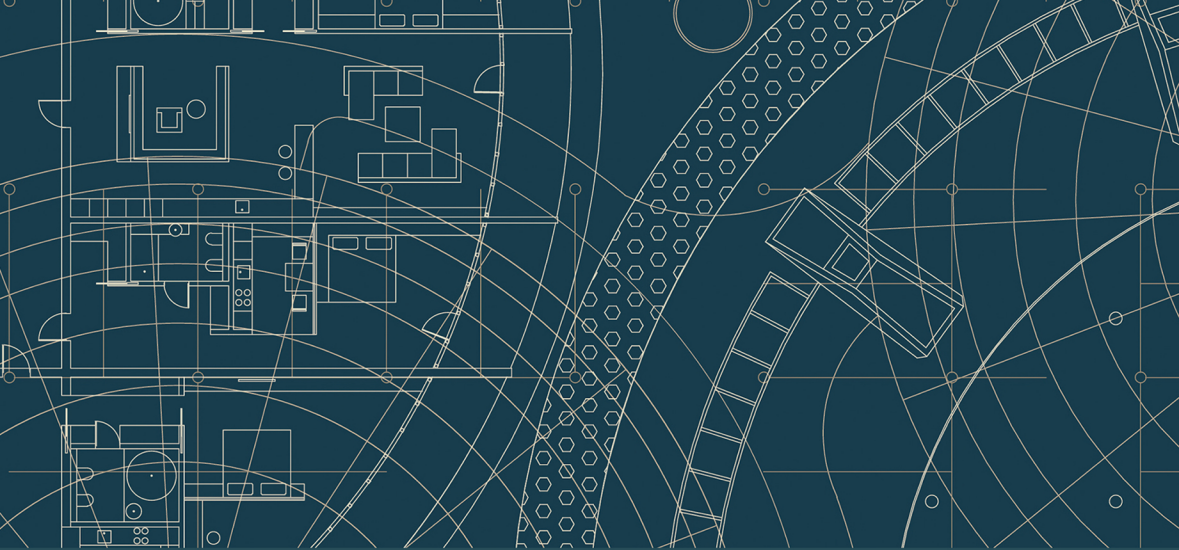




African Governance

MANAGING VIOLENT RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM IN FRAGILE STATES

BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY IN NIGERIA AND KENYA

Abosede Omowumi Babatunde, Mahfouz A. Adedimeji,
Shittu Raji, Jacinta Mwende Maweu
and John Mwangi Githigaro



Managing Violent Religious Extremism in Fragile States

This book examines how African states can build the institutional capacity to better prevent, manage and cope with the new security challenges posed by violent religious extremism.

Despite the evidence that violent religious extremism is exacerbated by underlying social, political, economic and governance factors, many states have focused their efforts only on reactive and coercive response strategies, overlooking more long-term measures. This comparative study of Nigeria and Kenya reflects on why insurgency in Kenya has not escalated to full blown terrorism as it has with Boko Haram in Nigeria, in spite of the similarities in relatively weak institutions of governance and colonial legacies across the two countries. The book interrogates the policy and institutional responses that have been put in place in both countries to address security challenges, and the extent of their efficacy in light of the intricate networks of politics, governance, corruption, poverty and violence and the relative fragility of state institutions. The authors highlight the areas of convergence and divergence in institutional capacities and recommend policies to enhance the capacity of institutions to manage violent religious extremism.

This book will be of interest to scholars of African Politics, Security, Peace Studies and Terrorism.

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**Abosede Omowumi Babatunde,
Mahfouz A. Adedimeji, Shittu Raji,
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Introduction

Managing violent religious extremism in fragile states: Nigeria and Kenya's perspectives

Violent religious extremism has become a growing and worrisome phenomenon in Africa. The rise and proliferation of violent religious extremism in Africa has placed the continent on the international terrorism map. The violent extremists pose a major threat to the already fragile peace and security, and undermine the prospect for socio-economic development on the African continent. The phenomenon of violent extremism is not new in Africa, as it has been part of the experiences of African states since the early independence era, in which the process of state building sparked contestations between state and non-state actors in the forms of political rebellion, military coups, and intra- and inter-state wars. Much has been written about the violent extremism that emerged in the early independence period, such as the Egyptian-based Muslim Brotherhood (MB), Tuareg rebellion in Mali, Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) in Eritrea, African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa and the Islamic Group (GIA) in Algeria (Clifford-Vaughan, 1987; Crenshaw, 1994; Forest & Giroux, 2011). However, violent religious extremism gained traction in the 1990s in North Africa and proliferated to other sub-regions, particularly in West and East Africa. This period heralded the rise and prominence of major violent extremists, whose growing lethality propelled national and international community's proclamation of these groups such as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda, Al-Shabaab in Somalia and the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb in North Africa, as terrorists (Mazrui, 1985; Forest & Giroux, 2011).

The form of violent extremism experienced on the continent in the early independence period involved acts of violence attributed to state and non-state actors, including armed militias, government forces, paramilitary forces and government-affiliated militias, for the purpose of achieving social, economic and political objectives. In the 1990s, a new trend emerged in the phenomenon of violent extremism in Africa, which has become more synonymous with Salafi-Jihadist violence, in what is today known on the continent as violent religious extremism. Some of the prominent violent

religious extremism that proliferated in Africa in the last two decades and transformed from localized to transnational groups include the likes of Boko Haram, the Islamic States of West African Province (ISWAP), Al-Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Armed Islamic Group (GIA), Salafist Group for Preaching and Combating Evil (GSPCE) and National Islamic Front (NIF) in North Africa (Gow & Olonisakin, 2013). Others include the Salafist Group for Prayer and Combat (GSPC), the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) and Ansar Dine (Hinds, 2013). The term, violent religious extremism is often interchangeably used to mean terrorism, especially the one that was carried out by Salafi-Jihadist group in the context of this study (Al-Kadi & Vale, 2020). For instance, the deployment of terror tactics by Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab led to their designation as terrorists by the national and international governments (see [Chapters 2 and 3](#) in this book).

While Africa grapples with the threat from violent religious extremism, the Western world is not left out. The United States has been contending with violent extremism linked to white supremacists which is considered as the most serious threat to its national security (Kanno-Youngs & Sanger, 2021). The United States, as a major superpower and advanced economy in the world, has the military and institutional capacity to deal with the threat posed by violent extremists. Yet, the United States recognized the scale of security threat emanating from violent extremism. Thus, African states, with their developing economies, weak technical know-how, relative military might and weak institutions are particularly vulnerable to threat from violent religious extremists, which can worsen the state of their fragility, if not properly dealt with.

In estimating the global economic impact of violent religious extremism leading to terrorism, a UNDP (2019) report showed that the total economic cost across the globe increased by two-third in the last ten years, from 2008 to reach US\$52 billion in 2017. In Africa, the total economic cost of terrorism which rose from 2007 to 2016 is estimated at a minimum of US\$119 billion, a figure that may in fact be higher if estimates of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) losses, lost informal economic activity, extra security spending and refugee/IDP costs are accounted for. While there is huge variation in the economic cost across specific focus countries, Nigeria accounted for the highest economic cost estimated at US\$97 billion, which is 89% of the total US\$109 billion cost over the ten-year period (2007–2017). Nigeria's economic cost is ranked 19 times higher than that of Libya, which had the second-highest cost of terrorism and over 22,000 times greater than that for Burkina Faso, which is rated to have the lowest total absolute economic impact out of 18 focus countries. The magnitude of the economic cost of violent extremism depicts the severe challenges and setbacks to economic and societal development that accompanied the activities of extremist groups. It is also an indication of the severity of the challenge it posed to the already weak socio-economic, security and political institutions in fragile African countries dealing with threats

from violent religious extremism. In fact, the UNDP report (2019) indicated that the African continent spends almost US\$84 billion per year on securitization, which is the equivalent of immunizing the 117 low- and lower-middle-income countries for approximately ten years.

The rise of violent religious extremism, linked to Salafist Jihadists in Africa can be traced to series of global events, particularly in Asia and the Arab world that created opportunities for the ideological indoctrination of some Africans into radical Salafist Jihadism with violent tendencies (see [Chapters 1, 7 and 8](#) in this book). The cumulative spread of violent religious extremism across the continent can be gleaned from the events that led to the defeat of Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the late 1980s, in which some Algerians were recruited in the Mujahedeen movement in Afghanistan which opened spaces for indoctrination to Islamic fundamentalism, training and connection with network of global Jihadists (Cilliers, 2015). Major events like the war in Iraq and the Israel and Palestine conflict have also triggered the rise of Jihadist movements in Africa (McCullough & Schomerus, 2017).

Although virtually all the sub-regions in Africa are grappling with the threat from violent religious extremism, the capacity of these countries to deal with the challenges is tied to the potency of their state institutions. Violent religious extremism gestates within a state, by riding on domestic grievances embedded in the weak structure of the state institutions that breed marginalization, and injustice to radicalize, mobilize and gains recruits among the local populations for the purpose of achieving its ideological and political agenda (see [Chapters 2 and 9](#) in this book). African states have varying degrees of fragility, and their capacity to deal with the threat from violent religious extremism could be discerned as a function of the state of fragility. While the degree of fragility of state institution is relevant in understanding the capacity of a state to counter violent religious extremism, it may be far-fetched to conclude that it is the only determinant of the ability of a state to deal with threat from violent extremists (see [Chapter 6](#) in this book). This raises the need to explore the interplay of complex, social, economic, political and security environment that creates a breeding ground for the evolution of violent extremism, in explaining the capacity of a state to deal with violent religious extremism.

Nigeria and Kenya are the two sub-regional powers in West and East Africa with weak state institutions and fragile democracies. However, dealing with violent religious extremism provides an interesting analysis of how state fragility intersects with the capacity to deal with and confront threats from extremist groups. The two countries are rich in natural resources, with advanced economies and relatively strong military capabilities in West and East Africa sub-regions. Yet, the two countries have weak government institutions characterized by endemic corruption, socio-economic inequalities and the inability to deliver adequate and quality public goods and services to the citizenry. The multi-ethnic composition of the two states delineated as majority and minority ethnic groups fueled ethnic and political tensions. This situation fueled

localized grievances that underlie the violent campaign of religious extremist groups. Nigeria, as sub-Saharan Africa's largest oil producer, is endowed with abundant oil and gas reserves, which provides the bulk of its revenue, estimated at 80% of government revenues and 90% of export earnings (Watts, 2017; Obi, 2019). Kenya as a resource-rich economy derived the bulk of its revenue, estimated at 75% from the agricultural sector, which also accounts for 33% of the country's GDP (USAID, 2021). Apart from the highly developed and lucrative tourist sector, Kenya also derived some of its revenue from mining, manufacturing, energy and financial services (Brendon & Dominic, 2019).

While Nigeria is confronting threats from Boko Haram, Kenya is grappling with the problem of Al-Shabaab. Boko Haram emerged in Nigeria as a religious dissident group venting domestic grievance, and later transformed to a transnational Jihadist network, through interaction with the militarized Nigerian security agencies (Matfess, 2020). Al-Shabaab, evolved primarily from Somalia and its incursion into Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and other countries in East African region, is linked to the military intervention in Somalia, in which Kenya took the lead in October 2011 (Ndzovu, 2017; Githigaro, 2018). The militarized responses of the Nigerian and Kenyan governments to Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab respectively shaped the changing trajectories of the two groups in these countries. Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab are both Salafist Jihadist groups with affiliation and connections to global Jihadists' network. The two violent religious extremists advocate theocratic rule under Islamic law (Omenma et al., 2020). Both extremist groups are contemporary Jihadist movements that propagate the doctrine of *takfirism* or prescribing appropriate punishment for those they labeled as infidels (Kafir) (Zenn & Pieri, 2017; Cannon & Iyekekpolo, 2018). While the declared ideological and political agenda of Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab centered on overthrow of the state and enthronement of Islamic rule, Al-Shabaab's agenda also focused on the elimination of all foreign 'infidel' influence' regarded as enemy of Islam. Kenya became primarily the main target of Al-Shabaab and regarded as 'infidels' and enemy of Islam due to the military intervention in Somalia, in support of the foreign occupation and control of Somali.

Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab articulated similar ideological and political objectives; however, the tactical operational strategy and target of attacks differs. While Boko Haram targets both Christians and Muslims who do not align with the group's radical ideology, with Muslims constituting the major target of attacks, Al-Shabaab waged a religious war against the Christian-dominated Kenya state, perceived as the enemy of Islam. Boko Haram emerged as an internal schism within the Islamic fold in which radical Salafist Jihadist viewed the traditional and moderate Muslims as infidel (Zenn, 2013; Babatunde, 2014; Comolli, 2015). Some commentators opined that Boko Haram's disproportionate targeting of fellow Muslims who are labeled as infidel belied Boko Haram's religious agenda (Varin, 2016; Matfess, 2020).

Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab ride on the groundswell of discontent and sense of marginalization and injustices by some segment of the populations

in the two countries to gain recruits in the quest to achieve their political and religious agendas (see [Chapters 4 and 5](#) in this book). It is not surprising that both countries performed abysmally in the Human Development Index report (2019), with Nigeria categorized among the countries with low human development with a score of 0.534, and Kenya rated with medium human development with a score of 0.579 in 2018. Despite the relative improvement in Kenya's human development, a large proportion of the population experience chronic poverty. As USAID (2021) report indicates, despite Kenya's ranking as one of the fastest growing economies in Africa, nearly half of the 50 million residents live below the poverty line, and two-thirds of Kenyans lack access to basic financial services such as bank accounts. Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics in the 2019/2020 report showed that 82.9 million (40.1%) of Nigeria's populations live below the poverty line and that about 13.1 million and 11.3 million of the over 200 million population are unemployed and underemployed respectively. These gloomy projections are indicative of the governance deficit in the two countries that contrasted sharply with their resource wealth and underscore the weak state of government institutions. In fact, Nigeria and Kenya also both ranked high on the Transparency corruption perception index as revealed in the 2019 report. In the report, Nigeria was ranked 146th, while Kenya was on the 137th position out of 180, with a score of 26% for Nigeria and 28% for Kenya. The two countries have persistently ranked in the categories of countries battling with chronic corruption that permeates the fabric of governance institutions.

The weak state of governance institutions produced grievances that underlie the propaganda of Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab. While the perceived grievance of Boko Haram is localized and rooted in the opposition to the corrupt state institutions that failed to deliver social capital, public goods and services to a large segment of the North-eastern populations, Al-Shabaab has been aggrieved by Kenya's military intervention in Somalia and the perceived marginalization of ethnic minorities, particularly in the Kenya's Coast, which led to the labeling of the Kenya's government as an enemy of Islam (Harnischfeger, 2014; Githigaro, 2015). Although some observers have increasingly cast aspersions on the acclaimed ideological agenda and motives of Boko Haram based on the group's shifting tactical operations, targets and doctrinal position (Comolli, 2015; Pieri and Zenn, 2018), the grievance linked to structural conditions of poverty, social deprivation and injustices is not in contention. Nevertheless, the poverty and marginalization narratives as the root of Boko Haram sparked a debate among some analysts which centered on the contradictions inherent in the Northern political elites' decades of control of political and economic power in Nigeria vis-à-vis the impoverished state of majority of the populations in North-eastern Nigeria (Babatunde, 2014; Anugwom, 2019). The poverty thesis seems to accentuate the governance challenges and the weak state institution which is more endemic in the North-eastern region of Nigeria (see [Chapters 3 and 4](#) in this book). In Kenya, the poverty narrative has also shaped Al-Shabaab strategy

of amassing followers, along ethnic and religious lines, using the perceived sense of marginalization by some ethnic minorities along Kenya's coast as the main justification for its violent campaign (Prestholdt, 2011) (see [Chapters 3 and 5](#) in this book).

Nigeria and Kenya's position as sub-regional powers, with strong economies in comparison to other countries in West and East Africa, exposed other fragile democracies in the two sub-regions to the threat from Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab. In fact, Al-Shabaab extended its tactical operations beyond Kenya to other neighboring states, targeting Uganda, Djibouti and Ethiopia, while Boko Haram has expanded its operations to Cameroon, Chad, Benin Republic and Niger. These countries are characterized by porous borders and expanses of ungoverned spaces that create enabling environment for extremist groups to incubate, operate and engage in illicit movement of arms and ammunition and illegal drugs within and across borders (Brechenmacher, 2019; Sweet, 2019; Ojo, 2020). Of note is the recent disclosure of the Nigerian former service chiefs, recently replaced by the Buhari administration in January 2021, while lamenting on the incapability of the military operation under their watch to counter extremism, the poor management and lack of security protection for the over 1,000 forest reserves across the country posed a major obstacle to the fight against terrorism. The former service chiefs also acknowledged that it may take about two decades for the government to totally decimate the extremist groups (Usman, 2021). Given the corrupt-laden and weak nature of the government institutions, including the security apparatus, such gloomy projection should not come as a surprise.

While the degree of fragility among these states differs, violent extremist groups portend more threat to relatively fragile states on the basis of how their socio-economic, regional and global positions shaped the responses from regional and global community. Nigeria and Kenya's prominent status within their sub-regions places them in a position of resourcefulness and benefactor to other countries within their sub-regions. As major sub-regional powers providing major economic and military supports to sub-regional and regional organizations, the security challenges emanating from violent religious extremism would resonate on the subregions, resulting in significant negative sub-regional and regional impacts. It would also make it difficult for the two countries to garner sub-regional and regional support from neighboring countries who themselves relied on these sub-regional powers for economic and security assistance. The threat from violent religious extremists would further weaken the state of fragility in these countries with severe implications for their security architecture. The ranking of Nigeria and Kenya in the alert category in the Fund for Peace's 2019 fragile state index with a score of 98.5 and 93.5 respectively serve as a pointer to the current and broader implications of violent religious extremism on the two countries and the sub-regions and the African continent.

The considerations of the regional and global status of Nigeria and Kenya have shaped the intervention strategies of the international communities to the threat of Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab (Nwankpa, 2015; Brechenmacher,

2019). The global status of the two sub-regional powers obviates more direct and potent intervention by Western allies, such as the United States, who could not engage in direct intervention, but relied on the Nigerian and Kenyan government's counter-extremism efforts. The concern for sub-regional security also informed donor assistance and cooperation with affected neighboring countries.

The challenge inherent in the donor-national counter-extremism collaborative interventions relate to the broader impact of the corrupt-ridden state institutions on the prospect of the interventions. It is not surprising that the intervention efforts have recorded mixed results, reflecting fluctuating trends of progression, missed opportunities and retrogression. Despite increasing donor assistance, the Nigerian and Kenya governments counter-extremism efforts have focused more on excessive use of force, while the political will to tackle the underlying causes of the violent religious extremism have been inadequate. The tactical operational strategy of the violent religious extremists has evolved in line with the social, economic and strategic responses of the Nigerian and Kenya government. As Boukhars (2020) notes, extremists' violent strategies are not static, fixed, random or irrational, rather they evolved from the political, social and strategic imperatives of the conflict environments that violent extremists operate in. The prevailing social, economic, political and security environments in Nigeria and Kenya have shaped the changing trajectories of violent religious extremism in the two countries.

Kenya's counter-extremism efforts have recorded more progressive trends than that of Nigeria, yet the government focused on a militarized response like that of Nigeria, paying little attention to the structural conditions that provoked grievances that Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab ride on in advancing their violent campaign. The excessive militarized responses have been a major impediment to the capacity of both countries to win the war on terror. What this portends is that even if both countries succeeded in decimating the violent religious extremists, the inability to tackle the grievances at the root of the extremists' violent campaigns would have severe ramifications for the security architecture. There is a high possibility of the emergence of other deadly extremists or armed groups either as a splinter faction from the current extremists (like the case of Boko Haram factionalizations) or as a new dissident group. The fallout of the weak capacity of the Nigerian government institutions to counter extremism violence is the expansion of the security crisis into other theatres in the form of armed banditry that intersects with the volatile farmer-herder conflict.

Despite the military onslaught, it is not surprising that Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab have remained remarkably resilient. In fact, the African Centre for Strategic Studies, in a 2021 report indicated that violent activities involving Al-Shabaab have increased by 33% over the past year, from 1,310 reported events to 1,742, a record rise that shows resiliency. It was also reported that in 2020 alone, there was a 47% increase in the battles between Al-Shabaab and security forces, which constitutes two-thirds of the violent activities linked to arguably Africa's most entrenched militant group. The report also showed

that Boko Haram and its splinter faction, the Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA), accounted for roughly 60% increase in militant Islamist violence in 2020, which rose from 1,223 events compared to 766 in 2019, in the Lake Chad Basin (comprising Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and southeastern Niger). The activities of Boko Haram led to 4, 801 reported fatalities, which are considered the highest death toll linked to violent religious extremists in Africa. Most of the rise in the violent activities of the extremist group is linked to confrontation with security forces, aligned militias and civilians.

This book is not simply about explaining the evolution of violent religious extremism and the weaknesses in the response of fragile states to the security threat. Rather, it focuses on the contextual issues that shaped the growth and operational strategy of violent religious extremism in fragile states, (drawing on the case of Nigeria and Kenya) and the response of the affected states to the war on terror. It interrogates the socio-economic, political and security environments that have animated the violent religious extremism and the changing dynamics of the operation of the violent extremists in their engagement with the Nigerian and Kenya state and transnational actors. This entails an analysis of the current trends in the extremist groups' violent campaigns and the corresponding state responses to the shifting tactics, and how they accentuate the adversity that fragile states deal with in the fight against terror.

Theoretical elucidation

This book, engages with debates on violent religious extremism and the associated state responses to the security threat on the African continent, with specific focus on Nigeria and Kenya. The book adopts the *securitization theory* as the analytical framework. The securitization theory is relevant to situating the social construction of terrorism threats in proper perspectives. The theory emerged from the Copenhagen School as an important contribution in the field of security studies. This school emerged at the Conflict and Peace Research Institute (COPRI) of Copenhagen in the 1990s, with Barry Buzan and Ole Waever being the main proponents of the theory. The framework was developed in the context of the post-Cold War, which required a redefinition of security. The starting point for the theory is that it rethinks security through the notions of securitization and de-securitization. According to the school, securitization is when an issue is presented as posing an existential threat to a particular referent object (traditionally the state but also the inclusion of non-state actors). This school identifies five general categories of security: military, environmental, economic, societal and political security (Emmers, 2016).

The theory addresses 'securitizing acts and actors' and who through a series of speech acts construct a phenomenon to be a security threat, which requires a range of extra-legal responses. The chapters in this book engage with the state notion of security and the impact on people-centered security. The nature of security is informed by 'securitizing actors' and 'referent object'. The securitizing actors are those who securitize issues by pronouncing

something, as a referent object, that is existentially threatened. These actors would usually be politicians, bureaucracies, governments and pressure groups, among others. The referent objects and the kind of existential threats they face then vary across sectors. Referent objects could include the state, national sovereignty, ideology, societal or even the habitats (Emmers, 2016). Upon the identification of an existential threat, the securitizing actor declares that it has to adopt extra-ordinary interventions that usually go beyond the ordinary norms of the political domain (Emmers, 2016). De-securitization on the other hand refers to shifting of issues that would normally be considered to be in the realm of emergencies to the normal processes of the political space (Emmers, 2016). This is useful as a framework in this book to situate how and by whom; a specific matter enters into the realm of either securitization or de-securitization. In tandem with other empirical studies, it is useful in assessing the policy effectiveness of extra-ordinary plans, but also the unintended consequences (Emmers, 2016).

The theory from a social constructivist point of view enables a discourse on what security actors perceive to be a threat to state security through their speech acts. The actors are regarded as important persons in a respective society. This discourse then allows the situating of security responses in tandem with the construction of security threats. The enabled security responses are expected to surpass the norms and routines of everyday politics (Williams, 2003; Buzan & Waever, 2009).

The Copenhagen School offers a two-stage process of securitization to describe how and when an issue is identified and acted upon as an existential threat to security. The first stage is when certain issues, persons or entities are described as existential threats to referent objects. Usually, the initial decision of securitization is launched by states, even though non-state actors such as popular movements can launch it. The norm however is that it is the powerful actors that dominate securitization – usually the state and its elites. The second stage is when a securitizing actor has succeeded in persuading a relevant audience (public opinion, politicians, elites and so on) that a referent object is existentially threatened. This then opens the stage for extraordinary measures to be adopted and which would bypass the normal bounds of political procedures. Critical to the two-stage process of securitization is the ‘speech act’. A speech act is the ‘discursive representation of a certain issue as an existential threat’ (Emmers, 2016: 171). A security actor, therefore, uses language to define a problem in security terms and to convince a relevant audience of its immediate danger. The problem articulation accustoms the audience while offering security actors the right to mobilize state power to respond to an existential threat (Buzan & Waever, 2009; Emmers, 2016).

The Copenhagen School considers security to be a socially constructed concept. This means that what is constructed as an existential threat is very much dependent on the shared understanding of what comprises a security danger. The discourse of the securitizing actor has to be explained in a manner that is persuasive to an audience. Every instance of securitization

entails a political decision that is informed by a political and social act. This school argues that an act of securitization can either succeed or fail depending on whether a separate audience accepts the discourse. The securitization model with its focus on the realist notions of 'existential' threats and survival is indicative of how it sits within the nexus of constructivism and realism. Constructivism in the sense of its use of language and perception of security is important in checking the spate of insecurity (Emmers, 2016).

While this model has been used as an explanatory framework for a series of government interventions in the name of overcoming existential threats, there are several shortcomings of the model. One of the shortcomings is the danger of securitization. This is particularly apt in cases where political elites in governance can adopt a securitizing act to curtail civil liberties, detention of political opponents or suspected terrorists without trial. The other danger lies in the near absence of checks and balances in situations where extraordinary measures are imposed (Emmers, 2016). Notwithstanding the varied criticisms of the approach, including the claim that it is Eurocentric, that its notion of security is broad and rather vague, it still offers a good level of analytical power in security studies broadly.

The securitization theory is part of the 'broadening' of the concept of security that is now to be understood beyond the traditional conceptualization of threats to the nation-state interpreted mainly from militaristic lenses (Williams, 2003). The securitization theory recognizes the threats from non-state actors including the human security concerns that underpin the grievance that underlies violent campaigns by non-state actors. Human security takes an individual-level analysis when it comes to security threats. It relates to concerns about human wellbeing, health, environment, poverty and political violence among others. The distinction for securitization theory in this ongoing debate is the view that 'security' is not an objective condition but rather is a resultant of social construction. For the Copenhagen School, security is a concept that should be applied with care given the possibilities for 'elevating threats' on the political agenda. This theory provides the impetus for enlarging the 'referent objects' the actors or the objects that are threatened and hence expanding issue areas on the security agenda that may well go beyond the military security of the territorial state (Williams, 2003).

What this securitization then enables is to allow state elites to elevate security threats beyond the law-and-order functions that require extraordinary interventions. Terrorism and/or violent religious extremism is one key area where securitization is critical. From a securitization theory point of view, an issue that threatens the existence of the state is elevated, requiring in certain instances extra-legal, socio-economic and political responses. In the context of terrorism, it is possible that certain identities can be framed as sources of threats thus negatively impacting in certain instances the enjoyment of human rights and security. This has been the case with Somali refugees in Kenya in the recent past (Mwangi, 2019). The Boko Haram atrocities in Northern Nigeria and neighboring countries in the Lake Chad Basin have

led to serious humanitarian crises that undermine the human rights and security of the affected populations (Brechenmacher, 2019).

Additionally, the securitization theory also enables the labeling of security issue(s) by insulating public debates and privileging secrecy from a national security perspective (Williams, 2003; Mwangi, 2019). This framework from an epistemological premise is that the understanding and analysis of terrorism discourses are rather a subjective process. This is a shortcoming of this approach. Based on this subjectivity, the security threats can be misinterpreted or disregarded (Mwangi, 2019). This notion applies to the Nigerian context in which the then-emerging threat from Boko Haram was downplayed by the then President Goodluck Jonathan who interpreted the emerging anti-statist activities of the dissident religious group as a political ploy by perceived political opponents hell-bent on destabilizing his government (Walker, 2016). The framing of the emerging security threat from Boko Haram as a political conspiracy has shaped the bland and highly militarized response of the Jonathan administration to the then evolving threat from the extremist group.

Complicating the violent extremism response are two distinct occurrences in the Kenyan context yet to be fully appreciated with regards to how to counter them. One is the returning foreign fighters and two, the possibilities of 'lone wolf' terrorism. Returning foreign fighters or returnees are individuals returning to their home countries from the battlefield after serving with a terrorist organization. 'Lone wolf terrorism' refers to the largely unpredictable phenomenon of individuals launching violent attacks when they are neither a part of or under the direction of a terrorist organization (Lindekilde et al., 2019). A securitization framework in the Kenyan context become more evident when Kenya chose to intervene militarily in Somalia in late 2011 through the 'Operation *Linda Nchi*' (Operation Protect the Country). The political elite in justifying this initial unilateral military intervention, before it became part of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in 2012, used a speech act for its domestic audience. It argued that its justification for intervention was prompted by a series of cross-border incursions and attacks on Kenyan territory by a non-state actor (Al-Shabaab) who operated in the territory of Somalia. This intervention was taken to safeguard Kenya's internal security but also to secure its strategic interests such as the tourism industry at the Kenyan Coast that nearly collapsed owing to the non-state actors' interventions. Pushing the securitization logic further, the Kenyan state continued thus to securitize the state of Somalia as an existential threat that needed to be addressed. This was facilitated through the continuation of the stabilization interventions it had put in place in Somalia including the support given to the transitional governments in the past through the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Part of the intentions of Operation *Linda Nchi* was to create a buffer zone between Kenya and the activities of the Al-Shabaab including the creation of a semi-autonomous state of Juba land to safeguard their security interests (Chau, 2018). Kenya government military actions in Somalia partly

accounted for Al-Shabaab incursion into the country and led the government to initiate counter-extremism measures.

For conceptual clarity, the concept of countering violent extremism (CVE) while contested in literature refers to a number of policy prescriptions that are non-coercive in nature and which seek to prevent the occurrence of terrorism in the first place. CVE is focused on the prevention of individuals from radicalization. Radicalization refers to the psychological, emotional and behavioral processes by which an individual picks an ideology that promotes the use of violence in the pursuit of a political, economic, religious or social goal (Jensen et al., 2018). CVE works on preventing the conditions and or behaviors that may lead to violent extremism. Prevention initiatives envisioned in CVE work may include educating and skilling a range of community personnel such as psychologists and social workers to respond to the issues of radicalization independent of the government or police. The CVE discourse has emerged as an alternative to the hard counter-terrorism measures such as the use of military force to respond directly to terrorist threats (Harris-Hogan et al., 2016). The reality in both Nigeria and Kenya is that the CVE efforts of the government reflected highly militarized actions, while largely neglecting or paying perfunctory attention (after violent extremism has already become deep-rooted in the countries), to the core of CVE that centered on preventing or addressing the social conditions at the root of violent extremism.

The shift to non-coercive measures in the post 9/11 period has among others been informed by the rise of 'home-grown terrorism' and the resolve then to focus on the preventive realm. However, CVE approaches remain context-specific. Primarily, CVE interventions are focused on preventing 'radicalization'. It follows therefore that some preventive actions are taken to pre-empt the rise of conditions, behaviors or attitudes that may lead to radicalization. CVE responses are departing from coercive measures and shifting to non-coercive approaches with community engagement being a critical pillar (Harris-Hogan et al., 2016). Even when the Nigerian and Kenyan governments adopted the so-called non-coercive measures to complement the militarized response, the inability to demonstrate the much-needed political willpower to enable effective community focused actions to deal with the grievances underpinning extremism, while also addressing the humanitarian crisis that accompanied their violent activities, have resulted in profound negative outcomes.

In the chapters in the book, the securitization framework is applied to explain state counter-terrorism actions in diverse contexts, specifically in Nigeria and Kenya. The United States for instance when launching its so-called Global War on Terror (GWOT) invoked this logic in the post 9/11 period. Consequently, this enabled a series of foreign interventions in both Afghanistan (then to root out the Taliban), and in 2003 in Iraq to depose Saddam Hussein who they claimed had links with terrorist networks. The 2003 intervention in Iraq was deemed to be an exercise in addressing human rights violation in Iraq, while dealing with the acclaimed threats of weapons of mass destruction.

This securitization persuaded public opinion and offered an opportunity for a regime change in Iraq (Hughes, 2007; Buzan & Waever, 2009).

In Nigeria, the government framing of security threats emanating from violent extremists has shaped the counter-extremism response of the successive administration which in turn has impacted the tactical strategy, flexibility and adaptive capacity of the extremists. The counter-extremism operation has also been rife with human right violations including the arbitrary detention of innocent civilians, killing, rape and maiming of civilians as well as excessive use of force on the extremists. The militarized response of the security operatives culminated in the extra-judicial killing of the founding leader of Boko Haram, and the transmutation of the sect to a more deadly extremist group that has continued to evolve and remained resilient even in the face of intensified military offensive.

In Kenya for instance, the threat of violent extremism over time has enabled forms of 'successful' securitization that have been problematic for a number of reasons. For instance, the application of counter-terrorism measures has resulted in a range of human rights violations including the negative labeling of certain identities. The latter in Kenya has led to the securitization of Muslims and the labeling of communities in the North East and the Coast as terrorist sympathizers progressively since the 1998 terrorist bombings. The implication of this securitization has been an articulation of 'suspect communities' which led to various extraordinary measures. These have in the past included claims of extraordinary renditions, extra-judicial killings, arbitrary arrests and detentions, enforced disappearances, factors that have in part contributed to the processes of radicalization that may lead to violent extremism. These extraordinary state responses have resulted in the exclusion of citizenship rights such as access to identity cards, passport for communities and identities negatively labeled in governmental discourses as terrorism suspects. The refoulement of Somali refugees in Kenya has also been enabled by this securitization framework (Prestholdt, 2011; Chau, 2018; Mwangi, 2018).

Furthermore, securitization logic also offers an understanding of governmental discourses over time that have securitized the Islamic identity, the Somali identity as responsible for terrorist threats in Kenya. In addition, this framework has also enabled the securitization of refugees and the camps as responsible for terrorist threats. The implication of this has been policy positions on the need to close the Dadaab refugee camp claimed to be a recruitment and a logistic hub for social movements such as the Al-Shabaab. Another layer of intervention that has been enabled by this securitization framework has been the passage of new legislations to criminalize and counter the threats of violent extremism. Some of the most recent amendments such as the 2014 Security Amendment Act have followed this logic. Indeed, some parts of the 2014 law were rendered unconstitutional in Kenya's High Court on the position that they impacted negatively on human rights of the people (Mwangi, 2019).

The chapters in this book reflect on different contexts, how security threats in the context of violent extremism are framed and how in turn this has shaped the grammar of security responses. The chapters contribute to the problematizing of how power is used sometimes in the context of safeguarding national security in the positive sense, but also in the negative resulting in breaches of the human rights of the citizen that the state is tasked to protect. The chapters also offer lucid analysis of the institutional capacity of fragile states to counter violent religious extremism and the prospects for the future.

Study design and research methodology

In terms of methodology, a qualitative research design approach was adopted for the study. This approach was chosen on account of the social phenomenon under study. Debates on violent extremism are subjective and thus necessitated this qualitative approach. This approach allows for interpretivism of the data collected while accounting for respondents' perceptions and interpretations of the phenomenon. The qualitative research techniques enabled the collection of qualitative data generated from Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) conducted for diverse respondents in Nigeria and Kenya. The interviews were administered through a semi-structured interview guide that was flexible enough to allow for further questions.

The qualitative research design enabled physical and direct interaction with the respondents while also allowing for clarification of any ambiguities. The qualitative design also allows for online interviews via mobile devices and email, especially for respondents who are not physically assessable. For ethical considerations, the respondents were clearly informed about the purpose of the research and their identities were highly confidential. The anonymity of the respondents allowed for freedom of expressions such that they are able to candidly respond to the questions without any fear of intimidation or attack. The primary data generated from the KII provided deeper insight into the issues of religious and secular fundamentalism, terrorism and counter-extremism-terrorism. It also allowed deeper interrogation into the roles of religious leaders in radicalizing the youth.

In Nigeria, the respondents included radicalized youth, military personnel, namely the Nigerian Army, Navy, Air Force, State Security Service, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, among others, government officials, Civil Society Organizations, religious leaders, community vigilante, media specialists and security experts in academic institutions in North-eastern Nigeria. In Kenya, key informant interviews were conducted with government officials, security officials, religious leaders, youth leaders, journalists and civil society leaders involved in counter-terrorism and managing violent extremism.

The fieldwork took place at intervals between 2016 and 2020 in Nigeria, in Maiduguri, Damaturu and Yola, the hotspot of Boko Haram onslaughts,

and Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory, the seat of government where the political, legal and security frameworks for the counter-extremism efforts were instituted. In Kenya, the fieldwork was carried out between 2017 and 2020 in Nairobi and Mombasa, the seat of government and the theater of violent extremism and terrorism.

The research team in Nigeria were able to gain access to the de-radicalized Boko Haram members and other key respondents through the support of the military personnel involved in the counter-extremism operation in the North-east, who were undertaking Master degree programme in Peace and Strategic Studies at the Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies, University of Ilorin, Nigeria. The military research assistants were utilized to address security concerns and methodological limitations. The respondents from the military ranged from 70 army personnel, 15 Navy, 15 Air Force to 45 security officers from the police, state security services, civil defense and others. Interviews were also conducted with the leadership of the security agencies, in which four key informant interviews were conducted for the Nigerian Army commandants, in Abuja, Maiduguri, Yola and Damaturu. For the State Security Service leadership, two interviews were conducted in Maiduguri and Damaturu, while two interviews were also carried out for the leadership of the Nigeria Police in Maiduguri. The officials of the Federal and Borno state Emergency Management agencies were interviewed on the basis of two Key Informant Interviews per agency. In the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camp, three interviews were conducted with the camp commanders in Maiduguri, Yola and Damaturu. Interviews were also conducted with the IDPs and repentant Boko Haram fighters in Maiduguri and Damaturu. The four interviews with members of the academic community were carried out in the University of Maiduguri and Yobe State University, Damaturu. The respondents were purposively selected based on the varied roles they played or were still in the violent extremism and counter-extremism efforts in North-eastern Nigeria.

In Kenya, 65 respondents comprising youth, government officials and religious leaders were interviewed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with religious leaders, youth leaders and journalists as well as civil society leaders involved in counter-terrorism and managing violent extremism. The journalists working for both Christian and Muslim media stations as well as secular mainstream media were purposively selected and interviewed to establish their views on how media covered terror acts in Kenya. Christian and Muslim religious leaders, as well as youth leaders who had been in the forefront advocating 'soft' approach to counter-terrorism were also purposively sampled. In all, 10 civil society organizations were interviewed in Nigeria and Kenya.

Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were conducted for 42 and 63 persons such as youth, and deradicalized youths in Kenya and Nigeria respectively, consisting of 7 respondents per session. The aim was to get in-depth insights into the root causes of violent extremism in both countries and the measures

that have been put in place to counter terrorism. The respondents provided viable responses to key questions central to the study as follows:

- 1 What are the interlocking causal factors for Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab evolution, and campaign of terror in Nigeria and Kenya?
- 2 What are the modus operandi of Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab?
- 3 What factors sustain Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab lethality and campaign of terror?
- 4 What are the policy and institutional responses to violent religious extremism by the Nigerian and Kenyan governments?
- 5 What are the roles of local and international civil society organizations, regional and International Community in the war on terror in Nigeria and Kenya?

The data collected were analyzed with the use of triangulation and logical deduction of facts from the triangulated data and verbatim quotations. The reliability and validity of the research instruments were established through the use of Cronbach's Alpha (2004) inter-instrument consistency model, which establishes the genuineness of any information obtained through an instrument when such information is confirmed to be factual by another research instrument.

In addition, the study draws on secondary data through a critical analysis of academic books and journals, newspaper articles, official documents and internet materials that examine the historical and emerging discourse on violent religious extremism and counter-extremism in diverse African states, particularly the Nigerian and Kenyan contexts. The secondary data were used to complement the primary data generated through the qualitative research method. This enabled broader insights into the phenomenon under study, given the impossibility of direct access to all the relevant stakeholders in violent religious extremism, terrorism and counter-terrorism operations, especially the extremists and the security operatives because of the security concern and sensitive nature of the information elicited. It also allowed the isolation of key themes that informed the organization of the chapter.

Scope of the book

Managing Violent Religious Extremism in Fragile States: Building Institutional Capacity in Nigeria and Kenya explores the drivers and consequences of violent religious extremism and the gaps in the institutional capacity to combat extremism in Nigeria and Kenya: the root of violent religious extremism; the evolving transnational dimension, dynamics in extremists' propaganda, modus operandi and the responses of the state, regional and international actors to the extremists' violent campaign. A number of the chapters sought to unpack the historical, social, economic, political and security environments that spawned violent extremism, including how the highly militarized

response of the state impacts the strategic, tactical operational dynamics and lethality of the extremists, and how counter-extremism initiatives have engendered a mixed outcome of progress, setbacks and mixed opportunities and how the extremist groups have continued to demonstrate remarkable resilience, adaptability and flexibility.

Beyond this, the book interrogates the complex connections between radicalization, violent religious extremism and terrorism, countering violent extremism and institutional capacity of the states. Given the weak institutional capacity of most African states, including Nigeria and Kenya, it is clear that violent religious extremist groups pose significant challenges such that these states continue to struggle to deal decisively with the grave threat. The peculiar characteristics of fragile African states make them particularly vulnerable to violent extremism, which spread and proliferate easily across borders to other weak states in the sub-regions, becoming a major transnational threat of epic proportions. The transnational dimension of violent religious extremism, makes it more difficult to counter the threat, with severe implications for national, regional and global peace and security. The states' excessive use of force as the major counter-extremism strategy, while paying little attention to the underlying structural conditions that spur extremists' grievances limit the ability to defeat extremism. The weak state institutions heighten the structural conditions at the root of the problem as it creates opportunistic incentives that corrupt state and non-state actors exploit for pecuniary incentives. This breeds a complex socio-economic, political and security environments that exacerbate existing conflicts and spark new ones. The regional and international ranking of Nigeria and Kenya has also shaped the kind of counter-extremism support from the regional and international partners.

The chapter that follows raised critical questions linked to the historical context, dynamics and implications of violent religious extremism in Africa. How did violent extremism take root and proliferate across the sub-regions in the African continent? How do the socio-economic and political experiences of diverse African states shape the evolution of violent religious extremism in these states? What internal contradictions and experiences of African states provide an enabling environment for global Jihadists' incursion and the gestation of local violent religious extremism?

[Chapter 2](#) highlights the concepts that are central to the analysis of violent religious extremism and the institutional capacity to counter extremism. The concepts of radicalization, violent extremism, counter-insurgency, counter-extremism and institutional capacity are contested terminologies. The contextual elucidation of these terms is tied to the socio-economic, political and security environments in the affected states. This chapter demonstrates that the framing of these concepts by the state actors have shaped the varying security responses to the war on terror.

In [Chapter 3](#), the contextual issues that shaped the formation and rise of violent religious extremist groups, Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram in Kenya and

Nigeria are explored. It provides an in-depth analysis of the ideology, propaganda, underlying causes, modus operandi and tactical operational strategy of Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram. The chapter raises a number of questions about the motives and goals of Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram, the targets of the sects and the transnational dimension of their violent campaigns. It also explains why Al-Shabaab expands from Somalia to other East African countries, especially Kenya. It analyzes the socio-economic and political issues that shaped Boko Haram's evolution in North-eastern Nigeria and its expansion to neighboring countries in the Lake Chad Basin. The chapter also interrogates the responses of the Kenyan and Nigerian governments to the violent activities of the extremist groups and the far-reaching outcomes.

The foregoing dovetails into [Chapter 4](#) which examines the historical, socio-economic, political and security environment in Nigeria that spurred the evolution of Boko Haram and its transmutation from a largely non-violent dissident religious group to a violent religious sect with links to global Jihadists. The chapter analyzes the ideological position, goals, sources of funding, shifting tactical strategy and factionalization of Boko Haram. It explores how the highly militarized responses of the state have continued to shape Boko Haram dynamics, resilient capacity, shifting tactics and flexibility. The chapter examines how the media framing of Boko Haram has shaped the evolving lethality of the sect, public opinion and the local, regional and global responses to the war on terror. The chapter demonstrates that the counter-extremism efforts have failed to address the grievance at the root of the extremism due to the persisting fragility of the state institutions, with far-reaching implications for the war on terror.

[Chapter 5](#) focuses on the rise of Al-Shabaab in Kenya. It analyzes the contextual issues that triggered Al-Shabaab's incursion into Kenya and how the security responses of the government have shaped the rising threat from the sect. It raises critical questions about the externally and internally driven grievances of Al-Shabaab, its ideological position, goals and agenda. The chapter also analyzes the media dimension of the rise of Al-Shabaab and the counter-extremism efforts of the Kenya government in cooperation with regional and international initiatives.

In [Chapter 6](#), the institutional strategies for countering violent religious extremism in Nigeria and Kenya are examined. It explores how the security framing of violent religious extremism shapes the response of state actors in Nigeria and Kenya to the threat from violent extremists. The analysis focuses on the socio-economic, political, security, civil society and international institutional framework for the counter-extremism efforts and the key gaps in the counter-extremism strategies. It demonstrates that the excessive use of force has been the major responses of the Nigerian and Kenyan government to the violent campaign of Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab. The limited attention to the root of extremists' grievances highlights the weak political commitment to tackling the root of violent extremism. The regional and global status of Nigeria and Kenya has shaped the nature of counter-extremism responses

from regional and international allies. The counter-extremism efforts in Nigeria and Kenya have engendered a pattern of progress, and setbacks that continue to shape the trajectories of violent extremism in both countries.

Chapter 7 focuses on the character of African states that creates vulnerabilities to violent extremism. The chapter analyzes the key elements of violent religious extremism in diverse states in Africa. It also unravels the diverse contextual issues that create spaces for violent religious extremism to take root in these African states and the broader implications for peace and security on the continent. It demonstrates that the institutional capacity of these states to counter violent extremism depends on the strength of their socio-economic, political and security institutions.

In **Chapter 8**, the analysis centers on the nexus between religious ideology, violent religious extremism and terrorism in Africa. It addresses critical questions on the roles of ideology in shaping the propaganda, tactics and agenda of hard-line religious sects. It depicts the centrality of ideological orientation to the operational target selection and the justification for violence by violent extremists. The chapter specifically profiles Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab, and examines the extent to which their ideological differences have shaped the factionalization of the two deadly extremist groups.

Chapter 9 examines the nexus between youth radicalism and violent religious extremism. It analyzes the features of youth radicalization, the doctrinal strands and channels of recruitments into radical movements. It investigates how youth radicalization transmutes to violent extremism. The chapter explores the contextual issues that create risks for the youth to be radicalized into violent religious extremism and the challenges they pose to weak states in Africa.

In **Chapter 10**, the key gaps in the institutional capacity of Nigeria and Kenya to counter violent religious extremism are highlighted. It explores the potential for countering violent religious extremism in Nigeria and Kenya. It also highlights the importance of strong and viable socio-economic, political and security institutions in the fight against extremism. The chapter demonstrates that winning the war on terror is tied to the ability to develop and implement people-centered, right-based and community driven counter-extremism strategies, facilitated through national, regional and international collaborative efforts.

Institutional capacity to counter violent religious extremism in Nigeria and Kenya

The threats from violent religious extremism remain lethal, persistent and debilitating to the fragile security architecture in Nigeria and Kenya. Despite the collaborative efforts of the national governments, with sub-regional countries, regional organizations and international community, the extremist groups in both countries have remained remarkably adaptive and resilient. Most narratives depict the socio-economic drivers of violent religious extremism, the highly militarized counter-extremism measures, tainted with poor accountability, human rights violations and opportunistic motives and

the broader impact of the lingering extremists' campaign of terror. While the security analysts accentuate the existential security implications of violent extremism for national and regional peace and security, and by logical extension global security, the medium to long-term projections remain highly contested and debatable. Central to these debates are three fundamental questions: are Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab mainly rooted in socio-economic and political grievances, propagated through ideological agenda? How have the largely militarized responses of the Nigeria and Kenya's governments shaped Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab's progression and shifting tactical strategies, flexibility, adaptability and resilience? What are the impacts of the varied socio-economic, political and security responses of the Nigerian and Kenyan governments to the threat from Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab and the prospect for the war on terror? Can Nigerian and Kenyan weak state institutions develop the capacity to counter violent religious extremism?

The chapters in this book have provided responses to most of these critical questions, highlighting the patterns and dimensions of the war on terror in Nigeria and Kenya. In analyzing the security threat from violent religious extremism in fragile countries, the book poses and provides answers to two pertinent questions: can Nigeria and Kenya, as sub-regional powers in West and East Africa, with moderate economic and military capabilities, but with weak state institutions, develop the capacity to counter the threat of extremist groups? How have Nigeria and Kenya's regional and global status impacted regional and global interventions in both countries the fight against terrorism? The responses of the Nigerian and Kenyan states to counter-extremism, including efforts to address the grievances and social injustices at the heart of the violent campaign of the groups, have hitherto accentuated the weakness of government institutions, in which the actions of the state officials have been primarily driven by vested political and economic interest. These responses largely preserve the dominant interest of the state and political elites, while paying lip services to tackle the underlying causes that spawned violent extremism, tied to inequity, deprivation, marginalization and social justice. The realities underscore the prevailing weakness of socio-economic, political and security institutions that continue to spawn grievances that non-state actors including violent religious extremists used in justifying the recourse to violence.

As the book demonstrates, the drivers of violent religious extremism lie in the persisting structural conditions of social inequities and injustices, that preserve the vested political and economic interests of the state, and spawn grievances by marginalized non-state actors who seek any means of resistance to challenge the status quo. While Al-Shabaab evolved primarily from Somali, the group was able to ride on the prevailing social inequities among the ethnic minorities in Kenya to launch its ideological agenda in the country. Boko Haram adopted the same tactics, exploiting the social marginalization narrative, in promoting its doctrinal position and ideological agenda. The two extremist groups were able to infiltrate other fragile neighboring countries with comparable or more profound governance deficiencies that

breed localized grievance that is used in rationalizing the crusade for religious liberation. The method of operations of Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab have reflected the socio-economic, political and security environments, evolving and adapting in conformity with the highly politicized and militarized counter-extremism strategies of Nigeria and Kenya.

The inadequacy of the counter-extremism efforts in Nigeria and Kenya, despite intensified regional and global support systems, have produced mixed outcomes of missed opportunities, progress and setbacks. Also, the violent campaigns by the religious extremists have worsened the socio-economic conditions at the heart of the grievances, engendering deeper structural imbalances that fuel further insecurity and the entrance of new dissident groups that capitalize on the crisis for opportunistic gains. The violent campaign of Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab has not engendered a solution to the root of the grievance, rather it entrenches a culture of violence in which dissident groups use the threat of violence as a means of negotiating or seeking concessions from the fragile states on the basis of political and economic motives. As much as Nigeria and Kenya continue the pursuit of a politicized and militarized responses that are largely devoid of human rights and people-centered approach to counter-extremism, the war on terror would remain insuperable in the foreseeable future. Ultimately, it is the Nigerian and Kenyan state institutions that will determine the future trajectory of violent religious extremism in both countries. The stake is high, given that Nigeria and Kenya, despite their comparable state of fragility are important sub-regional actors, with the most advanced sub-regional economies and drivers of regional integration in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and East Africa Community (EAC) respectively. It is incontrovertible that the threat from violent religious extremism has profound implications for sub-regional socio-economic integration projects, regional peace, security and stability and indeed peace and stability in Africa, and the rest of the world. Therefore, all hands must be on deck to counter such extremism through the institutionalization of the human security framework as a master strategy of dealing with security threats.

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1 **Historicization of religious extremism in Africa**

Introduction

An exploration of the history of violent religious extremism in Africa from the period of transition to independence as well as the post-colonial era provides critical insights into the socio-economic and political contexts in which violent extremist groups became incubated and eventually emerged in African states. It is argued that the fragility of many African states provides the opportunity for extremist groups to emerge, set up operational bases and find sanctuary to launch their violent campaigns. The African continent has experienced diverse forms of resistance movements, military coups, political assassinations and various intra- and inter-state wars right from the period of transition to independence to the post-colonial era (Forest & Giroux, 2011). These resistance movements that permeated several states on the continent have demonstrated extremist tendencies in the quest to attain ideological and political objectives.

Crenshaw (1994) suggests that extremist and ideologically inspired violent non-state groups have deployed terrorist tactics through acts of violence or the threat of violence as a coercive strategy to cause fear and political intimidation. Notable examples include the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in Algeria, the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) in Eritrea and the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa. Clifford-Vaughan (1987) describes how the ANC openly rationalized the deployment of terror tactics in its violent campaign against the Apartheid regime in 1969, through political subversion, propaganda, sabotage and terrorism, on the basis of their opposition to the political, economic and social structure of South Africa. The violent campaign of some of the violent extremist groups like the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda, Al-Shabaab in Somalia and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in North Africa has gained more prominence and global attention in the last half of the century (Mazrui, 1985; Forest & Giroux, 2011). In the 1960s, the Egyptian-based Muslim Brotherhood (MB) spearheaded by theologian Sayyid Qutb laid the foundation for the Islamist ideology that justified the use of violence by many of today's neojihadist groups and terrorist movements, like Al-Qaeda (Forest & Giroux, 2011). McCullough and Schomerus

(2017) indicate that some international events like the war in Iraq and Israel's actions in Palestine have inspired some Jihadist movements in Africa.

In the 1990s, extremist groups became more noticeable in Africa as their atrocities became more lethal, and attracted global attention. Since the mid-1990s, the use of terror tactics by the extremist groups has been interwoven into broader conflict systems linked to diverse forms of political violence, insurgencies and civil wars (Forest & Giroux, 2011). In the case of North and West Africa, Gow and Olonisakin (2013: 1) describe how the activities of Islamic Jihadists which were largely localized and contained became more intense since 2001 in the two sub-regions, transforming into complex organizations operating both locally and globally by coalescing religious ideology with criminal networks. For instance, in Mali, the rebellion by the Tuareg started in the early 1960s after the country attained independence, and another episode emerged in the early 1990s, and later in 2006 as a result of the breakdown in the National Pact of 1992, which failed to produce tangible results (Boås, 2019). Hinds (2013) identifies some of the major Jihadist groups prominent in the early 2000s in the two regions to include AQIM, GIA, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat, or GSPC), the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (Majao) and Ansar Dine.

In the 2000s, some of the domestic Islamic Jihadist groups merged and transformed into prominent groups with transnational objectives, such as the 2007 merger of Algeria's GSPC with Al-Qaeda that led to the formation of the Organization of AQIM (Forest & Giroux, 2011). Aside from that, AQIM has pushed south into some sub-Saharan states, with its incursion into Mauritania, Niger and Mali; the movement has also diversified its activities into various types of criminality, including drug trafficking (Hinds, 2013). For over a decade, African countries have been contending with the emergence of transnational terrorist groups that use the continent as a theatre to carry out attacks against both domestic and international targets, as well as to develop and maintain operations (Forest & Giroux, 2011). Some examples that point to the transnational dimension of violent extremist activities include the 1998 US embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, the 2002 bombing of an Israeli-owned hotel and airplane in Mombasa, Kenya and attacks against United Nation (UN) buildings in Algeria and Nigeria.

Walther et al., (2017) provide insights into the common historical and ideological background that led to the metamorphosis of the various Jihadist groups affiliated with Al-Qaeda in North and Western Africa into several components of a single, opportunistic network, rather than independent entities. These Jihadist groups became a single network through mergers, splits and changes of names. An author cited the case of GSPC – a splinter group of the Algerian GIA, which later rebranded itself as AQIM after it formally aligned with Al-Qaeda in 2007. Some of the members later split in 2011 to form the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), while others formed Al Moulathamoun and Al Mouakaoune Biddam. The two spinster

groups later merged in 2013 to form Al Mourabitoune, which was renamed Al-Qaeda in West Africa in 2015. An example of a recent merger is that of AQIM, Ansar Dine, Al Mourabitoune and the Macina Liberation Front which fuses on the 'Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims' (Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin) (Walther et al., 2017). Boås (2019) suggests that apart from the fact that the remnants of the original MUJAO insurgency still exist in the three-state border region that divides central-eastern Mali from Burkina Faso and Niger, known as the Liptako-Gourma, new ones have emerged such as the group led by Saharawi-born Abou Walid al-Saharawi that has pledged allegiance to Islamic State (IS), and Ansarul Islam, established by the Burkinabe Ibrahim Malam Dicko. In Nigeria, Boko Haram, the Salafist Jihadist group which emerged in 2002 and came into notoriety in 2009, also split into two major factions: the original Boko Haram known as the Jama'at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da'wah wa'l-Jihad ('the People Committed to the Prophet's Teaching and Jihad' or JASDJ led by Abubakar Shekau), and the faction referred to as Ansaru and later the 'Islamic State West Africa Province' (ISWAP) led by Abu Musab al-Barnawi (Matfess, 2017).

The Sudan's MB, and the National Islamic Front (NIF), under the ideological leadership of Dr. Hassan al-Turabi which came to power in Sudan in 1989 with the aim of establishing Sharia in Sudan, and throughout Africa, are considered ideological forerunners to Salafist-Jihadist groups like Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram, which emerged in East Africa and West Africa, respectively, in the 2000s (Zenn, 2012). In the 1990s, Bin Laden's close ties with the Sudan's NIF provided him the opportunity to connect with and provide funding for Islamic militants in East African countries, including Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Tanzania (Zenn, 2012). In West Africa, Jihadist movements were slow to emerge until the late 1990s, despite the fact that the region is considered to have the largest Muslim population in sub-Saharan Africa. The transition from political authoritarianism to democratic rule in Nigeria in 1999 seemed to have paved way for the emergence of religiously motivated warfare. The Sharia debacle in the 12 predominantly Muslim northern states in Nigeria in the early 2000s later culminated in the establishment of the Nigerian Taliban in 2003, which became known as Boko Haram with the demand for the full imposition of Shari'a-based laws on the example of Taliban-ruled Afghanistan (Zenn, 2012; Matfess, 2017).

The fluidity of the extremist violent campaign across regions is linked to the porosity of the borders on many African states. As Forest and Giroux (2011) aver, some extremists have capitalized on the local context and physical terrain to launch violent attacks within and outside a region. Citing the case of Uganda rebel group, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) which comprised the self-identified 'religious crusaders' from the Muslim Tablig sect opposing the government explained that the ADF were based in western Uganda, along the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo where they took advantage of the terrain and local context to set up rear bases in neighboring Congo, recruiting and training fighters with the promise of

money and education. The base in Congo serves as a signboard for the sect's violent operations. Zenn (2012) also draws attention to how the Algeria's GSPC used the remote parts of northern Mali, Niger and Mauritania as the operational bases to strike Algeria. Thus, the motive of the sect was not linked to any intent to destabilize the democratic transitions underway in West Africa at that time. The extremists exploited the broad weakness of African governments and the internal fighting and corruption of African regimes to strengthen their operational capabilities across the region.

The socio-economic and political realities in Africa provide a signpost for the gestation of violent extremist groups in the continent. Many observers have elucidated on the structural conditions which produce domestic grievances that extremist groups consider as justification for their recourse to violent actions. Most African states are weak with some degree of fragility, in which extreme ones like that of Somalia experience complete absence of a viable central government which makes the entire state ungovernable (Forest & Giroux, 2011). Some states with moderate level of fragility have 'ungoverned spaces' or 'lawless areas' within their borders, despite the presence of state authority that allows violent extremist groups to find sanctuary in these states. The presence of ungoverned spaces poses a major challenge that increases the vulnerability of African states to transnational terrorism.

Security analysts suggest that the structural weakness of African states manifests in lack of socio-economic opportunities that provoke grievances related to perceptions of political marginalization and deprivations at the root of violent extremism (Angerbrandt, 2017; Matfess, 2017). In fact, Bøås (2019) demonstrates that some of the countries confronting violent extremists like Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Niger are ranked the poorest and weakest countries in the world, with varying degree of fragility relating to instability, chronic violence, humanitarian crises and large-scale migration or displacement. In North and West Africa, decades of conflicts fuel political and cross-border instabilities, coupled with incidence of poverty, political and cultural marginalization, low educational attainment, lack of opportunities, especially for young people and the collapse of traditional Islamic organizations increases susceptibility to extremist groups (Hinds, 2013). Other contributory factors relate to the broader historical context of political and cultural resistance by certain peripheral regional elements to a delegitimized and stagnated central authority (Pargeter, 2009: 1032).

While some observers provide evidence which suggests that authoritarianism contributed to a vicious cycle of repression and extremism in the case of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia (Storm, 2009: 998), others find out that Islamist extremism can occur under other political circumstances, drawing example from the case of Algeria, where local Jihadism in suburbs of Algiers emerged during a period of democratic transition (Belaala, 2008: 15). Thus, Hinds (2013) concludes that the political context of various African countries has provided environment for radical Islamist elements to thrive. In the case of Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, it was suggested that the crises in these countries

led to consequences that spawned political vacuum that created conducive environment for Islamic extremism. In Nigeria, governance crisis fuels disillusionment with political authority and perceptions of the ‘hypocrisy’ of state actors that sparked anti-state tendencies by extremist groups (Hinds, 2013; Thurston, 2015). Citing the case of Algeria, Boubaker (2011) finds out that the Wahhabi Salafism leveraged on the disappointment of Algerians with the violence of the recent past and the dominance of the National Liberation Front to gain prominence. In a study on violent extremism in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger (International Alert, 2018) suggest that fragile and conflict-affected states are prone to extremist groups due to the perception of abuse and violation by government authorities that exposed young people to risk of joining violent extremist groups. The historical analysis into the evolution of violence extremism in Africa needs to take account of socio-economic and political contexts in which radical Jihadists emerged in the African continent.

History of violent extremism in Africa

The history of violent extremism in the African continent is rooted in the political and socio-economic experiences of the diverse countries confronting extremist groups in the continent. The diverse contexts in which violent extremism emerged in the African countries and spread to sub-regions can be understood through an analysis of their historical, political, social and economic experiences. The analysis will focus on the experience of specific regions in the continent, highlighting the circumstances that paved way for the emergence and rise of extremism in these sub-regions. The analysis shall focus on East Africa, West Africa, North Africa and Southern Africa. The analysis only covers countries that have significant violent extremist threats. It is important to note however the lack of uniformity on the so-called push and pull factors that drive violent extremism. Push factors refer to the structural contexts that would enable violent extremism such as poverty and marginalization. Pull factors would include the motivations and processes that would lead to violent extremism such as a sense of belonging. The analysis pursued in this chapter is context-specific but with overlaps on causations of violent extremism. The perspectives discussed in subsequent sections point to a multiplicity of factors. From the analysis provided, these extremist groups are largely founded on societal grievances, religious and political goals. Some of the groups such as the Al-Shabaab in Somalia embrace both a local form of Jihad and also a global form of Jihad. The latter is an interpretation of a defensive Jihad that would transcend the Somali nation. Boko Haram in Nigeria also follows the Jihadist agitation and is perceived to be localized, yet the call for a rule under Islam points to global Jihadist-inspired agenda. This would fit into an international struggle to defend a religion (Islam) that is under siege. This would explain Al-Shabaab’s goal of establishing a common Muslim state, the Caliphate (Hansen, 2016). The next section examines the history of violent extremism in North Africa and its linkages with other parts of the continent.

Violent extremism in North Africa and the proliferation across the continent

The history of violent extremism in the African continent is mainly traceable to the North Africa region from the early 1990s. In North Africa, in particular, the rise of Islamist radicalism that set the stage for violent extremism is linked in part to the events of the Soviet Union defeat in the late 1980s in Afghanistan (Cilliers, 2015). Drawing insights from the case of Algeria, young Algerians had previously been recruited to fight with the Mujahedeen in Afghanistan. This created the seed of Islamic fundamentalism that then ruptured when the Islamist inclined Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) won the 1992 elections in Algeria. The election win was subsequently annulled by the military. FIS then launched a Jihad against the Front de Liberation Nationale (FNL) in a conflict that claimed over 100,000 lives after the annulment of the 1992 elections. In post-independence Algeria, the FIS had been supported by the government on an Arabization and Islamization path as a way to counter French dominance in the country. In the context of the legalization of the FIS in 1989, a youth bulge had been rising in the country arising from the growing dissatisfaction with the FNL government. This period also saw the rise of multiple Islamic fundamentalist groups in a context of limited economic opportunities in Algeria (Cilliers, 2015).

In 1998 in Algeria, a new radical group was formed – GSCP which had by 2001 metamorphosed into Algeria's most dangerous armed group (Cilliers, 2015). It eventually found linkages with the Al-Qaeda global network. In 2004, it had established a training ground for new members from Chad, Mali, Sudan, Libya and Mauritania in Tibesti mountains in Northern Chad. By 2007, it had lost ground and eventually renamed itself AQIM to announce its support for the Al-Qaeda global network. In the 2007s, it changed its tactics that included the adoption of suicide attacks and increased casualties. While its reach and lethality has weakened over the years, it has maintained contact with the Boko Haram in Nigeria. AQIM has maintained contacts with Boko Haram by providing weapons and training. By 2015, a series of splintering within AQIM saw some factions pledging their allegiance to the IS, even though the core of the members sustained their affiliation with the Al-Qaeda global network (Cilliers, 2015).

A group of African students that left for religious training in parts of the Middle East and North Africa has also been linked to a wave of religion-inspired conflicts on the continent. This has been mainly attributed to the teachings of Wahhabist doctrines that are solely associated with Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia. The students who trained in countries as Saudi Arabia, Syria and so on returned to the African continent and inspired a wave of violent attacks in their respective countries (Ndzovu, 2018). Religion is linked with violence through Islamic radicalization. The connection made between religion and violence is on the basis of a radical interpretation of Islam to legitimize violence. Salafism in particular is considered a route of

Islamization (Larsen, 2020). Salafism, also referred to as Wahhabism, is a node within Sunni Islam that is literalist and puritanical in its interpretation of the Quran and *hadiths*. At the center of Salafism is its focus on the basic sources of Islam. The more radical versions of Salafism are intolerant of other religions, including moderate strains of Islam, while being open to violence (Comolli, 2017). It is however personal experiences and social background that can lead to religious radicalization. The latter would involve the indoctrination of extreme religious ideologies, which would raise the prospects for mobilizing political violence. This would proceed from the basis of emotions and broader connections with Islam for those who are persuaded to pursue a range of grievances (social and economic marginalization for example) that they perceive to be directed at their faith (Larsen, 2020). The next section examines the spread of violent extremism in East Africa.

The spread of violent extremism in East Africa

The foundations of violent extremism in East Africa can be linked to the 1970s and 1980s, following a return of religious leaders that had trained mainly in Saudi Arabia (Ndzovu, 2018). These religious leaders had been exposed to Salafist training. Salafism which is considered to be a variant of Wahhabism advocates for a return to the puritanical approaches of Islam as was passed by the companions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Within Salafism is a variant that advocates for a violent Jihad, with goals of establishing an Islamic State and a rule of God on earth (Ndzovu, 2018). Somalis have a history of traveling to Afghanistan in the Afghan War of 1979–1989. Somali Jihadists who participated in this war took a defensive Jihad posture. This, as Hansen (2016) notes, was a form of solidarity with their Muslim brothers who had come under Soviet intervention. These experiences, for the Somali fighters who had participated in the Afghan war, broadened their ideas on the international sphere and in religion. For these Somalis, they embraced from early on a form of Pan-Islamism which was a novelty in their country. This novelty meant that their notion of loyalty toward religion went beyond the Somali nation. It became an obligation to the wider Ummah (Hansen, 2016). This Pan-Islamism has been advocated in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania with references to wider Jihad causes. The interplay between religious narratives and social grievances is a critical factor in explaining the rise of violent extremism in the East African region (Hansen, 2016; Ndzovu, 2017, 2018; Romaniuk & Durner, 2018).

