, Chechnya, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Somalia, Algeria, Libya and Mali. In 2015, Shekau used technology to declare allegiance to ISIL (Roggio 2012, 4).

## Threats to National Security

The concept of national security is conceived of the principle of maintenance and protection of the well-being of citizens (including lives and property), socio-economic order of the state and interests in the face of threats from within the country or outside (Nwanegbo and Odigbo 2013, 286; Ogbonnaya and Stiegler 2014, 145). Evidenced by existing literature, religion played a pivotal role in shaping Nigerian politics and society in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, the onset of democratic rule in 1999 appeared to have further undermined political Islam, thereby deteriorating the country's security. However, the climax of Nigeria's insecurity is the rise of Boko Haram. The group has expanded transnational links resulting in a consequential decline in national security and signifying state fragility. The frequency and scope of terrorist attacks perpetrated by Boko Haram have drastically increased. The group's carnage has led to humanitarian crisis especially in the group's remote north-eastern strongholds in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States. Attacks are also prevalent in Bauchi, Gombe, Jigawa and other states (Abubaka and Botelho 2015).

Since 2009, Boko Haram has launched more than 53 indiscriminate and sporadic terrorist attacks including 2010 prison break, bombing of police headquarters in June 2011, bombing of the United Nations (UN) headquarters in Abuja Nigeria following in the footsteps of AQIM bombing of UN building in Algeria 2007 and Al-Shabaab attack on UN office in Somalia in 2013, killing of students from the agriculture college in Yobe state in 2013, chainsaw beheading of truck drivers, bombing of a bus station that killed about hundred people, kidnapping of 276 teenage girls from a girls school in Chibok in 2014 and the abduction of the wife of Cameroon's vice president in 2014 who was later released as part of a prison exchange. As of 2015, over 12,000 people have been killed by Boko Haram. In fact, the escalation of Boko Haram's terrorist attacks in 2015 forced the Nigerian government to postponed presidential elections to March 28, 2015 (Gourley 2012, 2; Nwanegbo and Odigbo 2013, 289; Elden 2014, 514; Agbiboa, 2013, 152).

The frequency and scope of indiscriminate killing of innocent people and persisting humanitarian crisis are evidence that Boko Haram is a grave threat to Nigeria's national security. Even more concerning is Boko Haram's feminisation of terror (Onuoha and Temilola 2015, 2). The group does not only victimise women but also uses them as vanguards of terror. It has been reported that in 2014, Boko Haram used about 17 female suicide attackers of which 15 successfully detonated bombs, and only two were aborted. On June 8 the same year, Boko Haram deployed a female suicide bomber at a military barracks in Gombe state. The female bomber who concealed explosives in her hijab killed a soldier including herself. On January 10, 2015, an innocent 10-year-old girl was strapped with a suicide vest that was remotely detonated outside the market in Borno killing ten people including the girl (Blair 2015).

These guerrilla and suicide attacks have displaced more than 300,000 people mostly from Borno and Yobe states. About 470,000 are internally displaced, and 70% of these people are women and children, (Human Right Watch 2014). The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) 2014 report also shows that more than 57,000 Nigerians have been registered as refugees in neighbouring Niger, Chad and Cameroon (Aghedo 2014, 241). Displaced people within Nigeria and in the surrounding countries face extreme problems in accessing food, water, shelter and other basic needs of life. These displacements could exacerbate the scarcity of food, water and housing among other necessities. Thus, creating an environment prone to organised crime including human trafficking; illegal migration and trading that could, in turn, be funding and sustaining Boko Haram. Therefore, the humanitarian crisis caused by Boko Haram does not only derail economic development but poses a threat to national and regional peace and stability that could lead to state fragility (Aghedo 2014, 241-243).

### **Geopolitical Implications**

Geography shows that Nigeria's borders are extensive and relatively porous. Nigeria has about 1,690 kilometres to the border with western Cameroon; about 1,497 kilometres to Benin in the west; 87 kilometres to Chad in the northwest and about 1,500 kilometres to Niger (Onuoha 2013; Aghedo, 2014, 241). Existing literature reveals that the majority of Boko Haram members are Kanuri by ethnicity and inhabit areas across northern borders. Ethnic links across the borders facilitate weapons and illicit trading. Particularly, the Kanuri regions of Chad provide Boko Haram with a corridor to Al Shabaab in Somalia through Sudan, the northern corridor to the Touareg region in Niger, Mali, Southern Libya and Algeria (Tanchum 2012, 76; Forest 2012, 1). The incursions Boko Haram has made in Cameroon, Chad and Niger enable widespread attacks that include villages and military bases in these countries. These extended areas of operation have created porous geopolitical security challenges that make it difficult for national security forces to combat the group. ECOWAS protocol makes the situation even worse as people move freely from one country to other with fewer restrictions. As a result, they engage in illicit trading (Aghedo 2014, 242). Lack of coordinated patrols in these porous borders is another problem that exacerbates illegal export of weapons and fighters across the borders. Also, enables the group to consolidate its strategic depth in neighbouring countries to train, recruits and execute terrorist attacks (Salaam 2012, 156).

