

FAILURE OF HUMAN INTELLIGENCE, BOKO HARAM AND TERRORISM IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

There is a stark contrast between the way suicide bombings and other terrorist activities take place and the way all these happen with precision without detection by Nigeria's security and intelligence agencies. The Boko Haram menace highlights several issues underlying the drivers of sustainable development and human insecurity in Nigeria. The infiltration of its members in government and security agencies validates the grossly-compromised public institutions argument in Nigeria. Based on open source information, extensive library search and drawing from facts gathered from existing literature, this paper documents and analyses the failure of human intelligence, explores other enabling contextual factors that gave birth to Boko Haram. It argues that Boko Haram has become a vehicle for the disintegration of Nigeria and a threat to good governance and sustainable development. With a view to guiding appropriate interventions, the interrogations that will guide the analysis include: Is Boko Haram motivated by economic injustice?

Keywords: Allahu Akbar, Almajiri, Al-Shabab, Ansar Dine, Boko Haram, social cleavage Theory, Relative deprivation Theory, Islamist movement, zakat,

INTRODUCTION

Due to the fact that terrorism as a phenomenon is very diverse, constantly changing and extremely complex, it lacks a generally accepted definition (Transnational Terrorism, 2007:3). The above highlights the difficulty of finding a “generally acceptable” definition of terrorism. Golder and Williams (2004:270) stated that despite decades of effort, with even greater focus after September 11, attempts to develop a generally accepted legal definition of terrorism have failed. This author has argued elsewhere that the failure is made possible because of the individual variability both in kinds of conflicts and in their methods of operation. Conflicts occur under very many different circumstances and take a bewildering variety of forms (Amaraegebu, 2011:210-11). Therefore, agreement regarding the precise definition of terrorism is a hypothetical argument that can be debated endlessly without ever reaching a consensus.

There are different reasons why we study a phenomenon. One of the reasons is to be able to discover variations within it, the features that distinguish one phenomenon and the linkages between the phenomenon under study with other phenomena in similar but unique circumstances. As we seek to deepen our knowledge of one phenomenon, we begin to identify sufficient distinctions of the phenomenon under study. It is possible that new things may be discovered which constitute new areas of study and attempt to close the gap in literature. Therefore, this paper shall proceed with caution and build its arguments around the concepts of categorical imperative. It will analyse, elaborate and contextualise Boko Haram phenomenon from a different slant and how it’s activities impede sustainable development in Nigeria.

To be clear, the object in the present exercise is not to attempt resolving the impenetrable complexity of terrorism. However, for the sake of analytical completeness, in the present discussion, terrorism will be employed to portray those violent acts intended to cause panic, commit mass murder and are perpetrated for a religious or ideological reasons; and deliberately targeted at civilians. Boko Haram has used the above means to murder worshippers in churches, disrupt economic development, cause panic and even turn against Muslims who do not share their extremist views. Whenever there is a deviation and the term is used in a general sense, this will be clearly evident from the context and the source will be acknowledged appropriately.

The Boko Haram menace has intrigued analysts. From its Salafist Jihadist ideology, their belief that the concept of a spherical Earth contravenes Islamic teaching and should be rejected, along with Darwinian evolution (Boyle,2009), to the wide variety of interpretations to its name, all bear witness to the inexhaustible variableness of the group’s character. However, as perplexing as the group’s inspiration might appear, its mission seem quite obvious: To overthrow the Nigerian State, impose an extreme interpretation of Shari’a law that makes it "haram", or forbidden for Muslims to take part in any political or social activity associated with Western society and abolish "Western-style education" (BBC, 2011a).

While Nigeria’s ethno religious configuration conspire with other factors to give militant jihadist sects the opportunity for self-expression, Boko Haram’s menace was also helped by either the incompetence or corrupt nature of Nigeria’s security services or both. The former option is more likely, but the latter is easier to prove, especially given that sustainable development and the protection of lives and property remain every government’s foremost responsibility, and Nigeria had failed in all of these.

Dealing with Boko Haram will require a comprehensive strategy aimed to address economic development and deal with the underlying problem of corruption. If these deeper issues are not addressed, government's "war on terror" will amount to an exercise in futility, even to the problem of fundamentalism, let alone the broader problem of terrorism. Poverty, underdevelopment and years of misrule has left the disillusioned youths, a labour pool at the disposal of militant Islamist groups with resources and extremist, criminal intents. Boko Haram's activities has caused lack of investment in the North because investors are scared and even most existing industries have relocated from the North due to insecurity.

The North is endowed with a lot of tourist attractions and these have been a source of revenue in the past, but with the spate of insecurity, investors find alternative locations. For example, the popular Yankari Games Reserve, which enjoyed high patronage by foreigners, has remained a shadow of itself. Therefore, the government owe it as duty to Nigerians to deal with Boko Haram's threat so that the disrupted economic fortune the region has suffered due to the insurgency will be improved for the sustainable development of the country.

Between 1999 and 2012, the security situation in Nigeria has worryingly deteriorated in profound ways. Out of the 36 states of the federation, sovereign control of about 10 is somehow undermined by terrorist upsurge. Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Kaduna, Kano, Kogi, Niger, Plateau, Yobe, Taraba states and Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) has been battling with the sect's terror activities. If at least one neighbouring state that has been made insecure as a result of probable overspill is added, there are about 22 states that are adversely affected by Boko Haram's terror machine. It means that government's unrestrained control of the Nigerian territorial space is incomplete, yet there is no civil war. Most Nigerians have got to that point where they think Nigeria's security and security agencies are corrupt, incompetent or deficient in intelligence gathering. The suggestions regarding the later betray a very refined imagination: a real problem that is bedeviling governments' efforts towards sustainable development.

