BREAD, NOT BULLETS: BOKO HARAM AND INSECURITY MANAGEMENT IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

Iro AGHEDO
Department of Political Science, University of Benin
Oarhe OSUMAH
Department of Public Administration, Ambrose Alli University

ABSTRACT   Nigeria has experienced pervasive violence since it returned to civilian rule in 1999 after more than 15 years of military dictatorship. Despite the brutal strategy followed by the state in response to public disorder, efforts to establish peace in Africa's most populous and largest oil-producing nation have failed. Indeed, state repression has increased rather than reduced violence in many areas. This empirical study investigated the effect of the military strategy to manage the ongoing Boko Haram insurgency in northern Nigeria. Despite the emphasis on economic empowerment as a viable mechanism for conflict mitigation, which has permeated mainstream discourse since the end of the Cold War, the application of this approach in much of sub-Saharan Africa, especially Nigeria, remains at the level of rhetoric or political spin. Our data also reveal the ineffectiveness of military brutality in managing anti-state uprisings. Thus, this study contributes evidence to the debate regarding economic empowerment as tool to manage security. In the context of the prevailing socioeconomic problems and inequities in northern Nigeria, including rampant poverty and mass illiteracy, this study suggests that economic empowerment (bread) is a more effective strategy than is brutal force (bullets) for insecurity management in the region.

Key Words: Boko Haram; Insurgency; Military; Security; Economic Empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

Insecurity in the context of violence has reached generally frightening levels in Nigeria since 2010. The youth rebellion in the oil-rich Niger Delta region in the South had scarcely abated when the Boko Haram (BH) uprising broke out in the North. BH was rated the second deadliest terror group in the world in 2012 for killing a total of 1,132 persons in 364 attacks, only surpassed by Afghanistan's Taliban, which killed 1,842 persons in 525 attacks (Aghedo & Eke, 2013; Mohammed, 2014). However, in 2013, BH became the deadliest terror group in the world for killing at least seven persons per attack (*Vanguard*, May 29, 2014). Indeed, Nigeria's president Goodluck Jonathan revealed in a special Summit held on the insurgency in Paris in May 2014 that BH's "[U]nconventional war has so far claimed over 12,000 lives with more than 8,000 persons injured or maimed" (*Sunday Vanguard*, May 18, 2014). Additionally, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) of the Norwegian Refugee Council implicated the insurgent movement, and the flood that ravaged several parts of the country in 2012, in the internal displacement of over 6 million people, who became "refugees" in their own country that year (IDMC Report, 2013).

Although Nigeria has experienced incidents of political and criminal violence including assassinations, thuggery, arson, vandalism, and even wars in the past, the practice of suicide bombing is new in the country. While terrorism is a regular event in countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, and so on, Nigeria has been largely devoid of the premeditated and indiscriminate mass killings of non-combatants that has now been introduced to the country by BH. In response to this emergent insurgency, the state has adopted a military approach to the management of internal disorder. This coercive strategy is congruent with the ideology of the US-led "War on Terror". Indeed, following the 9/11 attacks, President George W. Bush stated, "[O]ur responsibility to history is already clear: to answer these attacks and rid the world of evil" (cited in Keen, 2008: 4). Although the "War on Terror" has led to the arrest and execution of many al Qaeda leaders, including its leader Osama bin Laden in 2011, sustainable global peace remains elusive.

Since 2010, the coalition fighting the "War on BH" in Nigeria has broadened to include vigilantes known as the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), the Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTF) (comprising troops from Nigeria, Niger Republic, Chad, and Cameroon), and Nigeria's Joint Task Force (JTF). The European Union and other Western allies have also been supportive of the country's counterinsurgency measures. For instance, the US alone gives US $3 million (Nigerian Naira 480 million) annually to Nigeria as security assistance in addition to other technical and logistical support (LeVan, 2013). However, the efforts to arrest, detain, and even kill BH militants implemented by this broad coalition have been largely counterproductive. Rather than eliminate the Islamic sect, repression has radicalized and swollen their ranks with foot soldiers drawn primarily from the *almajiri* (plural Almajirai) *cohort* (itinerant Quranic pupils) and other economically disadvantaged individuals (Aghedo & Eke, 2013; Hansen & Musa, 2013).

Indeed, the use of "terror to end terror" has led to the spread of BH, as shown by the recent arrest of some BH insurgents in parts of Lagos and Ogun states in southern Nigeria, which are thousands of kilometers away from the BH headquarters in the North–East. Additionally, repressive counterinsurgency has fuelled anger against state security operatives, sometimes leading to the radicalization of individuals. Moreover, human rights and civil society organizations, including Amnesty International, have recently become critical of the excesses of state forces in managing the BH crisis. Several soldiers and policemen have been indicted for illegal arrests and detentions, extortion of members of the general public, rape, and extra-judicial murders. These gross human rights violations have led to calls on the Government to withdraw the troops. These anomalous events call for a reconsideration of the use of repression as an effective conflict-management strategy for BH and underscore the need to explore alternative means of securing the peace in the troubled North.

Keen (2006: 87) insightfully argued that the war on terror is predictably counterproductive if it fails to "understand the processes that lead people to embrace violence in an attempt to engage with processes of exclusion, humiliation and discrimination." Indeed, the coalition against BH has not been able to assess the motivations of BH foot soldiers, and especially why they are ready to die for this

group. We propose that, similar to medicine, where a proper diagnosis is crucial for the effective management of a disease, understanding the processes by which BH has proliferated is critical for containing the conflict and creating sustainable peace. This study revealed that socioeconomic deprivation is the core factor behind insecurity in northern Nigeria and highlights the role that economic empowerment can play in mitigating the crisis. This article is divided into five parts. The conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of our arguments are presented immediately following this introductory section. The third section presents a critical overview of extant security-management strategies in Nigeria. Based on respondents' views, the fourth section highlights the need for economic empowerment to manage terrorism in northern Nigeria. The fifth section offers several policy recommendations.

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Security is valued by individuals, organizations, and even states. Thomas Hobbes (1651: 84) noted that, "[L]ife would be solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short" in a society that did not guarantee security. Security is a prerequisite for the enjoyment of other social "goods" such as prosperity, the ability to associate, and freedom. However, security policies may differ according to the time frame on which they are based; that is, short-term tactics may differ from long-term policies. In the short term, a high fence, a vicious dog, and a large gun may be effective means of protecting valued resources from assailants. However, in the long term, the maintenance of positive relationships with neighbors is the preferred means of sustaining security. However, security management involves a variety of costs, such as sacrifices of resources that could have been devoted to other domains, such as the promotion of self-sustaining development, the generation of employment opportunities, the alleviation of poverty, and the establishment of a healthful environment. Additionally, states spend enormous amounts of money on the acquisition of armaments and military technology in the service of maintaining their readiness to counter threats to their sovereignty and territorial integrity (Watson, 2011).

Although issues related to security are addressed in everyday discourse, no consensus regarding the underlying concept has been reached. Each scholar tends to use the term to suit his or her purpose. Thus, the conceptualization of security has become a cottage industry in security studies (Chandiler, 2012). Two main threads in the conceptualization of security have emerged: the traditional or classical realist perspective and the modern or revisionist perspective. Traditionally, national security has been equated with the state's commitment to its military force, which entails military surveillance and defense of national core values such as sovereignty, territorial integrity and, at times, strategic resources (Hynek, 2012; Baldwin, 1997). This perspective often defines security as the provision, deployment, and use of military resources by a society to perpetuate its existence and sustain its values in the face of threats and challenges from both internal and external sources (Nwolise, 2009).

This state-oriented conception of security was especially dominant during the Cold War era. It has been severely criticized for reducing security to military surveillance, thus omitting critical socioeconomic variables such as poverty, unemployment, infrastructural deficiencies, injustice, hunger, squalor, environmental degradation, and diseases from its understanding of the causes of insecurity. Additionally, a great deal of insecurity originates from the state itself. These fundamental flaws in the traditional conceptualization of security led to the redefinition of security in the post-Cold War era (Liotta, 2002). The revisionist perspective of security corrects the inordinate emphasis on state sovereignty and territorial protection and treats human beings as the frames of reference for security. Advocates of this people-centric approach have argued that efforts to effectively neutralize and defeat insecurity must rest on conscious and adequate strategic planning that involves action and coordination on the part of all the vital sectors of society, including those involving laws, justice, peace, order, safety, and economic well-being (Richmond, 2012; Watson, 2011).