Strategic links have not only enabled Boko Haram to become a major player in regional *Jihadism* but a component of global Jihadism. Boko Haram had in the recent past proclaimed to be a version of Al Qaeda committed to carrying out the commands of Osama bin Laden in Nigeria (Agbibo, 2014, 409). It is also believed that Boko Haram members fought alongside AQIM in Mali in solidarity to the cause.

Existing literature also shows that the group received training from Al Shabaab and were involved in the April 2012 invasion of the Algerian embassy in Mali (Doyle 2012). Reports have also shown that the group has fighters from Chad, Cameroon, Somalia, Central African Republic and Niger. In fact, Boko Haram leader Shekau was born in Niger, which gives him leverage to sustain the group's strategic depth in Niger (Pham, 2012, 4; Agbiboa, 2014, 409).

Nigeria's poor border policing makes the country's territorial integrity vulnerable to the influx of weapons and fighters into the country. Nigeria accounts for more than 70% of eight million illegal arms in West Africa (Onuoha 2013). Boko Haram's core areas Maiduguri and Damaturru have more than 200 illegal entry points that facilitate illicit trading and provide a corridor for Boko Haram to access weapons from its affiliated groups aforementioned. This claim is evidenced by the group's public displays of sophisticated weaponry, armoured vehicles and ammunition (Aghedo, 2014, 241-242). It is also believed that on top of material support from affiliated groups, Boko Haram generates its income through illegal trafficking. Shekau's threat in 2014 to sell abducted girls into his slavery market is indicative of the group engagement in illicit trading to fund itself (Mauro 2014; Forest 2012, 1).

## **Counterterrorism Measures Against Boko Haram**

The USA designation of Boko Haram as a foreign terrorist organisation in 2011 did not translate into direct intervention against the group. In fact, the USA has refused to provide weapons and has blocked Israel's sale of Cobra attack helicopter to Nigeria citing past human rights abuses (Siobhan 2015). However, that may not be the only reason. The USA appears to understand that the rise of Boko Haram is rooted in unaddressed historical, socio-political discontent and structural complexities of the Nigerian society that contribute to the recurrence of religious extremists (Utietiang 2014). The USA may have also realised that it no longer enjoys sizeable military resources, and, therefore, cannot get directly involved in fighting terrorist groups in every country. For these reasons, the USA has recommended a regional coalition alliance against Boko Haram, one that would maintain strong border protection and disrupt the group's strategic links in the region. Through Africa Command, the USA provides support through training and providing intelligence to re-evaluate Boko Haram's trajectory to enable regional partners to develop the element of surprise (Africom Command Debrief 2013).

Boko Haram's incursion and consolidation of its areas of operation in neighbouring countries prompted the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council to mandate a formal framework to redevelop a Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJFT). The MNJFT includes Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, Chad and Benin (Zamfir, 2015).

While there is no doubt that Nigeria has displayed some degree of ineptitude in the fight against Boko Haram, it would be inaccurate to suggest that Nigeria has limited resource to combat the group. Nigerian has been the second largest contributor of forces to peacekeeping missions in the region. In fact, the government managed to suppress the Maitatsine in the 1980s (Forest 2012, 107; Lewis 2006, 102). A more accurate explanation to the Nigerian government's ineptitude would be a lack of complete knowledge of Boko Haram's strategy. Thus, they have failed to create a military strategy of contemporary nature to defeat the group. Tzu and Minford (2002, 10-15) recommend first to know the enemy and yourself to be able to attack a strategy itself to defeat the enemy.

So far, the Nigerian government's response to countering Boko Haram has solely been based on coercive or hard approach, rather than a balanced approach that includes conciliatory or soft approach. The Nigeria government has instead hired former mercenaries of the company called Executive Outcomes from South African (the company that was outlawed in South Africa in 1998) to fight Boko Haram for \$400 (U.S) to each mercenary in cash per day. Whether hiring foreign mercenaries will increase Nigerian forces capability to defeat Boko Haram is yet to be seen (York 2015). The Nigerian forces have from time to time conducted assassinations of terrorist group's leaders and members using missile strikes and invasions. However, these attacks have not dismantled Boko Haram's state-like military capability. Therefore, Nigeria would need to adopt both coercive and conciliatory approaches to defeat the group.