Islamic radicalism and the consequent terror of violence in Somalia was as early as 1975 with the brutal execution of ten Sheikhs on 23rd January (Ingiriis, 2018). Al-Itihaad Al-Islami (AIAI) in Somalia was formed in 1983 clandestinely by Somalis who had studied in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. It further supported the program of the Egyptian MB. Like the Brotherhood in Egypt, it ran humanitarian and social service activities in South Central-Somalia (Cilliers, 2015). Through these interventions, it built extensive support among

local communities. Its goal was to oust Barre and his scientific socialism from Somalia. It had a motivation to build a greater Somalia state in the Horn of Africa as it sought to unite Somalis living in Kenya, Djibouti and Ethiopia. It received funding from Somali diaspora as well as from wealthy Saudis such as Bin Laden. Bin Laden also supported the movement by sending foreign militants to train and fight with the group. Members of this group had amassed fighting experience in Afghanistan in the late 1980s. Following their return, a small Al-Qaeda cell was set up in Somalia which was responsible for the planning of the 1998 US embassy bombings in Nairobi and the Israeli hotel and airliner attacks in 2002 in Mombasa, Kenya (Cilliers, 2015).

On the 14th of July, 1989, there was the shooting at the Sheikh Ali Sufi mosque in Mogadishu where hundreds of demonstrators protesting against the oppression of the Siad Barre regime were massacred. Other demands of the 1989 protests included the release of imprisoned Sheikhs, and this incited the radical Salafi elements (Ingiriis, 2018). In Somalia, which is the home base of Al-Shabaab, the history of violent extremism can be traced to the aftermath of the state collapse in 1991. It was the state collapse in 1991 that offered a vacuum for the radical Salafi returnees from Saudi Arabia to return and compete for political power with the Siad Barre regime. The state collapse meant the lack of an overarching religious and political authority. This vacuum was exploited by the young Salafi returnees and older experienced leaders in urban spaces such as Mogadishu, to form an armed militia group – AIAI (Ingiriis, 2018).

The origins of the Al-Shabaab (meaning ‘youth’ in Arabic) can be traced more principally to 2003 as part of the efforts to restore the AIAI which had collapsed following a series of armed combats with Ethiopia between 1996 and 1998 (Ingiriis, 2018). The actual origin of the Al-Shabaab is contested in scholarship. There are conflicting accounts about the emergence of the sect between 2003 and 2007. What is not in doubt is that it draws its spirituality and militancy from the AIAI. The name Al-Shabaab emerged first when its members made a public appearance on the eve of the conquest of Mogadishu by the Islamic Courts Union (UIC) in June of 2006 (Ingiriis, 2018). In the aftermath of the UIC victory in Mogadishu, the movement began a consolidation process under the leadership of Abu Zubeyr (Ingiriis, 2018).

Under Abu Zubeyr’s leadership, Al-Shabaab’s military and organizational capabilities were enhanced through the incorporation of other movements that emerged from the UIC such as Hizbul Islam. Additionally, under his leadership, he was able to attract external funding mainly from the Gulf states, including the recruitment of young men who were both Somalis and non-Somalis to the movement. The rallying call was to create a strong Pan-Islamic anti-in-fidel insurgency (Ingiriis, 2018). Al-Shabaab has a goal to create an Islamic caliphate, push away foreign forces and to dismantle the Ethiopian-sponsored regimes at the central or federal levels in the country. In terms of ideology, it follows an extreme Wahhabi doctrine – which implies that they can kill or maim those who differ in their interpretation of Islam (Ingiriis, 2018).

The UIC had the goal of bringing order and the creation of an Islamic State. Earlier in February of 2006, the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) had been formed, but it failed to stamp its authority beyond Baidoa. TFG had the backing of Ethiopia. At the request of the TFG, the US-backed Ethiopian troops in July 2006, invaded Somalia with the goal of crushing the UIC and installing the TFG in Mogadishu (Agbiboa, 2014). Al-Shabaab managed to drive an anti-Ethiopian discourse and capitalized on that moment to recruit thousands of volunteers to its cause. It was further able to delegitimize a host of actors such as the TFG, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Kenya, Djibouti and Ethiopia in order to create support for its armed rebellion (Agbiboa, 2014).

In its expansionist strategies, Al-Shabaab found Kenya to be a suitable recruitment base for radicalization into violent extremism. To the Islamist-inspired recruiters, Kenya, after its military intervention in Somalia in October 2011, became principally an ‘enemy’ of Islam and was now seen in similar lenses of ‘western led’ occupation and control of Somalia. The call for recruiters thus was to join in a religion-inspired movement, led by Al-Shabaab against western assault on Islam, simply termed Jihad. Charismatic preachers mainly along Kenya’s Coast used the narratives of marginalization to support Al-Shabaab’s strategy which referenced globalization in its cause. They did this through indoctrination and recruitment of Kenyans into their cause. They used the frame of religion to provoke a broader call around a ‘defensive Jihad’ as a result of the perceived religious assaults. This assault was framed within larger debates on how governments have linked violence to Islam. The attendant actions such as the arbitrary arrests, extraordinary renditions, the military invasion of Somalia in October 2011 fit into this victimization narrative. Perceptions of Muslims suffering in other parts of the world including Somalia have been advanced with calls to uptake violent Jihad. Religion is then deployed as a counter-response to the perceived assaults (Ndzovu, 2017; Githigaro, 2018). Even though there is no consensus yet on the proper links between religion and violent extremism, the former is deemed important in providing meaning and can trigger a specific response including violence (Anderson & McKnight, 2014; Githigaro, 2018; Larsen, 2020).

Since 2008, Al-Shabaab has transformed itself from a Somali nationalist movement to a globalized agenda. The movement initially began with a localized agenda, which was to drive away the Ethiopians from Somalia. It later adopted an Al-Qaeda-led global Jihad against the West (Agbiboa, 2014). In 2009, Al-Shabaab deepened its ties with the Al-Qaeda and in September of that year pledged its allegiance to the Bin Laden’s Al-Qaeda. The immediate implication of this was a change in strategy and tactics of its insurgency (Agbiboa, 2014).

In Kenya, the return of Sheikh Abdulaziz Rimo in the late 1980s from training in Saudi Arabia led to the rise of the Ansar Sunna sect in Kwale in Kenya’s Coastal region. This is a region with a predominant Muslim population. Rimo laid the framework for violent religious extremism. It is through

the agency of the Ansar Sunna Sect in Kenya that a radical Wahhabist ideology got engrained in Kenya. Beginning in the early 2000s, a series of indoctrination and radicalization to violent extremism began (Ndzovu, 2018). This was aided by local and foreign charismatic preachers who sowed the seeds of violent extremism in the coastal region and beyond. These charismatic preachers took on tropes of marginalization, including a series of ‘violations’ against Muslim communities to advocate for a radical change and action in societies. These charismatic preachers supported the creation of an Islamic caliphate in the East African region where Muslims would be governed by Sharia law. This additionally would serve as a counter to ‘Christian’ governments that even though secular in their orientation were claimed to be discriminative to the Muslim communities (Mogire & Mkutu, 2011; Prestholdt, 2011; Githigaro, 2015, 2018).

The narratives of Muslim marginality particularly in the aftermath of September 11 attacks saw a series of Islamophobic tendencies in Kenya. These events inspired forms of revolt including violent extremism. Charismatic preachers critiqued the labeling of Muslims as ‘suspect communities’ in the evolving Global War on Terror (GWOT) discourse. This GWOT discourse was manifested through the securitization narratives of government officials who labeled Muslim communities as terrorism supporters often in uncritical ways. The latter has been based on the simplistic analysis that had been proffered between Islam and terrorism and particularly in Kenya’s Coastal region (Prestholdt, 2011). Following the 1998 US Embassy bombings in Nairobi, Kenya was linked to the Al-Qaeda network, and Muslims became scapegoats in the subsequent counter-terrorism operations. This led to the rise of arbitrary arrests and detention as well as regular swoops and raids in their neighborhoods, which also led to extraordinary renditions of terror suspects over time. Claims of human rights violations of Muslims were used to justify the call for recruitment into violent extremism. Recruitment was mobilized on the claims of a defensive Jihad that would require followers to defend a religion under siege. A counter response to Kenya’s military intervention in Somalia in 2011 was interpreted in this respect (Mogire & Mkutu, 2011; Prestholdt, 2011; Githigaro, 2015).

In Tanzania, East Africa, militant Islamic practice likely to lead to violent extremism became more manifested in the post-1998 Dar Es Salaam bombings (Lesage, 2014). In the Zanzibar Island, there was a series of domestic Islamist militancy largely inspired by local grievances as opposed to calls for a global Jihad. This series of local grievances in Zanzibar ranged from the historical marginalization of conservative Islamist voices in Tanzanian politics to frustrations around the status of Zanzibar, and high unemployment rates, including perceptions of Muslims marginalization by the central government (Lesage, 2014). In 2001, there was a rise of radical group known as *Uamsho* (which means a form of awakening in Swahili) (Lesage, 2014).

The rise of *Uamsho* in the wider context served to demonstrate that militarism was moving beyond the domestic sphere in Tanzania. This group

(*Uamsho*) raised the bar further in terms of radical politics, and it arose the fear that its activities could lead to wider sectarian conflicts. The group which was initially founded as an Islamic non-governmental organization has now become radical in its politics by calling for Zanzibar's independence from Tanzania. In the post-2012 period, the group has been linked to a series of attacks that included arson, acid and explosive attacks. There have been calls for bans on the movement for its claimed association with similar movements such as the Al-Shabaab in Somalia, its Kenyan offshoot, the Al-Hijra and the Boko Haram movement in Nigeria (Lesage, 2014).

The *Uamsho* group projects itself as a form of revivalist Islamic group by speaking the language of human rights and democracy. The government of Zanzibar portrays it as a fundamentalist group. Similarly, various western think tanks and intelligence services consider it a terrorist organization. *Uamsho* has been linked with attacks in the tourism industry in Zanzibar (Turner, 2009).

The connections between Kenya, Tanzania and Somalia have been more prominent with the Ansar Muslim Youth Centre (AMYC) in Tanga, Tanzania. AMYC remains the only direct affiliate of the Al-Shabaab through the Kenyan affiliate of the Shabaab-Al-Hijra. The connections have included trainings of AMYC recruits in Mombasa, Kenya in the past through such institutions as Masjid Musa, Kanamai and Masjid Sakina. These institutions have been associated with preachers such as the late Sheikhs Rogo and Makaburi. The AMYC is however made up of loose network of activists and preachers. What is not in doubt is that this structure could well be serving as a rear base for Al-Shabaab/Al-Hijra through recruitment, fundraising and organization. Tanzania could further serve as a base to launch attacks, given that Al-Shabaab has recruited its nationals (Lesage, 2014).

In Uganda, a domestic Islamist group known as the ADF operates on the Uganda-Congo borderlands. The ADF is considered a domestic-oriented group and is yet to form international linkages, unlike similar outfits such as the Al-Shabaab in East Africa and Boko Haram in West Africa. The ADF was established in 1996, even though its ideological roots can be traced back to the 1980s. It arose as a counterforce to the perceived marginalization of Muslims by the Ugandan government then. It has continued to launch attacks both in Beni in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and in Uganda, and it is considered a security threat by Ugandan authorities. ADF has been accused of perpetrating human rights violations including rape, abduction of children, executions and kidnappings. Following a series of battlefield defeats in 2014 by the Congolese forces, the group split into small formations to avoid detection. The group, predominantly made up of Salafi Muslims, has a goal of establishing an Islamic state in Uganda. This would allow it to apply Sharia law according to its leader Mukulu. In this regard, the group distributes tape recordings of its leader urging its followers to launch a holy Jihad, the forcible conversion of non-Muslims, while advocating for punishment according to Islamic law (Weeraratne & Recker, 2018). Its Islamic ideology has however been a subject of contention. Research has suggested that the group is intent on

removing Museveni's government and thus only uses religion instrumentally (Weeraratne & Recker, 2018).

Other perspectives argue that its motivation has evolved over time (Weeraratne & Recker, 2018). Furthermore, there are controversies in its religious ideology. Within the group, there is a disagreement about who the 'enemy' is. Do they deal with the Museveni regime as the near enemy, or do they engage with the faraway enemy as the 'global Jihadists' are intent on? The group is yet to cultivate any close ties with international extremist groups, even though it had infrequent ties with the Al-Qaeda in the 1990s and the Al-Shabaab in contemporary times (Weeraratne & Recker, 2018).

The ADF, owing to a military assault by the Ugandan military and the acceptance within its ranks of the Ugandan government amnesty program, lacks a clear goal in Uganda. While its operations have concentrated on the Uganda-Congo borderlands, its membership and recruitment strategy has shifted to the DRC. Half of its membership is drawn from local Congolese youths. It recruits through forced conscription and financial inducements. The group has a strong business network in Congolese towns such as Butembo, Beni and Oiche in North Kivu and also has expanded to other areas in Uganda and Rwanda. This cross-border trading supports the movement's logistics such as food, clothing and medicine for its training camps. The increased expansion of the ADF in the Rwenzori borderlands and into Eastern DRC can be explained by two factors. One is the near absence of state control in Eastern DRC. Two, the group's activities need to be contextualized within geopolitical crises in the Great Lakes region. It has been caught up in the regional war complexes of the region. At one point, it was claimed to be supported by the Bashir regime in Sudan as a plan to destabilize the Museveni regime for the latter's support of South Sudan's liberation struggle. It was also supported by the Mobutu regime in its early years as a counterforce to the Rwandan Ugandan collaboration against Hutu militias in Eastern DRC (Weeraratne & Recker, 2018).

The group, with the arrest of its leader Mukulu in 2015, seems to now reflect a growing Congo demography. It is presently a dissident group operating in the borderlands. Having been pushed out of Uganda, it also seems to have lost its original ideological goal. A UN Security Council expert that oversaw sanctions in the DRC found no linkages between the ADF and other extremist groups. The Ugandan government projects both the ADF and the LRA as terrorist organizations linked to the 'Global War on Terror' (GWOT) (Romaniuk & Durner, 2018).

There is an emerging evidence that Uganda may have sympathizers and supporters of Al-Shabaab in Somalia. Uganda contributes the largest percentage of troops to AMISOM mission in Somalia (Romaniuk & Durner, 2018). It experienced a deadly extremist attack in July 2010 in a restaurant as fans watched the World Cup football match (Romaniuk & Durner, 2018). Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for this attack. One of the masterminds was a Ugandan who had trained with the insurgent group in Somalia.

Overall, there is yet to be concrete evidence that Al-Shabaab or Al-Qaeda has set up significant operations or recruitment cells in Uganda. Furthermore, there is only limited evidence of IS in Uganda (Romaniuk & Durner, 2018).

In the context of violent extremism in Uganda, the non-Islamist group, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), is also referenced. The LRA emerged in northern Uganda as a Christian fundamentalist group under the leadership of the charismatic Joseph Kony in the mid-1980s after Museveni had seized power (Romaniuk & Durner, 2018). Kony claimed that the Holy Spirit had ordered the overthrow of the Museveni government. While initially the LRA had a good level of support among the Acholi population, it lost that community support as a result of brutality and violence. It later resorted to forced conscription including the use of child soldiers. LRA has shifted its operations to the Central African Republic and Sudan in recent years (Romaniuk & Durner, 2018).

In Sudan's post-1989 military coup, the country supported a wide range of terrorist organizations leading to its designation by the US government in 1993 as a state sponsor of terrorism. In the 1990s, Sudan also became a host to Bin Laden. It was variously deemed to be a refuge point and a training ground for a number of violent Islamist groups. These included the Lebanon Hezbollah, Egyptian al-Gama'at al-Islamiyya and members of the Abu Nidal's organization (Cilliers, 2015).

Between 1989 and 2019, Sudan was considered a facilitator of global Jihad movements. Through the Inqāz regime that seized power in a military coup in 1989, a series of support was offered to global movements such as the Al-Qaeda. This then created a germination ground for violent extremism. At the fall of Soviet Union and the end of the Afghan Jihad, Arab Afghans moved to Sudan such as Osama Bin Laden (Abdalla, 2019). Osama Bin Laden's stay in Sudan between 1991 and 1996 helped to strengthen the Al-Qaeda network, in terms of ideology and also its regional expansion (Abdalla, 2019). The Salafi Jihadist movement that thrived in Sudan, which is based on the *Tafkiri* ideas, recruited domestically from university students and also launched a series of domestic terrorist activities. Furthermore, through its internal training camps, it exported terrorist activities outside of Sudan. Salafi Jihadists and *Tafkiri* movements consider other Muslims as unbelievers and adopt the use of violence to achieve their goals. In the post-2014 period, two violent extremist groups exist in Sudan. The history of violent extremism can be traced to the latter years of President Numeiri's regime (1971–1985), and which took on the political ideology of the MB (Abdalla, 2019).

To understand the violent extremism landscape in Sudan's post-2014, two groups are discussed here. One is the MB and the second is Tayār al-Umma al-Wāḥida (TUW, Pan-Islamist Movement), a Sudanese Islamist ideological movement that promotes unity among all the Islamic groups and appeals for the reawakening of the Islamic caliphate (Abdalla, 2019). The group's founder and ideologue, Mohamed Ali Al-Jizuli, states that the group's goal is to reform the Islamic community and establish an Islamic State in Sudan. He devoted

his Friday sermons to support the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq (ISIS) ideology in Sudan. In June 2014, he called for attacks on American interests in Islamic countries on the claim that it was an act pertaining to Muslims' religious obligation toward the founding of an Islamic State. Although his desire to be appointed as an Emir by ISIS did not materialize, he remains sympathetic to ISIS cause that resists western expansionism and secular states. TUW has particularly appealed to the youth, as it deploys information technology, especially the social media, to reach its ever-expanding audience (Abdalla, 2019).

The second group in Sudan is a pro-ISIS leaning and is an offshoot of the MB; Jamat ul iltisam bil kitab wa sunnah. (JKS, Society of Adherence to Quran and Sunna). JKS traces its foundation to 1979, but owing to internal frictions split into two – NIF, led by Hassan al-Turabi, and the MB, led by al-Hibir Yousif Nouraldayim. It was a split within the MB that led to the creation of JKS in 1991 under the leadership of Sheikh Suleiman Abunaru who died in 2014. Abunaru's group has been supportive of Salafi Jihadi ideas. His group members had fought in the Soviet-Afghan war (1979–1989) and in the Jihad in Somalia (Abdalla, 2019).

Abdalla (2019) notes that JKS is inspired by Sayyid Qutb's Salafi-Jihadist ideology, which advocates the transformation of society based on Islamic rules, such as the use of Sharia and the pursuit of an armed Jihad in the expansion of Islam. The group has denounced the modern state and related institutions. It relies on lectures, lessons and meetings to push its agenda. It has particularly sought to recruit the youth to engage in preaching and Jihad through mosques and other religious establishments. The Sudanese government has deflected the role of local actors and historical developments that have supported the rise of violent extremism in the country. Instead, part of the official narratives is to treat violent extremism as imported from abroad (Abdalla, 2019). The rise of violent extremist groups in East Africa is rooted in the quest for theocratic rule due to perceived failure of the state. The violent extremist groups in this region all express desire to pursue Islamic States as forms of governance. The idea of an Islamic State is not only a localized agenda but also the idea of a global caliphate. The groups in this context are inspired by Salafist ideas and are open to projecting violence to achieving their goals.

Violent extremism in West Africa

The rise of Boko Haram, a violent extremist group in West Africa but with a principal base in Northern Nigeria, needs to be understood within the intersection of politics, poverty and Islamist fundamentalism. Like other Islamist groups beyond West Africa such as Al-Qaeda – and the now defunct group, ISIS – it has an overarching goal of establishing a Caliphate system governed by Sharia law. Boko Haram arose in a context of diverse ideological groups such as the Izala movement, Muslim Students Society of Nigeria (MSSN),

Islamic Movement of Nigeria, the Kala-Kato, Maitasine movement and the Ahmadiyya Movement. Even though these groups differ ideologically, they are unified in their desire for a rule under Sharia law (Akinola, 2015).

It suffices in this context to examine briefly two groups that foregrounded the rise of Boko Haram: the Izala movement and the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN). A key difference between the two is that the Izala are categorized as Salafists who align themselves with Wahhabi ideologies and draw their support from Saudi Arabia. Wahhabism is a movement within Sunni Islam that is literalist and puritanical in its interpretation of the Quran and hadiths. Salafism broadly offers radical interpretations and is fundamentalist in its ideology. It is largely intolerant of other religions including more moderate stances within Islam (Comolli, 2017). The IMN, on the other hand, is a Shiite organization and is shaped after the Iran Revolutionary Guards. It draws its support from Iran. IMN is open to the use of violence to pursue a Sharia-driven revolution as happened with the 1979 Iran Islamic Revolution (Comolli, 2017). IMN, for instance, did not acknowledge the existence of the Nigerian state and pursued violent clashes with government forces until 1999. In particular, while these groups took on a Shia-Sunni divide, they nevertheless found commonalities among other extremist Islamic groups that arose in northern Nigeria. The commonalities among these militant organizations are their negative evaluation of Nigeria's leadership that they consider to be unjust, corrupt and non-responsive to social and economic problems. Additionally, these groups denounce Western values which in their view have led to an embrace of secularism in the society (Comolli, 2017).

In Nigeria, Boko Haram has been in existence since the early 2000s, even though it began its insurgency in 2009. The initial leader of the group, Mohammed Yusuf, was killed in 2009 by the Nigerian security forces. His deputy, Abubakar Shekau, later emerged as the leader of the sect. Its main base of operation was northern Nigeria even though in the present context, it has a trans-border reach perpetrating attacks in countries such as Cameroon, Niger and Chad. Just like Al-Shabaab in Somalia, it was founded on a series of socio-political grievances. These grievances are linked to perception of socio-economic marginalization like poverty, unemployment, lack of social infrastructures which are important factors used in drawing people to their course and for the recruitment of new members. The relative deprivation thesis has been invoked in understanding the insurgency. In sum, relative deprivation argues that violent actions may be sustained by a range of grievances (Agbiboa, 2013; Akinola, 2015; Cannon & Iyekekpolo, 2018).

The group applies a religious ideology in its championing of a global ideology, thus linking itself to the rhetoric of the Al-Qaeda and the IS. The process of globalization is touted as an important factor in the trans-border expansion of the Boko Haram. This has enabled it to acquire illicit arms, weapons, funds, training and operational tactics (Cannon & Iyekekpolo, 2018). The group has an objective of establishing a caliphate system to be administered by Sharia law in Nigeria (Akinola, 2015). Its foundation is thus premised

on the mantra that ‘Western culture is forbidden’. The insurgency remains critical to what is termed as Western-based influences that impact on the traditions, values and beliefs among Muslim communities in Nigeria. It continues to pursue its overriding goal of controlling the Nigerian state through a Sharia code (Agbiboa, 2013). The group, like other insurgent movements, has factions and as such does not have a unified purpose. Some factions of the group are committed to ending its violence, others are committed to a peace agreement, with another faction committed to a goal of actualizing Sharia across the country. The group has claimed links with the Al-Qaeda and the Al-Shabaab in Somalia. The intensity of tactics such as suicide bombings is linked to the Al-Qaeda influence. Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab have been linked through trainings in Somalia (Agbiboa, 2013; 2014). Since July 2014, it has offered its support and consequent allegiance to the ISIS (Comolli, 2017: 97).

The contextualization of violent extremism in West Africa indicates that Boko Haram is the principal movement in the region. The sect emerged within the broader context of social, economic and political marginalization in the northern region. It was able to gain recruits in neighboring states where such socio-economic conditions are rampant. The group has managed to use the trope of religion as a mobilizing narrative and an ideology for its existence. It resembles other insurgent groups in other regions of Africa that continue to suffer splits and fractionalization owing to competing ideological outlooks.

Southern Africa’s encounter with violent extremism

Violent extremist threats are present in the Southern African region. During the apartheid period in South Africa, the ANC had deployed terror tactics as part of its violence against the Apartheid regime in 1969 (Clifford-Vaughan, 1987). In the post-apartheid era, a more serious form of violent extremist threats is found in Mozambique in the Cabo Delgado region (Morier-Genoud, 2020). In South Africa, the available evidence implicates individuals who either move there to hide, to plan attacks, or to raise funds rather than actual insurgent groups operating there. The individuals residing in South Africa have been implicated in logistical planning of violent extremist activities in other parts of the continent. For instance, one of the masterminds of the 2010 Abuja attacks in Nigeria, Henry Okah, lived periodically in South Africa between 2003 and 2010. He coordinated the Abuja 2010 attack from South Africa (Cachalia & Schoeman, 2016). Okah claimed to be a leader of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). In 2013, he was convicted in South Africa for 13 related counts of terrorism that touched on Abuja and Warri bombings in Nigeria. Another notable figure that is wanted by Kenyan authorities for terrorism charges hid in Johannesburg, South Africa, under a fake identity. The lady termed as the ‘White Widow’ is a British national named Samantha Lewthwaite. She lived and worked in

South Africa between 2008 and 2010. She was linked to the bombings in Mombasa, Kenya, in 2012 and the 2013 Westgate shopping mall attack in Nairobi, Kenya. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the Westgate attack. Within the South African region, there are claims that Al-Qaeda terror cells could be in operation around Namibia, Botswana and Madagascar. The cells are claimed to have been established mainly for terrorism financing (Cachalia & Schoeman, 2016).

In Mozambique, a wave of insurgency has been rising since 2007 in the Cabo Delgado region. This is a region characterized by poverty and inequalities amidst mega discoveries of gas. A group that is yet to have a clear identity has been operating in the area. The locals sometimes refer to it as 'Al-Shabaab' or the Al-Sunnah Wal-Jamâa. The use of the term 'Al-Shabaab sect' is applied locally with claims that it behaves like the Al-Shabaab in Somalia. It was only in 2016 that the group began its militant violence (Morier-Genoud, 2020). This insurgency is considered to have considerable connections with Kenya and Tanzania, given that some of the radical preachers have originated from the East African region. It is further influenced by Wahhabism with some of its Mozambican members having returned from training in Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Egyptian universities.

The group began principally as a religious sect and chose to withdraw from the society but with hopes of establishing a society based on Sharia. Prior to 2017, they demanded that their membership should not partake of secular systems such as health, education and justice which they would in turn provide in their mosques. This was their attempt to create a 'counter-society'. It was not until 2017 that the group changed its approach to violence in order to effect political change. There is at the moment very minimal scholarly insight into the ongoing insurgency but as of mid-2019, the insurgency group affiliated itself to the ISIS even though the extent of their relationship remains unclear (Morier-Genoud, 2020).

Conclusion

The historical analysis of violent extremism in the African continent has demonstrated that the extremist groups' emergence in diverse contexts across the continent is linked to perceived political and socio-economic grievances by radical religious groups against the state. The perception of marginalization by these extremist groups has been at the root of the emergence and spread of violent extremism in Africa. While some of the groups initially emerged as domestic groups, they later transformed into transregional and transnational extremists through association and affiliation with Jihadist groups in the Arab world that offered financial and other supports to them. The linkage with transnational criminal networks has also provided incentives for lethal activities of some of the extremist groups. Right from the pre-independence era, the struggle for political relevance has created the impetus for the emergence of extremists in some African states. In the post-independence era,

it is inevitable that discontent with the political arrangement will give rise to some dissident groups, which manifested along both ethnic and religious lines. It is in this context that religious extremism manifested in the 1960s in many African states. However, the activities of these extremist groups did not gain much international attention until the 1990s, when the atrocities perpetrated by them became more pronounced including direct targeting of Western interest in their countries.

The spread of religious extremism across various sub-regions in Africa has been linked to the fragile nature of the state in many contexts, where there are many ungovernable spaces that extremist groups utilize for their operational bases. In some contexts, the groups set up operational bases in neighboring countries where they launch attack on their countries of origin. The violent activities of these extremists have destabilized the affected regions, leading to profound peace and security challenges. While the lethality of the extremist groups differs across diverse contexts, their capacity to incubate and launch major attacks is determined by the degree of state fragility in diverse African contexts.

Evidence suggests that the weakness of state institutions in many African states creates structural problems that produce grievances that fuel extremists' agitations. The state's fragility also creates opportunities for the extremist groups to incubate and spread across regions. It also provides the opportunity for some of the groups to link up with transnational groups in the Arab world. The security challenges posed by extremist groups expose the weakness of state institutions in the affected countries, making the task of countering extremism a major challenge in Africa.

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2 Conceptual clarification

Introduction

The key concepts that are central to this study include radicalization, violent extremism, insurgency, terrorism, counter-terrorism and state institutional responses to counter violent extremism. The connections among these concepts are relevant to the analysis of how the nature of state institutions and their capacity shaped the emergence and rise of violent extremist groups. Thomas (2016) describes extreme tendency as the highest point of an action that is not necessarily physically injurious to human existence in itself, unless violence is introduced to it. Violence is often the outcome of irreconcilable differences of opinions, strategies and goals resulting in intentional actions and non-compromising positions. Violent action is characterized by the determination to achieve an extreme belief at all costs, including the use of physical attacks for doctrinal or pecuniary benefits. While violent extremism represents an uncompromising belief system manifesting in violent agitation, radicalization is the extreme orientation toward a particular political or religious belief. Insurgency and terrorism are the characteristic traits of violent actions, while counter-violent extremism and terrorism and state responses are the de-escalating strategies to counter violent extremism.

From time immemorial, armed conflicts and insurgencies have been part of human history. From the nomadic rebels that brought down the Roman Empire to the extremists that triggered America's global war on terror, insurgent forces have been a part of the history of warfare globally (Boots, 2013). Metz (2004) illustrates how insurgency has existed since the beginning of human history, its dimension and propensity for mass destruction of lives and property which has become more lethal and sophisticated in the last three decades. The rise in and lethality of insurgents and terrorists' groups are becoming an increasing feature of contemporary nation-states, with devastating consequences even in developed countries like the United States of America, Britain and France that have the military capacity to fight insurgency (Boots, 2013: 16).

In Africa, insurgency is not a new phenomenon as violent moves by defiant Africans to resist or oppose the enforcement of law, or revolt against

constituted authority of the state are very common. Such insurgent tendencies in many African countries are carried out in violation of domestic laws and international treaties or obligations and could be regarded as treasonable felony, terrorism, crimes against humanity and genocide (Powell & Abraham, 2006).

In Africa, insurgencies have existed in the form of raids, tribal wars and rebellions (Raji & Ahmed, 2015). Some analysts labeled such insurgencies as the extreme form of violence, which is largely characterized by mass killings through terror attacks (Rand, 2011; Thomas, 2015). From a historical perspective, these violent actions were carried out by the insurgents who were seeking power, status and influence and those who fought to register their grievances. The onslaughts by these insurgent groups in Africa have been driven by socio-economic factors linked to poor governance (Raji & Ahmed, 2015: 9). The weak governance structures have fueled endemic corruption and systemic failure that breed poverty, inequality, human rights abuses and gross ineptitude in the polity. This situation has led to widespread despair and disenchantment among the African populace. The grievances have created a fertile ground for revolts and insurgencies in the continent.

Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al-Shabaab in Kenya and Somalia are typical examples of insurgent groups in Africa whose lethality later transformed into terrorism. Other insurgent groups in Africa include, the Islamic States of West African Province (ISWAP), Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Armed Islamic Group (GIA), Salafist Group for Preaching and Combating Evil (GSPCE) and National Islamic Front (NIF) in North Africa.

The major difference between insurgency and terrorism is that, while the former is linked to socio-political grievances that escalate into violence by groups of individuals against the state, the latter is a violent strategy of achieving the goals of insurgent groups. Terrorism has been described as the highest form of insurgency and the strategy adopted for achieving insurgents' aims, especially when insurgent acts have hit the crisis stage (Lambe, 2017). Insurgency and terrorism differ in terms of the intent of the component activities and operations. There is nothing inherent in insurgency warfare that requires the use of terror, thus an insurgent act may entail peaceful or violent agitation, while terrorism is exclusively characterized by physical or psychological violence. In fact, while some of the more successful insurgency groups employed terrorism and terror tactics, there have been others that effectively renounced the use of terrorism. However, in virtually all religious insurgent actions, there is an overlapping choice of using insurgency and terrorism alongside guerrilla war strategies to achieve their aims. Although the aim of terrorism and guerrilla warfare, which is to impose violent destruction and instill fear in the populace may differ when they act independent of an insurgent action, they are seen as the violent and extreme wing of an insurgent action which is then considered as the main characteristic features of insurgency (Powell & Abraham, 2006). A more detailed conceptualization of the terms and their relevance to the study are provided in subsequent sections.

Radicalization

Radicalization refers to the action and process of convincing or coercing someone to accept and adopt another person or group of persons' extreme position, be it political, social or religious (Thomas, 2015: 6). Radicalization is largely influenced by exposure to one-sided points of view, and it represents ideas that reject and undermine the status quo on socio-political, economic or religious matters (Radah, 2014). The New York Police Department (2007) identifies the four stages of radicalization as pre-radicalization enticement, self-identification with radical objectives, radical indoctrination toward group ideas and Jihadization, which revolves around violent agitation to achieve radical objectives. Thomas (2015: 7) explains that the signs of radicalization include self-withdrawal from previous relationships, self-isolation from family and friends, sudden disrespectful attitude toward others and increased level of anger, among others.

Rabasa et al. (2010) observes that religious radicalism often boils down to violent extremism owing to its obstructive, disruptive and annoying modes of evangelization of the two dominant religions, Islam and Christianity. Such radicalized posture is considered as a demonstration of religious arrogance and insensitivity which can fuel community violence. There are three major doctrinal foci of religious radicals globally (Zaben, et al., 2012). The first aspect is the intense drive to expand the religious law of a particular sect that aspires to form a theocratic governance value system. For instance, Jewish religious radicals struggle to form a government to promote the supremacy of the Halacha (Dogma) while many Islamic fundamental sects struggle for political power to promote the supremacy of the Qur'an over any other law which must be rigidly followed even in a secular state. The Lord's Resistance Army's (LRA) attempt to enforce the Ten Christian Commandments on the Ugandans is another typical example. Another version of religious radicalism relates to the fundamentalists who are critical of existing governments or institutions, especially those they consider very corrupt, which they deem necessary to replace with those they perceive to have the same religious affinity with them. Such fundamentalists define honesty from their doctrinal perspectives. The third dimensional focus of religious radicalism is the rejection by radicals of values that are not native to their religion, and the rigorous inculcation of their doctrinal religious values on their members to shield them from any other doctrinal orientation, especially Western civilization and its appendages.

In contemporary times, however, there are more dangerous radical sects globally and locally who have gone to the extreme of adopting terrorist acts, including suicide bombing, to drive home their goals. Charismatic leaders of such radical organizations manipulate and customize religion to define and achieve their social, political and economic goals. Radicals equally twist and manipulate religion to convince others to commit acts, such as terrorism while also legitimizing any means to achieve their objectives. In such tendencies, there is a huge negative impact of religious radicalism on peace

and security in almost every country in Africa and the world at large. The founder of Boko Haram, Mohammed Yusuf, fits into such radical extremists who manipulate the Islamic doctrine to serve vested purposes. As a charismatic leader, he was able to mobilize many youths to accept his religious indoctrination and anti-statist tendencies.

Radicalism is characterized by the expression of belief and commitment to a cause beyond what is reasonably acceptable as enshrined in the script (Gadji, 2015). It also encourages religious intolerance and violence and does not tolerate other people's opinions or beliefs. Radicalism is equally dented with political and religious ideas and actions that are extreme and encourages the radicals to support certain doctrines passionately. Other features of religious radicalism include unquestioned certainty about radical's hardline position; demonizing those who disagree with such a position and desire for violence through battle, or holy war against those who oppose such religious values. The unquestioned certainty about the radical's position also implies that when he/she is certain that his/her position is absolutely and completely true, he/she goes to any length to defend and conserve it. The underlying insecurity that accompanies this certainty stems from the fear that any element of doubt would negate the radical's self-identification and his very existence. While radicals blame others for the ills of the society, the desire for a final battle, or holy war against those who oppose radical views is the most disturbing aspect of radicalism, because such hardline posture often promotes conflict of various dimensions, ranging from pure religious disagreement and acrimony to violent ethno-religious conflicts, leading to loss of lives and properties (Gadji, 2015).

Radical counter-modernists often identify themselves with the past golden age of conservatism rather than align themselves with Western modernity in an attempt to restore fundamental etiquette of religion, and they are generally assertive, clamorous and often violent (Godfrey, 2007). The radicals consider themselves as 'the Chosen' and 'the Saved', and as such, they are 'privileged' or 'burdened' with a special mission relating to their religious inclination which they consider beneficial to the society, while also believing that public marks of distinction are needed to maintain the radical's sense of superiority and distinctive identity. Their aim is to maintain that unique identity, as 'part of the narcissistic struggle to be considered unique and special'. The radicalized equally believe that there is only one true religion and one correct way of life that must be defended against in-roads from other religions and secularism, meaning that religious pluralism is a problem for the radicals because they accept only one exclusive 'Truth'. It, therefore, follows that the radicalized firmly believe in their convictions, which can hardly be broken.

Violent religious extremism

Violent religious extremism broadly refers to a religious ideology and world-view that deviates from the general societal norms which can be pursued or defended through violent means. A violent religious extremist holds

tenaciously to an ideology and is bent on using any violent means in realizing political and religious objectives without any regard for the life, liberty and the human rights of others (Neuman, 2010; Thomas, 2016). Extremism equally denotes the highest level of religious dogma with the desire to achieve martyrdom (Ismail, 2014). As Ismail posits, religious extremism is primarily characterized by uncompromised ideological belief, rigid interpretation of scripture, sectarian prejudice and hostility against other religions and any other opposing view. It revolves around intolerance of opposing views and self-imposed obligation to practice religious fundamentalism as ordained by the scriptures and the Prophets to which they were assigned.

Violent extremism is a violent action or behavior that originates from the ideological conviction shared by a group of individuals (Matfess, 2020). Violent extremism is largely characterized by the willingness, training and the actual conduct of violent acts against the society. Other characteristic traits of violent extremism include a strong belief in the use of force as a means of achieving ideological goals; claims of superiority of the doctrinal value of one faith over the others; ideological coercion, based on the belief that all ideological viewpoints must be coerced into one that is subscribed to by the extremist and the potential to inspire violence through intense coercion (Juergensmeyer, 2000). Thomas (2015) differentiates between violent extremism and radicalism. While violent extremism encompasses violent behavior, radicalism may not adopt violent behavior to pursue its conviction. Violent extremism might entail violent ideology shared by many, while radicalism is based more on intra-personal experiences that are relatively limited to individuals. Violent extremism includes the willingness as well as the training, preparation and the actual conduct of violent acts while radicalization only serves as an ideological impulse to carry out such acts. Besides, while violent extremism attracts violent acts, the radicalized element sometimes supports the act without his/her actual involvement in the execution.

Adetayo (2018) describes the central focus of religious extremism as a struggle for religious space to promote its doctrinal agenda against the mainstream socio-political system, while some extremists interpret religion as broad collective doctrinal responses against perceived marginalization, oppression and injustice. Such religious extremism is characterized by engagement in theological debate with rigid dispositions far beyond moderation and rejection of new innovation. Some scholars are of the view that religious extremism may not necessarily be rigid. For instance, Idris (2019) argues that religious extremism is very fluid and subjective in application, depending on who is expressing it. The contention is that religious extremists may or may not deploy violence, although those who use violent tactics may do so as a reaction or action taken to repel state's violence and policy that are considered as anti-people. Most religious fundamentalists also saddle themselves with the responsibility of purifying theological belief system, to what they perceive as the ideal standard of the past. Violent extremists are most prominent in some

countries in Asia, Middle East and Africa. In Africa, North, West and East Africa have been battling activities of violent extremist groups.

A more comprehensive definition of violent religious extremism is provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2018), which deposes that violent extremism has to do with the acts of supporting, engaging in, formulating ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic or political interests. The Boko Haram violent extremism in Nigeria has waged a lethal war against the Nigerian state, with significant civilian casualties claiming over 35,000 lives and displacing millions since the group's founding in 2002 (Matfess, 2020). Boko Haram has launched a major onslaught on the north-east of Nigeria and spilled over its activities to neighboring countries in West and Central Africa.

Violent extremism is a growing phenomenon in Kenya and can be traced back to the mid-1990s. It was not always linked to 'Islamist motivated violence' but was initially in the realm of politicized violence to raise marginalization discourses against the government (Oded, 1996). To the government, these kinds of grievances revived old fears and debates about the Coast wanting to secede (Oded, 1996). It is some of these grievances that would be galvanized and be transformed into the current movement – the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) (Goldsmith, 2011; Fathima & Goldsmith, 2018). In fact, in the current context/wave of youth radicalization, there have been claims of linkages between groups such as the Al-Shabaab and the MRC. The linkages have resulted from similar grievances such as marginalization by government (Mkutu et al., 2014).

Violent extremism is a phenomenon that however takes root in Kenya in the 1990s, with the setting up of Al-Qaeda cells that culminated in the United States Embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1998. Previous terrorist attacks such as the Norfolk Hotel in 1980 in Nairobi had pointed to this logic. Post-1998, the Kenyan government with the assistance of international partners began to take the threats of terrorism seriously (Otenyo, 2004; Mogire & Mkutu, 2011).

In the mid-2000s and more remarkably after the 2007 period, violent extremism escalated. Hundreds of, mainly, Kenyan youths were recruited to fight with the emerging youth militia of the Al-Shabaab (Hansen, 2016). The logic of recruitment for Kenyan youths was then to fight 'a global Jihad', that is, to defend a Muslim 'Ummah' that was under 'threat' by a multiplicity of states in the Horn of Africa and beyond. A significant event that would further drive the rise of and the push for violent extremism, and which has served to undermine Kenya's security, was the 2011 military incursion into Somalia dubbed as the 'Operation Linda Nchi' (International Crisis Group, 2012; Anderson & McKnight, 2014).

To the radicalizers, this singular military intervention before joining the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) troops in July of 2012 created an additional radicalization frame. This intervention was considered to be a 'Christian Country' intervention on 'Muslim Land'. This intervention

then required redress and hence re-amplifying the radicalization discourse in Kenya with a call for 'Jihad'. The Al-Shabaab would use this appeal to locate foot soldiers to join its ranks. The process of radicalization should however not be understood as one that is founded in Islam. Rather, it should be understood as a youth revolt against society, which is founded on an Islamic religious narrative of Jihad (Roy, 2015).

Insurgency

Insurgency has been defined broadly as a violent move by a person or group of persons to resist or oppose the enforcement of law, or running of government, or revolt against constituted authority of the state (Powell & Abraham, 2006). This definition underscores the fact that insurgents target the state over some perceived grievance. States with weak institutions are more vulnerable to insurgency because of the prevalent structural vulnerabilities. Some analysts posit that the material conditions in a state are a key determinant of the vulnerability of the state to insurgency (Ron, 2005). Studies have shown that states with stagnating economic growth, low per capita income, high rate of poverty, unemployment and poor infrastructures are more vulnerable to insurgencies. Thus, weak state structures that fuel systemic exclusion and marginalization of some groups tend to breed grievances that can spike violent agitations or revolt. A cursory look at states experiencing insurgency shows that these states are characterized by systemic problems of high rate of poverty, unemployment, inequality, human rights abuses and other forms of injustices against some segments or majority of the population. The excluded groups are thus likely to agitate violently, mobilizing other excluded groups to join forces against the state perceived to be responsible for their plight.

Such mobilization may be along ethnic or religious lines. In the case of insurgent groups in Nigeria, ethnic or religious sentiments were deployed by the insurgents in the case of the militant groups in the ethnic minority region in the Niger Delta and the Boko Haram sect respectively. In the case of Al-Shabaab in Kenya, ethnic sentiment was used to recruit among the marginalized ethnic groups in the Northern region of the country. The perception of relative deprivation in a context of widespread poverty, and dismal social amenities in the midst of abundant wealth generated from natural resources spawned discontent and frustration among the people (Iyekekpola, 2018). In Nigeria, the ethnic and religious divides between the predominantly Muslim North and the Christian South intersect with competition for control of power at the center. The domination of the northern elites in the political governance in Nigeria has always been a source of acrimony (Babatunde, 2017).

However, the rhetoric of Boko Haram seems to show that ethnic and religious divisions may not be a major explanatory factor for the sect's onslaught. Some analysts have rightly argued that ethnic and religious sentiments are usually invoked by some groups as a means of gaining political relevance

and economic resources (Hansen, 1987; Ekanola, 2006). Thus, the political calculus and motives of insurgents are captured in the conceptualization of insurgency by Moore (2011) who explains that insurgency is a protracted armed conflict in which one or more groups agitate for the fundamental change, or control of the political or social order in a state or region through the use of prolonged violence, insurrection, social disruption and political engagement. The Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab insurgencies clearly fit into this conceptualization of insurgency. The insurgent groups intend to delegitimize the state apparatus and gain partial or complete control of the political structure of the state or region. The US Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual (FM 324) (2009), thus describes insurgency as an organized politico-military struggle, with the intention to decimate the government legitimacy by occupying power, or other political authority and gaining territorial control over the state.

Aroge (2019), in explaining the motives of insurgents, which relate to the agitation against the state, notes that insurgents seek the overthrow of the existing order, for the purpose of achieving specific political, economic, ideological or religious objectives. This view confirms Kilcullen's (2006) submission that insurgency is a struggle to control a contested political space, between a state (or a group of states or occupying powers), and one or more popularly based non-state challengers. The author differentiates between classical and contemporary concepts of insurgencies, indicating that the latter seeks to replace the existing order, while the former sometimes strives for the expulsion of foreign invaders from their territory, or seek to fill an existing power vacuum.

In his insightful analysis of the Nigerian context, Imasuen (2015) posits that the phenomena of insurgency in Nigeria have been evident since her independence from British colonialists in 1960. The author cites some of the acts of insurgency since the early post-independence period such as the twelve-day revolution by Adaka Boro (1964), the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970) fought by the Biafra agitators, various ethnic militias such as the O'odua People's Congress (OPC), the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), the Niger Delta People Volunteer Force (NDPVF) and the recent Boko Haram which has been operating in Northern Nigeria since the early 2000s. The mode of operation of insurgency usually entails targeting the interest of the state and waging attacks on the citizenry. Aroge (2019) notes that insurgency constitutes an attack on defenseless citizens, resulting in injuries, loss of lives and property, as well as forced or massive internal displacement of people.

Insurgency, terrorism and guerilla warfare are terminologies that are often used interchangeably. These concepts differ in terms of their specific connotations and contextual interpretations. This points to the need to differentiate insurgency from terrorism and guerrilla warfare. Insurgency and terrorism tend to overlap in certain contexts. Guerilla warfare and insurgency are often

assumed to be synonymous with terrorism because of the similarities in the goals pursued by these rebel groups. However, a cursory analysis of insurgency and guerilla warfare points to specific differences in their conceptual and contextual connotations. A key difference is that insurgency is a movement – a political effort with a specific aim. This sets it apart from both guerilla warfare and terrorism, as they are both methods available to pursue the goals of the political movement.

These concepts are also distinct in terms of the intent, and mode of operations of insurgents and terrorists. There is nothing inherent in either insurgency or guerilla warfare that requires the use of terror. While some of the more successful insurgencies and guerilla campaigns employed terrorism and terror tactics, and some developed into conflicts where terror tactics and terrorism became predominant, there have been others that effectively renounced the use of terror tactics. The deliberate choice of terrorism considers its effectiveness in inspiring further resistance, destroying government efficiency and mobilizing support. Although there are places where terrorism, guerilla warfare and criminal behavior all overlap, groups that are exclusively terrorist, or subordinate aspects of insurgencies formed to specifically employ terror tactics, demonstrate clear differences in their objectives and operations. Disagreement on the costs of using terror tactics, or whether terror operations are to be given primacy within the insurgency campaign, has frequently led to urban guerilla warfare in the pursuit of the revolutionary goals.

Imasuen's (2015) submission seems to point to the ambiguity in the conceptualization of insurgency, noting that not all rebellions are insurgencies. There have been many cases of non-violent rebellions through civil resistance, such as the People Power Revolution in the Philippines in the 1980s that ousted President Marcos and the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 (Roberts, & Timothy, 2009). Where a revolt takes the form of armed rebellion, it may not be viewed as an insurgency if a state of belligerency exists between one or more sovereign states and rebel forces. For example, during the American Civil War, the Confederate States of America was not recognized as a sovereign state, but it was recognized as a belligerent power, and thus Confederate warships were given the same rights as United States warships in foreign ports. In a context where insurgency is used to describe a movement's unlawfulness by virtue of not being authorized by or in accordance with the law of the land, it is deemed to be neutral. However, when it is used by a state or another authority under threat, insurgency often also carries an implication that the rebels' cause is illegitimate, whereas those rising up will see the authority itself as being illegitimate.

A situation where one or more insurgencies occur simultaneously in a country is called multi-polar insurgency (Osanka, 1962). The case of the Iraq insurgency depicts one example of a recognized government versus multiple groups of insurgents. Other historic insurgencies, such as the Russian Civil War, have been multi-polar rather than a model made up of two sides. The notion of multi-polarity seems to extend the conceptual definition of

insurgency to situations where there is no recognized authority, as in the Somali Civil War, especially the period from 1998 to 2006, where it broke into quasi-autonomous smaller states, fighting one another within the confines of changing alliances.

Imasuen (2015) postulates that the ultimate goal of an insurgency is to challenge the existing government for control of all or a portion of its territory, or force political concessions in the quest to share political power with the state. In addition, insurgencies require the active or tacit support of some portion of the population involved. While external support, recognition or approval from other countries or political entities can be useful to insurgents, it is not a necessity. In the case of a terror group, it is usually difficult to gain the active support or acceptance or even the sympathy of a large fraction of the population. While insurgents frequently describe themselves as 'insurgents' or 'guerillas', terrorists tend not to refer to themselves as 'terrorists', preferring to be called freedom fighters or agitators (Imasuen, 2015). Terrorism relies on public impact and is therefore conscious of the advantage of avoiding the negative connotations of the term 'terrorists' in identifying themselves.

Terrorism

Terrorism has been conceptualized by political and security analysts in diverse ways depending on intent, motive and mode of operation of terrorists. The United States Department of Defence describes terrorism as 'the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious or ideological'. Inherent in this definition are the three key elements of terrorism, including *violence*, *fear* and *intimidation*. All the three elements coalesce in instigating terror in the victims or those at the receiving end. The American Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) notes that terrorism is the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof in furtherance of political or social objectives. The US State Department (2017) sees terrorism as the deployment of premeditated politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience.

According to the UK Department of Home Affairs (2021), terrorism is the use of violence for political ends, and includes any use of violence for the purpose of putting the public, or any section of the public, in fear. Ononogbu and Nwangwu (2018) defines terrorism as any act which endangers the life, physical and psychological integrity or freedom of persons, which causes injury or death to any person, group of persons or causes damage to public or private property and natural resources. According to Charles (2019), terrorism is any act calculated or intended to: (a) intimidate, put in fear, coerce

or induce the government, institution, the general public or any segment thereof, to do or abstain from doing any act, or to adopt or abandon a particular standpoint or to act according to certain principles contrary to their operational objectives; or (b) disrupt any public service, the delivery of any essential service to the public or to create a public emergency; or (c) create general insurrection in a State. The United Nations' definition of terrorism, cited by Folahanmi (2021), is all encompassing, and offers a universal conceptualization of terrorism. The UN defines terrorism as an 'anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi) clandestine individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby – in contrast to assassination – the direct targets of violence are not the main targets' (UN, 1999).

Political scientists and security experts have distinguished between domestic and international terrorists. Achi and Tar (2013) define international terrorists as any group that practices, or has significant subgroups that practice international terrorism. Logically, domestic terrorists refer to a group or subgroups that engage in domestic terrorism. The international dimension of terrorism involves acts of terror targeting the territory or the citizens of more than one country (Tar, 2019). Some critics argue that the notion of terrorism is premeditated and relates to international acts of terrors tend to conjure up the view that terrorism is only condemnable if carried out within the international community (Achi & Tar, 2013: 174–175).

To develop an acceptable definition of terrorism requires that the term is defined within specific contexts and based on the intents, motives and modes of operation of terror groups. A two-pronged approach to defining the act of terror by the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (Terrorism Financing Convention) is intended to capture those criminal acts carried out by terrorists that contravene existing criminal statutes (Chukwuemerie, 2006). Thus, the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (Terrorism Financing Convention) in its Article 2(1)(a) notes that act of terror includes, inter alia, offenses created under some other international conventions that deal with such matters as hijacking, hostage-taking, attacks on heads of states or diplomats, bombings of public places and the use of weapons of mass destruction. In providing a much broader definition that captures a wide range of terrorist-related acts, the Terrorist Financing Convention (TFC) in Article 2(1)(b) expanded the definition of terrorism to include those acts perpetrated with the intents to cause death or serious bodily injury to a civilian, or to any other person not taking an active part in the hostilities in a situation of armed conflict, with the ultimate purpose to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international organization in the pursuit of certain objectives (United Nations, 1999: 3).

The victims of terrorist attacks are usually not the main targets. As Imasuen (2015: 5) avers, terrorism does not attempt to challenge government forces directly, but acts to change perceptions as to the effectiveness or legitimacy

of the government itself. This is done by committing the widest possible acts of terrorist violence among the target audience. In most cases, terrorists do not attempt to ‘control’ terrain, as it ties them to identifiable locations and reduces their mobility and security. A guerilla force may have something to gain from a direct clash with a government combat force, such as proving that they can effectively challenge the military effectiveness of the government. A terrorist group has nothing to gain from such a clash. This is not to say that they do not target military or security forces, but terrorists hardly engage in anything resembling a ‘fair fight’, or even a ‘fight’ at all. Terrorists use methods that neutralize the strengths of conventional forces. Bombings and mortar attacks on civilian targets where military or security personnel spend off-duty time, ambushes of undefended convoys and assassinations of poorly protected individuals are common tactics of terrorist groups. Boko Haram has used such tactics including targeting government and international facilities, bombing of police and other security buildings, suicide bombing in churches, mosques and other public places.

Terrorism, unlike insurgency, does not seem to discriminate between combatants and non-combatants, unless they expand those they categorize as combatants in a way to render it meaningless (Sandler, 2002). One way of doing this is to categorize all members of a nation or ethnic group plus any citizen of any nation that supports that nation as combatants. Deliberate de-humanization and criminalization of the enemy in the terrorists’ mind justifies extreme measures against anyone identified as adversary. Terrorists often expand their groups of acceptable targets and conduct operations against new targets without any warning or notice of hostilities.

Terrorism is clearly different from insurgency from the viewpoint of the intent, tactics and mode of operation of the actor. Insurgency movements and guerilla forces can adhere to international norms regarding the law of war in achieving their goals. However, terrorists, by definition, are perpetrating crimes under both civil and military legal codes. Terrorists routinely claim that, were they to adhere to any ‘law of war’ or accept any constraints on the scope of their violence, it would place them at a disadvantage vis-à-vis the established state institution. Since the nature of the terrorist mindset is absolutist, their goals are of paramount importance, and any limitations on a terrorist’s means to prosecute the struggle are unacceptable to them. A series of violent actions ultimately transformed Boko Haram from a largely non-violent fundamentalist religious movement into the lethal and resilient force it is today, known internationally for its brutality (Matfess, 2020).

Countering violent extremism

Countering violent extremism (CVE) has become a central thrust for pre-empting terrorist threats. Whereas there is yet to be a consensus on what it entails and does not entail, a more practical view refers to it as a set of non-coercive measures to prevent terrorism. CVE is seen to primarily involve,

among other activities, counter-radicalization (Agbiboa, 2017; Harris-Horgan et al., 2016). CVE is also more reflective as a field of policy practice as opposed to an academic study (Thomas, 2015: 13). It is also a relatively new field having begun about a decade ago. The field emerged in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States popularly referenced as 9/11 (Mogire & Mkutu, 2011; Thomas, 2015). Whereas in the post-9/11 there was a focus on the use of coercive and hard power approaches (military means, use of force) to deal with the so-called terrorists, a CVE discourse altered that intervention (Thomas, 2015: 13). CVE has been critical of the use of force in dealing with the threats of terrorism. It rather calls for the use of softer and non-coercive responses that are aimed at preventing the rise of terrorism in the first place (Harris-Horgan et al., 2016). CVE is thus a departure from state counter-terrorism approaches that engage in military means, use of legislation and so on to deal with an ever-changing security landscape (Mogire & Mkutu, 2011).

The changing security landscape leading to the shift toward CVE has been informed by several reasons. One is that hard counter-terrorism measures have tended to be counter-productive, in the sense that they alienate the same communities that they intend to serve and protect. For instance, they perpetrate various human rights violations such as arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, constructing of certain communities as 'risky' communities and who require government surveillance. The cases of Kenyan Muslims and members of the Somali and Coastal communities have been 'constructed' as security threats that need intervention (Prestholdt, 2011; Omeje & Githigaro, 2012). The military offensive on Boko Haram has led to a crackdown on many communities that were accused of serving as informants to the insurgents. Evidence suggests that the crackdown has dented the human rights records of the military involved in the CVE (Onuoha, et al., 2020).

Another reason that has led to the CVE discourse is the realization of the need to incorporate multiple actors in the prevention and curtailment arena. This is reflective of a changing security landscape that recognizes the value of multiple actors in security provision. Non-state actors, individuals and communities are now being recognized as critical pillars in the CVE domain. This in part demonstrates the changing notion of security governance. The Boko Haram rhetoric and remarkable lethality have been attributed to the poor intelligence which is blamed on the discontent between the civilian population and the security personnel involved in the CVE operation in the north-east region of Nigeria. The lack of cooperation and support of the local population seem to have undermined the success of CVE (Matfess, 2020).

CVE, as a field of practice, aims primarily at preventing radicalization that may lead to violent extremism. CVE preventive measures are oriented toward behaviors, attitudes and conditions that may lead to acts of violent extremism. CVE thus focuses on raising awareness on violent extremism as a preventive approach. CVE approaches in this respect may include the mounting of educational programmes as well as working with a range of grassroots actors such

as community workers, health workers, teaching to equip them with preventative interventions to adopt in their localities (Harris-Horgan et al., 2016).

Counter-insurgency

Counter-insurgency in relation to insurgency broadly refers to efforts to combat insurgency. Tar (2019) contends that Counter-Insurgency (COIN) is a bandwagon concept that is often wrongly defined as acts of repression, military and paramilitary actions and systematic human rights abuses carried out by the armed forces in the name of national security. There is a need for a broader conceptualization of the terms that clearly capture the broad objective of the COIN operation. Counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism are often used interchangeably to describe the broad range of state activities to combat acts of insurgency and terrorism. Liolio (2013) defines counter-insurgency, often referred to by the acronym COIN, as a combination of measures undertaken by the legitimate government of a country to curb or suppress an insurgency against the state. While an insurgent group seeks to destabilize or overthrow the existing political authority in order to establish theirs, the counter-insurgency forces strive to consolidate the existing political structures as well as reduce or annihilate the usurping authority of the insurgents. Thus, COIN refers to the broad ranges of measures undertaken by a legitimate government of a country to combat act of insurgency (Tar, 2019).

An insurgent group challenges the state monopoly of the legitimate use of force, while a COIN operation seeks to uphold the monopoly of legitimate use of force or violence that is the prerogative of the state through measures aimed at subduing the insurgents. The US Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual (2001) defines counterinsurgency as ‘military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency’. Specifically, the 2009 Joint Publication Counterinsurgency Operations refers to COIN as a ‘comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to defeat an insurgency and to address any core grievances’. Moreover, it notes that ‘COIN is primarily political and incorporates a wide range of activities, of which security is only one’. While this definition encompasses a key point relating to efforts to address core insurgents’ grievances, it fails to reflect the different facets of COIN operations. This gap in the definition was addressed in the US Government submission in 2009, which notes that ‘effective counterinsurgency integrates and synchronizes political, security, legal, economic, developmental, and psychological activities to create a holistic approach aimed at weakening the insurgents while bolstering the government’s legitimacy in the eyes of the population’ (US Government, 2009). This definition clearly captures the broad range of activities relating to COIN.

However, the counter-insurgency operation of African states confronting insurgency seems not to encompass those range of activities that are essential for a successful COIN operation. The states tend to focus more on the security

and political aspects of COIN to the detriment of other important complementary activities. This oversight largely accounts for the failure of the COIN operation in African states, like Nigeria battling the Boko Haram insurgency. The COIN operation of the Nigerian government has been widely criticized by many security analysts for the excessive use of force, while the grievances of the insurgent groups have not been addressed (Zenn, 2013; Comolli, 2015). Thurston (2017) opines that part of the huge financial resources diverted to arms purchase for COIN operations should have been utilized to address other critical aspects of COIN that center on addressing the drivers of insurgency. Tar and Bala (2020) highlight one of the key challenges to COIN operations, specifically in the West African sub-region to relate to the inadequate commitment to the full spectrum of social, economic, political and security activities that would have been a formidable tool in COIN operations.

Institutional capacity

The concept of institutional capacity has been linked to a set of social, economic, political and security factors. Bhagavan and Virgin (2004) conceptualize institutional capacity as the competence and ability to perform a task satisfactorily, especially to the optimal level. The concept revolves around technical competence and the inherent capacity to enthrone social justice, good political and corporate economic governance to promote sustainable development. Morgan and Qualman (1976) argue that institutional capacity can only be achieved by providing the required resources (natural, human, financial resources) and the required framework to achieve targeted goals of an organization.

Kirchherr et al. (2016) differentiates between the traditional and contemporary notions of institutional capacity, explaining that the traditional concept of institutional capacity primarily revolves around the ability of governmental institutions to discharge their statutory responsibilities optimally, whereas the contemporary neoliberal concept of institutional capacity largely involves the capacity of an individual to govern himself to achieve personal aspirations without relying on government. Thus, in contrast to the expectation of individuals from governments, the focus of private institutional capacity building revolves around what the citizens can do for the government. Public institutional capacity focuses on the promotion and strengthening of accountability, transparency, legitimacy, pluralism and all-inclusive political participation, while private institutions focus essentially on self-development for the development of others. The author further posits that institutional capacity is aided more by sound political, economic, social and cultural enabling environment to thrive and such capacity is built on hard and soft values of governance.

The institutional capacity to fight insurgency is subject to the presence of strong economic government institutions, through the enthrone of corporate economic governance indices and robust funding of military operations. These indices include transparency and accounting governance rather than strong political participation (Thomas, 2015). Its main thrust is

to re-direct the self-interest behavior of individuals within given institutions into well-coordinated socially productive institutions for collective benefits for all (Morgan & Qualman, 1976: 15). The author notes that strong institutions thrive on incentives and sanctions for those organizations who uphold and those who neglect the rules respectively. Thus, institutional capacity is measured more in terms of strong or weak operational ability of an institution.

In the view of Onuoha et al. (2020), institutional capacity is enhanced more by capacity building strategies that are focused on good performance indices, including endogenous developmental programmes, dividends of democracy and institutional micro-economic advancement. The author opines further that institutional capacity thus embraces both the micro-institutional approach, that is dictated by commitment to each institution and the macro-institutional collaboration to achieve inter-sectoral connectivity for achieving collective goals for mutual benefits. Rid and Keany (2010) categorizes developmental institutions into three processes, including knowledge-generating institutions such as University departments, research laboratories, institutes and centers; Government entities such as Ministerial departments, policy-making authorities, regulatory authorities, environmental protection agencies, science and technology commissions, national research councils and civil society organizations (which include non-governmental and community based organizations) such as environmental organizations, consumers' organizations, producers' associations (including farmers' associations), professional associations and chambers of commerce. In his work, Francis (2014) illustrates the importance of institutional capacity as a vital performance pillar for achieving the national interests of a nation within the international community. Such capacity is derived from the totality of the country's political-economic profile, advanced technologies, military capability and leadership strengths. In the context of this study, institutional capacity encompasses the tasks, competence and ability of state institutions to perform, and the availability of the required resources; human, technical and financial resources they need to perform optimally. The effective performance of state institutions engenders social justice and equity, prevents violent extremism and/or has the capacity to combat violent religious extremism. However, the weak institutional capacity of many African states to prevent and counter violent extremism has created a complex security landscape.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided insights into the related concepts that are central to this study, given that violent extremism in Nigeria and Kenya manifests in acts of insurgency and terrorism against the states. The extremists exploit poor and weak governance in the two countries, to radicalize many impoverished youths through sustained propaganda. The attacks on the two countries by the extremists have led to massive civilian casualties and decimated large parts of the countries. Despite the military operations in the two states to counter insurgency and terrorism, Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab have continued to show

remarkable capacity, destructive rhetoric, dangerous tactics and heart-rending lethality in their onslaught against the states. From these conceptualizations, it is apparent that there are key gaps in the counter-terrorist operations, relating to the excessive focus on the use of force at the detriment of addressing the underlying drivers of the grievances of the violent extremist groups.

The states' approach to counter-insurgency and counter extremists' operations seem not to adequately capture the full spectrums of social, economic, political and security activities that are critical for efficient political and military measures to win the war on terror. The conceptualizations of these key terms point to the intent, motives and mode of operations of violent extremism and the significant gaps in the measures to counter violent extremism in Africa, with Nigeria and Kenya as examples.

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3 Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram movements in East and West Africa

Introduction

The rise of Al-Shabaab in Somalia in the late 1990s, Boko Haram in Nigeria in 2002 and other numerous 'indigenous' terrorist groups as 'syndicates' of international terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) have undermined the already fragile states' peace and security in Africa (Kagwanja, 2006). The growth of violent extremism and increasing terror attacks in Kenya and Nigeria, for instance, is not only setting in motion a dramatic reversal of development gains already made but also threatening the prospects of development for decades to come (UNDP, 2016). The presence and operations of Boko Haram have displaced millions of people internally and forced more than 200,000 Nigerians to flee to Cameroon, Chad and Niger (UNDP, 2015; Global Terrorism Index, 2020). In Kenya, there were over 200 attacks/incidents involving explosives or automatic weapons linked to Al-Shabaab between 2011 and 2015 alone (UNDP, 2016). The analysis of the Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram violent extremist groups in East and West Africa provides critical insights into the nature of the security threat that they pose to the two countries that are regarded as sub-regional powers within the African continent.

Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab initially operated from a home state: Nigeria and Somalia. Their genesis as terrorist organizations is traceable to socio-political and geopolitical contingencies in each country (Cannon & Iyekekpola, 2018). Both organizations have however since diversified their terror activities to neighboring states with Al-Shabaab targeting Kenya, Uganda, Djibouti and Ethiopia and Boko Haram targeting mainly Cameroon, Chad and Niger. In both Nigeria and Somalia, these violent extremist groups largely define themselves in religious terms, especially the willingness to be recruited and die for the Islamic objective (Omenma et al., 2020). Boko Haram's stated objective is to 'Islamize Nigeria based on Sharia law', while Al-Shabaab aims at 'establishing an Islamic state in Somalia based on the Islamic law' and to 'eliminate all foreign "infidel" influence'. The members of these two extremist groups, therefore, believe they are engaged in a 'just' and 'holy' war for the vision of the 'Islamic State' or 'caliphate' (Cannon & Iyekekpola, 2018).

Boko Haram's indiscriminate attacks on Muslims have led many analysts to question the group's claim of religious agenda (Varin, 2016; Matfess, 2020). This casts doubt on the claim that the sect is fighting a religious war.

Nigeria, Kenya and Somalia have been identified as some of the countries in Africa which are most affected by terrorism and violent extremism due to the high incidence of attacks, deaths, injuries and property damage by Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab. Both countries have, however, not ratified the African Union's (AU) Anti-terrorism Protocol adopted in 2004, which emphasizes non-combatant approaches, such as the Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism (PCVE) (Omenma et al., 2020). Both Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab identify with Wahhabism and Salafism ideologies, which instruct Muslims to practice the norms and values of Islam in their 'pure' forms (Cannon & Iyekepolo, 2018). Both groups have a connection with global Jihadists; the Al-Shabaab in the Islamic Maghreb and Islamic State.

Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab's adherents push for the implementation of Sharia policy, which will invariably cede political power to the Islamic leaders. These adherents, therefore, are lured into Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab membership with the intent to enthrone a theocratic political system (Omenma et al., 2020). The recruitment strategies for Boko Haram include the use of intimate relations like friends, immediate family members and the Imams in the identification process (Botha & Abdile, 2014), while Al-Shabaab mainly uses the clan leadership and online chat rooms (Solomon, 2014: 354). Both groups, use persuasion and propaganda in their recruitment process. Boko Haram has also used coercion through forceful indoctrination of those in captivity into the group (Matfess, 2020). Therefore, the recruitment process into Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab groups is a carefully executed exercise that takes into account several factors such as religious beliefs, the ability to be loyal and endurance of hardship among others (Omenma et al., 2020).