Thus, responses to security threats should include efforts to prevent or ameliorate the myriad dislocating effects of poverty, unemployment, disease, squalor, hunger, and human rights violations. Additionally, the revisionist paradigm underscores the fact that security policies must be inclusive in their goals due to the interdependence of humans. In essence, the goals and implementation of security policies are shaped by estimates of the probability that acquired values will be damaged and calculations of the degree of security needed to protect the acquired values to the extent desired. Although this notion of security has been criticized, based on arguments that it is very difficult to specify the degree of security a country has or seeks, according to Wolfers (1952: 483), security is a value "of which a nation can have more or less and which it can aspire to have in greater or lesser measure." Indeed, it has been noted that the "attainment of objectives is always a matter of degree" (Baldwin, 1997: 131).

Furthermore, the objectives and implementation of security policies are predicated primarily on the potential sources of threat. Threats to acquired values come from diverse sources and can be ideological, economic, military, or some combination thereof. Accordingly, a variety of means can be adopted in pursuit of security, including the traditional response, which includes threats and military deployment, as well as the modern approach, which involves the provision of safety nets such as programs to provide employment opportunities, reduce poverty, increase the standard of living and access to healthcare, improve the infrastructure and educational system, and protect human rights (Bellamy & MacDonald, 2002).

The policies adopted to protect acquired values often entail costs (i.e., the sacrifice of other goals that could have been pursued with the resources devoted to security). Discussion of this dimension of security policy is important because some scholars imply that costs do not matter. For instance, one scholar has defined national security in terms of the protection of core values, which he describes as "interests that are pursued notwithstanding the costs incurred" (Leffler, 1990: 145). However, there are no such interests from the perspective of a rational policy maker. Thus, costs always matter. It is unsound and unwise to commit heinous crimes, such as the mass killings and extrajudicial murders perpetrated by the

military against BH militias, under the guise of maintaining national security. In the context of the harsh socioeconomic realities that characterized the emergence of BH, we advocate the use of "bread" (modern security postulates), which includes job creation, poverty reduction, education, infrastructure development, and social justice, as alternative approaches to managing the security challenge posed by BH rather than "bullets", as exemplified in the traditional security paradigm. This argument assumes that the ordinary and neglected majority in the North rather than statism per se should be the focus of security and that socioeconomic empowerment rather than military violence should be the means used to address insecurity in the region.

OVERVIEW OF PAST SECURITY-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Despite differences in the ways in which states react to terrorism, their responses are usually divided into two general strategies: the "carrot" and the "stick". The stick model involves the use of coercion to manage terrorism and other forms of violence-based insecurity. Also known as the military model, this approach involves the arrest, trial, and sometimes execution of perpetrators of violence. This model underpins the US-led "War on Terror", which targets the organizers of terrorism (Keen, 2008). In contrast, the carrot approach involves conciliatory strategies, including dialogue and cooptation, to manage armed conflicts. Several reasons can be offered in support of the use of either the carrot or the stick strategy, including the availability of external support and the relative capability or strength of the state or the rebel group (Buhaug, 2006).

Even though Nigeria has received global praise for its adroit use of "federal instrumentalities" to manage social pluralism, including the creation of states and localities and the use of federal character (the local version of affirmative action) and power-sharing mechanisms among ethno–religious groups, the country remains violently divided (Aghedo & Osumah, 2014; Osaghae, 2002). The emergence of ethnic militias in different parts of the country in the last two decades has further compounded the crisis of national integration and unity. These groups are often driven by ideologies and claims relating to resource control, environmentalism, self-determination, the Islamization of the state, and even secessionist threats.

The widespread radicalization and mobilization of militias are underpinned by factors such as social injustice, resource scarcity, class antagonisms, unequal power relations, differences in values and interests, as well as state and governmental partisanship. However, societies vary in terms of the dynamic character and intensity of, and their responses to, militia violence. In Nigeria, militia mobilization has been essentially propelled by the political manipulation of primordial ties, violent struggles among elites over the control of power and resources, and grievances regarding pervasive poverty. In addition to these material factors, non-material variables such as culture, language, and group pride have also been the sources of some conflicts, as evidenced by the Oro crisis at Ijebu Remo in Ogun State (Nolte, 2004). The nature and dynamic character of conflicts in Nigeria influence the strategies used to regulate and manage such conflicts. Indeed, the state has

developed different mechanisms to manage politically motivated violence.

Nigeria relies on the constitutional method as a major strategy for resolving conflicts. Isumonah (2003) noted that the state developed diverse legal frameworks to manage the youth insurgency in response to militancy in the Niger Delta. For example, successive governments have established interventionist agencies to address the developmental needs in the Niger Delta. These agencies have included the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB), which was formed in 1961; the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC), which was created in 1992; the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), which was established in 1999; and the Ministry for Niger Delta Affairs (MNDA), which was created in 2008. However, these efforts have not been as effective as expected owing to various difficulties, such as inadequate funding, mismanagement of funds, corrupt practices, and struggles among the elites for control over the agencies (Agbonifo & Aghedo, 2012).

Another conflict-management strategy used by the state involves probe panels and/or judicial commissions of inquiry. Most crises and conflicts in Nigeria have been investigated through the use of probe panels established by the government with goals such as determining the immediate and remote causes of a conflict, identifying the perpetrators and victims of violence, and developing approaches to avert recurrences. Some of the popular probe panels have included the A.V.M. Usman Mu'azu Reconciliation/Peace Committee for Zango–Kataf in Kaduna State, which operated in 1994; the Presidential Advisory Committee on the Jos crisis, which operated from March to April 2010; and the Ambassador Gaji Galtimari-led Presidential Committee on BH Insecurity, which operated in 2011 (Aghedo, 2013).

However, several of these panels have barely submitted reports. Moreover, even when reports have been submitted, their recommendations were frequently not implemented by the government due to lack of political will, which has led to further violence. For example, despite several probe panels, ethno-religious violence has continued in Plateau State since 2001, resulting in more than 4000 deaths. The non-indigenous Igbo and Yoruba in that state alone claim they have lost property worth Nigerian Naira 970 billion (US\$ 6.4 million) due to these incessant conflicts (Crisis Group Report, 2012). In addition to criticizing institutionalized impotence, probe panels have indicted members of the government and powerful elites. Several top government officials, including members of the armed forces, were indicted for taking sides in the bloody Zango–Kataf clashes in Kaduna State, which were engendered by identity and land-related factors (Fwa, 2003). Such collusion has undermined efforts to thoroughly investigate conflicts and has interfered with efforts to publish and implement probe reports because such indicted "big men" and political godfathers have been seen as untouchable.

The use of peace and reconciliatory forums and communications, including amnesty declarations, are additional conflict-management tools used by the government. This strategy, which encourages actors to "take part in peace and dialogue as well as respect the sanctity of life" (Fwa, 2003: 96), was used in the indigene-settler clashes in Plateau State and the Zango–Kataf crises. Additionally, reconciliatory efforts regarding the Niger Delta conflict included the "Peace Accord"

between the Bayelsa government and core militants in the state in 2007, the "arms-for-cash" deal extended to militants in Rivers State in 2004 and 2007, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) organized in Rivers State in 2007 (Aghedo, 2013).

Offers of amnesty have recently been proffered for purposes of conflict management and to advance peace talks, as evidenced by the Niger Delta Amnesty Programme. In 2009, the Yar'Adua administration granted state pardons to fighters in the oil-producing region after several years of coercive government repression of the communal struggle for a more equitable distribution of the income from oil leases. However, neither peace talks nor outright declarations of amnesty have been able to achieve durable peace. For instance, although the use of amnesty has led to relative peace and increased oil production in the Niger Delta, the poor implementation of the policy continues to permit low-intensity conflict even among hitherto peaceful groups, who have begun to agitate for inclusion in the monetized amnesty deal. Similarly, the huge budgetary allocations and corrupt practices characterizing efforts to build peace have engendered inter-elite violent competition for the rewards that have transformed many ex-militants into millionaires in Nigeria's oil frontier (Aghedo, 2013).