The logic of coercion provides that retaliation against terrorism create a reputation of punishment. However, if it is less aggressive and concedes to terrorist's demands, it creates a reputation of weakness, which is where Nigeria is at the moment (Benjamin 2008; Agbiboa 2014, 410-411). In 2011, the Nigerian government's incoherent coercive approach resulted in Boko Haram tabling demands for a cease-fire. These demands included; an end to governments killing and arrest of Boko Haram members, government compensate the families of the group members killed by the Nigerian forces and prosecute government forces who killed the group's leader Mohammed Yusufu. The Nigerian government attempted to concede to some of these demands. Unfortunately, their attempt never came to fruition due to Boko Haram backing down (IRIN 2012). Considering that Boko Haram does not intend to down arms until its goals are achieved, as its mandate states, accepting demands could only open doors for even further demands that could undermine government's autonomy and legitimacy. For instance, Boko Haram's demands for the resignation of former President Goodluck Jonathan contending that they would not support an "infidel" and that the government was corrupt, uncaring, and unrepresentative of the interests of the people of northern Nigeria (Oluwaseun 2014, 10). It appears that what has come out of the government's attempts to concede to negotiations, however, is Boko Haram's sense of authority over government legitimacy.

## **Coercive Measures to countering Boko Haram Insurgency**

Aforementioned, Nigeria has historically played a leading role in sustaining regional security and has been the second largest contributor of troops to ten peacekeeping missions in Africa, both in African Standby Forces and in ECOWAS Forces. Nigeria has also played a vital role in providing the largest contingent of troops in Liberia and Sierra Leone during the 1990s and in northern Mali in 2013 (Lewis 2006, 102; Oluwaseun 2014, 10). In the fight against Boko Haram, the Nigerian government efforts have included; the deployment of the military task forces to counter Boko Haram insurgency and the declaration of a state of emergency in north-eastern Nigerian cities of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe in 2013 (Coleman 2013). Regardless, Boko Haram has grown even more powerful and sophisticated, posing a threat not only to national security but region security. With the current increase in frequency and scope of Boko Haram's terrorist attacks, it is reasonable to assert that Nigeria's counterterrorism policies have proved to be ineffective. However, the challenge of combating Boko Haram should not be underestimated, as beneath the group lies much deeper and complex ideological challenges.

In 2014, the state governor of Borno Kashim Shettima agreed that it is almost impossible for the state to defeat Boko Haram. He stated that the group has sophisticated weaponry and fields more fighters dedicated to the belief of the divine cause to serve the demands of Allah (Sergie and Johnson 2015). Through shared grievance and dedication, Boko Haram fighters appear to be better motivated than Nigeria troops. Therefore, it would be desirable for the Nigerian government to deploy a swift coercive approach and equip the Nigerian forces with sophisticated armoured tanks, fighter helicopters and vehicles, armoured personnel carriers, artillery guns and surface to air missiles to disrupt and destroy Boko Haram's strategic depth and its centres of gravity (Nmar 2012, 108). With the support of the coalition of the willing, the Nigerian government would need to take key steps to mount a long term coalition alliance with regional partners, with whom they have a shared sense of threat. Therefore, enhanced capability of regional alliance would enable;

- Coordinated militarisation of borders to prevent weapons proliferation and illegal trafficking, and disrupt financial flows from affiliated groups.
- Increase 24/7 surveillance capabilities by use of drones and other unmanned armed aerial vehicles.
- Enhance intelligence sharing and analysis to increase response capacity and the element of surprise.

- A well-coordinated regular offensive in Boko Haram's core areas, including targeted air strikes.
- Collective consideration to reform ECOWAS free movement protocol to increase regional security.
- Develop a mechanism to detect weapons and explosives concealed in food products and other commodities.
- Increase operational capacity and enhance area deniability to allow coordinated cross-border military operation.

These initiatives are consistent with the coercive counterterrorism frameworks of the AU, the USA and the 2014 Paris Summit (Zamfir 2015). Given the issues of inconsistent funding to sustain the MNJFT, Nigeria requires strengthening its national military capability to deal with imminent domestic threats of terrorism to safeguard the safety of its population and infrastructure critical to the country's economic development. Furthermore, Nigeria requires balancing coercive approach with a soft approach to combat terrorism.

