

Boko-Haram & Social Identity Theory: Explaining the Enigma that is Threatening National and Regional Peace in Africa

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Abstract: Because of the increasing nature of the global system, it is safe to say that insecurity anywhere is insecurity everywhere. The emergence of Boko-Haram in 2002 and the subsequent activities of the group have resulted to countless number of damages sustained by the Nigerian nation, the neighboring countries and the world in general especially with regard to loss of lives and properties. With this in mind, the necessity of understanding the group and the sociological factors surrounding their existence and survival becomes pertinent. The presence of Boko-Haram in Nigeria cannot be isolated from the underpinning social circumstances surrounding the understanding and interpretations of the ethno-religious forces that are prevalent in Nigeria and the proliferation of religious ideology from the Middle East. Hence, practical solutions to the problem cannot be realizable without a theoretically informed explanation. The objective of the paper is to trace the identity issue surrounding the emergence of boko haram and their activities using the social identity theory.

Keywords: Boko-Haram, Social Identity, Islamic religion, Ethnic Identity, Egalitarian Nigeria.

Introduction

Terrorism, as is the case with the Boko-Haram group is classified, as the premeditated threat or use of violence by individuals or sub national groups to obtain a political or social objective through the intimidation of a large audience, beyond that of the immediate victim. This appears in the multi- diverse strategies and the outcomes of the terrorists' activities (Abu-Amr, 1993). Although the motives of terrorists may differ, their actions follow a standard pattern which involves but not limited to airplane hijackings, kidnappings, assassinations, threats of and actual bombings, indiscriminate killings and suicide attacks (Alexander, 2004). These terrorist acts come with various negative consequences which includes; human casualties with massive number of deaths and injuries, destruction of properties, a heightened anxiety level, and myriad of economic costs (Andoni, 1997; U.S. Department of State, 2014). For instance, the twin attacks

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on September 11, 2001 had significant costs that have been estimated to be in the range of \$80 to \$90 billion when associated economic indicators such as lost wages, workman's compensation, and reduced commerce are included (Kruglanski, Jasko, Chernikova, Dugas & Webber, 2017).

Terrorist incidents not only that it causes human casualties but have other numerous socio-economic consequences such as causing the diversion of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), destroying infrastructure, redirecting public investment funds to security, or limiting trade and economic growth generally in the affected area (Collier, Elliott, Anke, Marta & Nicholas, 2003; Ahmed, 2002; Anderson, 2001). Terrorism, like civil conflicts, can devastate a nation and cause spillover effects among neighboring countries and regions as the activities of a number of globally designated extremist groups such as, Alqaida, Alshabab, ISIS, Taliban, etc have shown (Drakos, 2004; Ito & Lee, 2004; Chatham House, 2015; Enders & Sandler, 2006; Home Office, 2011b; MI5, 2012). For instance, Yemen's shipping industry suffered greatly after the terrorist attacks on the USS Cole and the Limburg, which led to the diversion of half of Yemen's port activities to competitive facilities in Djibouti and Oman as at 2002 and currently, have been crippled in the face of continuous sponsored terrorist activities in the country. Among the neighbors of Pakistan such as India, Afghanistan, etc, the activities of Taliban and other similar groups in the region have threatened internal and external peace and stability in addition to the threat it poses to regional and global peace (US Department of State Fact Sheet, 2002; Edelman, 2001; Euben, 2002; Faqir, 2001).

Although developed nations can show signs of monetary and fiscal capabilities to limit socio-economic impacts of terrorist attacks than small developing countries, terrorism anywhere has no tangible benefit other than enriching few individuals against the majority of citizens who derive their peace and stability through logical and globally accepted procedure for inter and intra human relation (Richardso Hudson, 1999; Bakker, 2006; Martin, 2009; Knudsen, 2003; Langohr, 2001; Lia & Skjøelberg, 2000). Despite the inherently controversial and fluid nature of the word "terrorism", one point which is not often obscured is the fact that terrorist activities, whether politically, religiously or ideologically informed, have one objective, which is to oppose an established authority or other groups with the purpose of coercing that authority or group into meeting the demands of the terrorists (Noy, 2004; Fischhoff, 2006; Soy, 2004; Beck, 2002).

Due to the complex and enigmatic nature of terrorism at the domestic and international stage, there has been a huge rise in multidisciplinary scholarly activities targeted at unravelling and evaluating terrorism and its socio-economic consequences for society (Fox, 2001; Fuller, 2002; Gerges, 1999; Juergensmeyer, 2000). While many are in the business of tracing the root of terrorism and the likely factors surrounding it, others have been working hard to defend the phenomenon either in the interest of religion or political ideology. In whichever way, what has come to play with regard to the consistent nature of terrorism is that majority of the recorded and verifiable terrorist incidents across the globe is fundamentally connected to religion with significant ethnic and political manifestations in most cases especially in developing nations.

Terrorism has grown from the level of few individuals' interests into global and lucrative business for groups and nations such that many nations across the globe are using the phenomenon as the alternative way of pursuing certain domestic, regional and international interests (Chaliand, Gérard, & Blin, 2004).

In developing nations, terrorism has been domesticated across the globe for different scales of operation focusing on certain internal objectives and interest but with different appearances and veil of social discontent (Counter Terrorism Calander, 2014). From 1914 till date Nigeria has been struggling to live out the expected implication of the amalgamation of the precolonial small scale societies with very unfavourable results. More importantly, the current challenge to the concept of one Nigeria is the metamorphosis of foreign religious interest into terrorist clusters as a covert strategy to continue the longstanding politics of domination in the country. Interestingly, no other terrorist group manifests this character more than the Boko Haram Islamic Sect which is by far the most coordinated insurgent group in Nigeria that is systematically aligned to the global Islamic terrorist network.

Scoring the knowledge base of the Nigerian government, African region and the global agencies for the curtailing of terrorist' activities, there is yet ambiguity about the nature and operation of the boko haram terrorist organization in comparison to other globally designated terrorist organizations and by implication, calls for more theoretically sound approach to the explanation of the group's activities, its origin and the likely future direction using the available indices of the group's activities.

This paper focused on understanding the origin and identity issues surrounding the phenomenon of bokoharam in Nigeria and within the religious framework of Islam. Being conscious of the end products of intellectual enterprise, which is elucidation of phenomenon and solution-driven communique, the paper juxtaposes the sincere confrontation of terrorism in view of the blink future of nations like Nigeria where terrorism is covertly encouraged under the cloak of ethnic, religion and politics.

Taken a little foray into the past and the current situation in many countries across the globe, there are a lot of self-explanatory warnings against selling any nation or region out to terrorism. Among the developing nations that have covertly embraced terrorism as a smoke screen to pursue ethnic and political cum ideological interests, political instability has become the order of the day (*Gall*, 2016; *Gunaratna*, 2007; *Hoffman*, 1995; *Pellot*, 2014; *Stakelbeck*, 2011; *Winer & Roule*, 2002; *Ganor*, 2002), and Nigeria seem to be toeing this disastrous path having opened its doors for terrorism as a strategy to actualize certain ethnic, political, religious, economic and other interests among the political gladiators.