The main incentive that both groups use to entice potential recruits is financial reward. Boko Haram is said to lure poor, marginalized and jobless youths with free Islamic education, informal jobs, interest-free loans, employment schemes, wheelbarrow gifts, sewing machines, motorbikes (achaba), free wives and a monthly salary (Abrak, 2016). As evident from interviews conducted in Mombasa in the coastal part of Kenya for this study, young, jobless and marginalized men described Al-Shabaab as a 'lucrative income generating venture'. Insights from respondents point to how Boko Haram gain recruits from mostly unemployed youths, who are lured into the sect's extremist ideology through promise of economic rewards and spiritual salvation. Also, responses from interviewees in Mombasa in Kenya showed that young men who join Al-Shabaab are rewarded with sustainable income for themselves and their families. Just like Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab uses youth unemployment, poverty and marginalization to mobilize its members. Both organizations purposefully target vulnerable youths and women (Omenma et al., 2020).

Al-Shabaab began radicalizing and recruiting young Kenyan males in 2009, whom they easily smuggled into Somalia through the porous border with Kenya, and then trained them to fight and destabilize the Transitional Federal Government (International Crisis Group Briefing, 2014).

Al-Shabaab in Somalia and incursion in Kenya

Al-Shabaab is said to be the militant arm of the Somali Council of Islamic Courts (CIC) which in June 2006 gained control of Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, after a war dubbed as the ‘Second Battle of Mogadishu’ (Roque, 2009). The combined forces of the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the Ethiopian military however soon ousted them between December 2006 and January 2007 (Marchal, 2009). Between 2007 and 2011, Al-Shabaab tried to take control mostly in the south and south-east of Somalia. There were series of attacks and counter-attacks between internationally sanctioned forces, such as the UN Security Council-approved African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) as well as those trained by other states and fielded in the name of successive TFGs, and, later, Somali Federal Governments (SFG) (Marchal, 2009).

It has been argued that the rise of Al-Shabaab in Somalia is directly influenced by the unilateral political and military interventions by Ethiopia and Kenya (Sanei, 2014). The unilateral intervention by Ethiopia in late 2006, among others, is the main trigger that motivated the formation of Al-Shabaab in Somalia (Sanei, 2015). In addition, the current policy by both Ethiopia and Kenya of creating buffer zones inside Somalia has only been a push for Al-Shabaab to recruit more Jihadists and followers and gain more sympathizers at home and abroad (Sanei, 2015; Omenma et al., 2020). The political and military interventions by Ethiopia and Kenya in Somalia have been in place since 1990s. During 1990s up to the early 2000s, Somali warlords were clients to both Kenya and Ethiopia as both countries were the main sources for the warlords politically and militarily (Sanei, 2015: 15). Therefore, Ethiopia and Kenya can be said to have played a role in perpetuating the Somali conflict in one way or another.

At its formation, the group was informally working under the ICU leadership led by the former Somali President, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, until the Ethiopian forces invaded Somalia in late 2006 (Krech, 2011). Al-Shabaab appeared publicly in 2007 after the Ethiopian invasion in Somalia, although the first suicide attack associated with the group in 2006 targeting the TFG leaders in Baidoa, a city in south-western Somalia (Sanei, 2014). Al-Shabaab was run by Aden Hashi Farah ‘Ayro’, who was appointed by Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys at the time of the organization’s founding until he was killed by a US airstrike in 2008 (Sanei, 2015). Before his death, Ayro visited Afghanistan and allegedly held a meeting with Bin Laden, and this has been regarded as the cementing of the relationship between Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda. Sheikh Mukhtar Robow (known as Abu Mansur) who succeeded

Ayro publicly declared the relationship between Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda (Fletcher, 2008). A merger between Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda was officially announced in February 2012 (BBC, 2012). Since the larger and more brutal the attack, the more relevant and powerful the group is perceived to be, Al-Shabaab's attacks in Kenya have been characterized by their gruesome effects and have attracted critical news coverage internationally, allowing Al-Shabaab a level of publicity, notoriety and international relevance that often belies its increasing isolation in Somalia (Omenma et al., 2020). Apart from waging attacks in Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya, Al-Shabaab has concentrated on targets close to the Somali border, such as Mandera and Garissa in Northern Kenya and at the coastal region, especially Mombasa and Lamu, all of which are closer geographically to Somalia (Cannon & Pkalya, 2019). As earlier stated, the terror group exploits the social and economic exclusion of Kenyan Muslim communities, especially those of Somalia origin, to lure them as local insurgents in Kenya.

Modus operandi of Al-Shabaab

Al-Shabaab recruits mostly from local Somalian youths, Somalis from neighboring Kenya and Somalis in the diaspora (Mercy Corps, 2016) and most recently young Kenyans who are not of Somali origin. As most of the respondents observed, Al-Shabaab uses persuasion and propaganda in their recruitment process through 'public sermons and DVDs such as those used by the fallen Sheikh Rogo in Mombasa. The messages propagated by these extremist preachers portray Muslim Somalis as being under threat from Christians, and the government because they represent foreign interests (mostly US interest)'. The extremist group operates mainly through conducting assassinations, suicide and roadside bombings by using improvised explosive devices (Sanei, 2015). As earlier stated, the first suicide bombing by Al-Shabaab militants in Somalia was on September 18, 2006. Between September 2006 and December 2009, the group had made a total of 13 suicide attacks: 2 in 2006, 4 in 2007, 2 in 2008 and 5 in 2009 (Ibrahim, 2010).

The stated objective of the group is to get rid of a system that they consider as 'apostasy', and to establish a system that is based on the way they want the Sharia to be implemented (Sanei, 2015). The group is said to have sympathizers from outside Somalia including young Somalis in diaspora. For instance, it is estimated that between 2008 and 2009, there were about 50–70 'mujahedeen' who left Britain for Somalia to join Al-Shabaab (Daveed, 2009). There are also reports on recruitments of young Somalis to join the 'call for Jihad' in Somalia in the United States. By mid-2009, more than 20 young Somalis, most of them from Minnesota, joined Al-Shabaab in Somalia (David, 2011). The group is said to be ruthless with any of its members found spying for the Federal Government or for Ethiopia with the penalty being beheading with blunt knives (Sanei, 2015).

Funding of Al-Shabaab

Al-Shabaab aggressively mobilizes funds for its operations. The group has reportedly developed an impressive and sustainable financing model, relying on the ‘financial control and surveillance of cash flows’ allegedly involving both domestic and external sources (Vilkko, 2011). Its financing strategies include taxation from subject populations, or willing donations by Somalis fed up with the corruption and misrule of Mogadishu (Cannon & Iyekepolo, 2018).

Money laundering in neighboring Kenya through numerous Somali-run financial institutions as well as the Kenya-based financiers who send money are also reportedly reliable sources of Revenue (Vilkko, 2011). After the invasion of Somalia by the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) in 2011, Al-Shabaab lost control of the port of Kismayu. This was a major blow to the group, which had reportedly made millions from the export of charcoal and sugar (Sanei, 2015). However, corruption in KDF, Kenya police, senior Kenyan politicians and prominent businesspeople has sustained the charcoal export business, thereby facilitating the funding of Al-Shabaab’s activities (Olsen, 2017). The long and porous border separating Kenya and Somalia is said to ease the flow of couriers, charcoal and recruits from Kenya to Somalia and vice versa (Cannon, 2016). There have been allegations that the KDF, Al-Shabaab and Somali authorities make millions of dollars from smuggling sugar, and to a lesser extent, charcoal into Kenya (Keatinge, 2015). Al-Shabaab has given the impression of being financially prudent and less corrupt than the central and local authorities it opposes in their internal financial management. It is alleged that the group not only pays its soldiers and operatives well but also provides for its veterans and the families of its martyrs (Sanei, 2015).

The Kenyan government has, on several occasions, frozen accounts of individuals perceived as financiers of Al-Shabaab. In September 2020, the Ministry of Interior published the names of ‘nine top financiers’ of terror activities carried out by Somali-based Al-Qaeda affiliated Al-Shabaab group. In a statement, the Minister of Interior, Dr Fred Matiangi, directed all the assets of the said individuals to be seized and funds frozen for allegedly supporting Al-Shabaab (Wasike, 2020).

Al-Shabaab’s onslaught and Kenya’s internal and external challenges

On May 3, 2017, President Kenyatta launched the KDF Defence White Paper 2017 that contains an analysis of the possible threats to national security posed by neighboring states’ armed forces, as well as the existential threats in the form of radicalized Islamic youth tragically influenced by external Jihadist forces to become terrorists at home and abroad, and prescribes measures that may be taken to ensure Kenya’s defense and security. Kenya’s Defence Forces are the military instruments of national power available for the defense of the

country and have a primarily defensive posture. They consist of the Kenyan Army, the Kenyan Air Force and the Kenyan Navy. They are established under Article 241 of the Constitution and the Kenyan Defence Forces Act (No 44 of 2016) Sec 8 (1).

Kenya's strategic position within the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region, and its proximity to Somalia has exposed it to terrorism. Terrorist groups including Al-Shabaab, ISIS and their affiliates continue to threaten national security (KDF Whitepaper, 2017). Kenya's national security environment is also influenced by its geopolitical location in the greater Horn of Africa (HOA) and the Western Indian Ocean. With five neighbors and a relatively long coastline, Kenya's security should be viewed in relation to its geopolitical location and its neighbors, some of whom are regarded as fragile states (KDF Whitepaper, 2017).

Kenya has, however, enjoyed relative calm and peace in a rather turbulent region since independence. The Al-Shabaab terrorist and extremist group which is being engaged by AMISOM in Somalia where KDF has been since 2011 poses one of the key internal and external security challenges for the country. This existential threat to national security has been further complicated by Al-Shabaab's collaboration with local criminal organizations.

Ethnic and political tensions associated with tribal clashes and other related conflicts have also threatened Kenya's national environment. Homegrown terrorism, radicalization, religious intolerance, banditry, drug trafficking, alcohol and drug abuse, corruption, youth unemployment, proliferation of small arms and light weapons, HIV/AIDs, poverty, environmental degradation, disasters (man-made and natural) and organized crime, among others are internal security threats that may negatively impact on the government's war on terrorism (KDF Whitepaper, 2017). For instance, poverty, inequality and economic marginalization limit the livelihood opportunities available to young people making them vulnerable to crime, violence and extremist ideas. Extremist religious ideology propagated through social media as well as mosques provides recruits and potential recruits, with a framework for making sense of and articulating their grievances.

Excessive use of force, torture and extra-judicial killings have become commonplace in Kenya's war on terror, even though such tactics have yielded very little success. Government responses that are largely perceived to target Somalis and Muslims seem to play directly into Al-Shabaab's tactical approach to foment a violent insurgency at Kenya's margins (Lind et al., 2015). As was evident from interviews with civil society organizations, security officers and members of the clergy conducted for this study, such militant interventions have only pushed and motivated more people to violent extremism and terrorist activities. As one of the human rights activists interviewed observed, 'the highly securitized war on terror in Kenya has acquired a "Somali Muslim" face targeting largely members of the Somali ethnic community some of whom are of Kenyan origin'. This has largely only succeeded in driving a deeper wedge between Somalis, other Muslims

and the state, and levels of Al-Shabaab violence have remained high (Lind et al., 2017).

In 2008, violence involving Al-Shabaab accounted for less than 2% of all recorded violent events in Kenya. There has, however, been a notable increase in the number of attacks over the years and by 2011, Al-Shabaab was implicated in over one-quarter of all recorded incidences of violence. Kenya's security institutions have responded to worsening violence as something that constitutes an 'external stress' and threat to Kenya's peace and security (Lind et al., 2017: 119). Some researches conducted in Kenya by the Institute for Security Studies in 2013 found that the majority of recruits to local militant organizations were motivated by incidents of injustice suffered at the hands of Kenyan security forces. The security forces should take into account such observations if they are keen on winning the war on terror.

Despite these challenges, Kenyan police, intelligence agencies and the military have regularly detected and disrupted terrorist threats, both big and small. While the Westgate and Garissa University attacks showed glaring gaps in Kenyan command and control and the unsuitability of conventional military forces to respond to a civilian incident such as Westgate, the initial response by the Crisis Response Team of the elite General Service Unit Recce Company was more competent (KDF White paper, 2017).

Countering violent extremism in Kenya

The fear of terrorism and violent extremism has pushed security high on the national agenda of most countries, and numerous initiatives have been taken to mitigate and eventually put an end to terrorism. Violent extremism refers to the belief and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals (UNESCO, 2017). Thus, a counter-terrorism strategy constitutes 'those state actions that aim to suppress terrorist violence, utilizing any or all tools of statecraft including the use of military force, criminal law measures, intelligence operations, regulatory controls, and diplomacy' (Norton, 2006: 35–36). Kenya launched the National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism (NSCVE) in September 2016. The NSCVE articulates a clear vision of minimizing and/or eliminating violent extremism by mobilizing individuals and groups at the national and community levels (Ogada, 2017). This vision is consistent with the global policy on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), in particular, the UN Security Council's Resolution 2178 (2014), whose focus is on 'preventing radicalization, recruitment and mobilization of individuals into terrorist groups and becoming foreign terrorist fighters' (United Nation General Assembly, 2015). Prior to the development of the NSCVE, measures against violent extremism in Kenya were security focused incorporated in the following laws: the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2012; the Security Laws (Amendment) Act, 2014; and the Proceeds of Crime and Anti-Money Laundering (Amendment) Act, 2017. The aim of these laws is to address

violent extremism through policing, money laundering controls, intelligence gathering and prosecution. The NSCVE is, therefore, meant to complement these security focused counterterrorism measures with a humanitarian framework for CVE measures, which include the provision of employment options, business opportunities and life skills, among other interventions, aimed at reducing youth vulnerability to violent extremism (National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism, 2016: 30). There have been concerns from civil society and human rights activists in Kenya that the over reliance on force/military approaches to CVE, mostly exacerbate the root causes of terrorism and entrenches social exclusion, alienation and state insensitivity to community rights. The seeming collective punishment of communities alienates the victims and undermines state legitimacy (Mutunga, 2018). For instance, after the 2002 bombing of the Israeli-owned hotel in Mombasa, the Anti-Terrorism Police Unit (ATPU) was established within Kenya's Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in 2003. Since 2014, Kenya has stepped up security activities in response to the threat of Al-Shabaab. It has instigated police swoops in majority Somali neighborhoods, tightened administrative controls of refugee populations, passed new security laws and given wide leeway to the ATPU that is tasked with identifying and detaining terror suspects (Lind et al., 2015: 9). Since its formation, the ATPU unit has, however, been suspected of a series of extra-judicial killings and disappearances (Mazrui et al., 2018). The 2010 Constitution of Kenya provides an important framework for addressing the contextual, political, economic and social factors that fuel violent extremist ideology. For instance, Article 238 of the Constitution of Kenya provides guidance on how to promote and better guarantee national security. Article 238 (2) (b) provides that 'national security shall be pursued in compliance with the law and with the utmost respect for the rule of law, democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms'. The Constitution advises security agents not to violate the rights of innocent Kenyans in their quest of fighting terrorism. Under the new constitutional dispensation, even the terrorists have the right to life, due process and other rights and freedoms detailed in the Bill of Rights (Mutunga, 2018: 11).

Reducing violent extremism requires an array of responses to create societies that offer peaceful means to resolve differences. Every government needs credible criteria to measure its capacity to fight terrorism successfully. Fighting terrorism is all about context and although certain concepts and principles are universal, their application can be quite different from society to society (Shemella, 2012). To successfully fight against terrorism and CVE, there is a need for teamwork and input from a wide range of national and international organizations including the law enforcement agencies, the military, the intelligence services, the financial sector, the diplomatic service and the health organizations. Organization, cooperation and coordination among and between these agencies are the keys to success (Worcester, 2014).

Good governance that is central to the effective administration of a state's resources, the rule of law and the development of a strong civil society is also

a prerequisite to the success of the war on terror. Feelings of dissatisfaction, oppression and marginalization, real or perceived are major drivers of terrorism and violent extremism. Responses from interviews show that poverty, marginalization and the influence of radical Islamist ideology are key factors that drive frustrated young Africans to join terror groups. It's therefore only when just institutional structures are in place to monitor, evaluate and check these sentiments that the war on terror can be effectively won.

Boko Haram in Nigeria

Nigeria has witnessed violent religious extremism, especially in its Northern axis for nearly two decades. The rapid expansion of religious extremist networks in Northern Nigeria has reached an alarming proportion, such that no part of the country can be said to be completely free from its destructive impact, either directly or indirectly. Such extremist attacks are very devastating, particularly in the North-eastern part of Nigeria where the Boko Haram insurgency has created several security breaches, socio-economic dislocations, ethno-religious mistrust and fragile peace in the country, especially since 2009. The grave situation has negative implications for national security as it continues to compromise various components of human security, especially both personal and community security in multifarious dimensions (Adedimeji, 2015).

A major factor engendering violent extremism in Nigeria is religious radicalism that is being used as a tool to unite and mobilize youths toward achieving certain political and ideological ends. In this regard, the purveyors of the extreme ideology opt out of the religious creed of the majority Muslims and maintain rigid interpretations of religious scriptures while their uncompromising convictions are forced upon others, using social pressure, economic coercion and sheer violence (Nwolise, 2014). The inclination to violence by radicalized groups has remained a persistent issue in contemporary security discourse (Zaben, 2012). While examining the roots of violent extremism in Nigeria, Huud (2015) posits that violence, first and foremost, is a sacramental act or theocratic duties for the radicals, which is expected to be executed in direct response to some theological demand for extreme struggle to achieve divine goals and reward.

In particular, Boko Haram emerged as a transcendental sect with a perverse and destructive ideology that brainwashes its members and launches narcissistic attacks with the primary aim of undermining state authorities. The destructive capacity of the sect has grown in intensity and ferocity such that currently, the sect is ranked the third deadliest terrorist group in the world, especially with its strong affiliation with other terrorist organizations across the globe such as the ISIS, the Al-Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan, the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Ansar Dine and Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) sects in Mali and Al-Shabaab in Somalia (Global Terrorism Index, 2020).

The Boko Haram conundrum in Nigeria

The Boko Haram sect is believed to have emerged in the mid-1990s as a religious group, with a similar ideological orientation to the radical Salafist movement known as the Izala. The sect later broke away from the Izala movement to form the 'Jama'at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da'wah wa'l-Jihad' (the people of the right path for preaching and struggling), which is popularly known as Boko Haram under the leadership of the radical Islamist cleric named Mohammed Yusuf in 2002 (Broke, 2011).

Boko Haram portrays the image of a radical extremist group, which is guided more by religious ideology that combines a political doctrine and religious philosophy of divine rulership, that is largely pursued through open Jihad (Religious War). The sect accepts this divine ideology as superior to Western values with its secular governments, democratic values and practices (Okpo, 2019). The sect's acclaimed goal is to establish an Islamic Caliphate in place of the Nigerian secular government. Members are made to believe that they are not criminals and cannot be subjected to rules of the constitution, which they believe projects Western values (*The New York Times*, 2015).

The sect believes in the indivisible nexus between the state and religion as it continues to advocate for a theocratic rule in Nigeria administered under Islamic law (Sharia). The Boko Haram sect considers the Muslim community as one indivisible entity under Islamic principles with no chance of secularism which the state professes, and in which the sect labeled as atheistic or syncretistic practices. According to Boko Haram, the imposition of secularism by the Nigerian constitution amounts to a religious-cultural affront, and an attempt to relegate Muslims to the position of second-class citizens. The group also labels both the state and federal governments as tyrants that must be attacked, even at the risk of death in order to achieve what it considers as the Islamic path to justice. This view was captured in the statement of one of the interviewees, a detained Boko Haram suspect in Maiduguri, who said:

Boko Haram is an Islamic revolution group whose impact is not limited to Northern Nigeria alone. In fact, we are across all the 36 states in Nigeria, and it is just a version of the Al-Qaeda which we align with and respect. We support Osama Bin Laden; we shall carryout his command in Nigeria until the country is totally Islamized. We have started Jihad in Nigeria which no force on earth can stop. The aim is to Islamize Nigeria and ensure the rule of the majority Muslims in the country. We will teach Nigeria a lesson, a bitter one (Personal Communication, 2019).

The sect's preaching supports the belief that any person or group including Muslims that oppose its agenda is anti-Islam and as such must be eliminated. This explains the vicious attacks by the sect on Christians, churches, security personnel, moderate Muslim clerics and traditional rulers that question the group's extreme orientation. Boko Haram members are also indoctrinated to

see death in the course of Jihad as a divine calling that is rewarded by Allah (SAW). This view is supported by a respondent, one of the detained members of the sect during an interview session in Abuja. He stated that:

The doctrinal training in discipline, unity and fatalism, inspires among members of the sect the belief in the happy endings of their victory or martyrdom (Personal Communication, 2019).

The above assertions clearly explain the mindset of members of the sect in launching their campaigns of violence leading to deaths, wanton destruction of property and disruption of social life. Thus, the above submission supports the view of Danjibo (2010) that the sect's doctrinal leaning is meant to discourage Muslims from seeking Western knowledge and oriental socio-political solutions to solve Nigeria's socio-political and economic problems. However, owing to the brutal and extra-judicial killing of its leader, Yusuf, in 2009, the group re-emerged under the leadership of Abubakar Shekau with a terrorist gusto that demonstrates the intent to violently confront the security agencies and the society to avenge the killing of their former leader, Muhammad Yusuf. For instance, the group attacked a police station in Bauchi state on September 5, 2009 resulting in the death of 39 members of the sect, 2 Police Officers and 1 Soldier (Onuoha, 2014). The attack was followed by a 5-day standoff between the insurgents and security personnel in Maiduguri, Borno State leading to the death of 750 people (Onuoha, 2014).

An interviewee, a University scholar, in recounting the events that led to the Boko Haram insurgency, blamed the Nigerian security agencies, in particular the Police for the escalation of the conflict which culminated in the extra-judicial killing of Mohammed Yusuf, and death of many of his members as well as the reckless crackdown on other members. He further reiterated that:

...all this waste of lives and property and suffering is because the government lacked tact in dealing with the sect's members. If the leader, Yusuf, and the sect members were found wanting or contravened any law of the land, the courts are there to prosecute them rather than taking the laws into their hands. You can imagine the level of devastation and calamity this error of judgment in extra-judicially killing of Yusuf has led to; it has brought serious calamities on innocent citizens and the entire nation (Personal communication, 2018).

Many security analysts have pointed to how the strong-armed tactics of the Nigerian security agencies in managing the activities of the Yusuf-led sect have shaped the violent campaign of the extremist group and its resilience (Onuoha, 2014; Serrano & Pieri, 2014; Comolli, 2015).

The mode of tactical operation of the insurgents later drastically changed from mere confrontation with security agencies to terrorist acts owing to the

linkage of the group to global terrorist sects, especially the Al-Qaeda network who supported Boko Haram with training and weapons (Forest, 2012). From the initial use of crude and locally made arms, the sect started to use sophisticated weapons. The sect now uses high caliber-precision weapons, Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and armed teenagers to attack selected targets. The Boko Haram sect has overtime established local and foreign sources of arms and ammunition supply as well as acquired technical skills in weapon handling and production of IEDs (Charles, 2019). Another emerging trend in the strategic combat operation of the insurgents is the use of suicide bombers with maximum impact on their target, thus constituting a serious threat to national security. The selection of the sect's targets has graduated from attacks on security posts and banks, to high-profile targets like the UN building in Abuja and the Police Force headquarters.

The destructive activities of the Boko Haram pose religious, economic and social threats. Within the religious confines, the sect's attacks on churches and mosques almost resulted in intra- and inter-religious polarization and conflict in Nigeria, especially amongst the Muslims and between the Muslims and the Christians. The general atmosphere of insecurity created by the activities of Boko Haram has impacted negatively on the economy, having virtually paralyzed business activities in the affected parts of the country as many traders and companies have closed down due to security threats from the terrorists. The incessant attacks forced many banks to close with its attendant implications for financial withdrawal, leading to business lull in many parts of the North-east Nigeria (*This Day*, 2011). The education sector is not spared owing to frequent attacks on primary and secondary schools in Borno State. At least, 36 public and private schools were set on fire in coordinated attacks launched mostly under the cover of darkness since the insurgency became noticeable in 2009 (Trifunov, 2012). Over 200 girls were kidnapped in April 2014 from Chibok in Borno State (Human Right Watch, 2015). This action has forced about 10,000 pupils and students to stay away from school. Many of the students roam the streets engaging in social vices.

Due to Boko Haram's violent confrontations with security agencies and destructive activities in the affected areas, the former President of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan, imposed a state of emergency on Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states on the May 14, 2013 (Jonathan, 2013). On May 15, 2013, a Military Joint Task force (JTF) began an 'Operation Safety' (OP) in the three states. The establishment of the JTF prompted some youths, hunters, vigilante groups out of sheer patriotism, to start assisting the JTF in their counter-insurgency operations by giving vital intelligence and collaborating with the conventional JTF to conduct house-to-house search. This group came to be known as the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF). The Force, under the leadership of Lawan Jafar, initially comprised 42 youths between the ages of 18 and 40, now has over 1,000 members (Lawal, 2014).

Boko Haram has drifted Nigeria away from its relative peacefulness to serious violence with the year 2015 posing the worst scenario. It is pertinent

to note that more than 70% of global deaths from violent religious radicalism in 2015 occurred in West Africa, out of which 65% of the incidents were recorded in Nigeria due to the destructive activities of the Boko Haram sect (Global Terrorist Index, 2015). The extremist group is also responsible for about 700,000 deaths of civilians and security agencies and the displacement of 2.2 million in the North-east. The 2020 report of the Global Terrorism Index ranks Nigeria third among 163 countries on the scale of key global insecure countries (Global Terrorism Index, 2020). Only Afghanistan and Iraq which ranked first and second respectively were ahead of Nigeria in the terror ranking. The Boko Haram terrorism accounted for 83% of the violent acts while armed banditry, kidnapping and militancy, among other heinous crimes accounted for the remaining 17% of acts of terrorism in Nigeria (Layi, 2020). This report indicates further that Nigeria remains the most terrorized country in Africa with its huge economic loss, which stands around N34 billion. In terms of humanitarian crisis, the death toll from Boko Haram terrorism in 2018 alone was 1,083 as of July, while the group's terror-related attacks increased from 411 in 2017 to 562 in 2018 (Human Right Watch, 2019). More so, about 90% of the Boko Haram combat terrorists are males, over 70% of the suicide bombers are females of which 1 in every 3 female is a minor (Salkida, 2019).

The Boko Haram has not only grown more ruthless, violent and destructive, but the sect has also made incursion into neighboring Cameroon, Niger and Chad, and this has enabled the group to mobilize youths for violent radicalism. The challenges of violent religious extremism as perpetrated by Boko Haram in Nigeria have been complicated further, by increasing level of collaboration between the sect and other criminal syndicates such as drug and human traffickers who finance the insurgents with the income generated from their illicit trade (Mark & Michael, 2014).

Table 3.1 and Figure 3.1 provide a glimpse of the gory tales of death records of civilians, police officers, military personnel and extremists in Nigeria between 2009 and 2015.

Of the three Northern Nigeria geopolitical zones in Table 3.1, North East has been worst hit by Boko Haram violence. North East's share of Boko Haram attacks was 4,682 and of deaths, 22,339, representing 87.8%. Borno State has borne the heaviest burden of Boko Haram of the six states in the North East zone. It suffered 4,452 attacks with 17,640 deaths, representing 80% of the zone's deaths from Boko Haram, excluding the unknown fate of the remaining 275 out of the 276 girls abducted from a Chibok school over 2 years ago. Only 5 of Borno State's 28 local governments have been untouched by Boko Haram. Until the recent counter-insurgency operations of the Federal Government, Borno State was effectively in Boko Haram's violent ring.

North Central and North West zones share almost equal number of deaths from Boko Haram attacks with 1,910 deaths and 1,182 deaths respectively. Although with slightly fewer number of deaths, North West suffered more

Table 3.1 Number of deaths from Boko Haram attacks (2009–2015)

Geopolitical zone	State	Total number of local governments	No. of affected local governments	Frequency of violent attack	No. of deaths	Largest no. of deaths in a single attack
North	FCT*			14	240	114
Central	Benue	23	3	5	49	
	Kogi	21	3	6	41	
	Kwara	–	–	–	–	
	Nasarawa	–	–	–	–	
	Niger	25	5	7	56	
	Plateau	17	9	28	1,524	
	Total	86	20	60	1910	
North East	Adamawa	21	12	73	1,787	205
	Bauchi	20	8	28	558	
	Borno	28	23	4,452	17,640**	755
	Gombe	11	5	24	366	79
	Taraba	16	2	3	37	
	Yobe	17	12	102	1,951	107
	Total	113	62	4682	22339	
North West	Jigawa	27	7	7	24	9
	Kaduna	23	9	42	393	85
	Kano	44	15	57	718	203
	Katsina	34	3	6	23	
	Kebbi	–	–	–	–	
	Sokoto	23	3	5	20	
	Zamfara	14	2	2	4	
	Total	165	39	119	1182	
	Grand Total	364	121	4861	25431	

* Federal Capital Territory.

** Excluding the unknown fate of 275 abducted Chibok school girls.

Source: Compiled from First Edition of the *Nigeria Watch Newsletter* (FATALITY TRENDS).

frequent Boko Haram attacks, and thus more anxious moments than North Central. Plateau State has suffered most frequent Boko Haram attacks and resultant 1,524 (79.8%), deaths in the North Central zone. Two of the prominent figures who were Boko Haram casualties in Plateau State include Senator Gyang Dantong and Gyang Fulani, the Majority Leader of the Plateau State House of Assembly. Kano and Kaduna States take the lion's share of attacks and deaths in the North West with 718 (60.8%) deaths and 393 (33.3%) deaths respectively. Kano Municipality suffered 203 deaths including 3 foreigners from an attack targeted at the then Emir of Kano. Twin bomb attacks, one targeted at then General Muhammadu Buhari, now President Muhammadu Buhari, and the other targeted at popular Islamic scholar, Sheikh Dahiru Bauchi, in Kaduna city, killed 85 and 10 people respectively.

The above data offer a brief glimpse into the magnitude of the lethality of the radical extremist, Boko Haram. Since 2015, when the military offensive

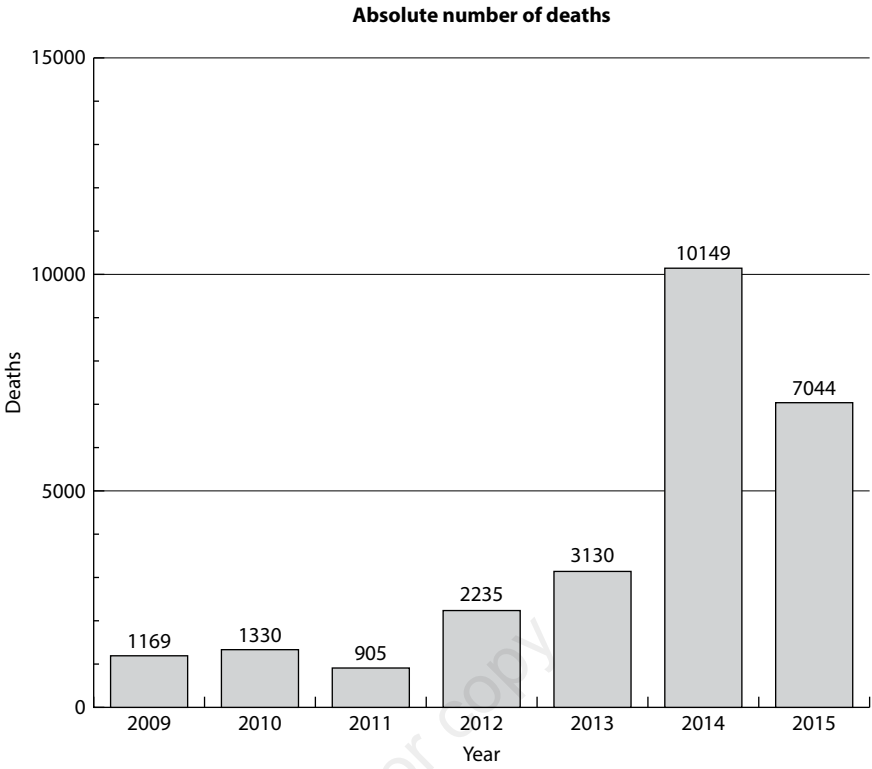


Figure 3.1 Absolute deaths from Boko Haram violence in Nigeria (2009–2015)

Source: Based on First Edition of the *Nigeria Watch Newsletter* (FATALITY TRENDS).

by the newly elected Buhari’s administration led to the technical defeat of Boko Haram, the sect has continued to demonstrate remarkable flexibility and adaptability, by reverting to its earlier guerilla tactics, including kidnapping and increasing use of suicide bombers targeting soft target. It remains to be seen if the Buhari’s government would be able to totally defeat Boko Haram, given the government’s incapacity to tackle the issues at the root of the extremists’ agitations and the far-reaching consequences of its campaign of terror.

Factors driving Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria

Many factors have been identified by commentators as the causes that led to the emergence and spread of the Boko Haram sect in North-eastern Nigeria (Muhammed, 2009; Thurston, 2011; Bolaji, 2014). These factors include their opposition to Western education and values. Okpo (2019) describes how the ideology and philosophy of the movement can best be understood from the linguistic meaning of Boko and Haram. The word ‘Boko’ is a Hausa

equivocal term which means 'book' while the word 'Haram' is an Arabic derivative, meaning 'forbidden, sinful or ungodly'. Literally put together, 'Boko Haram' means 'book is sinful'. But in its deeper meaning, it connotes 'forbid everything Western' and 'Western Education is sinful, sacrilegious or ungodly and should, therefore, be forbidden'. The inference from the foregoing explanations is that the movement characteristically opposes and outright rejects Western education, Western values and culture as well as modern science which they believe are antithetical to Islamic values.

Closely related to the first factor is the issue of religious bigotry. Boko Haram has its root in the nature of religious belief, and practice based on intolerance and the high capacity to impose and assert its perspective on the state's political agenda (Rasheed, 2009). The evolution of the sect also could be traced to what Muhammed (2009) views as phenomenal rise of the Salafi movement that emerged out of a coterie of disgruntled Ulama (Islamic scholars) into a broad-based social movement in which various grievances found expression. Jama'atu Izalatal Bid'a wa Iqamatus Sunnah (movement against negative innovation and orthodoxy), or Izala for short is the representative example of the Salafi movement in Nigeria. The Nigerian Izala movement was rooted in Sheik Mahmud Gumi's teaching and preaching activities which emphasized a just and ethical order (ibid). Thus, Boko Haram embraces and advocates the propagation and strict adherence to Islam by all and sundry, irrespective of people's personal wishes (Abimbola & Adesote, 2012). The sect believes the moral decadence, corruption, social deprivation and other vices confronting the Nigerian society are engendered by the embrace of Western culture and values and so in order to checkmate such decadence, there must be the entrenchment of an Islamic society on the nation by destroying modern political institutions and infrastructure (Danjibo, 2010).

This belief is also heightened by ideological fanaticism of the movement, based on the belief that any member who fights and dies, either by suicide bombing or by other means in the process of establishing a Sharia state that leads to the destruction of the modern state formation and government institutions would automatically go to Aljanna – Paradise or heaven (Taeb, 2014). Hence, for their aim to be achieved, all institutions represented by government including security agencies like Police, Military and other uniformed personnel have become targets that should be ruthlessly crushed.

Poverty, unemployment and ignorance have contributed significantly to the rapid spread of the sect's activities in Northern Nigeria. Some of the public analysts support the view that Boko Haram phenomenon in the North escalated as a result of the high level of poverty, unemployment and illiteracy prevalent in Northern Nigeria, largely due to the criminal neglect of citizens' welfare by successive governments. This reality found justification in Marxist proposition of religious influence on man as the opium of the masses. Accordingly, when a young man is poor, illiterate and unemployed, he becomes a clean slate (Tabula Rasa) for any kind of brainwashing which is more potent when it comes from religion aided by culture. This is so

because these categories of people lack the intellectual clout to question logically or critique what they are told. Also, the social services provided by the group make the brainwashing to be firmly embedded in their mind, given that the sect provides quasi-equivalent of employment. Thus, these socio-economically deprived youths engage in acting out the propaganda of Boko Haram into which they have been brainwashed.

The above postulation was supported by Danjibo (2010) who confirmed that majority of the followers of late Malam Muhammed Yusuf were largely illiterate youths who engaged in petty trading or had dropped out of school. Also, the sect has large and committed followers among the Almajiris – Quranic trainees who depend on their Malams (teachers) for knowledge, inspiration and daily survival.

For instance, Osama bin Laden, it was alleged, sent \$3 million to Muhammed Yusuf to help economically empower the highly impoverished Muslim youths in Nigeria (Pham, 2012). With such help from Al-Qaeda, Yusuf co-opted a local youth cult group operating at the University of Maiduguri, along with his vast youth followers and formed a sect now known as Boko Haram. Yusuf then intensified the preaching of a radical strain of Islam that rejected all forms of Western education, much like his spiritual predecessor, Maitatsine. The Maitatsine was a small but radical movement that emerged in Kano in the 1970s under the leadership of a young preacher, Marwa from northern Cameroon. Much like the other previous radical movements, Yusuf's Boko Haram believes that Nigeria needs to replace all Western institutions with Sharia law. Moreover, Boko Haram was able to derive support from several other sources to create an Islamic school and mosque, which were used for the effective recruitment and indoctrination of several youths and adherents. This feat set him apart from the previous radical movements that emerged in Northern Nigeria.

The UN Security Council (2010) reports that at the end of the July 2009 uprising that led to the death of Yusuf in police custody, the remaining members of the group reportedly fled to neighboring countries, where they attracted the attention of global Jihadist movements based around the Sahel. It further asserts that Boko Haram members received training in a Tuareg rebel camp in Mali, while others went to Somalia to fight with Al-Shabab during the group's hibernation.

Two events re-energized Boko-Haram group. First, many survivors from the riots fled to the Maghreb and trained with AQIM (Thurston, 2011). These extremists later return to Nigeria with increased knowledge in waging guerrilla warfare and expertise in the manufacture and use of IEDs and vehicle-borne IEDs. Second, Abubakar Shekau, perceived to be a vicious extremist with criminal mind, who was regarded as late Yusuf's deputy, assumed control of the group in the middle of 2010, giving Boko Haram renewed operational direction.

These two developments resulted in immediate dividends for the hitherto rag-tag insurgent group, now effectively transformed into a terrorist sect. It is on record that in December 2010, Boko Haram in a renewed vigor

started attacking targets across Northern-Nigeria (Agbiboa, 2014). On June 16, 2011, the group committed its first vehicle-borne suicide attack on the Police HQ in Abuja and in August 2011, Boko-Haram attacked the UN facilities in Abuja, internationalizing its fight and placing it under the broader context of Al-Qaeda's global Jihadist movement. The *Vanguard* (2011) reports that Boko Haram's spokesman later claimed that the sect attacked the UN to repay AQIM for its help during its state of disarray following Yusuf's death. The burst of violence in 2011 initiated the deadliest phase of Boko Haram's insurgency fueled by vicious terrorism.

Other causal issues for the rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria can be categorized as situational, strategic and ideological factors (Mark, 2006). Situational factors revolve around motivational pre-conditions for extremism caused by modernity. These include a broader range of modern technology that has homogenized the world. For example, the internet provides a powerful and accessible means for violent ideas that are shared and reinforced amongst larger audience. Although the presence of pro-violence technology does not automatically radicalize all its consumers on the internet, its cheap availability with other means of electronic gadgets of communication brings people closer to homogenization of religious ideas of violent extremism. Though many new terrorist recruits are very poor before recruitment, part of the attractive incentive is that they are often lured into the group by being provided with their immediate personal and family needs, including handset as an incentive.

An interview conducted with a de-radicalized and rehabilitated insurgent affirmed that:

Our first incentive after accepting to be recruited as a member of the faithful is to take affirmation to be loyal to the sect, after which we are given sufficient money and phone for intergroup communication and the freedom to loot goods belonging to infidels (Personal communication, 2019).

The sect leader, Shekau, has also utilized social media to pass most of his propaganda and violent campaign.

Urbanization is another situational factor for the Boko Haram phenomenon in Nigeria, because living in crowded households and cluster houses in large cities brings larger number of their potential members closer and makes it easier to share ideas including extremist views. One of the interviewees, a repentant Boko Haram during the interview session in Maiduguri narrated thus:

I was introduced into the sect with four of my family members by my young paternal uncle as we all gathered under the tree to talk about our lives, which were gradually being wasted due to lack of government job or credible empowerment programme to make us stand on our foot. The uncle promised to start all of us off on retail fish business, which he did. It turned out that the sect was the link to the business (Personal Communication, 2019).

The account of this respondent suggests that many of the members of the sect are recruited through members of their family who exploit their poor socio-economic conditions to offer them employment prospects through Boko Haram.

Circumstantial and strategic precipitant also trigger the Boko Haram phenomenon in form of revenge. For example, the activities of the Boko Haram sect was largely peaceful until 2009, when its members became hardened and more deviant after the extra-judicial killing of their leader, Muhammad Yusuf by the Nigeria Police, a situation that made the group to seek revenge as a strategic deterrence action against state aggression. Other factors which equally predispose to the Boko Haram phenomenon include strong identification with and ideological passion for Islamic faith, and deep empathy for the suffering of 'brothers and sisters in religion' in the hands of formal and informal authorities (Gadji, 2015).

Poverty and poor integration policy are considered a risk factor for enlisting in the Boko Haram sect as politics of exclusion and marginal socio-economic integration have led many members of the sect to affiliate with the sect to correct such perceived marginalization, from the development process through violent extremism. Poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and weak family structures contribute to making young men in the Boko Haram sect vulnerable to recruitment for violence as itinerant preachers have capitalized on broken homes to preach an extreme or distorted version of religious teachings and conveying a narrative of the Nigerian government as weak and corrupt (Onuoha, 2015).

Despite its vast natural resources, the North-eastern Nigeria, where the Boko Haram insurgents largely holds sway, suffers from substantial social challenges, of which poverty remains one of the most significant. According to the World Poverty Clock, (2019), between 2018 and 2019, the proportion of the Northern Nigerian population living in poverty was 84%. Thus, poverty presents additional challenges to security as an important factor in explaining outbreaks of violent extremism in Nigeria. This unfortunate scenario makes it attractive for many Nigerian youths to be lured into insurgent groups with better offer of basic sustenance in life.

The psychological state of anomie in Nigeria which arises from alienation and a sense of purposelessness in life has fueled the Boko Haram insurgency (Gadji, 2015). Hence, satisfaction has been found only when members of the sect turn toward violent religious orientation, which restores a sense of purpose and personal recognition to them. Concepts like martyrdom have been idealized for the extremists because they reinforce spiritual significance for their existence. Cambell (2013) identifies about 11 drivers of violent religious extremism in Africa which have direct relevance to the emergence of the Boko Haram sect in Nigeria. The factors revolve around hardline religious indoctrination, denial of endogenous development, environmental degradation and gross violation of fundamental rights of the individual and government repression of opponents. Other factors include widespread corruption,

poor governance, overwhelming poverty, illegitimate government through stage-managed elections and manipulation of religion for selfish interest. The above factors are the push variables for extremist activities. The pull factors as identified by USAID (2013) are those factors that made violent extremism appealing to terrorists and their sponsors. These drivers include the material benefits and economic gains to the terrorists and wrong socio-religious value orientations.

The Boko Haram insurgents see politics as a major evil effect of westernization that has largely promoted corruption and underdevelopment, hence the need to eliminate the western political values and political gladiators from the political space and enthrone a theocratic governance that is based on Islamic divine injunctions. For instance, the Boko Haram insurgents claimed the responsibility for eliminating Ali Modu Sheriff's younger brother, Engineer Modu Fannami Gugbio, who was a governorship aspirant in the company of six other people who were killed on January 28, 2011, after the sect left the Sheriff government; accusing him of reneging on his earlier promise before his election to fully implement Sharia law in the state. The capacity of the political institutions of the state to amalgamate and reconcile diverse political interests in Nigeria amplifies the continuity of insurgency. Thus, due to intense political rivalry, many politicians from the Northern part of Nigeria often sponsor insurgents to eliminate their political opponents while a serving senator from the North was accused and prosecuted for aiding the insurgents, a case that was eventually dismissed by the court. Initially, many insurgents also have their political affiliation, especially in Borno State, where they helped Ali Modu Sherrif win the governorship election with the promise that the government was going to enthrone religious law (Sharia) to govern the state. The corrupt nature of the Nigerian politics, which is largely prebendal in nature makes political competition to be fierce, particularly with the involvement of political thugs, who sometimes transform into insurgents and assassins after the conclusion of elections, having been abandoned by the politicians after supporting them to gain political power.

Boko Haram's operational strategy and funding

The operational strategy of Boko Haram has been grouped into six: armed confrontation, drive shooting, selective assassination, the use of IEDs, suicide bombing, kidnapping and hostage-taking (Okpo, 2019). The first, armed confrontation, is the group's major campaign tactic since 2009, which combines some aspects of modified version of the group's ambush as well as usual hit-and-run tactics. Initially, this tactic involved the deployment of selected members of the group, between 10 and 60 people, to confront security agents in direct armed battles. But under the modified system, the group sends large numbers of its men to conduct surprise attacks on selected security outfits such as police stations, army barracks, prisons or

civilian-populated places such as shopping malls, mosques and churches. The reason is that such places are usually crowded by people who can easily overpower the group's operatives in a direct confrontation (Murtada, 2013; Onuoha, 201).

In recent times, having acquired some military hardware and sufficient training in asymmetric warfare, the insurgent group has been empowered to be able to confront the security architecture head-on and on many occasions embarrassingly causing Nigerian troops to hastily retreat or record heavy casualty. The second tactic, drive shooting, involves the deployment of motorbikes by Boko Haram insurgents to kill or maim their target(s) without coming down and escape easily, avoiding arrest by the security agencies. This method is favored by the sect because it provides the insurgents with the flexibility of hitting their targets, especially members of the security architecture at close range and escaping without much difficulty in congested areas especially in urban centers. Through this method, identified security personnel, prominent politicians, businessmen and people identified as threats to the sect's cause have been killed. Among those brutally eliminated in this manner include the former Deputy Inspector General of Police, Saleh Abubakar Ningi, on June 6, 2012, and Sheik Albani with his wife and two children on February 1, 2014 (Bello, 2013).

The third tactic, referred to as selective assassination, is used by the sect to eliminate perceived infidels who 'fatwa' has been declared upon and labeled as its arch enemy. The method involves trailing the victim by the insurgents' sharpshooters to a convenient environment or ambushing them so that the killing will be done effortlessly. In most cases, motorbikes are used to keep surveillance on their victims. The use of motorbikes provides the operatives advantages of killing their victims at close range and at the same time maneuvering their ways with ease to avoid arrest. Victims of these tactics are mostly those openly opposed to the sect's ideology and activities such as politicians, clerics, traditional rulers and other community leaders. Some of the victims of such gruesome attacks include the late Imam Ibrahim Ahmed Abdullahi murdered on March 12, 2010, Borno State ANPP governorship candidate, Engineer Modu Fannami Gugbio, in company of six other people including Governor Sheriff's younger brother cut down on January 28, 2011, Kano-based Cleric, Alh Muhammadu, eliminated on February 9, 2012, Borno State Justice Commissioner, Zanna Malam Gana, shot dead in Bama town on September 17, 2012 and a family of four wasted in Kano on September 16, 2012 (Idris, 2011; *PM News*, 2012).

The fourth tactic which is the use of IEDs is adopted by the group after the 2009 gruesome confrontation with the security architecture. The tactic involves the use of IEDs such as drums, gallons, jerry cans and used soft drink cans filled with petrol and other inflammable chemicals like trinitrotoluene and ammonia fertilizers. Any of these devices is subsequently planted in bags, dust bins or un-used empty containers within the premises of the selected target such as car parks, bus stops, lecture halls, places of

worship and other public places. Among the prominent attacks conducted by the group using this method are the coordinated Kano bombings on January 20, 2012; *This Day Newspapers* Abuja building on April 26, 2012; Bayero University Kano Christian Chapel on April 29, 2012; Abuja bus station on April 14, 2014; and Jos market bombing on May 20, 2014 (Nkechi, 2013; Blanchard, 2014).

The fifth tactic is suicide bombing which involves the use of IEDs by the group. However, the difference is that the IEDs are fitted in the boot of a car and driven by the operative(s) to strike at the target. In this case the driver(s) is also killed by the explosion when the car hits the target, or the explosive is detonated by the suicide bomber to avoid detection or apprehension by the security agents. The types of suicide bombings used by the group include: vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIED), motorbikes-borne improvised explosive devices (MBIED), body-borne improvised explosive devices (BBIED) and tricycle-borne improvised explosive devices (TBIED). Through this tactic, the group has undertaken several attacks in different parts of Nigeria. For instance, some of the most prominent suicide attacks carried out by the group between June 2012 and May 2014 include Abuja Police Headquarters car park suicide bombing; UN building suicide bombing in Abuja on August 26, 2011; Madallah Saint Theresa Catholic Church in Niger State on December 25, 2011; Kaduna Army Headquarters suicide bombing on February 8, 2012; Taraba State Police Commissioner's convoy suicide bombing on August 3, 2012; and Maiduguri suicide bombing on January 14, 2014 (Bekoe, 2011; Onuoha, 2015).

The last tactic of the sect is kidnapping/hostage taking which is one of the newly modified tactics of the Boko Haram sect. It involves the kidnapping of foreigners, women, school girls and young able men by the group. While it is clear that foreigners are kidnapped by the sect for ransom purposes, the group explains that they are kidnapping school girls in order to stop them from pursuing Western education, even though the sect has not offered any reason as to why they are also kidnapping women. Media reports seem to suggest that it is being done to satisfy the sexual needs of the group members. Also, Boko Haram's increasing use of females as suicide bombers suggest that the sect mostly forcefully coerced their female captives into their suicide bombing operations. Whatever may be the reason for the use of this tactic, it has generally been assumed that both the girls and the women are being subjected to sexual slavery by the sect. This assumption was recently confirmed by the sect's leader in a televised video message when he asserted that over 250 Chibok school girls kidnapped by the group have become subjects of war bounties or slaves and as such, they can be treated in any way. On the other hand, the kidnapping of the young men by the group is attributed to their desire to augment the strength of their lost operatives, by forcing those who are kidnapped to join the sect (Muhammad, 2012; Ruth, 2014).

Through the combination of the above enumerated tactics, Boko Haram insurgent group (including the Ansar Dine and later Islamic State in West Africa, the splinter factions of Boko Haram) has undertaken different types of terror attacks in Nigeria since 2009 which have in turn impacted negatively on the overall wellbeing of the citizens and the country at large. These tactics have evolved over time and changed over time in response to the government military offensive and the internal schism within the group.

Boko Haram terrorists fund their activities largely through harassment and extorting money from people; they rob banks, kidnap and rustle cows for sales. The funding of Boko Haram insurgency is largely derived from the monies realized from the sect's engagement in criminal activities such as kidnapping for ransom, bank heist, cattle rustling, drug pushing, human trafficking/sex slaves, money laundering and prisoners' swap. The sect receives financial and material donations as well as training/manpower support from terrorist organizations within and outside Nigeria. For instance, Mohammed Yusuf and Mohammed Bello Damagun were arraigned and tried in 2007 for aiding terrorism in Nigeria, and for receiving US\$300,000 from Al-Qaeda to recruit and train Nigerians in Mauritania for terrorism. In addition, Mohammed Yusuf was also charged with receiving funding from 'Al-Qaeda operatives in Pakistan to recruit terrorists' who would carry out attacks on foreigners, especially Americans residing in Nigeria. There were also donations from politicians, especially those under the threat of Boko Haram blackmail list or targeted attacks, government officials and individuals sympathetic to Boko Haram cause (Onuoha, 201).

Boko Haram's hierarchy, chain of command, operational areas and membership

Boko Haram is a highly organized and compartmentalized organization. At the top of its chain of command is the **Imam**, in the person of Abubakar Shekau, who doubles as the spiritual and overall commander of the sect. He is assisted by a set of advisers who constitute the **Shura Council**, which ranks as the highest decision-making body of the sect. It comprises a clique of staunch members whose decisions are binding on all the sect members upon the approval of the Imam. The sect has **Commanders**, referred to as '**Qiads**'. They are often placed in charge of the **Fias** which are the **operational zones** of the sect. Assisting the Qiads are the **Munzirs**, the sub-commanders of the various cells of the sect under who are the **Amirs** or **Uwats**, the cell coordinators. At the rung of the ladder are the **Munsarat**, the sect's foot soldiers who could also graduate in ranking based on their individual capabilities, often measured by their viciousness and passion for the sect's agenda. For instance, the sect's foot soldiers often boast among themselves of the number of eliminated people and wanton destruction to their credit, to taunt those with fewer numbers of victims (Onuoha, 2010).

Onuoha (2010) reports that Boko Haram has four (4) operational zones across Nigeria namely:

- i **Fi'a Mukatila** – This is the first zone comprising Maiduguri, Damaturu, Chad, Diffa (Niger Republic) and Cameroon.
- ii **Fi'a Mansura** – This is the second zone consisting of Gombe, Taraba, Adamawa, Biu and Bama.
- iii **Fi'a Mujaida** – This is the third zone, which consists of Kaduna, Kano, Jos, FCT, Kogi, Niger and Bauchi States.
- iv **Fi'a Mumina** – This is the fourth zone, which comprises Zamfara, Jigawa, Sokoto and Katsina States.

The membership of Boko Haram cuts across the strata of the Nigerian society: politicians, medical doctors, highly educated persons and youths as well as children who could be as young as eight years old. As noted by a respondent, one of the repentant members of the sect in Damaturu:

Our members cut across all the strata of the society, including politicians and business men who sponsor us for one form of protection or the other (Personal Communication, 2020).

However, the bulk of the sect's membership are unemployed idle young adults who pose as everyday people involved in various trades while many were raised as Almajiri pupils. The Almajiri system is an Islamic educational institution that allows a large number of people, especially children at a very tender age, to have Quranic education under the tutelage of an Islamic teacher or cleric. Over time, this system has been abused by some Islamic clerics who use the avenue to indoctrinate the young ones into religious extremism (*The Nation*, 2012).

The sect also has massive followership from the army of Muslim graduates who have completed studies but are unable to secure employment. The sect also engages in extensive and intimidating sermons that include the threat of the use of force in recruiting new members. Additionally, other intellectuals who are swayed by the sect's ideologies abandon their jobs, burn their certificates and sell their assets to contribute to the growth of the group as they join. Tradesmen, carpenters and drivers who are disgruntled with the provisions of government also join. Some privileged youths from well-to-do families as well as migrants from neighboring Niger, Chad and Cameroon also become radical followers of the sect's leader (Agbiboa, 2014).

Specifically, reports indicate that Alhaji Buji Foi, one of the former commissioners in Borno State was a prominent member and financier of the sect before his demise. In addition, Kadiru Atiku, who was a lecturer in one of the Nigerian universities, was reportedly a prominent member of the radical Islamic sect (Onuoha, 2010). There is evidence that some disgruntled

ex-service men and sympathetic security forces officials also joined this group to inflict more damage on the state (Zenn, 2012).

Similarly, according to the alleged confessional statement made by Ali Sauda Umar Konduga (a.k.a. Usman al-Zawahiri), one of the arrested members of the sect disclosed to the State Security Services (SSS) that influential Nigerians were mentioned in the said statement including a serving senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and late Saidu Pindar, former Nigerian Ambassador to Sao Tome and Principe, who was reported to have also featured prominently in the said confessional statement as one of the sect's financial backers (*The Nation*, 2012).

In recent times, several local and international sources accuse the military hierarchy of gross graft and aiding to prolong Boko Haram insurgency, by diverting funds meant to procure military hardware or procuring obsolete and refurbished equipment, leaking both tactical and operational intelligence, gross negligence of the welfare of troop deployed to the theatre of conflict as well as willfully abandoning weapons and even armored tanks at the battlefield for the insurgents to rake up among other debilitating acts of internal sabotage (Transparency International, 2016).

Mitigating violent religion extremism in Nigeria

Nigeria has designed different counter-terrorism strategic responses. Generally, three models of counter-terrorism strategies are discernible (Omotola, 2013). These are military-led reprisals and pre-emptive actions against the Boko Haram insurgents, which rely principally on the use of force, constitutional enactment, amendment and reforms that seek to improve the performances and the response of security agencies to terrorist threat; and a tactical de-radicalization approach targeted at appeasing religious extremists to drop their hardline postures.

In the wake of the renewed terrorist attacks launched by the sect in September 2009, the Federal Government deployed security forces against the group and in the process, Mohammed Yusuf, the group leader, was captured by the military. Having been handed over to the police, he was extra-judicially executed in custody under controversial circumstances. The Nigerian National Assembly passed the anti-terrorism law on February 17, 2011 owing to increasing terrorist incidences. The bill gives the security forces powers to seal-off a property or vehicle without a search warrant and allows a judge to order the detention of terror suspects for up to 30 days if they feel it is in the interest of public safety. The law also allows the court to pass sentences of up to 30 years imprisonment on the convicts, depending on the severity of the charges. The law has enamored the JTF, created in July 2011 to curtail terrorism in North-eastern Nigeria. The JTF consists of military, police and SSS, and it is charged with restoring civil order in the affected areas. However, Nigeria's counter-terrorism operations, built mainly on force, with very weak intelligence foundations, have largely been counterproductive

and have been betrayed by cases of human rights violations, and extra-judicial killings, amongst others (Human Right Watch, 2015).

The Nigerian counter-terrorism institutional model, especially under former President Goodluck Jonathan, appears very weak; just slightly ranks above the failed state model. A University scholar who was interviewed pointed to the gaps in the government counter-insurgency efforts. As he noted:

The institutional capacity for managing insurgency under the Goodluck Jonathan Administration was largely undermined by poor funding of the security sector, outdated equipment, low morale and mismanagement of funds. (Personal Communication, 2018).

Some of the other identified factors for the weak institutional response capacity of Nigeria to counter-terrorism, as distilled from Huud (2013), include lack of adequate synergy among the security sector for information sharing and the difficulties involved in fighting insurgencies because of its hidden identity, unpredictable attack pattern unlike the conventional warfare.

The capacity to counter-terrorism in Nigeria relatively improved under Muhammad Buhari's administration as the counter-insurgency operation apparatus significantly curtailed the activities of the Boko Haram insurgents, having largely dislodged them from the Sambisa forest, which is their core base. Such relative success is attributed to the significant efforts to address corruption by the government, improved funding of the security sectors, that boosted the troop morale and provision of more logistics to the security agents, amongst others (Comolli, 2015).

The military-led strategic actions by the Buhari's government include reprisals and preemptive attacks against violent religious extremists. Through this strategy, more than 25,000 security personnel were deployed to the North-eastern parts of Nigeria, while more than 3,000 security personnel have been sent by the Federal Government on counter-terrorism training in France, Britain, the United States and Israel (Adeosun, 2018). Within the confines of the military institutional framework, the Nigerian government has significantly mitigated violent extremists' tendencies, while the military offensive liberated more than 350 communities from the insurgents through sustained military attacks and counter-attack operations. The military has also reclaimed lost territories and neutralized more than 6,000 terrorists while also rescuing more than 8,000 kidnapped victims (Ibrahim, 2019). The security institution has provided security covers for the aid workers and protected the Internally Displaced Persons camps, they have been providing security and protection for the motorists and commuters plying major dangerous roads infested with terrorist's attack in the North-east.

Ibrahim (2019) identifies major factors that have enhanced the institutional capacity of the Buhari's regime to record laudable gains in the war on terror, especially between 2015 and 2017. These include a rise in security budget

from about \$1.44 billion in 2009 to \$2.81 billion in 2018. The military also changed its tactical operations by mounting strategic hot pursue of insurgent, with little space for them to operate and embark on offensive rather than defensive tactics of curtailing terrorism. The military also improved cooperation between the country and its neighbors contrary to the previous practice, in which each country was fighting insurgency independent of one another. The Buhari's government facilitated timely payment of troops, improved logistics and equipment to fight the terrorists. The Buhari's administration also embarked on shuttle diplomacy leading to the re-invigoration of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTF) comprising troops from Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and Chad. With the support of the MJTF, Boko Haram was chased from the occupied territories into the Sambisa forest while the military equally won and secured more than 350 communities' territories for people to return home. There was also a closer and well-organized relationship between the military and the civilian leading to the establishment of the CJTF by the local youth, which complemented the military operation because the youth have adequate local knowledge of their immediate environment.

In spite of the moderate achievements of the military under the Muhammad Buhari's administration, terrorists have regrouped, retooled and renewed their attacks on the Nigerian state since 2018, while there is a relapse in the relationship between the military and the local communities due to allegations of human rights abuses, leading to mutual distrust between the military and residents. The locals perceive the military response to be inadequate to tackle community security threat as against the effective response from the nearby Chadian soldiers. The military also accused the community of sabotage. The lack of adequate cooperation between the Nigerian military and the locals largely center on allegations of human rights abuses against the security personnel and CJTF. Indeed, soon after government launched these operations, the Borno Committee of Elders and Leaders of Thought demanded withdrawal of the military in July 2017 because of abuse of human rights and killings of innocent people (Rasheed, 2019; Simmons, 2020).

The initial solidarity and coordination efforts in the Lake Chad among the countries in the MJTF deteriorated, with each country once again adopting different operational strategies due to the controversy on who bears the cost of operation (Simmons, 2020). In fact, the Chadian Army unilaterally cleared the insurgents from the Eastern Lake Chad in July 2020. Increasing friction between the civilian JTF and the military, and between the military and international aid agencies, who are being accused of supporting the insurgents have also undermined counter-insurgency operations in the North-east (Rasheed, 2019).

The problem of weak governance and sustainable security of the territories earlier cleared by the military persists, which makes it easier for the insurgents to re-conquer some of the communities. Quite suddenly, the Nigerian military has tactically changed its strategic counter-insurgency operation from

offensive to defensive operation due to dwindling funding of operations and lack of modern equipment to match the acquisition of superior fire power by the insurgents. These highlight intelligence operational lapses and the abandonment of the re-settled communities, expose these areas to terror attacks such that the locals are forced to show loyalty to Boko Haram in exchange for protection while they are distrustful of the military. Shortage of security personnel to effectively police the vast expanse of land in North-eastern states, especially Borno state, which has the second-largest landmass in Nigeria, has curtailed the success of counter-insurgency operations.

The military counter-insurgency operation is largely premised on weak tactical sustainable security architecture, in terms of intelligence gathering, surveillance operation, community policing and border security without adequate synergy and involvement of other relevant security institutions, like the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, State Security Service and Nigeria Intelligence Service in its operations. Lack of adequate intelligence gathering makes strategic appraisal of opposition for defeat a herculean task for the security institutions. The support of local communities for security institutions to win the insurgency war is weaning in North-eastern Nigeria, and this has undermined intelligence gathering. Even though the introduction of the CJTF, which has the local knowledge of the operation of the insurgents, has helped to complement the conventional military task force in reclaiming most areas earlier occupied by the insurgents, some of these areas, including Konduga, Gwazo and Lake Chad area have been recaptured with alleged collaboration of the locals, who give intelligence report to the insurgents because of their conviction that the institutional capacity of the state to protect them from insurgents is weaning (Pham, 2018).

The Nigerian military is also overstressed by the burden of carrying out policing duties, in addition to the constitutional combat roles while there is low morale now due to weak motivation. For instance, 386 soldiers fighting the terrorists voluntarily disengaged from the Nigerian Army while many others have deserted their positions on Away Without Official Leave (AWOL), having felt betrayed and uncertain about the strategic direction of Nigeria's counter-terrorism operations against the Boko Haram and Islamic State in West Africa province (Salkida, 2019: 2). Many military personnel are concerned about the high rate of losses of position, equipment and men owing to frequent operational intelligence leakages to the terrorists, especially within the local community and war commanders about movement of troops, leading to the killing of not less than 300 soldiers (Ejiwoh, 2019). Due to incessant attacks on military formations, leading to seizure of arms and ammunition, the military strategically established a large military super camp to pull their defensive arsenals together in order to repel the terrorists. In spite of this strategic effort, the mega camp has also come under severe attacks by the terrorists which sometimes rattle the soldiers.

Against this backdrop, the Nigerian security apparatus has made moderate contribution toward degrading the insurgents and curtailing their scope of

operation. However, the security institutional capacity, as currently constituted, lacks the required strategic capacity for adequate counter insurgency in North-eastern Nigeria. The aspect of addressing the socio-economic issues of marginalization, deprivation, poverty and human rights abuses that are contributory factors to the rise of violent extremism have not been given the needed attention by the government. The lack of adequate attention to these critical issues also impact adversely on the war on terror.

Conclusion

The analysis of the Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram movements in Kenya and Nigeria has provided critical insights into their origin, mode of operation, funding as well as the several measures that have been put in place in both countries to counter these groups. The similarity between Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al-Shabaab in Somalia borders and Kenya lies in the fact that both are terrorist groups and 'syndicates' of international terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS. Both have adversely impacted the already fragile peace and security in their countries and Africa in general. Insurgents in Nigeria and Kenya have equally set in motion dramatic reversal of development gains already made in both countries, thus threatening the stunted growth of socio-development projects in both countries and neighboring states for decades. Both the Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab have also displaced people internally and forced many people to flee to neighboring countries. The two sects remain very deadly with the utmost capacity for lethal violence through the use of deadly weapons, involving explosives or automatic weapons and suicide bombing.

The fundamental differences in the operations of Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab border on the fact that both are operating in different countries, Nigeria, and Kenya, and different sub-regional settings, East and West African sub-regions. While Boko Haram is a homegrown insurgent group from Nigeria, the Al-Shabaab originated from Somalia but with overwhelming tentacles in Kenya.

The main security and development measures that have been put in place by the Kenyan and Nigerian governments in partnership with development partners have been a focus of analysis. The internal and external challenges that often fuel violent extremism and terrorism have also been discussed. The main argument presented is that highly securitized measures should be supplemented with soft development-oriented approaches so that the government does not end up fighting terror with terror. Since terrorism and violent extremism are a result of historical, political, economic and social circumstances as well as the impact of regional and global power politics, states should come up with measures and policies that address these issues to effectively curb this menace. Just as the root causes of violent extremism are complex, multifaceted and intertwined, so should the measures put in place in order to effectively address the structural environment in which radicalization and possibly violent extremism thrive.

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4 The Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria

Introduction

Nigeria's post-independence life has been rife with ethnic and religious tension and conflicts. Of significance is the scale, intensity and dynamics of the ethno-religious conflicts since the return to civil rule in 1999, with the attendant adverse impacts on peace, security, stability and national cohesion in a dimension comparable to the 1967–1970 civil war. In the present democratic dispensation, the emergence of the *Jama'atu Ahlis-Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad*, popularly known as Boko Haram brought into reckoning the daunting security threat confronting Nigeria. Boko Haram emerged in Nigeria as a dissident religious sect founded by a Salafist preacher, Muhammed Yusuf, in Maiduguri the capital of the north-eastern Borno State in the early 2000s, with the goal of establishing an Islamic state under Sharia law. The sect's evolution is driven by domestic grievances against perceived political and economic marginalization and corruption of successive Nigerian governments and political elites, provoking the group's rejection of Western education and demand for judgment through Sharia law (Aghedo, 2014; Varin, 2016; Matfess, 2020). However, the deadly atrocities of Boko Haram against the locals have raised serious questions about the real motives of the sect.

The group's contradictions led some analysts to contend that Boko Haram extremism cannot be discerned only from religious perspectives, links to global terrorist networks or violent religious ideologies. According to Mustapha and Meagher (2020), the phenomenon of violent religious extremism requires a focus on domestic political and economic forces that intersect with the wider social processes and pressures in northern Nigeria. An examination of the evolution and rise of Boko Haram is critical to the understanding of the phenomenon and dynamics of the group in terms of its propaganda, motives, modus operandi, tactics, resilience, flexibility and adaptability. As Anugwom (2019) avers, the violence perpetrated by Boko Haram has worsened the socio-economic conditions suffered by the people and rendered the sect's grievances illegitimate.