One of the most enduring conflict-management approaches in Nigeria rests on coercion, which involves the deployment of armed forces to ensure law and order. This recourse to repression has roots in the colonial state. As noted by Falola (1998: 52), "[T]he colonial state was coercive… and was built by conquest and subjugation; the state never acquired any enduring legitimacy or trust from the various indigenous groups and nationalities." However, the use of repression continued after flag independence in 1960. In pursuit of selfish interests, the political elite who inherited the colonial state relied on coercive mechanisms to compel obedience largely because the postcolonial state had "a narrow social base and relied for compliance on coercion rather than authority" (Ake, 2001: 3). The repressive character of the state in Africa was further accentuated by the proliferation of military dictatorships across the continent. As noted by First (quoted in Ebohon, 2012: 31):

> More than any institutions left behind by colonialism, the armies of Africa were set in the colonial pattern. More than this, the armies of the new states were identical to the armies that colonial powers built to keep their empires quiescent. After independence, they retain, with few exceptions, their colonial pattern of army organization, their dependence on the west for officer training, separatist advice and equipment, and their affinity with the foreign and defense policies of metropolitan countries.

Consistent with its centralized command structure, penchant for discipline, top-down communication, and other peculiar features, military rule was violently repressive in Nigeria, leading to several deaths and many coups and counter-coups. In fact, there were 10 known coups between 1966 and 1996. In 1967, the Gowon regime (1966–1975) enacted Decree 24, which vested arbitrary powers in the army to declare a state of emergency and detain people without trials when necessary

(Osaghae, 2002). Military brutality was extended to university campuses in 1978, when the peaceful demonstration of students at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria against harsh austerity measures by the Obasanjo military government led to police shooting and killing eight students and injuring scores of civilians, leading to riots across the nation's 12 universities. A 1986 commemoration of the 1978 campus killings met with more deaths as paramilitary police, better known as "Kill-And-Go", fatally shot more than 20 students and several others at Samaru in Zaria (Mustapha & Othman, 1986).

The Shagari civilian administration (1979–1983) continued in the tradition of military authoritarianism, transforming the police into a paramilitary squad that unleashed terror on the people. The brutality toward the leaders of the Maitatsine (the precursor of today's BH) urban revolts, which broke out in Kano in 1980 and spread to other northern cities, led to the deaths of more than 10,000 persons including soldiers, police, and Muhammed Marwa, the leader of the Islamic sect. The militarized police also crushed the Bakalori peasants who were protesting against their displacement from their farmland to enable construction of a new dam in Sokoto State (Falola, 1998).

Authoritarianism assumed an inter-state dimension when the Buhari regime (1983–1985) attempted to repatriate Second Republic politician Umaru Dikko from the UK in a crate that was to be flown to Lagos as "Federal Government property". The botched abduction of Dikko in 1984 to face corruption charges strained diplomatic relations between Nigeria and the United Kingdom, as did the diplomatic row sparked by the expulsion of over 700,000 illegal Ghanaian immigrants by the regime in what came to be famously known as "Ghana-Must-Go". Even revered traditional institutions were not spared by the regime, as exemplified by the restriction of the Emir of Kano and O'oni of Ife to their domains in 1984 for making "unauthorized" visits to Jerusalem when Nigeria had no diplomatic relations with Israel (Osaghae, 1998). State repression became unimaginably brutal under the Babangida dictatorship (1985–1993). As noted by Falola (1998: 65), "[I]n a span of just a few weeks in 1993, the Babangida regime killed more than two hundred protesters in Lagos." Student movements, professional organizations, and trade unions were proscribed for the pressure they exerted in favor of democratization and human rights reforms. The regime was also indicted for the death of journalist Dele Giwa, who was assassinated with a parcel bomb in 1986.

However, whereas state violence was disguised under Babangida, this was not the case under the Abacha government (1993–1998), which was responsible for the deaths of several pro-democracy activists, including Mrs. Kudirat Abiola, whose husband had allegedly won the June 12, 1993, cancelled presidential election, as well as the attempts on the lives of Guardian publisher Alex Ibru, elder statesman Anthony Enahoro, and 1986 Literature Nobel Prize laureate Wole Soyinka. The execution of the Ogoni Nine, including writer and environmentalist Ken Saro-Wiwa, led to the suspension of Nigeria from the Commonwealth of Nations in 1995 and the severing of diplomatic relations with Nigeria by many Western nations (Harnischfeger, 2008).

State recourse to brutality to quell local uprisings did not abate even as the country transitioned to civilian rule in 1999. For example, the deployment of state

troops to Odi Village in November 1999 by the Obasanjo civilian administration in response to the killing of 12 policemen by irate youths led to the killing of over 2,000 persons and the destruction of the village by soldiers. At the end of this incursion, every building except a bank, a church, and a health center had been burnt down (*The Source*, July 30, 2012). As noted by Isumonah (2003: 219), "[A]ll elements of coercion—assaults, abuses, arson, arrests, detention, harassment and extra judicial execution—were played out in Odi." In the same way, in October 2001, soldiers on a revenge mission killed over 200 people when they invaded the town of Zaki Biam in Benue State in reaction to the killing of 19 of their colleagues by Tiv militants during the Jukun–Tiv crisis. In May 2009, President Yar'Adua ordered soldiers into the Gbaramatu Kingdom in Delta State in pursuit of militants. The military invasion of the oil-producing community was accomplished via land, sea, and aerial bombardments, leading to several deaths and the internal displacement of thousands of people who became "refugees in their homeland" (*The Source*, July 30, 2012).

The ongoing counterinsurgency in northern Nigeria is characterized by rampant human rights violations. At the end of 2012, the activities of the Special Task Force and the JTF in Plateau and other volatile states in northern Nigeria were already attracting accusations and counter-accusations. Individuals and civil society groups have complained that the security operatives deployed to maintain order were using rape, human rights violations, destruction of property, illegal arrests, and extrajudicial murder as instruments of engagement. In addition to the abuses perpetrated by military personnel, the constant use of state troops to manage violence within the state has polarized the armed forces along ethno–religious divisions, thereby eroding professionalism. At best, these strategies for managing violence have achieved only a fragile peace in some areas, such as the Niger Delta; at worst, they have contributed to violence-related insecurity in northern Nigeria, as exemplified by the BH insurgency.

RETHINKING SECURITY MANAGEMENT: THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OPTION

Thus, state efforts to manage violence-based insecurity in Nigeria have been largely unsuccessful. In fact, rather than dampening the fires of discontent, some of these efforts have actually fuelled the flames of violence. The major reason for this failure is that the root causes of insecurity have not been addressed; hence, we need to rethink the strategy by which security is maintained and peace is pursued.

Methodology

This research was guided by the following questions: What factors motivate the members of BH to generate insecurity and perpetrate criminal actions in Northern Nigeria? How do the causes of BH violence relate to socioeconomic factors? How can an emphasis on socioeconomic variables rather than military might mitigate

the challenge posed by BH to security in the short- and long-terms? This study empirically investigated these questions, focusing particularly on the active members and followers of BH in the North–East geopolitical zone of Nigeria, especially Borno, Yobe, Gombe, and Bauchi States. Data were collected from both secondary and primary sources. The secondary sources included journals, newspapers, magazines, reports, and BH documents, leaflets, or pamphlets. Primary data were collected via a questionnaire and media reports on interviews with BH members and their supporters.

A sample size of 300 respondents drawn from Mubi in Adamawa State, Potiskum in Yobe State, Maiduguri in Borno State, Bauchi City in Bauchi State, and the town of Gombe in Gombe State participated in this research. The choice of these locations was based on the fact that they have been hotspots for the most intense BH activities. Seventy-five respondents were selected from each of the research locations to ensure equal representation. The sample design relied on purposive and snowball techniques due to the sensitivity of the issues investigated, which required circumspection from all concerned. Consistent with snowball sampling, those who responded to questionnaires identified other persons with useful information. Respondents were promised anonymity.

The survey questionnaire was administered to members and followers of BH in the aforementioned locations. It gathered information on the characteristics of members and supporters of BH and their grievances against the Nigerian state. Although the exact number of active BH militants is not known, it is estimated to be in the low hundreds, with a few thousand supporters involved to various degrees (Pham, 2012). Due to logistic and security limitations, Muslim clerics (local Imams) in the various locations were asked to administer the research instrument to BH members and supporters. The choice of this category of persons to administer the questionnaire was based on the need to gain easy access, which would have been more difficult for an outsider or a total stranger, whose presence would have elicited considerable suspicion among BH members and followers. Indeed, BH members and followers have strong ties with local Imams, especially in the local mosques where they worship.