Boko haram and the Journey of Terror in Nigeria so Far

Terrorism and insecurity, is not a problem that is unique to Nigeria. The US, the UK and many other countries, face the challenges of insecurity within their borders on a daily basis (Adejumo, 2012; Önis, 2001; Woltering, 2002). The difference between most of these nations and Nigeria is how they manage the threats; how knowledgeable sincere and prepared they are; how they deploy resources; how effective these resources are; how patriotic and united their people are against threats of insecurity.

When the pillar of national security is weak, the structure quivers and sends sensations to the occupiers and potential occupiers of such structures. This is the case with the Nigerian entity, where insecurity and unrelenting violence by Boko-Haram in the country have continued to pose a threat to the nation's economy and investments. According to Carson (2012), in the wake of the crisis in the country, many international agencies and countries began to issue travel warnings to their citizens about the dangers involved in travelling and doing business in some parts of the country. Precisely, the United States warned American citizens of the risks of coming to Nigeria, with particular emphasis on places such as Jos, Bauchi, Gombe, Yobe and Borno States (Campbell, 2014). Of course, this cannot be isolated from the prevailing understanding and social stigma attached to terrorism in its totality wherever the signs appeared (Sigrid, 2017).

The areas affected by the Boko-Haram insurgency especially the north-eastern part of Nigeria have become disproportionately affected in terms of socio-economic development since in most cases, insurgency in that zone leads to a reversal of previous development gains while hindering new progress in this regard. The tragedy is that the collapse of local economies and the gradual erosion of social capital reinforce a downward spiral of further impoverishment, which in itself sows the seeds of further conflict (Nigeria RPBA Volume II –Component reports, 2016). For most of the north, the ongoing insurgency has had a significant negative impact on the regional economy. This can be seen in the economic statistics of the affected region.

The annual impacts of Boko Haram related conflict on output and price in the North East were simulated between 2011 and 2015. It is estimated that the region suffered an accumulated output loss of 1.66 Trillion Naira between 2011 and 2015, with a significant loss registered in 2012 and 2014 (464.32 Billion Naira and 447.13 Billion Naira respectively) (Nigeria RPBA Volume II –Component reports, 2016).

The primary affected States of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe experienced significant output loss accounting for 75 % of the accumulated output loss in six States, with Borno experiencing the greatest loss between 2011 and 2015. While Borno, Adamawa and Yobe are the primary targets of the Boko Haram group, the loss suffered by the three other States is to a large extent attributable to the influx of IDPs and fear of conducting economic activities in locations that are close to primary targets of the armed group. [Nigeria RPBA Volume II –Component Reports, 2016]. Lebanese and Indian expatriates who have

established businesses in Kano going back decades have relocated to Abuja and the south. A good number of them have left the country altogether. Hotels, banks and other business sectors have witnessed significant reductions in their activities. The border towns that have thrived on trade with Nigeria have also seen their businesses curtailed because of increasing restrictions on cross-border traffic. In Kano alone, an estimated 126 industries have recently closed down (Sunday Trust, 2012).

Another trend is the massive movement of southerners from the north, many of them small and medium scale operators and professionals anxiously needed in this region for sustainable development. Boko Haram terrorist activities have been a bad signal to foreign investors who would have been interested in investing in the country's economy (Baiyewu, 2012).

Some experts believe that there are no criteria to quantify the loss of Boko-Haram impact on the Nigerian economy including the loss of lives. As such, some have concluded that any figure that is thrown up from any source may be a scratch on the surface (Nigeria RPBA Volume II –Component Reports, 2016; Baiyewu, 2012; Eme & Ibieta, 2012; Okereocha, 2012).

The Human Right Watch report with its scary figures revealed that, in 2011 alone, 'Boko Haram' struck 115 times and killed 550 people. Within the first three weeks of the year 2012, the sect killed 250 people with the deadliest being the coordinated bombings in the ancient city of Kano, which claimed 185 lives (Eme & Ibieta, 2012). For a cause that is neither war nor natural disaster, the nation, according to a report by the Human Rights Watch (HRW), lost more than 935 of its human capital between 2009 and 2012 and more than 20,000 lives between 2009 and 2017. In terms of finance and investment, though direct and indirect loses are unquantifiable, a World Investment Report (WIR) of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), estimated that the domestic economy lost about N1.33 trillion Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), owing to the activities of Boko Haram (Okereocha, 2012). The quest for rapid industrialization of Nigeria has continued to suffer significant setbacks due to the heinous activities of the said group.

Even though the activities of Boko Haram seem to be more restricted to the Northern part of the country, the entire nation suffers because those outside Nigeria have a country-wide picture of the violence, hence, creating fear in the heart of prospective foreign investors. The attack that took place in Kano was one of the significant impacts of the Boko-Haram because the city has always been the commercial center for West African nations trading with Nigeria for the past 500 years, ever before the evolution of Nigeria (Suleiman, 2012). According to the UNCTAD report, FDI flows to Nigeria fell to \$6.1 billion (N933.3billion) in 2010 after the spread of the terror activities of book haram activities, a decline of about 29 per cent from the \$8.65 billion (N1.33 trillion) realized in 2009 fiscal year. Also, statistics obtained from the 2010 annual report by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) showed that the total foreign capital inflow into the Nigerian

economy in 2010 was \$5.99 billion. The record showed that FDI represented about 78.1 per cent drop from \$3.31 billion in 2009 (Okereocha, 2012). In 2009, over 837 factories have collapsed and closed shops during the first emergence of the Boko-Haram terror activities. About half of the remaining operating firms were classified as “ailing”, a situation that poses serious threat to the survival of the manufacturing sector in the country in the nearest future (Okafor, 2011).

According to a survey carried out as part of its membership operational audit in January 2010 by the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), the 837 figure represents the cumulative aggregate of firms that have shut down operations in 2009 across the country. The report of the survey showed that in 2009, a total number of 176 firms became terminally ill and collapsed in the northern area, comprising the Kano and Kaduna manufacturing axis. (Maiyak, 2010; Okafor, 2008; Okafor, 2011). Many of these firms have severally cited insecurity, vandalization of equipment and sabotage, epileptic power supply, among other reasons. The skewed budget allocation in favour of security as represented in Fig. 1.1 below paints a better picture of the problem posed by book haram insurgency since 2009.