The sect has transmuted from a small religious extremist group to an internationally recognized Islamist terrorist group with transnational influences.

Boko Haram has expanded its operations across the borders to neighboring countries including Chad, Cameroon, Benin and Niger. The International Crisis Group (2014) classifies Boko Haram's attacks in north-eastern Nigeria and nearby Cameroon and Niger over a 1,500-kilometer-long border among the most ruthless terrorist violence in history. The Global Terrorism Index in 2015 categorized Boko Haram as the most lethal and disrupting extremist religious group that ever rose in Nigeria. In the 2017 Global Terrorism Index, it was noted that the number of reported fatalities linked to Boko Haram had declined from the peak of 11,519 in 2015, yet the number of violent events linked to Boko Haram rose from 417 in 2016 to 500 in 2017. For nearly two decades, Boko Haram has been responsible for the major humanitarian crisis in North-eastern Nigeria, involving the deaths of tens of thousands of people and displacement of millions.

With tactics like those of Al-Qaeda in Iraq and the Taliban in Afghanistan, Boko Haram has targeted many sensitive locations including schools, churches, government offices and security posts and UN headquarters in Abuja. While both Christians and Muslims are target of Boko Haram violent attacks, majority of Boko Haram victims are fellow Muslims who are perceived to engage in un-Islamic activities (Forest, 2012; Kendhammar & McCain, 2018). Nevertheless, the sect's attacks on Christians have a significant negative effect on inter-religious relations in Nigeria (International Crisis Group, 2010). Boko Haram's disproportionate attacks on Muslims prompted the former US Ambassador to Nigeria, John Campbell, to contend that Boko Haram 'appears to be a civil war among Muslims' (*The Guardian*, May, 2014). This lends credence to Kassim's (2018) postulation that Boko Haram's disproportionate attacks on Muslim point to how the sect's evolution is linked to the internal Muslim sectarian struggle for power and dominance.

Boko Haram's goals of establishing an Islamic enclave point to a revolutionary ambition. However, as Mickler et al. (2019) contend, Boko Haram's ideological position and the accompanied modus operandi relating to the treatment of Muslims contradict what revolutionary warfare entails. Boko Haram rhetoric suggests that the group motivations in the real sense seem to differ from the public proclamation, and may be tied to reasons that are too dark to be openly professed (Pieri & Zenn, 2018). Although Boko Haram's indiscriminate and excessive brutality may have alienated the sect from the Muslim communities, it is remarkable that the group has continued to demonstrate resilience in its campaign of terror in North-eastern Nigeria.

The complexity of religious extremism and the underlying cause can be traced to Nigeria's history and contemporary politics. In exploring the historical context of religious extremism in Northern Nigeria, Smith (2015) traces the root to the poor state of education in the North and the spread of Islamic education. The Christian missionaries who promoted Western education throughout the south during the colonial era were denied access to the north, due to resistance from Northern Nigerian leaders and Colonial administrators, on the excuse that the region's culture and religion should

be preserved as much as possible. This action paved way for the proliferation of Quranic and Islamic education as a vital part of the culture that promoted the almajiri system in Northern Nigeria. The almajiri, labeled as 'large army of unemployed youth', are perceived to be vulnerable to exploitation by extremist groups for recruitment into radical movements in the North, drawing examples from their involvement in the Maitatsine movement, Izala to the Boko Haram sect (Danjibo, 2009).

In an attempt to understand the historical and political factors that are central to the evolution and rise of Boko Haram, Mustapha (2014: 166) identifies issues relating to religious doctrines, poverty and inequality (vertical and horizontal), political context of post-1999 electoral competition, the personal agency of the youth directly involved in Boko Haram, and the geographical and international context of the insurgency. As Matfess (2020) submits, Boko Haram exploited the long-standing perceptions of political and economic marginalization among the population in the North-east to boost its recruitment drive, while the violence encountered in the hands of the Nigerian security sector, and transnational flows of weapons and ideology helped in advancing the group's campaign. Matfess (2020) concludes that the actions of the Nigerian state and insurgent actors have shaped the insurgency more than the group's links to transnational Jihadists such as Al-Qaeda or the Islamic State.

In an attempt to rationalize the appeal of Boko Haram to the Muslim communities in North-east Nigeria, Dele-Adedeji (2020) observes that Boko Haram's local empowerment initiatives attract members not only based on the group's emergence as one amongst other social service providers, but also because of the moralization of social service provision by Boko Haram prior to July 2009 which provided agency and spiritual certitude to Muslims in ways that the Nigerian state are incapable of competing with. Iyekekpolo (2018) emphasizes how political elites have mobilized and given political relevance to the Boko Haram group. The contention about the roles of political elites in the evolution of Boko Haram can be gleaned from the events surrounding the Sharia debacles and the political patronage enjoyed by the Yusufiyya movement (the group later known as Boko Haram) from Borno state government under the then governor Ali Modu Sheriff. The adoption of Sharia law by 12 Northern states between 1999 and 2002 provided the Northern politicians with politico-religious incentives to gain electoral support from the masses to win elections in their quest to corruptly enrich themselves.

As Harnischfeger (2014: 37) and Anugwom (2019) note, Boko Haram evolved in part, as a reaction to the derisive game of politicians who mobilized religious sentiments and empowered religious groups by posing as campaigners of an Islamic renewal and declaring that their state must be governed according to divine laws as means to actualize and protect their political ambitions. Some analysts opine that the poverty narratives on the evolution of Boko Haram may not offer a convincing explanation when viewed from the prism of how the Northern political elites have been at the helm of political and economic powers in Nigeria longer than Southerners

(Babatunde, 2014; Anugwom, 2019). The poverty thesis only makes sense when analyzed in the context of the political intrigues surrounding the dismal neglect of the Northern region by the Northern political elites. Nevertheless, Varin (2016) contends that the motive of the religious extremist group cannot be interpreted purely based on religious sentiment or manipulation by ambitious politicians. It is also important to take into cognizance how religion has become a convenient vehicle for mobilizing and voicing discontent over the poor socioeconomic conditions of the country and a lack of trust and confidence in the government, the security forces and the fellow countrymen, which created an environment propitious to violence of any kind as the social contract disintegrates.

The politico-religious context that shaped the evolution of Boko Haram provides insights into some of the group's sources of funding which are largely shrouded in secrecy. There is an indication that the sect is funded by prominent politicians, the Islamic movements in North Africa and other Arab countries (Smith, 2015; Anugwom, 2019). This supports Smith's (2015) view that Boko Haram leader, Shekau in his vicious rhetoric in video messages made allegations of politicians financing the sect. In fact, the former Nigerian President, Goodluck Jonathan, in a well-publicized statement in 2012, declared that the group benefited from huge political patronage and had some political elites in its fold. Kendhammar and McCain (2018) also submit that, right from the evolution of Boko Haram in the early 2000s, ambitious Northern politicians made shadowy deals with Yusuf and his allies to exchange their support for money and recognition.

Forest (2012) noted that Boko Haram has received weapons and training in bomb-making and other terrorist tactics from affiliates in the north and/or east of the continent. Through their internal and external funders, Boko Haram was able to amass sophisticated weapons such as 'Rocket-Propelled Grenades (RPGs), machine guns with anti-aircraft visors, automatic rifles, ammunition, grenades, explosives (Semtex), and light anti-aircraft artillery (light caliber bi-tubes) mounted on vehicles' (Varin, 2016). The group also generated funds from criminal activities such as bank raids, armed robberies and kidnapping.

Cattle rustling has been identified as one of the major sources of finance for sustaining the extremist movement logistical and essential supplies needs and providing material sustenance as critical source of milk, meat, as well as trade in animal skin and dry meat (Pieri & Zenn, 2018; Okoli, 2019). The activities of cattle rustling have led to the emergence of a criminal carter involving the agents, middlemen, opportunistic traders with the complicity of state and para-state agents as a means of economic accumulation and material aggrandizement (Okoli, 2019). This criminal enterprise has also heightened other conflicts such as the farmer-herder conflict which has been ranked as the second most volatile conflict in the North. Thus, terrorist financing provides the means to sustain the modus operandi of the group. De Coning et al. (2016) explain how collusion between criminal or militant actors, business

actors and state structures underpins the changing modus operandi of Jihadist terrorist networks and heightens security challenges. These complex connections with state, criminal and militants' elements have shaped the shifting tactics, modus operandi and resilience of Boko Haram. This view is captured by Angerbrandt (2017) who links the use of more sophisticated weapons in recent years by Boko Haram to connections with powerful actors.

The Nigerian government's initial response to Boko Haram violent campaign has been perceived by many analysts to be highly militarized (Varin, 2016; Brechenmacher, 2019; Matfess, 2020). The counter-insurgency response of former President Goodluck Jonathan's administration was marred by the initial slow response to the emerging threat posed by the group as well as the political tension between the government and the opposition, particularly governors of Borno and Yobe states. Brechenmacher (2019) observes that the pursuit of a highly militarized response by the Nigerian government under Goodluck Jonathan in the early years of the insurgency posed constraints to donors who struggled to find viable counterparts for civilian stabilization efforts. The donors' focus shifted to a regional response due to the fact that the Goodluck Jonathan proved to be an unwilling partner even as the Boko Haram insurgency festers.

The Jonathan administration's inept response further eroded public trust and confidence in the government who demonstrated limited political will to fight Boko Haram partly due to vested political ambitions (Walker, 2016). Boko Haram's impunity correlates with the ineptitude of the government security agencies which is linked to poor training, inadequate equipment, diversion of funds, corruption, human rights abuses and so on. Boko Haram capitalized on these gaps in the counter-insurgency operation to lay ambush on the security forces, seize their equipment and weaken the rank and files of the forces that lead to low morale among the agencies.

Jonathan's successor, President Buhari's counterinsurgency strategy since 2016 has been boosted by the government demonstration of willing partnership with donors from the United States, European Union and the World Bank, paving way for the development of the so-called Buhari Plan that set out the blueprint for post-conflict stabilization and recovery (Brechenmacher, 2019). Although the Buhari administration has so far failed to implement many of the promised reforms, his government made remarkable gains in the counter-insurgency operation boosted by the support of the Lake Chad's Multinational Joint Task Force (Kassim, 2018). President Buhari administration's restructuring and the apparent remilitarization of the National Security Agency has led to increased momentum in the counter-insurgency with the appointment of new service chiefs, relocation of the military headquarters in the efforts toward improved intelligence gathering and response times to attacks that boosted troop morale (Varin, 2016). The government's counter-insurgency also paved way for the reclaiming of the territories occupied by the insurgents. However, Boko Haram has continued to demonstrate remarkable resilience and shifting tactics by returning back to the use of

guerrilla tactics (Matfess, 2020). Varin (2016) rightly avers that Boko Haram's return to guerrilla tactics may sustain the group's longevity for a time until it is ready to resurge as it did already between 2005 and 2009, and again in 2010 after being crushed by the Nigerian security forces, twice. This contention cannot be dismissed given that the socio-economic conditions at the root of the insurgency still remain.

This backdrop foregrounds the contending issues that shape the Boko Haram phenomenon. Although Boko Haram has been significantly weakened, the group remains dangerous, as demonstrated by the sect's persisting lethal capacity to hit soft targets in the north-eastern Nigeria. Some recent violent attacks include the sacking of four local government areas in Gubio, Magumeri, Kaga and Konduga in Borno State on February 2021 (Shuaibu, 2021). The sect has also engaged in mass abductions of school children, including the over 300 school boys in Kankara, Katsina state in December 2020, who were later released and the killing of about 50 farmers in Zabarmari town, Maidugiri, Borno state in November 2020 (HumAngle, November 28, 2020; Reuters, December 13, 2020).

Gravitation to youth extremism and violence

Violent religious extremists in Northern Nigeria have persistently exploited the governance deficit in Nigeria that breeds inequality, marginalization, injustice and human rights abuses. The governance deficit in Nigeria is most pronounced in the predominantly Muslim-dominated Northern region of Nigeria. Paradoxically, the level of religiosity in the North contrasted sharply with the governance deficit. Thus, religion provides solace for the people who seem to have little confidence in their political leaders to safeguard their well-being. In the North, where Islamic education has historically overshadowed formal education (Smith, 2015), the relatively educated and uneducated youth have more inclination toward religious ideologies than formal education.

Decades of perceived marginalization and deprivation by the ruling elites, most of whom were Northerners, provided an opportunity for extremist elements to mobilize and amass followers among the impoverished Northerners, especially the youth. In Nigeria, the youth are worse affected by the governance deficits that rendered most of them without access to viable employment and other socio-economic opportunities. The National Bureau of Statistics in its 2019/2020 Nigerian Living Standards Survey showed that 82.9 million (40.1%) Nigerians are poor. The report showed that the high poverty rate is more pronounced in the North than in the South of Nigeria. In the North-east, the epicenter of Boko Haram, the poverty indices are above the National average and vary slightly across the states in the region. The Human Development Index (HDI) is lowest in the North-east where there are particularly high levels of economic and infrastructural deprivation (Mustapha & Meagher, 2020).

The high rate of poverty and unemployment that is endemic, particularly in the north-eastern Nigeria, is accompanied by a massive youth bulge in

which about 69% of the population is below the age of 30 (Davis, 2012). The 2019/2020 report of the National Bureau of Statistics has shown that 55% of those within the active age (15–34) experienced a combination of unemployment and underemployment rate of 55.4%, with about 13.1 million unemployed and 11.3 million underemployed.

The low level of formal education in the North correlates with the high rate of poverty in the region. The United Nations International Children Emergency Fund reported that about 10.5 million of the children aged 5–14 years in Nigeria are not in school. This rate of out-of-school children is more severe in the Northern Nigeria, where the net attendance is at 53% only (Iheonu & Urama, 2019). Thus, Boko Haram founder, Yusuf was able to provide both social services and spiritual succor to the Muslim communities in ways that the Northern political elites have been unable to provide for the people (Dele-Adedeji, 2020). Most of the respondents interviewed in Maiduguri were unanimous in their perception that successive government has not demonstrated concern for the wellbeing of the people which breed distrust and lack of confidence in the state. Yusuf's ability to cater to the welfare of the impoverished people positioned him as a champion that offers the pathway to spiritual certitude. According to one of the local NGOs interviewed, Yusuf perceived that educated political elites have been the perpetrator of the inequality, injustice, marginalization and corruption that spawned poor governance.

Studies have revealed that Boko Haram amassed a large following from street children, known as *almajiri* who are sent out to beg for a *mullah* in exchange for Quranic schooling (Davis, 2012). Products of *almajiri* grow up to become knowledgeable in orthodox Islam but lack any skills for earning a living, making them perfect foot soldiers for Boko Haram (Davis, 2012). In fact, the group's founder, Yusuf, like its present leader, Shekau, started as an *almajiri*, but made an impressive career by diligently acquiring Islamic knowledge (Harnischfeger, 2014).

The high rate of uneducated, illiterate, ignorant, poor and frustrated youths in the North is at odds with the political and economic power largely enjoyed by the Northern political elites. The Northern elites unfettered access to political power in Nigeria than any other region made some analysts question the poverty narratives as a driver of youth radicalization. The contention is that the poverty thesis makes sense only when viewed within the prism of the actions of the Northern political elites who controlled and political and economic power at the center, for their self-enrichment at the detriment of majority of their people in the North (Babatunde, 2014; Anugwom, 2019).

Religious fundamentalism in Northern Nigeria

The varying but compelling narratives on Boko Haram clearly show that it is a product of a history of sectarian supremacy in Northern Nigeria. Thus, a vast area with an ethnically and religiously mixed population, a mixture

of ethnicity, religion and politics have resulted in occasional violence in the region. Notable major incidences include Kafanchan-Kaduna (1987 and 1999), Zangon-Kataf (1992), Tafawa Balewa (1991, 1995, and 2001), Kaduna Sharia riots (2000) and the Miss World riots, which were reactions to the provocative Danish cartoons of Prophet Muhammed in 2005. Religiously motivated violence in Northern Nigeria between 1999 and 2003 led to the death of over 10,000 people, even before the advent of Boko Haram (Varin, 2016).

These religious conflicts occurred mostly in the urban centers of Kaduna, Kano and Bauchi states in north-central zone among populations of Hausa-Fulani Muslims and non-Muslim groups laying strong claims to religious and political autonomy. According to the International Crisis Group (2010), sectarian conflict took a new twist within the Islamic fold with the conflict between the Izala movement and the Sufi brotherhoods in the 1980s, followed by more intra-Muslim violent clashes between Sunnis and Shiites, especially in Sokoto state and Zaria from the mid-1990s.

The corrupting influence of secular political power in the colonial and post-colonial era gave rise to Islamic sectarianism. The original Islamic ideology among Muslims was Sufism. Sufi in Nigeria is an adaptation of Islam to traditional Hausa society as the bastion of the aristocracy and elites of the society who derived political influence and power from their religion (Thurston, 2017). The adherents to the Sufi practiced a moderate brand of Islam and sought to build a bridge between political power and spiritualism similar to the religious practice of Usman dan Fodiyo,

There are diverse ideological debates between Sufism and the new ideologies, which tend to divide those who respect the established religious and secular authorities. The reformist ideological strands include the Salafist-type anti-Sufism and Iranian-inspired Shiite movements. The new ideological strands demanded a breakaway from the established Sufi rituals which they considered un-Islamic (Arabic: *bid'a*), including social customs such as the bride price, extensive mourning (Arabic: *bika'*) and supererogatory prayers (Loimeier, 2012). The reformists who craved a pure unadulterated practice of Islam tailored after the Prophet Muhammad and the first community of believers seem to appeal more to the middle class, and the poor masses (Thurston, 2017; Anugwom, 2019).

However, some of the reformists are prone to co-optation by both religious and secular authorities, largely because of the quest for resources under the control of the political class. There are others who remain resolute in their hostility or rejectionist stance against the perceived corruption-prone political elites, which in some isolated cases, turn into violent rejection of public authority. This scenario gravitates to clashes over doctrine and between political and spiritual authority.

The historical narratives reveal that a thread of rejectionist thinking runs through Northern Nigerian history with the mindset that collaboration with secular authorities is illegitimate. Toward the tail end of the colonial era, there were increasing tensions between the Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya

brotherhoods. The predominantly Qadiriyya ruling aristocracy in Sokoto who aligned with the colonial rulers were widely accused of collaboration, amassing power and wealth and condoning 'decadent' western influences. In reaction, leaders in different parts of the region began to align with Tijaniyya, attracted by the brotherhood's apparent anti-colonial and anti-Western stance (ICG, 2010). The Tijaniyya was gradually transformed to an influential mass movement with extensive political and economic network by Ibrahim Niass, the highly influential Senegalese and Tijaniyya leader, and his ally, the Emir Muhammad Sanusi of Kano. However, even with an aggressive Tijaniyya presence, and the incessant clashes between the two orders, the caliphate's influence remained strong (Paden, 2002).

In the immediate post-independence period, the determination to promote Islam, both as a unifying instrument and as a means of preserving the region's cultural identity, led to the establishment of the Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI, 'Victory for Islam') in 1960 in Kaduna, as an umbrella body to unite the Muslim sects, propagate Islam and provide an ideological base for the NPC. However, these efforts did not in any way achieve any significant results in forging Muslim unity and restoring the heritage of the caliphate as violent confrontations between adherents of rival Sufi orders continued. During decades of military rule in Nigeria, the tensions in inter-ethnic and religious relations in the North were accentuated by some of the policies of the military rulers such as the 1986 decision to enroll Nigeria as a full member of Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the 1992 decision to recognize Israel, and disputes over subsidies for pilgrimages (Falola, 1998).

With the transition to democratic rule in 1999 and the election of Olusegun Obasanjo from the Yoruba ethnic group, the Northern elites were faced with the reality of the loss of political and economic power. It was within this context that the Zamfara state governor, Ahmed Yerima initiated the campaign for restoration of Sharia. The action of the Zamfara government had a bandwagon effect on other core Northern states, whose governors followed with varying degrees of enthusiasm. Thus, 12 Northern states with a population of about 53 million, introduced Sharia between 1999 and 2002. The Sharia project as championed by the Northern political elites was first promulgated into law in Zamfara state in October 1999.

The rise of Boko Haram

In the 1970s, the anti-Sufism radical movements that emerged include the Maitasine and Izala. The Izala is a radical Salafist movement with anti-statist tendencies, and it adopted a literal interpretation of the holy texts but does not support violence and attacks on the state as the best mode of engagement (Loimeier, 2012). The Izala movement played a prominent role in the evolution of Boko Haram. Boko Haram is believed to be part of the Izala movement before they separated in 2002 as a result of disagreement over the interpretation and understanding of the glorious Quran and Hadiths (Loimeier, 2012).

The Maitasine, a smaller but highly radical group, was spearheaded by a young preacher from Northern Cameroon, best known as Marwa, who started gathering a significant following in Kano. The movement was variously interpreted as a revolution of the underclass or a reoccurrence of Mahdist-type millenarian Islam. The group's violent confrontation with the police reached a peak in 1980 when an open-air rally sparked massive rioting, causing destructive chaos in Kano for several weeks and leaving hundreds of people dead. The riots spread to other states in the North. Although Maitasine leader, Marwa, died in the riots, his followers continued to violently challenge the state for several years (Falola, 1998).

After the Maitasine movement fizzled out in the late 1980s, another similar group emerged in the north-east in the early 2000s. The group, which is generally referred to as the 'Nigerian Taliban', also rejected all secular authority. It is widely believed that it is the Nigerian Taliban that later re-emerged as the radical extremist group generally known as Boko Haram, which literally means 'Western education is forbidden'. Some observers explained that Boko Haram metamorphosed under various names, such as the *Yusufiyya*, *Muhajirun*, *Nigerian Taliban* and lately as *Jama'atu Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da'wah wa'l-Jihad* (Onuoha, 2014; Comolli, 2015).

Boko Haram's original name is *Jama'at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da'wah wa'l-Jihad*, meaning a 'People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad'. Like other radical movements, Boko Haram derived its ideology from Salafi Jihadism while its actions are driven by Takfirism (Onuoha, 2014). Boko Haram strongly evokes the rhetoric of Salafism, the ultra-conservative stream of Sunni Islam espoused by Al-Qaeda and its affiliates around the world (Davis, 2012). Takfirism as a religious concept is a highly controversial ideology that has caused division within and among Jihadist movements on the basis of the interpretation of who is or is not a 'Kafir' (infidel), as a determinant of the appropriateness of violent tactics and those civilians to be targeted (Zenn & Pieri, 2017). The disagreement over the usage of takfir would later lead to the factionalization of Boko Haram. Some Jihadists, like Boko Haram, capitalized on the pronouncement of takfir to discredit and dispose of their 'enemies' (Zenn & Pieri, 2017). Boko Haram, under the leadership of Shekau, is believed to adopt the most extreme interpretation of takfir (Kassim, 2018).

Mohammed Yusuf, the founding leader of Boko Haram, subsequently redefined the doctrine of the sect around an ideology that abhors Western education and the tenets of Western science. He centered his aspersion and criticisms on the failures and corrupt attitudes of *yanboko* (modern elites trained at secular schools) who have acquired Western education and are currently in positions of power. In the sect's view, 'the system represented by the *yanboko* is unjust, secular and has no divine origin. It is therefore un-Islamic, which in turn accounts for its ineptitude and corruptness' (Isa, 2010: 332).

The sect targets individuals and groups who do not subscribe to its strict interpretation of Islam whom they regard as *kuffar* (disbelievers; those who

deny the truth) or *fasiqun* (wrong-doers). Although, it was reported that Boko Haram members wore long beards and red or black headscarves and shunned certain purportedly Western goods, such as wristwatches and safety helmets (Ajani, 2011; Jimoh, 2011), they do not abhor the use of Western products such as motorcycles, cars, cellular phones, AK-47 guns and other innovations that have aided their violent operations (Onuoha, 2014).

Through his preaching, Yusuf was able to attract a large following of unemployed youths from Yobe and Borno states, and even from neighboring countries such as Niger and Chad. A recent report of the Centre for Contemporary Islam (2019) suggests that Salafism's strong networks and mosque infrastructures in Maiduguri and beyond informed Yusuf's decision to join and train under the movement because it provided a convenient platform, which he sought to both co-opt and challenge in propagating his own agenda. The group at this period was popularly known as the *Yusufiyya* movement. Some of the repentant Boko Haram members interviewed explained that the sect was able to amass large followership among the people who were captivated by Yusuf's eloquent preaching. They added that apart from unemployed youths, many of the sect followers were also drawn from students, especially in tertiary institutions in Borno and Yobe states, who withdrew from school, tore up their certificates to join the sect. It was estimated that Yusuf's followers during his lifetime ranged from 1 million to between 4,000 and 10,000 people (Varin, 2016).

In the build-up to the 2003 general elections, the politicians were impressed by the large followership that the *Yusufiyya* movement commanded, which they saw as potential for manipulating the elections in their favor (Onuoha, 2014). As it is common practice in Nigeria's electoral politics, politicians use youth groups and militias, established or funded by them, as political thugs to manipulate or out-manuever their opponents (Isumonah, 2012; Babatunde, 2014). So, in the North, politicians used various youth groups such as *Yan Sara-Suka* in Bauchi, *Yan Kalare* in Gombe, *Yan Daba* and *Yan daukanamarya* in Kano, Economic Community of West African State Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Borno and Yobe states and *Damagun Boys* and *Shinko Boys* in Adamawa State, as well as *Bani Israila* in Taraba state (Ojo, 2013).

Ahead of the 2003 polls in the north-eastern states, youths belonging to the *Yusufiyya* movement, *Yan Kalare* in Gombe and *Sara Suka* in Bauchi, were armed with sophisticated weapons by political leaders contesting gubernatorial elections in Bauchi, Borno, Gombe and Yobe states (Ohia, 2009; Idris & Adebayo, 2012; Onuoha, 2014). The *Yusufiyya* movement was able to gain foothold in Borno state where it was reported that Ali Modu Sheriff employed their services as well as that of another youth group known as the ECOMOG during the 2003 election to snatch Borno state from the then Governor Mala Kachalla. It was reported that Ali Modu Sheriff promised the group strict implementation of Sharia, 50-million-naira reward, 50 motorcycles and the office of the Commissioner for Religious Affairs in exchange for their support (Onuoha, 2014). After becoming governor, Sheriff created

a Ministry of Religious Affairs and appointed Alhaji Buji Foi, *Yusufiyya*'s national secretary, as its first commissioner (Idris & Adebayo, 2012).

There was a breakdown in the relationship between Governor Sheriff and the Mohammed Yusuf-led group, traceable most notably, to disagreement over issues of strict implementation of the Sharia. The disagreement led to the eventual resignation of Alhaji Buji Foi and other members of the movement brought by Foi to the Ministry of Religious Affairs from Sheriff's cabinet. The relationship between the governor and the *Yusufiyya* movement further deteriorated such that it was alleged that Governor Sheriff used rival group, ECOMOG to tackle the *Yusufiyya* movement. This made Mohammed Yusuf more vocal and belligerent in his preaching against Sheriff's government (Onuoha, 2014). Yusuf's rhetoric could be discerned from the contradictions in his preaching and lifestyle. Although Yusuf preached a simple, ascetic form of life for his followers, he enjoyed Western luxuries, including a Mercedes car and imported delicacies (Onuoha, 2012).

According to Suleiman (2007), the group gradually metamorphosed into a violent extremist group from 2003. In December 2003, the sect launched its first attack against the state establishment when it attacked police stations and public buildings in the towns of Geiam and Kanama, Yobe state. Besides the attack on the police station, Serrano and Pieri (2014) have pointed out that the sect also clashed with followers of one of their original leaders, Mohammed Ali, which escalated violence and led to a cycle of retaliation and retribution compounded by their skirmishes with the Nigerian security forces.

In September 2004, another attack was launched against police stations in Bama and Gwoza in Borno state, killing several policemen and stealing arms and ammunition. Afterwards, the sect carried out intermittent hit-and-run attacks on security posts in some parts of Borno and Yobe states until the explosive July 2009 anti-government uprising. The July 2009 uprising was traced to the fatal shooting of members of the sect which occurred on June 11, 2009 when men of the Operation Flush intercepted some members riding on motorbikes on their way to a cemetery to bury four of their members that had died in a motor accident. The affected members were temporarily detained for not wearing crash helmets as stipulated in the state traffic law. The action of the patrol team infuriated other sect members which they interpreted as a provocation, given that they were in a funeral procession.

The resultant altercation with security forces under Operation Flush led to the death of some of the sect's members. Yusuf's reaction was to incite his members to retaliate the death of his members (Sani, 2011). On a tip-off of a planned attack by the sect, the security operatives stormed the sect's base in Dutsen Tanshi in Bauchi state where nine members of the group were arrested while items used in local production of bombs were recovered (Ohia, 2009). In a reprisal attack on July 26, 2009, the sect members attacked and destroyed the Dutsen Tanshi police station. This generated a wave of unrest and revolt that manifested in Bauchi, Borno, Kano, Katsina and Yobe states until July 30, 2009, when Mohammed Yusuf was captured in a goat pen in

his residence in Maiduguri. While in police detention, Yusuf was murdered extra-judicially, though the police officials claimed that he was killed while trying to escape. Over 800 members of the sect had been killed during the revolt and others numbering hundreds were arrested, detained and awaiting trial (Adesoji, 2010). The extrajudicial killing of Yusuf in police custody set the stage for a more deadly phase of the Boko Haram evolution.

Yusuf's extrajudicial murder in police custody not only transformed Yusuf and his group into a symbol of political defiance and martyrdom, but it also created an opportunity for his second in command, Abubakar Shekau, to take control of the movement in 2010 with the support of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Through connection with global Jihadists, Shekau was able to gain his followers, and devise his strategy, tactics and *modus operandi* in his armed struggle against the state. The group's connections with AQIM and ISIS have enhanced Boko Haram's terrorist credentials (Mustapha & Meagher, 2020)

The Shekau-led Boko Haram launched its first attack with the spectacular prison break in Bauchi in 2012, freeing over 700 prisoners, including 150 of its imprisoned members. Shekau's efforts to connect with global Jihadists demonstrated that he possessed broader and more deadly ambitions. Kendhammar and McCain (2018) explain that some of the evidence recovered from the compound where Osama bin Laden was killed in Pakistan showed that Shekau had reached out to other global Jihadist leaders in the aftermath of the failed 2009 uprising in an effort to consolidate his own power and rebuild Yusuf's movement. Shekau also made indirect contacts with AQIM's emir, Abd alMalik Droukdel, through some of the Nigerian former AQIM fighters who had participated in the uprising. This effort paved way for some financial support for Shekau to regroup and take off in 2010 and 2011, through the transfer of €200,000 authorized by Droukdel. It was reported that up till 2015, before the military offensive led to the reversal of the group's fortunes, Boko Haram appeared to enjoy widespread support as its membership rose to 15,000 people (Varin, 2016).

While Boko Haram largely derived its funding from membership dues through a daily levy of 100 nairas during the time of Yusuf, in the era of Shekau, the group derived its funding from diverse sources including membership dues, donations, external funding and bank robberies (Onuoha, 2015). The group also financed its activities through cattle rustling. (Pieri & Zenn, 2018; Okoli, 2019). Interviews of repentant Boko Haram members in Damatura showed that the group derived some of its funding through politicians and businessmen who are alleged to sponsor the group activities in exchange for some sort of protection. The claim of the interviewees confirmed the submission of Shekau in his numerous video clips that some politicians are sponsors of the group. It also aligned with the statement of former President Jonathan that some government officials were members of the sect.

The mainstream media has linked the source of funding of the group to monthly pay-offs from the governors of some states such as Kano, Bauchi

and Borno who pay off Boko Haram as a form of protection against the sect's direct or retaliatory attacks in their states. However, these affected state governors have contested such claims. Nevertheless, in the case of Kano state, it was reported that about N5million was paid by the governor to the group in 2004, and twice that amount was paid by 2009 (Anugwom, 2019). A serving Nigerian senator was also named as one of the financiers of the group while a serving police commissioner was indicted in the daylight escape from detention of a mastermind of the 2011 Christmas day bombing by the sect (Anugwom, 2019).

These various sources of funding provided Boko Haram with sufficient funding to run its violent campaign and procure sophisticated weapons in its fight against the state. The group's illegal activities of kidnapping foreigners, politicians, members of staff of the University of Maiduguri and youth in secondary schools have been the focus of the sect. The abduction of over 200 school girls in Chibok in 2014 brought the sect into global reckoning (Matfess, 2020). Insights from the Director of a local NGO interviewed confirmed that the sect has carried abduction of school girls and boys on a scale larger than that of the Chibok girls which was never officially announced. The group had once abducted about 500 young school boys and girls in Maiduguri, which did not come to public knowledge; Even the local NGO was not privy to the abduction incident until several months later.

Since 2018, there have been increased incidents of kidnapping of women, foreigners and humanitarian workers by the Boko Haram and the splinter group, Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA) in many states in the North East including Yobe, Adamawa, Gombe and Borno and North Central in states such as Kaduna, Bauchi, Niger, Kano and recently Katsina as well as around the borderlands to Chad and Niger (Ojo, 2020). Other recent abductions include the kidnapping of the Dapchi school girls in 2018 and the Kankara school boys in December 2020.

Boko Haram shifting tactics and resilience

Boko Haram has adopted varying violent tactics in response to the government offensive against the sect (Walker, 2016; Matfess, 2020). Boko Haram strategy of urban guerrilla warfare to achieve its objective of territorialization has been sustained over the years (Varin, 2016). One of the major tactical innovations of the group was the use of suicide bombers, especially the use of female and child suicide bombers. Boko Haram's use of suicide bombers as part of its tactics has proven to be a terrible and effective weapon. While the security forces have been arresting suspected male members of Boko Haram, the sect shifted to the use of women and men dressed in women's clothes to smuggle weapons and evade capture since 2014 (Varin, 2016; Walker, 2016).

The use of suicide bombers, although not new to Boko Haram alone, as other insurgent groups like the National Liberation Front during the Algerian civil war, Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, terrorist groups in Lebanon and Central

Asian countries such as Uzbekistan and Afghanistan and more recently Al-Qaeda in Iraq have deployed this tactics. Boko Haram ranked first among terrorist groups in history that deployed the highest number of female suicide bombers in 2015 alone (Nwankpa, 2015; Nwangwu & Ezeibe, 2019). While the use of female suicide bombers by Boko Haram signals an ideological orientation adopted from other religious and social movements across the globe, the use of girls as young as 10 years old is quite remarkable (Nwankpa, 2015). This included the use of child suicide bombers, some as young as nine in its suicide bombing operation especially in targeting civilian outposts in public spaces in urban centers, like markets and bus depots (Matfess, 2020). Kassim (2018) reported that the group has carried out frequent suicide bombing attacks especially on mosques since mid-2015 in a way that parallel the regular attacks on Christians and churches in 2010–2012. The Christian places of worships are less frequently targeted since 2012.

The scale of Boko Haram's use of female suicide bombers by late 2015 was not only regarded as globally unprecedented, but it was also considered a tactics directly at odds with both Al-Qaeda Central and Islamic State doctrine and practice (Pearson, 2018). Boko Haram started the use of female suicide bombers in June 2014, and by October 2015, the group has deployed 90 female suicide bombers leading to the death of about 500 people and injury of over 700 in just over 16 months (Walker, 2016: 166). It was estimated that between 2011 and 2017, Boko Haram deployed 244 female suicide bombers out of 434 bombers (Kriel, 2017; Nwangwu & Ezeibe, 2019). In another report, an estimated 100 suicide bombing in the north-east were carried out by girls and women between 2014 and 2017 alone (Hassan, 2017). By February 2018, a recorded 469 female suicide bombers have been deployed or arrested in 240 incidents, in which more than 1,200 people were killed and about 3,000 more people have been injured across 4 countries including Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon (Pearson, 2018). The use of suicide bombers by Boko Haram is indicative of the ruthless capacity, shifting tactics and flexibility of the sect which was carried out without human compassion.

The increasing abductions of school children gave a boost to Boko Haram's suicide bombing operations. It is thus not surprising that suicide bombing operation is carried out alongside kidnapping by the group. Boko Haram recently claimed responsibilities for the abduction of over 300 school boys in Kankara, Katsina state in December 2020, who were later released.

Ojo (2020) provides critical insights into how institutional failure to provide security in the many remote areas has created ungoverned spaces which insurgent groups like Boko Haram used as safe haven for the illegal movement of arms and ammunition, the raw material for bombs, illegal drugs and foreign machines. He concludes that the ungoverned or poorly governed spaces which have continued to create an enabling environment for insurgent groups make it difficult to win the war against terrorism and other armed groups.

While Boko Haram insurgency remains localized, the factionalization of the sect and the emergence of the offshoot of the sect known as *Jama'atu*

Ahlis-Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad, meaning the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) in 2016 under the leadership of Abu Musab Al-Barnawi, who has familial links to the still revered founder, Muhammad Yusuf, suggest more direct access to major support from ISIS. It is important to point out that Shekau's unwillingness to adjust his hardline tactics in line with ISIS doctrine and practice, particularly in the deployment of female and child suicide bombers largely led to the emergence of ISWAP (Omar & Ani, 2018).

Boko Haram factionalization

An analysis of the contextual issues that underpin the fragmentation of Boko Haram into splinter factions is central to the understanding of the sect dynamics, shifting tactical strategy and lethality. The split within Boko Haram has been largely attributed to ideological differences between Shekau and some other top members of the group. It is interesting that the issue of ideological differences which was linked to Boko Haram's founder's separation from Izala in 2002, in spite of similarities in their doctrinal position, also accounted for the splits within Boko Haram. This perhaps call attention to the emerging debates among some analysts that Boko Haram is not primarily driven by ideology and the group's motive seem to be shrouded in secrecy (Pieri and Zenn, 2018). In fact, Comolli (2015) has argued that Boko Haram should not be labeled as a monolithic homogenous sect that is mainly driven by extreme religious ideology.

Zenn and Pieri (2017) identify three factions of Boko Haram with differing ideologies in terms of the use of takfir. The first is ISWAP with affinity to the Islamic State and prioritizes loyalty to Al-Baghdadi with a moderate use of takfir. Second is Boko Haram under Shekau with the name *Jama'atu Ahlis-Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal- Jihad* (JAS), which is neither affiliated with Islamic State nor Al-Qaeda, but accepted Al-Baghdadi as caliph, and holds the most wide-reaching interpretation of takfir. The third, Ansaru, like ISWAP, believes that ordinary Muslims should not be subject to accusations of takfir so long as they do not actively oppose jihad, such as fighting in the Nigerian military. In spite of the differences in their doctrinal position, all the three Boko Haram factions are irredentist movements with anti-statist disposition. Some analysts speculate about the likely existence of other factions of Boko Haram including a group led by Mamman Nur that is allied with Al-Barnawi's ISWAP faction but not part of the Islamic State as well as other smaller groups like Bukar Mainok's faction (Onuoha & Oyewole, 2018).

Ansaru, known as the *Jama'atul Ansarul Muslimina fi Biladis Sudan*, meaning 'Vanguards for the Protection of Muslims in Black Africa', broke away from Boko haram in January 26, 2012, while the ISWAP, also broke away in 2016. An account by Omar and Ani (2018) indicated that Ansaru public announcement of its emergence followed Shekau's Boko Haram assault on the largely Muslim city of Kano, in which about 185 people were killed on January 20, 2012. Other criticisms against Shekau centered on his leadership

style and the direct assault on the group members. Ansaru split from Boko Haram was also attributed to disagreement between the leader of Ansaru, Al-Barnawi and Shekau over the sharing of a 40 million-naira (\$250,000) ransom that Al-Barnawi had 'donated' to Boko Haram in 2011 (Varin, 2016).

Ansaru's criticism of Shekau also centered on his attack on Ansaru members who defected from Boko Haram's group and its spiritual leader from Gombe State (Zenn & Pieri, 2017). In its choice of the name Ansaru, the leaders who were former Nigerian AQIM members or those trained by AQIM, consulted their 'Algerian brothers'. Ansaru's objectives which centered on the protection of the interests of Muslims across West Africa and in Africa are indicative of the group's global ambitions in contrast to Boko Haram under Shekau's domestic interest. The emergence of Ansaru and its tactical strategy became a major challenge to Shekau's Boko Haram.

It is believed in some quarters that Ansaru actually broke away from Boko Haram in 2011 and was formally known as 'Al-Qaeda in the Land beyond the Sahel', and its emergence became known when the group abducted two European engineers from a construction site in Kebbi (Zenn, 2013). The kidnapping tactics of Ansaru set the stage for the shift in Boko Haram tactics, even though Boko Haram under Shekau focused on abduction of locals (Varin, 2016: 70). Ansaru's tactical operation focused primarily on kidnapping for ransom, with foreigners as the main target. In 2013, Ansaru was involved in high profile kidnapping of foreigners and prominent politicians which yielded millions of dollars as ransom payments. Some of the prominent kidnapping operations by Ansaru include the abduction of seven members of a French family and a former Nigeria's petroleum minister, Dr. Shettima Ali Monguno (Anugwom, 2019).

Ansaru has also targeted Nigeria's interest in two notable attacks on a prison facility in Abuja in November 2012 and the assault on Mali-bound Nigerian troops near Kogi in January 2013 as retaliation for the government's military involvement in Mali. In fact, Varin (2016) described the role of Mali's Islamist groups in the emergence of Ansaru. The Mali crisis between the Malian Army and President Amadou Toure, who was violently overthrown and replaced by a military junta in 2012, paved way for the temporary existence of an Islamist state in the country and the alliance with the Ansaru leader.

While Ansaru insurgency was short-lived, the group's existence until its disappearance from the public in May 2013 was accompanied by an increase in the tempo of attacks and use of sophisticated weapons by the Boko Haram in a way that changed the group's strategic and regional impacts (Varin, 2016). The increasing lethality of the group at this period evidently point to how its strong ties with global Jihadist groups boosted its tactical operation. There has also been some indication that Boko Haram was able to acquire some weapons like surface-to-air missiles and man-portable air defense systems which was smuggled into Nigeria in the aftermath of the Libya civil war that erupted in 2011.

The tactical strategy of Ansaru most likely informed the designation of Boko Haram and its faction as a global terrorist organization by the International community. Both the United Kingdom and the United States through the Department of State listed Boko Haram and Ansaru among the foreign terrorist organizations in June and November 2013 respectively. This was followed by the United Nations declaration of Boko Haram a terrorist group linked to Al-Qaeda in May 2014, and the imposition of sanctions in the form of arms embargo and asset freeze (Brechenmacher, 2019).

Another splinter group emerged in 2016, known as ISWAP. The emergence of ISWAP divided Boko Haram members with some who were loyal to Shekau and those who opposed his leadership style and ideological stands (Matfess, 2020). While Shekau retains the control of Boko Haram, ISWAP continued the legacy of Ansaru through its pursuit of a distinct Jihadist path in Nigeria outside the confines of Shekau's authority (Omar & Ani, 2018). Although some analysts were unsure if there is any overlapping relationship between Ansaru and ISWAP (Omar & Ani, 2018), others have established a connection between the two groups (Zenn & Pieri, 2017). In their study, Zenn and Pieri (2017) indicated that ISWAP leaders, Abu Musab Al-Barnawi and Mamman Nur and Abu Fatima, were previously part of Ansaru. These Ansaru leaders later rejoined Shekau in March 2015 because they believed that uniting with Shekau to pledge allegiance to Abubakar al-Baghdadi was a priority even despite their reservations over Shekau's excessive takfirism.

The emergence of ISWAP became apparent when Islamic State in an interview in its weekly, *Al-Naba*, announced a new leader for its West Africa Province in August 2016 (Omar & Ani, 2018). This singular declaration has severe implications that continue to manifest till today. Although Shekau had pledged allegiance to Islamic State Caliph Abubakar Al-Baghdadi in March 2015, he was still replaced with Abu Musab Al-Barnawi, rumored to be the son of the late Mohammad Yusuf (Zenn & Pieri, 2017; Matfess, 2020). Shekau's pledge of allegiance to Islamic state Caliph is considered a strategy to revive his weakened group in the aftermath of the Nigerian military offensive (Zenn & Pieri, 2017).

The displacement of Shekau with approval from the Islamic State leadership in Syria and Iraq was linked to the Islamic state reservation over his excessive takfirism. Shekau was accused of ignoring Al-Baghdadi's advice on distinguishing female 'apostates' who should be killed and not enslaved, and Kafir Asli, or 'those who are born unbelievers', such as Christian girls, who can be kept as slaves (Zenn & Pieri, 2017). Al-Barnawi, apart from the perception that his familial relation to Boko Haram founder, Yusuf represents a continuous ideological stand, he is also seen to have a more restricted view of takfir. Interestingly, the accusation about Shekau's application of takfirism was similar to the criticism that Al-Qaeda levies against Islamic State (Zenn & Pieri, 2017).

Some of the criticisms that led to the breakaway of Ansaru from Shekau-led Boko Haram was similar to those made by the ISWAP particularly the

accusation of Shekau killing his own group members, often in secret and without justification. Another criticism was that Shekau killed civilians whose only crime was holding a government ID card and members who defected to Abu Musab Al-Barnawi's faction, just as Shekau had done to Ansaru members. Shekau was also accused of lack of concern for the welfare of group members, allowing them to starve while he continues to live in opulence (Matfess, 2020). The issue of cattle was also identified as a source of friction that led to the antagonism to Shekau. Members of Boko haram under Shekau were accused of killing a villager who sold cattle against the group's orders. This act was justified on the ground that the villager stole from Boko Haram by selling the cattle (Kassim, 2018; Pieri & Zenn, 2018). In reaction to Shekua's crime, Abu Musab Al-Barnawi, the leader of ISWAP cut him off communication with the Islamic State (Zenn & Pieri, 2017).

Shekau's refusal to accept his disposition after pledging allegiance to the Islamic state led him to revive the previous Boko Haram group, JAS, which had become extinct between March 2015 and August 2016. Despite his replacement and the revival of JAS, Shekau refused to renounce his pledge of allegiance to the Islamic state, and he continued using the ISIS logos in circulating his propaganda. Shekau's avoidance of direct disapproval of Barnawi or Nur given his otherwise loquacious personality seem to suggest the possibility of future reconciliation (Pieri & Zenn, 2018). The possibility of reconciliation may not materialize given that there have been recent clashes between Shekau's Boko Haram and the ISWAP. For instance, in February 2021, there was a clash between the two factions triggered by ISWAP abduction of dozens of women linked to Boko Haram, leading to the group subsequent attack on ISWAP base to rescue the women (Global Sentinel News, February 22, 2021)

Boko Haram and ISWAP continue to show remarkable resilience despite the massive military offensive that led the Buhari administration to claim that the groups have been technically defeated. The adaptive capacity of the group is evident in the report that over the course of 2018, ISWAP has been able to expand its reach in Northern Borno, and even recaptured a number of towns near Lake Chad previously controlled by the Nigerian military, where the group obtain tax from the people as a form of revenue (Kendhammar & McCain, 2018; Brechenmacher, 2019). In the North-east, some areas like Adamawa state, Yobe state and southern Borno have been under greater security which led to the return of displaced populations. This is not the case in other parts of Borno state where the military continue to struggle to provide security under condition of humanitarian crisis (Brechenmacher, 2019). The tactical operations of Boko haram and ISWAP have involved an increasing level of kidnapping of women, foreigners and humanitarian workers since 2018 in many states in the North East, North Central and along the Chad and Niger borders (Ojo, 2020). The situation of some of the captives, including some of the Chibok girls who are yet to be released from captivity even after government negotiations with the sect remains the same as at the time of this study.

Matfess (2020) is of the view that the schism within Boko Haram that led to the group's factionalization may not have much significance on the Global War on Terror and the future of the insurgency in the Lake Chad Basin given the decentralized, cellular organization of the group and other characteristics that prime it for fragmentation. Boko Haram rhetoric also primes it for fragmentation taking into consideration the contradictions in the group's doctrinal debates and the lifestyle of the leaders.

It has been reported that some of the factions of Boko Haram favored dialogue with the government, while some have maintained a hardline stance (Aghedo, 2014). Government's attempts to dialogue with the group, were seen as part of the non-military approach to address the grievance of the group may not be meaningful taking into consideration the complex security environment in which conflict capitalists benefitting from the extremist activities are hell bent on preserving the status quo. This scenario was captured in the response of some local NGOs who point to how some state and non-state actors have exploited the Boko Haram campaign of violence for self-enrichment. This anecdotal view has been supported by the submission of some security analysts and the media linking Boko Haram's financing to collaboration with government officials, political elites, security agencies and criminal elements (Angerbrandt, 2017; Pieri & Zenn, 2018; Okoli, 2019).

The media and Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria

The evolution and rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria have attracted the attention of local and international media. The media spotlight on the group became more intense in 2009 when the Nigerian security operatives launched an offensive on the sect, culminating in the extra-judicial killing of Muhammad Yusuf in police custody. As the group atrocities increased, the media coverage of Boko Haram intensified. In fact, the media coverage of the kidnapping of the Chibok school girls brought Boko Haram into global reckoning.

An analysis of the media coverage of Boko Haram insurgency is critical to understanding the impact on the conflict environment, and the local, regional and international responses to the war on terrorism. The media coverage of Boko Haram phenomenon has been counter-productive. This is in the sense that the media coverage boosted Boko Haram campaign of terror due to sensational reportage that boosted the group's intent of creating fear in the minds of the populace, and depicted the failure of the government to provide security for its citizens.

Media experts emphasize that people's worldview shape their perception and responses to media reportage. For instance, Wakefiled et al. (2014) draws attention to how the initial media reportage on Boko Haram activities in the North-east mainly portrayed the group as anti-Christians. Such reportage could inflame religious division in a country like Nigeria that is sharply divided along ethnic and religious lines, while downplaying the magnitude of Boko Haram brutal targeting of Muslims. At the onset of Boko Haram

violent campaign, news about attacks on Christian places of worship and adherents have provoked public sentiments, especially from Christian associations, the predominantly Christian populations in the Southern part of Nigeria and international human rights organizations and security experts (ICG, 2010, Forest, 2012). As more coverage of Boko Haram atrocities emerged, it became clearer that Muslims are the major target of the sect's brutal attacks.

Another issue is the contention about the reliability of media reportage. The local media has been accused of peddling unfounded and sensational news about Boko Haram activities. In fact, the sect also targeted media outlets it perceived to be biased and supportive of the government in their reportage. For instance, the insurgents bombed the offices of *This Day* newspaper in Nigeria on the April 26, 2012 in Abuja and Kaduna, killing seven people for misrepresenting their ideological position (Mark, 2012). The interviews of the media experts demonstrate that the reportage of violent extremist activities will inevitably be sensational given that it led to fatalities. The response of the media experts points to the sensitive nature of the coverage of insurgency and terrorism. It also raises the need for media sensitivity in the framing of such violent acts.

In the event that a higher level of civilian casualties was reported than the actual number of casualties, such reportage tends to give leverage to Boko Haram by heightening the climate of fear and insecurity. It also portrays the gaps in the counter-insurgency operation. On the other hand, the depiction of a smaller number of civilian casualties which may fall below the actual figure of death will tend to convey that Boko Haram violence has decreased and the government counter-insurgency operation has improved; whereas this projection may actually be flawed. The above scenarios can give a false sense of security to the local population that Boko Haram may exploit to launch sporadic attacks on vulnerable areas. This supposition depicts the significance of media framing as a critical determinant of public opinion, perception and response to Boko Haram's violent campaign.

The media coverage has provided insights into the gender dynamics in Boko Haram tactical operations by depicting the unprecedented use of women as suicide bombers by the sect. In one of the reports of Boko Haram suicide bombing by the international media, CNN (2017) estimated that 434 suicide bombings were carried out by Boko Haram insurgents between 2011 and 2017, in which at least 286 of the 405 suicide attacks were carried out by women.

The audio-visual films that depicted horrific scenes of bomb blasts and dead bodies contravene the National Broadcasting 1993 code as amended in 2016. Thus, excessive media display of physical suffering and pain or the exhibition of dead bodies which were covered in some of the media video or the interview of children used as suicide bombers without the consent of their parents is antithetical to the broadcasting law even though such interviews could serve as a deterrent to other youths from engaging in bombing.

This kind of situation clearly depicts the poor media control and sanction to deter violation of the media ethics as contained in the National Broadcasting Code.

Some of the media narratives on Boko Haram tended to create confusion and misinformation. For instance, in 2015, media debates raged with contending narratives about the claim that Shekau had died (Varin, 2016). In the midst of the media debacle about the death of Shekau, Boko Haram violence campaign intensified. The claim about Shekau's supposed death was buttressed by the fact that since his appearance in a video in February 2015, there was no further video appearance. Boko Haram released an audio message later in September 2015 purportedly by Shekau, but many doubted that the voice belonged to him. Although the group's members released several videos claiming that Shekau is still alive and remains the leader of Boko Haram, the furore that the debate about Shekau's death generated in the media became a major concern to international players (Varin, 2016).

The media have fostered conspiracy theories about Boko Haram's rhetoric, source of finance and connections. As Kendhammar and McCain (2018) explain, in the wake of Buhari's victory, the conspiracy theories about Boko Haram's true motives and connections to political power gained new traction, aided by the viral nature of social media. They averred that although social media had democratized access to information, on the negative side, it has created a global problem in the past decade relating to how it enabled conspiracy theories and opinions to not only look like real investigative journalism but have some of its power as well. In spite of substantial evidence derived from eyewitnesses, social media has helped in propagating political rhetoric that disparages the claim about Boko Haram's kidnapping activities. For instance, it was reported that a self-styled 'free-lance journalist' named 'Odera N. O.' in May 2017, was instrumental in the propaganda about the Chibok girls' abduction in which she falsely claimed in social media circles that her several years of visits and investigation in Chibok revealed that the abduction of the Chibok girls was a political conspiracy. Even when challenged, she stuck to her false claim (Kendhammar & McCain, 2018). The kidnapping of the Chibok girls was thus perceived by some opinion leaders and the public as a political hoax to tarnish the image of Jonathan's administration.

Apart from the conventional media outfit, the Nigerian military has a military counter terrorism media campaign which became more prominent with the establishment of the Lafiya Dole Radio. The high cost of broadcasting jingle in both the private and government media partly led to the establishment of Radio Lafiya Dole, which focused its media coverage largely on the counter-insurgency achievements and challenges encountered. The army personnel interviewed also confirmed that the establishment of the Lafiya Dole Radio was meant to address some of the gaps in the private and government media which they identified to include poor media relationship, propaganda, secrecy, poor broadcasting and enlightenment campaign

on the counter-insurgency operation. The Nigerian Television Authority, being a government-owned outfit, initiated a televised counter-terrorism media campaign in collaboration with the National Orientation Agency and Ministry of Information and Culture. The central campaign of the media jingle was tagged 'Nigeria Unite against Terrorism' focusing on advocacy and sensitization of the Nigerian public through the provision of telephone numbers to report suspicious movement and people to and clamoring abstention from embracing destructive ideologies.

The Nigerian media over time have lost much of their credibility that was derived from decades of independent and fierce journalism which also involved confrontations with the powerful political elites. As Carment (2011) posits, public interest should be the major aim of every media house rather than profit, and anti-terrorism messages must be sensitively packaged to promote national security through collaboration with security agencies to understand and safeguard the sensitivity of security information at their disposal. In the recent decades, the Nigerian media confront profound economic and structural challenges in their news coverage and reportage. Kendhammar and McCain (2018) identify two of the key challenges facing most of Nigerian media houses to include lack of resources to promote investigative journalism or to train their reporters in proper journalism and the volatile political terrain. As such, most of the media reports are drawn from official statements and other government-sponsored narratives rather than from extensive investigation.

The media is believed to engage in what Kendhammar and McCain (2018) describe as 'journalism of convenience' in which most of the Nigerian media outfits draw on stories and news derived from foreign media and from reporters working for global press agencies. The poor and distorted reportage about the Chibok girls, particularly in the social media could partly be attributed to the inability of the Nigerian media to commit resources to extensive investigative journalism that transcend the urban spaces to dig into situation in conflict zones. The Western media, like CNN, was able to provide a first-hand account of the abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls through extensive visits and investigations in Borno state. It offered a glimpse into the victims' accounts of their ordeal on television that helped to discountenance the conspiracy theories about political hoax.

The newspapers based in the north such as the *Daily Trust*, *Blueprint* and *Leadership* and their Hausa language counterparts have direct access to the conflict zone and events as well as the advantage of local language skills. This advantage provided these newspapers with the opportunity to generate more detailed and comprehensive reportage than media companies based outside the region (Kendhammar & McCain, 2018). Some of these media outfits like the *Daily Trust* were commended for consistency and commitment to following up the situation report several years after the abduction of the Chibok girls through the information engrained on its masthead that depicts the number of days since the Chibok girls had been taken. For over three

decades, many Nigerians, particularly those in the north, relied on the BBC, the Voice of America, Radio Deutsche Welle, China Radio International and other foreign news services broadcast daily in Hausa.

In spite of the resource availability and other opportunities that the outside media agencies enjoy that put them at advantage to access conflict events, interviews with the Boko Haram members and the government and military officials, they also face the challenge of ethical coverage. Kendhammar and McCain (2018) narrate how the international media like the CNN have displayed the photos of the missing Chibok girls on-air and broadcast interviews with their parents identified by name in the immediate aftermath of the Chibok abductions. Such coverage exposed the victims and their parents to security risks. In fact, Boko Haram attack and brief occupation of the Chibok community, few months after the kidnapping incident, was perceived to be retaliation for the media coverage and targeted at those who had spoken on camera. The exposure of the Boko Haram's victim through sensational reportage about sexual violence and others, may also lead to stigmatization of the victims on their return to their communities.

The broader circumstances in which the Western media operate in the North-east entail a complex setting. The international journalists would have to contend with language barriers, power differentials and a lack of awareness of the potential reach of such media exposure. These issues can lead to unpredictability of events and circumstances that the international media may not be able to fully grapple with. It can thus complicate the ability of Western journalists to obtain real consent from victims of groups such as Boko Haram.

The Boko Haram sect has also used the media in its campaign of terror, especially the social media by releasing video clips of its victims, mission press statements as well as granting interviews to few trusted local and international media (Islam, 2015). The social media coverage of the group's activities was carried out by the youths who conveyed in small sheds in Borno State (Pieri & Zenn, 2018). The templates for the videos are usually sent via emails by the Islamic State to these youths, who would film Boko Haram attacks locally and incorporate the local footage with the Islamic State templates and then send them back to the Islamic State, through e-mail, for the Islamic State to disseminate on its social media channels (Kassim & Nwankpa, 2018).

Journalists from Northern-based papers and stringers for international news agencies based in Maiduguri have accessed information from Boko Haram via 'news conferences' over mobile phones using undisclosed numbers (Kendhammar & McCain, 2018). The insurgents also have different channels of mass communication, especially the internet; to spread their ideologies and mobilize the locals to join them. It is also notable as reported by some media outlets that some parents, after being convinced by the terrorist media campaign strategies, willingly donate their children for radicalization. This has made it possible for the insurgents to gain followers.

Within the global media, the group's link to international terrorist organizations like ISIS and Al-Qaeda signaled an opportunity for the coverage of

Boko Haram activities in the international rebel media in a positive light. This is unlike the conventional media which reportage portrayed the group's activities in negative terms. The dissemination of Boko Haram activities in the international rebel media opens up space for many international insurgent organizations to support the group with arms and training. In the same vein, the Western media reportage on the declaration of Boko Haram as a terrorist group by some Western countries including the United States and the United Kingdom brought the North-eastern Nigeria into international focus (Brechenmacher, 2019).

Government's response to Boko Haram insurgency

It is very important to evaluate how the state responses to the misty purpose of Boko Haram from its religious through political and criminal objectives, have manifested through the group's *modus operandi* and shifting tactics deployed to realize its goals. On the part of government, sensitivity to Nigeria's ethnic and religious diversity has been an important factor in its consideration of response to Boko Haram. To illustrate, Northern interest groups hinged the cooperation of the north with the government of Goodluck Jonathan's fuzzy war against Boko Haram on the replacement of his kin, General Andrew Owoye, as National Security Adviser with a Northerner. He subsequently did with Colonel Ibrahim Dasuki (Rtd.) under whom, the government achieved momentary upper hand over Boko Haram before the 2015 general elections.

In all considerations, government's predominant response to Boko Haram activities has been based on the use of force, while limited efforts were devoted to tackling the grievances that spurred the violent extremism. Counter-insurgency operation as defined by the United States Department of State entails a comprehensive civilian and military efforts carried out to simultaneously defeat and contain insurgency and address its root causes. The counter-insurgency operation of the Nigeria government has largely neglected the aspect of addressing the root causes of the insurgency. This gained impetus when Boko Haram launched a full-scale rebellion against Nigeria's defense and security forces involved in the war against terrorism. The counter-insurgency operation involved the three arms of the armed forces (Army, Navy and Air Force), Nigeria Police Force, Defence Intelligence Agency, Department of State Services, National Intelligence Agency, Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, Nigerian Customs Service, Nigerian Immigration Service and Federal Ministry of Information. The police force is charged with the primary responsibility for internal security and as such was required to tackle Boko Haram violence when it first flared up. But policing in Nigeria is hardly approached with professionalism perhaps because of bad recruitment process, poor conditions of service and lack of motivation.

The excessive use of force by the Nigerian security agencies on Muhammad Yusuf's movement only provoked the sect to regroup for vengeful attacks on

government interests and innocent people. After the extra-judicial execution of their leader in police custody in 2009, the sect embarked on more reprisal attacks on the police and government agencies (Cook, 2011; Onuoha, 2012; Walker, 2012).

Boko Haram's suicide tactics effectively moved its confrontation with the state and society from symmetric to asymmetric warfare. In symmetric warfare, the enemy is well defined in contradistinction to asymmetric, unconventional warfare in which the enemy is difficult to identify because they do not wear uniform, move in marked vehicles and often live amongst the civilian population (Agama, 2014). Nigerian security forces were least prepared for such a war because they were not designed or trained for it. As Hill (2013) notes, campaigns against terrorism are being focused on intelligence and creation of specialized military and police units to take the lead. To complement those efforts, counter terrorists' strategies also look at the root causes of radicalization itself. Israel's counter-terrorism indicates that success in asymmetric warfare is not only just dependent on high quality, real-time intelligence, but also on a nation's ability to react to intelligence swiftly through synergized efforts. With the benefit of hindsight, a non-military strategy might have been more effective. If at all unavoidable, force should have been balanced with non-military strategies.

The government focuses on coercive approach while downplaying the utility of non-kinetic approach which involves the use of hearts and minds (Tar, 2019). The perception is that the utility of 'hearts and minds' would have shown the humane side of the government and its armed forces in a way that endears the state to the public/citizens. The non-military approach would have mitigated the risks that the extremists posed to those vulnerable to radicalization as well as provide the incentives for the group members to denounce violence.

Government formed Joint Task Force (JTF) comprising the police, armed forces and other security personnel for the war on Boko Haram. JTF's tactics include curfews, mass arrests, door-to-door searches, destruction of homes and prolonged detentions and/or interrogations of terror suspects and extra-judicial executions (Olugbode, 2011). Government also declared a state of emergency in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states with massive deployment of security forces in June 2013. JTF placed a ransom of N50 million on Boko Haram's new leader, Abubakar Shekau, under whom it became more lethal and horrific with new tactics including suicide bombings, and N25 million each on 19 others for various offenses to no avail (Ikuomola, 2012). Brutality to checkmate Boko Haram could have elicited local sympathy and provided its members the opportunity to indoctrinate and recruit vulnerable youths into their fold. Besides, when brutality is indiscriminate as JTF has been accused of, it alienates the local populace and the public as well as the international community. As Human Rights Watch (2012: 59) puts it, 'abuses by the JTF have created more distance between the people and the government'. Indeed, the US explained her refusal to sell arms to Nigeria in 2015 in terms of human rights abuses by security forces.

Government tendentiously denied charges of human rights abuses by local civil society groups, opposition politicians and international human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International in their counter-terror campaign. It scored an exception when in response to the outcry over abuses by security forces when it filed criminal charges against five police officers (Njadvara, 2010; Ogundele, 2011; HRW, 2012).

Lack of public confidence in the JTF because of human rights abuses has denied the military solution essential intelligence information by the communities. According to a retired Major-General, the limited success of counter-insurgency operation is not only because of inadequate arms and ammunition but also the failure of JTF to secure intelligence information for uncovering the activities and hideouts of the violent extremists from local communities because of mistrust. Nothing exemplifies the absence of the instrument of intelligence in Nigeria's insurgency operations than the continuous failure of intelligence agencies to foresee and forestall attacks. Many a time, the security forces were caught off-guard by the suicide bombing and ambush tactics of Boko Haram insurgents.

Government's announcement of a ban on Boko Haram was a contradiction of its avowed disposition to dialogue, which was not backed by concrete programmes and actions. Boko Haram appeared to have used the offer of dialogue to 'buy time' when their capacity was being undermined by security agencies to retreat and re-strategize before launching more attacks. As Saudi Arabia's experience with terrorists indicates, it is hard to negotiate with terrorists motivated by an extreme religious ideology without disbanding the state (Ero, 2011). Another obstacle to dialogue with Boko Haram is factionalism. One of the factions dismissed any future dialogue with the federal government, which it accused of killing about 47 of its emissaries in failed dialogue efforts (Odebode et al., 2013). Boko Haram had also not given the federal government the basis to believe in their dialogue offer because they previously reneged on such offers and went on to intensify violent attacks on soft targets (Odiegwu, 2012).

Evidence showed that lack of political will of Jonathan's government to fight Boko Haram was reflected in the poor mobilization of domestic and human resources to tackle Boko Haram insurgency. The few half-hearted non-military efforts of the government included the You Win programme (Ikuomola, 2012) and several other pro-people initiatives and policies such as lifelines (Stroehlein, 2012). It is not surprising that his military response was marred by corruption leading to inadequate operational support for the military in supply of weapons and equipment. It is instructive that Jonathan feebly sought the cooperation of Nigeria's neighbors as late as 2014 after the abduction of Chibok school girls and over five years of Boko Haram's destructive campaigns.

In fact, interviews of the security operatives comprising the Army, Navy, Air Force and others identified key obstacles to the counter-insurgency operation, to include bad terrain; poor weather condition; poor social amenities, particularly bad road, weak communication and organization of logistic

support; lack of political cooperation; inadequate weapon and manpower; sabotage and ambush and low morale. As Onuoha and Oyewole (2018) note, the local response to the ineptitude of the Jonathan's administration counter-insurgency operation amidst the mounting violence unleashed on the people by Boko Haram led to the establishment of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), formed by the Northern youth to complement the military efforts. With the benefit of hindsight, the first serious military response to the Boko Haram insurgency was in 2015 before the general elections. This drastically reduced its devastation but not its threat.

The second most determined military response, which has degraded Boko Haram occurred under the newly inaugurated Buhari administration in 2015. President Buhari had made the fight against Boko Haram a cardinal campaign manifesto. He reached out for international cooperation of neighboring countries, France and the United States. By 2015, the counter-insurgency operation has recorded a boost, partly due to the unprecedented increase in the troop deployed to the North-east which recorded significantly success in pushing back Boko Haram (Varin, 2016). It was reported that the troops deployed for the counter-insurgency operation in the north-east rose from about 3,000 in 2012 to 8,000 in 2013, 20,000 in 2014, 25,000 in early 2015 and 40,000 to 50,000 in 2017 (Oyewole, 2017).

According to Onuoha and Oyewole (2018), the counter-insurgency operation under Buhari administration witnessed increasing assault on Boko Haram members, leading to the death of many of the group's foot soldiers, recapture of territories and serial bombardment on Sambisa forest a thick forest and former game reserve in Borno state regarded as the operation base of the sect. The military operation in Borno state also led to the destruction of many of the Boko Haram 'camps', seizing of group's weapons and disabling the recruitment and radicalization process (Varin, 2016). Buhari government reorganized the military response with the location of the operational headquarters in the heart of Boko Haram insurgency in the north-east after the appointment of new service chiefs. The initial lack of international support from the international community to the Nigerian government changed during Buhari's administration, with the United States and the United Kingdom sharing intelligence and cutting-edge technology and analysis with the Nigerian military.