Data Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion

This section presents, analyzes, and discusses the data obtained from the survey. Data were analyzed in terms of simple percentages. Each cell presents the number (percentage) of respondents in each category by research location. The data analysis was based on an aggregate cross-comparison of the responses of respondents in the research locations. The survey results were supplemented with information from the extant literature, including newspapers, magazines, reports, and official documents.

As shown in Table 1, the respondents were relatively homogeneous in terms of demographic characteristics. The subsample in each region included both males and females, with male respondents constituting the majority of the subsample in all four locations. Additionally, the majority of the respondents in the four locations had a primary/secondary education, while only a few were educated beyond

this level. Furthermore, the respondents were all Nigerian Muslims from the Kanuri or Hausa/Fulani ethnic groups.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

	Bauchi	Gombe	Maiduguri	Yobe
Sex:				
Male	54 (72)	50 (66.67)	49 (65.33)	52 (69.33)
Female	21 (28)	25 (33.33)	26 (34.67)	23 (30.67)
Education:				
Primary/Secondary	49 (65.33)	51 (68)	47 (62.67)	55 (73.33)
Tertiary	26 (34.67)	24 (32)	28 (37.33)	20 (26.67)
Religion:				
Islamic	75 (100)	75 (100)	75 (100)	75 (100)
Nationality:				
Nigerian	75 (100)	75 (100)	75 (100)	75 (100)

Source: Fieldwork 2012

Table 2. Basis for the Emergence of BH

	Why do we have BH?	Bauchi	Gombe	Maiduguri	Yobe
a.	Islamization	75 (100)	75 (100)	75 (100)	75 (100)
b.	Application of Sharia law	75 (100)	75 (100)	75 (100)	75 (100)
c.	Rejection of non-Islamic (Western) education	63 (86.67)	64 (85.33)	63 (84)	66 (88)
d.	Hatred of democracy	69 (92)	68 (90.67)	71 (94.67)	68 (90.67)

Source: Fieldwork 2012

The primary objective and philosophy of BH is rooted in Islamism. As indicated in Table 2, BH members and followers claimed to be influenced by a desire for Islamic purity through the application of Sharia laws, the abolition of non-Islamic education, and the rejection of a democratic style of governance. Indeed, Islam has been an integral part of the history of the people in the northern part of Nigeria since the 1804 Sokoto Jihad waged by Usman Dan Fodio. Since that time, Islamic doctrines have guided the people's daily lives and interpersonal relationships, including their social and economic interactions (Imobighe, 2012). However, colonial rule interfered with the continuation of the pre-colonial institutional hegemony of Islamic values, norms, and traditions, subordinating them to the imported Western culture. Thus, the ideological basis of BH rests on the subordination of Islam and its values during colonial rule. Colonial rule marked the infiltration of non-Muslims into the Dar-al-Islam (house of Islam), as established by Usman Dan Fodio. As BH's pioneering leader, Utaz Yusuf Mohammed noted, "Our land was an Islamic state before the colonial masters turned it to a kafir land. The current system is contrary to true Islamic beliefs" (*Daily Trust*, July 27, 2009).

According to our data, BH's primary objective is to abolish democracy and institute Sharia law. This finding is consistent with several statements credited to

BH spokespersons. On April 24, 2011, the group issued the following statement in Maiduguri:

> We want to reiterate that we are warriors who are carrying out jihad (religious war) in Nigeria and our struggle is based on the traditions of the Holy Prophet. We would never accept any system of government apart from the one stipulated by Islam because that is the only way that the Muslims could be liberated. (*Tell*, July 4, 2011b)

Another statement, signed by Alzawahiri (a BH spokesman) noted, "… we would never be ready to compromise and we don't need amnesty. The only solution to what is happening is for [the] government to repent, jettison democracy, drop the constitution and adopt the laws of the Holy Quran" (*Tell*, July 4, 2011b: 50). In addition to fighting for the Islamization of Nigeria, the respondents indicated that BH repudiates "adulterated conventional education" (*Boko*). In an interview with the BBC in 2009, Yusuf argued that Western-style education includes issues that are contrary to their Islamic beliefs: "Like rain, we believe it is a creation of God rather than evaporation caused by the sun that condenses and becomes rain. Like saying the world is a sphere. If it runs contrary to the teaching of Allah, we reject it. We also reject the theory of Darwinism" (Pham, 2012). Thus, BH members are motivated by the Quranic doctrine that "Anyone who is not governed by what Allah has revealed is among the transgressors" (*BBC News*, 2011).

However, BH is not the first group to profess allegiance to Islamism and seek the violent overthrow of the prevailing secular order. From a retrospective perspective, the history of northern Nigeria has been characterized by periodic instability, conflict, and sectarian violence. Jihadists sacked Birnin Ngazargamu in 1808 and invaded and occupied Rabih in 1893. In the early 1970s, the Muslim Brotherhood, a Zaria-based Islamic Movement in Nigeria, was led by Ibrahim El-Zakzakky, an undergraduate at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria in Kaduna State (Osumah, 2013). Similarly, in the early 1980s, the Maitatsine sect rejected symbols of Western capitalism and renounced several Muslim practices, including praying five times a day, triggering an intra-religious conflict between it and the dominant Islamic sects of the time. The Maitatsines also harassed members of the public and became a huge source of social disorder and insecurity until its members clashed with state forces in Kano in December 1980. After the Kano clash, members of the sect traveled to other northern cities and continued the revolt, which erupted in Bullum-kutu in October 1982, in Rigassa, Kaduna State in October 1982, and in Jimeta-Yola between February 27 and March 5, 1984 (Falola, 1998). Maitatsine attracted more support from youths and unemployed migrants, who were disenchanted by the unresponsiveness of the government and Islamic hierarchy to their needs.

Despite the ideological and operational similarities between BH and previous movements, the Executive Governor of Borno State, Hon. Kashim Shettima, noted that the earlier movements were not "as destructive as they did not degenerate to killing of innocent souls and targeting of recreational centres, places of worships in a sustained and protracted manner as the case of Boko Haram" (*Sunday Tri-*

bune, July 17, 2011: 52). Since 2010, BH has claimed responsibility for serial bomb attacks on security formations, public offices, the United Nations office in Abuja, religious and media organizations, and institutions of formal education. BH has also kidnapped many Westerners and local people, for whom they have requested huge ransoms, and school girls, whom they have used as sex slaves. For example, a day after BH insurgents killed more than 80 persons in a dawn attack in Nigeria's capital city, Abuja, on April 14, 2014, members of the group kidnapped more than 250 students at Government Girls Secondary School at Chibok in Borno State (*The Guardian*, April 16, 2013). The BH leader's videotaped threat to "sell" the schoolgirls as "slaves" led to an outcry that has reverberated across the international community, social media, and civil society, engendering the media storm known as "#Bring Back Our Girls" (Zenn, 2014).

The emergence and radicalization of BH's attacks resemble the socioeconomic deterioration in the North after the Maitatsine violent campaigns in the early 1980s. The interval between the emergence of BH and the activities of earlier fanatical sects, such as Maitatsine, has been characterized by unbridled corruption among the elites and only marginal improvements in the well-being of the populace, creating the impression that residents of the North have fallen behind their counterparts, particularly the Christians, in the South. Additionally, the emergence of BH and its increasing threats mirror the North–South division in Nigerian politics (Imobighe, 2012). Since the end of protracted military authoritarianism in 1999, when the civilian-military elite from the North held dominant political power, there has been a geographic shift in the locus of political power to the Christian South. Thus, the form of complacency characterized by the attitude "we are in charge", which had existed during the protracted years of military rule, and had dissuaded Islamic militants from inciting their kinsmen, no longer exists. The geographic shift in political power facilitates acceptance of the message that the Muslim-dominated North has been marginalized.

In an interview granted to *Al Jazeera* on June 4, 2010, Abu Musab Abdel Wadoud, a leader of al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb stated that his group would support BH with weapons and training to defend Muslims in Nigeria and also to abrogate "the advance dance of a minority of crusaders." At the same time, many Muslims, especially from the North–East, strongly opposed the candidacy of President Goodluck Jonathan, a Christian from the minority Ijaw ethnic group in the South who succeeded President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua from the Muslim North in the wake of the latter's demise in 2010. When Jonathan decided to run for the presidency in his own right, it was claimed that the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) had a pact to alternate power between the Muslim-dominated North and the Christian-dominated South every 8 years. Indeed, President Jonathan recently admitted that BH members had infiltrated his administration (Pham, 2012).