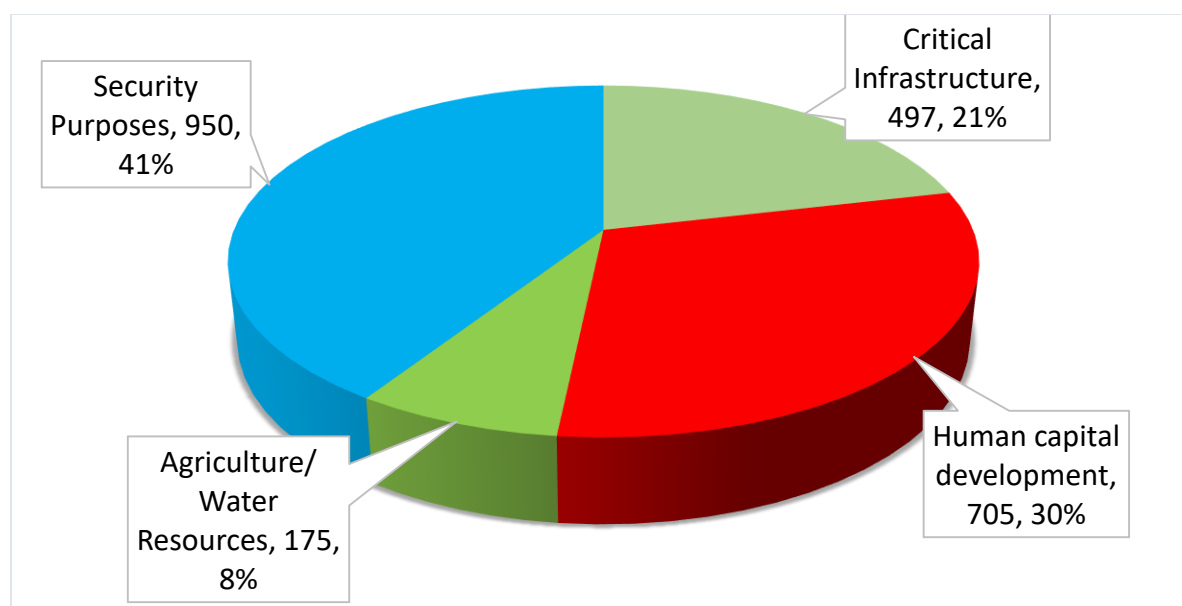


Figure. 1: Key Funds Allocation for the 2013 Budget in Nigeria in Bilions of Niara

Compiled by authors from This Day Newspaper, 2013

From the Figure above, key allocation of funds in the 2013 budget include: Critical infrastructure (including power, works, transport, aviation, gas pipelines, and Federal Capital Territory) – N497 billion; human capital development (i.e. education and health) – N705 billion; and agriculture/water resources – N175 billion. Also over N950 billion was allocated for national security purposes, comprised of N320 billion for the Police, N364 billion for the Armed Forces, N115 billion for the Office of the NSA, and N154 billion for the Ministry of the Interior (This Day, 2013). A situation where the funds allocated to security alone is almost equal to

funds allocated to education, health and critical infrastructure combined in a fiscal year, as is the case with Nigeria, is detrimental to national development (Adebayo, 2014; Eme & Jide, 2014). And this only appeared in Nigeria fiscal allocation structure for the first in 2013 due to book haram activities.

It is estimated that the northern region where Boko-Haram continued to operate suffered an accumulated output loss of 1.66 Trillion Naira between 2011 and 2015, with a significant loss registered in 2012 and 2014, 464.32 Billion Naira and 447.13 Billion Naira respectively (Nigeria RPBA Volume II –Component reports, March 11, 2016). Boko Haram's global reputation is also a source of concern. For instance, the group has pledged allegiance to the world' dreaded Islamic state and by implication has opened the Nigerian border as a safe haven for the fugitive group to escape the onslaught of the coalition forces and the Syrian forces. In the Middle East. Currently, Boko Haram is maintaining a regular training network with the Islamic state, Al-Shabaab, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and covert exchange of fighters with the Taliban. This cannot be far from the current situation on ground.

According to Central Intelligence Agency (CIA, 2018), boko haram has set up a plan to operate sophisticated military hardware such as drones against Nigerian forces; a situation which indicate that book haram is not isolated in their operations as they are in touch with more advanced global terrorists and some representatives in Nigerian government and other legitimate authorities. All the appearances and activities of Boko Haram placed them in a position that strongly shows that they are anti-domestic and global peace (Abayomi, 2014, Okafor, 2017; 2018).

Boko haram, Political Capital and Public Deception in Nigeria

The incidence and operation of book haram since 2002 has become a sociopolitical enigma in Nigeria and West Africa at least, looking at the fact that the sincere global think thanks in United States of America and across Europe cannot be confused in a context like this.

While the political gladiators from the Northern part of Nigeria and their staunch allies from the Middle East and North Africa continue to confuse the Nigerian public with their dominant access and control of the public media and the public institutions about boko haram, the Nigerian poor masses have given up to fate in the hope that eventually a miracle will happen from United States of America and Europe someday to relief the country of the pains.

However, in the absence of understanding the situation on ground at least for the sake of knowledge of our real problem, even the most dedicated human right organization cannot properly confront the matter as it is. Boko haram came up ostensibly to establish a mega foothold for global jihad in Nigeria but appeared first in camouflage of charity organization (Walter, 2014; Okafor 2018).

The original intension of boko haram was contained in the mission of the al-Qaida leader (Bin Laden) and the former dictator in Libya (Gaddafi) who were in Nigeria in the latter part of 20th century. While al-Qaida leader focused on proselytization of the youth for the recruitment of more youth in Kano and other parts of Northern Nigeria for the propagation of jihad and elimination of their enemies (the non-Muslims), Gaddafi was using diplomacy to draw the politicians in the region into the quagmire by enticing them with money and other donations.

In their germination, Gaddafi's mission resulted in the increase of seasonal jihad (Edoh, 2001), which relatively died down in the wake of boko haram (Green, 2011). As a matter of fact, before the domination of the Nigeria sociopolitical conflict stage by boko haram relatively from 2009, there were incessant youth restiveness across the northern Nigeria ostensibly to make things difficult for non-Muslims in the region especially the non-indigenes (Eukora, 2005). This restiveness came seasonally and in different states in the northern Nigeria but with similar methodology and focus (making the non-Muslims the target) (Ikelegbe, 2001). Usually the conflict started in any of the states in the North with a slightest provocation or group induced provocation to explain the conflict away from Islamic jihadist agenda. However, whenever these conflicts started they will attract all the Muslims within the area and beyond, who will gather in matter of hours to execute the killings and destructions (Okpanachi, 2010). These happened randomly among the states in the north at different times but with a specific interest, which was to make life difficult for the non-Muslims. Over the years of these incidents none of the Muslim politicians or religious leaders ever condemned the incidence sincerely rather they will only make a ceremonial statement of explaining the incidents away from Islamic jihad.