The military operation was complemented with some non-military efforts as the Nigerian government initiated dialogue with the group, which led to the payment of ransom and prisoner swap to secure the release of 103 abducted Chibok school girls in 2017 and 104 Dapchi school girls in 2018. While controversies have trailed some of the government's negotiation efforts with the sect, particularly the dialogue that led to the released of the Dapchi schoolgirls, the efforts of the military under Buhari in decimating Boko Haram have been lauded both locally and globally. Other efforts of the government include the offer of amnesty to Boko Haram members and the launch of Operation Safe Corridor, a deradicalization programme for repentant members (Onuoha & Oyewole, 2018). The Buhari government also

complemented the political and military measures with some humanitarian efforts with the creation of the Internally Displaced Camps and the Victim Support Fund. It has also made efforts to re-socialize insurgents in protective custody and tackle the structural problems of poverty, unemployment and infrastructure deficits through the Presidential Committee on North East Initiatives, North East Development Commission and partnership with the EU, the UN and the World Bank on Strategic Plan for reconstruction. However, paucity of funds and endemic corruption which the government has not been able to effectively tackle undermine these economic measures. These constraints have continued to structural conditions and hardship in the affected region (Mustapha & Meagher, 2020).

This military operation under Buhari's government culminated in the creation of a Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTF) comprising Nigerian security agencies and troops from Cameroon, Niger and Chad. The gains in the counter-insurgency operation have been boosted through collaboration with the regional military. The troop from the 3 countries which was estimated as 15,000 troops, in early 2015 was further strengthened by 8,700 troops from Benin Republic. The MJTF officially take-off in 2016 with the mandate to patrol common borders and curb the trans-border activities of the sect. The efforts of the regional military operation in collaboration with the Nigerian military was relatively supported, by the international community which provided some financial and intelligence support, training and weapon supply (Onuoha & Oyewole, 2018). The MJTF was able to push back Boko Haram from neighboring countries where the group has secured foothold as a safe haven.

Nevertheless, the regional military operation has suffered some challenges that undermined its operational capabilities. Tar (2019) describes some of the challenges that affected the regional military operations, capacity, capability and interoperability. The geostrategic politics among the contributing countries breeds political mistrust and mutual suspicion that affected the troops from performing optimally. The uneasy relations among the contributing countries and the adverse impact on the regional military counter-insurgency operation led to some difficulties in command and coordination. The political rivalry between Chad and Nigeria has been particularly pronounced and manifested in the squabble over the initial location of Chadian military headquarters in Nigeria and the eventual relocation to Baga-Sulla in Chad.

The success made in the Buhari's military response to Boko Haram underscores the impact of leadership dynamics on counter-insurgency in Nigeria. Under the Buhari Administration, many challenges that confronted JTF and the campaign against Boko Haram came to light. The most significant is the massive corruption allegations against the military masterminded by the former National Security Adviser, Colonel Ibrahim Dasuki (rtd.). By his own admission, the armed forces diverted \$2.1 billion meant for arms purchase to fight Boko Haram to the 2015 re-election of Goodluck Jonathan campaign. The revelations of the arms scandal involving top military officers and service chiefs (Army and Air Force) as well as the Chief of Defence Staff most outstandingly

bore out the discontents among the ranks of the army fully expressed in the attempted attack on their General Officer Commanding by some junior officers fighting the insurgency in the north-east. Yet, the Buhari government has not demonstrated adequate commitment to the war on corruption.

Despite the progress made in the fight against Boko Haram by the Buhari government, the group has continued to demonstrate remarkable resilience as evident in the continued attacks on remote communities, humanitarian convoys, Internally Displaced Persons camps and military bases in the North-east (Onuoha et al., 2020). This showed the high level of persisting gaps in the counter-insurgency operations. It also highlights the peculiar vulnerability of weak state institutions confronting deadly extremist groups which posed additional constraint on the frail institutions, worsening the structural conditions that spurred the extremist's agitations in the first place.

Conclusion

The complexity of the Boko Haram phenomenon intersects with the complex challenge of counter-terrorism in a country with weak institutional capacity bedeviled by corruption, lack of political will and struggle for power underlined by mistrust between regional groups. The weakness of state institutions cuts across all strata from the local to the national. The media as discussed in this chapter have also played roles that impacted positively and negatively on the activities of Boko Haram and counter-insurgency efforts. The negative impact of the local media's unprofessional conduct raised serious ethical issues that exposed Boko Haram's victim to security risks and stigmatization.

The government responses to Boko Haram activities have shaped the rise of the religious dissident group to a lethal organization with remarkable resilience and adaptability. While the Nigerian government has realized the importance of tackling extremism from the root, by addressing the structural issues of marginalization, deprivation and injustices that make the youth susceptible to extremist orientation, the lack of political will has been the bane of the efforts toward tackling this deadly menace. This situation exposes the vulnerability of the Nigerian state to deadly extremist groups that capitalize on the weak institutions to challenge the legitimacy of the state. While there have been remarkable gains in the counter-insurgency operations of the government, there are many lessons to be drawn from the challenges that still mar the fight against insurgency.

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5 The threat of Al-Shabaab extremism in Kenya

Introduction

Al-Shabaab, which means ‘The Youth’ in Arabic, is the largest militant organization fighting to oust the Somali government and the foreign military presence supporting it. Al-Shabaab emerged as an independent organization around December 2006 after breaking away from the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), for which it had served as the military wing (Curran, 2015). Originally, the militant group’s main focus was to remove foreign influence from Somalia and bring a strict form of Islamic governance to the country. Between 2008 and 2010, it controlled Somalia capital, Mogadishu, and a sizeable territory south and west of the capital, including the ports of Merca and Kismayo (Cannon & Plaut, 2019). The analysis of the Al-Shabaab movement in Kenya necessitates an insight into its origin, mode of operation, triggers of the group violent campaign in Kenya and the role of the media in the war on terror in Kenya.

In mid-2006, the ICU briefly gained control of central and southern Somalia. In December 2006, the United Nations backed Ethiopian troops along with Transitional Federal Government (TFG) forces and competing warlords to drive the ICU out of Mogadishu. The ICU was completely crushed and formally disbanded on December 27, 2006, but Al-Shabaab remained active (Masters & Mohammed, 2015). The UN-backed Ethiopian invasion of Somalia was a major turning point for Al-Shabaab, fueling resentment against foreign occupying powers. It marked the major beginning of Al-Shabaab becoming the major force for resistance in Somalia after most ICU leaders fled. After the invasion, Al-Shabaab carried out attacks against Ethiopian and TFG forces using bombs, suicide operations and assassinations. The aim was to force the Ethiopian troops, who remained in Somalia after the invasion, out of the country. In March 2007, African Union troops from Uganda and Burundi jointly known as the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) also joined the operation to stabilize Somalia, and Al-Shabaab attacks targeted those troops as well (Harnisch, 2010). In an effort to (re) gain control of territory in Somalia, the militant group has most commonly attacked military targets (48.8% of all attacks since 2007), which come from

various nations, including Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Turkey, and Uganda, as well as the multinational AMISOM forces (Pate et al., 2015).

Ethiopian forces withdrew from Mogadishu in accordance with a 2008 UN-backed agreement between the TFG and the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) in January 2009. Al-Shabaab claimed victory in expelling the Ethiopians from Somalia and turned its attention on forcing other foreign soldiers from the country, particularly the TFG and AMISOM troops (Masters & Mohammed, 2015). Although Al-Shabaab mainly focused on attacking Ethiopian and African Union forces, the group also attempted to connect its cause to a broader Jihadist movement linked to Al-Qaeda. It is alleged that Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda leaders have enjoyed positive relations, with the two praising each other publicly. Al-Shabaab has also publicly offered refuge to Al-Qaeda members in the region (Page, 2010).

Although Al-Shabaab is most active in Somalia, it has also committed numerous attacks in neighboring countries, notably Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia. Kenya, which has contributed troops to military missions in Somalia and hosts large numbers of Somali refugees, has been the worst hit. Although the first alleged Al-Qaeda related terror attack in Kenya took place in 1998, Al-Shabaab has intensified its terror activities in Kenya in retaliation for Kenyan forces intervening in Somalia in 2011. The group seems to have declared war against Kenya, even though other countries involved in AMISOM are ostensibly waging war against the group with a view to strengthening the nascent government in Mogadishu. Some of the respondents interviewed in this study felt that, Al-Shabaab is mostly hard on Kenya because of its 'perceived close connection with the US in the war on terror'. This suggests that Al-Shabaab attacks Kenya because the United States is a perceived enemy of Somalia by the terrorists. Also as Brendon and Dominic (2019) observe, it seems Al-Shabaab's continued target of Kenya goes beyond the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) incursion. The respondents indicate that Al-Shabaab's continued attacks in Kenya are driven by opportunistic reasons. For instance, Kenya's geographical proximity to Al-Shabaab's bases in southern Somalia partly plays into the terrorist groups' general *modus operandi*. Other factors such as Kenya's international status and visibility, the presence of the region's mostly free media, a highly developed and lucrative tourist sector, relatively high numbers of Kenyan foreign fighters within the ranks of Al-Shabaab, the presence of terror cells in Kenya, relative democratic space and high levels of endemic corruption, all conspire to provide an environment most attractive to Al-Shabaab's attacks (Brendon & Dominic, 2019: 837).

Since 2014, the Kenyan Government has stepped up its security responses to the perceived threat of Al-Shabaab. Some of the responses include: passing new security laws, establishing the Anti-Terrorism Policing Unit and tightening administrative controls of refugee populations (Lind et al., 2015). These responses have however in a way enhanced the stigmatization of Kenyan Somalis, branding them more as both internal and external threats, thereby precipitating further attacks. According to the Study of

Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (Pate et al., 2015) report, by 2012, almost one-quarter of Al-Shabaab's attacks (22.7%) took place throughout Kenya, primarily in Garissa (13 attacks), Nairobi (8 attacks), Wajir (4 attacks), Mandera (4 attacks) and Ifo (4 attacks). Since it emerged from the ICU in 2007, Al-Shabaab has carried out more than 1,700 terrorist attacks, killing more than 4,000 and wounding more than 4,000. The number of attacks attributed to Al-Shabaab has increased rapidly from less than 10 in 2007 to more than 800 in 2014. Between 2003 and 2005, Al-Shabaab allegedly killed international workers in Somaliland, which is in the northwestern region of Somalia. The militant group was also accused of supporting the use of violent retaliation against employees of Somalia's TFG after various ICU members were assassinated in 2005, allegedly by the TFG (Harnisch, 2010).

Al-Shabaab movement in Kenya

The Al-Shabaab violent extremist group in Somalia has significantly threatened security in Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, Ethiopia and Somalia, thereby provoking policy and academic debate in search of solutions to the challenge (Avery, 2010). The first terror attack attributed to Al-Qaeda in Kenya was the 1998 bombing of the US Embassy in Nairobi which left 224 people dead and 5,000 wounded. In 2002, the Paradise Hotel in Mombasa was bombed by suspected Al-Qaeda followers, killing 15 and wounding 40 (Botha, 2014). Between 2011 and 2014, there were numerous violent and excruciating terrorist attacks in Kenya such as the deadly attack on the Westgate mall in Nairobi in 2013 which killed over 70 people and the Garissa University terror attack in 2015 which left more than 140 people dead (Lind et al., 2015).

The Al-Shabaab attacks have increased in frequency and magnitude since October 2011, when Kenya and Somalia launched Operation 'Linda Nchi', Swahili word meaning ('Protect the Country'), a joint military operation to take 'coordinated pre-emptive action' against Al-Shabaab in southern Somalia. Since then, the threat of violent extremism in Kenya has grown immensely as the Somalia-based Al-Shabaab keeps on stepping up its cross-border raids and attacks against Kenyans, in what is believed to be a revenge mission because of Kenyan government's intervention in Somalia. As one of the key informant interview respondents observed, 'radicalization and violent extremism are increasingly becoming a grave threat to Kenya's security and stability with the militant Al-Shabaab movement increasing its cross-border presence and recruitment to build a network along the Kenyan coast, Northern Kenya and Nairobi's Somali dominated Eastleigh area' (Interviews, 2016). The group is believed to capitalize on 'the long standing perceived political, ethnic, religious and regional marginalization among local communities in these areas by the state to actualize its goals' (Interviews, 2016). The group is also believed to exploit the deeply rooted disaffection amongst the peoples of the Kenya coast and north-east, resulting from long-standing real or perceived historical injustices that go back to Kenya's colonial history. The inequalities in citizenship

for Kenya's Somali populations, as well as Muslims, have historical roots and have been part of the state formation process leading up to contemporary state security responses to Al-Shabaab attacks (Lind et al., 2017).

The current relationship between Kenyan Somalis and the Kenyan state has to be analyzed against the longer history of state-society relations between the state and ethnic Somalis (Lind et al., 2015). The alienation and marginalization of the North Eastern Province, the home of Kenyan Somalis, started during the early years of colonial rule. After independence, the post-colonial administration enforced a form of military administration, implementing policies that effectively isolated the area from the rest of Kenya (Anderson, 2014). As most of the respondents observed, 'even for those of us who have been here for decades as Kenyan citizens, we are still seen as outsiders by majority of Kenyans and state agencies'.

The nature and patterns of violent extremism in Kenya have changed from a threat primarily emanating from Somalia to a home-grown, Kenyan problem, necessitating a review of the strategies for countering it. An estimated 25% of Al-Shabaab militants are Kenyan nationals (BBC, 2017). Coincidentally, in the northern and coastal regions of Kenya where youth radicalism and extremism are rampant, there is evidence of poverty, inequality and economic marginalization. These factors limit the livelihood opportunities available to young people, making them especially vulnerable to crime, violence and extremist ideas (Lind et al., 2015, 2017). According to the Kenyan Integrated Household Survey for 2015/2016, by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2018), the north-eastern region was rated as the poorest region of the country; almost 98% of people in this region were either living in poverty or near poverty line (Diwakar & Shepherd, 2018).

As established from the research findings, radicalization of youth in Kenya is the epicenter of terrorism and terrorist activities. Most of the terrorist attacks in the country have been carried out by local youth radicalized and recruited by Al-Shabaab. Violent extremism in Kenya has evolved over time as more Kenyans, usually young people, are introduced to an overtly ideological message and belief system that encourage them to move from beliefs that are generally moderate and mainstream toward very extreme views, which are violent in nature (Khalil & Zeuthen, 2014). This has been manifested in perpetration of violent terrorist acts, burning of churches, targeting of religious leaders, security agencies and security installations. Attacks in Nairobi, Mpeketoni and Lamu among others have nurtured fear and suspicion among Muslims and Christians and could tilt the balance of inter-religious harmony and trigger religious violence in the country.

Although the government and development partners have launched various Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) projects, extremist and terrorist incidents continue to rise, particularly among the Muslim communities. There are reported cases of recruitment in the predominant Muslim areas in Nairobi, Coastal Kenya and North Eastern Kenya. In many cases, the recruitment targets the poor slum dwellers where Muslims are in the majority. Although

violent extremism is not new in Kenya, what is worrisome is that its nature and pattern is continuously changing. When CVE programmes began, many saw Al-Shabaab as a threat emanating from Somalia. Currently, it is evident that it is a Kenyan problem where many Kenyans are joining the group. The greatest threat from Al-Shabaab is now how it relates to and reinforces tensions precipitated by Kenya's domestic policies, politics and practices, particularly as they relate to uneven development patterns and the treatment of its Muslim populations. Al-Shabaab is said to recruit former fighters belonging to a 2,500-man strong militia of Kenyan Somalis and refugees that Kenya mobilized and trained to fight in Somalia (Lind et al., 2015).

The September 2013 terror attack at the Westgate shopping mall, the 2015 Garissa University and the February 2019 Riverside attack in Nairobi have heightened worldwide attention to Al-Shabaab's activities in Kenya. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility and maintained that these attacks are retaliation for Kenyan military operations in Somalia. But these incidents represent only a small percentage among many other onslaughts of violent extremism in Kenya in recent years. The terror group has claimed responsibility for several 'small scale' attacks across the country. Although Operation 'Linda Nchi' was meant to enhance domestic security, the scope, scale and audacity of Al-Shabaab's attacks have worsened since then. According to Kenya's Anti-Terrorism Policing Unit (ATPU), over 133 attacks occurred between October 2011 and July 2014, killing 264 and injuring 923. Terror-related attacks have multiplied across the country, from bombed markets in Nairobi's working-class neighborhood of Gikomba to exploding matatus (public minibuses) on the city's Thika superhighway, to village massacres (Lind et al., 2015). Attacks such as those perpetrated by Al-Shabaab in Kenya exploit existing opportunity spaces and can be referred to as 'propaganda by deed' (Brendon & Dominic, 2019). The group seeks to raise attention to its existence and viability, thereby enticing recruits to its ranks and spreading fear. The larger and more brutal the attack, the more the group is perceived as potentially more relevant and powerful than it possibly is (Cannon, 2017). Al-Shabaab's attacks in Kenya have been characterized by their gruesome effects and wide international news coverage. This gives Al-Shabaab a level of publicity, notoriety and international relevance that often belies its increasing isolation in Somalia (Brendon & Dominic, 2019).

Historical insights and dynamics of violent extremism in Kenya

To fully understand the issue of violent extremism in Kenya, one has to go back in history and evaluate the historical relationship between Kenyan Somalis and the Kenyan state, as well as the Kenyan state and its ties with the US and Israel that extended to many decades before the emergence of violent extremism in Kenya as we know it today. For a long time, many Muslims in Kenya have been suspicious of the nation's post-colonial governments because

they have maintained very close ties with the USA and overly keen to forge closer ties with Israel. It is therefore not a surprise that Kenya became a target of Muslim-related terrorist attacks against American and Israeli interests in the country as early as 1980. It is worth noting that acts of terror in Kenya were not intentionally targeted at Kenyans initially. The intended targets were Israel and the USA, even though the majority of those killed invariably turned out to be Kenyans (Mazrui et al., 2018). One of the earliest terrorist attacks in Kenya took place on December 31, 1980, when a bomb exploded at the Norfolk Hotel, Nairobi, killing nearly 20 and injuring over 80 people. At that time, the hotel was owned and managed by a Jewish firm, the Block Hotels. Another Israel-targeted terrorist assault came in November 28, 2002. This was a twin-attack: bombing of the Paradise Hotel in Mombasa, owned by Israeli nationals, and the unsuccessful attempt to take down an Israeli charter plane with surface-to-air missiles (Mazrui et al., 2018). The first anti-American terrorist attack on Kenyan soil occurred in 1998, when Al-Qaeda struck the US embassy in Nairobi two years after Osama bin Laden had declared his war against the USA.

The state's position on ethnic Somalis has also been entangled by its approaches to domestic security right from Kenya's independence in 1963 (Lind et al., 2017). During the early years of colonial rule, the North Eastern Province (NEP), later known as the Northern Frontier District (NFD) comprising the Somali-majority current-day Mandera, Wajir and Garissa counties were alienated. The colonial regime enforced a form of military administration; implementing policies that effectively isolated the area from the rest of Kenya (Anderson, 2014). There were also deliberate efforts to ignore the socio-economic and political integration of its population (Otunnu, 1992). The colonial regime also imposed mobility restrictions and tight administrative control over the next few decades (Otunnu, 1992). Further, political parties in NFD were banned, and Somali resistance to these measures was harshly suppressed by the colonial administration.

In 1962 during the Lancaster House Constitutional Conference, Kenyan Somali representatives from NFD expressed their wish to secede from Kenya and join the greater Somalia, which had gained Independence on July 1, 1960. There was a government inquiry by an Independent Commission on these grievances which showed that 87% of the NFD population, Somali and non-Somali Muslims, was in favour of secession from Kenya to Somalia (Otunnu, 1992). But instead of addressing the issues, the British government formed the NEP. To express their displeasure with the decision, the region's Somali population boycotted the 1963 elections. Armed groups started an insurgency known as the 'Shifta war' (1963–1967), which Somalia covertly supported (Anderson, 2014). The new Kenyatta government then declared a state of emergency in NEP in December 1963 and sent military and paramilitary police units. About 4,000 Somalis were killed between 1964 and 1967 during the operation (Branch, 2014). Therefore, the tense relationship between Kenya and

Kenyan Somalis as well as Somalia has a history that extends longer than the current deployment of KDF soldiers in Somalia.

But since Kenya deployed its forces to Somalia in support of flushing out Al-Shabaab militants, there has been a marked increase in the number of the youth (of Somali and non-Somali origins) drawn to extremism as evidenced by rising recruitments and terrorist attacks in various parts of the country and re-emergence of radical groups such as the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC). Most of the youth are made vulnerable to the forces of radicalism and criminality because of the feelings of real and perceived marginalization, hopelessness, identity crisis, denial of access to national resources, frustrated expectations and relative deprivation (Republic of Kenya Report, 2015). Widespread unemployment, the presence of local extremists and foreign radical preachers who import the extremist ideology to the country have been identified as some of the facilitating factors that predispose the youth for recruitment (Botha, 2013c). Radical groups have also been able to take advantage of the perceived historical injustices and marginalization to recruit and radicalize vulnerable youths to their cause. Although radicalization of the youth in Kenya has spread throughout the country, it has particularly escalated in the Coast and North Eastern regions (Mutuma & Mutahi, 2018).

Various empirical studies and responses from this particular study show that perceived and/or real discrimination as well as profiling of especially Kenyan Muslims of Somali origin, by the government security forces in the war on terror has also been identified as a key 'push factor' for violent extremism in Kenya. As one of the respondents observed, 'all of us are terrorists in the eyes of the government, and that in itself is a recipe for radicalization'. A study by the International Crisis Group (2012) showed that the war against Al-Shabaab has led to an increase in ethnic profiling and discrimination against Somalis in particular, and Muslims in general; these findings resonate with this study. There have been several cases where members of the Somali Kenyan and Somali communities have claimed to be victims of racial or ethnic profiling when security agencies round them up and arrest them for no reason other than their race and ethnicity (Botha, 2013c). As some respondents interviewed in Mombasa in 2016 in the course of this research observed, it is a 'religious/ethnic persecution by a predominantly Christian government and police force'. They observed that in most Muslim-dominated neighborhoods in the coast, Nairobi and Northern Kenya, 'many young men have disappeared, dragged from their homes by the police in the middle of the night and have never been seen again'.

Deep-seated injustices and a sense of marginalization among Kenya's many minority ethnic and religious groups have provided a fertile ground for Al-Shabaab to localize its Jihad at Kenya's margins (Botha, 2013c; Lind et al., 2015; Mutahi, 2015). As one of the respondents observed, 'most of these so-called extremists such as the late Sheikh Rogo find audience in disenfranchised youths who see the truth in his calls for revolt against an unjust society that discriminates Muslims since that appears to be the truth on the

ground'. State security responses that are perceived to target Somalis and Muslims play directly into Al-Shabaab's tactical approach to foment a violent insurgency at Kenya's margins (Lind et al., 2015). As most of the respondents observed, 'heavy-handed government responses that are perceived to punish entire communities for the actions of a few are a major push factor to radicalization. Take for instance, the Kenyan government's Operation Usalama Watch, which resulted in the incarceration of thousands of people, the majority without charge'. These security operations are largely conducted in regions with sizable Somali Muslim populations and 'the impression of many in these communities is that they are being unjustly punished for the acts of a few extremists' (Interviews, 2016). Kenya's peace and stability seem to be largely undermined by 'external stresses' from Somalia's long-running state collapse and conflict spillovers as this is evident from attacks attributed to Al-Shabaab as well as the group's alleged business of money laundering and recruitment activities in Kenya (Lind et al., 2015).

Socio-economic factors such as poverty, inequality and economic marginalization have also been identified as leading factors that contribute to violent extremism in Kenya (Mutahi, 2015). Youths who are most vulnerable to radicalization and violent extremism in parts of coastal and north-eastern Kenya are said to have very few livelihood opportunities and are an easy target for the Al-Shabaab recruiters (Lind et al., 2017). As one of the respondents observed, 'these youths are vulnerable because they feel marginalized; they are not educated, are jobless and therefore it becomes easy to get recruited... they see it as a win-win situation because if you die in the process of the attacks they go to heaven and receive cash (40 thousand Kenya shillings) reward from the terrorists if they survive' (Muslim cleric, 2016).

Faith-based extremist ideologies disseminated by extremist Muslim preachers have also been said to provide recruits and potential recruits with a framework for making sense of, and articulating their grievances and justifying their violence. Extremist preachers, especially in the coastal region, have used some mosques and exploited social media such as Twitter and Facebook to recruit new members and spread their violent ideas. Online newsletters such as 'Gaidi Mtaani' as well as online videos such as 'Mujahideen Moments' have featured Kiswahili-speaking extremists who legitimize their calls for violence on account of the 'humiliation suffered by Muslims in Kenya', the 'Christian occupation of coastal land' and the 'revenge for the killing of prominent Islamic preachers' (Mutahi, 2015). The 2011 UN Monitoring Group Report on Somalia singles out the Muslim Youth Centre (MYC) at Pumwani Riyadhha Mosque in Nairobi as a recruitment and training centre for would-be Al-Shabaab fighters (UN Monitoring Group, 2011).

Repressive security operations in state-led counterterrorism measures are also a contributing factor in the increasing violent extremism in Kenya. For instance, counterterrorism operations undertaken in Nairobi's Eastleigh area, Garissa, Mandera, Wajir and Mombasa after the West Gate Mall attack and Garissa University attack have been criticized by Somali leaders and human

rights organizations for their excessive use of force, arbitrary arrests, illegal detentions and executions of terrorism suspects (Lind et al., 2015). The most notable was the 2014 'Operation Usalama Watch' where serious violations of human rights occurred. Reports by the media, and local and international human rights groups as well as the testimony of local residents established that the operation was marred by arbitrary arrests, rape, torture and extortion (Lind et al., 2015). During the operation, more than 4,000 suspected illegal immigrants and refugees, mainly from Somalia were arrested and detained at the Kasarani Safaricom Stadium in Nairobi for screening by authorities. Others were sent to the Dabaab Refugee Camp in northern Kenya, while others were deported to Somalia. As one of the respondents observed, 'the government's approach is questionable...they seem to be fighting terror with terror because of the brutal way in which they handle the suspects'. There are also allegations of serial killings and disappearances of Muslim leaders, business people and preachers against security agencies. Police have also been accused of detaining individuals for long periods of time in undisclosed locations, without providing them access to lawyers or contact with their families as required under the Kenyan constitution. The manner in which these counterterrorism operations have been conducted has fueled resentment among many ethnic Somalis and Muslims. The effect of this has been the alienation of the very communities whose support is needed in detecting and preventing terrorist violence (Botha, 2013c; Khalil & Zeuthen, 2014).

The issue of historical ethnic profiling and discrimination of the Kenyan Somalis goes back to the 1960s. In the minds of most other Kenyan communities, Kenyan Somalis are seen as 'suspects and outsiders' whose loyalty to the country is questionable. Somalis in Kenya are often without distinction labeled as 'Al-Shabaab'. The increased terror attacks in recent years in Kenya by Al-Shabaab have led to increased official and public suspicion of Kenyan Somalis and Muslims in general, who some believe are sympathetic to terrorist elements operating from within Somalia and Kenya (Khalil & Zeuthen, 2014; Mutahi, 2015). This hostility has, in some instances, led to violent attacks against Kenyan Somalis and Muslims, and in turn heightened frustrations among them, pushing some to more radicalization and violent extremism. As one interviewee observed, 'It is painful for us Kenyan Somalis living and working in Kenya to have our loyalty to the country being constantly questioned and doubted. If the blanket profiling and highly securitized policies continue, they will increase communal tensions and the risk of "home-grown" terrorism' (Kenyan Somali, 2016).

Some of the respondents also observed that the increasing religious extremism and radicalization in Kenya can be attributed to external influence based on what is happening globally where Muslims are perceived as terrorists and therefore, 'in brotherhood', some radicals locally want to stand against that. Some radical preachers also indoctrinate the youth by preaching Jihadism which regards any non-Muslim as a non-believer, popularly known as *Kafiri*. There is also the perception that since Kenyan leaders at the national level

have been Christians, consecutive Christian governments have deliberately marginalized the coastal areas and by implicating Muslims (see also Botha, 2014a, b; Mutahi, 2015). The attacks are therefore an expression of Muslims' grievances to the 'Christian government'. This is how one of the respondents put it: 'I can say that Al-Shabaab thrives on vulnerable people. The Coast has been marginalised for some time... there are resources here, but we have a largely marginalised population. So this becomes a fertile ground for Al-Shabaab'. There have been small-scale attacks by Al-Shabaab since January 2020, even as information emerges that the KDF plans to exit Somalia come 2021. Between January 2 and January 13, 2020, the group conducted several attacks in the Northern and coastal regions in Kenya, killing over 15 people among them 3 Americans in a US military base in Lamu at the coast near the Somali border (Abdalla, 2020). The AMISOM, which KDF has been part of in the war since February 2012, plans to start withdrawing its 22,000-strong force from Somalia in 2021 (*Daily Nation*, August 20, 2020).

The media and violent extremism in Kenya

The growing threat posed by terrorism and violent extremism globally has generated serious debates about media representation and framing of acts of terror (Ogola, 2019). While it is undeniable that the media plays a critical role in the way society understands and relates to terrorism, it is equally important to examine how the representation of terrorism in the media may cause fear and anxiety in society, or even worsen the problem of terrorism and violent extremism. In Kenya, there have been concerns, arguments and counter-arguments that the extent to which the media sensationalize issues concerning Islam and terrorism, in a way deepens the problem of radicalization and violent extremism (Media Council of Kenya, 2014). The media have, in some cases, been accused of the propagation of a dominant narrative that borders on stereotyping Muslims and their involvement in terrorism and religious intolerance. Some of the propaganda narratives include: 'People of Somali origin are potential terrorists; all Muslims are potential terrorists because most terror suspects are Muslims; and the war on terror is a war involving Muslims and Christians' (Media Council of Kenya, 2014).

It can be argued that the deeds of terrorists are planned and executed with the mass media in mind (Nacos, 2002). Terrorists, therefore, understand how the media work and some have employed the services of propagandists to guide their actions in order to attain media attention (Keinan et al., 2003). Key Informant interviews conducted in Mombasa Kenya in 2016 about the role of the media in promoting interfaith dialogue in Kenya with religious leaders, youth leaders, journalists and human rights defenders showed that the media ignore moderate Muslim voices in favor of radical or extremist Muslim perspectives. With such biased news selection, the Muslim community is at the risk of being misrepresented by the media-aided voices of people with extreme views.

The media are significant and powerful social agents that can potentially influence public perceptions and understanding of critical issues, such as terrorism and the war on terror. The media can also influence the public negatively by distorting facts or promoting over-sensationalization, thereby causing unnecessary moral panic. The war on terrorism is also a war of images, and the most effective images are those of terrorists' victims often through the media. For instance, during the January 2019 Riverside attack in Kenya, the editorial decision by international media, the *New York Times* and the *Daily Mail*, to use a photograph by AP credited to photographer Khalil Senusi, showing bodies of victims of the attack slumped on chairs and covered in blood, was vehemently criticized. It was regarded as inhuman, potentially racializing and glorifying the terrorists' activities. Such 'insensitive coverage' can be said to have highlighted the deeply embedded institutional practices that lay bare the racialized lens that characterizes the reporting of 'distant deaths' as compared to deaths as a result of terrorism in the US. The two media reportage was regarded as emotionally removed from the pain and misery of these 'far off' events, with the portrayed distant deaths narrated as mere spectacles (Ogola, 2019). The mainstream media in Kenya has also been criticized in the past for using the 'report to shock' approach when informing the public about acts of terror, by publishing detailed accounts with accompanying visual images of how the attack was executed. This, in a way, is arguably seen as helping the terrorists by giving them the much-needed publicity locally and internationally.

In the immediate aftermath of any terrorist attack, the media inevitably become part of the story. The relationship between the media and terrorism is complex. It is often argued that the media are the oxygen that feeds terrorism. Terror provokes fear and anxiety, and the public expects the media to give timely information as the terror story unfolds. But terrorism also relies on the same media coverage to gain publicity for its heinous acts. Terrorists create a theatre of death and destruction, and the media are often accused of providing them a stage at no cost. There is, therefore, always the question about whether the way the media cover acts of terror, inevitably capturing in detail the drama involved, encourage further violence or promote the terrorists' agenda. Death and blood associated with terrorism and violent extremism elicit shock, and it is becoming increasingly clear that terrorist organizations are now quite keen on manipulating the media to achieve their objectives. Terror attacks and violent extremism no longer just target victims; they also target the public with the aim to cause both physical and psychological harm which is achieved through the creation of shock, panic and a sense of helplessness through the media (Rohner & Frey, 2007).

Studies (Silver, 2008; McNamara, 2009; Zelizer & Allan, 2011) have shown that the media reporting of terrorist activities can intensify the impact of terrorism and that terrorists select targets that will generate maximum publicity, holding local and international media attention for the longest possible periods of time. Because of the global reach of modern-day news media and

the emerging phenomenon of ‘if it bleeds, it leads’, an incident of a terrorist group holding hostage or shooting people in Nairobi, for instance, becomes an instant international hit on all the world’s major news channels. Terrorists capitalize on ‘media coverage, whose powerful visual images create strong emotional responses, including fear, panic, despair, and rage, even in individuals who live far away from the traumatic events’ (Fremont et al., 2005: 430).

The intricate relationship between media and terrorism is such that as the journalists search for the story, the terrorists search for publicity to instill more fear in the public through media coverage. There have, therefore, been concerns and allegations that in the process of covering and reporting terror events, journalists often become the terrorists’ ‘best friends’ by giving them the much-needed publicity, thereby instilling more fear among members of the public. Maintaining professional ethics in such times is often difficult as journalists try to balance between sensational reporting, accurate reporting, respect for victims and breaking the story. Live broadcasting during terrorist attacks, especially focusing on the crime scene, showing operational step-by-step details, interviewing survivors and holding press conferences at the crime scene, have been singled out as some of the biggest challenges facing the media, as they are likely to give the suspects a huge platform and free publicity.

How the public reacts is largely dependent on available information, mostly from the media on unfolding events from the scene, as well as official government briefing and advisories. In a country like Kenya which has no effective, reliable and trusted public media, this means almost the entire country tuning into blanket live coverage on various privately owned TV stations that are not under government control or the international media such as CNN, BBC and Aljazeera which are regarded as more credible than the local stations. This has its own challenges, especially when the media has to rely on the government as the key authoritative and credible source of unfolding events. There is a possibility of government manipulating figures, but in most cases, the media have no choice than to go with the government figures.

The advent of social media platforms has compounded this complex relationship and role of the media during acts of terror and violent extremism. Terror attack news now break on social media. The public is then bombarded with all sorts of information, some of which is fake and falsely engineered by the terrorists themselves. This puts more pressure on journalists to get their facts right from such sea of facts and fiction. Reporting terror attacks in the era of digital media is increasingly becoming one of the most challenging tasks for journalists and mainstream media. Social media platforms provide avenues for extensive misinformation and propaganda, including the enemy circulating figures of alleged casualties, and the mainstream media are at more pains to ‘set the record straight’. In an environment where speed and sensation drive audiences to websites and social media platforms, the temptation to be the first to report and to have the most dramatic pictures (however unsettling) can seduce even the most respected news organisations. This in a way provides oxygen to the attackers, leaving the audiences with an unbalanced and

often unverified view of the events. The terrorist attack at 14 Riverside Drive in Nairobi in January 2019 and related spates of similar attacks elsewhere in Kenya (Westgate in 2013, Mpeketoni in 2014 and Garissa University in 2015) among others have put spotlight on the media coverage and treatment of violent extremism, radicalization and terrorism in Kenya.

When terrorist activities are presented in the media, the potential to create moral panics is dependent on the choice of words that journalists make. The danger of creating these moral panics related to terrorism is that they depend on the narratives used. The public will often form stereotypes and symbols concerning particular incidents related to terrorism as a result of media coverage. In the case of Kenya, it can be argued that the media have caused the public to form stereotypes and symbols concerning Muslims and Kenyans of Somali origin, and this has led to the increasing association of these groups with acts of terror and violent extremism. There has, therefore, been ethno-religious profiling, marginalization and undue victimization of members from these groups. The Kenyan media, in some instances, have succeeded in constructing sensational headlines on terrorism. The sensational and unethical headlines in the media cause society to associate the Islamic religion with terrorism. When the media fail to construct their narratives professionally and ethically, there is a tendency that they may scare their audience into the perception that our nation and lives are under assault by the Islamic religion (Media Council, 2014).

Conclusion

The perspectives on the origin of Al-Shabaab extremist organization in Somalia, and how it evolved in Kenya show that the group poses one of the major internal and external security threats to the country. It has been argued that Al-Shabaab draws from political and historical grievances on the failure of integration and marginalization of Somalis and Muslims from the coastal and north-eastern parts of Kenya to propagate their extremist ideologies. Kenya's military presence in Somalia has also fueled the extremists' narrative who use it for recruitment drives. The patterns and trends of violent extremism in Kenya have also been examined as well as the possible sources and drivers of violent extremism. The government's approach to countering violent extremism in Kenya has been highlighted as a major cause for fueling 'homegrown' violent extremism in the country due to its highly securitized approach.

Violent extremism in Kenya is therefore no longer exclusively externally driven since there are many Al-Shabaab sympathizers locally. The spread of violence involving Al-Shabaab in Kenya, highlights the limitations of the government's institutional structures to contain the menace. The threat to Kenya's peace and security posed by Al-Shabaab can said to be intricately tied up with the legacies of earlier state violence and marginalization of certain regions and populations, particularly Somalis and other coastal populations. There is, therefore, the need for a 'softer' approach that minimizes the profiling, discrimination and the 'securitization of Somali presence' (Jeremy et al., 2017) to manage the increasing

violent extremism and radicalization among Al-Shabaab sympathizers. The chapter has also highlighted the media and Al-Shabaab movement in Kenya. It has been observed that the Kenyan media in some instances have engaged in sensational reporting of terror activities, thereby in a way publicizing terrorism.

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6 Institutional strategies to counter violent religious extremism in Nigeria and Kenya

Introduction

Nigeria and Kenya have been the sites of terrorists activities perpetrated by violent religious extremists, Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab in the past two decades. The two countries share similar characteristics in terms of the availability of natural resources that boosts the economy and military strength, yet the two states grapple with fragile nature of their state institutions. The significant threat from violent religious extremism in Nigerian and Kenya and the weak capacity of these countries to deal with the act of terror clearly exposed the fragile nature of the state institutions. Given the sub-regional status of Nigeria and Kenya in West and East Africa, the violent activities of the religious extremists in both countries have severe ramification for security in the two subregions, the continent and the global war on terror.

As Zenn (2012) avers, Boko Haram insurgency and its expansion beyond Nigeria's borders, could destabilize other fragile democracies in West Africa. The porous nature of African borders provides ample opportunities for religious extremists to proliferate neighboring countries. Boko Haram spreads its campaign of terror into neighboring countries including Chad, Niger and Cameroon. Al-Shabaab expanded its attacks from Somalia to other countries in East Africa including Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia and Tanzania. Kenya has been primarily a major target of attacks and recruitment drives for Al-Shabaab. In explicating on the character of fragile states, Sweet (2019) suggests that fragile settings are characterized by porous boundaries and high levels of fragmentation between areas controlled by state forces and armed actors. A report of the University of Notre Dame Keough School of Global Affairs (2020) demonstrates that the security environment in fragile settings enable state and non-state groups to strike clandestine deals for political or economic goals. The report goes on to note that the fragile security environment could lead to a situation in which some armed groups may assume governance roles, with state officials providing support to rebel groups or collaborate in criminal activity. These complex characterizations of fragile state create a complex security terrain that makes it difficult for the affected states to deal with violent religious extremists.

In Nigeria, Boko Haram emergence in the north-eastern region and the group opposition to secular authority is rooted in domestic, political and socio-economic grievance against the perceived corrupt state institutions. Al-Shabaab incursion into Kenya from Somalia and the group's violent activities in the country rides on grievances relating to Kenya military offensive in Somalia, the collaboration with the United States on the global war on terror and the perceived sense of marginalization of ethnic Somali Muslims in Kenya coastal and Northern region.

Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab are religiously and politically motivated extremists, with links and allegiance to global jihadists that 'transnationalise' their network and aid their tactical operational capacity. To fully grasp the contextual issues that shaped the response of fragile states to threat from violent extremists, the earlier chapters have provided insights into how violent extremists evolved and proliferate in Nigeria and Kenya. The institutional strategies adopted by Nigeria and Kenya have been contextually driven by local and international environments. The analysis will thus, focus on the local and global contexts that shaped and influenced the two countries' responses to the threat from Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab.

The poor state of governance in the two countries as evidently manifested in their ranking among the most corrupt countries in the Transparency Corruption perception Index. In its 2019 report, Nigeria was ranked 146th, while Kenya was on the 137th position out of 180, with a score of 26% for Nigeria and 28% for Kenya. The high ranking of the two countries among the most corrupt countries in the world points to the deficiencies of governance, and how it fueled social inequities and political exclusion among some segments of the population. In fact, both countries have consistently obtained high scores on the corruption index for nearly a decade. The two countries did not perform better on the human development index, as the 2019 report showed that Nigeria was categorized among the countries with low human development with a score of 0.534 in 2018 which put the countries in the position of those with low human development. Kenya fared slightly better with a score of 0.579 placing the country among those with medium human development. However, Kenya's corrupt governance institutions and the perceived marginalization of some ethno-religious groups have provoked grievances that religious extremism taps into their violent campaign against the state.

Nigeria and Kenya are already confronting security threat from ethno-religious tensions and clashes and political violence with the attendant negative impacts on socio-economic development. Kenya has experienced political conflict along ethnic lines, pitching ethnic majority against the minority groups since the early 1990s. These conflicts have not only intensified in recent decades and culminated in the Kenya political crisis in 2007–2008, but it has also accentuated the division along ethno-religious lines that Al-Shabaab exploited in waging its religious war. The rise of violent religious extremist groups in both countries complicates these existing security challenges and puts additional strain on the fragile state institutions.

As some analysts have pointed out, in most fragile states in Africa, the lines between state and non-state actors are blurred because the political legitimacy of state and non-state actors tends to vary in relation to time and geographic locations (Staniland, 2012; Mukhopadhyay, 2014). The violent activities of religious extremism not only challenge the political legitimacy of the state, but the weak nature of state institutions also create an avenue for state officials to become complicit in the criminal activities that accompanies the violent religious extremism. This raises a pertinent question on how a fragile state institution can develop the capacity to respond adequately to the lethal threat from violent religious extremism. To answer this question, necessitates a careful analysis of the diverse legal, military, social, economic and political strategies adopted by Nigeria and Kenya in response to Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab onslaught and the broader impacts on the war on terror.

The state's institutional responses to violent religious extremism need to be examined in the light of changing local, regional and global contexts given that terrorism is a globalized threat. At the institutional level, the agency of the international is acknowledged within the geopolitics inherent in the Global War on Terror (GWOT) discourse (Keenan, 2010). This is a discourse that began in the post-September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. The discourse elevated terrorism to be a global threat that required urgent action across states. The US has to lead an international campaign to destabilize terrorist networks such as the Al-Qaeda and its related affiliates. Yet the responses from the United States and other Western countries to the threat of Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab in Nigeria and Kenya have varied in relation to the political realities in the two countries and generated diverse consequences and outcomes. While the United States have offered staunch support to Kenya from the onset of the military offensive against Al-Shabaab, the reverse is the case for Nigeria. It was not until the start of the Buhari administration that the United States showed commitment to cooperate with the Nigerian government to fight Boko Haram.

In an attempt to unravel the logic of extremist violence in fragile states in Africa, Boukhars (2020) identified four interrelated factors that underlie the groups' violent activities. The first is the level of local support that violent extremists are able to mobilize and sustain in their violent campaign. The second and third factors relate to the dynamics of extremists' in-group/out-group differentiation and corresponding hostility; and the inter-group rivalry and looming power shifts. The third is the strategies of counterinsurgency employed by governments. This is an important factor that shaped extremists' tactical strategies. Thus, Boukhars concludes that extremists' violent strategies cannot be regarded as statics, fixed, random or irrational. It can be discerned as a conscious strategy that aligns with the political, social and strategic imperatives of the conflict environments that violent extremists operate in. While the first three factors have been the focus of earlier chapters, the last factor will be the main preoccupation of this chapter. The violent activities of extremists groups tend to weaken the already fragile institutions,

in a way that makes it extremely difficult for the state to respond adequately to curtail the threat. It also brings into fore a new security threat resulting from the dynamics of violent religious extremism. While the ability of the affected states to generate support from civil society organizations, regional and international institutions can raise the capacity to counter-extremism, the nature of the social, economic and political environment may undermine the positive impacts of these external supports.

Rotberg (2004: 4) conceptualizes weak states as a broad continuum of states that are battling with geographical, physical or fundamental economic constraints. Rotberg goes further to note that weak states can be basically strong, but temporarily or situationally weak as a result of internal antagonisms, management flaws, greed, despotism or external attacks. Nigeria and Kenya provide typical case of weak states which are basically strong as a result of strong economy, but weak due to poor governance institutions. Nigeria's economic strength is derived from abundance of an oil and gas resource that provides enormous wealth for the country, while Kenya's lucrative agricultural and tourist sectors drive the bulk of the country's wealth. The corrupt nature of the governance institutions logically implies that the enormous economic resources benefit a small segment of the political class and their patron-client network, while majority of the citizens are deprived of benefiting from the countries' wealth. It is not surprising that the recent Fund for Peace's 2019 fragile state index, ranked Nigeria and Kenya in the alert category with a score of 98.5 and 93.5 respectively. The grave security threat emanating from the violent religious extremists and the inability to adequately deal with the threats would largely account for the ranking in the category of high state of fragility. The framing of terrorists' threat by the Nigerian and Kenyan political actors have shaped the political, military, economic and social institutional responses of Nigeria and Kenya to violent religious extremism.

Nigeria and Kenya's framing of terrorism threats

The discourse on terrorist acts of violent religious extremism by the Nigerian and Kenyan state officials has been structured in several ways. In the first instance, Boko Haram was not initially perceived as a security threat with the potential to lead to an insurrection, much less terrorism. Of note is the statement of one of the interviewees from the state security services, who explained that the Nigerian government downplayed the security report about the radical preaching of Boko Haram founder, Yusuf and his anti-statist tendencies. It was not until the relatively peaceful sect transmuted to a religious dissident and later a violent religious extremism, that the government acknowledged the severity of the security threat (Matfess, 2020).

The government's neglect of the security threat from Boko Haram extremists was summarily described by Kendhammar & McCain (2018) who posited that the Nigerian government for several years failed to recognize

the magnitude of the threat that Yusuf's Boko Haram posed. The initial perception of the Borno state government, and the Northern political elites who provided political patronage for the Yusuf's movement, was that the group did not constitute any serious security threat, despite its large followers and organized structure. The Nigerian military and police also failed to fully comprehend their roles in the escalation of Boko Haram insurgency through the use of excessive force that culminated in the death of Yusuf in police custody (Kendhammar & McCain, 2018). Even after the Nigeria state realized the enormity of the security challenges posed by Boko Haram, particularly in the aftermath of the abduction of over 200 school girls in Chibok, the Nigeria government under ex-President Goodluck Jonathan did not demonstrate commitment to the counter-extremism measures partly due to the perception that the activities of the sect arose from political maneuver from the opposition parties bent on destabilizing his government (Walker, 2016). The security operatives interviewed identified the weak leadership of the Jonathan administration as a contributory factor for the ineffective counter-extremism strategies. The broader ramifications of Nigeria's government and its security agencies' miscalculation and ineptitude in handling the activities of Yusuf's movement have continued to unfold over the years.

In Kenya, the failed state of Somalia is considered as an existential threat to the country. This discourse has been enabled by the speeches of government officials and analysts who consider the so-called 'failed state' of Somalia as an existential security threat to the country and in particular for posing terrorist threats. In the prism of security officials interviewed, Somalia poses two inter-related security threats to Kenya and indeed in the Horn of Africa region. One is that it has enabled a 'breeding ground' of terrorism and in the present context has allowed Al-Shabaab to thrive in that territory. In addition, it has enabled the proliferation of small arms and light weapons which can be used to perpetrate terror attacks. This is often couched in debates around 'ungovernable spaces' and how they provide an easy ground for criminality.

In Nigeria, for instance, some security analysts have debated over the geographical location of Boko Haram's violent activities in the remote area of Borno state in the far north-eastern region. Mustapha & Meagher (2020) attempt to make sense of the group emergence in Borno state, where Islamic practice is known for a wealth of traditional innovations, rather than in the epicenter of fundamentalist Salafi revivalism in the north-western Nigerian city of Kano led to the supposition that Boko Haram emergence can be understood within the wider social processes and pressures at play at the locality in which the sect emerged and the time it emerged. The broader social processes and pressures that led to the emergence of Boko Haram in Borno state intersect with the political climate in the northern region, and at the center of state power, the terrain and security environment in the north-eastern region. The limited or lack of security presence or surveillance in the remote areas of Borno state where the sect operate could be discerned as an ideal location for the extremist to create a parallel governance structure.

The government's failure to secure these ungoverned spaces enabled the Boko Haram sect to capture many territories in the remote areas in Borno state. This view was supported by Ojo's (2020) submission that poor security in the ungoverned areas stimulates illegal movement of arms and ammunition, the raw material for bombs, illegal drugs and foreign machines and safe haven for extremists. It was not until the coming to power of the Buhari's administration that the government started to pay closer attention to the ungoverned spaces as part of the counter-extremism strategy. This paved way for the government's success in reclaiming the territories occupied by the sect. The military identified the Sambisa forest, a dense and isolated forest as the fortress of Boko Haram and the abode of the leader, Shekau (formerly Yusuf's deputy) and his commanders who trained their recruits in the forest. Sambisa is believed to be the location of the sect's kidnapped victims, including the Chibok girls, many of whom were forced to live in squalid conditions inside the forest (Varin, 2016; Walker, 2016; Tar, 2019). The Buhari government launched a military offensive in May 2016 to clear the remnants of Boko Haram in Sambisa Forest while the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) set up Operation GAMA AIKI, in June 2016 to dislodge the sect from remote areas in the northern part of Borno state (Anugwom, 2019). The inability of the government to expand the security surveillance to virtually all the remote areas allowed the sect to continue to attack those undefended communities.

In Kenya, the refugee camps were discerned as the enabling security environment for Al-Shabaab operations. The security discourse in Kenya has focused on the labeling of refugees as security threats that should be subjected to extra scrutiny and surveillance. In this respect, the refugee camps and in particular, the Dadaab Refugee camp in North Eastern Kenya has been securitized as a hub for youth radicalization into violent extremism. Furthermore, this camp has also been considered to be a planning/logistics hub for the execution of terror attacks (Mwangi, 2019). The 2013 Westgate attacks, the 2014 Mpeketoni attacks and the 2015 Garissa university attacks were linked by state officials to the Dadaab refugee complex. The state discourse then has been to frame refugees' camps as an existential threat to Kenya's natural security. This discourse thus securitizes both the refugees and the camps as threats that require urgent and immediate action. Among other outcomes has been the refolement (in refugee studies terminology – it means to 'to return' or to 'expel' usually without the proper legal channels), in particular of Somali refugees as a strategy to counter the threats of violent extremism (Mwangi, 2019). The Dadaab camp has a population of over 300,000 refugees with 95% being of Somali origin (Cannon & Fujibayashi, 2018).

The attempts at the relocation and subsequent closure of the Dadaab refugee camp began in 2013 with a signing of the tripartite agreement between Kenya, Somalia and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This agreement was to facilitate the repatriation of the Somalis in Dadaab. While the state had assessed the security threats that prompted the

eventual decision to close the camp, human rights organizations remained largely critical of the connections that had been made between the refugee camps and the security threats. Their criticality was being informed by the need to safeguard the refugee's rights in light of extra-legal interventions that the Kenyan state has considered

The Kenyan state has threatened to shut the Dadaab refugee camp in spite of its commitment to the principle of non-refoulement. This is provided in the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees for which Kenya is a signatory. The Kenyan government in a revision of the Refugee Act of 2006, in 2016, in parts qualifies that refoulement of refugees can be instituted in cases of a threat to national security. It qualifies this on grounds that due process of law shall be followed. The Kenyan government raised an intention as early as 2012 to repatriate refugees. It even went ahead to announce a closure date for Dadaab refugee complex for November 2016 but later pushed it to May 2017. As of February 2021, it has yet to fully close the camp as earlier announced. In early 2017, a Kenyan High Court decision ruled that the closure of the camp would be unconstitutional (Cannon & Fujibayashi, 2018).

The security discourse has initially viewed the Boko Haram extremism from an interreligious prism with the perception that the attack was targeted primarily against Christians. The initial media coverage of Boko Haram's violent activities by the Nigerian media has led to the portrayal of Boko Haram as an anti-Christian extremist with the intent to wipe out the small Christian population in the North-east (Wakefiled, et al., 2014). Most of the news coverage between 2010 and 2012 has mostly shown attacks on churches and Christians who were made to forcefully convert to Muslims or face the ultimate penalty of violent death in the hands of Boko Haram (Kassim, 2018). The emergence of the Boko Haram faction, Ansaru in 2011 with its declared agenda to defend Muslims, and target Nigerian government and Christians, have also contributed to the claim that Christians were the primary target of the sect (Varin, 2016). The political clime was terse, given that the Nigerian President as at the time, Goodluck Jonathan was a Christian from the Southern region of Nigeria (International Crisis Group, 2010; Forest, 2012). The targeting of Christians by the sect shaped the discourse among the government officials, who advanced the view that Boko Haram emerged as a machinery of Northern political elites to destabilize the Jonathan administration.

Since 2012, report by security analysts has shown that although both Christians and Muslims have been attacked by the sect, most of the victims of Boko Haram atrocities have been fellow Muslims who the sect perceived as infidels (Forest, 2012: 1; Babatunde, 2014; Kendhammar & McCain, 2018). Kassim (2018) reported that most of the suicide bombing attacks by Boko Haram since mid-2015 have primarily targeted Muslim. Perhaps this unfolding narrative of Boko Haram's disproportionate targeting of Muslims has partly informed the commitment of President Buhari who is a Muslim from the North to the counter-extremism operation in contrast to the slow and weak counter-extremism strategies of the

previous administration of Goodluck Jonathan, a southern Christian. This assertion is plausible and necessitates further research on how religious considerations have shaped the counter-extremism strategies of successive Nigerian government in response to Boko Haram sect.

In Kenya, the securitizing discourse has manifested in the labeling of the Muslim and Arab ancestry as responsible for terrorism threats. The Coastal Muslim community in Kenya has been particularly considered to be sympathetic to terrorism causes. The previous administrations of Moi and Kibaki managed to drive this negative narrative that the Muslims and the Coastal identities were linked to terrorism and which was made possible by a securitizing language. This consequently shaped their range of counter-terrorism responses (Prestholt, 2011). Over time, the state has continued to securitize parts of the Coastal region as providing a recruitment ground for groups such as Al-Shabaab. Specifically, Mombasa and Kwale have been securitized as radicalization hotspots not only for Al-Shabaab but also in the past for Islamic State (IS). This has in turn been complicated by the returnees from such movements estimated to be over a thousand (Cragin, 2019; Mktuand & Opondo, 2019). This is then the logic that feeds into the state securitizing officials to consider the Coastal region as a hotspot for radicalization and recruitment. Radicalization and recruitment into violent extremism is however not unique to the Kenyan Coast and has spread to other parts of the country including the north-east, central and western regions of the country. This is a discourse that was shared by government officials interviewed in the course of this study (Fieldnotes, July 2019).

The immediate implications of a securitizing language have been to render possible the non-observation of certain fundamental human rights. This securitizing language and the attendant responses enabled for instance extra-legal renditions of terror suspects as happened following the July 2010 bombings in Kampala. Additionally, it has made possible the refoulement of Somali refugees that run counter to the principle of non-refoulement as enshrined in the Geneva Conventions of 1951 for which Kenya is a signatory. The Refugee Act of 2006 further guarantees this provision (Mogire & Mktu, 2011; Jaji, 2013).

Like the Kenya case, the Nigerian counter-extremism offensive has also targeted the Muslim populations in the north-eastern region on the suspicion that many of the people are members of Boko Haram. The local people faced threats from Boko Haram and also contend with the military offensive. The targeting of locales in both Nigeria and Kenya eroded public trust in the capacity of government and impact adversely on the intelligence aspect of the counter-extremism operation in which local support is a vital element of intelligence gathering.

The foregoing narratives suggest that the framing of Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab by the state officials engaged in the counter-extremism responses have promoted in part a negative securitizing narrative that partly undermined the war on terror.

Countering violent religious extremism in Nigeria

The Nigerian government put in place a range of measures in the fight against violent religious extremism and the accompanied humanitarian crises in the north-eastern region. These measures are operationalized under various institutions and have engendered varying degrees of success and challenge. The Nigerian government instituted diverse political, socio-economic, security and international framework in response to the Boko Haram act of terror. The counter-extremism efforts were carried out in collaborations with regional and international organizations and western allies. The government in power during the varying phase of extremism has adopted diverse counter-extremism strategies that aligned with the political realities, agenda and calculation of their administrations. These counter-extremism strategies of the administration in power at a particular period and the level of cooperation and collaboration with regional and international allies have impacted the progress and setbacks to the fight against terror. The counter-insurgency strategies of successive Nigerian government also impacted the tactical operational capacity of the extremist.

The fight against violent religious extremism has witnessed a fluctuating trend of successes and failures largely due to the structural imbalances deeply embedded in the government institutions. A deeper glimpse into the counter-extremism strategies of successive Nigerian governments within the socio-economic, political and legal, security and international frameworks reveals the range of outcomes that trailed the war on terror and the broader implications.

Political and legal framework

Within the political and legal institutional framework for countering violent extremism, the Nigerian government enacted new laws, which impose stiffer punishment on convicted religious terrorists. Interviews of lawmakers in Abuja revealed that the National Assembly has passed some laws to aid the security forces in the counter-extremism operation. According to the lawmaker:

The 2011 anti-terrorism law that was passed into law gives the security forces power to seal off a property or vehicle of terror suspect without a search warrant and allows a judge to order their detention up to 30 days in the best interest of public safety (Personal communication, 2019).

He goes on to explain that the counter-terrorism act, as amended in 2013 by the National Parliament in Nigeria, imposes up to 30 years imprisonment, and death sentence to convicted terrorists. It also creates an avenue for foreign assistance to combat terrorism through mutual information sharing and extradition of wanted terrorists. While these laws are a demonstration of the

government's efforts at promoting the rule of law, and accountability for acts of terror, the reality is the lack of implementation or abuse of the laws by the security agencies. As a lawyer interviewed explained, the major problem is not the law *per se*, but the inability to implement the law to promote social justice.

The Jonathan government initiated series of dialogue geared at identifying the grievances of Boko Haram, and also set up the Presidential Amnesty Committee in 2013, to design an amnesty programme for Boko Haram, similar to that of the Niger Delta militants in the South (Aghedo, 2014). While the decision of the Goodluck Jonathan's administration to grant amnesty to repentant terrorists who surrendered their arms was lauded by the northern political elites, it has provoked criticism from opinion leaders and security analysts, who saw such a move as portraying that the government condones terrorist. The criticism perhaps led the government to consider a deradicalization programme as an alternative. The deradicalization programme of the Jonathan government which was set up in 2014 for repentant members of the sect and those serving prison terms was justified as a soft approach to win the hearts and minds of the extremists to renounce violence, as an alternative to the military's 'hard approach' that arguably alienated the security forces from the local population and induced further radicalization of the Muslim communities (Varin, 2016). While the deradicalization programme is a relatively new initiative backed by psychological studies, it can have limited precedence as there is no evidence to demonstrate its effectiveness (Varin, 2016).

As part of the counter-extremism measures of the Jonathan administration, in the wake of the growing criticism against the military operation in the north-east, the government sacked all the top military service chiefs and replaced them with new ones in January 2014. The replacement of the service chiefs did little to douse the criticism against the Jonathan government. Rather, it fueled further distrust of the government and the perception of undue favoritism of the South-South and South East geopolitical zones where the President originates in the selection of the top military chiefs (Walker, 2016).

The inability of the Jonathan government to garner regional and international support led to the resort to foreign private military providers who were hired from South Africa in 2014 to boost the dismal counter-extremism response of the Nigerian security forces (Varin, 2016). The private military providers comprised military veterans of apartheid South Africa who are known as Specialized Tasks and Training Equipment and Protection (STTEP) (Walker, 2016). It was not clearly discernible if the efforts of the private foreign military providers were impactful before the Buhari administration took over power in 2015.

The Buhari administration has embarked on series of political measures to strengthen the counter-extremism operation. These counter-insurgency initiatives of the government led to the reduction in the scope, but not in the defeat of violent religious terrorism in North-eastern Nigeria (Charles, 2017). The military offensive has drove the sect from many states in the

North-east and confined it mainly within Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states (Charles, 2017: 3).

The government responses to Boko Haram have failed to deal with the crimes of the group. Also, there have been allegations of the complicity of government security forces, including soldiers, policemen and some members of the civilian vigilante groups, in the criminal enterprises of cattle rustling, armed and drug trafficking that generate funding for Boko Haram (Okoli, 2019; Thomas, 2019). The narrative of one of Boko Haram's repentant members captured how they were made to take narcotic drugs like marijuana, cocaine and heroin as pain killer before any operation to shield them from rabid fear and bullet pain (Adamu & Abdullahi, 2019). The drug abuse points to one of the criminal dimensions of the activities of Boko Haram linked to organized crimes that the Nigerian government has been incapable of curtailing.

The government has also not demonstrated the political will and capacity to block sources of recruitment of insurgents. It has been established from intelligent reports that insurgents are largely recruited from among prisoners who were freed from prison by Boko Haram during rescue attacks because of poor security at the Nigerian prison. The Nigerian government has also not demonstrated the capacity to block the internal and external sources of funding of the extremists that has continued to enhance Boko Haram's operational capacity (Charles, 2019; Okoli, 2019).

Although the dwindling community support for Boko Haram should have boosted the capacity of the military to generate intelligence from the locale, the inability of the government to respond adequately to the problem of corruption, arm proliferations, drug trafficking, training and weaponry for the security operatives and securing ungovernable spaces and porous border have mitigated against the gains made in the counter-extremism operations.

Security institutional framework

The Nigeria's military has been at the forefront of the counter-extremism operation in the North-eastern region. In practical terms, the implementation of the institutional framework by the military has revolved mostly on aggressive military responses against Boko Haram (Tar, 2019). The government's military response to the extremist violence led to the mass deportation of suspected illegal aliens to the Republic of Benin, Chad, Niger and Somalia and the declaration of emergency rule in 15 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Borno, Yobe, Plateau and the Niger states (Aghedo & Osumah, 2012). Although the state of emergency was later lifted, some analysts have contended that this action, including the aggressive military counter-extremism response by the Jonathan government, aggravated the insurgency (Aghedo, 2014; Nwankpa, 2015). The upsurge in Boko Haram assault at this period was estimated to have led to 11,519 fatalities in 2015, according to the Global Terrorism Index report, highlighting the ineffectiveness of the counter-extremism operation.

The inability of the government to provide security led the affected local communities to seek alternative security provisioning through the establishment of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in June 2013. This comprises a ‘disparate group of civilians’ commonly referred to as ‘van goro’ or men with sticks, and lightly armed, who patrolled checkpoints around Maiduguri before they came together as a single body known as CTJF (Kendhammar & McCain, 2018). There has been speculation that the CTJF sprang up through former members of Boko Haram who left the group and took up arms against them as deterrence against attack (Walker, 2016). The CTJF members were initially seen as heroes and an indispensable part of the security assault against Boko Haram, offering intelligence to the military on the sect’s hideouts (Walker, 2016). It eventually became apparent that the CJTF posed a security risk that led to the escalation of Boko Haram violence. According to the report of the Nordic Africa Institute (2017), the CTJF comprising about 23,000 members has a loose structure, no formal training, command or coordination by the military, despite the fact that they possess arms. The report notes further that the CTJF demand for recognition and compensation for their efforts make it susceptible to massive abuses, including executions of both community and non-community members.

The military offensive which commenced with the deployment of Operation Flush to crush Yusuf’s Boko Haram revolt in July 2009 culminated in the extrajudicial killing of the sect founder, Muhammed Yusuf, in police custody and the reemergence of a more brutal phase of the sect under the leadership of Yusuf’s erstwhile deputy, Shekau. The disbandment of the Operational Flush and the subsequent deployment of other missions under various code names have also been largely ineffectual until the strategic review of the military operations by the Buhari government. This paved way for the launch of the Operation Lafiya Dole to counter the violent activities of Boko Haram. This operation was complemented by the Operation Crackdown, in May 2016 to dislodge the remnants of the Boko Haram in their stronghold in the Sambisa Forest.

The establishment of the MNJTF comprising troops from Cameroon, Chad and Niger served as the major regional counter-extremism strategies which recorded some significant results in decimating Boko Haram onslaught in the North-eastern region and neighboring countries. The regional military operation of the MNJTF, code-named Operation GAMA AIKI, was launched in June 2016 as part of the renewed counter-extremism strategies against the Boko Haram sect. These multi-layered military operations have largely rendered Boko Haram incapacitated to carry out successful lethal assaults, neutralized more than 6,000 of its members, rescued about 8,000 kidnapped victims. It also paved way for the reclaiming of more than 350 communities previously occupied by the sect (Olaolu, 2019).

Mustapha and Meagher (2020) identified some of the major factors that led to the achievement recorded by the Buhari government in the counter-extremism efforts, especially between 2015 and 2017. These factors

centered on the improved budgetary allocation to fight the extremists, the strategic review of the military operations, and improved relations and cooperation with neighboring countries. For instance, the security budget, which was about \$1.44 billion in 2009, rose to \$2.81 billion in 2018. The rise in budgetary allocation to fight Boko Haram led to the timely payment of troops, improved logistics and equipment, training and remuneration for the security personnel in ways that boosted their morale. The increased fund was used to procure superior arms and ammunitions for the military.

The improved military tactical operations resulted in enhanced strategic hot pursuit of the extremists, pushing them back and creating little space for them to operate. As Varin (2016) notes, the improvement of relations and cooperation with neighboring Chad and Cameroon in the Lake Chad region was an important initiative of the Buhari government that paved way for the establishment of the MNJTF to ensure their participation in the counterinsurgency efforts across common borders. These regional efforts seriously disrupted the food and logistic routes of the sect into Borno State (Varin, 2016).

Buhari's appointment of new service chiefs, and in particular, Tukur Buratai, an indigene of Borno State, as the new chief of army staff and the relocation of the military headquarters from Abuja to Maiduguri, the hotspot of Boko Haram revolts, were all seen as strategic moves that repositioned the military's fight against terror. The interview of one of the of the Army personnel engaged in the military operation in Maiduguri indicates that the troop are more motivated due to improved arms and ammunitions and a rise in the allowance as well as regular payment. The International Crisis Group (2020) reported that the military counter-extremism operation between 2017 and 2019 has led to the rescue of many civilians from the Boko Haram extremists and allowed for the smooth supply of humanitarian aid to affected local populations.

Nevertheless, the sect has remained adaptive and resilient by reverting to previous guerrilla tactics and suicide bombings in its attacks on soft targets, in remote communities, humanitarian convoys, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps and military bases in the North-east (Mickler et al, 2019; Onuoha, et al., 2020). The ability of Boko Haram to regain some of its lethal capacity and continue its assault could be linked to the relapse in the intelligence aspect of the counter-extremism efforts due to the breakdown in the relationship between the military and the affected local communities. The insights derived from interviews of military personnel involved in the security operation showed that the counter-extremism efforts are still rife with persisting corruption within the military, acts of sabotage by some security personnel and complicity in the Boko Haram criminal activities for monetary rewards. Similar allegations of diversion of funds that trailed the military operation under Jonathan also bedeviled the military under the Buhari administration. For instance, a former National Security Adviser was accused of diverting over \$2.1 billion meant to fight insurgency for political party campaigns for the re-election of former President Goodluck Jonathan. A former Chief of Defence Staff has also been accused of embezzling about

\$400 million meant to combat insurgency while some officials and men of the security personnel were accused of giving classified intelligence and other vital information to the extremists (Okoli, 2019).