The North-South relationship has been particularly tense since 1999, when the northern elite, starting with the Governor of Zamfara State, began to demand public adoption of the Sharia legal code despite the constitutional recognition of Nigeria as a secular state. Since that time, Islamic law has been adopted in 12 of the 19 northern states (see map, next page).
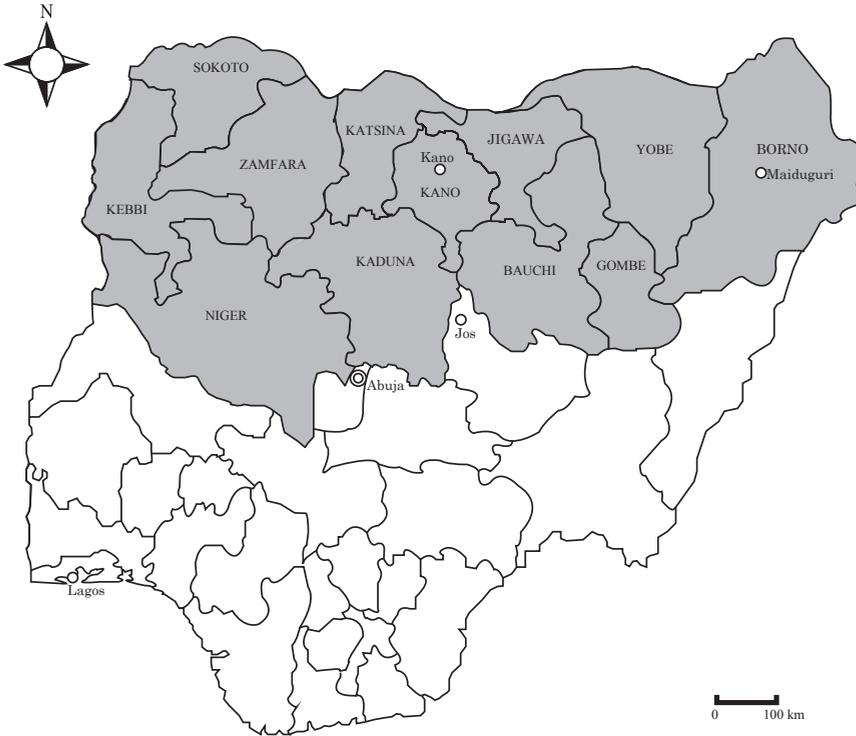
Fig. 1. Sharia states
Source: African Studies Centre, Leiden 2002

   Although BH's ideology centers on religion and ethnic politics, it can also be
understood in the context of devastating socioeconomic conditions. Indeed, BH's
religious and ethnic political positions resonate with those of individuals with eco-
nomic grievances, such as marginalized youth who face the insensitivity of the
corrupt elite. As has been argued elsewhere, the bulge in the youth population
and the pervasiveness of discontent and hopelessness constitute auspicious condi-
tions for the incubation of insurgent groups such as BH (Osumah, 2013). Even
the political elite, whose poor governance has driven the economy aground, have
agreed that the youth bulge, unemployment, and poverty are the core drivers of
insecurity in the region. According to Borno State Governor Kashim Shettima
(*Sunday Tribune*, July 17, 2011: 52):

   The World Bank has described the North East political zone, the center for
   BH, as one of the poorest in the world, with a very minimal and mainly
   dilapidated infrastructure; a population with little education and the highest
   level of unemployment, especially among youths; little or poor resources for
   the mobilization of people for self-help efforts; a large number of hungry
   and angry people; an inept and bankrupt leadership; and the partial or com-

plete absence of government control, networks, and other factors promoting the economic progress and social harmony of the area.

Thus, the BH phenomenon is a practical manifestation of many years of unresponsiveness, corruption, and malfeasance on the part of both the government and the elites, which have evolved into social disorder (Toni, 2011). Lending credence to this argument, Muhammad Isa (2010: 332 cited in Forest, 2012) noted:

> The idea of boko is not just about rejecting Western education per se; it is a judgment of its failure to provide opportunities for better lives and thus became a symbol for the Boko Haram movement to capitalize on the shortcomings of yan boko. Subsequently it was coupled with haram (forbidden). The movement used the term to mobilize unemployed, unskilled and poverty-stricken youths to join its cause, dislodge the secular, boko-controlled state in Nigeria, and introduce the strict application of Shariah law and the creation of an Islamic state. This partly explains why Boko Haram's primary targets of attack were symbols of the state such as security agencies, which had become widely despised.

Profile of BH Militias

As shown in Table 3, most members and supporters of BH are young, predominantly male, Muslims who are students at local universities and technical institutions or migrants with no visible means of livelihood. The founding members of the sect were drawn from a group of Muslim students who dropped out of the University of Maiduguri in around 2002 and enlisted in the group for Quranic instruction (Pham, 2012). Nigerian reporter Isioma Madike implied that the group, which began in 1995 as Sahaba, was led by a conservative Islamic cleric, Lawan Abubakar, who later left for the University of Medina in Saudi Arabia for further study (Forest, 2012). Similarly, the founding leader of BH, Yusuf Mohammed, was alleged to have established a religious complex, including a mosque and an Islamic school, which served as its recruiting center (*Newswatch*, August 1, 2011). Most foot soldiers were recruited through the almajiri system, targeting homeless students of the Quran who roam the major streets in the North begging for alms to survive (Aghedo & Eke, 2013).

The demographic profiles of members and supporters of BH reflect the socioeconomic conditions in the North. Indeed, much of northern Nigeria is plagued by unprecedented unemployment, massive poverty, infrastructural deterioration, governmental corruption, and many other devastating conditions (Hansen & Musa, 2013). According to estimates from the National Bureau of Statistics (see Poverty Profile in Table 4), the rate of poverty and unemployment is higher in the North than it is in the nation as a whole.

Table 3. Demographic Profile of BH Members

	Members of Boko Haram	Bauchi	Gombe	Maiduguri	Yobe
a.	Devout Muslim students	75 (100)	74 (98)	75 (100)	75 (100)
b.	Kanuri/Hausa individuals	71 (94.67)	73 (97.33)	75 (100)	75 (100)
c.	Jobless youths	69 (92)	71 (94.67)	74 (98.67)	72 (96)
d.	Uneducated individuals / school drop-outs	68 (90.67)	70 (93.33)	67 (89.33)	71 (94.67)
e.	Well-educated individuals	23 (30.33)	19 (25.33)	26 (34.67)	17 (22.67)
f.	Migrants (aliens)	11 (14.67)	17(20)	14 (18.67)	13 (17.33)
g.	*Almajirai*	60 (80)	62 (82.67)	65 (86.67)	63 (84)

Source: Fieldwork 2012

Table 4. Incidence of Poverty by Geopolitical Zone in Nigeria

Geopolitical zone	Food poverty	Absolute poverty	Relative poverty	Dollars per day
North–Central	38.6	59.5	67.5	59.7
North–East	51.5	69.0	76.3	69.1
North–West	51.8	70.0	77.7	70.4
South–East	40.0	58.7	67.0	59.2
South–South	35.5	55.9	63.8	56.1
South–West	25.4	49.8	59.1	50.1

Source: Aghedo and Osumah (2012: 42)

With the exception of the North–West, the North–East geopolitical zone, which is the base of BH, has the highest rate of poverty in Nigeria. Additionally, residents of states in the North, especially those in the North–East, are less educated than are their counterparts in the South. For example, in the 2007 Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination, Imo State in the South–East produced more candidates seeking admission to universities than did all the 19 northern states. The five states with the most candidates were located in the South: Imo, 93,065; Anambra, 64,689; Delta, 61,580; Edo, 57,754; and Akwa Ibom, 47,928. The states with the fewest candidates were located in the North: Sokoto, 3,925; Taraba, 3,832; Zamfara, 2,904; Jigawa, 2,541; and Yobe 2,516 (*The Punch*, July 9, 2013: 27).