Boko haram was the by-product of Osama Bin Laden's proselytization in the Northern part of Nigeria and this appeared to further establish the foothold of jihadism in Nigeria in an advanced form (Umej, 2008; Walter, 2013). While the mission of Gaddafi took care of monetary sponsorship at ranks and files of the Islamic political elements in the northern Nigeria to conceal covert jihads in this region, Bin Laden's mission expanded the agenda by raising more foot soldiers and radicalizing the youth to actually see jihad as an Islamic obligation [a mission he has started even before appearing on Nigerian scene] (U.S Department of State National Counterterrorism Centre, 2012). Although boko haram surfaced in Borno state in the wake of their operation, the mysteries surrounding the group were made complicated by their sponsors and those who started it. For instance, Borno state was made the scape goat for the evidences of the disasters by the group owing to its location at the border as well as the natural facilities of desert encroachment in the area (Walter, 2013; Okafor & Iyalla, 2017).

The developers and sponsors of boko haram covertly operated from other states in the north and most of the states where the major sponsors of boko haram lives were carefully isolated from the activities of the group. This also can be observed in the bokoharam international posture. Although boko haram is not

exclusively an internationally focused jihadists, however in all their attempt on international interests, they never attacked certain foreign subjects such as citizens and interests of America, Russia, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, Lebanon and some countries in Europe.

While in the case of America, Russia, Israel and some other countries in Europe they are careful of falling in their wrath, they avoided most of the Middle East nations on the ground of invisible cord of brotherhood. This simply displayed the level of the intelligence among the developers and sponsors domestically and internationally. In the wake of boko haram, the incidents of incessant sociopolitical restiveness started dying down.

Boko haram was developed as political capital as well as instrument of jihad among the northern politicians and religious leaders as well as the global jihadism network. In the cocoon of political capital, the problem of boko haram, which ought to have appeared as national problem requiring sincere collective action was turned into political strategy when one of the politicians in the northern Nigeria publicly made the statement in Lagos in 2011 that if he didn't become the president of the nation, that Nigeria will be ungovernable (Clottey, 2011). This statement was reinforced when the supreme court of Nigeria declared his agitation of declaring him a president after the election, unfounded on the ground that his purported political party whose agenda was nothing but intolerable Islamism, did not cover even a single region not to talk of winning the constitutionally acknowledged majority. On this note he repeated the same statement of threat in another form by saying that "since Nigeria did not allowed me to assume the office of the president, the nation will hear it" (Aziken, Umoru & Akinrefon, 2012). They will hear it, in the local content and popular discuss, simply implies that the nation will see the violent or bitter aspect of the speaker. This reflected in the subsequent multiple bomb blast in Kano shortly after the statement.

When boko haram problem escalated the then government of Nigeria decided to approach the case with military might owing to sabotage by the Nigerian police force who could not explain the death of the then Boko haram leader (Yusuf Mohammad) (Warner, 2012); this move was also sabotaged by the entire northern politicians who took the then president of the country to the International Court of Justice in Hague on the ground that boko haram members are their children who deserved amnesty like the Niger delta youth a situation, which acted as a pull factor (van der Heide & Huurman, 2016; Schuurman & Bakker, 2016; La Palm, 2017) to many Muslim youth to consider the group as a potential representative of Islam.

Every effort to negotiate with boko haram or settle the matter with military strategy was sabotaged by the political and religious leaders from northern Nigeria (Roach, 2012). In the 2015 election boko haram became a hot issue in the political campaign majorly from the same quarters that has been threatening the nation with insecurity. Their claim was that they will eliminate boko haram in matter of weeks if they assume power. This, became a political capital to convince the poor masses in the northern Nigeria who were in

dare need of peace as well as further threat to the then president of Nigeria who has no military experience and by implication was assuming that his conceding defeat will bring about peace.

On conceding to defeat in the 2015 election by the then president of Nigeria from southern extraction, boko haram major agenda seemed to have been actualized while they now entered into the second trajectory of perpetuating global jihad. After the 2015 election, boko haram madness gradually fizzled away ostensibly to create the impression that “new government has started fighting the jihadists”. However, boko haram did not stop irrespective of the public media announcement that they have been technically defeated.

Boko haram simply entered into the trajectory of the second or rather, the major phase of their mission, which was to maintain global jihadism and to decimate the population of their enemies (non-Muslims) in the country. This, reflected on the new posture of boko haram such as openly acknowledging their ties with the globally designated terrorist organizations in Africa and the Middle East. Beyond these, they equally took a new posture domestically such as kidnapping for ransom, regaining their lost territories, collaborating with their staunch allies in the government and Nigerian army to decimate the Nigerian soldiers regularly posted to the area and using the Fulani herdsmen as a smoke screen to spread their terrors towards the middle belt region of Nigeria.

While their acknowledgement of affiliation with the globally designated terrorist organizations such as Islamic state yielded handsomely by providing them with state of the art terrorists equipment and training, kidnapping for ransom became a lucrative strategy covertly encouraged by their collaborators in Nigerian government, who secretly arranged for the amount and the delivering of the money to them at their convenience.

It should be noted here that one of the strategies suggested by U.S and other European nations to stamp boko haram out of existence was to starve them financially and materially- a strategy which succeeded in frustrating the Islamic state and the Al Qaida; however, owing to the fact that boko haram activities was a coordinated attempt having support from countless elements in Nigerian government, boko haram was revived by the return of ransom payment, which were strongly suggested by their agents in government [to release some of the chibok girls, the condition shifted from the international bodies pressurizing them into demand for millions of dollars of which they spent on importing more sophisticated weapons. Again, in the case of Leah, who was among the children they kidnapped from Yobe state, the condition of release shifted from government plea and international pressure to the demand of more than a billion naira].

Boko haram decimation of the Nigerian soldiers became a successful and sustainable agenda courtesy of their allies in Nigerian army who even sold their colleagues out at the point and time of posting. This can

be observed in a number of boko haram onslaughts on Nigerian army, which virtually took place on different occasions as soon as a new set of soldiers were posted to the area and almost at the point of their arrival.

On the herdsman menace, boko haram has taken over the movement of the herdsman as the trajectory to continue the spread of the terror towards the south especially, with the interest of fulfilling the Usman Danfodio's unplayed manuscript in the west African jihad agenda. While they have been pursuing these agenda with double quick match mowing down communities, local government and states, their collaborators in government strengthens them by given deaf ear to what they are doing and making a perverted posting and transfer of commanders in the affected regions. Any commander that acted out of the auspices of the concealed jihad was transferred to another place while few soldiers were release to the affected region only after the jihadists have finished their mission.

Again, while the jihadists continued the mission of terror and destruction in the middle belt and the north east, the fighting equipment and the available soldiers are moved to the south east and the south south to unnecessarily threaten the inhabitants. Currently, boko haram has started running their own government in some parts of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states. These were the places they were stamped out entirely before 2015, making them to rely on hit and run strategy and having the sambisa forest as their only stronghold.

Theoretical Underpinning of Terrorism (Boko-Haram) in Nigeria

Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory consists of three major components such as the *social psychological* component, the *system component* and the *societal* component (Rubin & Hewstone, 2004; Jost, Banaji & Nosek, 2004). Social identity theory's social-psychological component relates to the understanding of the cognitive and motivational processes that are connected to a form of intergroup discrimination [social competition] which, makes the social identity inevitable in individual self-evaluation and as such, makes individual self-values attached to group's value (Turner, 1975; Tajfel, 1979).