### **Conciliatory Measures to Address Grievances and Dispel the Ideology**

It is indisputable that the Nigerian government's over-reliance on coercive approach has not contained religious extremism but has rather contributed to radicalisation. For instance, the assassination of the Maitatsine Leader in 1980 and Yusuf founder of Boko Haram in 2009 did not contain religious extremism but legitimised Boko Haram grievances (Agbiboa 2014, 403). Therefore, a conciliatory approach could help address conditions that contribute to the recurrence of violent religious extremism, at the same time legitimise the government's coercive approach (Miller 2007, 331). One good example of a country that has successfully balanced coercive and conciliatory approaches to countering terrorism is Saudi Arabia. The Saudi government's conciliatory approach policy to counterterrorism includes prevention, rehabilitation and aftercare. Government surveys show that none of the terrorist who go through these programmes re-offends (Boucek 2008, 4). Although Nigeria's economic capacity cannot be compared to Saudi Arabia's, Nigeria could focus on community building through the provision of a variety of social and economic development programmes.

Looking back at the time of the Fulani Jihad, the Maitatsine and now Boko Haram, it is clear that the recurring violent religious extremism in Nigeria is a war of ideas. Therefore cannot be countered by guns alone but a combination of coercive and conciliatory measures.

Like the Maitatsine, Boko Haram uses grievances including widespread poverty, lack of political cohesion, economic and education disparities among others things, are the underlying issues that need to be addressed. Therefore, the research recommendations include, but not the least;

- The Nigeria government to reform its political system to encourage federal participation of Muslim leaders, whose influence is limited to the northern part of the country, in formulating economic policies that would allow equal distribution of profits from the country's oil and gas ventures in the Niger Delta.
- Encourage and fund community-based programmes such as subsistence farming and small-scale entrepreneurship to diversify job creation mechanisms. This strategy could encourage a culture of resilience and create a sense of responsibility for citizens as actors of their development.
- Establish community building forums where government representatives would share information about government policies and allow people to identify issues that require immediate attention. These forums could help people gain confidence to work together as a people to solve problems and increase awareness that fighting poverty takes time and requires a collective effort.
- Improve learning conditions and provide government assistance in schools to make education more affordable for less privileged citizens.
- Reform national education curriculum to allow multifaceted media campaigns against violent religious extremism with the help of religious scholars.
- Re-introduce universal primary education that was introduced by former President Olusegun Obasanjo, and provide incentives to the less privileged students (Utietiang Bekeh 2014).
- Allow a due process to try perpetrators of terrorism, establish rehabilitation or counselling services in prisons to give perpetrators a chance to reform and become responsible citizens.

It is indisputable that Nigeria's social and religious composition is complex. However, well-coordinated and interconnected community building programmes could delegitimise Boko Haram's grievances and the ideology could become less appealing to the populations, and could also discourage individuals from joining violent religious extremist groups. These recommendations may seem far-fetched but are ordinary methods that increase people's confidence in the government, enhance the resilience of the population against violent religious extremism and encourage individual capacity to take responsibility in contributing positively to create a vibrant larger community.

Collier et al. argue that:

Countries with low, stagnant, and unequally distributed per capita incomes face a high risk of prolonged conflict. In the absence of economic development, neither good political institutions, nor ethnic and religious homogeneity, nor high military spending provides important defences against large-scale violence (Collier et al. 2003, 53).

The logic in Collier's view is that economic development is pivotal to preventing domestic conflicts. In the case of Nigeria, as earlier mentioned, the absence of economic development has historically been a contributing factor to the rise of religious extremism. Therefore, the government requires adopting a combination of coercive and conciliatory measure to end historical recurrence of violent religious extremism. This assertion is not to ignore the fact that Boko Haram has shown state-like military strength; however, it is to suggest that the Nigerian government can respond to Boko Haram insurgency with absolute force. However, the government needs to back it up with conciliatory measures, thereby addressing grievances that legitimise the rise of violent religious extremism.

## **Conclusion**

The violent wave of religious extremism in the post 9/11 world necessitates the notion that Islam is the mother lode of bad ideas. However, this assertion fails to separate ideologies that motivate violent religious extremism from the precepts of the Islamic school of thought and practice that promotes peace and tolerance. At the White House Summit on countering religious extremism on February 19, 2015, USA President Barack Obama proclaimed that his country is not at war with Islam but terrorists who have perverted Islam (Acosta and Lipstak 2015). President Obama made that proclamation to encourage the separation of religion from a set of ideologies that incite religious extremists into action.