The 2019 Report of the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) indicated that corruption within the rank and files of relevant counter insurgency institutions is a major factor undermining the state's capacity to contain extremist violence in North-eastern Nigeria. It is thus not surprising that the Nigeria's overstretched, under-resourced and corruption-plagued military has struggled to consolidate the earlier gains made in the fight against terrorism (Brechenmacher, 2019). In January 2021, the Buhari government announced new military service chiefs for the Nigerian defence, Army, Navy and Air (The Cable, January 26, 2021). However, it remains to be seen if the recent overhaul of the leadership of the security architecture could bridge the gaps in the military operation in North-eastern Nigeria.

The initial solidarity and coordinated military efforts of the countries in the Lake Chad deteriorated, with each country once again adopting different operational strategies, largely due to the controversy on who bears the cost of operation (Salkida, 2019). This period also marked increasing friction between the military and international aid agencies. The civil society organizations working in the North-east have criticized the government counter-extremism strategies, on the ground of excessive corruption of government officials and mismanagement of the funding from international agencies. The counter-extremism operation has been rife with accusations of repeated abuse of civilians by the security personnel, including widespread evidence of arbitrary detention and torture (Simoncelli, 2021). The excessive use of force and abuses of civilians are major shortcomings that highlight the urgent need for effective security sector transparency and accountability (Oyewole, 2017; Nwangwu & Ezeibe, 2019; Matfess, 2020)

Despite the increase in military personnel to the north-east, there is still the challenge of shortage of security personnel to effectively police the vast expanse of land in North-eastern states, especially Borno state, which has the largest landmass of 70,898km² in the region. The intelligence lapses and abandonment of the re-settled communities make these areas to be more prone to terror attacks. It also made the people show allegiance to Boko Haram in exchange for protection, while they distrust the military. Some local communities have made a pact with the Boko Haram sect to spare their communities from attacks while they avoid providing information to the military about the identity and activities of the extremists. The breach of such agreement led to the recent massacre of about 110 Nigerian farmers on 28th November in Koshebe, a village near Maiduguri, Borno state by Boko Haram's Shekau's faction who claimed responsibility in a publicized video, for the attack (Simoncelli, 2021).

Since the counter-extremism operation involves various security agencies, the synergy and collaboration between these agencies are very crucial to the success of the operation. However, the findings from interviews of the

various security personnel indicated that there has been very weak inter-agency synergy, coordination and collaboration. The lack of synergy between the agencies is also closely connected to the problem of sabotage by traitors within the military who provide classified information on the operation to Boko Haram because they are either sympathetic to the sect or desirous of financial reward. Thus, the military counter-insurgency operation is largely premised on weak tactical sustainable security architecture in terms of intelligence gathering, surveillance operation, community policing and border security without adequate synergy and involvement of other relevant security institutions like the National Police, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, the Federal Road Safety Corps (NSCDC), State Security Services (SSS) and Nigeria Intelligence Service (NIS) in its operations. The weak intelligent capacity led to the difficulty of profiling the numerical strength of the extremist, not until the Chadian army in the MNJTF intelligence revealed that the insurgents have over 40,000 members in Nigeria and neighboring countries, including Chad, Cameroon, Niger and Mali and that the insurgents sometimes hire contract fighters from Libya (Onuoha & Oyewole, 2018). The factionalization of Boko Haram has also contributed to the group's persisting adaptability and resilience. As Simoncelli (2021) explains, the two factions of Boko Haram which split into small, hard to locate cells are well-organized and deeply rooted in the region.

In the light of the foregoing, it is apparent that the counter-extremism operation since the Buhari government commenced its second term has weakened leading to a reversal of some of the gains previously made in the war on terror. There is now low morale among the security personnel due to weak motivation bordering on delay in the payment of salary and non-payment of allowance unlike what was experienced from 2015 during the first term of the Buhari's administration. For instance, 386 soldiers fighting the terrorists voluntarily disengaged from the Nigeria army while many others have either deserted their positions on Away Without Official Leave (AWOL) linked to a perceived sense of betrayed and uncertain about the strategic direction of Nigeria's counter-terrorism operations against the Boko Haram and its faction, the Islamic State in West Africa province (Mickler et al, 2019, 2019). Due to incessant attacks on military formations with seizure of arms and ammunition the military strategically established a large military 'super camp' to pull their defensive arsenals together in order to repel the terrorists. The Nigerian military super camps strategy was widely criticized for leaving the local communities vulnerable to attacks by Boko Haram. The super camps left many communities in Nigeria and neighboring Cameroon to the mercy of the extremists who unleashed violence on these unprotected areas.

The gaps in the counter-extremism operation evidently manifest in the spike in Boko Haram assault which extended beyond Borno to other states and neighboring countries as at the time of this research. For instance, Boko Haram has claimed responsibilities for the attack on a village in northern Cameroon in January 2021 and the killing of 27 civilians in December 2020

in the Diffa region of neighboring Niger (Simoncelli, 2021). According to Simoncelli (2021), the strained relations among the countries in the Lake Chad Basin have led to poor coordination and intelligence sharing between countries which is needed to block the group's supply networks, built on raids, robberies and arms and raw materials trafficking.

Socio-economic institutional framework

Nigeria's government has put in place some 'carrot' approaches to countering extremism in the North-eastern region. The socio-economic measures are geared toward winning the heart and minds of the people by addressing the underlying causes of the extremism. The measures are also designed to prevent and curtail the risk of youth radicalization and recruitment into violent religious extremism.

As part of socio-economic security measures to reintegrate repentant extremists back into the community and empower them economically, Nigerian government developed a three-pronged de-radicalization programme, which involves proper religious education; economic empowerment; and resilience building, that targets the radical mindset of the captured terrorists toward bringing about a positive change. (Onuoha et al. 2020). The religious education involved preaching by Islamic scholars to motivate some detained extremists to renounce violence, counter-extremist ideology and their distorted doctrinal values founded on a set of core beliefs that are opposed to the state and western education, as well as opposition to religious diversity. The empowerment aspect of the de-radicalization programme provided skill acquisition and training to detained terrorists, who were trained as shoe and cap makers, tailors, barbers and other business vocations before they were reintegrated back into their communities.

Another programme for the youth is the Nomadic and 'Almajiri' (local Islamic) schools, which combines Islamic education with Western education as part of the measure to address the youth indoctrination to radical extremism (Onuoha et al, 2020). The combination of Islamic and Western education for the Northern youth, in the Nomadic schools, was meant to foster a better understanding of inter-faith relations and tolerance among the Islamic strands. As part of the socio-economic empowerment scheme, specifically designed for the counter insurgency, the Nigerian government established the Presidential Initiative for the North East (PINE), which entails economic revitalization, infrastructure development, job creation and programs designed to protect IDPs and other victims of terrorism. The North-east Development Commission (NEDC) was established on January 29, 2018 for the economic revitalization, infrastructure development, job creation and protection of IDPs and other victims of terrorism (Adewole, 2019).

The Nigerian government's socio-economic measures may have achieved some modicum of success, yet numerous challenges have been mitigated against the effectiveness of these programmes. Many of the youth employed

under the social re-investment programme complained of lack of regular payment of allowance. Most of the nomadic and 'Almajiri' schools are not maintained, such that they are now dilapidating and also lack adequate instructional materials. Many of the religious leaders have been the direct target of Boko Haram and have been forced out of their communities, or maimed, or killed for refusing to support the group in its confrontation with the Nigerian state (Rasheed, 2019). This created a local leadership vacuum to curtail radicalization of the youth to extremism.

Against this backdrop, the weak institutional capacity of Nigeria to provide the basic necessity of life, curb abject poverty, unemployment and human rights abuses and protection of the citizens are indicators of a failing state, which promotes a breeding ground for ethnic militia and terrorist groups to thrive. This situation in part undermines the counter-extremism strategies to tackle the deadly extremists.

Civil institutional framework in countering extremism

The civil society organization has played complementary to boost the efforts of the government in the fight against violent religious extremism in the North-eastern Nigeria. The roles of the civil society organizations are global in orientation, blending global initiative with local-led civil society organizations humanitarian support to the local populations confronting the threat of violent religious extremism (Nwangwu & Ezeibe, 2019). The civil society organizations operate largely in Borno Yobe and Adamawa states, the epicenter of the insurgency and counter insurgency operations. Some of the major civil society organizations include the Nigeria International Federation of Red Cross, Action Against Hunger, Mercy Corps, Global Rights, Amnesty International and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Their work cut across health, food aids, skill acquisition training support, provision of made shift educational facilities and accommodation for IDPs and the protection of their human rights. They also focused on conflictive sensitive awareness programs and IDPs resettlement programs. The activities of these civil society organizations have bridged the dearth of humanitarian material from the government, and inadequacy of resources through donations, mostly in kind to the IDPs, which is estimated at about \$135 million (Nwangwu & Ezeibe, 2019).

These civil society organizations work alongside the government-owned National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), charged with the coordination of the activities of the civil society organizations, by taking the frontline position in the management of the humanitarian crises linked to Boko Haram violence activities in the North-east. The efforts of NEMA are carried out in collaboration with the State Emergency Management Agencies within the North-Eastern Nigeria and civil society organizations. The Nigerian government under President Buhari has commenced a 'post-conflict stabilization phase', in the north-east, coordinated through various civilian institutions, including NEMA. Other civilian institutions

include the Presidential Committee on the North-east Initiative (PCNI), the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA), an Inter-Ministerial Task Force charged with coordinating humanitarian relief operations, the Victim's Support Fund, the Ministry of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Resettlement in Borno, as well as state-level emergency management agencies (Brechenmacher, 2019).

NEMA has experienced increasing difficulty in managing the large numbers of IDPs, estimated at around 2.4 million, partly due to inadequate funding from the government. As indicated by NEMA (2019), over N2 billion is needed quarterly from the state and federal governments to take care of the IDPs in the three affected states out of which N483 million are made available quarterly for the purpose. NEMA relied most often on civil society organizations to fund some of its activities for the IDPs. It was documented that the humanitarian stakeholders on the IDPs project, including the Federal and state government, local and international donor agencies and private individuals have donated more than \$135 million to the humanitarian efforts to alleviate the plights of the IDPs in North-eastern states since the insurgency started in 2009 (Global Report on Internal Displacement, 2019). However, a large number of these IDPs are still living in very deplorable, impoverished and unhygienic conditions without any efforts made toward their rehabilitation (Aroge and Raji, 2019).

Apart from financial limitations, NEMA and the other civil institutions have been alleged to engage in corrupt practices and management of the humanitarian relief fund. It was reported that NEMA and its state-level counterparts are made up of political cronies who have dabbled in corrupt practices of diversion of millions of aid dollars into private hands (Brechenmacher, 2019). The scale of corruption within these civil institutions poses a major challenge to the government-led stabilization efforts. It further worsens the citizen's distrust of the government, increasing the perception of government's lack of commitment to address the root of extremism. The financial gains made by these corrupt government officials from the counter-extremism efforts would be a motivation for their lack of interest and commitment to tackling the security crisis so as to continue to benefit from the insecurity.

The civil society organizations working in the North-east engage mostly in countering violent extremism activities through preventative counter-radicalization initiatives. These initiatives are geared toward identifying and tackling the root causes of youth radicalization through various activities such as the provision of relief materials, protest marches, press conferences, advocacy visits to major stakeholders, socio-economic services, rehabilitation of critical infrastructure and participation in early warning workshops (Nwangwu & Ezeibe, 2019). While the efforts of the civil society organizations are laudable, there have been some tensions between them and the military operating in the affected north-eastern region. Rather than collaboration and complementarity of efforts, the relations between the civil society organizations and the government security agencies have been

marked by accusation and counter-accusation, mutual distrust and suspicion. Some international NGOs like Mercy Corps were shut down by the military for allegedly supporting terrorists. Also, the military temporarily suspended UNICEF from operations in the region on the ground that the organization was spying for Boko Haram terrorists. This was confirmed in a recent study by Njoku (2020) who elucidated on how the Nigerian military announced, in December 2018, the suspension of the activities of UNICEF, Mercy Corps and Action Against Hunger in north-eastern Nigeria. The military claimed that it had credible evidence that UNICEF, Mercy Corps and Action Against Hunger had abandoned their roles of providing humanitarian services, and accused them of engaging in training people for clandestine activities to undermine the counter-terrorism operations. However, the military later reversed the suspension.

Some of these foreign NGOs' criticism of government's stabilization and early recovery initiative have further provoked reaction from the Nigerian military. Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch have leveled major allegations of abuses of civilians by the military, in which nine army commanders and top service chiefs appointed by former President Jonathan were indicted by the organizations (Walker, 2016). The civil groups have also criticized the Nigerian government's approach to stabilization and early recovery, which heavily rests on the return of displaced populations and infrastructure reconstruction, sponsored through large amounts of funding from international development banks. The perception is that the government approach tends to further worsen corruption (Brechenmacher, 2019). In their counter-accusation, the military called for the closure of Amnesty International offices in Nigeria, on the claim that the organization was trying to destabilize the country through false allegations of human rights abuses in counter-terrorism operations in the north-east (Njoku, 2020).

The NGOs' humanitarian practice of providing food for the camp of the Boko Haram without discrimination does not go down well with the military, who is used to the deployment of starvation as a weapon of warfare. However, the argument of most international NGOs has always been that there are innocent civilians trapped within the confines of the insurgents' captured territories, including children, women and non-belligerent people who need urgent aid intervention.

The international NGOs have been at the forefront of the humanitarian assistance in the north-east while most of the local NGOs are financially handicapped to provide complementary roles. While there has been some collaboration between the international and local NGOs, working in the north-east, some of the local organizations have been accused of diversion of aid materials and other resources (Mickler et al, 2019). Many of the local NGOs, including Accord for Community Development, Islamic Aid Group and Aid Delivery Foundation, have grassroots connections with local communities across the North-east, yet many of them are accused by the Nigeria Military of being spies for the insurgents (Suleiman, 2019: 4). There has also

been the proliferation of many fake local NGOs operating without proper registration with constituted authorities, whose main interest centered on financial benefit (Mickler et al. 2019: 9).

Some of the main challenges confronting the civil society organizations in the North-east include the risk of increasing insurgent attacks on aid workers, which led to a rise in the death of these humanitarian workers from 6 to 37 between 2009 and 2019 (Global Aid Report, 2019). The increasing friction between the military and the civil society groups may also translate to weak security protection by the military. It was reported that sustained attacks on the NGOs led to the evacuation of about 152 aid workers and temporary suspension of humanitarian deliveries in the North-east, especially Borno state (Global Aid Report, 2019: 2). There are cases of humanitarian workers being kidnapped for ransom due to poor security cover for them while humanitarian workers are often deterred from providing needed assistance to many of the affected areas in the north-east due to partial accessibility of the areas to aid workers. As UNICEF (2018) reported, about 26 Local Government Areas in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states are identified as partially accessible for humanitarian workers due to porous security arrangement. The number of aid workers in the North-east, which is put at 2,500 to cater for the 7.7 million people directly and indirectly affected by the security crisis in the three states is insufficient (Adamu & Rasheed, 2019: 6). From the foregoing, the highlighted series of challenges have clearly mitigated against effective government-civil society collaboration, with severe implications for the fight against extremism.

International institutional framework

The Nigerian government's counter-extremism efforts have received support from sub-regional and regional organizations as well as the international community. At the regional level, the African Union (AU) established the African Centre for the Studies and Research in Terrorism (ACSRT) as an institution of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) in line with the Algeria Plan of Action (Rasheed, 2019: 6). Though not established specially for defeating Boko Haram, the primary goals of ACSRT are to generate and centralize information, initiate and analyze studies on terrorism and terrorist groups; and develop training programmes and symposia, organized through collaborations with international partners. Working within the framework of the ACSRT, the MNJTF, a loose coalition of troops from Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria was the major regional effort by the Lake Chad Basin Commission to tackle the menace of Boko Haram. While some of the main challenges that undermined the efforts of the MNJTF have earlier been discussed, it is noted that the intervention of the MNTJF in collaboration with the Nigerian military led to the recapture of territories previously taken over by Boko Haram and the progress made in the fight against extremism between 2015 and 2017. It also sparked an increasing regionalization of the counter-extremism efforts as Boko Haram continued to expand its violence

campaign to countries involved in the MNTJF project. The financial assistance received from the United Nations, the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the African Union Commission, was used in developing a short, medium and long-term regional stabilization strategy, with focus on stabilization, resilience and recovery needs for the Boko Haram-affected areas in the Lake Chad basin (Brechenmacher, 2019). However, the internal schism among the countries in the Lake Chad Basin undermined the progress made by the MNJTF in the war on terror.

Nigeria's status as a sub-regional power in West Africa, mitigated against more direct and greater intervention in the counter-extremism efforts against Boko Haram by the AU and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (Nwankpa, 2015). Since Nigeria is a major financial of ECOWAS, and provider of the largest contributing troop to ECOWAS and AU peacekeeping efforts, it seems odd that Nigeria is now in a state of security crisis that would require the support of ECOWAS and AU. As Nwankpa (2015) posited, Nigeria's prominent regional and global stature serves as a limitation to the level of combative steps or actions that ECOWAS, AU and global institutions were able to take in the fight against Boko Haram, unless if these bodies were dealing with a less prominent state.

The contention is that weak states like Nigeria are able to deploy their prominent regional and international status and diplomacy in a way that hinders external intervention in their internal affairs. This view is in tandem with Brechenmacher's (2019) submission that Nigeria, unlike other conflict-affected states, wields significant resources and regional power, resulting in a greater status vis-a-vis international partner. This situation, perhaps explains the lack of international support to the fight against Boko Haram violence campaign during the Jonathan administration. For instance, despite the evidence of rising humanitarian crises in the epicenter of Boko Haram violence in the north-eastern region between 2014 and 2015, the UN leadership in the country did not demonstrate much interest in demanding greater international involvement (Brechenmacher, 2019).

Nigeria's global and regional status arguably explained why the donor governments made the decision to focus primarily on working through the Nigerian government structures rather than sidestepping local authority, despite the awareness of the high level of corruption, and bureaucratic obstruction as well as weak political will and commitment that characterized government counter-terrorism response. Brechenmacher (2019) noted that the donor states and the United Nations (UN) lack the political interest in declaring the war-torn north-eastern region as a large-scale emergency, due to the additional commitments of resources that it would engender in an already crisis-ridden international context. The preoccupation of these donor governments was then on the security crisis in Iraq, South Sudan and Syria, while Nigeria as a resource-rich country was considered to require less international aid.

While there was a more committed response of the international community to the security crises in the north-east region of Nigeria under Buhari's

administration, some analysts opine that the radical increase in the overall donor's response was triggered in mid-2016 due to the media reportage on widespread starvation in one of the worst affected towns, Bama, in Borno state (Brechenmacher, 2019). The Bama situation set the stage for more involvement of donor agencies in the worsening humanitarian disaster in many other war-torn areas previously under Boko Haram control but now recaptured by the Nigerian military.

As the massive military crackdown on the Boko Haram sect led to improved security in late 2016 and early 2017, the donor agencies in partnership with the Nigerian government shifted their approach to stabilization strategy. This was articulated in the so-called Buhari Plan that spelled out the post-conflict recovery plans for the north-east with focus on emergency assistance, stabilization and early recovery. This was followed in 2018 by the African Union and Lake Chad Basin Commission's regional stabilization strategy which aimed toward a transition to longer-term development and governance activities.

Some of the international donors like USAID, the International Organization for Migration, and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) have supported the Nigerian government in developing a legal and policy framework to guide the reintegration efforts, and to harmonize procedures for screening, detaining, rehabilitating, or prosecuting suspects with neighboring countries. The international donors prioritize the reintegration of former Boko Haram members on the premise that it is unlikely to reach a peace agreement with the group, and that the empowerment of the repentant members would weaken the membership strength and capacity of the extremists. This approach is also considered a priority based on the consideration that the repentant Boko Haram members are likely to face stigmatization, distrust and resentment on their return to their local communities, particularly in a situation in which victims have not received adequate support. These considerations led to the donor agencies focus on psychosocial and livelihood support programmes for Boko Haram victims and returnees in order to preempt and bridge intercommunal divisions. These programmes also involved community dialogues and family support sessions, direct support to returnees, including captives of Boko Haram, especially the women and girls, training programmes for community leaders on reconciliation and conflict resolution, and radio programmes on advocacy for the reintegration process. It also encompasses a specific focus on integrating women and girls into discussions of security challenges in relation to the strategy of reporting gender-based violence to the appropriate authorities. Other donor-funded support centered on assistance to the Nigerian government's small-scale defector programme for repentant low-level combatants, called Operation Safe Corridor, and a rehabilitation center in Maiduguri for women and girls formerly affiliated with Boko Haram (Brechenmacher, 2019).

The DFID's Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Program (NSRP) was designed for the leadership of security personnel in Nigeria to bridge gaps between Nigeria's multiple and often competing security institutions, including the military, the National Police, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence

Corps, the Federal Road Safety Corps and the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) (Salkida, 2019).

Donor support from the USA, France and the UK shifted to neighboring countries due to increasing concern about the extremist's threat to regional stability since Boko Haram has expanded its operation to neighboring countries in the Lake Chad Basin (Salkida, 2019: 3). The US government's move toward greater military cooperation with the Lake Chad Basin countries including Cameroon, Chad and Niger, and actualized through the Global Security Cooperation and Counterterrorism Partnership Fund (Brechenmacher, 2019).

The increasing donor-funded assistance and collaboration with the Nigerian government fail to impact optimally on the effort at degrading the violent extremist owing to what Brechenmacher (2019) refers to as a contested and confused premature shift of operational emphasis from fighting insurgency to post insurgency recovery stabilization by the Nigeria government. Thus, as security conditions improved in late 2016 and early 2017, the security discourse of the Nigerian government under Buhari's administration, centered on the declaration that Boko Haram has been 'technically defeated'. This declaration of 'technical defeat' of Boko Haram shifted the focus of the international partners from counter-extremism operation to community stabilization. One major programme that accompanied the shift in the direction, was the Regional Stabilization Strategy Against Insurgency (RSAI), developed by the AU and Lake Chad Basin Commission in 2018, which set the ground for a transition to longer-term development and recovery for the Lake Chad region that has been ravaged by insurgency. As part of this effort, the USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) rolled out initial assessments on the broader impact of the insurgency geared toward understanding people's displacement calamities, their perceptions of governance in preparation toward their return to their natural habitat as well as to determine their specific needs (Brechenmacher, 2019).

The international shift of focus from countering violent extremism to stabilization and recovery program has been premised on a false narrative of return of normalcy to the trouble spot. This sudden shift in the intervention of the international community has continued to place emphasize on long-term post insurgent recovery assistance to Nigeria while downplaying ongoing crisis conditions and security relapse in the North-eastern region.

Institutional strategies to counter violent extremism in Kenya

In the past two decades (1998–2018), the security threats emanating from terrorism have been on an upward trajectory. Kenya's experiences with terrorism need to be interpreted from nuanced contexts and circumstances over time. Terrorism incidences predate 1998 such as the 1980 bombings of the Norfolk Hotel in Nairobi (Krause & Otenyo, 2005). The changing dynamics of

terrorism have been with regards to the actors and the motives for the attacks. On August 7, 1998, there were simultaneous bombings of the American Embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, in Tanzania. This attack was attributed to the Al-Qaeda network and had as its primary target American interests. The attack in Nairobi claimed over 200 lives. In 2002, there was the Paradise hotel bombing at the Kenyan Coast and the near downing of an Israel-bound flight from Mombasa. This attack was directed at Israel's interests. A group calling itself the 'Army of Palestine' and linked to the Al-Qaeda network claimed responsibility for the Mombasa attacks (Krause & Otenyo, 2005).

The events of September 11, 2001 (hereafter 9/11) attacks in the United States would further point to the growing threats of a globalized form of terrorism. Kenya in the post 9/11 attacks oriented her domestic and foreign policy responses to deal with this emerging threat. Part of the immediate responses was to seek both bilateral assistance (mainly with the United States) but also cooperation with regional bodies such as the AU (Krause & Otenyo, 2005). The need for a counter-terrorism strategy in Kenya only received serious scrutiny post the 1998 bombings and thereafter the 9/11. This led Kenya to be designated by the United States as a 'frontline state' in the emerging discourse on the Global War on Terror (GWOT) and which necessitated a range of counter-responses. Kenya's designation as an anchor state in the GWOT reflected then the growing perception of an Al-Qaeda presence in the Horn of Africa (Mogire & Mkutu, 2011).

The post-1998 bombings reopened an otherwise frosty relationship that had existed between the Daniel Moi administration and the US establishment. The frosty relationships had been occasioned by Moi's administration's rampant corruption and crackdown on opposition activists in the post-Cold War. The counter-terrorism tactics adopted with the support of partners such as the US had their fair share of setbacks. These included human rights violations as the so-called Global War on Terror was being pursued. These human rights violations included the securitization of the Muslim and Coastal communities as terror suspects. Other violations have included extra-legal renditions, and arbitrary arrests of perceived terror suspects (Prestholt, 2011).

Between 2002 and 2010, there were series of small-scale terror attacks that in a changing *modus operandi* began targeting ordinary Kenyans. A series of events however would complicate the threats of terrorism that Kenya would face post-2010 including Al-Shabaab threats.

Around 2007, and immediately after the ouster of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), in Mogadishu in late 2006, a new trajectory of violent extremism became manifest in Kenya. This had an implication in the changing face of terrorism in Kenya. This in turn shaped the nature of institutional responses that followed post-2007. With the ouster of the ICU that had briefly governed Mogadishu came the threat of a young militia that had been affiliated with the ICU. This group became known as the Al-Shabaab. From 2007, it began a radicalization and recruitment drive for Kenyan youth to join in its ranks (Hansen, 2016). The movement recruited on a range of grievances

ranging from poor socio-economic prospects to perceived marginalization of the Islamic identity. Fieldwork collected for this chapter and the existing literature speaks to poor socio-economic prospects as poverty and has been incorporated into the radicalization narratives. Poverty in the radicalization narratives was further attributed to perceived marginalization in terms of development in the so-termed radicalization hotspots such as Nairobi and Mombasa. Recruitment into social movements such as the Al-Shabaab offered not only an opportunity to improve one's economic status, but also an opportunity to fight their perceived social injustices. These perceived injustices have been used as baits of recruitment. For instance, government actions borne out of securitization, and seen through acts such as arbitrary arrests, extra-legal renditions of individuals mainly of Muslim identity have resulted in further radicalization and recruitment. While poverty or poor socio-economic circumstances are considered push factors for radicalization into violent extremism, they worked alongside others factors such as religion and peer pressure in influencing the process (Botha, 2014; Mkutu & Opondo, 2019). This recruitment initially centered around impoverished urban spaces in Nairobi and Mombasa. It was the Kampala bombings in July 2010, that raised the prospects of threats from Al-Shabaab.

In October 2011, Kenya took an unprecedented decision to invade the Al-Shabaab in Southern Somalia in a military operation that was termed 'Operation *Linda Nchi*' (Operation Protect the Country). This decision was notably informed by a series of cross-border security incidences that were linked to the Al-Shabaab in Somalia. Kenya has since the collapse of the Somali state in 1991 been wary of the security threats that emanated from the country. It was the near-crippling of the tourism industry at the Kenyan Coast that further necessitated this military response (Chau, 2018).

Kenya in its first foreign military intervention invoked Article 51 of the UN Charter on self-defense. This military intervention had several security motivations. One was to create a secure, buffer zone of about 100 kilometers inside Somalia. Two, it had the intention of seizing Southern Somali ports from Al-Shabaab including the Kismayo port. The third, was to create a political and administrative arrangement in the areas around Jubba Valley. In mid-2012, Kenya subsequently joined the AMISOM offensive against the Al-Shabaab (Chau, 2018).

On September 21, 2013, there was an attack at the Westgate shopping mall, an incident that claimed 67 lives while injuring hundreds. The Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for this attack. The intention of the attack was to force a withdrawal of Kenyan Defense Forces (KDF) in Somalia (Mwangi, 2017). The counter-response of the Kenyan government was to launch Operation *Usalama Watch* (Operation Security) in 2014 and which primarily targeted undocumented refugees in Nairobi. This had arisen out of the government securitizing language that linked refugees with insecurity (including terrorism). Whereas the counter-terrorism operations have resulted in a reduction of terror-related crimes, they have been more pronounced in terms of

human rights violations. This has been so particularly for the Somali Kenyan Muslims and Somali refugees. Part of the narrative too has linked government security agencies to the allegations of the assassinations of prominent Muslim clerics (Mwangi, 2017).

In 2014, there was a series of attacks in Lamu County of Kenya and which were blamed on the Al-Shabaab. In April of 2015, there was an attack at the Garissa University College and which claimed at least 147 lives. This attack was again linked to the Al-Shabaab. In January 2019, there was the Dusit D2 attacks in the Nairobi Westland area.

Below is a table summary/chronology of major terrorist attacks in Kenya from 1998–2019. These incidences have generated a series of institutional responses that are the focus of this chapter.

From Table 6.1, two quick deductions can be made. One is that the most significant threats to insecurity have been the Al-Qaeda and in the more recent past, the Al-Shabaab threat has intensified. The second deduction to be made is that these incidences are indiscriminate and target different sectors. From the table above, hotels, educational establishments, rural spaces have been targeted in the post-1998 period. Whereas attacks such as 1980, 1998, and 2002 had clear targets (western interests), terrorist incidences have become arbitrary in the Kenyan context. The attacks have become arbitrary in the sense that they are no longer confined to specific targets or interests. They can attack public spaces, schools, shopping malls, religious spaces in no particular order.

The Kenyan state within the framework of counter-terrorism in the post-1998 US Embassy bombings engaged in a variety of counter-terrorism strategies. These responses were informed by gaps/weaknesses in various sectors that pose difficulty to efforts at pre-empting and disrupting terrorism threats. There have been some scholarly arguments that Kenya's vulnerability to terrorism can be linked to institutional weaknesses. These institutional

Table 6.1 Summary of terrorism incidences in Kenya (1980–2019)

<i>Date/Month</i>	<i>Incident location</i>	<i>Casualties</i>	<i>Actor/*Claimed responsibility</i>
December 31, 1980	Nairobi, Norfolk Hotel	15	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)
August 7, 1998	Nairobi, US Embassy	Over 200	Al-Qaeda
November 28, 2002	Paradise Hotel, Mombasa	13	'Army of Palestine'
September 21, 2013	Westgate Shopping Mall	67	Al-Shabaab
June/2014	Mpeketoni, Lamu	60	Al-Shabaab
April 2, 2015	Garissa University College	151	Al-Shabaab
January 2019	Dusit D2 Complex, Nairobi	21	Al-Shabaab

Source: Compilation from various academic and grey reports. This table is not inclusive of all incidences of terrorist attacks. It is only based on significant events that triggered certain institutional responses.

weaknesses included gaps in human resource, the law, as well as ill-prepared institutions as some of the setbacks that hampered counter-terrorism initiatives (Mogire & Mkutu, 2011). The following are the institutional strategies that Kenya adopted in countering violent extremism:

Institutional strengthening

One of the key institutional strategies that Kenya has pursued either bilaterally or multi-laterally has been partnership seeking to bridge institutional weaknesses to pre-empt terrorism threats. This has involved seeking partnerships to build or revamp existing institutions including human resource capacities. There has been significant strengthening and or establishment of new anti-terrorism institutions (Mogire & Mkutu, 2011). In the post-2010 constitutional framework, counter-terrorism functions have been associated with the three key national security organs. These have included the KDF, the National Intelligence Service (NIS) and the National Police Service (NPS) (Mwangi, 2017).

Key institutions that have been strengthened in this regard have included the NIS, previously, the National Security Intelligence Service. This has been through training and equipping this organization that has the legal mandate to identify and analyze intelligence. The National Counter-terrorism Center (NCTC) was also established in the post 9/11 period. It had the mandate among others of developing a long-term counter-terrorism strategy while offering coordination to regional counter-terrorism efforts. In 2016, the NCTC launched the Kenya National Counter-Violent Extremism Strategy. This strategy in particular goes beyond the often-deployed hard power responses (military, legislation, use of force, etc.) by valuing the place of the community as a critical pillar in countering violent extremism. This shift could in part reflect the values that non-state actors/community actors can play in the fight against terrorism (Mogire & Mkutu, 2011; Aziz, 2016; Government of Kenya, GOK, 2016). From field interviews, community actors were playing important roles in the preventative space for countering violent extremism. This included awareness raising on the signs of radicalization, including community conversations on the societal threats that radicalization and recruitment into violent extremism posed. These were enabled through platforms such as community policing and dialogue forums at the grassroot levels. Indeed the 2016 Kenya Government strategy to counter violent extremism acknowledges the critical roles the community can play in countering violent extremism.

Creation of the anti-terrorism police unit

In 2003, the Kenyan government with the support of external partners and more principally the US, a specialized counter-terrorism police unit was created. This unit became known as the anti-terrorism police unit (ATPU). The unit has been responsible for a series of successful counter-terrorism responses. In addition,

there was also the creation of the Maritime Interdiction Unit that would be responsible for countering arms trafficking, movement of terrorism suspects and contraband along the East Africa Coast (Mogire & Mkutu, 2011). In 2007, again with the support of the US through military to military assistance, there was the creation of a specialized Kenyan army unit known as the Ranger Strike Force with a mandate to act as a frontline for armed groups (Prestholt, 2011).

Whereas some of the aforementioned institutional responses have served to strengthen Kenya's counter-terrorism responses, they have received a fair set of criticisms. For instance, organizations such as the ATPU have been accused of various human rights violations. These have included claims of arbitrary arrests, torture, enforced disappearances and extra-legal renditions of terror suspects. They have been accused of particularly discriminating in their counter-terrorism operations as they seem to target Muslims of Arab and Somali ancestry. These kinds of negative experiences especially among Muslims have resulted in the calls for the disbandment of the ATPU (Mogire & Mkutu, 2011).

While there is no doubt that foreign military/security assistance has enhanced domestic counter-terrorism responses, another layer of criticism has been that Kenyan officials in CT operations rely on minimal evidence and are in breach of domestic and international law. For instance, detention without charge has been widespread (Prestholt, 2011). These institutional strengthening initiatives have also operated in a context where corruption is widespread and which in covert ways contributes to the complexities of addressing this pressing threat (KNA, 2015). Throughout the Mwai Kibaki administration (2002–2013), the issue of identity discrimination became more evident as his government articulated the terrorism threat as one emanating from a small Coastal Muslim population. The context of this is that the Kenyan central government always had an uneasy relationship with the Muslim community (Prestholt, 2011). Field interviews were indicative of this ongoing uneasy relationship, owing to the securitization of these identities. The implication of this was to reduce trust levels between the state and the community and which would be critical in countering violent extremism broadly. As this interviewed respondent noted:

The issue of trust has between the community and the security agencies has not been at the required levels.... there have been various violations in the war on terrorism, such as arbitrary arrests...some officials do wrong... but we are the making lots of strides to build poor citizen- police relations that have been in existence... (Interview with a government official, Nairobi, 18/07/19).

Legal responses

Kenya as part of her institutional responses has enacted a variety of counter-terrorism laws. These laws have been focused on among others the criminalization of terrorism, including the prevention of terrorism (Mogire &

Mkutu, 2011). One of the earliest attempts at anti-terror legislation was the 'Suppression of Terrorism Bill of 2003' which was submitted to the Kenyan Parliament. This bill faced lots of opposition from the Muslim Constituency and was eventually shelved. Critics argued that it was a replica of the US Patriots Act that was passed shortly after 9/11 (Whitaker, 2007; Mogire & Mkutu, 2011). In post-9/11, there was a considerable shift from individual rights to national security. This could mean therefore that even in democracies, certain individual rights could be curtailed. Kenya's attempt at anti-terror legislation could thus be read from external influences such as the US influences for aid (Whitaker, 2007).

The substance of the argument critiquing the 'Suppression of Terrorism Bill of 2003' was that it gave security agencies sweeping powers to arrest and detain terror suspects without regards for human rights. This bill was additionally seen to be discriminatory of the Muslim identity. The bill was eventually withdrawn in 2003 after widespread opposition (Whitaker, 2007). In 2006, a similar bill the 'Anti-terrorism bill' was published by the Attorney General but it was rejected on similar grounds. This new bill of 2006 was claimed to have addressed previous criticisms. In the aftermath of these bills' rejection, politicians argued that the passage of an anti-terrorism legislation was more of a US priority and not a Kenyan one (Mogire & Mkutu, 2011). The path toward anti-terror legislation in the Kenyan context was thus riddled with claims of external influences. Politicians even put a rider to the bill's passage with a condition that they would only prioritize it if Washington accepted to compensate the Kenyan victims of the 1998 US embassy bombings (Mogire & Mkutu, 2011).

It was only in 2012, that the Prevention of Terrorism Act was passed after an attempt of nearly a decade due to political opposition to the bill. Other related legislation acts include the Witness Protection Act of 2006, Proceeds of Crime and Anti Money Laundering Act of 2011 including the Prevention of Organized Crime Act of 2010 (Mogire & Mkutu, 2011).

In 2014, there was the controversial enactment of the Security Amendment Act of 2014 and which updated a range of counter-terrorism related laws. It brought on board 97 provisions. Some eight provisions of the Act were rendered unconstitutional by the High Court on February 2015. This act provided the state with more repressive and coercive powers for counter-terrorism. These included covert 'special operations' to counter national security threats (Mwangi, 2017). This amendment further expanded the mandate of the National Counter-terrorism Center (NCTC) which according to a key informant is at 'the core of the fight against counter-terrorism. It serves as a coordinating institution for CT, where it is responsible for the formulation of CT policies, their sensitization, outreach and educational sensitization' (Key informant interview, 27/07/2019, Nairobi). Additionally, the 2014 Security Amendment Act set the establishment of a coordinated border control agency (Mwangi, 2019).

The multi-agency approach

The Kenyan government has in the last several years adopted a multi-agency approach in countering terrorism. This response has been informed by the multi-faceted nature of the terrorism threat. This multi-agency approach has entailed the cooperation and collaboration of key security agencies in the country. Part of this cooperation includes the Kenya Defense Forces, National Police Service, National Counter-terrorism Center among others. This is a perspective gleaned from several key informant interviews with government officials experienced in the security sector. From the key informant interviews conducted in Nairobi, Kenya, the rationale for this approach had been necessitated by poor and uncoordinated responses by security agencies in previous terrorist attacks such as Westgate in 2013 and the Garissa University attack in 2015. Interviewed security officials argued that this cooperation had avoided taking decisions in single agencies and hence promoting a coordinated response to terrorism. As this interviewed respondent noted on the value of cooperation across agencies and the added impetus in the fight against terrorism:

The multi- agency cooperation is a critical pillar in the counter-terrorism work. Relevant government agencies have now been working together... this resulted from the negative effects of lack of coordination across government agencies in previous counter-terrorism responses. What this approach is providing among other things is to make the counter-terrorism efforts seamless for instance in terms of information sharing across sectors. Additionally, it also breaks organizational barriers/bureaucracies that previously existed. (Interview with a government official, Nairobi, 29/07/2019).

The above quote clearly illustrates the value that cooperation can bring to counter-terrorism. In this regard, the reference is to the harnessing of energies on the counter-terrorism front.

Additionally, this approach has been more entrenched post the Garissa University attack in 2015 which experienced a poor coordination response from the relevant security agencies. In particular, this shift in counter-terrorism approach has also been informed by multiple related crimes that aid terrorism. As this respondent remarked: '... the resolve towards multi-agency cooperation is also borne out of the realization that that crimes such as drugs trafficking, wildlife trophies, money laundering and terrorism are linked ...' (interview with a government official, Nairobi, 29/07/2019).

What the above quote then demonstrates is the need for a multi-faceted approach to counter various forms of criminality that could be aiding terrorism. This approach is necessary because of the nexus that has been made between terrorism and multiple forms of organized crime. Drawing on field interviews, the multi-agency approach has further been actualized through joint capacity building and cooperation in counter-terrorism operations.

The shift toward a PVE approach

According to key informant interviews with government officials, Kenya had begun embracing the prevention discourse to complement the traditional hard power approaches. The Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) is an approach that is gaining traction in the evolving discourse on countering violent extremism. This discourse on PVE is growing globally as a critique of the often-used terminology of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) which has been criticized on the basis that it infuses security agendas in contexts such as social work and education. The new discourse on the PVE and which the Kenyan government is progressively adopting is a departure from the discourse on CVE with regards to its operation. The PVE discourse is seeking to engage in the prevention of violent extremism not from a security agenda point of view but rather from social or educational structures. In this respect therefore, and in drawing from multiple disciplines, the focus of PVE then is to engage with the individual or environmental factors that are said to create conditions for violent extremism to thrive.

Furthermore, the PVE discourse is also focused on the place of community engagement in the prevention realm. This has mainly worked at the level of not only community policing but also with the work of community based organizations working on their own in this preventative realm.

The working of community policing in the preventative space is lauded but is faced by several deficits. A key deficit is the lack of trust that would be required between citizens and the state. The quality of relationships between the state and the police, in particular, can be assessed in this respect. The lack of trust between the state and the community has been a result of the former previous nature of policing that included repressive tactics such as arbitrary arrests, use of excessive force in policing among other negative practices. This has been conceptualized as having an earlier focus historically on regime policing as opposed to citizen policing (Omeje and Githigaro, 2012). With respect to community based organizations (CBOs), there is need for an acceptable level of distance between the community and the state for purposes of maintaining their credibility. This 'distance' is meant to allow CBOs to work with the community on sensitive matters such as CVE without a direct engagement with the state in some instances. Additionally, community based organizations' programming commands more legitimacy than security agencies for instance (Stephens et al., 2019). Community based agencies do in multiple instances in the CVE realm command more legitimacy than security agencies, given the latter's history of poor relations with the policed.

In this regard, the Kenyan state has been tapping on spaces such as community policing and the '*Nyumba Kumi*' (ten households) initiative as a strategy engaged in this preventative space. While community policing structures act as tools of crime surveillance, they have been ineffective for a number of reasons. One is corruption, where tipped information is used to extort bribes

as opposed to helping with community safety. Corruption thus could limit the effectiveness of this engagement (Kioko, 2017).

As this interviewed respondent noted:

The government is engaged in several prevention interventions. Some of the programs have included working with religious institutions to provide the right interpretations of scriptures that have been used in the past for countering violent extremism... the interpretation of scriptures is thus a preventative embrace. (Interview with a government official, Nairobi, 29/07/2019).

The above quote is illustrative of the changing approach of government in preventative spaces. In addition to working with religious institutions, a gender lens has been critical in this preventative realm. Focusing on a gendered perspective and in this case, women as a preventative strategy has been critical for several reasons. Based on field accounts, one reason has been the increased numbers of women that are being radicalized but more fundamentally the unique role they occupy in society as nurturers. In this regard, capacity building has been undertaken in several Kenyan counties considered hotspots in order to empower women/mothers with tell-tale signs for radicalization. As this respondent noted on the place of women in this preventative space:

Prevention is focused on women because of their positioning in society. They are mothers, wives, sisters.... A male individual is likely to interact in any of these capacities.... In this case, when empowered, they can be better placed in terms of early detection and reversing of ideologies that can lead to violent extremism... (interview with a government official, Nairobi, 29/07/2019).

Working with women in the preventative realm has also helped to counter female recruitment in groups such as the Al-Qaeda, the Al-Shabaab and increasingly Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in the past. This involvement of women in violent extremism is challenging the traditional roles of women in Islam. These include nurturing roles that are considered sacred. These roles had been changing as this respondent noted:

Women are no longer restricted to the private spheres.... They are taking on various roles in violent extremism. They are engaged in propaganda, recruitment, weapons smuggling, spying and even execution of terrorist acts.... Recall the Al-Shabaab attack mounted by several women in September 2016 in Mombasa.... (Interview with a government official, Nairobi, 29/07/18).

From a security point of view, preventing this threat is thus important as it would eventually pre-empt growing threats posed by male involvement in

violent extremism. The governmental response has been to work with a number of community based organizations (CBOs) as part of this preventative response.

Given the increased complexities in countering violent extremism and particularly the threat from Al-Shabaab, the government has increasingly taken a cue from academic analysts and lessons from other jurisdictions about the need for a multi-faceted approach. The value of this approach is that it allows the combination of both the formal and the repressive counter-terrorism approaches with bottom-up community centered approaches. The formalized approaches are top-down and would usually include repressive tactics. These kinds of interventions are more long-term. In contrast, the bottom-up approach is considered long-term and has a preventative approach. Bottom-up approaches would require working with and the cooperation of the state with a range of informal institutions, faith-based institutions, including community based organizations. The outcomes of the bottom-up approach are their human-centered and friendly approach. The value of these community based engagements is to develop layers of trust with state institutions. On one hand, they build political trust between the state and the citizens, and on the other hand, they build social trust among citizens. This then creates the possibility of a population support to counter the threats of violent extremism, and which would offer legitimacy to the war on terror (Mwangi, 2017).

As part of demonstrating the shift in countering violent extremism from prior hard power responses, the Kenyan state in 2016 produced a national countering violent extremism strategy. This strategy, in particular, has a solid prevention strategy. It values the working of multiple stakeholders in the preventive domain. Among other responses, it values the place of the community in the preventative responses. Community based organizations, faith-based groups, the members of the academia/research community have been incorporated in this strategy (Government of Kenya, GOK, 2016). From field insights, this approach has been working to a sufficient level given the incorporation of non-state actors in this response. Studies in this respect offer a mixed perspective as to its working. In some instances, it has worked in such areas as information sharing, brainstorming of community sensitive interventions. On the other hand, trust deficits that still exist between some communities and government agencies have inhibited its potentials in this preventative space (Githigaro, 2018).

Reintegration of returning foreign fighters

As a counter-terrorism measure, the Kenyan government has put in place a series of responses to respond to the phenomenon of returning foreign fighters or simply the returnees. These returning foreign fighters have defected from social movements such as the Al-Shabaab and the Islamic State. The government has securitized the so-called returnees as security threats to the country. This threat has been more prevalent at the Kenyan Coast with estimates of between 300 and 1000 returnees particularly from Kwale County of Kenya.

As part of a process for deradicalization, reintegration and rehabilitation for the returnees, the Kenyan state announced on April 2016, a ten-day amnesty programme for their rehabilitation. This policy response by the government was critiqued at several layers more notably on account of inconsistency. For instance, the government argued that while it was ready to rehabilitate the returnees, it would take extra-legal measures to deal with the Al-Shabaab sympathizers. Furthermore, a suspected Al-Shabaab returnee was claimed to have been executed by the police owing to gun and grenade attacks in Diani, Kwale with seven other suspected returnees arrested. Since 2016, the amnesty programme has been met with several dilemmas. One of the dilemmas was the failure of acceptance with the local communities. Secondly, there was the mistrust of the government, and third but not least the fears of attack by Al-Shabaab sympathizers. The government has additionally been criticized for the lack of a coherent legal policy to respond to the returnees (Mkutu & Opondo, 2019).

Notwithstanding some of the dilemmas raised by researchers above, the government has put in place a reintegration program with lessons learning as it is implemented. The points of lesson being highlighted given that it is a new experience in the Kenyan context. The view of the government is that it is a long-term process with other contexts also providing other forms of learning. As this respondent noted:

Reintegration is a long-term process; these kinds of processes are also expensive.... They may not be successful 100 percent. There have been many successful cases such as in Afghanistan, Nigeria, it is a working model for us. Some CBOS have been closely working with the government to enable this process.... (interviewed government official, Nairobi, 29/07/2019).

The above interviewed official was also apt to reiterate that the reintegration program faced several challenges. In reiterating some of the critiques provided by scholars such as Mkutu and Opondo (2019), this official noted the lack of a clear document providing guidance to the entire integration process. Additionally, key informant interviews underscored the challenges of trust that existed between the government and the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) which are critical in reintegration programs. Civil society is particularly better placed to work with returnees given the government mistrusts that have existed in the countering violent extremism realm.

Returnees themselves pose several security threats. This threat is often indefinite given their capacities to engage in domestic terrorism. They are often presumed to be radicalized but also have the potential to form sleeper terrorist cells. Nevertheless, when assessing the threats posed by such individuals, it is important to avoid single prescriptions of threats as circumstances do differ. Whereas it is possible that some individuals may return to participate in domestic terrorism, some could also have become disillusioned with such groups. Empirical research on returnees such as those from ISIS in

Western countries has shown that reintegration efforts should occur within six months of return. Beyond the six months, the propensity for attacks increases significantly as the lag time in attacks is an average of one year upon return. Western countries have been in dilemmas on how to address the challenges posed by returnees. Some of the options taken have been to strip citizenship of these fighters while others have detained them as unlawful enemy combatants with jail terms stretching up to 20 years. Reintegrating returning fighters would thus require a tailored approach that would in part address the specific psychosocial interventions (Malet & Hayes, 2018).

Tensions/negative outcomes linked to these institutional responses

Whereas the various counter-terrorism responses instituted by the Kenyan state have been useful to counter the threats posed by Al-Shabaab in the country, they have left several tensions in the process. One has been the erosion of trust between the Muslim community and the state. This has been on account of repressive tactics that have been adopted in Kenya's counter-terrorism stances. Part of the resultant has been that a section of youth targeted by these counter-terrorism swoops have ended up being radicalized and joining violent extremist groups such as the Al-Shabaab including the now weakened ISIS (Botha, 2014; Mwangi, 2017).

These institutional responses while proving effective to a considerable extent in counter-terrorism operations and hence a reduction in terror related crimes have however been faulted on the account of weak coordination. This deficiency in coordination and cooperation among security agencies was made more manifest in the Westgate 2013 security responses. This deficiency in collaboration, cooperation among security agencies was again evident in the Garissa University attack response in 2015 (Mwangi, 2017). A parliamentary report on the Garissa University attack speaks to failures to act on the recommendations of the security intelligence committee that had among others required the increase of security personnel guarding learning institutions within Garissa. At the time of the attack, the institution had only two police officers on duty Kenya (National Assembly, 2015). According to field interviews, some of these coordination gaps have been addressed by the multi-agency response that has in place at least since 2015. As this interviewed respondent noted:

A multi-agency approach is now in place in counter-terrorism. It brings on board such agencies as the military, the police, immigration, prisons etc..... this approach is turning out to be a critical pillar in the success of operations.... It is further enabling the mapping of various trends of terrorism.... (interview with a government official, Nairobi, 29/07/19).

The next section discusses regional and transnational responses adopted in countering violent extremism.

Regional and transnational responses

This section of the chapter engages with the regional and transnational responses that Kenya has undertaken in counter-terrorism.

Somalia's stabilization process and Kenya's engagement with AMISOM

Part of Kenya's counter-terrorism response has focused on stabilizing Somalia. Since the collapse of the Somali state in 1991, there has been a securitization of the state as posing security threats including terrorism. This has been on account of the often-associated linkages between failed states and terrorism, even though such connections have been disputed in the literature. Prior to the intensity of terrorist threats in Kenya, the Kenyan authorities working through the regional body – the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) had been engaged in the Somali state stabilization process. This culminated with the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in 2004 (Mogire & Mkutu, 2011).

In early 2009, Kenya with the support of the TFG created a 2500 strong militia made up of Kenyan Somalis refugees as part of a strategy to take over Al-Shabaab-controlled areas since its rise in late 2006. Part of the strategy included taking over the port city of Kismayo. Furthermore, in response to the growing security threats by Al-Shabaab that had in part crippled Kenya's strategic tourism industry, Kenya began to plan for a military offensive as early as June 2011. In October 2011, in what would be Kenya's first foreign military intervention, Operation *Linda Nchi* began (Operation Protect the Country) Kenya initial unilateral intervention and subsequent joining of the AMISOM contingent had among other outcomes the expulsion of the Al-Shabaab from the Southern Somali ports including Kismayo (Chau, 2018). The Al-Shabaab attacks in Kenya in the post-October 2011 period such as the Westgate in 2013, Mpeketoni in 2014 and the Garissa University in 2015 have been a reaction to Kenya's military intervention (Mwangi, 2017).

In efforts at stabilizing Somalia, a series of interventions would need to be activated by both AMISOM and partners such as the United States that undertake a 'tailored engagement' program where the latter has been supportive of African forces in the counter-insurgency operations against the Al-Shabaab as opposed to more direct engagement. This series of interventions would include reducing the threats posed by the insurgent group, helping Somalia set up legitimate and sustainable security services before exiting Somalia (Williams, 2018).

Cooperation with regional and continental and supranational bodies

Kenya's institutional responses to counter terrorism has also involved a commitment to cooperation through regional bodies such as the AU and, in particular,

with the Horn of Africa regional body – the IGAD. In 2003, IGAD in which Kenya is a member convened a conference on the prevention and combating of terrorism. This conference articulated the African Union (AU's) Convention on Terrorism. This conference resulted in a six-point implementation plan that articulated standards and measurement of compliance with regional and international obligations. Some of the priority areas of the plan included tightening border controls and mounting measures to address terrorism financing (Kagwanja, 2006).

Additionally, there has been the establishment of the IGAD Capacity Building Program against Terrorism (ICPAT), whose mandate includes intelligence and police networking. Furthermore, IGAD member states have adopted conventions on joint extradition to allow the transfer of suspected terrorists across the states (Galadima & Ogonnaya, 2018). Kenya has also ratified all the 12 international conventions and protocols relating to the fight against terror. Kenya also ratified the UN Security Council Resolution 1373 of 2001 that requires states to criminalize offenses of planning and executing terror attacks including cooperation and extraditing terror suspects (Kamau, 2006).

Responding to lone wolf terrorism

Interviewed security officials argued on the complexity of responding to a potential threat of violent extremism posed by the possibilities of lone wolf terrorism. In the literature, lone wolf terrorists need to satisfy three criteria. One, they must act as a single perpetrator in an attack; two, they must not have a direct affiliation with a terrorist group; and three, they must not be under the direct command of a group (Lindekilde et al., 2019: 113).

Individual agency is thus important in determining an act of lone wolf terrorism. According to the interviewed security officials, the challenge remained how to respond to this potential threat in the Kenyan context. This, they affirmed, was a difficult threat to assess and put in place counter-measures. An inference made was that the internet could aid or motivate lone wolf terrorism. According to interviews with security officials, this was perceived as a 'futuristic and a probable' threat that they needed to pre-empt and anticipate how they would address. Part of the strategy involved assessing the probability of this threat. This had among others involved a constant engagement with an assessment of this threat level and the measures they needed to put in place given the difficulties of disrupting individual agency in terrorism threats. The internet was considered an enabler of lone wolf terrorism in terms of ideas, motivations and tactics that they could use to execute terrorist threats. The lone wolf terrorism according to field interviews was being aided by the rise of online platforms owing to increased penetration of the internet as this respondent noted:

There is rise of self- radicalization currently...this is being aided by online platforms that are changing the radicalization discourse online,

beyond the traditional personal contact that has been important to convince individuals to join social movements... the online discourses are very convincing, they are careful packaged complete with verses that help to fit a particular context to enable radicalization... (interview with a government official, Nairobi, 29/07/19).

Conclusion

This chapter has assessed the institutional strategies engaged in countering violent extremism in Niger and Kenya. The chapter engages in a variety of counter-extremism responses by the Nigeria and Kenya states, ranging from institutional strengthening to mounting of legal responses to counter threats posed by terrorism. The chapter unpacks the changing dynamics in countering violent extremism in Nigeria and Kenya which has shifted from the excessive hard power responses to the increasing utilization of soft power approaches. This shift to soft power, situated within the realm of PVE discourse is informed by experiences in other contexts. There is a renewed appreciation that the community is a critical pillar in the prevention of violent extremism. Despite this awareness, the counter-extremism efforts in Nigeria and Kenya have still been more focused on militarized responses due to the limited political will and determination to fully use soft power in addressing the underlying social inequities and injustices at the heart of violent religious extremism. The counter-extremism efforts have engendered mixed outcomes of progression, missed opportunities and retrogression.

The shift toward community focused approaches through the PVE approach would however need to continuously build on trust deficits that currently exist between Nigerian and Kenyan communities and security agencies. These trust deficits have been occasioned by repressive policing strategies in the past and current counter-extremism efforts that have included arbitrary arrests, human rights abuses, complicity of state officials in extremists' criminal activities, corruption and the securitization of certain identities as responsible for terrorism threats in an uncritical way. The chapter also discusses the range of regional and transnational cooperation through bodies such as the MNJTF in the Lake Chad Basin, IGAD, the African Union and the UN. The value of cooperation is considered important in pre-empting the globalized threat of terrorism.

Whereas the Nigeria and Kenya states have carried out some security reforms and/or strengthened their institutions including adopting a multi-agency approach, there are still several challenges. In Kenya, to address these challenges would not only require the need for a coherent legal policy to deal with the challenge of returning foreign fighters, but also a contingency plan to counter lone wolf terrorism. Lone wolf terrorism is however a tough form of terrorism to counter given its individual agency and lack of organizational structure that could be easily be disrupted. This phenomenon is being attributed to the rise of 'online radicalization'.

While Nigeria stresses the need for a regional response to the crisis, the country has so far not provided sufficient internal politico-economic infrastructure in the fight against terrorism. The overreliance on inadequate external funding and logistic support, also impedes the capacity for effective counter-extremism efforts. The Nigerian case thus exemplifies the difficulties of implementing effective local-level stabilization efforts through international assistance while working with a host government that sometime lacks political commitment, transparency, accountability and coordination to defeat violent extremism. Well-designed international conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms have proven effective at the design level, yet they are difficult to scale-up for implementation at the local level due to concerts of internal factors, including corruption, weak unaccountable institution and outright sabotage.

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7 African States and violent extremism

Introduction

Many African states have witnessed violent religious extremism that has become more pronounced in the last three decades. In such states, violent religious extremism by local groups seems to be the mechanism for redressing perceived grievances against the state. The lack of redress for the perceived grievances linked to struggles for economic and political resources breeds frustrations that are expressed through religious-oriented insurrection. The early notable examples of violent extremism in Africa which are more linked to political struggles are the Mau-Mau rebellion in Kenya in the 1950s and the Algerian independence struggle from 1950s to early 1960s. There arose much later the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebellion in Northern Uganda, the militia and rebel groups in Sudan, the revolt to capture state power in the Eastern part of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the rebellion to overthrow constituted political authorities by the Tuareg militias in Mali. Some of these dissident groups have been alleged to receive considerable internal and external support and employ tactics that challenge existing security institutions (Emizet, 2012).

The political struggles of the late fifties and sixties in Africa seem to have created the circumstances that led to the recent emergence of violent religious extremism with the lethal capacities to decimate major territories in the affected countries, causing severe havoc to the people through wanton destruction of lives and infrastructure. Prominent violent extremist groups in Africa are Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram insurgent groups in Somalia, Kenya and Nigeria.

Religious extremist networks in Africa have increased in both number and influence such that no part of the continent can be said to be completely free of terror threat. Some African countries have been seriously battling with the onslaught of violent extremism. Nigeria, Kenya, Somalia and Mali are countries with major security threats posed by violent extremist groups. The pertinent question this chapter will unravel is: what are the socio-economic and political factors that make these states vulnerable to violent extremism and why have they not been capable of countering the violent extremism? This

chapter, therefore, examines this pertinent question, exploring the nature of violence extremism in Africa, the driving factors and the challenges relating to institutional capacity of select African states for preventing or managing violent religious extremism. In exploring these critical issues, a closer attention is given to the Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab's acts of terror in Nigeria and Kenya, the main focus of this study.

The phenomenon of violent religious extremism in Africa

North Africa harbors more violent extremist groups than any other sub-region of the continent. The primary goals of violent extremist groups have been the reformation of the state, politics and religion in line with pure Islamic doctrines and etiquette (Ado, 2014). To achieve these goals, many insurgent groups in the sub-region have established local and global Jihadist networks for defending and purifying Islam through violent means. It is thus not strange to note that North Africa along with many parts of the Sahel region has become a stronghold of insurgent sects. Most notable amongst these sects is the Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) that has a link and a working alliance with the global Al-Qaeda network (Omotola, 2013). AQIM was formed in 1993 as a Jihadist group to overthrow the military regime that halted the imminent electoral victory of the Salafist Islamic Party in 1992 in Algeria, with the intention of turning the country into an Islamic state. The initial organization behind the political and religious Jihad in Algeria was the Armed Islamic Groups (GIA) from which the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combating (GSPC) broke away in 1998 as a result of internal differences; particularly in relation to the latter's alleged dislike for the former's indiscriminate attacks on civilian population. By 2003, under the leadership of Abdelmalek Droukdel, the GSPC declared its 'allegiance' to the Al-Qaeda global network and thus changed its name to AQIM in the Maghreb in 2006.

Although primarily based in Algeria, AQIM has spread its destructive tentacles wide in North Africa and the Sahel region, with its presence and violent destruction widespread in Mauritania, Chad, Mali and Niger, as well as the establishment of a training camp along the Algeria-Mali border (Omotola, 2013). Other notable violent actions in North Africa, carried out mainly by AQIM include several attacks on the government security forces and foreign workers in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Mauritania, Mali and Niger. Specifically, between 2001 and 2009, AQIM and other terrorist groups together launched more than 900 attacks involving the bombing, shooting, kidnapping and killing of citizens and foreigners in the targeted countries with over 1,500 deaths and 6,000 injuries (Bolaji, 2010). Some of the attacks included the 2007 shelling of the government palace in Algeria which houses the Prime Minister's Office and the office of the Interior Ministry. In 2008, suicide bombers attacked a police academy, killing more than 40 people in the country. In June 2009, gunmen killed 24 gendarmes (paramilitary police)

in an ambush more than 200 miles East Algeria (Omotola, 2013). Apart from frequent incidences of violent attacks in Algeria, many Algerians have been arrested for terror-related incidences across the globe, including France, Italy, Germany, Britain and the United States of America (Global Terrorism Index, 2014).

In the Sahel, AQIM has been involved in many violent attacks, including assassinations, kidnappings and suicide bombings. In 2008 for example, the group assassinated 12 Mauritanian soldiers and kidnapped UN and Canadian envoys in Niger. In 2009, the group kidnapped and held in Mali, 29 European tourists, who were later beheaded because their governments refused to accede to the demands of AQIM for ransoms to release suspected terrorists detained by their authorities. In June 2009, a United States aid worker in Mauritania was murdered, and the group also carried out a suicide bombing near the French Embassy in Nouakchott, Mauritania in August of the same year. AQIM assassinated Malian military officers involved in the arrest of its members in June 2009 and in September 2000, several French Uranium mineworkers were kidnapped in Niger and moved to Mali by the sect (Global Terrorism Index, 2014: 6). Consequently, the incidences of violent extremist attacks in the North African sub-region and the Sahel rose from 21 in 2001, to 302 in 2014, representing about 58% increase within 8–9 years (Global Terrorism Index, 2014). Out of this figure, Algeria alone accounted for 185 incidents, which amounts to 90.68%.

Violent extremist attacks occur intermittently in East Africa by militant religious groups (Sewall, 2016). Their presence and penetration in the sub-region has been linked to the ascension to power of the National Islamic Front (NIF) in Sudan in 1989 (Gunnar, 2012). Under this regime, Osama Bin Laden enjoyed some state protection and financial lifeline to fund and train Al-Qaeda global network with overwhelming recruitment of East Africans, especially from Somaliland (Benson, 2013). Thus, in Somalia, there are many fundamentalist religious groups like the Al-Ijtihad Islam sect, Harakat group (Al-Shabaab), Al-Mujaheed and the Ras Kamboni sects, all of which represent irredentist movements with the primary objective of promoting Islamic legal system. Of these groups, the Al-Shabaab is the most deadly and consistent, judging by its frequency of clandestine activities and use of sophisticated weapons on the targets. Many of these groups have carried out devastating attacks in East Africa. A notable violent attack in this region is the bombing of United States Embassy in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, which claimed 299 lives, 12 of whom were Americans while over 500 were injured (Omotola, 2013). In November 2002, 13 people (10 Kenyans, 3 Israelis) were killed in a simultaneous bombing in Mombasa, Kenya. In 2009, the Al-Shabaab insurgents launched several attacks in Somalia, including suicide car bombing of the African Union Mission in a Somali military base in Mogadishu in which 11 soldiers died. Some other examples of the series of destructive activities of insurgent groups were the bombing in May 2009, of a Police Headquarters in Mogadishu that killed policemen and a civilian.

The accounts of notable insurgents' destructive activities in East Africa, also include the September 2009 Al-Shabaab attack on the African Union (AU) base in Mogadishu, killing 21 people; and an attack during a medical school graduation ceremony in December 2009 that claimed 23 lives. On July 11, 2010, multiple suicide bombings were carried out in Kampala, Uganda by Al-Shabaab, killing 76 people and injuring over 80. In Uganda, the LRA has been attacking villages killing and plundering communities since 1980 (Gadji, 2015). The LRA tentacles have spread far and wide from Uganda, to DRC, South Sudan, Central African Republic and Chad, leaving behind destruction of lives and properties.

The West African sub-region has also become a hotbed of predatory activity for violent extremist groups, including the Boko Haram sect, the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and West Africa (AQIMWA), the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) and the Ansar ul Islam and Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM). These terror sects primarily operate in Nigeria, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso respectively. The sects have wreaked overwhelming destruction of lives and property, created security breaches and undermined development efforts in their areas of operations. It is important to note that violent extremism became more pronounced with the emergence of the Boko Haram sect in North-eastern Nigeria in the 2000s and spread to neighboring countries in the sub-region and Central Africa.

In Nigeria, the Northern region has been the site of various religious crises over perceived differences in ideology within the Islam fold, which eventually culminated in the emergence of the lethal sect, Boko Haram. The conflict within the Islamic fold pitted various Muslims sects, over divergent views and doctrinal debates within the homogeneously Muslim states like Sokoto, Kano and Maiduguri in Borno, sparking a destructive intra-Muslim violence, between the Izala movement and the Sufi brotherhoods (the Qadiriyya and the Tijaniyyah) in the 1980s; Sunnis and Shiites, especially in Sokoto state and Zaria, since the mid-1990s (Loimeier, 1997; Umar, 2005; International Crisis Group, 2010). The contradictions and tensions later culminated in the emergence and revolt against the secular state by the radical groups, initially known as the 'Nigerian Taliban' and later refer to as Boko Haram (Comolli, 2015).

Boko Haram, which emerged in 2002 and came into prominence in 2009, derived its ideology from Salafi Jihadism and its actions are driven by Takfirism, with the goal of purging Islam of outside influences and the return to the Islam practiced by the 'pious ancestors' (Harnischfeger, 2014; Onuoha, 2014). According to Cook (2011), Boko Haram sect has transited from being a local radical Salafist Islamic group, which until 2009 had a largely quietist nature to a Salafis-Jihadi group with capacity to cause private and public mayhem. The roots of the ascendancy of the sect lies in the Islamic history of Northern Nigeria, which harbored various Jihadist Islamic movement, who regarded themselves as religious purificationists; starting from the Usman Danfodio Jihad of 1802 to 1812. Thus, prior to the British introduction of Christianity to Nigeria, the Northern part of the country had gained contact with Islamic

religion through a trading and missionary linkages with other North and West African countries, in which Nigerian Muslims in Kanem and Bornu empire connected with those in Egypt, Ghana and Songhai empire. These foreign Muslim scholars cum traders became the first transformer of Islamic scholars and culture with Jihadist orientation (David, 2011). Askiyya Muhammad, who ruled after Sonni Ali in the Songhai empire also sent Muslim missionaries and Jihadists to the Hausa land in Nigeria, which led to the conversion of many Muslims who transformed themselves into radical Salafis and Sufi Muslim communities in the 14th and 15th centuries. The most important of these radical Islamic communities includes the Qadiriyya and Tijanniyah sects, which still remain the largest Sufi communities in Northern Nigeria. The sects are also sub-divided into Wahhabism and the Izalatbidiyyah sects with active and passive defiance to Western culture and education having been considered to be anti-Islam. There is also the Sunnis sect, which is considered as the mainstream Islamic sect with moderate reliance on the teaching of the Quran and Hadith of Prophet Muhammad. The Boko Haram sect claimed to have emerged from the Sunni sect with the ideological goal to operate according to the teachings and doctrine of the Sharia law.

There are diverse opinions among scholars over the precise period and circumstances under which the Boko Haram sect insurgency evolved (Abdallah, 2010; Onuoha, 2010; Adeniyi, 2011). Some schools of thought opined that the group had been in existence and operated clandestinely since 1995, while others claimed that it was founded in 2003 or 2004 (Okpo, 2019). Yet other schools of thought posited that Boko Haram had been in existence since 2002 but became popular and notorious in July 2009 when its members had a brutal and prolonged clash with security agents who had wanted to dismantle the group as they curtailed the Maitasine group in 1981 and 1984 respectively. However, the plan failed as Boko Haram members fought back ferociously and have since remained determined in its deadly terrorist attacks (Abdallah, 2010).