Perhaps Ogedebe and Jacob (2012: 126) were right when they stated that the Nigerian security forces in their present state do not appear to be in a position to defeat the terrorists and kidnappers. Their ubiquitous roadblocks, token arrests, reactive soldiers neither frighten Boko Haram nor other contestants (kidnappers and armed robbers) for superior fire power. The federal government has tried to remain undamaged by the growing Boko Haram menace, but it has several significant weaknesses to overcome: seize the momentum and put the group's elusive leadership under intense pressure, build capacity of the rural villages where the sect find support, provide economic development, partner with communities and encourage neighbourhood watch groups. The bottom line is that government's strategy has failed, and the indiscriminate bombing that has become almost a daily occurrence in parts of Nigeria are ample illustrations of this claim. President Jonathan has been criticised for not been decisive enough on terror and national security. But government has tried to neuter criticism with the counter-charge that it inherited the problem. Granted, Boko Haram predated Jonathan's presidency except that under his watch, a sect that started as an anonymous Islamic group metamorphosed into an evil force ready to destabilise Nigeria.

Boko Haram's activities is significant both in the ways it has set a precedent, and how it has strengthened attempts by previous militant conservative Islamists at imposing a variant of Shari'a philosophy on Nigeria, and how it has negatively affected sustainable development in the North. The Maitatsine uprisings in Kano (1980), Kaduna (1982), Bulumkutu,

Yola (1984) and Bauchi (1985) were previous attempts by Islamic fundamentalists to impose sharia doctrine in Nigeria. These marked the beginning of vicious religious conflicts in Nigeria (Ibrahim 1997: 511-12, Isichei 1987: 194-208). Previous studies, for example, Enwerem (1999: 124), Ibrahim (1997: 512-16) and Imo (1995: 21-3) have documented other crises that followed the Maitatsine uprising. They include the Kano metropolitan riot (October, 1982), the Ilorin riot (March, 1986), the nationwide crisis over Nigeria's membership of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) (January/February, 1986), the Kafanchan/Kaduna/Zaria/ Funtua religious crisis (March, 1987), the Kaduna Polytechnic riot (March, 1988), the bitter (October/November, 1988) Sharia nationwide debate at the Constituent Assembly, the Bauchi/Katsina riots (March/April 1991), the Kano riot (October, 1991), the Zangon-Kataf riot (May, 1992) the Kano civil disturbance (December, 1991) and the Jos crisis (April 1994).

BACKGROUND, IDEOLOGY AND ASSESSMENT

The growing Islamist movement based on a literal interpretation of and strict adherence to Shari'a doctrine around the world and some internal factors act together to make a highly volatile Nigerian society prone to sectarian violence. (Roggio, 2012) struck a plausible note when he designated Boko Haram most fittingly as Qaeda-linked Islamist terror group. Boko Haram is the popular Hausa name for the jihadist terrorist organization whose name has been variously interpreted to mean People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad. With official name as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad., the sect strongly seeks to abolish the secular system of government and establish Islamic rule in Nigeria. Researchers have recalled that the rejection of western values, primarily western education is a sentiment that has a historic resonance in northern Nigeria since the colonial era, when the Sokoto caliphate - one of the most powerful empires in sub-Saharan Africa that included parts of what is now northern Nigeria, Niger and southern Cameroon - fell to European colonisation in the 19th century (Sitbon and Jacinto, 2012).

There is no accurate record regarding when the group was originally formed. However, it is possible that the sect may have been in existence before 2009 but operated in different names. It has been associated with such names as Ahlusunna wal' Jamma Hijra; the Nigerian Taliban; and the Yusufiyya (Omipidan 2009: 48; Fasure 2009: 2). Some accounts has it that late Mohammad Yusuf, the sect's leader was reportedly a member of Ibrahim El-Zakzakky's led Shiites. Yusuf joined Jama'atul Tajdidi Islam (JTI) and eventually became its leader in Borno State after Abubakar Mujahid led Kano-based JTI broke away from the Shiites in the 1990s (Sulaiman 2009: 19-23). But Boko Haram proper was created by Mohammad Yusuf, the radical Islamist cleric in 2002 in Maiduguri, Borno state. Quoting Paul Lubeck, a University of California professor studying Muslim societies in Africa, Johnson (2011) wrote: Yusuf was a trained salafist and was strongly influenced by Ibn Taymiyyah, a fourteenth century legal scholar who preached Islamic fundamentalism and is considered a "major theorist" for radical groups in the Middle East.

Sharia jurisprudence was introduced in 12 northern states of Nigeria in 1999 (See map below) yet, there was no substantial evidence that Sharia law had helped to reduce poverty and other moral vices in those northern states. Yusuf and his followers rejected the "adulterated" sharia doctrines in those northern states and argued that Nigeria's leadership class as a whole was corrupt. All they crave was to transform Nigeria into their type of a shari'a-compliant state. Even the northern traditional Muslim hierarchy were considered irredeemably corrupted by "Western-style" desires.



Source (BBC, 2002)

In 2009, the group suffered a setback due to a major government crackdown and the death of its leader, Yusuf. But it re-established itself with new leadership, resources, and strategies and renewed its terrorist campaign.