The need for self-esteem is thought to motivate group members to adopt various cognitive and behavioral identity management strategies (Blanz, Mummendey, Mielke, & Klink, 1998; van Knippenberg, 1989; Rubin & Hewstone, 2004). Among other things, social competition is a behavioral identity management strategy that may be used to change the status positions of the in-group and/or out-group in order to create or protect high in-group status (Rubin & Hewstone, 2004).

For competition to or not to take place according to Social Identity Theory is the determination of the system component which is the social psychological component that sets out such conditions. The system component indicates three socio-structural variables such as the *permeability* of group boundaries, the *stability* of the intergroup status system, and the *legitimacy* of the intergroup status system. The system component predicts that social competition will occur only when group boundaries are impermeable and the intergroup status system is unstable and illegitimate (Tajfel & Turner, 1979 as cited in Rubin & Hewstone, 2004:3).

The societal component of the theory relates to the specific historical, cultural, political, and economic context that contains and defines the groups and their status system (Rubin & Hewstone, 2004). The specifics of this societal context have been described as the social reality of the intergroup situation (Doosje, Spears, Ellemers, & Koomen, 1999; Tajfel, 1979). Two aspects of the societal context that are particularly important are societal norms and the societal value of intergroup behavior.

While the societal norms prescribe the background of intergroup relations against which social competition may be predicted to operate (for example, societal norms may prescribe outgroup favoritism), (Brown, 1978; Spears & Manstead, 1989), the societal value of intergroup behavior determines the behavior's potential for creating or protecting high in-group status (Rubin & Hewstone, 2004).

Social identity theory maintains that there are three types of discrimination engendered in and by a group such as realistic competition, social competition, and consensual discrimination (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1975; Rubin & Hewstone, 2004). Realistic competition according to social identity theory is driven by personal self-interest and occurs when there is an objective conflict of group interests over a limited material resource; social competition is driven by the need for social self-esteem and can occur in the absence of objective conflicts of group interests while, consensual discrimination is most likely to occur when intergroup status is stable and legitimate because these conditions indicate a high degree of intergroup consensus about each group's status.

Social Identity Theory Application in Diverse Social Circumstances

Social identity theory according to Tajfel and Turner (1979), is one of the enduring theories that have critically examined the implication of group existence in the society and the individual membership of these groups. According to Tajfel (as cited in Sigrid, 2017:10), social identity theory views the individual relationship with the group in the society as "an individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership". Social identity theory has been subjected to a number of interpretations with each scholar focusing on the relevance of the theory to the particular field or phenomenon of interest. For instance, Hogg & Abrams (1988) have interpreted the theory with focus on social psychology of intergroup relations and group

processes giving the theory, a relevance in the understanding of intergroup relationship and the processes involved in the existence of group phenomenon. Similarly, Tajfel and Turner (1979) have applied the theory to the explanation and understanding of intergroup conflicts in the society. Nonetheless, Turner (1987), has approached the meaning and understanding of social identity theory with focus to self within the group as the individuals still realize their uniqueness in the group identity irrespective of the extent of collective image.

Relatively recent approaches to social identity theory have widened its relevance and scope to elaborate its understanding and utilitarian value in explaining social phenomenon. For instance, Sigrid, (2017) has recently applied some sections of the theory in explaining the disengagement process from terrorism among the die-hard terrorists.

The role of identity is a potentially important but overlooked aspect of terrorism globally (Barrelle, 2010; Sageman, 2017; Doosje, Moghaddam, Kruglanski, de Wolf, Mann, & Feddes, 2016), and in Nigeria. Studies on terrorism and radicalization have shown that identity is an important element in the process (Al Raffie 2013; Seth, Curtis & Alan, 2009). Blanco-Mancilla (2003) defines identity as an ensemble of subject positions, e.g. Hausa Muslim, Christian, Female, northern Nigerian; each representing the individual's identification with a particular group, such as ethnicity, religion, gender and region. This definition captures the way people view themselves in Nigeria, where identity is defined by affiliation to ethno-religious groups rather than the national identity. In Nigeria, for example, it is erroneously assumed by many that a Hausa man, by virtue of his ethnicity, is a Muslim – a classification that distorts the Hausa-Fulani dichotomy in the northern region of Nigeria. In a similar vein, Ikelegbe (2005) argues that most Southerners are seen as Igbo, thereby submerging numerous other minority ethnic groups such as the Ibibios, Efiks, Ijaws, and many others. Here, identity is understood as 'a combination of socio-cultural characteristics which individuals share, or are presumed to share, with others on the basis of which one group may be distinguished from others.

Identity acquires meaning when it is used as the only platform for the articulation of common interests or the pursuits of shared beliefs and culture. In this sense, ethnicity, religion, culture, etc. are all key components of social identity. Religions are absolutist in nature when they advance the view that they have precise and complete understanding of truth, and that therefore all other religions are in error. Religious concepts contrasting believers and unbelievers, such as infidels, 'sinners', and 'heretics,' can provide justification for attacking out-group members.

The emergence and operations of Boko-Haram in Nigeria bore the hallmark of social identity-induced actions among the Islamic world. Although nobody has accepted to acknowledge it as a legitimate social group, the evidence on the ground such as the identity and the claims of the members simply point to the fundamentals of Islamic teachings and goals especially under the doctrine of Salafism with its origin rooted in the mutual oath of loyalty taken by Muhammed Ibn Abdul Wahhab and Ibn Saud in 1744. The term comes from *al-salaf al salih* (the righteous ancestors), and the beliefs its adherents espouse are rooted in a strict

reading of the Quran and Sunna. Salafists believe they are following the path of the ancestors (Chatham House, 2015).

Fundamentally, the duty of the Salafist via the Sunni, which is the majority and domineering sect of Islam across the world is, to maintain strict adherence with the focus on protecting Islam from any form of innovation and adaptation to unfamiliar environment. This core and unwavering responsibility is surrounded by some level of violence and conservatism against the out-group such as the Shiite, the Christians and other non-Islamic adherents. In the principles of social identification and categorization as are found in the social identity theory (Spears, 2011; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Hornsey, 2008; McKeown, Haji, & Ferguson, 2016), what the foundation and global objective of boko haram specifically, can be located within the ambit of Sunni Islam.

Having given a section where the Salafists are empowered for *private jihad* the few element drunk in ideology found a loophole for extremism which at the surface bore the mark of collective interest in Islam but in a micro view, stand for numerous biased agenda (Chatham House, 2015; Okafor, 2018; Okafor & Iyalla, 2017). Such a situation having succeeded at the global network of Islam became a powerful strategy for extremist elements among Nigerian Muslims especially, after the seeds of Bin Laden and Gadaffi germinated in the northern Nigeria.