Similarly, Adeniyi (2011) suggests that the origins of Boko Haram dated back to 2002 when Muhammad Yusuf, the spiritual leader and founder of the sect, an indigene of Jakusko in Yobe State, rose to recognition within the Salafi Islamic circle (Wahabites) preaching against Western education, the government and calling for Jihad with a special focus on the youth. He moved from Muhammadu Ndimi Mosque to Daggash Mosque both in Maiduguri, before he finally got a piece of land at the Railway quarters to build a mosque and acquire a house from his father-in-law, Baba Fugu. He was seen as a crusader for the poor and thereby got numerous followers which increased his influence and authority. A radical splinter group among Yusuf's followers went on to form the 'Taliban'. In 2005, Yusuf later reconciled with this faction, which had accused him of being too flexible in his approach to the Islamic Jihad campaigns.

In another account, Abdallah (2010: 4) posits that Muhammad Yusuf was born on January 29, 1970 in a rural village known as Girgir in Yobe State. He was once a Tsangaya Quranic teacher, a Shiite faithful who later joined

the Izalatul-Bid'awa Iqamat al Sunna (Izala) movement and again left it to be with the Shabab ul Islam. His radical point of reference was linked to Ibn Taymiyyah after whom he named his mosque in Maiduguri, seeking to eliminate Nigeria's secular system of government and establish a Sharia law in the State similar to the Taliban agenda in Afghanistan. Yusuf was charged to court in 2006 for receiving funds from an Al-Qaeda-linked organization but was later released. He was able to enlist Buji Foi, a former Commissioner of Religious Affairs in Borno state and several foreign nationals as well as militants from Somalia and Sudan to further his religious agenda (Okpo, 2019: 7). Abdallah (2010: 7) further explains that in 2005, Abubakar Adam Kamar and Khalid Al-Barnawi with directives from the Algeria-based GSPC proclaimed Mohammed Yusuf as the Amir Daulatal Islam fin Nigeria (Leader of Islamic Republic in Nigeria) and promptly changed the name of the sect from 'Taliban' to 'Jama'atul Ahlus Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal Jihad', which means 'Brothers of Sunni United in the Propagation and Fight of the Holy War'.

Mohammed Yusuf was also a trained Salafist (a school of thought often associated with Jihad) and was heavily influenced by Ibn Taymiyyah, a 14th-century legal scholar remarkable for Islamic fundamentalism and considered a 'major terrorist' for radical groups in the Middle East (Cook, 2011). Prior to this time, he was once the leader of the youth wing of the moderate Jama'atul Izalatul Bidi'a Wa Iqamatul Sunna (JIBWIS) at the popular Indimi Mosque in Maiduguri. Subsequently, Mohammed Yusuf created a school and mosque, which were used for the recruitment of several youths and adherents (Cook, 2011: 3).

Under Yusuf's leadership and thereafter, the sect propagated extreme Islamic doctrine which condemned democracy, western education and culture as corrupt, immoral and therefore obnoxious before God, thus earning it the name 'Boko Haram' which means 'western education is sinful or prohibited'. Their mission was to establish a Taliban-style Islamic state in Nigeria, where the Sharia code would guide the conduct of affairs, official or otherwise, and totally insulated from any component of western values (Mickler et al, 2019). This move pitched them against the Nigerian secular State, considering the realities of the Nigerian entity in terms of diversity of religions and ethnic groups that resulted in a fratricidal conflict situation (Cook, 2011: 9).

Though there are different narratives on the emergence of the Boko Haram sect in Nigeria, what is not in doubt is the fact that the Boko Haram onslaught in Northern Nigeria, led to loss of over 21,000 lives with properties worth over ₦13 billion destroyed (Shaw, 2018). For instance, in 2014 alone, it was reported that Boko Haram insurgents killed 780 and kidnapped over 600 people in 23 separate attacks (Abubakar, 2014). Some of the sect's most notorious assaults on security establishment, include the attack on the Dutsen Tanshi police station in Bauchi, resulting in the death and arrest of over 40 and 200 members of the sect respectively in 2013 (Omotola, 2013).

The group demonstrated their disdain for Western education when some students of higher institutions in Borno and Yobe states, two Northern states where the group is firmly established, while acting under the influence of the

philosophy of Boko Haram, abandoned schools, tore their certificates and joined the group for Quranic lessons and preaching (Varin, 2016). The attacks and abductions of school children in some secondary schools in Chibok and Dachip, in Borno state, could arguably be seen as part of the Boko Haram antagonism against Western education. The sect has continued its attacks on civilians, security forces and public infrastructures despite the military offensive by the Nigerian government and the multinational joint task force in the Lake Chad Basin with the deployment of troops from Cameroun, Niger and Chad (Thurston, 2017). Boko Haram has spread its campaign of terror to neighboring countries in Cameroun, Niger, Chad and Mali.

The challenges of violent religious extremism in Africa have been complicated further by the increasing level of collaboration between terrorist groups and other criminal syndicates such as drug and human traffickers who finance many insurgent movements with the income generated from the illicit trade in drugs (Jibowu, 2008). In Nigeria, for instance, the frequent violent attacks by Boko Haram are more worrisome. The group's subversive activities include direct confrontation with the state security agents, the use of sophisticated weapons and improvised explosives as well as the adoption of suicide bombing to attack targets have made extremist religious fundamentalism the deadliest security challenge currently confronting Nigeria. The Boko Haram terror in Nigeria has escalated beyond domestic control with dangerous linkages of their dastardly activities to other international terrorist groups, especially the Al-Qaeda. The international connections manifest in the adoption of tactics peculiar to global Jihadist such as suicide bombing, make the violent activities of Boko Haram and other violent religious extremists like Al-Shabaab not just a threat to national but international peace and security. As a confirmation of the above observation, the Boko Haram extremists bombed the United Nations (UN) buildings in Abuja, Nigeria in 2011, killing 25 international workers (Cook, 2011).

The Boko Haram sect was also documented to have supported the Tuareg rebels in Mali in 2012 in their attempt to unseat a legitimate government in the country through a military coup. Some of its members were among the insurgents who allegedly laid siege to the Algerian consulate in Gao, Mali (Abubakar, 2014: 6). The bombing of the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya in 2013 in which many nationals of other countries died, had a collaborative input of the Nigerian Boko Haram (Human Right Watch, 2012). Such destructive activities clearly confirm that religious extremism is an emerging transnational threat to global peace and security in Africa.

The Al-Qaeda global network and violent extremism in Africa

A focus on the Al-Qaeda global network is germane to the understanding of the development and impact of violent extremism in Africa. As Human Rights Watch (2013) notes, the rapid expansion of Al-Qaeda's network in Africa has

caused immense destruction to the continent. The origin and transformation of Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda may have contributed to the expansion of its affiliates in Africa. The group originally consisted of core veterans of the Afghan insurgency which was sponsored by the United States of America (USA) against the defunct Soviet Union, with a support structure made up of mainly African (Egyptians) insurgents. The Al-Qaeda network has since then undergone full circle transformations. Consequently, the group has metamorphosed into a diffused global network and philosophical movement, which now consists of 'semi-autonomous or self-radicalized actors' within the international system, often with peripheral ties to either a core terrorist network in Pakistan, or affiliated groups in Africa and elsewhere. The group currently has presence in over 70 countries (Omotola, 2013).

The transformation of the sect from the Taliban to Al-Qaeda was not only borne out of its opposition to the US in pursuance of its global war on terrorism but also as a strategy of self-defense and expansion to spread what it considers as true Islamic doctrines. In the course of its transformation, the group leader, Osama Bin Laden, left Saudi Arabia in 1991 following his rift with the Saudi leadership over the decision of the latter to host US combat troops to defend Saudi Arabia against Iraqi invasion. Bin Laden relocated to Sudan where he stayed until 1996 when the Sudanese government expelled him as a result of pressures from US and Egypt (Alexander, 2018). The Al-Qaeda leader eventually moved to Afghanistan, a country that has remained the coordinating base of Al-Qaeda affiliations, allegiance and joint operations with many national and sub-national insurgent groups across the globe, especially from Africa and the Middle-East. Virtually all the affiliated insurgency groups in Africa enjoy tremendous financial backing, training and logistics support from Al-Qaeda (Zenn, 2013; Harnischfeger, 2014).

Ideological differences and factionalization of Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab in Nigeria and Kenya

An examination of the ideological fractionalization of the Al-Shabaab sect since its inception in 2006 shows a negative effect on its internal operational dynamics leading to violent behavior. In fact, some of the sect's top leaders were killed as a result of infighting in June 2013 as the forces loyal to Al-Shabaab leader, Ahmed Mukhtar Abu al-Zubayr (otherwise known as Godane) clashed. Godane killed a factional leader, Ibrahim al-Afghani, and his close companion, Maa'lim Hashi (Agbiboa, 2014). The ideological differences among the Al-Shabaab sects border on the management of resources by its leadership. Other ideological variations and operational divergences revolve around military strategies of operation, killing of large number of Muslim civilians, ill-treatment of regional commanders who disagreed with central leadership and maltreatment of external fighters (Agbiboa, 2014: 9).

Al-Shabaab had the economic control of Kismayo port city as it collected lots of revenue from the ports and the roads in their areas of control, but much

of this fund was being largely misappropriated by the leadership in Kismayo with only little getting to the unit commanders in the county (Ali-Baba, 2015). The above internal operational divisions have created effective operational challenges within the Al-Shabaab sect, especially in Somalia while also precipitating the decline of the sect with dwindling capacity to attack targets. Much of its strategic efforts are targeted toward internal leadership consolidation rather than target selection. This development is projected by David (2018) to herald the beginning of the end of Al-Shabaab.

There is also fractionalization of the relationship of the sect with other international terror organizations. While the Godane faction supported the affiliation of the sect to other international terror groups for adequate funding and training, and external operations in other countries, Ibrahim al-Afghani discouraged the idea of dissipating their resources on external operations while encouraging concentration on internal operations where they have the local knowledge of their operational environment. There is also an ideological division over military strategies of winning war. While the Godane faction favored frontal attacks, others supported asymmetric operations, with specific emphasis on gorilla warfare. However, the sect's military strategy of direct attacks to oust the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) from the country as ordered by Godane proved very fatal. The overwhelming defeat of the Al-Shabaab caused serious internal wrangling between the sub-commanders, Hasan Yaqub and Mukhtar Robow, who were dissatisfied with Godane's dictatorial leadership style. Godane in return was not pleased with Robow for withdrawing from combat too quickly in the AMISOM operation.

The bitter disagreement led to the suspension of the Shura Council (Decision Making Council), and the subsequent deferral of a codified command decision. The suspension of the Shura Council meetings also created loose lines of command by 2011 as the command structure became decentralized with each regional commander working independent of the others and holding sway in their areas of control while the centralization of training and recruitment process also ceased. There was also the ideological disagreement over the killing of Muslims, which Osama Bin Laden and another Al-Qaeda operative, Fazul Abdullah Muhammad seriously condemned. The ceaseless killing of Muslims also made Umar Hammani, an American returnee Jihadist, to break ranks with the Godane controlled sect. The killing of Hammani by Godane also led to the withdrawal of Al-Qaeda's financial support for Al-Shabaab.

There was an ideological dispute over the marginalization of Al-Shabaab foreign fighters who were treated as second-rated combatants contrary to the Islamic tenets that all Muslims should be treated equally. Based on the above operational anomalies under the Godane leadership, the factional leaders announced a fatwa (religious decision) that Godane should not be obeyed for violating the tenets of the Holy Quran with his leadership style. Those who divorced the main Al-Shabaab sect led by Godane included

Fuad Khalif (Shongole), Mukthar Robow, Al Dheere Ali Jabal, Yusuf Cisse (Kabakutukade) and Maxamad Dulyadeyn. They all formed their own factions. This move made Godane to target all dissenters for elimination, including his second-in-command, Ibrahim al-Afghani, and Hassan Dahir Aweys; who was killed in 2013. Godane's victory over the internalization of Al-Shabaab operations, especially against those countries that supported AMISOM and the establishment of the Muslim Youth Center (MYC) in Kenya led to the sustenance of the internationalization of the sect's activities.

The foregoing suggests that the ideological differences within the Al-Shabaab sect revolve around tactical issues, the sect's atrocities against a large number of Muslim civilians, ill-treatment of regional commanders who disagreed with central leadership, weak military strategies and corruption against the central leadership as well as maltreatment of external fighters. All the above ideological differences have reduced its internal cohesion and its fighting strength, which seems to have toned down the current fighting capability of the sect in East Africa, especially in Kenya and Somalia. The internal division seems to provide an advantage for the state security apparatus to decimate the violent extremist group. Apparently, the states have largely not capitalized maximally on this internal division to gain a stronghold against the sect by addressing the issues that underpin the extremist violent acts and strengthening the counter-violent extremism operation.

The ideological split within the Boko Haram insurgents in Nigeria led to the factionalization of the leadership of Abubakar Shekau, with the emergence of the Abu Musab Al-Barnawi fraction. Shekau perceived the splitting as an act of betrayal by Al-Barnawi, who he refers to as a coup plotter and polytheist. Al-Barnawi split from the main Boko Haram led by Shekau to form the Islamic State in West Africa (ISWAP). The central ideological differences within the sect revolve around leadership accountability, conflict interpretation of Islamic law, which borders on the permissibility of attacking civilians, scope of operation and the legality of using women for war. The Shekau faction views everyone; men, women and children, Muslims and non-Muslims who disagree with their doctrines as 'infidels' liable to be attacked. More so, the sect sees every Muslim participating in democracy as an 'infidel' and that Western education is a sin punishable by death.

However, the Al-Barnawi faction disapproves the killing of non-Muslim combatants, especially women, children and soldiers who surrendered themselves. While agreeing that women in the military could be killed only in self-defense, and they also strongly opposed any attacks on the Mosque. The focus of the Al-Barnawi group attacks are the security institutions and the Churches. They argued that women should also not be sold as slaves but should rather be married off so that they can enjoy the protection of their husbands and be entitled to certain rights. Thus, the difference in ideological orientations of the two fractions suggest that recent attacks on security institutions in Nigeria are from the Al-Barnawi faction while those who have been attacking the civilian targets indiscriminately are from the Shekau faction.

While the Shekau faction relies heavily on women as suicide bombers, the Al-Barnawi faction repudiates the principle.

The Al-Barnawi faction also accused Shekau of greed and corruption due to the latter acts of hoarding food and arms without their adequate release to field commanders. While Shekau insisted that the geographical scope of operation of the sect should be within Nigeria, fearing that any externalization of its operation could make him lose the control of the organization to the external forces, Al-Barnawi was favorably disposed to the merger of the sect with other global sects with similar operational aims and objectives. Their rejection of a national scope of operation made the latter sect to merge with ISWAP, especially when Shekau expelled the leadership of the organization that was sent his camp to train new and old recruits.

Despite the claim by the Nigerian government that Boko Haram has been significantly decimated, the two factions have continued to demonstrate their lethal capacity through attacks on soft targets. Evidence suggests that the government's lack of sufficient capacity to counter violent extremists is largely linked to the failure to tackle the systemic issues at the root of the extremist violent onslaught and the internal weakness within the security apparatus. This points to the fact that most African states are vulnerable to violent extremism because of the fragile state institutions that breed exclusive politics that undergirds extremism.

Main elements and causes of violent religious extremism

There are four key elements of violent extremism (Berkey, 2010). First is the 'violence requirement', which requires terror acts to be carried out within the rhyme of violent confrontation. 'Target criterion element', the second, requires terrorists to target individuals or institutions within a particular category of the group to be selected. Targets are in many instances, civilians, non-combatants and the innocent. The third element of violent extremism is the 'intention requirement' which has two parts. The first part requires that the violence inflicted on civilians, non-combatants, or the innocent should be intentional, rather than being inflicted unintentionally as an accidental effect of an attack. The second part requires the agent or agents inflicting the violence to aim at causing fear or terror in others, especially those who sympathize with the victims. The fourth element of violent extremism is the 'ideological goal requirement', which requires that the violence be inflicted so that fear or terror is created in the mind of the targeted to achieve political, social or ideological goals of the attackers or the organization they represent.

Although violent religious extremism does not necessarily constitute terrorism in itself, it nonetheless serves as a breeding ground for a dissented mindset to perpetrate acts of violence, and can serve as a foundation for terror acts. As Williams (2015) argues, there is no terrorist who does not have an extreme conviction of the ideological justification for any particular terror act. The conceptual basis on terrorism denotes that the terrorist motives relate

to ideological rationale. The transformational phases of religious extremism to terrorism as distilled by Williams (2015: 7) include openness of extremist mind to new doctrinal view with overwhelming conviction, refining of the initial doctrinal identity, change in religious ideological worldview from the old to the new, adoption of extreme beliefs, enrolment as a member of extreme organization and the preparedness to die for an extreme course, endorsement of personal duty and obligation to engage terrorism if need be, and actual engagement in terror acts. Similarly, Saroglou (2011) identifies five transformational stages of a moderate religionist to an extremist and terrorist. These include a stage of cognitive awareness and conviction about the doctrinal value of religion (believing stage), a bonding stage (which binds the believer with the reality of his new found religious worldview), physical attitudinal manifestation and disposition toward practical application of his conviction to his daily activities (behaving) and belonging; identifying with a particular extreme religious denomination that represents his world view.

Thus, the transformation of an extremist to terrorist takes the form of psychological preparation and physical transformation. Schmid (2014) identifies five warning signs of a possible transformation of religious extremism to terrorism. These include recalcitrant and uncompromising belief in absolute truth of the preferred religion with intolerance of alternative view, endorsement of blind obedience to such religious leadership, quest to establish fundamental utopian piety around the preferred religion and declaration of other religions as doctrinally dirty, physical attitudinal preparedness to cause trouble by any means to sustain such doctrinal ideology and declaration of holy war against any secular authority that opposes such religious view. Hogg and Adelman (2013) observe that the transformation of religious extremism to terrorism is also facilitated and highly triggered by those with radical religious agenda, which support violent action, authoritarian leadership, use of crude and harsh religious law, extreme intra-group discipline and loyalty to the self-righteous leadership and weak acceptance of divergent worldview.

Some analysts have offered diverse perspectives on the driving factors that underpin the transformation of religious extremists into terrorists. For instance, Thurston (2016) suggests that dissatisfaction arising from systemic issues of poverty, illiteracy and weak education, socio-economic stress and youthful deviance could lead an extremist to transform into a terrorist. Thus, the author concludes that five components of religious transformation from extremism to terrorism can be linked to ideological orientation (belief), level of intellectual capacity (knowledge), quality of ritual strength or spiritual advancement (spiritual worship), level of emotional balance and the level of the state capacity to contain violence. The author is of the view that if the above variables are low in the mindset of a religious adherent, there is likelihood of religious laxity; their moderation could also lead to religious tolerance while their extreme orientations could turn a religious believer into a terrorist, especially if the state's counter-terrorism institutions are too weak to curtail it. What the above components suggest is that religious extremism

motivates acts of terrorism. The weak state of the institutions and security landscape in many countries on the continent make it a daunting task to contain and mitigate violent extremism.

The elements of terrorism which distinguish it from other forms of violence are better summarized as follows:

- i Terrorism is premeditated and designed to create a climate of extreme fear.
- ii The act is directed at a wider target than the immediate victims.
- iii Terrorism is considered by the society in which it occurs as extra-normal; having violated the norms regulating disputes, protest and dissent.
- iv It is used primarily, though not exclusively, to influence the political behavior of governments, communities or specific social groups.

However, as a goal-oriented violent action, terrorism is rooted in religious and structural factors (Danjibo, 2010). The religious factor is attributed in the growing literature on the diverse interpretation of the scriptures which has divided faith into conservatism and protestantism, feeble and core religious adherence, fledgling and total devotion and monotheism and paganism of religious followers. Structural factors include inadequacies in the society occasioned by injustice, unfairness, inequity, corruption, bad governance, amongst others. Elements of the middle class could also engage in violent religious extremism in response to their experiences of discrimination and social segregation.

Causes of violent religious extremism can be grouped into three. These are situational, strategic and ideological (Mark, 2006). Situational factors revolve around motivational pre-conditions for extremism caused by modernity. These include a broader range of modern technology that has homogenized the world. For example, the internet provides a powerful and accessible means for violent ideas that are shared and reinforced amongst larger audiences. Although the presence of pro-violence technology does not automatically radicalize its consumers, its availability on the internet with other means of electronic communication brings people closer to homogenization of religious ideas of violent extremism. Urbanization is another situational factor for violent religious extremism because living in large cities brings larger number of people closer and makes it easier to share ideas including extremist views.

Globalization and modernization are another major predisposing factors to violent extremism. The religious communities have integrated their activities within the globalization process through technology and the internet. Hence, religious ideologies including radical orientation can spread more widely internationally. Propagation of strange values that challenge entrenched social and religious values could also encourage religious radicalization. Gay marriage is a case in point. It is perceived as a Western value being imposed as a religious doctrine on non-Western societies.

Circumstantial and strategic precipitants also trigger religious extremism in form of revenge. For example, the activities of the Boko Haram sect in

Nigeria were largely peaceful until 2009 when its members became hardened and more deviant due to the confrontations with the security forces (Sani, 2011). After the extra-judicial killing of their leader, Muhammad Yusuf, by the Nigeria Police, the group sought revenge as strategic deterrence against state aggression. Other factors which equally predispose people to violent extremism include strong identification with and ideological passion for a particular faith as well as a deep empathy for the suffering of 'brothers and sisters of the same faith' in the hands of formal and informal authorities (Gadji, 2015). Boko Haram's acclaimed ideology centered on radical interpretation of Islam, and opposition of the state's corrupt and exclusionary tendencies (Onuoha, 2014).

Poverty and poor integration policy are also a risk factor of violent religious extremism. For instance, politics of exclusion and marginalization often leads to the adoption of radical extremist orientation deployed by violent extremism to correct perceived injustice in the development process. Poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and weak family structures contribute to making young men vulnerable to recruitment for violence as itinerant preachers capitalize on the situation of the vulnerable mind to preach an extreme or distorted version of religious teaching and conveying a narrative of the government as weak and corrupt (Onuoha, 2014).

Most African countries have fallen prey to insurgent acts based on numerous socio-economic and political factors that revolve around unaccountable regimes, resulting in widespread despair and disenchantment amongst the populace (Cambell, 2013). The accusations against the leadership range from corruption and insensitivity to gross ineptitude. These grievances ultimately create an atmosphere for political mobilization of disenchanted groups or opposition leaders that leads inexorably to revolt and insurrection in a situation of mutual defiance and other forms of lawlessness.

The psychological state of anomie that arises from alienation and a sense of purposelessness in life could fuel a transitory religious experience, which borders on socio-economic discrimination against such religious adherents. Solutions to such socio-structural discrepancy could be found only when people turn toward violent religious orientation, which restores a sense of purpose and personal recognition. Psychologically, feelings of humiliation could contribute to violent extremism (Gadji, 2015: 21) as many terrorists believe that their fellow religious adherents are being humiliated and oppressed and thus retaliate as a form of objection. For instance, the mass arrest and extra-judicial killing of the founding leader of Boko Haram, Mohammed Yusuf, in Police custody created the impetus for the transformation of the sect to a more lethal group under the leadership of Shekau (Harnischfeger, 2014).

Social networking places individuals at the risk of violent agitation. For example, terrorists in one part of the world share similar religious sympathy, affiliation and hard-line orientation that serve as trigger for the recruitment of other like minds across the world (Bakker, 2009). Frosty Western relations, especially with parts of the Muslim world have created anti-Western sentiments and violence against Western targets and interests. Personal

experiences relating to perceived discrimination or rejection have also been hypothesized to induce violent extremism. When people are ostracized or treated badly, they frequently exhibit hostility toward others irrespective of whether they were the perpetrators of their maltreatment or not (Baker, 2006). Confinement, especially through imprisonment, has a nexus with violent extremism (Awan, 2008). Inmates who have little knowledge about what their religious doctrine really is are vulnerable to misinterpreted teachings from seemingly more ‘learned’ clerics in prison.

Cambell (2013) identifies eleven drivers of violent religious extremism in Africa. These drivers include hard-line religious indoctrination, denial of endogenous development, environmental degradation, gross violation of fundamental rights of the individual and government repression of opponents. Others are widespread corruption, poor governance, overwhelming poverty, illegitimate government through stage-managed elections and manipulation of religion for selfish, personal, political ambition and survival. The foregoing factors are the push variables for extremist activities. The pull factors as identified by USAID (2013) are those factors that make violent extremism appealing to terrorists and their sponsors. These factors include the material benefits and economic gains to the terrorists and wrong socio-religious value orientations. Evidence suggests that most African countries battling with violent extremists have weak institutions in which the identified driving factors are pervasive, exposing the states to the risk of dissident groups like religious extremists violently challenging the state authority.

Institutional responses to violent religious extremism

Although many parts of Africa are bedeviled by violent religious extremism, the impact of such extreme tendencies differs. There is no country in Africa that is not a potential site for extremist tendencies. What makes the difference in each country is the extent of the strength of their political, economic, social and security institutional capacity to curtail the outbreak of extremist violence (Francis, 2001; Huud, 2013; Ado, 2014). David (2012) identified four main institutional models in Africa, which contribute to the extent of the presence or absence of violent extremism in African states. These include the Somalia or ‘failed state’ institutional capacity model. This model posits that an insecure environment occasioned initially by the collapse of the central government in 1992 degenerated into a total breakdown of the security apparatus.

The failure of the state to provide adequate security in Somalia has enhanced the relevance of religious extremists, which offer their services for people’s protection while also insisting on the total allegiance of the people in the territories they control. The Somalia model applies to Nigeria, where Boko Haram initially seized the control of about 13 local government areas in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states from the government as part of the territorial expansionist agenda made possible due to the virtual collapse of the state security apparatus in the area. (Alexander, 2018: 6).

In such circumstances, innocent people either wittingly or unwittingly support or accept any group including religious extremists, warlords and other organized criminals who could offer some form of socio-economic incentives and protection which the government who is supposed to provide basic needs for the people seem incapable of providing.

In the process, religious sects have gained greater public acceptance of their ideologies, willingly or unwillingly. Thus, a state's failure to assert its monopoly of legitimate instruments of force opens the door for extremists to build their economic, political and power bases. This situation is typical of Somalia where Al-Shabaab, alongside other extremist groups, has an overwhelming influence than that of the state as a result of the group's capacity to provide the needed socio-economic need vital for human security for the people. Even so, such extremist groups in Somalia have carried out large atrocities in different communities in contradiction of their promise of an alternative and better order.

Within the Egyptian institutional capacity model, often referred to as 'Strong State Model', violent religious extremism has largely been curtailed despite political volatility in the country (Akinwumi, 2010). This is possible because there is a general reversal of relationship between extremist Islamic influence and state security strength. In Egypt, religious extremists occupy a marginal fringe of the political space and influence because of strong and capable state security sector to checkmate their activities (Okpo, 2019). The Muslim Brotherhood represents an isolated case of the pursuit of an extremist agenda largely through electoral competition rather than violent extremism. The great strength of the state security apparatus in Egypt has further weakened any form of cooperation between religious extremists and the religious moderates. Now, the repression of extremists by the government raises the cost of violent religious extremism such that only those who see holy war as a divine duty remain committed to the risk of being jailed or killed. Consequently, extremist organizations have renounced violence.

The Algerian 'stick and carrot' counter-terrorism model has largely reduced violent extremism in the country. Within this institutional framework, the state uses a combination of oppression and amnesty to curtail religious extremists as brutal religious violence has attracted high-handedness and repression from the state. Moderates' religious sympathy for the extremists has also declined because many Algerians who originally sympathized and supported the religious extremists after the military nullified the 1991 elections, which the group was poised to win, withdrew their sympathy when the group picked up arms against the state (Abubakar, 2014: 5). The government equally used the 'carrot' approach to curtail violent extremism through amnesty legislation that granted any religious group, which renounced and voluntarily abandoned violence, state pardon.

The Senegal counter-insurgency institutional capacity model has largely reduced religious unrest in the country. This model essentially borders on the establishment of a legitimate state that is largely characterized by open,

free and fair elections and respect for rule of law, among others and moderate security institutions to counter violent extremism and other criminal acts (Alozieuwa, 2012). Although Senegal is a low-income country that is characterized by an average institutional capacity of security, the country has considerable political legitimacy (Bassey, 2016). It thus uses the combination of political openness and relatively robust security institutions to defuse religious radicalism.

Such openness has created the opportunity for the extremists to expand their roles in social, religious and political life. Senegal has also cultivated a long tradition of religious moderation within the confines of high intellectualism, freedom of expression and worship in which the relationship between religion and politics is freely debated even publicly and without harassment from government, thus fostering relative religious harmony in the country (Bello, 2013). It is not surprising that Senegal is known as an Islamic country in spite of its significant Christian population. The country prides itself with famous Islamic scholars who have followers across the globe. Such scholars include Sheiks Tijani Kaula of the Tijanniyah sect and Sheik Ahmed Qadr of the Quadriyyah sect.

The Nigerian counter-terrorism institutional model, especially under former President Goodluck Jonathan, was very weak and slightly ranked above the failed state model of the Somalia example. The state institutional capacity for managing insurgency under the regime was largely undermined by poor funding of the security sector, outdated equipment, low morale and mismanagement of funds (Hud, 2013; Thurston, 2017). Other factors for the weak institutional response of Nigeria to counter terrorism include inadequate synergy among the various agencies of the security sector for information sharing and the difficulties involved in fighting insurgencies because of their hidden identity and unpredictable attack patterns unlike conventional warfare (Osaghae et al., 2013). Low foreign exchange earnings from oil and mismanagement of resources have led to insufficient budgetary allocation to the security sector to fight terrorism in Nigeria. There was also inadequate political will by the government of President Goodluck Jonathan to identify and deal with those behind violent religious extremism in the country. Although President Jonathan publicly acknowledged the presence of Boko Haram members in his administration, he failed to mention, sack or prosecute them (Okoli and Iortyer, 2014).

Nigeria's institutional capacity for counter-terrorism improved considerably under the Muhammadu Buhari administration as the formal security apparatus significantly curtailed the activities of the Boko Haram insurgents, having dislodged them from the Sambisa forest, which is their core base (Thurston, 2017). The relative success of the Buhari counter-extremism effort is attributed to zero tolerance of corruption by the government, improved funding of the security sector, boost in troop morale and provision of more logistics to the security agents among others. The relative improvement in Nigeria's performance has led to her elevation to the Senegalese model of moderate power

in terms of counter-insurgency from the previous Somalian counter-terrorism capacity rating under the Jonathan Administration. The extent to which the country can sustain the relative success at combating terrorism is still debatable as the insurgents still carry out serial gun and bomb attacks on their targets.

The counter-terrorism institutional capacity in Kenya appears relatively stronger than Nigeria and could be situated within the Algerian 'Moderate State Model' because of relatively low incidences of religious extremism in the country. This is because there is a more coordinated counter-terrorism strategy from diverse institutions in Kenya than Nigeria. This can be seen from Kenya's numerous counter-terrorism institutional frameworks, namely, the National Steering Committee on Peace building and Conflict Management, the Counter-terrorism Center, Kenya National Focal Point on Small Arms and Light Weapons, National Disaster Operation Center and the Anti-terrorist Unit of the National Intelligence Unit. These institutional frameworks seem to be collaborating and synergizing with government and civil society organizations to counter terrorism. The collaboration amongst government agencies in Kenya has helped to improve institutional capacity for countering terrorism in spite of similar high corruption rating with Nigeria. However, Kenya's better counter-terrorism efforts when viewed in the context of Nigeria's larger population, complex and bigger geographic landmass and different backgrounds of violent extremism, historical antecedents, context and operational complications may seem not to be remarkable.

Conclusion

Various sub-regions of Africa have continued to witness violent religious extremism. The security challenges posed by violent extremist groups have severe ramifications for peace, security and development in Africa. Extremism has resulted in several security breaches, socio-economic dislocation, ethno-religious mistrust and fragile peace. Insurgency impacts negatively on the national security in many African countries as it continues to increase security spending while also compromising human security. Violent religious extremism is linked to religious and structural variables while its causes have been grouped into three factors: institutional, strategic and ideological.

The ability of each African State to counter violent religious extremism depends on the strength of their socio-economic, political and security institutions. Credible institutional framework, which has made some states degrade violent extremists included strong political, economic and military institutions along with advanced technologies and well-trained personnel. However, both Nigeria and Kenya are largely characterized by weak, or at most moderate institutions which shaped the progression and retrogression experienced in the counter-extremism operations in the two countries.

The current strategic security responses across African countries have largely been militaristic in conception and application, and dominated by coercive power. Although the military approach cannot be totally separated

from any productive counter-insurgency strategy, there is the need to reform the military and related security agencies in the war against terrorism. It is important to build security capacity in Africa, by increasing partnership between security agencies among African countries, to promote intelligence and information sharing about terrorist activities, especially their source of financing and training. Checkmating linkages between local terrorist groups and their global counterparts will help to reduce the security threats posed by such local groups. Without sincere efforts at addressing the structural condition that breeds grievances, it would be difficult to prevent and counter violent religious extremism in Africa.

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8 Religious ideology and terrorism in Africa

Introduction

Ideology plays a crucial role in activities of hard-line religious sects, as it reveals the terrorists' motive for action and provides a prism through which they view the actions and reactions of other people (Frank, 1998). Ideology is equally central in Jihadist target of operation and selection, apart from serving as a foundation for the justification of violence and peace by religious sects. Although ideology is not the only factor that determines potential target of attack by religious insurgents, it provides an initial range of legitimate or illegitimate targets, and a means by which terrorists seek to justify their actions to the outside world. Ideology is not only central to terrorist doctrinal values, having provided the initial reason for their actions, but it also sets out the moral framework within which terrorists operate (Samuel, 2015). Thus, ideology provides a motive and framework for violent actions of religious extremists. This perspective on religious ideology as it intersects with terrorism in Africa is relevant to the discourse on the war of terror on the continent.

The religious ideology of terrorism is primarily defined by a doctrinal belief system derived from the scriptures, prophetic traditions and the opinion of learned religious scholars (Dawud, 2012). This is the prime source of defense for adherents of a religion in the face of invading forces. Terrorist ideology also draws from political, economic, structural and ethical sources. But most Jihadist movements and militancy are built on religious laws, doctrines and orientation because of the belief in religious supremacy over state secularism, as well as firm and fundamental interpretation of the holy books expected to guide religious and secular leaders. To religious radicals, man and God are inseparable because God created man for His spiritual and social advancement. Thus, in the ideology of terrorism, religion is the primary source of all other ideological sources from the belief that all the sectors – economic, political and social – are from the same scriptural source, interwoven and inseparable.

Consequently, unsecular authorities are ordained by God as political leaders are appointed and accountable to Him only. Such political leaders should

therefore rule according to what God dictates, while obedience to constituted authorities should be reserved for God-fearing leaders only rather than any ungodly secular authorities (Samuel, 2010). Thus, obedience to God according to religious ideology of terrorism is achieved through obedience to the man of God, who rules according to God's law only. Although secular ideologists have argued that divine ideology of terrorism creates room for tyrannical government because of the disdain of divine rulers for their subjects, hard-line religious radicals solemnly believe that all God-appointed and inspired theocratic rulers cannot be monstrously vicious. If a divine ruler is wicked, God has sent him as a punishment for the people's sins (Appadorai, 1968). Patience, earnest prayers and adjustments of peoples' lives are the only lawful means to move God to relieve the people of such tyrants. Therefore, religious, political, social and economic guidance must only be sought from God through His scriptures, prophets and His representatives on earth as demonstrated by pious leaders who must be allowed to rule the state always.

Based on the above ideological orientation, many Islamic State militants are critical of existing governments, especially those in the Arab world, believing that the leadership of such states has succumbed to Western secular influence by diluting the application of God's law with secular legislation. For instance, the Al-Qaeda criticized Hamas Islamic sect for participating in the Palestine Legislative Council elections in January 2006 because such elections were influenced by Western pressure, and the fact that the Palestinian electoral process was based on secular instead of God's law. In the view of the terrorists, the misapplication or abandonment of religious law by most Muslims accounts for many societal vices such as corruption, moral decadence, poverty and injustice. In relation to the defense of religious land, Jihadists often abandon national patriotism in favor of a religious caliphate that straddles national boundaries. This pious land must be defended against the physical attack and doctrinal influence of external values, especially Western values. In the absence of responsible governance in many countries, the ideological orientation of the Jihadist sects holds a certain appeal to most of the Islamic faithful, because they are seen to be moving closer to the resolution of the problem of a society that was created mostly by Western ideological orientations, though they may disagree with Jihadist violent tactics. Jihadists regard most governments, particularly those in the Arab countries, as infidels because they rule with a law and ideological orientation that is a departure from the paths of Allah. It is their duty then to wage war against such infidel governments by removing them from office.

Apart from the introduction, subsequent sections provide insights into the ideology of terrorism in Africa, and the dominant perspectives about the ideology of religious extremism. The analysis covers how religious ideology shaped terrorism as well as terrorist target selection. The measures adopted by the states to counter violent religious extremism is also explored, and a conclusion drawn on the basis of these analyses.

Perspectives on ideology of religious terrorism

The ideology of religious terrorism could be divided into two broad orientations: defensive and offensive Jihad (Drake, 2017). Defensive Jihadists aggressively resist any idea or physical presence of an occupation army such as America's military presence in the Arabian Peninsula. They perceive foreign presence as unacceptable pollution of their holy land. In this regard, defensive Jihadists have used Religious Policy Advisory and Reformation Committee as a media platform to express their displeasure, with the violation of their land through the presence of the US forces after the gulf war, and the persecution and arrest of some religious leaders in the Arabian Peninsula who opposed Western influence, among others.

The offensive terrorist ideology is directed against any country perceived by the terrorists to be harboring corrupt regimes. Attempt is often made by Jihadist and religious militants to violently overthrow such states. The ideological dichotomy between defensive and offensive Jihadist movements has split many terrorist sects. Such differences actually divided the Al-Qaeda sect into two ideological orientations. For instance, in contrast to the hard-line defensive Jihad articulated by Osama bin Laden in 1984 to reclaim Arabian land from western occupation, Abdullah Azzam, Al-Qaeda deputy commander, left the mainstream to join the Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) that was formed by Islamic State militant fighters to overthrow Hosni Mubarak's government, which they accused of being corrupt.

Furthermore, the basic doctrinal foundation of violent religious extremism is that God alone is the absolute owner of all existing wealth on earth, and that worldly things that man possesses or acquires are part of God's blessing that the less fortunate and community should benefit from (Alathara, 2011). On this premise, the political economy must be based on divine injunctions of the Holy Scriptures and the teachings of the prophets that are geared toward the reduction of poverty, the promotion of justice, fairness and equity in the society. The cardinal economic principle of religious radicals is compulsory charity which compels religious adherents who have substantial means to share part of their wealth with the needy, in order to redistribute worldly resources equitably for the benefit of all people. Equally central to the economic strand of radical Islam's ideology is the argument that wealth may be accumulated by individuals but not in a way that violates the norms of honesty, fairness and transparency. There is also the insistence on constant circulation of wealth in the society or generosity if the wealthy will remain blessed in the sight of God.

Radical religious economic ideology forbids economic exploitation of any kind and prohibits interest on goods and services, which it considers exploitative. It does not contemplate class contradictions and segregations in which some people received the wealth from God, but do not share the benefit with the less privileged, or where leaders outright embezzle the collective wealth of the society. Having guaranteed the individual's right to earn a livelihood

according to their personal capacity through legitimate means, the purpose for which expenditure may be incurred from such lawfully acquired wealth must equally be lawful. An individual and government cannot squander their wealth on unlawful ventures that are prohibited by religion such as gambling, alcohol, prostitution, pool betting, etc. The primary ideological objective of a state is invariably to utilize societal wealth to establish a religious culture of existence in which all economic activities that are good and proper are promoted, and all that are evil are discouraged. In the terrorists' ideological mindset, the financial affairs of the state must be handled by people who are trustworthy. It is therefore incumbent on all citizens to eliminate corrupt financial managers from the state.

From a structural view of society, many religious terrorist sects see global conflict and social problems like political instability, global economic dependency, injustice, poverty, disease, corruption and inequity as consequences of capitalist exploitation for the benefit of Western countries. Western domination of the global political economy through technological proficiency, as well as information and communication technology gives credence to this perception. The West and its allied countries must be resisted for being anti-religious and not egalitarian and creating inequality among global citizens as can be seen from structural division of the world into blocs of material comfort and discomfort with the concentration of poverty, scarcity and misery in the developing and underdeveloped world. As argued by many terrorist groups, exploitative capitalist countries can only be curtailed through violent actions for realizing social welfare and creating godly states. The Western countries are equally blamed by the terrorists for creating dependent states that are structurally exploitative, draconian and anti-welfare, in contrast with what could be obtained under religious states where charity will prevail. Structural defects must be eliminated from society through forced policy reforms.

Within such an ideological milieu, there is an ethical compulsion upon government to promote the moral uplifting of its citizens based on religious etiquette, in order to produce and promote useful and pious citizens. Religious terrorists do not accept the secularization of society which they describe as godless and beneficial only to a set of individuals (Garuba, 2012). For them, the society based on capitalist values has promoted barbaric lifestyle, moral degeneration, political and economic instability and so on. The goal of the Jihadists is social change and social justice through reconstruction of society built on a pure moral foundation opposed to the secular or Western conception, that is devoid of the true fear of God.

Jihadists believe that true believers will attain spiritual salvation as well as material possession in this world and in the hereafter, by confronting the ungodly and morally degenerate society. Religious radicals equally believe that any form of civilization and culture and the consolidation of their power and strength depend on morality (Bonn & Baker, 2000). If the people have good and excellent moral character, then all good qualities will be found in

their society and political organization. Otherwise, their kingdom and rulers will be corrupt and susceptible to destruction.

To the religious fundamentalists, all cultural civilization and moral etiquette should originate from religion because its doctrinal values have a reforming potential. It is also a divine means of obtaining bliss and prosperity because a society that does not abide by religion loses its ethical essence and spends its precious life in aberration, externalism and negligence. Such a society ignores wisdom, and its people would be narrow-minded and foolish. The ungodly society often involves itself in immorality and misbehavior and forfeits all its humanitarianism. Indeed, the application of religious law of morality ensures happiness and salvation of the individual and the society, while its neglect breeds corruption, disruption, instability and anarchy. Without cleansing oneself of all evil habits, religious terrorists believe that it would be impossible to nourish and develop moral virtues in oneself and others. In order to attain ultimate and final perfection, it is necessary to transverse the part of struggle against selfish lusts and immoral tendencies, which may exist within the soul through peaceful or forceful means, in order to prepare human soul to receive the grace of God for a better society. The religious ideological orientation of terrorists is to encourage the right moral attitude and development approaches that are based on the fear of God in all dimensions of public life.

The above discourse on religious ideological orientations relate mainly to Islam and Christianity. However, there are many other religions that occupy far lesser geographical scope, which have global adherents, but whose ideological foundations have helped to shape the world negatively or positively. Most popular amongst these religions are Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism which are found in the East-Asian region, with doctrinal ideologies that have been practiced by millions of people for centuries (Mohammed, 2010). While the ideological thrust of Hinduism is centered on a Supreme Being like Islam and Christianity, the ideology of Buddhism and Confucianism primarily revolves around the teaching of man. On the other hand, Daoism centers on the concepts of right and wrong attitudes. These four Asian religions share many similarities in their ideological orientations. They typically encourage good moral behavior, charity and respect for the universe. Hinduism, which is a tribal religion found mostly and notably in India, believes in one supreme unifying force that creates, protects and preserves Man and his environment. Although a decentralized religion with many deities or gods, Hindu deities represent different facets of a single entity (Purusha). As the religion is tribal, a person must be born a Hindu before he can practice the religion. He cannot convert to Hinduism from another tribe (Folkenberg, 1994).

Such a person must live a good and godly life and practice kindness and charity, in order to attain the ultimate reward of perfect salvation from the punishment of the ultimate god Purusha. Hinduism is a religion of love and the common bond uniting all Hindus into a singular body is the law of

karma. The doctrinal ideology of the religion is mostly found in the four purusarthas (supreme deities) that teach retribution (Karma), soul purification (Dashavataram), love (Dharma) and reincarnation (Moksha). How a person lives his life on earth determines what happens to one's soul in the hereafter (Almond, 2003). In the doctrinal foundation of Hinduism, the soul is reborn until all bad Karma has been erased for such a soul to be reunited with the Supreme Being (Purusha).

Morality is also central to the ideological thrust of Hinduism, as the religion teaches that human beings are moral agents of the Supreme Being who have the imperative of applying the moral understanding of their religion to their daily lives, to bring about a corruption-free society. In this context, the supreme moral reality in life (Brahman) exists in all things, including the bodies of all individuals. Hindu's moral admonition preaches the importance of understanding and realizing this divine essence. The religion's ideology encourages all Hindus to discover God's purpose for their lives, which is to be the happy servants of the Supreme Being, while its adherents are expected to find their own individual purpose in life through Dharma (constant spiritual meditations that reveal purposes for Hindus' existence in life). Thus, being in different positions (stations) in life entails fulfilling the purpose (dharma) unique to that position (Ruthven, 2004). For example, the moral purpose for a child's existence in life, which is to follow the guidance of righteousness from the cradle, is different from that of an adult who should serve as the guide, and both should fulfill their respective roles. Hinduism thus places moral emphasis on harmony, where all individuals conform to their societal roles.

Although the religion teaches that morality is unique to individuals, this does not negate its belief in a universal morality (Sharma) that applies to all people collectively (Nietzsche, 1976). This morality consists of service to personal Hindu deities, through dedicated acts of worship such as joint fellowship and the performances of other commendable acts including honesty and magnanimity in victory, in relation to other people and the Hindu society in general (Qureshi, 1998). The moral orientation of Hinduism also preaches the importance of good virtues in daily life, in which Right Action (Karma) is the chief agent of these virtues. Thus, if an individual acts morally by helping others, worships deities regularly and acts selflessly, he radiates positive action. When individuals fail to live up to the standard and perform acts motivated by greed or hatred, they project a negative karma. To the Hindus, when good things happen to them, it is a product of positive Karma (action) while bad outcomes are results of negative karma (action). The Hindu's belief in reincarnation means that karma also extends across lifetimes, and negative events may be the result of bad karma from a person's previous life.

The Hindu's religious ideology teaches many ethical and moral principles. For example, Hindus' doctrine (dharma) emphasizes non-violence (Ahimsa) as any kind of violent act disrupts moral order. For this reason, when considering the ethics of an act like abortion, Hindus believe in the course that

results in the least amount of violence to the unborn child and generally oppose abortion, except in situations where the action was designed to save the life of the mother. In spite of its focus on one Supreme Being (Purusha), there is no central Hindu ideology within a universally recognized text because of the existence of diverse deities who serve as intermediaries to the Supreme Being. That is, the Hindu ideology emphasizes one Supreme Being whose spiritual essence manifests in many gods. Thus, individuals' interpretations of the Hindu ideology on morality sometimes differ because of their diverse deities. Another central ideological thrust of Hinduism that relates to the sustenance of global peace and security is the idea of unity and interconnections of all living beings, as well as previous and present life experiences as reflected in the Hindu teachings of reincarnation (Moksha).

Reincarnation is the belief that a soul experiences different lives based on how a previous life was lived. Ultimately, the human soul will achieve oneness with God and unity with all other souls to make the world worth living within a peaceful setting. The ideology of Hinduism relating to unity of life is expressed in Truth which is greater than any individual's consciousness, and that such a virtue unites all Hindus. Although they worship many gods, Hindus acknowledge three important gods: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva as being responsible for the creation, maintenance and destruction of the world (Almond, 2003). However, the law of retribution (Karma) emphasizes that every action has an opposite reaction and people control their own fate, achievements in life and spiritual salvation through their actions, reactions and thoughts. Hinduism thus explains that the enduring sense of ever-present truth in man is that god within him is the essence of his being, and his responsibility on earth is to follow a righteous path that leads to his spiritual maturity to enhance optimal spiritual blessings of god.

The ideology of Buddhism focuses more on the philosophy of good life than religious doctrines or dogmas (Mews, 1989). The central thrust of its ideology is that there is no god to be worshipped. Instead, Buddhists focus on attaining inner peace through sound moral behavior, great foresight (thinking before acting), considering consequences of actions before taking them and gaining better understanding of the philosophy of life to live happily. An Indian prince, Siddhartha Gautama Buddha, founded Buddhism to teach enlightenment about human purpose in life; the ultimate of which is enjoyment and happiness. According to Buddha, the four noble truths of life are: everyone suffers, human beings cause their own sufferings, mankind should stop doing things that make them suffer and that they should follow an enlightened path to end their suffering and live happily.

The ideology of Confucianism is derived from the teachings of a Chinese philosopher, Confucius (Mews, 1989). Confucianism, like Buddhism, is about following teachings rather than worshipping a deity. The teachings suppose that all human beings are essentially good. This goodness must be practiced toward fellow human beings. Politeness, good virtue, righteousness, propriety and moral wisdom are essential components of goodness to

make life more peaceful and worth living. Elders and ancestors are to be held in reverence, as they give life to their children and guide them to prosperity. Education and learning are also highly regarded within the ideology of Confucianism, in order to broaden the intellectual ability and reproductive capacity of man to live a fulfilled life.

Daoism, or Taoism, started around 500 B.C. as a Chinese religious ideology and was founded by Lao Tzu (Aho, 1981). The central ideological theme of Daoism is a balanced disposition to hard work and simple lifestyle. A person should strive to cultivate Dao, living a simple life in harmony with nature but work hard to achieve a good life. Within its central ideology, Dao is not a being, but a concept that is neither good nor evil. It creates the universe but does not try to interfere with or control it. Compassion for other people's life, living within moderation and having humility may lead mankind toward the Dao which represent goodness of life. Daoism also assumed that freeing oneself from excessive desires and believing in the equality of man and nature would help man lead a peaceful and happy life too.

From the ideological orientation of different religions examined above, it is very difficult to ignore the role religion plays in public affairs in relation to the moral uplifting of the society, sustenance of peace and security, peaceful co-existence, unity and love among others. There are also fundamental similarities in the ideological orientations of all the major religions examined. The ideologies of these religions emphasize one form of belief system or the other. Each encourages good moral behavior, charity and respect for others and the universe, and preaches stronger ethical uplifting of man for building a corruption-free society.

All religious ideologies encourage fairness, justice and equity for peace and security in the society. They preach kindness and charity for the attainment of religious salvation and peace in the society, and they all teach retributive or restorative justice. While the doctrinal focus of all religious ideologies is the reformation of the society, their ideological foundation is moral rectitude, spiritual salvation and social cohesion of society. They all preach social justice, believing that the way in which a society is constructed has a fundamental link to the right or wrong ideological orientation amongst religious adherents. None of the religions preach deliberate acts of violence. They teach peace as reflected in the Islamic concept of Salam and the Hindu's concept of Ahimsa.

Despite the similarities in the ideological focus of different religions, there are also fundamental differences amongst them. While the ideological orientations of some religions, especially Islam, tilts their adherents toward a belief system that emphasizes one Supreme Being, others like Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism focus their belief system essentially on the philosophy of good life, presupposing there is no god to be worshipped. The Muslim faithful believe in the existence of one God. Followers of other religions like Hinduism and many Christian denominations also believe in one Supreme God who could only be reached through other gods that ultimately

link them up with the Supreme Being. Some of the religions especially Islam, Christianity and Hinduism have scriptures that guide the spiritual lives of their adherents. Others like Confucianism and Taoism do not have divine scriptures, but rather follow the philosophical teachings of their founders. Islam, with one scriptural foundation, enhances more coordinated unity in worship, dogmatic followership and global religious nationalism for solidarity and violence than other religions. This is because other religions including Christianity and Hinduism with similar overwhelming global followership have fragmented scriptures and denominations that are short of mobilizing global adherents with nationalistic feelings for peaceful or violent global actions. But because Christianity overwhelms Islam in global followership and numerical strength, which stands at over 2.3 and 1.8 billion respectively (Global Terrorism Index, 2020), the two religions have been able to promote and attract global sympathy and solidarity for their globally extensive doctrinal values, peace or violence than other religions like Confucianism and Buddhism that are virtually restricted to the East-Asian region of the world (Bello, 2013).

Islam and Christianity are founded on the tenant of the Day of Judgment when human deeds will be accounted for. Others like Taoism and Confucianism do not believe in life after death. Islamic and Christian ideologies have no attachment to race or color. Others such as Hinduism are racially based, as one cannot practice nor convert to the religion without being a Hindu. All religions believe in fairness and justice, but what constitutes those two concepts differ from one religion to the other. For instance, Islam and Hinduism conceptualize fairness and justice in retributive terms while Christianity's concept of justice is restorative. Although Christianity and Islam have divine prophets who were sent to preach God's words, others like Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism do not.

The examination of the relationship between religious ideologies and violent extremism above reveals that Islam with one scripture and one of the two religions with the largest global followership has successfully been used for violence because of the overwhelming appeal of its doctrinal stance. It galvanizes many of its adherents across the globe against Western civilization for its purported moral laxity, unlike Christianity that is sometimes portrayed as a by-product of Western civilization. Hinduism – the third religion with the highest number of followership in the world – is certainly much less associated with violent fundamentalism because of its fragmented scriptures, different expositions and because of its tribal foundation. In fact, there are a number of factors associated with Hinduism, which makes violent fundamentalism appear impossible.

Firstly, fundamentalists are absolutists that hold rigidly to their beliefs that their religion alone is true and that other religions should not be tolerated, particularly in the lands where members of their religion are the majority. However, Hindus are not of one single faith. They are divided up into Shaivites, Vaishnavas, Shaktas, Smartas and a number of other groups which

are constantly being recreated compared to other religious groups. Pluralism is the basis of Hinduism, and it does not claim to be the only true religion. According to the Vedas, there is only one God who has many names and faces as there are many paths that will lead to him. Hindus acknowledge that other religions may have differing belief, but they all have the same underlying notions of a return to God.

An important apparent contradiction arises from linking Hinduism with fundamentalism in the light of the notion of *Ahimsa*, a religious concept that advocates non-violence and respect for all life. It is a Buddhist philosophy that was propounded 2,500 years ago by Gautama Buddha, which is now also commonly associated with the peace philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and Hinduism. It is interesting to note that such a philosophy arose as a reaction to violent acts against animals and humans for sacrifices in the Vedic practice of Yagna (purification). Regardless of that, *Ahimsa* is one of the six schools of Hindu philosophy. It is also included as one of the representative virtues of *dharma* (moral responsibility) for all human beings in all castes to be peaceful. Yet, these laws are non-binding to the warrior class, the *Kshatriyas*. The duty of the Kshatriya class is to make any sacrifice to protect society by any means necessary, even by force of arms, at the cost of killing or being killed. The religious concept of *Ahimsa* non-injury opposes the idea of the necessity of religious warfare in Hinduism, but the concept of the warrior class which encourages the defense of the interest of the Hindu race by all means including commensurate violence limits the non-violence posture of Hinduism.

The ideological foundation of many of the religions examined above focuses more on the religious revival and principle of absolute religious orthodoxy and evangelical influence, which extends religion into the spheres of both political and social life, with the tendencies for their manipulation by the political class to further their political interest through violence in many instances. Thus, violent religious extremism that is premised on wrong ideological orientation has led to global insecurity caused by the Islamic Jihadists, ultra-orthodox Jent Sikhs, Buddhist resistance fighters and many more. The differences in the ideological leaning of these religions have brought about dangerous intra- and inter-religious secularization, religious intolerance and hate religious crusades, leading in many instances to ethno-religious wars.

The ideological foundation of violent religious fundamentalism has also been known to be reactive in nature. It does not start on its own. Something or some actions, rightly or wrongly, usually provoke(s) it, especially bad political and economic governance, suffocating brutality of political opponents and denial of fundamental rights. Corruption and weak political leadership have resulted in poverty and intense hardship, leading to youth radicalization and wrong ideological orientation to perpetrate evil in the society. The main ideological orientation of many religious fundamentalists is to protect their doctrinal values and ways of life, without which they are at the risk of being destroyed (Larsson, 2004). Such fundamentalist ideology wears different garbs; as a religious phenomenon, a political movement and a state of

consciousness. It is characterized by profound dissatisfaction about the state of society and a strong preoccupation with fundamental religious beliefs that should dethrone ungodly states.

As noted by Blais et al. (2010), fundamentalism is a modern movement that is responding to the pains of modernity and modernization. The modern world, which seems so exciting to a liberal, seems godless, drained of meaning and totally opposed to many conservative religious ideologies. Although the religious ideology of most fundamentalists revolts against the Modern Age, the attitudes of fundamentalists cannot be perceived as anti-modernist because they make full use of the technological advances that modernity has created. The ideological foundation of most religions, especially Islam that is largely opposed to Western civilization favors the adoption of military strategies that are more vicious than that employed by states because these religious wars have become a matter of protecting an identity, driven by the divine will to totally exterminate the perceived enemy. The religious ideological foundation of many extremist actions is also attributed to their unyielding belief that they are fighting a cosmic battle between the forces of good and evil, which justify their actions as claims of their divine authority. Like other totalitarian worldviews such as fascism, Stalinism and neoliberalism, fundamentalist groups claim absolute righteousness for their own beliefs (Aho, 1981). As posited by Armstrong (2001),

What starts up on its own as religious ideology revolves around traditionalism, conservatism and orthodoxy, which is inherited in the previous centuries. Then something comes along and jostle; mass media or imperialism or religious pluralism, people from a strange outlook impinging on your own thought patterns that are very uncongenial to what you are used to, assaults on your own personal or group identity, and then you must react; violently if need be. You feel you will be overcome otherwise.

With the dissatisfaction of the fundamentalists with the state of society, it is likely that the enemy is not simply an aspect of a society, but the society. This then leads to their intention to overthrow the entire society, which should be achieved through any means necessary, including violence (Lipner, 1994).

How does religious ideology drive terrorism?

Many factors drive the ideology that often aids violent religious extremism. These include biological and environmental factors. For instance, being born or brought up in a family that subscribes to violent and uncompromising religious worldview predisposes the individual to terrorism. Government domestic and foreign policies on local religious and political matters that undermine better standard of living of the populace could trigger radicalization that leads to violence, to repel policies extremists consider unfavorable to them.

Religious ideology influences terrorism in different stages (Crenshaw, 1995). First, there is the contact stage where terrorists identify their potential members, and then discuss their ideas with them in order to convince them to join the group. The gateway of contact with terrorists includes prayer groups, sports clubs, charitable organizations, cult groups and deviant meeting points (e.g., Indian hemp joint). Second, is the recruitment and indoctrination stage. This occurs after the first initial contact between individuals and clandestine groups where individuals are formally admitted into the radical terrorist sect with oath-taking. Here, the rules of the sect are read to the members who then pledge commitment and loyalty to the cause of the sect. The third stage of ideological development of a religious sect borders on training, involving spiritual indoctrination that is characterized by quoting distorted versions of the scripture, physical training in armed struggle and financial management.

Other ideological processes in the third stage include endurance and survival strategies in a strange environment, topographical and geographical familiarity, reconnaissance strategies, training on weapon handling, appropriate timing for action and strategic training on target precision and induction on manufacturing of explosives. The fourth stage of ideological development for religious terrorism is a strategic action plan and implementation of action by sending militants to the field to attack targets.

Religious ideology and terrorists' target selection

Religious ideology plays a crucial role in the terrorist's target selection (Drake, 2017). Selection is affected by many factors because terrorists seek to achieve their political aims by coordinating the group's resources, pattern of attacks and any other actions by attacking those targets which confer the greatest benefits upon their cause. Terrorist strategies involve attacks that maximize the chances of achieving desired goals. Target selection is also affected by other factors such as the resources available to the group to carry out its assignment, the counter-terrorism reaction of the society to the actions and the security environment within which the terrorists operate. While the place of ideology in target selection process is crucial, there is no single way to adequately explain terrorist target selection. Sometimes also, for reasons of either misjudgment or operational efficiency, the reaction that terrorists may actually provoke is not always the response they intended. For instance, in Nigeria, an overwhelming majority of Muslims does not support the destructive activities of the Boko Haram sect because of their militant disposition and unorthodox confrontation with the constituted authorities in Nigeria, which is contrary to the core teaching of Islam, despite their claims that they are fighting the cause of Islam.

Terrorists might equally attack the wrong target due to misfortune, miscalculation or incompetence. For example, in the Dutch town of Redmond in May 1990, Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) members shot dead two Australian tourists whom they had mistaken for British soldiers

(Frank, 1998). This is an indication that the results which terrorists achieve are sometimes not those that they intended. It is important to bear this in mind when trying to figure out the motives of their actions. Although the decision to turn to terrorism may occasionally be provided by the ideology of the group, such a decision could be determined by other strategic factors such as the failure of non-violent methods for achieving the group's goals or the repression of non-violent methods by state or non-state bodies. Irrespective of how the decision to turn to terrorism has been made, when a group takes the decision to use violence, an early step is to identify its primary and secondary targets by first determining who or what should be attacked for the group to achieve its objectives.

A group's ideology is thus extremely important in determining target selection because it defines how the group's members see the world around them and how they intend to retain, sustain or change the prevailing world view. The ideology of a terrorist group defines its primary target by first identifying the 'enemies' of the group having irrationally provided the standard against which to assess the 'innocence' or 'guilt' of people and institutions. Terrorist's irrational judgment gives rise to the idea that certain people or things are somehow 'legitimate targets'. Thus, the terrorist concept of a legitimate target is not the same as common or legal notions of guilt and innocence. For instance, members of the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) in Britain frequently claim that by breaking the law, they are in fact responding to a higher divine law that compels them to act as they do (Drake, 2017).

Consequently, events and the actions of various people, intentional and unintentional, constitute potential targets of terrorists and such actions influence terrorists' course of action, even if the people concerned have never given the terrorists a moment's thought. The notion of guilt or innocence for selection as a terror target is thus dependent upon the subjective legal and moral imperatives and interpretation of people's offenses by the terrorists. Thus, just being who, what, or where one is may be enough for a person to be legitimate, intended and unintended target. Target selection for the terrorists may be simple or tasking (Clark, 2002). It is always simple if there is a symbol of identification like uniform, visible identity card, uniform tag and signpost, amongst others. Target selection is always difficult where the above physical symbols are lacking or not conspicuous. On the other hand, terrorist strongholds cannot be adequately targeted by conventional security forces because terrorist operations are largely carried out undercover.

Many terrorist groups lack both the cohesion and the effective hierarchical chain of command to select their targets rationally as one may find inefficient formal security organizations (Hoffman, 2001). Sometimes, operational decisions concerning target selection may be made by middle-ranking or junior terrorist leaders on the battlefield rather than the head of the terrorist organization. Thus, it may be wrong to attribute terrorist decisions about target selection to one central and collective ideological mindset.

Countering violent religious extremism

African governments at various levels – national, sub-regional and regional, have designed different counter-terrorism strategic responses. Generally, three models of counter-terrorism strategy are discernible (Omotola, 2013). These are military-led reprisals and preemptive actions against the insurgents, which rely principally on the use of force; constitutional enactment, amendment and reforms that seek to improve the performances and the response of security agencies to terrorist threat; and a tactical de-radicalization approach targeted at appeasing religious extremists to drop their hard-line postures. Thus, both Nigeria and Kenya have responded to the threat of and/or terrorism, using state security-led reprisals with preemptive and reactive actions which rely largely on the use of force. There is also the legal regulatory measure through legislative acts that impose heavy punishment on convicted extremists, and strengthening of the law enforcement institution through counter-terrorism training along with the establishment of a panel of enquiry to investigate the causes of insurgency. In the wake of Boko Haram terrorism, Nigeria has with the assistance of the US, France and the United Kingdom trained military personnel on counter-terrorism operations.

At the regional level, the African Union established the African Centre for the Studies and Research in Terrorism (ACSRT) as an institution of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) in line with the Algeria Plan of Action (African Union, 2021). The primary goals of ACSRT are to centralize information, initiate and analyze studies on terrorism and terrorist groups; and develop training programmes by organizing, with the assistance of international partners, training schedules, meetings and symposia. Also in line with the UN Security Council Resolution 1373, which requires all member states to enact counter-terrorism legislations and policies, many African countries have responded in various ways.

In North Africa for example, after years of militarized responses, former President Bouteflika of Algeria, upon assuming office in September 1999, approved the ‘civil Accord’ which granted amnesty to those who fought against the government (Omotola, 2013). This was pushed further in another referendum in September 2005, which approved the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation (CPNR). The CPNR not only grants amnesty to all except murderers, rapists and bombers, but also provides for compensation for the families of the victims of violence and those missing in terrorist attacks. The Algerian government also initiated in 2008, efforts to reform its security sector primarily through the recruitment of 100,000 new police and gendarme officers to reinforce border control, augment security at airports and increase security presence in major cities. Given the increasing threats of AQIM, especially outside Algeria, where its activities have been curtailed or constrained by security measures, the leaders of Algeria, Libya and Mali agreed in July 2009 to collectively work against AQIM. Consequently, in August 2009, the military chiefs of these countries and their Mauritanian counterpart met in

Tamanrasset, a Southern Algerian town to fashion the Tamanrasset Plan, a regional agreement to cooperate against terrorism and related crimes through joint military actions. The plan became operational in April 2010 with the establishment of a joint command center for security officers from 25,000 (15,000 of whom were Algerians) to 75,000 (Omotola, 2013).

In Nigeria where Boko Haram has carried out several attacks, the official response has been mainly militaristic albeit too late. In the wake of the renewed terrorist attacks launched by the sect in September 2009, the federal government deployed security forces against the group and in the process, Mohammed Yusuf, the group leader, was captured by the military. He was extra-judicially executed in custody under controversial circumstances. There was a lull in even military force response to Boko Haram violence after Yusuf was captured and assassinated. The government launched a major military response with the military Task Force (JTF) codenamed 'Operation Restore Order' (ORO) 1 and 11 in June 2011 in Borno and Yobe states after Boko Haram violence got out of hand. Indeed, soon after government launched these operations, the Borno Committee of Elders and Leaders of Thought demanded withdrawal of the military in July 2011, perhaps because of abuse of human rights and killings of innocent people.

The Nigerian National Assembly passed the anti-terrorism law on February 17, 2011 in response to increasing terrorist attacks. The Act gives the security forces powers to seal off a property or vehicle without a search warrant and allows a judge to order the detention of terror suspects for up to 30 days if they feel it is in the interest of public safety. The law also allows the court to pass sentences of up to 30 years imprisonment on conviction, depending on the severity of the charges. Built mainly on force, Nigeria's counter-terrorism operations palpably lack an intelligence foundation and strategic communication, and have largely been counterproductive and characterized by human rights violations, extra-judicial killings, amongst others (Human Right Watch, 2013). For a long time, Nigeria failed to secure the cooperation of other countries, namely, Cameroon, Niger, Mali and Chad, whose borders provided escape routes to Boko Haram insurgents until 276 Chibok girls were kidnapped in April 2014.

The counter-terrorism responses in East Africa are not very different from those of Nigeria. For instance, Kenya established a specialized anti-terrorism unit within its police force. This was in addition to the creation of the National Counter-Terrorism Center under the auspices of the National Security and Intelligence Service, to provide timely intelligence services to assist in the war against terrorism. The country also initiated security measures at public places, airports, government installations and foreign embassies in Kenya. However, the government efforts to pass anti-terrorism laws were vehemently opposed by Islamic leaders, who saw the proposed laws as too draconian and capable of curtailing the rights of Muslims.

In Uganda and Tanzania, anti-terrorism legislations were enacted, namely, Uganda's Suppression of Terrorism Act of 2002 and Tanzania's Anti-Terrorism

Law of 2003, which essentially criminalize terrorism and prescribe sanctions, including denial of bail to suspected terrorists, power to arrest without a warrant and the confiscation of assets and instrument of violence. While the counter-extremist efforts have yielded different levels of success in different contexts, they have also undermined human rights in many instances. There is, therefore, the need for further search for more appropriate counter-extremist strategies in Africa. Counter-terrorism strategies of African states are not remarkably different from those of the advanced economies and democracies, which are experiencing or facing the threat of terrorism. According to Sidel (2010), two patterns are identifiable in the UK, Australia and India. The first is the strengthening of state capacity to investigate and punish expanded range of terrorist or terror support activities. The second is the enactment and enforcement of new legislation and old legislations with renewed determination that restrict privacy.