In Nigeria, Jihadist ideologies are not a new phenomenon. They predate Nigerian independence and can be understood in a historical context from the time of the Fulani Jihadists led by Dan Fodio. Boko Haram's stance on religious pluralism has been a continuation of Dan Fodio's beliefs. Even if Dan Fodio's Fulani Jihad ideology has not been identified as a Salafi Jihad ideology, its precepts are congruent. Like the Maitatsine, Boko Haram followed the path of Dan Fodio's Fulani Jihadism and guided by Al Qaeda's Salafi Jihad ideology. The political success of the Sokoto Caliphate, the 1979 Iranian revolution and Osama Bin Laden's aspirations to unite the Muslim world in solidarity against religious pluralism and modernity; and forcibly sweep Islamists to power in all Muslim countries around the world are significant inspirations for Boko Haram.

Although the Fulani Jihad, the Maitasine and Boko Haram emerged at different times; their ideologies are not dissimilar. Dan Fodio fought to revive pure Islam. He suppressed theological innovation and promoted strict adherence to the orthodox interpretation of the holy text on the basis of the *Maliki fiqh* jurisprudence. The Maitatsine and Boko Haram are more like, in Kepel's (2004, 5) words, born again medieval fanatics that reject religious pluralism, oppose the outgrowth of modernity in the view that it is challenging traditional religious and social structures, thus, their advocacy for strict adherence to the traditional interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Like Dan Fodio and the Maitasine, Boko Haram regards Jihadism as a holy war against "infidels" and calls for the enthronement of a Caliphate. It is reasonable to assume that Boko Haram seeks to revive Dan Fodio's interpretation of Islamic law. The group opposes western civilisation, promotes intolerance of a secular Nigeria, aspires to re-establish a Caliphate, and uses violence to achieve these goals. Given the historical religious violence in Nigeria, the Salafi Jihad Ideology is more like old wine in a new bottle.

Differences among these Jihadists are minimal. The Fulani Jihadists were not a terrorist group but a religious movement that engaged in an all-out bloody war to create change. Whereas, the Maitatsine and Boko Haram are Salafi Jihad terrorist groups that strategically use terror tactics to create fear, inflict pain and often death to advance their agenda. As a terrorist group, Boko Haram appears to have no foreseeable end to its violence until the entire Nigerian state is governed according to demands of medieval Islamic law or the state itself engages in swift coordinated and balanced counterterrorism measures against the group. Boko Haram also denounce global civilisation, and it is non-inclusive compared to the inclusive Fulani Jihadists in their early years. The group often recruits members under duress, unlike the Fulani Jihadists that attracted people based on collective grievances.

Dan Fodio did not only unleash the great Jihad; he embarked on a mass enslavement of Hausa people and established the largest slave society of his time, the reason that led to the British conquest. Boko Haram leader's threat to sell abducted girls into his slavery market is indicative of the group imitation of slavery of women that existed in Sokoto Caliphate. It is reasonable to suggest that Dan Fodio left a model of violent dissent and aggression that we see in Boko Haram today. However, one of the positive things that came out of the Sokoto Caliphate through the great *Jihad* was the sense of unity, peace and political stability, especially for Muslims.

Substantial similarities among these Jihadists indicate the impact of the Fulani Jihad legacy felt today in the north-south chasm, and the cross-border links that make Boko Haram's religio-political ambitions thrive; and consolidate state-like military capabilities to undermine governments' efforts to promote social-political developments.

Differences between the Fulani Jihad and Boko Haram indicate that Boko Haram has innovatively rebranded the Fulani Jihad legacy to suit contemporary social and political environment, as its allegiance to Al Qaeda and recently ISIL manifest.

The tactical indirect rule policy appears to have given the British leverage to exert control and influence over social and political matters in Sokoto Caliphate and later dismantled fundamentals of peace and stability in the region. Although the British left power to Muslims at independence, they left a divided Nigeria where religion became a metaphor for competition for political power, control and influence. Competition along ethnic and religious lines may have enabled the infiltration of external religious ideologies that perpetuate violent religious extremism. While Muslims in the north maintain a majority rule principle and contend that Nigeria needs to be governed by the precepts of Sharia law, Christians in the south uphold the biblical principle that religion needs to be kept separate from politics. Such differences exacerbate violence perpetrated by religious extremism.