The group first came into international consciousness following sectarian violence in Nigeria in July 2009. The crises started from 25 July to 30 July 2009 and spread across four Northern states of Bauchi, Kano, Yobe and Borno. It was Borno that saw the most gruesome violence perhaps because the sect's leader was based there at the time. The riot was sparked due to the sacking of the sect's hideaway at the Dutsen Tanshi area of Bauchi State on 26 July 2009 by government's a joint security team. About two hours later, reprisal attacks on police formations ensued in Bauchi, Kano, Yobe and Borno states (Owuamanam, Falola and Shobiye 2009: 2-3; Bakare, Adedeji and Shobiye 2009: 5). The government forces managed to quell the riot after the sect's leader, Mohammed Yusuf was captured and killed (allegedly in police custody) following a fierce battle with his followers (BBC, 2011b). The fierce confrontation between government security operatives and the sect members left an estimated 700 people (on both sides, including civilians) dead. Churches, schools, police stations, prisons, and public buildings were destroyed (Nwankwo and Falola 2009: 2; Oyegbile and Lawal 2009: 67-71).

IS BOKO HARAM'S TERROR ACTIVITIES LINKED TO ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES IN THE NORTH?

Indeed, the deteriorating socio-economic situation in Nigeria may have made the "Almajiris" (street children) and dispossessed youths angry, restless and desperate, and therefore available for Boko Haram recruitment. Could Boko Haram be a regime of "Almajiris despair"? Before answering the question, it will be helpful to offer a little insight into the "Almajiri system" in Northern Nigeria. In northern Nigeria, throngs of Muslim children who graduated from Islamiyya schools roam the streets begging for alms. Their instructors are usually peripatetic teachers or Mallams who do not earn salaries or wages. For sustenance, these itinerant Mallams send out their students to the streets or private homes to beg for alms. During their tutelage, the only form of livelihood for them and their Mallams is the proceeds of their begging. Kukah (2009), a respected Nigerian Catholic cleric, noted that these hordes of young children are unleashed on the streets of almost all the Northern cities and towns with no means of self-support. Their population, he said, runs into millions across all the major cities and towns in the Northern states. They, he concluded, are the cannon fodder that feed sects like Boko Haram and other similar millenarian movements that sprout occasionally in the North.

Now, to answer the question; Boko Haram has consistently said it seeks to abolish democracy, annul Nigeria's constitution and impose sharia rule on the nation. Therefore, sense of frustration; desperation and despair do not justify Boko Haram's radical Islam and insurgency that has claimed many innocent lives. Given that "*poor government,*

ineffective service delivery, and dismal living conditions” in Nigeria is public knowledge, one wonders if Boko Haram is not trying to exploit the weaknesses of Nigeria’s uninspiring political leadership to advance its extremist schemes. On the surface, Boko Haram is viewed by many as part of the unintended consequences of an unjust society that has squandered its oil wealth through decades of corrupt regime and a product of a political leadership that has failed to tackle the fundamental problems of a nation. But at the bottom, it reveals an ultra-secretive, yet hyperactive jihadi group determined to overthrow the government in Nigeria and institute Shari’a law.

In his book, *Why Men Rebel*, Gurr provided a theoretical basis for researchers to make a connection between economic inequities with the tendency for individuals to resort to political violence. He designated the discrepancy between the ‘ought’ and the ‘is’ of collective value satisfaction that disposes men to violence as “*relative deprivation*” (1970:3-4). The core of his hypothesis is that when people’s socio economic expectations exceed the actual distribution of political and economic goods and services, political violence is inevitable. Deriving from Gurr’s hypothesis, Lichbach (1989:432-3) said: Economic inequity is concomitant with social cleavages between classes, religions, regions...between educational and occupational strata; and between linguistic, ethnic and communal groups. Zielinski (2001:10) described “*social cleavage*” as a line that separates two groups of people who disagree on some issues. However, there are other scholars who discredit socio economic factors. For example, Kerbo (1978:1) points us to the direction of foreign influence as having direct impact on internal political violence. He categorized into two broad forms (1) direct and intentional involvement through various types of support for one side or another after a conflict has developed; and (2) the indirect and unintentional influence on the “preconditions” for political violence through such things as “cultural contact,” disruption associated with international war, or “diffusion effects”. Some theories, he concluded, have ignored the influence that “*powerful nations*” can exert on direct and intentional influence on the preconditions for political violence in developing countries.

Laqueur (1987, 2001), Bjorgo (2005) and Wilkinson (1986, 2000) are other scholars who have attempted distinguishing various causes of terrorism. But Post (1990:25) provided a framework for analysis regarding how individual conditions and characteristics can increase the probability that a radical group can metamorphose into full blown terrorist group: ...political terrorists are driven to commit acts of violence as a consequence of psychological forces, and that their special psycho- logic is constructed to rationalize acts they are psychologically compelled to commit. Taking Post’s analysis into account, there is little doubt that internal (social cleavages) and external (cooperation with foreign terror groups) variables of radicalisation are possible explanations for Boko Haram’s emergence. While Gurr’s “*relative deprivation*” theory makes sense, it provides a framework to explain a society’s genuine resentment against disproportionate distribution of public goods and services. The Arab Spring that swept political leaderships in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen in 2011 provides a ready example.

Boko Haram’s communiqués expose it is an unsympathetic, callous sect that care more about the propagation of jihad than its obligations to collective society. Clearly, its announcements give it up as an Islamist sect that has adopted an increasingly Salafist-Jihadist ideology and has expanded its objectives to include overthrowing the Nigerian government. Boko Haram claimed responsibility for two explosions which killed three people in Maiduguri, Borno state, on 24 April 2011. In a peacock defiance, the *confessedly jihadist sect* was quite upfront about its agenda for Nigeria and replied its critics in these infelicitous words:

We want to reiterate that we are warriors who are carrying out Jihad [Holy War] in Nigeria, and our cause is based on the traditions of the Holy Prophet. We would never believe in any system of government apart from the one agreed by Islam, because we believe that it is the only way that can liberate the Muslims. We would not allow the Nigerian constitution to replace the provisions of the Holy Quran; we would not allow adulterated conventional education to replace Islamic teachings (Duodu, 2012).