With the spread of the extremist ideologies of which one of the elements is poisoning the mind of the youth against the status quo, the seed of boko haram found a fertile ground especially in the north eastern Nigeria. When the in-group appears derogatory to the members of the group with a close by out-group showing more favourable picture, the chances of defection increases and by implication, make the available members a lucrative venture to the proselytization of the out-group (Sindic & Condor, 2014; Jenkins, 2014; Reicher, Spears, & Haslam, 2010). While Sunni Islam in the perspective of social identity theory here [see social identification and categorization] appeared as the stereotype for violent religious crusaders, boko haram in extreme trajectory simply appeared as the prototype of the Sunni Islam.

While boko haram are fighting in their total understanding, to advance the cause of Islam, the Islamic world only label them terrors on the ground that every other group across the globe has seen them as terrorists otherwise, any mission, which they executed against the non-Muslims are simply seen as jihad and propagation of the interest of Islam in using force to lure people into conversion. Boko-Haram started with the foundation of Islam and maintained a strand in Islam especially the Sunni Islam in projecting the image of Islam in the best of their understanding having at the back of their mind the Islamic world as their social identity and passport to the general public.

Boko haram activities and interests are not far from the terrorists in the Middle East and South Asia who have embedded themselves in the mainstream social and political activities with the consent of the general

Islamic community in these places, especially the government of most of these nations. For instance, in Pakistan the Taliban, the Hakani network, etc. all have received the blessings of the general Islamic community especially, the Sunni Islam in fighting the Christians, the Shiite Islam, the Hindu, the Buddhists, the elements of western civilization etc. While the state of Pakistan is giving these groups support from behind the scene, they come out for mere *soap box oratory* to caution the group before the global scene in order to exonerate themselves (Pakistan) from any suspicion from the entire globe. A similar situation is found in Yemen, Iran [although Iran technically remove these groups from their domestic politics for fear of revolution on their soil but builds a consistent extremism in the internal circle against the West, the Sunni adherents, Christians and other out-groups to Shiite Islam], Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, etc., the expansion of this ideology of Islam among the Muslim dominated nations has become the form and format for seeking for political power and domination anywhere in the world where Islam steps its foot as it is gradually surfacing in the case of Nigeria¹ (Codewit World, 2013; Bakker, 2007; Bangstad, 2002; Ansari, 1984; Gall, 2016).

The operation and activities of Boko-Haram bore the signature of ethno religious politics in the country making it more or less an interest group and representative group in Nigeria polity (Okafor & Iyalla, 2017). The complication with Boko-Haram and its activities is the involvement of ethno-religious politics. At the inception of the group in 2002, they were more of proselytization group than violent group making them more or less a stealth instrument in the hand of modern Islam in spreading the message of Islam to win souls like their Christian counterpart. This took a dramatic change in 2009 after the death of the former president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria [Umaru Musa Yaradua]² (Campbell, 2014; Counter Terrorism Calander, 2014; Walker, 2012).

¹ In the case of Pakistan, a number of terrorist groups who were openly denounced by Pakistan before the whole world are gradually registering as political parties in the country with the clear knowledge of the state that these people have nothing as agenda other than terroristic mission. The most current example of these groups is the JUD (Jumaat-ud-Dawa), which has been the front group for Lashkar-e-Taiba who's their posture and activities have helped Pakistan to sustain covert war against India in Kashmir. In the case of Hamas and Fatah in Palestine, they were specifically set up as anti-west and state of Israel before they mingled into the mainstream politics and socially reorganized groups in the system with mixed political objectives. In Lebanon, Hezbollah which was once the Shi'a Islamist group set up by Iran for their destabilization mission in the Middle East, later became a registered political party for the main stream politics in the nation. In Egypt, Muslim Brotherhood which in itself, set up the modern terrorism in the Middle East quickly grabbed power during the fall of Hosni Mubarak. In the absence of covert intervention by the U.S government, the party would have collapsed the entire Middle East and Africa via extremism. In Yemen, Al-Islah was one of the covert instrument for Islamic extremism and global terrorism planted by the Muslim Brotherhood. They appeared as political party for the main stream politics in the nation but were purposefully set up to harbor globally designated terrorists.

² Boko-haram was the by-product of the visitation of Marmur Gaddafi and Osama Bin-ladin who invested heavily on Islam in Nigeria in the early 90s. Specifically, while Gaddafi was interested in turning Nigeria into totally Islamic nation by luring more youth with money, Bin-ladin was interested in open spread of the message of Islam to all available youth in order to multiply the group. However, due to the shift in the analysis of Nigerian political power as Jonathan took over from Yaradua, there were some agitations from the North against the Niger Delta indigene holding the power instead of the already streamlined pattern of sharing power between the North and the West (Yorubans). This gave room for the manipulation of the Boko-Haram elements to turn their energy against the Nigerian nation. When they started their violent agitations, their leader who was captured by the Nigerian army was killed in police custody to seal every available information from him, these unfortunately gave the group more bitterness to see Nigerian government as corrupt and unreliable system and at the same time, sealed the truth about their mission and who was behind their violent agitation. Before the group started their full violent agitation, it was recorded there were a number of places in the North such as in Niger state where the group was identified as training more 3000 members for combat mission and none of the Northern states viewed such as threat to Nigerian existence. When the federal government arrested most of these youths who were involved in the training, the Northern states collaborated to release them to terminate any further interrogation. Even when the group continued with their violent agitation,

While the Boko-Haram see itself as an element of Islam with the mission of restoring the sanctity of Islam based on the original manuscript of their ancestors, this was corrupted by the ethno-religious politics, which now turned the human capital and the faceless nature of the group into political capital for securing power and influence hence, the campaign of 2011 and 2014 were mainly on how the Boko-Haram saga will end in matter of days as soon as Buhari takes power.

Having turned the groups' heartlessness into political capital, the group itself understood their preeminence in the system and used the Islamic community to camouflage itself for efficient and successful mission of destabilization¹ (Walker, 2012; Campbell, 2014). For more solid network and smoke screen, the group now attached itself to the parallel politics of the North and the South, which now gave them even more representation in the national house of assembly and senate, where their matters are argued about with hidden agenda and with more focus on how to conceal everything about the group and display to the world the image of human right protection while dealing with Boko-Haram. The Northern region now protects the agenda of Boko-Haram manipulators without understanding the inner circle of the group and their campaign of decimation of non-Muslims. The covert identities such as Sunni Islam, general Islamic community and Northern Southern politics have shielded the mission of Boko-Haram and granted them successful mission as one of the dreaded global designated terrorists². This is aptly represented in Figure 2 below.