As discussed, it is clear that the Salafi Jihad ideology is the primary motivating factor to the rise Boko Haram; and socio-political conditions are a vehicle on which the Salafi Jihad ideology discourse is driven. From this perspective, it is clear that the primary motivating factor for the mobilisation of the Fulani Jihad was the propagation and maintenance of pure Islam. Precisely, religion was a motivating factor; it resonated with the Fulani people and appealed to some Hausa people on the grounds of shared grievance. In all Jihadist events, socio-political conditions provide a political opportunity to force change. In the post-independent Nigeria, historical social-political discontent led to a zero-sum struggle for power and resources triggering national-wide armed violence that led to the Biafra War from 1967 to 1970. Consequently, these conditions persisted and resulted in the emergence of the Maitatsine revolt in 1980. While the Nigerian government succeeded in suppressing the group by assassinating the leader Mohammad Marwa and destroying the group's strategic depth, the ideology remained and grew even stronger in the rise of Boko Haram. Government's failure to address historical grievance resulted in the emergence of another religious extremists group - Boko Haram. Like Marwa, Yusuf exploited socio-political conditions to delegitimise governments' authority to advance his agenda.

The end of Cold War accelerated globalisation and revolutionised technology. These developments have reshaped social and political constructs globally, thus, the emergence of devastating new forms of terrorism exhibited by Boko Haram and other terrorist groups around the world. Boko Haram's feminisation of terrorism is an emerging trend that has presented new challenges to countering the group. Boko Haram takes advantage of using vulnerable women and girls to avoid detection, and therefore increasing a magnitude of the attacks.

Although women have historically been involved in the insurgency and political violence, female suicide bombers Boko Haram deploys, especially young girls, appear to be unaware of the consequential effect of what they are about to do. Even if they did, they would have minimal means of escaping for fear of putting their loved ones in harm's way. Boko Haram's new trend of feminising terrorist activities can, therefore, be seen as not only a way of employing an element of surprise but of penetrating security to increase the carnage.

Geopolitical implications are evident in Boko Haram's growing links with the like-minded terrorist group in East Africa, the Islamic Maghreb, Arabian Peninsula and the recent allegiance to ISIL. These links could potentially provide new avenues for Boko Haram to intensify terrorist activities into large-scale attacks that could further threaten peace and security in the Sub-Saharan Africa. Boko Haram attack on the UN Headquarters in Abuja was a significant strategic shift in its goals of undermining the Nigerian government's capability to safeguard national interests, to threatening interests of the international community.

An array of discussions above has shown that historical experiences, narratives and significant events are essential to understanding the rise of Boko Haram. For Boko Haram, like other Salafi Jihadists in the contemporary world, a religious ideology provides motivation, justification, structure and a world view. Boko Haram appears to take seriously the notion that Islam is in the state of decline. Therefore, its members feel obligated to fight for the revival of fundamental orthodox beliefs, thus, its demands for a return to the medieval interpretation of Islamic law. Through the lens of Boko Haram, a successful return to the orthodox interpretation of Islamic law guarantees political power, control and influence. From this perspective, Salafi Jihad ideology does matter to account for the rise of Boko Haram.

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## **Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations**

### **Al Qaeda**

International terrorist organisation formed in the 1980s by Osama Bin Laden

### **Al Shabaab**

Muslim youth terrorist group (Somalia)

### ***Amir al-munin***

Commander of the believers against unbelievers

### **Anti-Colonialism**

Movement that opposed colonial rule and promoted autonomy

### **AQAP**

Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula

### **AQIM**

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb

### **AU**

African Union

### ***Boko***

Hausa word meaning book

### **Diasporas**

Groups of scattered minorities around the world

### **ECOWAS**

The Economic Community of West African States

### ***Emirs***

An Islamic concept for chiefs that give allegiance to the Supreme Leader or Caliph

### ***fiqhs***

Religious law within Sunni Islam

**GDP**

Gross Domestic Product

**Globalisation**

The process by which societies have become interconnected through technology and communication

***Haram***

The Arabic term for “forbidden by Islam.”

***Hijaz***

Present day Saudi Arabia

***imams***

Preachers

***infidels***

Unbelievers of Islam

**ISIL**

Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

***Jamaa***

Followers

***Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-jihad***

People committed to the propagation of the prophet's teaching and jihad

***Jama'Atu Ansarul Musmina fi Biladis Sudan***

A vanguard for the protection of Muslims in Africa south of the Sahara

***Jihad***

Islamic concept that generally refers to a struggle or conflict (Militant Islamist groups interpret jihad as war against unbelievers of Islam; majority Muslim interpret jihad as a personal or spiritual struggle)

**Jihadism**

Holy war against unbelievers of Islam

**Hadith**

Record of traditions or sayings of the Prophet Muhammad

***mai***

King

***Maliki***

Sunni school of Islamic law

***mallams***

Scholars of theology

**MNJFT**

Multinational Joint Task Force

**Mujahideen**

Fighter of God

**OIC**

Organisation of Islamic Conference

***Qur'an***

Islamic sacred book believed to be the word of God as dictated to Muhammad by the archangel Gabriel