Clearly, the group's message was many things, but first, it was far from showing resentment against "relative deprivation" and secondly, did not show any commitment to distancing itself from transnational terrorism groups. Apparently, it did not want to leave matters at the level of buzz word regarding how it aimed to advance the ostensible liberation of Muslims.

It may be a truism that Nigeria is no stranger to violent sectarian uprisings. However, the particular distinction of Boko Haram does not lie simply in the fact that the group has humbled Nigeria's security and intelligence community. Its criminal genius lie in two areas: an open contempt for Nigeria and its constitution and, it covertly exposes vulnerable youths to extremist influences, recruits and deploys them as an essential part of the group's terror machine. In a video message the sect posted on 12th April, 2012 entitled "Message to Goodluck Jonathan," it was unapologetic in its resolve to overwhelm Jonathan's Nigeria:

You, Jonathan, cannot stop us; instead we will devour you in three months... We are proud soldiers of Allah; we will never give up as we fight the infidels. We will emerge as winners ... we will finish you and end your government (YouTube, 2012).

There are a number of arguments on the ongoing events in Northern Nigeria, and a few have missed some otherwise sapient interventions. Some analysts explain Boko Haram's insurgency along the lines of social inequities in the North. To facilitate the point, an excerpt from Johnnie Carson's (U.S. Assistant Secretary) narrative will be cited: Boko Haram capitalises on popular frustrations with the nation's leaders, poor government, ineffective service delivery, and dismal living conditions for many northerners (Akande and Obinor, 2012). In Carson's narrative, an interesting perspective that explain the Boko Haram insurgency is detected- one that fits well with the materialist worldview, and one that defies reality. There are two significant elements here. One, Carson set the grounds to plead economic inequities as the reasons why Boko Haram throw bombs into churches and kill "others" who are considered sell-outs because they do not subscribe to the extreme form of Islam that the group propagates. Two, he sought to re-set the terms of the debate by declaring that, with effective service delivery in parts of the North, Boko Haram will stop the mass murder, suspend the sect's aim of establishing Shari'a law in the country and respect the Nigerian constitution.

An immediate critique can be raised against Carson's hypothesis. The criticism relates to how Carson tried to illustrate an understanding of the sect's terror activities as a manifestation of socioeconomic frustration and despair in the North. This is a geopolitical explanation and it makes sense. But it makes sense only at a certain level of perception, a level of perception that is admittedly popular within the ranks of some conservative political tendencies of the Northern power bloc in Nigerian politics. The reality, about "dismal living conditions for many northerners" as used by Carson would be so embraced by most politically conscious Northern Nigerians, politicians, analysts, even the intelligentsia. The

employment of the category, “*many Northerners*” would make some analytic sense in addition to being popularly understood if Carson had embedded the fact that he meant the entire North. But even his hypothesis would be implicitly contradicted by the fact that the same Northern region has ruled Nigeria for about 38 years- (North -East – 5 years, North- West -15 years and North- Central -18 years) , while Southern region (South- West -11 years, South- South – two years and South -East – six months) ruled for 13 years (Vanguard, 2012). All three zones of the North have benefited from federal largesse more than other zones through several federal revenue allocation formula- local councils, states and electoral constituencies.

It is these details that reinforce the argument that materialistic explanations do not fit in all related circumstances. Krueger and Maleckova (2003:142) had hypothesized that terrorism resembles a violent form of political engagement. Therefore, a deep evaluation of role of political Islam and the culpability of the ruling class as a factor in the escalation of the insurgency will be helpful in this enquiry. Agreed that low levels of economic and social development can increase the appeal of political violence and instability, but it is yet to be substantiated that poverty can transform poor people into terrorists and mass murderers. A cursory glance at established terror organisations and terrorists do not seem to immediately validate the “*economic inequity*” hypothesis.

To those who insist on a causal relationship between poverty and the Al Qaeda-inspired terrorist activities in the North, this paper argues that most well organised international terror activities were masterminded by people from very privileged, wealthy backgrounds who chose to embrace violence means to bring about the social orders they desired. The 19 hijackers of 9/11 were middle-class Saudi Arabians who were definitely not protesting *dismal living conditions*. Late Osama bin Laden was from one of the richest families in Saudi Arabia. Ayman al-Zawahiri, Osama’s successor, was born into an upper-class Egyptian family of scholars and doctors, yet he chose to devote his life to Islamic jihad. Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, the young Nigerian Islamist who was jailed for life in US, did not take on the mission to blow up an American jetliner over Detroit on Christmas day of 2009 because of the “*grim*” economic situation in Nigeria. He is the son of one of Nigeria's most prominent businessmen. He lived a life of privilege, had access to world-class education and lived in comfort during his studies (BBC, 2011c). Krueger and Maleckova (2003:122-3) provided a fitting response to the materialistic worldview:

Suicide bombers [and terrorists] are clearly not motivated by the prospect of their own individual economic gain... their primary motivation results from their passionate support for their movement. Eradication of poverty and universal secondary education are unlikely to change these feelings. Indeed, those who are well-off and well-educated, may even perceive such feelings more acutely.