The concept of one Nigeria, African Regional Integration and boko-haram insurgency

From the inception of the word "Nigeria", the implication has been the conglomeration of ethnic cum religious entities living together with mutual respect and understanding in a geographical setting. More importantly, the existence of the groups involved is with one superseding goal, which is to champion the development of African humanity. After the colonial administration succeeded in drawing the Northern and

it was learnt that the Northern elders' forum and the ARIWA Consultative forum ganged up against the federal government claiming the effort of the federal government to quench the agitation was to kill their youth; taking the federal government to the international criminal court. A report even emerged from credible sources that the first set of mobile police men who went to fight Boko-Haram in their hideout in the desert died and were abandoned to rotten in the desert as the governor of Bornu state refused to release fund to bring back their bodies after they were ambushed by the Boko-Haram. All the efforts made by the federal government under Jonathan to stop the group were all sabotaged by the entire Northern politicians.

¹ While the Northern politicians were using the group for campaign strategy, the group was growing wings to fly out of their cage of structural dominance and used the interaction between them and the men behind the scene to secure a secrete channel into the Nigeria government institutions such as the military, police, prisons even the presidency. These reflected on the way they are able to gather information about government activities and decisions concerning them. In a number of occasions, the group has specifically made open their knowledge of certain government plans towards them and has also succeeded in thwarting the military move to invade their hideouts.

²While Salafism via Sunni Islam gave Boko-Haram the identity as fundamentalists, Sunni Islam gave them the identity as Islamic sect; the general Islamic world gave them the identity as religious group while the Northern Nigeria gave them the identity as regional militants other than terrorists. These made it difficult for any person or group that intended to confront Boko-Haram and eliminate their activities. While the Salafists are covertly sponsoring terrorists who dance to their tune anywhere in the world, the Sunni Islamists become biased when terrorists are linked to their sect; the Islamic world approach with bias terroristic activities related to Muslims except where it threatens their domestic interests and global image. The Northern Nigeria since the amalgamation of the country has always viewed every regionalized issue with bias in favour of regional interests

Southern Nigeria together, the rest of the survival efforts needed for the development of the country were left on the shoulder of the indigenous people of Africa.

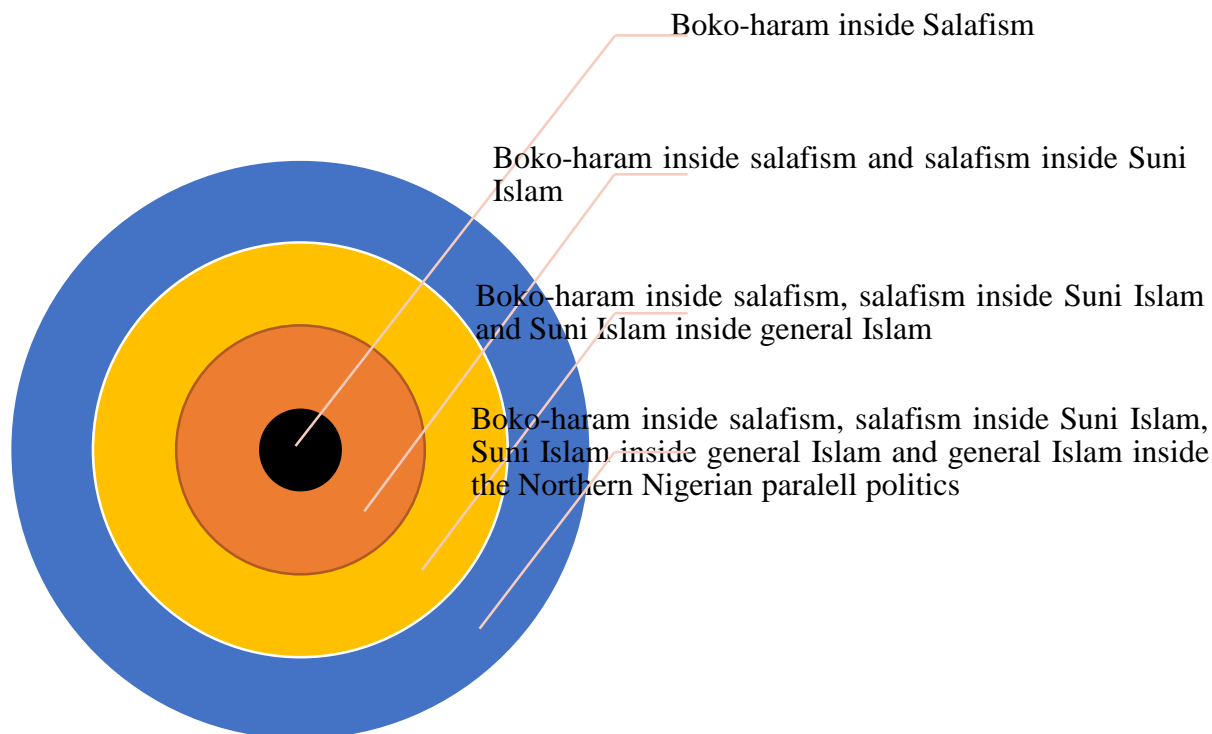


Figure 2: Basic target diagram displaying the cocoon of Boko-Haram in Nigeria (see the footnote (4) below for more explanation).

Source: Okafor and Raimi

There is no continent or country anywhere in the world where there is absolute homogeneity of social group, making it, more or less a quasi-natural phenomenon that geographical territory, will only exist in complementary of fluid social network of sub social groups culturally, racially and ethnically. In the case of Nigeria, the existence of heterogeneous group made up of sub groups, was inevitable as the groups living within the geographical setting have developed a consistent social network both in the economic activities and other fluid social interactions even before the amalgamation of the south and north parts of what we know today as Nigeria. These, made it easy for the colonialists to merge the groups without much stress unlike other African nations that later separated after some years into their independence.

Having been dragged into the relationship, which some international political merchants are using for their interests efficiently than the indigenous people of Africa, the only option is to check out how other countries

that fall into such incidence survived it and move on with development. Since the amalgamation of the southern and northern protectorates in 1914, the nation has been dabbled into the politics of regionalism irrespective of the absence of such in the fundamental constitution and structural set up. This regionalism, which came as a result of colonialism so to speak, has continued to take pre-eminence in the management of resources and relationship of the groups that made up the nation. The covert regionalism in Nigeria's socio-ethnic co-existence has been more important than the entity itself, warranting the reckless adoption of unwholesome strategies by different groups to secure their interest. Among other things, boko-haram emerged and continues to survive as a result of the covert regionalism and reckless adoption of inhumane political strategies for regional interests. Since the beginning of the covert boko-haram activities in 2002 to 2009 when they clearly declared their religious cum political interests, none of the states in the Northern region of Nigeria ever came out to declare the activities of the group as detrimental to the existence of Nigeria instead, all attention was on how the group should be condoned or treated like the Niger Delta militants who were provoked into agitation by the environmental degradation in the area¹. The emergence of boko-haram in Nigerian political terrain has sent some ripples across various sectors in the country with the progressive destruction of the very essence of the collective conscience of the people. By far, the most affected and compromised is the defence sector. Nigerian military in particular has adversely been affected especially given the progressive defeat they encounter in the battle field in different parts of the north-eastern Nigeria, where many senior and junior officers constantly lose their lives due to sabotage by the staunch allies of boko haram in the system. The ferocity of Boko-Haram and their style of gathering intelligence about Nigerian government and security system aptly displayed Nigeria as a failed nation that cannot protect her citizens let alone foreign citizens in the nation should the terrorists change their focus on the citizens and the foreigners.