***Salaf***

Ancient one

***Salafism***

A school of Sunni Islam that rejects theological innovation

***sufi***

An Islamic Jurisprudence

***Sufism***

Intensification of Islamic faith and practice or the tendency among Muslims to strive for personal engagement with the Divine Reality

***Sultan***

Ruler

***Sunna***

A way of life prescribed as normative for Muslims

**TGPT**

Theory-guided process-tracing

***Ulama-as-su***

Preachers of evil

**UN**

United Nations

**UNHCR**

United Nations High Commission for Refugees

**USA**

The United States of America

**WWII**

World War II

**Acknowledgements and Dedication**

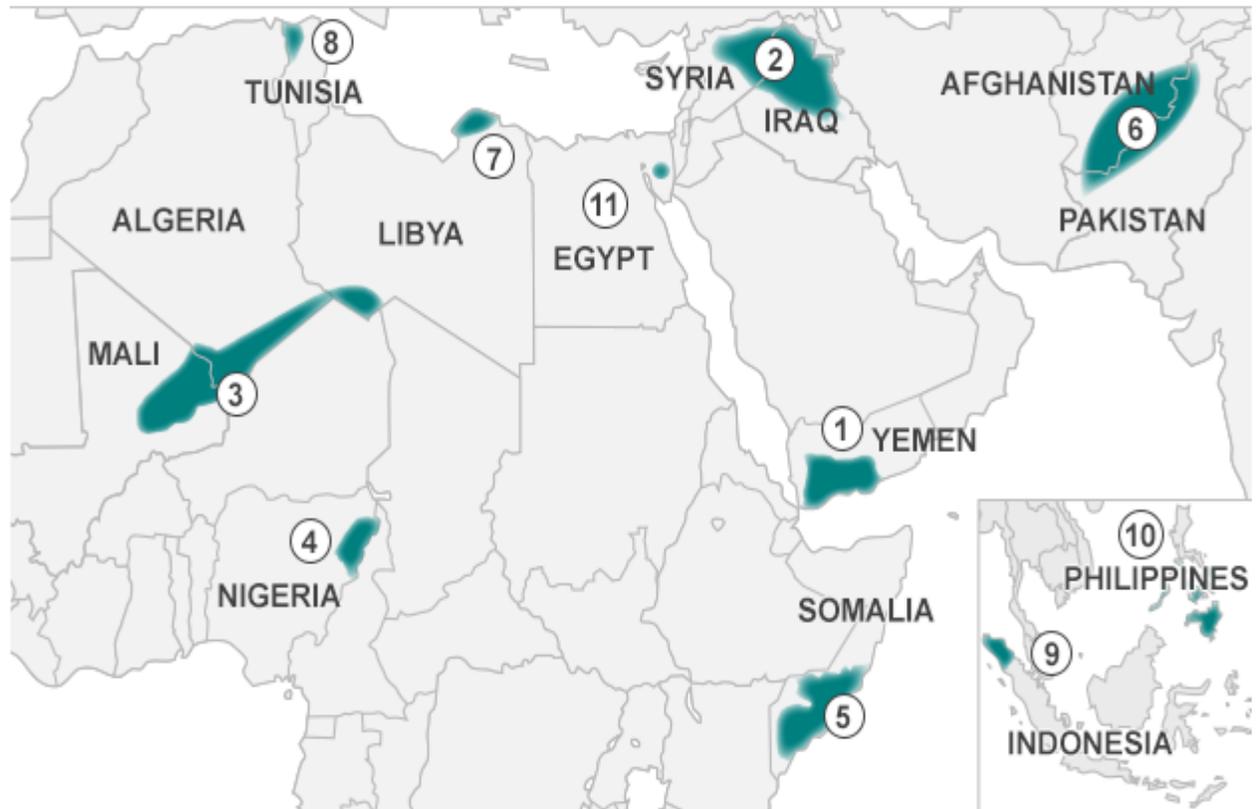
When I started putting ideas together to determine causes of the rise of Boko Haram, my mind was roaming in all direction in an effort to reach a specific focus of the research. This part was made easier by the support of Professor William Hutchinson. Although Professor Hutchinson was unable to supervise my research due to other commitments, he offered his support in structuring the focus of the research. I extend my deepest gratitude to Professor Hutchinson for taking time off his busy schedule to provide me with expansive advice, wisdom and giving me the confidence to soldier on.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Salafi Jihad Groups