Boko Haram shares striking resemblance with other “*Allahu Akbar*” screaming murderous Islamists around the world who commit mass murder not because they are poor. Boko Haram, according to local interpretation, means “*western education is forbidden*” and not “*we kill because we are poor*”. Rich Saudi Osama had supported the Islamist regime of Sudan in the past and there are many wealthy donors that provide funding for jihadi groups like Boko Haram as part of their zakat. As was aptly captured elsewhere, the sect’s political philosophy and ideology readily contradicts the logical and theoretical connection between poverty as antecedent causes and terrorism as effect:

The political goal of Boko Haram is to create an Islamic nation in the 12 northern states of Nigeria, eventually spreading to the rest of the country. From its inception, Boko Haram viewed Nigeria as a state run by non-believers and made the government its main target—even when the country had a Muslim president (Bartolotta :2011).

The inferences that can be drawn from the above are: the sect's intent to establish an Islamic state where extremist Islam would be practised; replace Nigeria's secular state formation with "pure" Islamic tradition because a non-Muslim is not permitted to govern Muslims—not because he is not good for the economy, but because he is an infidel; Western values are antithetical to Islamic values, and that core Islamic tenets cannot be allowed to be corrupted by Western values; That corruption and the poverty it brings is a consequence of Western influence, and in order to expunge the Nigerian society of the evils of corruption and moral decadence, sharia law must be entrenched and finally; in order to properly purge the Nigerian society, modern political institutions and infrastructures must be destroyed and all *infidels* converted to Islam. Hence, for their objectives to be realized, all institutions of government including security agencies should be targeted for destruction.

This paper will break ranks with Carson's narrative and charge that the motivational justification for the rampaging Boko Haram assault on Nigeria is not dictated purely by socio economic decision. Carson's narrative is not only collapsible but deficient in sound analytical logic. While he made a pretty average case for discontent being the unintended consequence of "poor government" and "dismal living conditions," Carson's intervention contain not a shred of proof to remotely establish that poverty is synonymous with terrorism. Dispassionate analysis of all relevant facts about the group's origin and ideology, as well as the patterns and targets of its attacks would help to attain a level of understanding that is practical and reliable.

A report produced by the US Congress Sub-Committee on Counter-Terrorism and Intelligence in November 2011 was upfront in its assessment: Perhaps the most troubling aspect of the rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria is the reports of increasing collaboration between the group and al Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and al Shabaab. The rapid evolution of Boko Haram may point to the sharing of weapons and expertise among various terrorist organizations across the African continent...Boko Haram has also attacked beer drinkers, card players, and those engaging in activities that they deem as un-Islamic (U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence,2011:13) The connections which Carson have tried to make between *poor government*, on the one hand, and the insurgency of Boko Haram, on the other, are, at best, tenuous, and, at worst, flawed. Indeed, the argument that Boko Haram sprung from the North because of *poor government*, further strengthens the view that Boko Haram is more of an extremist, than economic phenomenon.

The Friday, August 26 2011 attack on the UN House in Abuja was the group's most tactical and operational upgrade in its capabilities and targets. It marked the group's maturation from a remote northeast -based Nigeria terror group targeting symbols of authority to a terror group with global ambition. The group claimed responsibility saying it considered the US, the UN and the Nigerian government as common enemies and would continue to attack them because they were infringing on the rights of Muslims (Marama, 2011). Boko Haram has a regional presence with cells in different parts of Northern Nigeria and links to al Qaeda's North African wing, operating in Niger Republic. Although it

draws followers from Niger Republic, Chad, Sudan and from the 19 states of Northern Nigeria, its exact numerical strength is unknown.

The bulk of its die-hard adherents is *Almajiris* but also has wealthy and influential people including contractors and politicians in its membership. It is from this later group that the group draws its funding (Onuoha, 2012:3). Although many of its internal sources of funding remain unknown, the trial of Senator Aliyu Ndume on charges of financing terrorism at a Federal High Court in Abuja (Soniya,2012) and the support of Buji Foi, a former Borno State commissioner for religious affairs are evidence that the group might be getting support from establishment officials. Other speculated sources of financial support come from prominent religious leaders and other “*brothers inside Nigeria*” (Fisher, 2011). Motivations for support may range from belief in the group’s cause to sponsorship for anticipatory goodwill. The sponsors may be attracted by the sect’s Islamist agenda to launch a revolution that would overthrow the Nigeria state, vacate its constitution and establish Sharia law. While it carries bank robbery to swell its funding, it also gets financial contribution from an Algerian terror group (Ogala, 2012).

Countrywide, vast majority of Nigerians live on the threshold of poverty (under \$2 a day), while about two thirds of the population live in extreme poverty (around \$1.25 a day) (El-rufai, 2011). Therefore, poverty and all other components of misgovernance as highlighted by Carson are not restricted to the North, the catchment area of the Boko Haram insurgency. Concerns over poverty are entirely legitimate, but it is an error of analytical judgment and too narrow to look at the Boko Haram conundrum purely through the prism of *grim* poverty in the North .It is a misnomer to tar the sect with the lofty description of “*poverty alleviation campaigner*”. That is because those who plead economic inequities are waking up late to the realization that Jihadist ideological “*extremists*” and “*extremism*” that clearly aims to Islamise Nigeria proves more of an explanation than poverty. That is the fitting way to enter into any characterization of the activities of Boko Haram, an Islamist movement with worldwide jihadist connection.

The group shares a perception that Western culture has corrupted Islamic values and traditions. An extremist group determined to expel Christians and even Muslims who do not subscribe to its narrow, radical interpretation of Islam cannot be said to be motivated by economic considerations. The sect exploits corruption, injustice and poverty to propagate its Salafist-jihadist ideology. It has been argued that the link between poverty and terror is erroneous:

Little reason for optimism that a reduction in poverty or an increase in educational attainment would meaningfully reduce terrorism. Any connection between poverty, education and terrorism is indirect, complicated and probably quite weak. Rather than view terrorism as a direct response to low market opportunities or ignorance, it is more accurately viewed as a response to political conditions and long-standing feelings of indignity and frustration that have little to do with economics (Krueger and Maleckova, 2003:119).