¹ When Boko-Haram started their campaign from the foundation of Islamic evangelism by Osama Bin-Ladin in Kano ostensibly to recruit more youth for terrorism and suicide mission here in Nigeria and other places in the world, they were treated as mere Muslim youth propagating the gospel of Islam in Nigeria. When the same group started training for handling of weapons and combat action, the states in the Northern region especially Niger state and other states they used as footholds were all quiet in the name of protecting Islam and the domination of Islam in the northern Nigerian territory. A good number of these youth (more than 3000) were cited in some secondary school grounds where they were having training and nothing was done about it. Even when some of them were arrested, the generals and political gladiators from the region only made contact with authorities to release them without prosecution or any further investigation. In 2009 when they came on board with their trainings and ideology to destabilize the nation, the northern Nigerian politicians teamed up to protect them as their frontiers for political domination. This resulted to mysterious death of Muhammad Yusuf in the hand of the police in order to terminate any covert investigation into the matter by the Nigerian intelligence group. Having been accused of approaching the matter with force by the then president of the nation, the presidency requested for negotiation with the group of which they claimed they were faceless group. All effort made to approach this group or control their activities simply failed because of the gang up by the northern Nigerian politicians to use the group as a covert political frontier in championing the domination of the region in Nigerian political affair. The northern power drunk entities went ahead to demand for amnesty for a group that has no tangible agitation in reaction to what the politicians in the region saw as sharing the national cake with the Niger delta militants who were offered amnesty after they accepted to drop their agitations. This same pattern and strategy of encouraging and sustaining the Boko-Haram elements re-surfaced in the subsequent administration of Muhammadu Buhari. The presidency went behind to pay ransom in millions of dollars to Boko-Haram for the release of the Chibok girls when the United States of American government has adopted financial starvation strategy to eliminate this group. More so, the same government went ahead to grant amnesty to a number of northern youths who were projected as Boko-Haram members while the main Boko-Haram members and leadership has not accepted any open negotiation with the Nigerian government.

Boko-haram emergence and operations opened the Nigerian border for the international jihadists, who now operate, using the smoke-screen of the herdsmen-farmers' conflicts. Technically, Nigeria has not faced the farmers-herders clash as such a magnificent problem as these clashes are clearly defined and can be approached based on the substance of conflict. However, since the emergence of Boko-Haram and the subsequent emergence of government dominated by Fulani men especially, in the security institution of the nation, herdsmen/farmers clashes have taken a new dimension of battle of occupation and Islamic conquest using the elements of boko haram mostly from outside Nigeria. The role of the boko haram in this has made the herdsmen incidents more complicated such that the herdsmen have become the umbrella for the Fulani criminals from all over Africa and beyond who are now moving towards the south for their kidnapping and armed robbery businesses.

The emergence of boko-haram in Nigeria turned Nigerian economy into the avenue of the sponsors of boko-haram to make their own secret wealth. The battle against boko-haram became a business opportunity for the merchant of death (weapon proliferation agents) in the West African region and in Nigeria particularly. While boko-haram collect money from Nigerian government and individuals via ransom payment and covert bank robbery to buy weapons from these merchants of death, the corrupt elements in the military, who have seen the situation as opportunity, are busy demanding and squandering funds made for the war against boko-haram. Worst still, the present government saw the situation as the opportunity of diverting foreign aids and other available funds to the political merchants in the north-eastern part of Nigeria under the guise of security and developmental aids for the affected region. The most recent of this scenario, is the demand for some billions of Naira to fight boko-haram after the government has pronounced the defeat of boko-haram by Nigerian army.

The north-south fluid economic investment, which made Nigeria more unified than parliamentary and military edits, was reduced to nothing in the wake of boko-haram insurgency, as the southern investors in the north felt more targeted by the boko-haram in the region. The fragile unity of Nigeria since the end of the civil war has been further undermined by the boko-haram emergence. While the northern political merchants were using the boko-haram as political capital to make way for their continual domination of the rest of Nigeria, the south saw the incidence as an indication that they needed to pull away from the concept of one Nigeria, hence, the militants in the Niger Delta changing their posture from the environmental agitators to freedom fighters seeking for the creation of Niger Delta Republic.

The emergence of boko-haram and their terror activities via the herdsmen insurgents gradually drew every part of Nigeria into the agitation for the re-negotiation of the unity of the country making Nigeria currently one nation in principle with multiple anti-unity interest in practice. The existence of terrorist groups anywhere is a threat to peace globally. This is strongly evident in the activities boko haram, which constantly pose significant threat to global peace, even though its base is in Nigeria. The group has become a conduit pipe

to covertly transfer the elements of Taliban, Islamic state, Al-Shabaab and other similar groups to Europe via Africa. In the fluid relationship of Nigerian Fulani and their likes in the West African region, boko haram has appeared as a covert strategy to complicate the already feared Islamic extremism in the region.

Having accepted to operate with the Islamic state and other globally designated terrorists, boko haram is now building a safe haven for these fugitives from Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, Kenya, Egypt, Libya, etc., from where to covertly plan and execute globally designated attacks without easy traces. Of course, boko haram has solidified the already existing terrorist groups in West African region for stealth domination of the region via porous borders and consistent criminal activities across the borders of West African nations. Currently, boko haram is preparing to operate combat drones according to the latest information from U.S Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). This, shows the degree of challenge boko haram poses to the West African region and the global peace looking at the sophisticated nature of such and the extent of vulnerability of the people in the region and beyond. This also reveals the activities of boko haram as a covert Sunni Islamic extremists' encroachment with global pedigree.

Conclusion

Boko-haram insurgency is part of the globally recognized terrorists that had its foothold on the extremist teaching among a religious subgroup (Salafists). This teaching found its way into Nigerian political landscape via the mainstream religious group, with the major aim of turning Nigerian political landscape into political system run on theocratic principle, with much reservation for extremists' ideology. While the group has this as the ultimate goal, they became vulnerable to the political gladiators of the northern region of Nigeria who adopted the wave and influence of their activities as political capital in the game of terror and domination, which has come to characterize Nigerian political culture after independence in 1960. In the lens of identity theory, boko-haram is a tiny group with globally recognized dangerous mission, which hides inside layers of political, ethnic and religious cocoons to operate in Nigeria and further turn the West African region into safe haven for globally designated terrorist organizations.

The effects of boko-haram insurgency across all sectors in Nigeria have undermined the country's unity, arousing every region of the country to seek for the re-negotiation of the future of the nation. More so, the existence of the group is appearing to be a powerful sustenance for the dreaded Islamic state and the likes in view of the volatile security networks within Sub Saharan Africa thereby raising a concern over the battle against insurgency across the globe.

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