Conclusion

An examination of the religious ideology of terrorism indicates it is the root cause of violent extremism in many countries. Terrorism has negative implications for national security as the act has created chaos, inhibited investment and stifled development while also creating social disorder in many African countries. Ideology has played a crucial role in terrorist activities of hard-line religious sects as it reveals their motives for action and provides a prism through which terrorists view the actions and reactions of other people. Ideology equally plays a central role in the decision about targets of attack and serves as a foundation for the justification of violence and peace by hard-line Jihadists of religious sects.

The religious ideology of terrorism primarily originates, rightly or wrongly, from the religious scriptures, prophetic traditions and the opinion of learned religious scholars. Religious doctrines, which fuel terrorism, fall into five ideological categories: religion, politics, economics, structure of society and ethics. Many factors, which include biological and environmental issues, drive the ideological orientations of violent religious extremism. There are different ideological openings and many gateways of contact between potential recruits and terrorists. These include prayer groups, sports clubs, charitable organizations, cult groups and deviant meeting points such as Indian hemp joints. Although this chapter has distilled the general ideological orientation of religious terrorism, it does not portray an in-depth knowledge and understanding of ideological orientation of each religious terrorist group which is very diverse within inter- and intra-religious ideological settings.

Such irreconcilable ideological variations have brought about operational split and factions amongst some terrorist groups in the course of pursuing their objectives. Many African countries affected by violent religious extremism have designed different counter-terrorism strategies, including military reprisals and preemptive actions against terrorism through de-radicalization

programmes. However, the counter-terrorism strategies have achieved limited success due to concerts of internal and external factors. There is then the need to draw up a comprehensive counter-terrorism plan in Africa. Such a strategy should encompass various but closely knitted programmes that address increasing proliferation and radicalization of terrorist groups in Africa. Such counter-terrorism strategies include addressing security problems, both strategic and non-strategic components. African countries should also address economic, political and governance challenges, in order to promote development of social equity on the continent.

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9 Youth radicalism and violent religious extremism

Introduction

Youth radicalism, which has a connection to violent religious extremism, is salient in terrorism and counter-terrorism discourse because it is the foundation of such destructive acts (Obasanjo, 2001; Martin, 2009; Pareli, 2014). Youth radicalism and violent religious extremism have remained recurrent destructive decimals across the world, with such radical postures manifesting in acts of terrorism in many parts of Africa. Terrorism poses a serious threat to security in Africa, given the catastrophes that it engendered including physical injury and psychological trauma. It has also led to the displacement of families and communities, increased insecurity and impediments to sustainable development.

The nexus between youth radicalism and religious extremism in Africa, drawing on the case of Nigeria and Kenya, is the main focus of analysis. Nevertheless, perspectives on diverse African contexts provide critical insights into the transnational interconnectedness of the phenomenon in Africa. The rise of the affiliates of global Jihadist groups like the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Ansar al-Sharia in North Africa is primarily driven by radicalized youths. This is also the case for the Boko Haram sect in Nigeria. Since 2012, the Northern part of Mali has become a major hub of radicalized youths, with an inclination to violent extremist intents which manifest in the ceaseless and destructive attacks by the Ansar al-Din and the Movement for the Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) (International, 2015). Youth radicalism and violent extremism, as perpetrated by the Al-Shabaab religious sect is very pronounced in Somalia and Kenya while radical Islamism by the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) is very rife in Algeria.

More so, youth radicalization and the recruitment process are increasingly becoming transnational and protracted in nature, with complex networks of terrorist groups transcending sub-regional, regional and continental boundaries, as well as social, racial and cultural barriers. For instance, radicalized Boko Haram violent extremists are largely recruited from Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, Chad and Mali. Also, the involvement of highly western-educated youth, such as Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, the Nigerian-born terrorist,

who attempted to bomb a US-bound plane in 2009, has challenged the conventional ideas around the earlier held notion on the profile of violently radicalized youth in Africa as being largely populated by the illiterate and the destitute. This case suggests that educated young men and women from seemingly affluent backgrounds are also at risk of radicalization.

Radicalism has been described as the process of strict adherence to a belief system that involves the use of non-conventional means to aspire and effect change along the lines of what is considered an ideal past, or an envisioned future in the society (Oshita et al., 2015). The phenomenon of youth radicalism draws on doctrinal values and identity in which an individual or group adopts an extreme worldview that rejects and undermines freedom of choice and expression of alternative religious beliefs. Such a radical posture also opts for a violent approach to achieving ideological ends (Pareli, 2014).

A unifying theme across Kenya and Nigeria is the way the two social movements (Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram) have managed to frame their recruitment appeals across two major themes. One is that they have framed socio-economic grievances directed against their respective states, to mobilize recruitment and consequent radicalization into violent extremism. The grievances are centered around youth unemployment, poverty and general societal inequalities blamed on 'secular states', this recruitment appeal is couched to justify the need for an alternative governance under style premised on Sharia Law. Secondly, these groups rely on a global appeal that advocates the need to protect the Muslim Ummah. The set of grievances they continue to narrativize against states advances the need to protect Muslims who are claimed to face a 'global assault' by apostates and western governments, particularly through the framing of the 'Global War on Terror'. These groups appeal to events happening outside of their operational contexts (East and West Africa) to propagate Muslim marginality elsewhere and hence the need to defend a global Ummah. It is largely through these two themes which are interspersed with religious frames that indoctrination and consequent recruitment into violent extremism happens.

Debates on radicalization

The concept of radicalization with its connection with violent extremism remains contested. A number of variables at the root of radicalization have been discussed in the literature. The variables range from political and social ideologies to a series of personal and collective grievances (Nilsson, 2018). The term radicalization gained currency in the counter-terrorism discourse post the Madrid and the London bombings, respectively in 2004 and 2005. Radicalization has often been debated within the context of Islamism, terrorism and Jihadi terrorism (Manyange, 2015).

Radicalization has, thus, been considered from the psychological, social and emotional processes that lead individuals to adopt an ideology that justifies violence. These processes can be at individual or group levels. Radicalization

scholars suggest that the phenomenon should be treated as a set of complex causal processes that are weaved together to produce extremist outcomes. Radicalization thus should be contextualized as a set of intricate pathways that can result in multiple outcomes. Therefore, it should not be analyzed simply from linear processes or a series of indicators (Jensen et al., 2018). The concept of violent extremism is applied in this chapter means ‘advocating, engaging or supporting ideologically motivated violence to further socio, economic or political goals’ (Romaniuk et al., 2018: 162). For radicalization to transform into violent extremism, a series of events precede it. One is the existence of local level grievances, and two, among others, is the connection between the local and global dynamics with regards to grievances and which then are relied upon to mobilize violence to achieve desired objectives (Ismail, 2013).

Furthermore, radicalization, which likely leads to violence, or the picking of extreme belief systems, is not unique to the African context but is rather a global question. In the West, Islamic radicalization has been mediated by several factors. One of the factors is globalization and breakdown of traditional communities and identities. This has particularly been the case among second-generation Muslim immigrants who experience challenges of social exclusion. In this regard, there may be an easy affinity to the *Ummah* – a global Muslim community and which the Jihadis claim to represent. A second factor in the West relates to social interaction and its linkage to radicalization. Peer pressure and interaction with charismatic leaders have formed part of the radicalization chain. A frame alignment is often created to enable recruitment. Framing has to do with how a phenomenon is presented and interpreted. In this context, an issue is presented as requiring a response through the mobilization of violence in response to a particular societal grievance (Ndzovu, 2017: 159). This framing and the subsequent recruitment occur through the interpretation of factors such as poverty, racism and war and the attendant solutions (Nilsson, 2018).

Poverty remains contested as a causation of radicalization that can lead to terrorist acts. Economic deprivation can be a risk factor however (Piazza, 2006, 2011; Vertigans, 2007). Such solutions would include the formation of an Islamic State that would offer an alternative form of governance. A third factor is the individual level motivations and needs. These may include political and ideological inclinations, a sense of adventure or youth rebellion. Having highlighted these factors, there is the lack of a clear radicalization path. A more useful approach is to consider it a long-term process. In other words, it is a gradual process that is mediated by a multiplicity of factors. There is the lack of a singular pathway in the radicalization process. Recruitment into Jihadist networks is thus context-specific and as such, a variety of studies would help to situate the radicalization process in much clearer details (Nilsson, 2018). In the Kenyan and Nigerian contexts, radicalization discourses are often debated through the agency of charismatic religious leaders and the marginalization narratives perceived to be experienced by Muslims. It is the series of local level grievances, which find resonance with the global dynamics that the stage is set for the radicalization processes.

Youth radicalization in Africa: An appraisal

Today, religion is not only the principal issue in international politics, but it is also a primary cause of violence and global conflict (Harold et al., 2012). The historical profile of extremism shows that violence in the name of religion is a recurring theme in human history (Gadji, 2015). For instance, early Judaism radicals presented their religious deity (Dalaam) as a fearful personality who showered wrath on followers for falling short but for the power of priests who shielded devotees from such divine anger. Thus, there is no alternative to worshipping 'Dalaam' for its unreserved blessings and protection for mankind. Christian radicals from the Church of Rome have a history of retarding scientific advances, by punishing anyone who voiced an opinion contrary to the Church's doctrines. Muslim radicals from Afghanistan (Taliban) have also destroyed religious monuments belonging to natives which they considered as centers of idol worship.

Unfortunately, mankind is still fighting this plague. Religious radicalism has gained renewed global attention since September 11, 2001 when the United States of America was attacked by Al-Qaeda. In recent times, such radical posture has been on the rise and is manifesting in militancy in many parts of Africa. Currently, religion is being used in many instances as a tool to unite and mobilize people, to dominate politics, education, ways of life and even thinking. The upsurge of religious radicalism and the concomitant spate of violence and terrorism has caused considerable anxiety and destruction of lives and properties leading to a state of insecurity in Africa (Rafique and Muhammad, 2014). The likes of ISIS in Iraq and Syria, the Ansar ud-Deen, MUJAO in Mali as well as Al-Shabaab in Somalia, Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al-Qaeda are typical examples of religious radicals who are currently bent on establishing a religious state in a secular environment.

In 2011, the Arab uprisings created unexpected opportunities for religious radicals as the marginalized Jihadi-Salafi groups in Tunisia gained mainstream support for their hard-line position on the need to establish an Islamic state in the country (Gadji, 2015). In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood won the presidential election mainly because of its pro-Islamic state political manifestoes. By implication, many Muslim radicals supported the rise of 'Islamic democracy' under a Muslim Brotherhood banner in Egypt (CSIS, 2015).

In Uganda, Joseph Kony of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) is a Christian radical who professed to have direct audience with God. He led an army of renegades to wipe out villages. Survivors were either converted to child soldiers, or child wives of the men in the 'army of god'. Radicalized child soldiers were also commanded to go back and attack, kill, rape and plunder in their own communities where mostly their own families had survived previous attacks (Gadji, 2015). The LRA tentacles have spread far and wide from Uganda to Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), South Sudan, Central African Republic and Chad, causing destruction of lives and property. In Sudan, a group of military officers, led by Omar al-Bashir, overthrew the democratically elected government of Sadiq al-Mahdi on June 30, 1989, professing disciples

of Hassan al-Turabi, the great fundamentalist figure of modern Sudan and the founder of the movement called the National Islamic Front (NIF).

Religious extremism in Nigeria first came to limelight in the early 1980s when Muhammadu Marwa (Maitatsine) struck in Kano. Although Marwa was killed by security agents during the crisis, his followers who escaped have since then continued the propagation of his doctrine (Murtada, 2014). There were similar uprisings in Bauchi, Maiduguri and Yola in 1980 and 1981. The followers of Marwa, popularly known as 'Kala-Kato' remain a potent threat in most parts of Northern Nigeria. The country also harbors several other groups with extremist tendencies. Some of these groups include the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (Shiite sect), Ansar ud-Deen group and the Jama'at Ahlus Sunnah Lidda'Awati wal-Jihad (The group of the people of Sunnah for preaching and struggle) popularly known as Boko Haram. The latter group was formed by the late Muhammad Yusuf in Maiduguri in 2002 (Murtada, 2014).

There are three major doctrinal foci of religious radicals globally (Zaben, 2012). The first aspect is the intense drive to expand the religious law of a sect with such a sect aspiring to form a theocratic government. For instance, Jewish religious radicals struggled to form a government to promote the supremacy of the Halacha (Dogma) while many Islamic fundamental sects struggle for political power to promote the supremacy of the Quran over any other law which must be rigidly followed even in a secular state. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) wants to rule to enforce the Ten Christian Commandments on the Ugandans. Charismatic leaders of such radical organizations customize religion to radicalize the youth toward their social, political and economic goals. Radical leaders equally twist, turn and manipulate religion to convince vulnerable youths to commit acts such as terrorism while also legitimizing any means to achieve their objectives.

Characterization of youth radicalism

Youth radicalism is characterized by expression of belief and commitment to a cause beyond what is reasonably acceptable as enshrined in the script (Gadji, 2015). It also encourages religious intolerance and violence and does not tolerate other people's opinions or beliefs. Other features of religious radicalism include unquestioned certainty about the radical's hard-line position; demonizing those who disagree with such a position and desire for violence through battle or holy war against those who oppose such religious values. The unquestioned certainty about the radical's position also implies that when he is certain that his position is absolutely and completely true, he goes to any length to defend and preserve it. The underlying insecurity that accompanies this certainty stems from the fear that any element of doubt would negate the radical's self-identification and his very existence.

Demonizing those who disagree with radical views is often accompanied by the use of vile language. While radicals blame others for the ills of the

society, the desire for a final battle or holy war against those who oppose radical views is the most disturbing aspect of youth radicalism because such a hard-line posture often promotes conflict of various dimensions ranging from pure religious disagreement and acrimony to violent ethno-religious conflicts leading to loss of lives and property (Gadji, 2015). Godfrey (2007) found ten pointers to youth radicalism as follows:

- a Radical counter-modernists often identify themselves with the past golden age of conservatism rather than aligning themselves with Western modernity in an attempt to restore the fundamental etiquette of religion.
- b Radicals are generally assertive, clamorous and often violent.
- c They are 'the Chosen' and 'the Saved'. And as such, they are 'privileged' or 'burdened' with a special mission on behalf of their deity and for the benefits of the world.
- d Public marks of distinction are needed to maintain the radical's sense of superiority and distinctive identity, not only for the purpose of maintaining that unique identity, but also as 'part of the narcissistic struggle to be considered unique and special'.
- e There is only one true religion to the radicals and one correct way of life that must be defended against in-roads from other religions and secularism.
- f Religious pluralism is a problem for the radicals because they accept only one exclusive 'Truth'.
- g There is one superior holy book, prophet or charismatic leader to whom literal obedience is mandatory.
- h Beliefs, laws and supreme authorities come from God only and His dictates must be strictly followed.
- i Female sexuality must be controlled and clear impassable boundaries must be established between men and women.
- j Convergence of fundamentalism and nationalism – The moral life according to the will of God can only be fully lived in a society of fellow practitioners of the belief. This can be achieved through God's rule only and not through the national executive and legislative authorities. Hence, radicals emphasize the importance of enthroning a government that will prioritize the right morals and right culture for the nation, relegating other functions of government to the background.

Medium of youth radicalization

There are various channels of youth radicalization in Africa. These include verbal preaching, books, video and audio clips, mobile phones and the internet. Through these avenues, the doctrinal truth, virtues and spiritual alchemy of a particular religion are shared by radicals while membership could also be recruited through personal connections with existing terrorists. Radicals adopt various channels to relay their ideologies to the outside

world with a view to recruiting new members, wooing sympathizers and sustaining the devotion of active members (Gadji, 2015). Devotion to comrades is not only a force for joining a radical group, it is equally or more a barrier to leaving the group. Such a process of radicalization begins with changes in self-identification due to grievance frequently driven by personal or group agitations regarding local issues and international events (Onouha, 2014). Grievance is, thus, understood to create a sense of alienation or disenchantment that provides a cognitive opening for radicalization.

Moreover, a radical ideology is an extreme set of ideas that provides the individual with a new outlook and explanation for the world in which he finds himself. Thus, an individual becomes mobilized as he slowly but steadily integrates into a community of other like-minded people. A specific event can equally push an individual or group from rhetoric to violent radical action (Murtada, 2014). The major hallmark of radicalization is that an individual's passive reception of revolutionary or extremist views and ideas usually transform to the active pursuit of these ideas through the adoption of violence and other means to realize such intentions (Murtada, 2014: 15).

Youth radicalization could take place at societal, group and individual levels (Macvaugh, and Schiavone, 2010). Radicalization takes place at societal level for mass mobilization for nationalistic feelings, hard-line postures and war of extermination of other groups as witnessed in Nazi Germany, where people were massively radicalized to hate and exterminate the Jews. At group levels, there is progression toward increased extreme mass actions, by religious sects and political organizations to impose their ideologies, or even forms or ideas of government. There are also individuals' motives for radicalization to include individuals' perceived or real victimization and abuses by concerned authorities. Such radicalized individuals can act alone rather than being part of a group to take revenge through terrorist acts.

Youth radicalism and acts of terrorism

For the religious radicals, violence is first and foremost a sacramental act or theocratic duty executed in direct response to some theological demand for struggle, including terrorism, to achieve divine goals through holy war for gaining divine reward. Most radicalized youths are pushed into violence as arsonists, hired assassins, armed robbers and terrorists. Such radical approach has assumed a transcendental dimension where radicals are unconstrained by political, moral, or practical barriers (Hoffman, 1995). Since 2001, religious radicals have overtaken ethnic separatism to become the main drivers of terrorist attacks around the world (Gadji, 2015). Majority of these terrorist incidences were perpetrated by just four groups: the ISIS, the Boko Haram sect in Nigeria, the Taliban in Afghanistan and the Al-Qaeda. More than 80% of deaths from violent religious radicalism in 2013, occurred in just 6 countries: Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nigeria, Yemen and Syria (Global Terrorism Index, 2014). Majority of incidents over the past few years were credited to

groups with a religious agenda (Arnett, 2014). In the 2019 Global Terrorism Index, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Mali and Mozambique are categorized as countries that recorded a substantial increase in deaths from terrorism in 2018. In the same vein, conventional wisdom has emerged that the current wave of religiously motivated terrorism propagates acts of unrestrained, indiscriminate violence, and that it is irrational, thus offering few, if any, policy options for counter-terrorism measures.

Youth radicalism which is predominant in the Middle East has spread to North, East, West and Central Africa because extremist movements offer values, economic support and services and a sense of community that is attractive, especially to the young and disenfranchised in the society in the face of persistent socio-economic problems, corruption and poor governance in those countries. Religious radicalism is somewhat regarded as problematic, because it is widely and increasingly being used as a resistant movement whose manifestation adversely affects national security by promoting religious intolerance, resistance of lawful authorities, spreading terrorist activities while equally promoting bigotry and violence. Radicalism polarizes countries and is inconsistent and incompatible with freedom of association. All this indicates a strong and direct relationship between religious radicalization and insecurity in many African countries whose socio-economic conditions provide a fertile ground for the rise of radicalism.

The link between violent extremism and terrorism

Though violent religious extremism does not constitute terrorism in itself, it nonetheless serves as a breeding ground for a dissented mindset to cause violence and the foundation for terror acts. As argued by Williams (2015), there is no terrorist who does not have an extreme conviction of the ideological justification for specific act of terror. The transformational phases of religious extremism to terrorism, as identified by Williams (2015: 7), include openness of extremist mind to new doctrinal view with overwhelming conviction, loss of interest and connection with the initial doctrinal identity, change in religious ideological worldview from the old to the new, adoption of extreme beliefs, enrolment as a member of extreme organization and the preparedness to die for an extreme course, endorsement of personal duty and obligation to engage in terrorism if need be and actual engagement in terror acts. In the same vein, Saroglou (2011) identifies five transformational stages of a moderate religionist to an extremist. These include a stage of cognitive awareness and conviction about the doctrinal value of religion (believing stage); a bonding stage, which binds the believer with the reality of his newfound religious worldview; physical attitudinal manifestation and disposition toward practical application of his conviction to his daily activities (behavior); belonging; and identifying with a particular extreme religious denomination that represents his world view.

Thus, the transformation of an extremist into a terrorist takes the form of psychological preparation and physical transformation. Schmid (2014)

identifies five warning signs of a possible transformation of religious extremism into terrorism. These include recalcitrant and uncompromising belief in absolute truth of the preferred religion with intolerance of alternative view, endorsement of blind obedience to such religious leadership, quest to establish fundamental utopian piety around the preferred religion and declaration of other religions as doctrinally dirty, physical attitudinal preparedness to cause trouble by any means to sustain such doctrinal ideology and declaration of holy war against any secular authority who opposes such religious view. As noted by Hogg and Adelman (2013), the transformation of religious extremism into terrorism is also facilitated and highly triggered by those with radical religious agenda, which support violent action, authoritarian leadership, use of crude and harsh religious laws, extreme intragroup discipline and loyalty to the leader who does no wrong and weak acceptance of different worldview.

Drivers of religious extremists into terrorists, as argued by Thurston (2019), include marginal life satisfaction that is characterized by poverty, illiteracy and weak education, socio-economic stress and youthful deviance. Thus, the conclusion of the author revolves around five components of religious transformation from extremism to terrorism and these are; ideological orientation (belief), level of intellectual capacity (Knowledge), quality of ritual strength or spiritual advancement (spiritual worship), level of emotional balance and the level of the state capacity to contain violence. The author believes that if the above variables are low in the mindset of a religious adherent, there is likelihood of religious laxity; their moderation could also lead to religious tolerance, while their extreme orientations could turn a religious believer into a terrorist, especially if the state's counter terrorism institutions are too weak to curtail it. What the above conceptual clarifications suggest is that religious extremism is a direct motivation for acts of terrorism.

Religion and the links to violent extremism

The events of 9/11 renewed a debate in the scholarship on the claimed links between religion and violence. In the aftermath of the attack, Islam and political violence became increasingly associated. Whereas there is evidence that Muslims have been linked with terrorist violence globally, the critical voices, on the other hand, opine that it is the Western media framing that tends to associate Islam with political violence. The rise of groups such as the ISIS, Boko Haram in Nigeria and the Al-Shabaab in Somalia have continued to shape the association between Islam and civil wars (Karakaya, 2015). To some scholars, and sometimes in uncritical ways, Islam has been associated with intolerance toward non-believers and hence a proximity to violence. Part of the argument on the violence claims is centered on the concept of Jihad and some verses of the Koran to advance this argument (Karakaya, 2015).

Two perspectives on Jihad are often invoked in literature. These are the offensive and the defensive Jihad. The less practiced of the two is the offensive Jihad. It focuses on the spread of Islam, enlightenment and civility in

war. The more widely practiced is that of the defensive Jihad. In sum, it is founded on the pursuit of justness. It simply argues that the need for Muslims to protect their global community is a religious obligation. It thus calls for Muslim communities to protect their faith and the faithful in instances where external forces invade their territory. Al-Qaeda used this defensive posture to justify its 9/11 attacks in America. Reference had been made earlier to the suffering of the Muslim populations in such contexts as Palestine. Defending the Muslim community against external aggression is thus at the core of defensive Jihad (Wiktorowicz, 2005).

Prior to the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the concept of Jihad assumed a different currency – it was focused on inner purity and struggles for one's soul (Wiktorowicz, 2005). Al-Qaeda and other fundamentalist movements constitute the 'global Jihad movements' (Wiktorowicz, 2005: 75). They constitute a broader community of the 'Salafis' often also known as the Wahhabis. The Salafis follow strictly the Quran, the *Sunnah* (traditions of Prophet Mohammed), including the examples of his companions but with reference to religious sources. There exist variants within the Salafi movement on the understanding of Islam. It is the Jihad faction that advocates the use of violence to set up Islamic states and confront the United States and its allies. The non-violent factions denounce the use of violence. The contention across these Salafi groups include when Jihad can be called, what constitutes 'defensive or offensive Jihad', and the targeting of civilians, including the use of suicide bombing. These contentions are settled on the basis of subjective religious interpretations with reference to the past and contemporary issues (Wiktorowicz, 2005).

In a nutshell, Jihadi Salafism is a global movement that focuses on armed struggle to defend an imagined *ummah*. It is an entity founded on the selective interpretation of Islamic theology and history. As a religious movement, it exhibits violence but also suffers fragmentation from within (Karagiannis, 2014). The evoking of Jihad in Islamic insurgencies does create local, regional and global appeal. The term insurgency here is used to refer to a movement that aspires to control a particular territory using a range of techniques that may include guerilla warfare, terrorism and so on (Byman, 2013). With this appeal comes resources and a band of friends. This also comes with its own challenges. Salafi insurgents are unified by set of factors that range from a cause, to the narrative or propaganda they adopt, the recruits, weapons and supplies, and organization among others. In singling out recruitment, most recruitment often happens through religious networks and organizations. Mosques and related social organizations are spaces that can be used to motivate individuals to join these movements. Charismatic preachers are usually part of this chain to encourage individuals to join in the fight (Byman, 2013). Salafism draws its roots from Saudi Arabia and has expanded globally, owing in part to its oil wealth but also as part of the state's foreign policy (Wiktorowicz, 2005; Mwangi, 2012; Amble & Hitchens, 2014).

Religious ideology and youth radicalization in Kenya

The place of ideology and ideologues in the Kenyan context is important in this respect. Since 2008, hundreds of Kenyan youths have joined the Al-Shabaab in Somalia. Their motivation to join the insurgency has, in part, been influenced by the rise of a Jihadi ideology (Amble & Hitchens, 2014). The targets of radicalization, while rapidly changing over time, have not only been the Somali population in Kenya's border towns alone but also in Nairobi's informal settlements such as Majengo. The focus of recruitment has further changed to include Swahili-speaking majority ethnic groups across the country. Empirical data collected from former militants in the insurgency is indicative of the place of ideology in recruitment. The motivation to join being anchored on the need to defend a global Ummah under threat. The Jihad ideology was, thus, invoked to enable a response from a western assault on 'Islam'. Religious preachers with affiliation to the Al-Shabaab network became important conveyors of this Jihadist ideology (Amble & Hitchens, 2014). The conflict in Somalia thus united Kenyan Muslims with other nationalities that were concerned with engaging in a violent Jihad. The conflict in Somalia also offered an opportunity for the Kenyan Jihadists to be part of a global Islamic movement (Ndzovu, 2018). Boko Haram in Nigeria has, additionally, capitalized on religious ideology to recruit and justify its cause. It relies on Jihadi Salafism like the Al-Shabaab in East Africa (Kassim, 2015).

The agency of religious narrative has been invoked in the context of radicalization. The preparatory process toward radicalization and the likely engagement in violent extremism is said to be influenced by the presence of charismatic individuals who plant an ideology of hate and hence a call to violence. The preparatory process has been blamed on the so-called 'Jihadi' preachers with roots mainly at the Kenyan Coast even though their influence has spread toward other parts of the country including providing linkages with neighboring countries such as Tanzania. The presence of charismatic preachers at the Kenyan Coast such as the late Sheikhs Aboud Rogo and Makaburi have been linked with the preparatory processes (Hansen, 2016; Ndzovu, 2017).

The evolution of a Jihadi ideology in Kenya is traced to a prominent Muslim cleric, Sheikh Abdulaziz Rimo (1949–2015) who offered a new approach in addressing political issues among Muslims in the country. He was trained in Saudi Arabia and joined an emerging group of Salafists in the country in the 1980s. Rimo had, in 1972, received an eight-year scholarship from the Saudi Arabian Embassy to study at the Islamic University of Medina. On completion of his studies, he returned to his Digo Community in Kenya's South Coast and began his Jihad mission. The expansion of Salafism in the country could be attributed further to the increased training of Kenyan Muslims in the Middle East and in particular Saudi Arabia with its state support of Wahhabism (Ndzovu, 2018). His ideology was later picked by some of his students who in the 2000s would be termed as Jihadi clerics. Rimo

influenced some prominent Sheikhs such as Aboud Rogo (d. 2012) and Samir Khan (d. 2012). In his preaching, he urged engagement with the prophetic traditions as a source of guidance. In this regard, he denounced, among others religious innovations, a dependence on old Islamic scholars for guidance (Ndzovu, 2018).

According to field interviews conducted in Kenya in July 2019, the appeal for the Kenyan youth has been the non-localization of the cause that they should engage in. This being derived from a carefully calculated strategy of the Al-Shabaab. The recruiters are thus able to craft a globalized strategy and not a Somali strategy. As this respondent averred:

.... It is a contradiction, on one hand, that Al-Shabaab aspires to a theocratic state in Somalia while at the same time it is recruiting beyond Somalia in places such as Kenya. On one hand, it is able to show that it is not a purely Somali driven agenda... it aspires to a more global outlook in defending an assault on Islam.... (Interview with a government official, Nairobi, 29/07/2019).

Some of the aforementioned charismatic preachers in Kenya have been linked with the Answar sect that has bases in Tanga, Tanzania with claims of training linkages between the Kenyan Coast, Nairobi and Tanzania. In other words, the training has cross-border linkages (Lesage, 2014). They are said to have run trainings that sought to justify violence on the basis of a perceived marginalization of Islam globally. They principally rely on their interpretation of 'Jihad' in Islam as a bait to recruit. This is, however, a gradual process that then manages to brainwash individuals and hence persuade them to take up violent extremism (Ndzovu, 2017). The reliance on charismatic leaders is not unique to the Kenyan context. It has been applied in other contexts such as Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Furthermore, groups such as the Boko Haram that operate in West Africa have similarly situated both local and globalized grievances as pathways to radicalization (Ismail, 2013). It is important to note that not all individuals who engage in the preparatory process take up violent extremism. It is simplistic, however, to argue that the agency of the religious narrative is the most important. It just forms part of the process. It is also prudent to note and locate, from a reading of multiple works of literature on the lack of singular narratives, the radicalization process. The next section examines the radicalization process in Nigeria.

Youth radicalization, religious extremism and terrorism in Nigeria: Context, relationship and realities

Nigeria, as a sub-regional power in West Africa, was once well respected for its role in restoring stability in some conflict-torn states. In the last two decades, the growing campaign of violence by the radicalized and violent extremist group, Boko Haram, poses not only threats to the internal security in Nigeria

but also sub-regional stability in West Africa; and global insecurity has put the country at a fragile state, requiring assistance not only from neighboring countries but also from the international community (Onuoha, 2014). Studies have shown that Boko Haram runs an international network of recruitment, training and indoctrination camps in many countries, including Gao and Kidal areas in Mali; the Diffa, Miradi and Maina Soro area in Niger Republic; Maroua and Garoua area in the Republic of Cameroon; the Zango and Ridina quarters in Ndjamena, Chad; the Ranky Kotsy area in Sudan; as well as cells in the Central African Republic (Jonathan, 2014). Nigeria provides a classic case of the interlinkages between religious radicalization, violent extremism and terrorism, given that the country has been a hotbed of religious conflict more than other African countries put together, and the number of people that have died as a result of religious violence in the last two decades is higher than those of all African countries combined. Most of the casualties resulted from Boko Haram's violent activities in the North-east of Nigeria.

The lethality of the extremists has not only spilled over to neighboring countries in West Africa where about 5,000 nationals of other countries have been killed, but the sect has also remained the deadliest radicalized extremist group in West Africa (Global Terrorist Index, 2019). It is pertinent to note that more than 60% of deaths from violent religious radicalism in 2018 occurred in West Africa, out of which 65% of the incidents were recorded in Nigeria due to the destructive activities of the Boko Haram (Global Terrorist Index, 2019). In spite of the fact that there are other well-known radicalized groups in other West African countries including the Ansar Dine and MUJAO sects in Mali, the inclination of Boko Haram to lethal violence is unprecedented and distinctive, in comparison to other radicalized groups in the sub-region. The challenges of the attacks have been complicated further by the gradual infiltration of the sect into other criminal activities, including banditry, kidnapping and drug trafficking from where they largely derive the resources to finance their illicit activities.

The Boko Haram extremists is one among many radicalized groups that emerged from ideological differences linked to political Islamism in Northern Nigeria, right from the pre-colonial to post-colonial period. In this area, the genesis of religious radicalism has been traced to the Usman Dan Fodio's Jihad in the 19th century. The radical reformist that emerged in the post-colonial movements include the Izalatul Bidi'a (Society for the Eradication of Evil Innovations and the Re-establishment of the Sunna), the Islamic Movement of Nigeria, Maitasine, Nigerian Taliban and recently Boko Haram. These movements adopted a more reformist ideology with tendencies toward violent orientation and opposition to secular authorities. However, none of these ideological movements have demonstrated such radicalism and lethality, with the capacity to significantly undermine national and regional security such as the Boko Haram sect.

Okpo (2019) explains that there are different contexts and dimensions of the Boko Haram phenomenon in Nigeria, which he categorizes into three dimensions: religious, criminal and political Boko Haram. The religious sect

is the original one led by the late Muhammed Yusuf that sought to Islamize Nigeria and its environs through Jihad. Their operation was largely peaceful with some few violent incidences. The criminal Boko Haram evolved in the post-2009 phase of the sect under the leadership of Shekau, by adopting violent confrontation as its retaliative mode of operation due to the killing of its leader, Muhammed Yusuf. Its criminal characteristic includes violent attacks on the private and public spaces, killing of people and destruction of property, harassment and extortion of money from people, bank robbery, kidnapping and hostage-taking, suicide bombing, cattle rustling and killing of Nigerians regarded as infidels. The criminal brand of the extremist also has in its fold both local and international criminal-minded persons fueling the crisis for financial or other personal considerations. The Political Boko Haram is made up of political rivals in the North and other parts of Nigeria who use arms to settle disputes between themselves. The political model of Boko Haram is used as a coinage to describe the local politicians who sponsor armed thugs to help them win election with the promise of implementing the Sharia law and making them part of the government as witnessed in Borno state, where some of Boko Haram members were given political appointments, including the post of Commissioner under the Modu Sheriff administration while many of them, who had earlier been given arms and ammunitions by the politicians, are abandoned after the election, which created a fertile recruitment field for the sect and its criminal activities. There has been some conjecture that some members of the international community stoke the terrorists, using third parties to achieve some diplomatic, economic and other idiosyncratic intentions (Okpo, 2019).

The nexus between youth radicalism, violent extremism and terrorism in Northern Nigeria lies in the fact that radicalism, as well as indoctrination, is first and foremost a sacramental act or theocratic duties for the radicalized youth, which must be executed in direct response to some theological demand for extreme struggle, including terrorism, to achieve divine goals through holy war in order to gain divine reward. Most radicalized youths in Northern Nigeria are therefore predisposed to violent acts as arsonists, hired assassins, armed robbers and terrorists. Such violent radical approach has assumed a transcendental dimension where radicals are unconstrained by political, moral, or practical barriers that seem to affect other terrorists (Charles, 2017).

The Boko Haram sect offers the Nigerian youth valuable economic support while the youth also offer them deadly services, including their utilization for suicide bombing. This negative engagement between the Nigerian youth and the sect has created a sense of community spirit that is attractive, especially to the young who are annoyed with the Nigerian state as a result of persistent socio-economic problems, corruption and poor governance in the country. The Boko Haram insurgency and terrorism in Nigeria is very problematic, because it is widely and increasingly being portrayed as a resistant religious movement whose manifestation adversely affects national security by promoting religious intolerance, resisting lawful authorities, religious bigotry and violent religious extremism as well as spreading terrorist activities.

These evidently show that there is a strong and direct relationship between religious radicalization, insurgency and terrorism in Nigeria.

The sect's ability to gain easy recruits among vulnerable youths for violent radicalism both in Northern Nigeria and neighboring countries have assumed increasing worrisome dimensions in recent times due to the upsurge in terrorism, banditry and kidnapping, among other forms of criminal activities in Nigeria.

Drivers of youth radicalism, violent extremism and terrorism

Although violent religious extremists in Nigeria adhere to diverse doctrinal ideologies, the strategies that they employ to enlist youths into their ranks are often similar. Radical organizations understand and prey upon a combination of political realities and socio-economic factors that render youths in Nigeria vulnerable to recruitment for terrorism. Thus, for a very long time, disturbances associated with the expression of radical religious views in Nigeria have been explained with reference to broader issues like the nature of the country's ethno-religious division, the fluidity of its socio-economic and political structure and the ways both issues underpin politics and governance in the country. However, the changes in the global perception of radicalization, brought about by the September 11, 2001 attack on the United States, have necessitated the need for a more detailed exploration of the phenomenon (Oshita et al., 2015).

The easy recruitment of youths in other neighboring countries by Boko Haram is partly linked to many factors, including the porosity of border and the capacity to indoctrinate the youth in many remote communities to radical strands of Islamism. The inability of religious leaders in the affected areas that are prone to radicalism to forestall the propaganda of radical movements and divorce the youth of religious pretensions partly enabled the recruitment of youths into radical extremism. In addition, the structural imbalances in terms of high rate of poverty, unemployment and deteriorating infrastructure in these communities are important contributory factors. More so, community based Civil Society Organizations have not exerted enough pressure and technical support or adequately collaborated with religious leaders and other important stakeholders, including the governments to take decisive action to curtail the radicalization of youths into the Boko Haram sect in Nigeria, due to a combination of political, socio-economic, ethnic and religious factors (Uju et al., 2019). Also important are the weak institutional capacities of Nigeria to deal with violent radical extremist groups, and the counter-terrorism efforts of the Nigerian government in collaboration with other West African countries and the international community have not achieved sufficient success.

Simply put, the genesis of Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria could be linked to religious and politico-structural factors (Danjibo, 2010). The religious factor is attributed to increasing literature on religion with diverse

distorted interpretations of the scriptures which has divided the Islamic faith into conservative and protestants, feeble and core religious adherents, fledgling and saints and monotheism versus paganism amongst religious followers. Structural causes include lopsidedness in the society which is largely characterized by injustice, unfairness inequity, corruption and bad governance, amongst others, all leading to structural violence that is characterized by poverty, unemployment and deprivation which undermine human security. One of the strategies being used by the Boko Haram sect to gain support is the exploitation of the deep-rooted societal inequalities, like pervasive poverty, endemic corruption, high youth unemployment, etc., that pervade Nigeria, particularly in Northern Nigeria. This strategy is used to gain support and recruitment among youths for violent radicalism (Danjibo, 2010; Gadji, 2015; Best, 2017). To the many unemployed youths, joining extremist armed groups offers a way to express their frustration with the Nigerian state and get personal empowerment.

The Nigerian youth in Northern Nigeria that are radicalized have experienced some form of discrimination and social segregation, especially those regarded as middle-class and the less privileged in the society. The alienation of many Nigerian youths who confront a sense of purposelessness in their mode of existence has amplified violent religious extremism in Nigeria (Gadji, 2015). This negative development has made them turn toward radical religious orientation which restores a sense of purpose and personal recognition to the radicalized while the promise of martyrdom for those who die in the religious struggle has equally remained cardinal for the recruitment and retention of many a Nigerian youth in the Boko Haram sect.

The contemporary Nigerian youth increasingly connects to each other and the global marketplace of ideas via information and communication technology, especially through social media. In fact, many peasant youths in Nigeria sacrifice a large chunk of their income to purchase mobile phones. More so, improvements in Internet penetration have increased the number of Nigerian youths accessing information online at relatively cheaper rates. Thus, many youths are using social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and others to share radical ideas about a range of topics with each other and their peers in the Diasporas.

In addition, the Nigerian youth are more urbanized than previous generations as many of them are migrating to cities in search of better socio-economic opportunities, including education, employment and social amenities that accompany urban life. Though many Nigerian cities provide opportunities for achieving personal developmental aspirations of the youth, they also represent a place where youths are exposed to hardships relating to job shortages, high costs of living and a lack of traditional family and social cohesion. The difficulties of urban life are a source of youth frustration, which renders certain young people vulnerable to radical influences. Therefore, counter-radicalization efforts need to be adequately focused more on the young people struggling to survive in large cities while those who

choose to live in rural areas are radicalized toward a conservative lifestyle full of resistance to modern innovation and inclination toward violent Jihadist orientation.

The regional contexts in which the Nigerian youth reside also impact their vulnerability to radicalization. For instance, many states in Northern Nigeria, more than any other region in the country, have experienced inter-tribal and ethno-religious wars or post-election violence, with many youths gathering more combatant experiences and access to arms and ammunition, which are being eventually used for terrorism in North-eastern Nigeria. It is therefore not totally surprising that most members of the Boko Haram sect are youths from the North who have participated in one form of ethno-religious clashes or the other. In addition, the Nigerian youth live under weak and unaccountable governance and weak public institutions, which respond marginally to their personal and group development aspirations. The weak governance profile has enthroned minimal trust and disillusionment with political leaders, in a way that encourages the enlistment of Nigerian youths into radicalized sects. It is, thus, argued here that youth radicalization is both a conventional and non-conventional foundation of violent extremism in many African countries, and an avenue where the youth get the required conviction to perpetrate evil acts, using devilish religious sects.

Mediating factors in the radicalization process in Kenya

There are several mediating factors that are influencing the radicalization process in Kenya, with possibilities of leading to violent extremist acts. One of the least examined route/process is the lone wolf extremists. These are individuals who on their own volition and principally without any human agency choose by themselves to take up violent extremism. In the Kenyan context, there are yet to be any conclusive studies that would prove this process to be significant. It is also extremely difficult to prove that an extremist act is directly attributable to lone wolf plans.

Even though it is not absolutely significant in the Kenyan context, the use of the internet and related social media platforms has influenced the radicalization process (Azmiya, 2018). This has mainly been used to access propaganda materials and also for communication purposes. As has happened in related movements such as the ISIS, social media platforms such as Telegram have been used for this purpose. These platforms are relied upon for the confidentiality they offer based on claims that they have end-to-end encryption meaning that the messaging cannot be intercepted by third parties. They rely on this to avoid phone tapping that security services may adopt in the context of safeguarding national security. Security agencies in most parts of the world have capabilities for phone tapping for, among others things, preempting security threats. The advent of the internet technology has further led to the phenomenon of self-radicalization. As a respondent noted:

There is the rise of self- radicalization... the online platforms are changing the radicalization discourse.... these guys are very convincing and creating content that is very appealing and accessible online. They will collect religious verses and make them fit to a context.... (Interview with a government official, Nairobi, 29/07/2019).

One of the other mediating factors in the radicalization process in Kenya is the hard-power counter-terrorism tactics adopted by the state. Analysts have argued that a counter-terrorism response anchored on hard power tactics such as arbitrary raids and arrest of certain suspect communities (for instance, the targeting of a Muslim identity) has created an anger that is said to push individuals to want to revenge against the state (Botha, 2014). These communities have often experienced various human rights violations such as enforced disappearances and the deliberate stigmatization as 'suspect communities' in the Global War on Terror (GWOT). Some of these human rights violations have been offered as enabling factors for terrorism at the Kenyan Coast (Prestholdt, 2011; Mwakimako & Willis, 2014).

This anger couched in a marginalization narrative helps to lend credence to violent acts justified on the basis of Jihad. An interviewed government official was in agreement with the perspective that hard power can indirectly aid the radicalization process. As this respondent observed: '... Anywhere there is growth of terrorism such as Nigeria- the more force you use, the more terrorists you create.... You give them {terrorist organizations} fodder for radicalization and consequently recruitment...' (Interview with a government official, Nairobi 29/07/2019). Additionally, the above interviewed official was of the opinion that the state as part of pre-empting this threat had been embracing the new discourse of preventing violent extremism (PVE), which entails, among other tools, the use of soft power in addition to the more traditional hard power counter-terrorism responses.

To situate the contested process of radicalization, it is imperative to observe that it remains an individualized process and is dependent on contextual circumstances. In the Kenyan context and where the North Eastern and Coastal regions represented higher threat levels, there is no singular radicalization process. In order to unravel the process, one has to examine the place of religious narratives, the mediating role of the internet and social media, including tough and alienating state counter-terrorism strategies (Amble & Hitchens, 2014; Anderson & McKnight 2014; Botha, 2014; Mair, 2016). These processes are however not static, but they keep evolving for several reasons. One is that the state is able to keep up with radicalizing trends including their disruption. However, recruitment networks keep reinventing their strategies to escape detection by law enforcement strategies.

An identifiable trend, especially influencing the recruitment and radicalization process, is that of trickery into the movement. This has mainly been prevalent at the Kenyan Coast, where women especially are being lured to join violent extremism under deception. This has in the past worked through

false job recruitments mainly in the Middle East only for the ‘recruits’ to find themselves in some of the social movement camps in Somalia and in the post-2014 period territories held by ISIS. Field interviews indicated several motivations for women recruitment. One of the critical motivations cited was the continuity of the movement given women reproductive roles. As our respondent noted:

Women are reproductive vessels... they create the next generation of Mujahedeen.... This comes from the realization of the need for continuity of a movement.... Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, ISIS are doing it. Other groups such as the Lord Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda and FARC rebels in Colombia have been engaged in similar practices. It is one of the ways of assuring recruitment into the respective movements.... (Interview with a government official, Nairobi, 29/07/2019).

Youth de-radicalization: Programs, principles and prospects

Just as there are processes through which an individual becomes radicalized, there are also avenues through which such extremists reject a radical view and renounce violence. That process of retreat involves a series of de-radicalization programmes. Such action plan revolves around social and psychological processes which reduce an individual’s commitment to violent radicalization to the extent that they are no longer at risk of involvement and engagement in violent activities (Ado, 2014). De-radicalization programme is thus one of the counter-terrorism measures to control and influence the mind of radicals and extremist individuals and organizations against the motivational doctrine and other factors that propel them into violent radicalism in the first instance.

The programme of action for de-radicalization is multi-dimensional as it involves rehabilitation, especially when the cause of radicalization is linked to wrong indoctrination, societal neglect, poverty and unemployment (Ado, 2014). One of the broad approaches is to change the extremists’ wrong interpretation and indoctrination of Jihad to correct conceptual understanding of scriptures. Another is addressing the ideological sources of violent extremism through religious re-education, psychological rehabilitation and counseling by knowledgeable and respected religious leaders. Over time, radicals are scripturally reintegrated back into mainstream religion. Extremist ideologies held by the individuals are also punctured through prison-based rehabilitation programmes not only in the conventional prisons where the radicals are being incarcerated but also in other detention centers, such as the police station and security intelligence units. The programme involves renowned clerics and psychologists who build confidence in the militants with a reduced risk of recidivism to help them to realize that their activities are not in consonance with conventional religious practices.

De-radicalization programmes equally come in the form of economic empowerment by the government, through the establishment of skills acquisition centers, to provide paid jobs and other sources of income for the reintegrated and rehabilitated militant radicals into the society. They also provide palliative support to the immediate families of de-radicalized religious extremists to prevent further radicalization. Through empowerment programmes, Egypt has established demonstration farms and workshops to provide former militants with vocational skills and knowledge that make them gainfully employable while loans are granted to the graduates of the vocational centers to enable them to set up their businesses to earn a living.

For instance, the Nigerian government has put in place some measures to curtail the youth from radicalization, violent religious extremism and terrorism through series of de-radicalization programs. Such an action plan revolves around social and psychological processes which reduce the youth's vulnerability to violent radicalization to the extent that they are no longer at risk of involvement and engagement in violent activities (Ado, 2014). Despite the adoption of the de-radicalization programs as part of the counter-extremism measures in Nigeria that include legislative, prosecutorial, military actions, bilateral and multilateral institutional initiatives, there has still been a rise in the activities of extremists and escalation of terror attacks, especially in the North-eastern parts of Nigeria (Balami, 2014).

The main challenges with the counter-terrorism strategies border on the fact that much attention is focused on the military solution, at the detriment of tackling the causative factors for youth radicalization and violent extremism, including corruption and poor political governance. For instance, corruption and poor governance still persist as Nigeria is rated in the 146th position out of 180 countries on the corruption index scale by Transparency International in 2020 (Amnesty International, 2020) as unemployment, hunger and intense suffering still persist among youths while little efforts are made toward containing the proliferation of illicit arms and ammunitions in Nigeria, which primarily aid insurgency and terrorism in the first instance. There is also the weak strategic approach of the Nigerian government toward the blockade of illicit financial lifeline from foreign insurgent sources, especially from the ISIS and Al-Qaeda insurgent affiliates abroad. Inter-agency synergy and intelligence sharing among the security agencies toward the curtailment of terrorism in North-eastern Nigeria is relatively weak. The amnesty programme for the Boko Haram members which was initiated by the government in 2011, solely targets the ex-terrorists such that it serves as inducement that may motivate other youths to join extremist groups in anticipation of such reward. The programme is biased because such resettlement strategies are mainly designed to benefit the insurgents while largely excluding the victims while the financial inducement of about N50,000 monthly stipend to the so-called repentant insurgents induce the recruitment of more youths as insurgents and terrorists, through the promise that they will also be beneficiary of the financial inducement.

The conversion of some of the ex-terrorists as intelligence personnel to quell the insurgent is also strategically faulty as they could serve as a spy for the Boko Haram as well. Poor funding of the palliative and empowerment programs to resettle the terrorists has equally slowed down the counter-insurgency programs in Nigeria. The counter-terrorism efforts have remained largely unattainable due to faulty strategies and weak funding of the programs.

Conclusion

This chapter has assessed the phenomena of youth radicalism and religious violent extremism in Africa. The chapter, using literature and empirical materials, has shown the complexity of radicalization and violent extremism with a case study of Kenya and Nigeria. The chapter contributes to the unsettled debates around the pathways that lead to violent extremism. Communal grievances and religious ideology are however more prominent as drivers of violent extremism. The chapter further provides the linkages between youth radicalization and enlisting into the Al-Shabaab and the Boko Haram insurgent groups. In terms of its wider implications, it shows similarities with other violent social movement groups such as the Boko Haram and Al-Qaeda in terms of their recruitment narratives and ideologies.

There are many factors militating against de-radicalization programmes in many African countries. Government often finds it difficult to get credible and knowledgeable religious leaders who have the respect and confidence of the radical extremists to mediate between them and society. There is also the problem of paucity of funds to sustain effective and pragmatic ideological reorientation programmes on a sustained basis for de-radicalization of extremists, especially those that have been released from prisons. Activities of the de-radicalized are hardly monitored by security agents, to measure the extent of their security compliance and threat to the society. The above factors, amongst others, have curtailed the anticipated success of de-radicalization programmes in many African countries.

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10 Conclusion

The prospect of countering violent religious extremism in Nigeria and Kenya

The threats from violent religious extremism became more apparent in the African continent in the 1990s, as the aftermath of series of events in the global arena. Some of the notable events include the defeat of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the late 1980s, and the subsequent recruitment of some North Africans into Afghanistan's Mujahedeen movement and the rise of the Taliban. Violent religious extremism has since proliferated across the sub-regions on the continent, and the act of terror by these groups placed Africa on the international terrorism map.

In Africa, prominent and arguably the most deadly and entrenched violent extremist groups are the Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab. Boko Haram originated in North-eastern Nigeria as a religious dissident group that later transmuted to a deadly insurgent and terrorist sect. Al-Shabaab sprang up in Somalia as a fundamental Islamic organization, which spread its campaign of terror to other countries in East Africa, especially Kenya. Nigeria and Kenya have continued to grapple with the campaigns of terror by Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab, despite the extensive counter-extremism efforts in both countries. Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab have proved intrepid, evolving and adapting in response to the social, economic, political and security environments in Nigeria and Kenya. Both extremist groups propagate similar narratives, advocating the displacement of the corrupt state institutions and the enthronement of theocratic rule under Islamic law. With connections to global Jihadi networks, the tactical operational capabilities and strategies of the extremist groups have continued to evolve in remarkable ways. The lethal activities of these violent religious groups have become a transnational security crisis that has transcended Nigeria and Kenya, to other countries in the Lake Chad Basin and East Africa.

Violent religious extremism poses fundamental threat to the security architecture in Nigeria and Kenya, despite the fact that the two countries advanced economic and strong military capabilities in East and West African sub-regions. For more than a decade, the two countries plagued by the violent

campaign of Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab have institutional capacity gaps, to deal with the grave security threat and the colossal humanitarian crisis. The weakness of state institutions stems from governance deficits in both countries that spawned grievances that the extremists exploit in advancing a radically violent ideology, with the ultimate goal of enthronement of Islamic rule. The socio-economic inequities, injustices and sense of marginalization that characterized weak states in Africa, Nigeria and Kenya inclusive, spurred grievances that enabled extremist groups to distort religion, in the quest to impose their radically violent ideology on the disenfranchised and vulnerable segments of the populations. The weak state institutions also pose huge challenges to the capacity of the fragile states, to cope with and deal decisively with the fundamental threats from violent religious extremism. This situation becomes a double tragedy, given that the act of terror by the deadly extremists further worsen state fragility, deepening the structural imbalances at the heart of the extremism and expanding into diverse forms of criminality.

The combined counter-extremism efforts of the national, regional and international institutions have not been adequate to deal with the daunting security threat from violent religious extremism in Nigeria and Kenya. This is not only because of the peculiarity of fragile states but also because of the global and regional statuses of fragile states, like Nigeria and Kenya. This presents a dilemma to outright direct external intervention in the fight against terrorism. The threat from Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab remains potent, as the groups continue to evolve, modify and shift their operational strategy and tactics, to align with the conflict environment and the dynamics of the national, regional and international counter-extremism initiatives in Nigeria and Kenya. It is important for future research to probe into how the defining features of a fragile state, dealing with violent religious extremism impact the pattern of external interventions in the fight against terrorism.

The chapters in this book provide lucid perspectives into the historical, conceptual, national, regional and international contexts of violent extremism in Africa, focusing specifically on Nigeria and Kenya. This book offers perhaps the first attempt at a comparative analysis of the institutional capacity of two fragile African states, Nigeria and Kenya, to counter violent religious extremism. In the face of the fragile state of the governance institutions and the lingering threat from Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab, what are the prospects for a workable counter-extremism intervention to win the war on terror in Nigeria and Kenya? It remains to be seen if these countries can overcome the fundamental threat by mustering the sheer willpower, to decisively deal with the lethal and entrenched violent extremist groups.

Potentials for viable counter extremism responses in Nigeria and Kenya

Since the 2000s, Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab, Africa's most deadly and entrenched terror groups in Nigeria and Kenya, have become a persisting

existential threat to peace, security and development in the affected countries. The expansion of these extremist groups' violent campaigns to other countries in the sub-regions signposts the transnational dimension of the security threat emanating from them. Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab's links with global Jihadist networks have provided the impetus for the acquisition of weaponry and ammunitions, training and other resources for their tactical operations. Apart from the externally acquired resources, the extremists' capacity for resilience, flexibility and adaptability is enabled by the fragile socio-economic, political and security environments in Nigeria and Kenya that created conducive environments for violent extremists to incubate and proliferate. The two violent groups exploited the structural weakness in the governance institutions that spawned social inequities and injustices, wide disconnect between the government and the governed to propagate their distorted ideological and doctrinal position.

Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab's tactical capacity and operational capability are enabled by the inability of the Nigerian and Kenyan states to tackle the domestic grievances that extremists ride on, in their violent ideology and anti-statist propaganda. The concept of radicalization, violent religious extremism and counter-extremism, although contested, are pivotal to the contextual analysis of the historical context, trends and changing dynamics of violent extremism, and the national, regional and international counter-extremism initiatives in fragile states, focusing on Nigeria and Kenya. This book has provided diverse perspectives on how radical Islamic fundamentalist groups advance religious and political agendas. They do so by manipulating the religious inclination of the disillusioned local populations who are distrustful of government institutions, to advance their ideological positions through a call for violent radicalization and extremism. The viability of the government's counter-extremism response is key to the capacity to defeat violent religious extremism.

In essence, this book has illuminated the security discourse on the extremists' goals, motives and objectives linked to religious and political agenda. However, the study establishes that extremists' rhetoric, strategic, tactical and operational dexterity and brutal targeting of hapless civilians belie a much deeper territorial and opportunistic agenda. The book has demonstrated that the extremists' goal and objective transcend religious and political motives, to encompass opportunistic and pecuniary proclivities. For instance, Boko Haram's disparate carnage against fellow Muslims and the alleged maltreatment of the sect members by the leader, seriously call into question the so-called advocacy for theocratic rule. Al-Shabaab's framing of Kenya's government as an enemy of Islam is at variance with the sect targeting of both Christians and Muslims in the country, reflecting a more innate agenda. The groups use the trope of religion to radicalize and conduct attacks when convenient. Thus, the two groups are misrepresentation of religious truths and Islamic doctrines which seem to be deliberate and calculative actions intended to pave way for the attainment of a disparate set of religious, political, social and economic goals.

The emergence of Boko Haram in North-eastern Nigeria and Al-Shabaab's penetration into Kenya's coastal and Northern region are suggestive of the extremists' well-thought-out strategy, taking cognizance of an enabling social, economic, political and security environments for their violent campaigns. In North-eastern Nigeria, the physical terrain, in the birthplace and epicenter of Boko Haram violent propaganda in Borno state, which is inundated with dense forest reserve and large landmass, but lacking security surveillance, provides a viable breeding ground for the extremists. The interviewed security agencies for this study stressed the enormity of the challenge that the difficult terrain posed to the military operation in the North-eastern region. Yet, Boko Haram is able to penetrate the dense forest, using Sambisa forest in particular, as a safe haven and seat of operation. The failure of the security agencies to utilize local knowledge in understanding the distinct physical terrain is a major shortcoming of the war on terror. The marginalization of the Muslim communities in Kenya Coastal and Northern region has been a rallying point for Al-Shabaab activities in the country. It is evident that Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab have continued to exploit the weak social, economic, political and security environment in their shifting tactics, flexibility and adaptability.

The securitizing framing of Nigeria and Kenya depicts a militarized approach that places emphasis on the use of hard power to defeat extremists, without due attention to resolving the local grievances that spawns violent religious extremism. Counter-extremism as clearly defined by the US Department of State should encompass comprehensive civilian and military efforts geared toward the simultaneous defeat and containment of insurgency and dealing with its root causes. The efforts to tackle the local grievances at the root of violent extremism, through the use of soft power approach, would entail the state acknowledgment of their roles, in enabling the evolution of violent religious extremism and not demonstrating sufficient political will to address the governance deficiencies. The chapters in this book reveal the excessive focus on militarized response by the governments of Nigeria and Kenya is indicative of the unwillingness to address the localized grievances at the heart of the violent extremism. The reliance on the use of hard power is perceived as a means to crush the extremists while preserving the status quo of social inequities and injustices.

The militarized approach is rife with human rights abuses, arbitrary arrest, detention, attacks leading to injury and death of innocent civilians caught in the crossfire between the military and the violent Jihadist. The human rights abuses and targeting of civilians by the Nigeria and Kenya's governments further alienate the affected populations from the government, widening the gaps between the government and the citizenry and leading to resort to self-help and dysfunctional survival strategies. In fact, in the Nigerian context, it has engendered a situation in which the civilians seek protection from the violent Jihadists rather than the government. The governments in Nigeria and Kenya missed the opportunities to capitalize on the extremists' violent

carnage and attacks on civilians, to build the trust and support of the local populations. Nigeria also missed the opportunity to infiltrate Boko Haram through the internal division and schism that led to the splitting of the sect into various factions. Arguably the loose cell structure and organization of the diverse factions of Boko Haram may obstruct deep penetration into the group, yet efficient security intelligence could pave way for the permeability of these loose structures by the security agencies, as a means to infiltrate and decimate the groups. This situation openly exposes the deep-rooted governance failings and the importance of intelligence in driving counter-terrorism initiatives. It is also reflective of the inadequacies in the counter-extremism strategies in these fragile states.

Even with the supposed shift of the governments of Nigeria and Kenya to the soft-power approach, geared toward addressing the domestic grievances at the heart of violent extremism, the lack of commitment, accountability and determination has been a major impediment to these efforts. The realization of government's low commitment also impacted the morale of the security agencies involved in the counter-extremism efforts, leading to weak intra-interagency synergy, sabotage, espionage and subversion. The evidence derived from the interviewed security agencies, as shown in this study, has depicted how low political willpower, corruption and poor leadership have undermined the counter-extremism efforts, leading to series of missed opportunities and setbacks to some progress earlier made.

Regional and international support and cooperation in the counter-extremism efforts would record little success, in as much as the national governments in Nigeria and Kenya are not purposeful in dealing with the violent religious extremism, through the adoption of a people-centered counter-extremism approach that blends hard and soft power appropriately. The regional and global status of Nigeria and Kenya has been an obstacle to regional initiatives, given that the two countries are major sub-regional powers providing economic and military support to other countries in their respective sub-regions. The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in the Lake Chad Basin, the major regional counter-extremism effort against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria and neighboring states of Cameroon, Chad and Niger, recorded major gains in pushing back the terrorists, reducing their scale of attacks, tactical operation and leading to the recapture of territories previously under their control. Yet, the regional counter-extremism efforts have been marred by political rivalries and schisms between the countries, leading to setbacks that the sect exploited in regrouping and regaining its lethality and modifying its tactical operation.

In Kenya, the regional counter-extremism efforts have been driven by the country, with the support and cooperation of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union. The efforts have not been sufficiently tailored to the social, economic, political and security contexts. The support of donor agencies and governments in Nigeria and Kenya has been channeled through the evolving counter-extremism efforts of the governments, thus rendering these international efforts ineffectual.

As the chapters in the book indicate, the efforts of the civil society organizations in dealing with the drivers of radicalization, complementing the government de-radicalization programmes, providing humanitarian assistance to victims of violent religious extremism/terrorism and collaboration with security agencies have been undermined by weak security protection, climate of distrust, accusation and counter-accusation between the civil society groups and the security forces.

The governance deficiencies compounded the threat from violent extremism, bringing to fore deeper systemic issues and deepening the weak state of governance institutions. The extremists have ventured into licit and illicit activities that create opportunities for other non-state actors and unscrupulous state actors to accumulate economic benefits. It is within this context that armed banditry, transnational organized crime and farmer-herder conflict that is ubiquitous in Nigeria become calamitous, complicating the worsening state of insecurity. The intensified political tensions and ethnic divisions in Kenya have become major fallout of the Al-Shabaab propaganda and campaign of terror that portend grave threat to the security architecture. Violent religious extremism accelerates old conflict issues and breeds new ones, and blurs the lines between religious and political struggles and criminality. The interlocking and complex security issues require further research to unearth the interlinkages between violent religious extremism, cross-border criminalities and other forms of incipient conflicts.

The threat from Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab has transmuted to a transnational security crisis of epic proportions, with significant implications for other fragile countries in the sub-regions which have weaker state institutions, and depend on these two countries for economic and military support. With the gestation of Africa's most deadly and entrenched extremism in Nigeria and Kenya, two of the continent's major powers, transnational and international terrorism has become ingrained in Africa. The potential of countering extremism and winning the war on terror in the two countries would require intense and sustained local, national, sub-regional, continental and international cooperation. It remains to be seen if Nigeria and Kenya can harness the required political willpower, determination, commitment and dedication to map out, design and implement strategic counter-extremism measures that would frontally deal with the root, symptoms and consequences of violent religious extremism in the two countries, a microcosm of Africa.

Enhancing the institutional capacity to counter violent religious extremism in Nigeria and Kenya

Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab's lingering lethality and remarkable resilience in Nigeria and Kenya suggest the need for a more holistic, and transnational counter-extremism strategies that are people-centered, right-based and community driven. The military approach must be complemented with sustained efforts to deal with the root of violent religious extremism. Winning

the war on terror would require a radical shift from the predominantly militarized approach to proactive, and robust non-military counter-extremism efforts that are responsive to the yearnings of the people for the dividends of democracy in an equitable and fair manner. This will also require preventative efforts to deal with the drivers of youth radicalization that can bridge the gaps between the state and the citizenry, in order to foster trust and confidence-building. Concerted efforts toward dealing with structural imbalances, such as socio-economic deprivation, social inequities and injustices and political exclusion would go a long way in restructuring the weak state-society relation in Nigeria and Kenya. The counter-extremism efforts in the two countries have suffered from inadequate intelligence gathering due to the poor state-society relations. The capability to generate good, timely, precise and actionable intelligence would require good relations with local populations, to facilitate information on the conflict terrain, hideout, plans, strategies, sources of finance and resources and capacities of the extremists. In Nigeria, the ill-timed stabilization and reconstruction efforts have been marred by the lack of dedicated and sustained proactive efforts to simultaneously address the drivers of extremism and the attendant humanitarian crisis.

The community led approach to counter-extremism is crucial to boosting the capacity of the state to defeat extremism and terrorism. This also requires healthy relations and collaboration with credible civil society organizations, as well as youth groups, religious institutions, community leaders and humanitarian agencies in the fight against terrorism. This would entail comprehensive socio-economic, political and security (both strategic and non-strategic components) reforms. The reform of the security would necessitate an entire overhaul of the security architecture, which is backed up by major governance reform of the socio-economic and political institutions. The comprehensive reform of the military and related security agents will facilitate inter-agency collaboration, well-equipped hardware and weaponry, training and incentives to boost the morale of the personnel in the war against terrorism in Nigeria and Kenya. There is also need for adequate training and retraining of security agents on counter-terrorism, in such a way that their actions do not jeopardize national security and respect for human rights. This calls for the establishment of specialized anti-terrorism units imbued with adequate skills, equipment and funding. While some specialized units are already put in place, these units are not adequately funded and equipped to ensure efficient service delivery. It is also important to checkmate linkages between local terrorist groups and their global counterparts as a critical counter-extremist effort meant to mitigate the security threats posed by the local extremists.

The governance reform also encompasses judicial and penal system, and the setting up of Truth Commission to address post-conflict trauma and heal the wounds of the carnage perpetrated by violent religious extremism. The counter-extremism efforts in Nigeria and Kenya have largely neglected

the aspect of conflict resolution and transformation, in line with the United States 'no concession' policy on terrorism. This policy demonizes and criminalizes terrorism, making the act unworthy of any form of negotiations and concessions. A conflict transformational approach gives an alternative view of violent religious extremism as a conflict issue, where all actors and stakeholders are constructively engaged with a view to getting to the roots of the problem and finding mutually agreed solutions. Such an approach should not preclude prosecution and conviction of perpetrators of violence to serve as deterrence. Without this comprehensive reform, even if the Nigeria and Kenya states are able to defeat Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab, there is the likelihood of the emergence of other deadly extremists.

Meanwhile, the capacity of the two countries to deal with governance deficit would serve as good examples for other fragile states in the sub-regions and the continent looking up to the two sub-regional powers. Given the transnational nature of violent religious extremism and terrorism, there is need for a well-coordinated, unified, integrated and sustained regional and international counter-extremism effort in fighting terrorism. The initial progress made by the MNJTF in Lake Chad Basin exemplifies, how a well-coordinated regional counter-extremism operation can engender a positive outcome.

A comprehensive civilian and military counter-extremism effort would require not only sufficient funding but also the proper utilization of the funds for the initiatives in a transparent and accountable manner. While inadequate funding has been an impediment to the national, regional and international counter-extremism efforts, the mismanagement of the available funding by the corrupt and predatory elements in the states is another key issue to be dealt with. What this implies is that even if there is sufficient funding, in as much as there is no accountability and transparency, the funds would not be effectively utilized to achieve the desired outcome. Fragile states pose distinctive challenges in fighting terrorism due to the 'domino effect' of the weak institutions of governance on the counter-extremism efforts. In other words, the weakness of state institutions set in motion chains of unhealthy impacts that tend to erode the gains of the counter-extremism efforts.

The stake is high, given the global and regional position of Nigeria and Kenya within their sub-regions, the continent and the international community at large. Nigeria and Kenya are important sub-regional actors in West and East Africa, and the drivers of regional integration in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and East African Community (EAC). It goes without saying that the prospects of fragile states in Africa to counter extremism are strongly connected to the capacity of Nigeria and Kenya to win the war on terrorism. This is why the two countries should continue to put all hands on deck, to ensure that they continuously develop their institutional capacities to forestall, respond to and tackle security threats when they emerge, without compromising the rights of the citizens in the counter-terrorism initiatives and strategies.

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