This is a narrative in the “*social cleavage*” argument. None of the elements of this narrative would be strange or unfounded to any observer of Boko Haram’s awful activities. “*Poverty alleviation campaigners*” do not employ suicide bombers or use Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) or Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIEDs) to blow up places of worship and cause panic. These are sophisticated weaponry and strategies that cannot be the pastime of

poor people. Claiming responsibility for an attack on a funeral in Jos, that killed dozens of people including a serving senator and state legislator on Sunday July 8 2012, Boko Haram let its guard down and, full of false confidence, remarkably asserted:

We praise God in this war for the Prophet Mohammad. We thank Allah for the successful attack in ... Plateau state on Christians and security men," Christians should accept Islam or they will never have peace.....we do not have any agenda other than wanting to establish an Islamic kingdom like during the time of Prophet Mohammed (Bello,2012).

It is clear that the group does not seek the secession of the North but rather to keep Nigeria intact and convert it into a rigid theocracy. Support from other terrorist groups, particularly AQIM and Somalia's al-Shabab appear to enhance Boko Haram's capabilities as they are likely sharing funds, training and explosive materials that can be quite dangerous (Doyle, 2012). Connections has been made between Ansar Dine, an Al Qaeda-linked Mali Islamist group led by Iyad Ag Ghaly operating in Northern Mali and Nigeria's Boko Haram (BBC, 2012a; Reuters, 2012).The above have given further credence to the argument that, a once a small religious sect has metamorphosed into a flexible self-motivated organisation with the capacity to change tactics and targets.

The US Committee on Homeland Security report (2011:1) pointed out that the cooperation between Boko Haram and foreign terror groups, combined with its increased sophistication of attacks, have led to concerns over the sect's intent and capability to strike Western targets in Nigeria, throughout Africa... Since its re-emergence in 2010 and its association with AQIM, Boko Haram has grown to become a serious security a threat both to Nigeria and beyond.

DISCUSSING HUMAN INTELLIGENCE FAILURE AND BOKO HARAM ACTIVITIES

Intelligence gathering is a key element in fighting the chronic and difficult battles that make up an insurgency (Smith, 2006:1) and to accurately evaluate terror threats and the character of terrorist organisations is an extremely challenging task for states. The task of cataloguing and designating definite significance to real and probable danger to national security in a well-defined manner so that policy makers could access information without difficulties is hard. Hoffman (1996:217) was right to suggest that intelligence, investigative and most importantly academic research issues need to be addressed before counter, much less appropriately designed preventive or deterrent, measures can be considered. Boko Haram falls in the category of what Hoffman (1996:215) described as an "*amorphous and diffuse*" group of highly nomadic characters whose objectives remain elusive without credible human intelligence.

Boko Haram menace has become Nigeria's national security nightmare. It has become increasingly difficult for the government to successfully evaluate the scope of its threat in order to come out with the most fit and proper countermeasures. Nigeria's effort to defeat Boko Haram has not yielded the expected results, despite allocating approximately 25% of its budget for 2012 to the security sector (Herskovits, 2012) in what ought to translate to improved military and intelligence coordination. The group has grown increasingly active and deadly in its attacks against state and civilian targets in Nigeria (Ploch, 2012:10) .According to a report, the group has carried numerous attacks in northern Nigeria, killing hundreds of people since 2009 (BBC, 2012b). Under the circumstances, the strategy does not seem to be working because the strategy has lacked credible human intelligence.The magnitude of havoc is capable of

wrecking on imaginary enemies, said the Punch (2012), have also exposed the seeming helplessness of the Nigerian state and its feeble approach to stopping these terrorists. The cause of the group, it said, has been advanced by the grass-roots support it has been enjoying from the local people. Rather than freely offer information, the people have tended to identify with the group because the tactics is not human intelligence-driven. At some point, President Jonathan inadvertently admitted that Nigeria's security and intelligence community, under his watch lack required intelligence capacity to carry out their basic duty of identifying enemy of State:

Some [of the Boko Haram members] are in the executive arm of government, some in the parliament/legislature arm, while some are even in the judiciary. Some are also in the armed forces, the police and other security agencies. Some continue to dip their hands and eat with you and you won't even know the person who will point a gun at you or plant a bomb behind your house. That is how complex the situation is (Adetayo, 2012).

President Jonathan's lamentation can be deconstructed, interrogated, and made clearer: Jonathan insinuated that some state officials give protection to Boko Haram. He has identified certain establishment figures that compromise national security but failed to arrest and prosecute them for abetting terrorism for reasons of political expediency. His lamentation is a tacit acknowledgment that Nigeria's security and intelligence community lack the operational infrastructure to collate accurate country-wide security intelligence and act on it appropriately. The only hypothesis for which a serious case can be made is that by the sect's infiltration to his government, President Jonathan has saboteurs in his government. What was clearly a continuous source of worry to Jonathan was the fact that the security and intelligence organs failed to measure up the expectations of his "transformational agenda". There was always someone, in every arm of his government who caused him grief. There was no grouping of state officials on which he could look with complacent satisfaction. Amid this frustration occasioned by intensified criticism of his government's handling of the sect's insurgency, Jonathan had on Friday, June 22, 2012, sacked his Defence Minister, Mohammed Bello and National Security Adviser (NSA), Owoye Azazi.