The educational crisis in the region has also had an adverse effect on the development of this cohort. Indeed, the burgeoning youth population lacks artisanal skills and a competitive spirit and has little or no chance of success in the labor market. As a result, many members of the youth cohort lack a decent job and must settle for the most difficult and least remunerative work, such as chopping wood, selling food items, and fetching water, popularly known as *mai rua*. Importantly, the low priority given to education in the North is not related to the Islamic religion. Taraba State, which is predominantly Christian, has a high rate of illiteracy. In this regard, Saudi Arabia, the headquarters of Islam, is very education-focused, with a literacy level of 83% among those at least 15 years of age. Moreover, Indonesia, which has the largest Muslim population in the world, has a 92% literacy rate, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has a 90% literacy rate. However, Nigeria's literacy rate is 51% (World Bank, 2014).

Despite the fact that Nigeria's northern civilian–military elites have dominated their southern counterparts in terms of political power, the region's leaders often rationalize socioeconomic underdevelopment in the North as a consequence of the low level of oil revenues allocated to the area. Although corruption is pervasive in most spheres and regions of Nigeria, there is sufficient evidence that the socioeconomic situation in the northern part of Nigeria is partly due to the failure and insensitivity of the local elites. The public resources that could have been used to provide for the needs of ordinary people have been largely diverted and privatized. The annual budgetary allocations of the Local Government Councils, State Governments, and Federal Government are skewed in favor of the ruling elite and their immediate family members at the expense of the vast majority of hungry, angry, and frustrated citizens. For example, in Bauchi State, which is one of the BH hotbeds, the state governor, Isa Yuguda, reportedly "approved the appointment of 94 senior special assistants, 20 special advisers and 810 special assistants" in September 2011 to ensure his comfort in office (*The Punch*, September 27, 2011).

In retrospect, it is clear that the entire northern part of the Nigerian federation, which is currently administered by 19 state governments with large budgets and bloated staffs, was effectively governed until 1966 by Sir Ahmadu Bello with 12 regional ministers. Aside from government functionaries, the lifestyle of the traditional leadership in much of the North is also characterized by ostentation that stands in stark contrast to the squalid conditions of the masses in the area. According to Saheed (*Nigerian Compass*, November 12, 2012: 48):

> There is no two ways to it. No country that spends over 90% of its total earnings on just less than 1% of its population can ever escape from dangers as we have exposed ourselves to as a country and as a people…. The 300,000 police we have for 3 million people cannot save the situation.

This grim situation, which tends to keep the vast neglected majority of the people economically dependent, is used by desperate politicians, ethnic warlords, and religious extremists to motivate vulnerable people to participate in or support collective violence. These "merchants of violence" achieve their aim with little money because the vulnerable groups are ready to accept any amount, no matter how meager, to meet their immediate basic needs. Moreover, owing to widespread ignorance, many foot soldiers are brainwashed into believing that if they engage in suicide attacks against the so-called infidels they will be rewarded with 72 virgins in paradise.

Indeed, it has been subtly insinuated that some members of the elite harbor sympathy for, and are complicit with, BH for selfish political reasons. Former National Security Adviser, General Azazi Owoye, argued that the proliferation of BH attacks is attributable to the exclusionary politics of the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) (*The Punch*, April 28, 2012). Additionally, some sitting senators from Borno State and a former Governor of the State have been accused of having ties with the Islamic sect (*The Punch*, January 27, 2012). Moreover, several retired military generals, two ex-heads of State who served before the administration of General Sani Abacha, a former Vice President who served during the

first 8 years of the current relaxation of democratic standards, several Governors of northern states, and a number of Muslim traditional rulers have been identified as sponsors and allies of BH, and several soldiers have been court-marshaled for collusion with the terrorists (Osumah, 2013).

Elite collusion with terrorists is understandable in Nigeria, where politics is the most rapid way to accumulate wealth, leading to the high value placed on governmental power. Jega (2007) argued that the state remains a critical factor in the development and maintenance of the wealth of the ruling class. As a result, the contest for state power assumes a zero-sum character and does not adhere to codes of civility or the rule of law. Control over the Nigerian state, especially during periods of economic crisis, is seen as the central prize in the transformation and resurgence of identity politics that has occurred in the service of securing power and access to the public purse. Against this backdrop, BH's ideology, although couched in Islamism, is a function of the socioeconomic conditions engendered by the elite whose self-serving objectives with regard to power, primitive wealth accumulation, lack of transparency, and poor governance are all manifestations of the country's archetypal dependence on oil wealth and its attendant resource curse.

Government Security-related Responses to BH

The federal government of Nigeria has used various approaches to manage BH-related insecurity. As Table 5 indicates, the government's efforts have included direct military attacks, proscription, intimidation, arrests, detention, and extrajudicial killings as well as calls for dialogue, the establishment of probe committees, the building of Islamic schools, and sensitization and awareness campaigns through nationalist spokespeople in the media.

Table 5. Government Security-related Responses to BH

	Governmental responses	Bauchi	Gombe	Maiduguri	Yobe
a.	Direct attacks/Military coercion	45 (60)	48 (64)	50 (66.67)	47 (62.67)
b.	Willingness to engage in dialogue	30 (40)	27 (36)	31 (41.33)	29 (38.67)
c.	Sensitization	21 (28)	24 (32)	19 (25.33)	25 (33.33)
d.	Establishment of probe committees	38 (50.67)	39 (52)	41 (54.67)	38 (50.67)
E	Deportation of illegal aliens	47 (62.67)	49 (65.33)	46 (61.33)	45 (60)
f.	Building of Islamic schools	53 (70.67)	56 (74.67)	53 (70.67)	53 (70.67)
g.	Employment generation	8 (10.67)	11 (14.67)	9 (12)	11 (14.67)
h.	Poverty reduction	11 (14.67)	14 (18.67)	8 (10.67)	17 (22.67)
i.	Infrastructure development	9 (12)	11 (14.67)	14 (18.67)	15 (20)

Source: Fieldwork 2012

The Nigerian government has adopted both "stick" and "carrot" approaches to the BH phenomenon according to the nature of the insurgency. In the wake of regular deadly attacks by BH, the Nigerian government has issued statements criminalizing or labeling the sect as a "terrorist group" and its members as "ene-

mies of the state", promising to appropriately punish the perpetrators of violence. On various occasions, the federal government reacted with panic by convening meetings of stakeholders to assess the BH security challenge. Following the deadly attacks on the UN office and national Police Headquarters in Abuja in 2011, the government held meetings with leaders of the Muslim community and several Islamic clerics. Additionally, a number of meetings have been held with military service chiefs and director-generals of the state security services and the National Intelligence Agency to assess and generate appropriate solutions to the BH security challenge (*Tell*, July 4, 2011a).

According to human rights activist Shehu Sani, these meetings and consultations are not with the right people:

> The problem of Boko Haram cannot be solved because Goodluck Jonathan is talking to the wrong people. The Sultan of Sokoto and emirs are not in a good position to solve the crisis. I believe the Boko Haram people should be talked to in an open dialogue rather than get confrontational with them because every government in the world dialogues with people irrespective of their demands and [we should] not resort to killing and arresting members on daily basis (*Tell*, July 4, 2011a).

Another government response to the BH onslaught has involved the empanelling of committees to identify both the remote and immediate causes of the insecurity and to recommend appropriate solutions. It was for this purpose that the Usman Gaji Committee was established in 2011. In 2013, the Presidential Amnesty Committee was created to identify approaches to making BH embrace an amnesty deal similar to that of the Niger Delta militants in the South (see Aghedo, 2013). Additionally, the government has sponsored the appearance of nationalist spokespeople on national electronic media to create public awareness and understanding of the tactics and inappropriate behavior of BH.

Similarly, BH members have also been asked to make their grievances known and embrace dialogue and negotiation. However, despite such conciliatory gestures, the government has continued its huge deployment of troops and bombardment of BH enclaves, killing members of the sect. In another show of ambivalence, Borno State Governor Kashim Shettima, who had earlier promised to engage in dialogue with BH, recently donated 10 armored vehicles to the police to boost their counter-terrorism operations (Osumah, 2013). Thus, the government's frequent calls for dialogue and its over-reliance on repressive tactics are widely seen as contradictory. This ambivalent posture may have undermined its sincerity and trustworthiness. According to BH leader Aliyu Tishau:

> When I gave my advice, the police chased and arrested me and kept me in detention. Before I was detained, I gave the police the video recording of how some of our members were being given military training, but the Inspector General of Police (IGP) ordered that I should be detained. I was left in detention for 10 months. But when I was in detention, I was in contact with our people, and I still kept forewarning the authorities about the attacks. I

even told them beforehand whenever an operation was to take place (*News-watch*, October 10, 2011: 15).