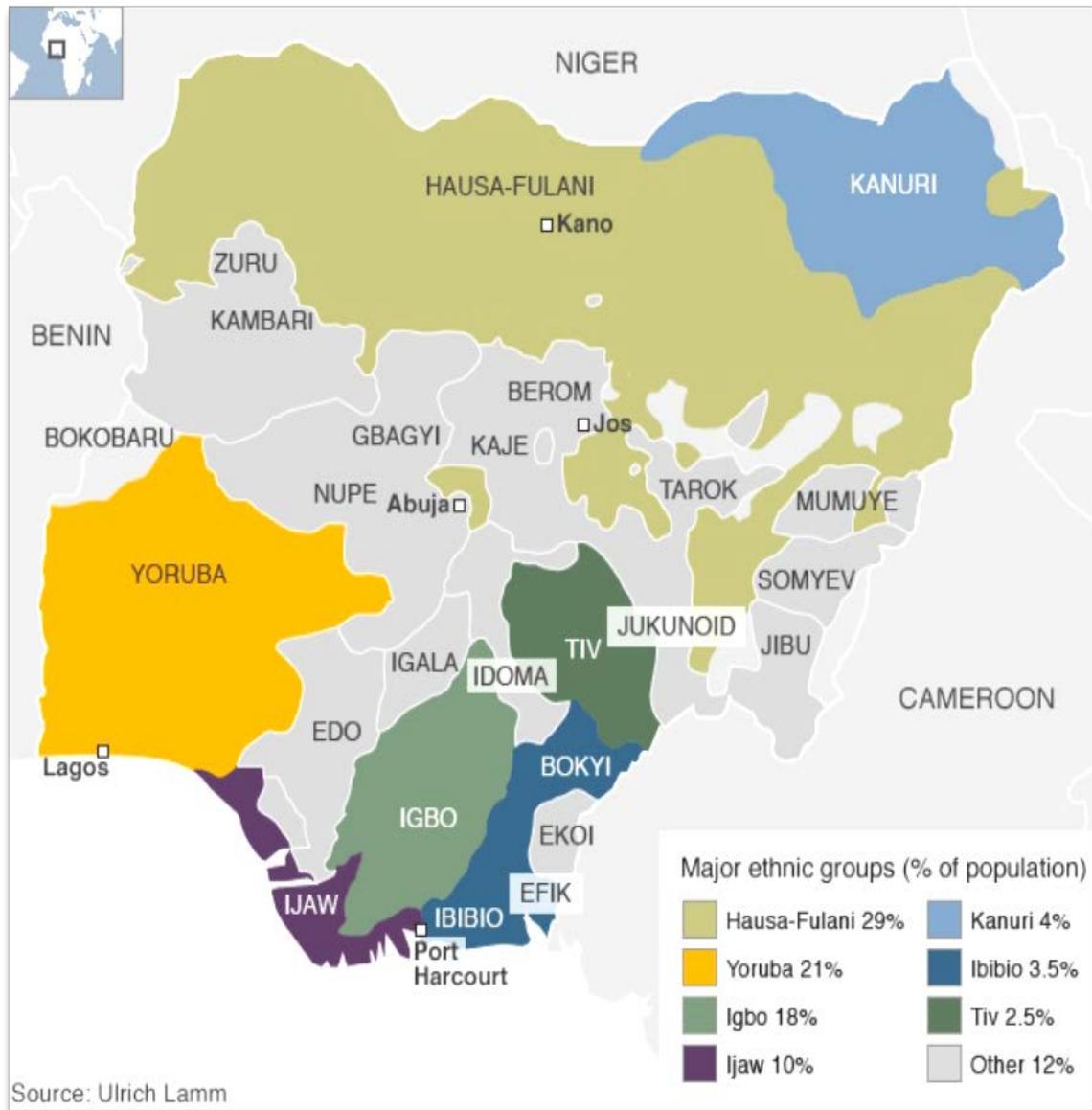
#### Where are the main jihadist groups based?



- |   |                              |                         |
|---|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)    | 4 Boko Haram                 | 9 Jemaah Islamiah       |
| 2 Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) | 5 Al-Shabab                  | 10 Abu Sayyaf           |
| 3 Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)      | 6 Taliban                    | 11 Ansar Bayt Al-Maqdis |
|   | 7 Ansar al-Sharia in Libya   |                         |
|   | 8 Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia |                         |

Source: Institute for the Study of War, Global Security, Stratfor Global Intelligence, ICCT, BBC experts

Appendix 2: Composition of Ethnic Groups in Nigeria



Appendix 3: Boko Haram Attacks 2010 - 2014, State Emergency since 2013

**Boko Haram fatal attacks**

Civilians reported killed in Boko Haram attacks Sep 2010 - 17 May 2014