On his media chat aired on Nigeria television network on Sunday June 24 2012, Jonathan explained that both men were fired because he needed new strategies that could defeat Boko Haram's new tactics: They (Boko Haram) change their tactics every day, and their aim is to destabilize the government. So, we brought in people with fresh ideas to tackle the security challenges (Jibueze, 2012). Both men may have given the President an incorrect intelligence assessment of the security situation, which led to his rather impulsive and premature assurance that government would suffocate the insurgency and pound the terrorists to submission by June, 2012:

We have some parts of the country where we have terrorist attacks, but it does not affect the whole country. We are in reasonable control. We have the belief that in the middle of this year; in terms of security of individuals, we will have full control (Mamah, 2012).

Failure of human intelligence is the much that can be inferred from the reason Jonathan gave relieving them of their duties so that government can deflect changing tactics of the Boko Haram insurgency. It is the responsibility of Nigeria's key field operators on security to determine, through their operational capacities the threat levels that Boko

Haram poses, use both covert and overt means to anticipate and nip such threats in the bud. In the course of the research, this author stumbled on articles which appear to be a confirmation of President Jonathan's declaration. In an article entitled "*Nigeria: Targeted for Destruction*," Gordon Duff a "*security specialist with decades of experience in Nigeria*" said:

The security of the presidency and the entire nation has been greatly compromised by the activities of certain individuals very close to the presidency. There are no real interests to control the activities of Boko Haram because of the vested interests of certain foreign governments in collusion with their agents in the present administration and the country. Sources within the Intel community have confirmed that Boko Haram is getting Intel assistance from senior Nigerian intelligence officials (Duff, 2011).

This author is not sure about Duff's genuine "*concern for Nigeria*", but in the context of deep concerns that the Boko Haram insurgency has raised, a new and dangerous threat which is both largely unknown and unprecedented in its nature and dimensions, his perspective raised the level of discourse around the issue. For the purpose of completeness, what other analysts have suggested is quite obvious. For example, Fisher (2012) stated that Boko Haram's urban guerrilla tactics have represented a new challenge which [Nigeria] have struggled to cope with. While it talks tough on the sect's terror campaign, it has failed to increase Intelligence Community Collection on the sect.

On June 7 2012, the United States (U.S.) Secretary of State Hillary Clinton delivered a speech at the opening of a two-day Global Counterterrorism Forum held in Istanbul, Turkey. Given the state of terror threats all over the world, it was appropriate enough that she reminded her audience that the threat of terrorism has spread and become more geographically diverse. She was quite right in her approach that dealing with terrorism requires much more than just military operation:

While countries have made stride in counter terrorism, all that is needed is a strategic, comprehensive approach to counter terrorism that uses intelligence. To defeat a terrorist network, there is need to do more than to remove terrorists from the battlefield. There is need to attack their finances, recruitment and safe havens (Xinhua, 2012).

To attack terrorist network's finances, recruitment and safe havens would be impossible without credible human intelligence. From a broader sense, Boko Haram's mode of operation lends it as part of an Islamist movement exclusively sustained by global Islamic jihadists bent on establishing and imposing sharia doctrine wherever possible in the World. Clinton appear to have suggested that international forces against terrorism must rise against this plague irrespective of geography, for if their strength is weakened from the root, (attacking their finances), they will not be able to operate even at the local level.

Dearth of Intelligence Community Collection on the sect and poor law enforcement is arguably, the Nigerian government's undoing. These two crucial elements remain the most important missing links in Nigeria's efforts to defeat Boko Haram. Government has deployed a rather blunt instrument of military onslaught in those areas where the sect's activities are most prevalent. Rather than route out the terrorists, these highhanded military operations have, as evidenced

by the government's response to the bombing in the Kaleri Ngomari Custain area of Maiduguri, in July 2011, inflicted mass punishment on the general population of the area. In July of 2011, government forces sealed off the area and searched from house to house maltreating the population. In the aftermath of the exercise, about 25 people were reported dead and many more injured (Amnesty International, 2012).

Boko Haram operates undetected because the local residents do not trust the government well enough to offer intelligence information. According to a report,

Majority of locals are hesitant, or unwilling, to provide information to security operatives about the hideouts and activities of the sect members. Consequently, absolute mistrust, suspicion, and fear characterize the relationship between the security operatives and the civilian populations in the volatile states, undermining intelligence undertakings that would lead to the definite identification and extirpation of the sect's members and activities (Spaces for Change, 2012:9).

Knowledge of Boko Haram's characters which can be obtained from the local population is a reality that cannot be denied. The security and intelligence community need to have infiltrators in extensive strength to know about the group's dispositions, strength and its members' exact location. Modern technologies like GPS and satellites have their limitations and these cannot be 100% accurate as human intelligence which is based on primary source.

The local population should be taken into confidence by offering them opportunities and a sense of belonging. If the local population are given a sense of belonging, they may not hold resentments against government forces. With assurance, they can act against the terrorists because they have good knowledge of the local terrain and can give more accurate information about the activities of the group, their movement and location. Foreknowledge can enable government to defeat Boko Haram. This foreknowledge cannot be inferred from comparing previous sectarian crisis because the character and motivations of previous perpetrators might be different. This knowledge can only be obtained from people who have knowledge of the group's circumstances and the only people in a position to do this are members of the local community.

The sect mercilessly executes anyone it suspected of spying for the government. Warning informants after it claimed responsibility for an attack that killed two police guards at the family house of the Vice President, Namadi Sambo in Tundun Wada area of Zaria, Kaduna State on Monday July 31 2012, it vowed to slaughter government informants to deter recruitment for human intelligence:

We wish to reiterate that our crusade is meant to ensure the establishment of an Islamic state [in Nigeria]...We wish to strongly warn people to desist from collaborating with security agents...we only kill government functionaries, security agents, Christians and anyone who pretends to be a Muslim but engage in assisting security agents to arrest us... we are aware of the activities of some women who have been recruited to spy on us. Whenever we catch any woman spying on us, we would slaughter her like a ram (Ali and Akowe, 2012).