This coercive and military-oriented approach is reflected in the mass deporta-tion of suspected illegal aliens to the Republic of Benin, Chad, Niger, and Soma-lia as well as the declaration of emergency rule in 15 local government areas in Borno, Yobe, Plateau, and the Niger states (Osumah, 2013). Further evidence of excessive repression is the enhancement of the security presence and checkpoints in major northern cities in a manner symptomatic of a nation under siege and on the brink of collapse. Consistent with its stance on the "war on terror", the US provides both fiscal and logistical support to Nigerian troops. According to Amer-ican Undersecretary of State Wendy Sherman, the US has trained over 800 staff officers and more than 41,000 troops through the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ASOTA) Programme since 2004 (*The Guardian*, Septem-ber 16, 2013).

However, the government terror-management strategy is replete with allegations of extrajudicial killings, rape, wanton destruction of property, and human rights violations. Indeed, the Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and other human rights groups have all reported that, irrespective of issues of self-defense and/or heavy provocation, state security operatives have been reckless in their use of lethal force, resulting in the deaths of a number of BH suspects and innocent persons (*The Guardian*, August 2, 2009). In response to allegations of extrajudi-cial killings, illegal arrests, detention, and arson, JTF spokesman Lt. Col. Sagir Musa noted that the JTF killed only when necessary (e.g., in self-defense or to save the lives of innocent and law-abiding citizens and their property). In his words, "[W]e should not forget that several security operatives have been killed or maimed by the terrorists, and a lot of police stations and military installations have been destroyed" (*Daily Sun*, June 4, 2012). Although no precise official sta-tistics on the number of suspects and innocent persons killed or maimed are avail-able at present, the number of casualties may be considerable.

From a historical perspective, the over-reliance on a military approach to the management of insecurity is not new in Nigeria. As noted above, the post-colonial Nigerian state, like its colonial progenitor, has been wont to rely on the military to manage security threats to its acquired values. In the wake of the current abro-gation of certain democratic constraints, various militia movements such as the O'odua People's Congress (OPC), the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), and the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), were at the receiving end of repressive military responses. The administration of President Obasanjo issued a shoot-at-sight order targeting any member of the OPC. State security operatives also raided the suspected hide-outs of the MASSOB, members were arrested and detained, and some were killed. Additionally, the military was deployed against Odi Village in Bayelsa State and Zaki Biam in Benue State.

The military responses by the Nigerian government to BH activities may have been informed by its officials' perception of the downtrodden as the "wretched of the earth", miscreants, criminals, scoundrels, disgruntled elements, hoodlums, ras-

cals, and rebels who deserve to be treated ruthlessly. This attitude is reflected in the constitution of various combat security units, variously code-named "Operation Thunderstorm", "Operation Wipe", "Operation Sweep", "Operation Restore Hope", and so on (Osumah, 2013). Additional support for this perspective can be found in former Minister of Information Dora Akunyili's reaction to the summary execution of BH sect leader Mohammad Yusuf in police custody: "Yusuf's demise is positive for Nigeria" (quoted in *The Guardian*, August 2, 2009). As shown in the data presented above, the Nigerian government has not addressed the conditions that have fuelled and propelled BH militancy, in particular, and insecurity in the country in general. Such precipitating factors include unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, poor infrastructure development, and general human insecurity. Indeed, the Ambassador Usman Goji Galtimari Committee, which was established in response to insecurity in northern Nigeria, recommended that the solution to terrorism in the region should involve the economic empowerment of young people.

CONCLUSION: THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OPTION

The insecurity caused by BH has endangered acquired values at both individual and state levels in Nigeria. It has resulted in general uncertainty, tension, and instability. In its attempts to contain the insurgency, the Nigerian government has adopted various security measures. These have tended to emphasize military approaches over those that target the socioeconomic variables that fuel and sustain the radicalization of the violence. Although policy statements about socioeconomic empowerment have been issued, this course has rarely reached the stage of designing and implementing comprehensive programs aimed at addressing the root causes of insecurity.

It is all too easy for groups such as BH to recruit rebels in the context of the huge number of marginalized, alienated, unemployed, poverty-stricken, hungry, frustrated, and desperate people who are willing and ready to take up arms to participate in any risky behavior. The deployment of military force can hardly deter such desperate actions by angry and hopeless individuals. Thus far, the continued emphasis on the military option in dealing with BH-related insecurity and criminality has not significantly affected the security situation in the North. Instead, it has led to carnage, internal displacement, and loss of investment, which has further worsened the socioeconomic conditions associated with numbing frustration, disillusionment, and desperation. Thus, this approach has provoked even more violence. The continued disregard for the genuine needs and aspirations of the vast majority of people has created widespread insecurity and consequent demands for reform. Thus, both short-term and long-term measures are needed to meet the security challenge posed by BH.

In the short term, Nigeria need to establish a committee to develop a list of all victims and to provide them with appropriate compensation. Additionally, the federal government should assist in the development of a comprehensive rehabilitation program for repentant members of the BH militia and violence-prone youth. All levels of government should purchase foodstuffs for distribution to the extremely

poor people at the center of BH activity. Moreover, the business community should receive an economic stimulus package involving the establishment of microfinance banks in every senatorial district that provide soft loans to traders/marketers and cooperatives to increase and encourage entrepreneurship.

Nigeria must also de-radicalize the vulnerable individuals who have been led to believe in the false doctrines and religious intolerance spewed by the preachers of hatred and the unscrupulous politicians. To this end, debates conducted in local languages should be broadcast on local television and radio stations to educate the masses and end the glorification of jihad. Additionally, the preachers of hate and unscrupulous politicians who "trade in violence" by manipulating and mobilizing vulnerable groups to create insecurity should be arrested, given fair trials, and brought to justice. The recent establishment of special state-of-the-art colleges for *almajirai* by the government is a bold step that deserves continued support.

In the long term, the welfare and aspirations of ordinary people should be treated as the primary concern of governments, at all levels, in terms of the design and implementation of policies. There should be conscientious efforts to alleviate poverty, generate employment opportunities, and invest in the development of infrastructure and education for the masses. An investment in grassroots socioeconomic empowerment aimed at creating jobs and increasing the employability of young men and women could yield massive returns. Indeed, a reduction in the number of idle and jobless persons in the North would reduce the number of hungry and angry recruits who form the majority of the BH membership. Employability can be greatly enhanced by radically revamping and repositioning the educational system in the service of meeting the challenges of contemporary society, by massive investment in training in vocational and skills, and by construction of an auspicious environment for domestic and foreign investments.

Given the extreme situation in the North, it is imperative that the government collectively pursue a program to alleviate poverty. This can be achieved by supporting agriculture through irrigation projects in the Chad Basin Area, offering training in agricultural techniques, and providing tools, improved seedlings, and post-harvest extension services in storage facilities. The sustainability of employment-generation and poverty-alleviation programs requires investment in infrastructure, such as transportation (roads), electricity, and water, which are intermediate inputs to production. The establishment of an infrastructure will increase the level of services and amenities available to the local population and aid in the establishment of economic enterprises that can increase productivity and enhance the quality of life.

Importantly, the people should learn to be self-reliant through innovation and hard work. Poverty and unemployment should not be accepted as reasons for acquiescing to or supporting the rhetoric of political demagogues, religious bigots, and ethnic warlords who instrumentalize the vulnerable, using them as cannon fodder in violent confrontations. Indeed, people must learn that the best way to improve their economic status is not to expect to be fed on daily basis, indebted to the "warped goodwill" of others; self-reliance offers a much more effective way forward. As the Chinese proverb states, "If you give a man a fish, you feed him

for a day; but if you teach him how to fish, you feed him for a lifetime."