Granted that technology is helpful, but there are few things which cannot be measured or analysed without active human intelligence. Boko Haram operatives often attack economic and strategic interests that are of symbolic importance to the state. Their targets of attack only reduce state revenue flows and scare investors and these weaken sustainable development plans.

CONCLUSION

It is wrong to apply one explanation to all phenomena that share similar characteristics even when it is clear that some aspects of the phenomenon are different and require individual explanation. In applying a generalised explanation for all phenomena that appear similar, one would be failing to find an effective solution to an individual problem and also fail to improve our knowledge of that very problem.

Undoubtedly, the Nigerian leadership class have failed to commit the huge resources of the country for societal progress and sustainable development. This failure occasioned by corruption has made it virtually impossible for the government to enforce order and therefore, vulnerable to terrorist networks. Clapham (2002:200) argued that the breakdown of law and order in African states was basically the result of the legacy of bad governance. Clapham's statement suggests that poor governance and economic deprivation interact to fuel political unrest. But he could not give a very convincing answer as to whether "*breakdown of law and order*" are important root causes of terrorism. Many analysts are wont to explain the Boko Haram insurgency along same generalised line, but it is important to look a bit deeper than that and consider the lessons to be learnt from the sect's threat.

The lesson is that from the type of situation-widespread poverty and unbridled corruption- that exist in Nigeria, there can spring an Islamist movement that camouflages in the garb of radical populism. Boko Haram deceptively builds on the *economic deprivation theory*- poverty in the north and mass disgruntlement. Boko Haram's history, language, attacks, tactics, targets, antecedents and mode of operation already gave it out as a politico-religious Islamist force that wants the imposition of strict Sharia law across Nigeria. The danger might be clearer if we realise that Islamists may, like that of the Taliban (*the Islamist militant movement that ruled large parts of Afghanistan including Kabul, its capital, as the "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan" between September 1996 and October 2001*) operate with popular support due to government's failure to protect and provide sustainable development. It is clear that any Islamist group can always find a number of issues around which to cover its main mission: Poverty, corruption, security and lack of sustainable development. The lesson is unambiguously clear: Islamist militant groups could falsely appropriate radical rhetoric with a concealed mission to hijack secular rebellion against lack of sustainable development.

This paper has analysed the sect's knowledge gap by evaluating the "*relative deprivation*" and "*social cleavage*" hypotheses in light of the sect's philosophy, origin and dominant character. A detailed evaluation and connection of terrorism to the strategies, targets and remarkable audacity and devotion of members of the sect to their conviction, leaves no one in doubt that political Islam is the main driving force. Following the Maitatsine uprisings of 1980 in Kano, 1982 in Kaduna, 1984 in Yola and 1985 in Bauchi, it is clear that Boko Haram emerged as an Islamist movement with long and resistant religious antecedents. From its targets, resilience and utterances, the sect appears to be living up to this characterisation. If the sect is explained along the materialistic worldview, explicit and implicit responses to economic deprivation, sustainable development and despair seem the most attractive explanation. But this *relative deprivation*

theory does not take into account, any categorical response to political Islam which has remained a very crucial element of the Boko Haram narrative.

This paper has resisted the temptation to place Boko Haram within the context of “*relative deprivation*” theory. It is a murderous group whose known intents are far more revolutionary and ideological than a campaign against poverty. However, it does not outrightly reject a socio economic explanation for Boko Haram. If there is good governance in the northern states, a happy citizenry with good education, skilled jobs and opportunities in the northernmost precincts, they may not play ready host to Boko Haram. No doubt, the problem of socio economic injustice and unemployment (both offshoots of misrule and corruption) can produce security challenges. Apparently, there is a link between poverty, misrule, corruption and disillusionment of the poor but recourse to terrorism is a radical decision that is not determined by the realities of misrule and corruption.

It is clear that Yusuf, the sect’s late leader, exploited Nigeria’s poor economic situation and the *Almajiri system* in the North. Masquerading as a Qur’anic teacher and preacher, he was able to attract large followership amongst the impoverished Almajiris, who, unable to afford the basic necessities of life, were radicalised, and created a supply line of willing Boko Haram’s instruments of mass murder.. Without doubt, the group is fundamentalist to its core and influenced by other transnational terror groups like al-Qaeda, Al-shabab, etc and its ability to recruit is the *Almajiri system* in the North.

Nigeria needs novel techniques targeted at restructuring and evolving effective security strategies that have robust human intelligence elements with sustainable developmental components. Such tactics must illustrate practicable and realistic engagement with the local population that are vulnerable to the sect’s extremist radicalisation. Also, the underlying political and socioeconomic problems in the affected areas must be addressed as well as specific and holistic strategies on a short, medium and long-term with time frames for realisation. Government’s brute force strategy and an insufficient knowledge of the adversary has been counterproductive and has failed to reduce tension in the affected areas significantly.

Finally, this paper proposes that any comprehensive response to Boko Haram must contain an unequivocal statement of principle regarding the secularity of the Nigerian state. Government’s response to Boko Haram must be influenced and shaped-to a large extent, within the framework of constitutionality and one nation, including government’s relationship with the citizens. Therefore, applying the combination of solutions-economic empowerment, law enforcement and political concessions could help to pursue sustainable development and stabilise the region.

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