REFERENCES

African Studies Centre, Leiden, 2002. *Islam in Nigeria*. Online.
    http://www.ascleiden.nl/content/webdossiers/islam-nigeria (Accessed February 26, 2014).
Agbonifo, J. & I. Aghedo 2012. Asymmetrical conflicts in Africa: The case of Ogoni in the Niger
    Delta region of Nigeria. *The Nigerian Journal of Social and Development Issues*, 9(2): 1–20.
Aghedo, I. 2013. Winning the war, losing the peace: Amnesty and the challenges of post-
    conflict peace-building in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*,
    48(3): 256–278.
Aghedo I. & S.J. Eke 2013. From alms to arms: The Almajiri phenomenon and internal secu-
    rity in northern Nigeria. *The Korean Journal of Policy Studies*, 28(3): 97–123.
Aghedo, I. & O. Osumah 2012. *Welfare Policy Administration in Nigeria: Cases, Context and
    Challenges*. Rally height publishing, Lagos.
——— 2014. Insurgency in Nigeria: A comparative study of Niger Delta and Boko Haram
    uprisings. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*. Online. http://jas.sagepub.com/content/
    early/2014/02/20/0021909614520726.abstract (Accessed February 26, 2014).
Ake, C. 2001. *Democracy & Development in Africa*. Spectrum Books, Ibadan.
Baldwin, A.D. 1997. The concept of security. *Review of International Studies*, 23: 5–26.
Bellamy, A.J. & MacDonald, M. 2002. The utility of human security: Which humans? What
    security? A reply to Thomas & Tow. *Security Dialogue*, 33(3): 373–377.
Buhaug, H. 2006. Relative capability and rebel objective in civil war. *Journal of Peace
    Research*, 43(6): 691–708.
Chandlier, D. 2012. Resilience and human security. *Security Dialogue*, 43(3): 213–229.
Crisis Group Report. 2012. *Curbing Violence in Nigeria (1): The Jos Crisis*. Crisis Group 2002,
    Dakar/Brussels.
Ebohon, S.I. 2012. The state in the Nigerian project: An empirical theoretic audit. In (T.A.
    Imobighe & S.I. Ebohon, eds.) *Themes and Issues in Nigerian Governance and Politics*,
    pp. 23–48. National Institute, Kuru.
Falola, T. 1998. *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies*.
    University of Rochester Press, New York.
Forest, J.J.F. 2012. *Confronting Terrorism in Nigeria.* Joint Special Operations University,
    MacDill, Florida.
Fwa, L. 2003. Ethno-Religious conflict in Kaduna State. In (T.A. Imobighe, ed.) *Civil Society
    and Ethnic Conflict Management in Nigeria*, pp. 81–105. Spectrum Bodies, Ibadan.
Hansen, W.W. & U.A. Musa 2013. Fanon, the wretched and Boko Haram. *Journal of Asian and
African Studies*, 48(3): 281–296.
Harnischfeger, J. 2008. *Democratization and Islamic Law: The Sharia Conflict in Nigeria*.
    Campus Verlag. Frankfurt.
Hobbes, T. 1651. *Leviathan*. Clarendon Press, Oxford.
Hynek, N. 2012. The domopolitics of Japanese human security. *Security Dialogue*, 43(2): 119–
    137.
Imobighe, T.A. 2012. Addressing sectarian violence in Nigeria. In (T.A. Imobighe & S.I.
    Ebohon, eds.) Themes and Issues in Nigerian Governance and Politics, pp. 317–340.
    National Institute, Kuru.
Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) Report 2013. *28.8 Million Internally
    Displaced People Worldwide in 2012*. Online. http://www.nrc.no/?did=9674155 (Ac-
    cessed June 9, 2013).

Isumonah, V.A. 2003. The Obasanjo administration and the management of Niger Delta conflicts in Nigeria. *African Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*, 1(2): 210–225.

Jega, M.A. 2007. *Democracy, Good Governance and Development in Nigeria*. Spectrum Books Limited, Ibadan.

Keen, D. 2006. War and peace: What is the difference? In (A. Adebayo & C.L. Siriameds, eds.) *Managing the Armed Conflicts in the 21st Century*, pp. 1–22. Frank CASS, London.

————— 2008. *Complex Emergencies*. Polity Press, Cambridge.

Leffler, P.M. 1990. National security. *Journal of American History*, 77(1): 143–152.

LeVan, A.C. 2013. Sectarian rebellions in post-transition Nigeria compared. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*. Online. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2013.783999 (Accessed June 8, 2013).

Liotta, P.H. 2002. Boomerang effect: The convergence of national and human security. S*ecurity Dialogue*, 33(4): 473–488.

Mohammed, K. 2014. The message and methods of Boko Haram. In (M-A Perous de Montclos, ed.) *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, pp. 9–32. African Studies Center, Laiden.

Mustapha, A.R. & S. Othman 1986. The recent police killing on Nigerian campuses. *Review of African Political Economy*, 13(36): 73–77.

Nolte, I. 2004. Identity and violence: The politics of youth in Ijebu-Remo, Nigeria. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 42(1): 61–89.

Nwolise, O.B.C. 2009. Peace and security. In (I.O. Albert, ed.) *Praxis of Political Concepts and Cliches in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, Essay in Honour of Dr. Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu*, pp. 245–289. Bookcraft, Ibadan.

Osaghae, E. 1998. Managing multiple minority problems in a divided society: The Nigerian experience. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 36(1): 1–24.

————— 2002. Regulating conflicts in Nigeria. *Peace Review*, 14(2): 217–224.

Osumah, O. 2013. Boko Haram insurgency in northern Nigeria and the vicious cycle of internal insecurity. *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 24(3): 536–560.

Pham, J. P. 2012. Boko Haram's Evolving *Threat. Africa Security Brief*, 20:1-8 (April).

Richmond, O.P. 2012–2013. Human security and its subjects. *Canada's Journal of Global Policy Analysis*, 68: 205–225.

Toni J. 2011. *Boko Haram*. Online. http://www.examiner.com/conservative-inyakima/never-before-has-nigeria-experienced-such-violence-by-muslims-pt-i (Accessed November 7, 2011).

Watson, S. 2011. The human as referent object?: Humanitarianism as securitization. *Security Dialogue*, 42(1): 3–20.

Wolfers, A. 1952. National security as an ambiguous symbol. *Political Science Quarterly*, 67: 483–492.

World Bank. 2014. *Literacy Rate, Adult Total (% of people aged 15 and above)*. Online. http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS?page=1&order=wbapi_data_value_2010%20wbapi_data_value&sort=asc (Accessed May 31, 2014).

Zenn, J. 2014. *Boko Haram and the Kidnapping of the Chibok Schoolgirls*. Online. https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/boko-haram-and-the-kidnapping-of-the-chibok-schoolgirls (Accessed May 31, 2014).

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

BBC News, 2011. Who are Nigeria's Boko Haram? By Farourk C. Online. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13809501 (Accessed August 26, 2014).

Daily Sun, June 4, 2012. Alleged extrajudicial killing: JTF faults northern elders. By Ola, T.

Daily Trust, July 27, 2009. Sect leader vows revenge. By Ahmad S. Online. http://wwrn.org/articles/31419/?&place=nigeria (Accessed January, 6, 2014).

Newswatch, August 1, 2011.The Boko Haram killings. By Ishaya, I. T

Newswatch, October 10, 2011. The Boko Haram kingpin they can't arrest. By Maureen, C.

Nigerian Compass, November 12, 2012. Expensive government cause of our woes. By Saheed, A.

Sunday Tribune, July 17, 2011. Islam and peace in Borno. By Shettima, K.

Sunday Vanguard, May 18, 2014. Online. http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/05/12000-lives-lost-boko-haram-jonathan/ (Accessed June 15).

Tell, July 4, 2011a. Why Boko Haram is elusive. By Agbo, A.

Tell, July 4, 2011b. A dangerous standoff. By Suleiman, T.

The Guardian, August 2, 2009. Boko Haram: Matters arising. By Abati, R.

The Guardian, April 16, 2013. Gunmen abduct 100 school girls in Borno. By Marama, N.

The Guardian, September 16, 2013. How to end Boko Haram terrorism, by United States.

The Punch, April 28, 2012. NSA blames PDP for Boko Haram crisis. By Addeh, E.

The Punch, January 27, 2012. IG: Senators accused of links to Boko Haram. By Akinsuyi, Y.

The Punch, July 9, 2013. The harm Nigeria does to the north. By Azuka O.

The Source, July 30, 2012. Plateau of trouble. By Onyemaizu, C.

The Punch, September 27, 2011. Yuguda's 924 assistants.

Vanguard, May 29, 2014. Boko Haram, world's deadliest terrorist group – former US counter terrorism bureau chief. By Onoyume, J.

Corresponding Author's Name and Address: Iro AGHEDO, *Department of Political Science, University of Benin, Ugbowo Campus, PMB 1154 Benin City, NIGERIA.*
E-mail: matthew.aghedo [at] uniben.edu