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Abstract

This study is a systematic analysis of the origin of Boko Haram insurgency in Kukawa local government area of Borno State. It draws from the background of the sect, as well as its transformation from an offshoot of the Izala sect into an insurgency that wreaked havoc on lives and properties in north-eastern Nigeria with Kukawa LGA as the focus. It x-rays Kukawa LGA, carefully stating its wards and how the activities of Boko Haram have wreaked havoc in the LGA. The paper relies on the use of secondary sources which involves the use of books, journals, newspapers and reports to drive home its points. Findings from the research reveal that Kukawa Local Government area is very strategic because of its historical and economic importance in the history of Borno which makes it a breeding ground for the activities of the terrorists. The study, therefore, concludes that the impact of the Boko Haram Insurgency in Kukawa LGA has been phenomenal concerning its socio-economic impact on the various communities in Kukawa LGA.

Keywords; Boko Haram, Insurgency, Kukawa, Religion and Ethnicity

Introduction

Boko Haram is not the first insurgent group Northern Nigeria and by extension Borno State. Though latent for the better part of the past decade, since 2009 the group has waged a campaign of extremist, anti-government attacks across much of northern and central Nigeria. Insurgency activity in North-east Nigeria began in 2009 with a violent campaign by the terrorist group known as the Association of Sunnis for the Propagation of Islam and for the Jihad. Prior to the violent escalation, the group had begun in 2002 as a largely peaceful sect but with a radical ideology. Most writers and commentators have attributed the transformation of the group to the death of its leader, Mohammed Yusuf, ostensibly at the hands of government security agencies in 2009.¹

In keeping with its unofficial and more commonly known identifier “Boko Haram”, the group routinely targets schools, but also places of religious worship. In recent times, its preferred targets have included markets, parks and similar locations with large concentration of civilian populations, as well as

¹Agbonkhanmeghe Orobator, Why is Boko Haram Succeeding? *Commonwealth Magazine*, 29 June 2015



kidnapping for ransom as evident in the Chibok girls in 2014 and more recently the Dapchi school girls in Yobe state.

The link between conflict and economic progress as observed within academic literature is presented with different theoretical relationships. These theoretical links vary in terms of the nature of the variable in terms of cause and effect relationship, the direction of causality and the magnitude of the effect. Studies that examine this relationship either try to ascertain the impact of conflict on economic progress or, alternatively, whether sufficient evidence exists to show that the level of economic development is a likely determinant of the likelihood that conflict might occur within a given political or demographic entity. As a measure of the severity of the Boko Haram crisis, several commentators have described the insurgency as the worst political and security challenge the country had faced since the Nigerian Civil War.² Foard Copeland in his work, the Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria posits that Boko Haram emerged from the Northern Nigeria state of Borno. This position was corroborated by Adam

Muhammad in 'Democracy, Religion and Peace in Nigeria: The Lesson from KanemBorno Empire.' Where he argued that Boko Haram had established their stronghold popularly known as "Markas" in Maidiguri, the Borno State capital since 1992. However, Adam Muhammad further stated that Boko Haram movement actually started in Borno-Yobe axis in the 1990's. Foard Copeland further asserts that a coherent group identity could not be established until Mohammed Yusuf, a charismatic cleric gained prominence among local youths in Maiduguri, Borno state capital. By 2003, Mohammed Yusuf led a movement espousing a conservative theology that mimicked Saudi-style Salafism and opposed Nigeria's secular state, which it considered corrupt and un-Islamic.³ Also, the introduction of Sharia law in the 12 northern states in 1999 was deemed insufficient by Yusuf and his followers who argued that the ruling class as a whole was moored by corruption and even Muslim northern leaders were irredeemably tainted by western style ambitions.⁴

Copeland also asserts that initially, Mohammed Yusuf's group secluded itself from mainstream Muslim communities, believing the local government to be corrupt and un-Islamic.⁵ Its small cabinet of leaders established a mosque and farm, imposed a harsh form of Sharia law and eventually developed its own police force. At the time, funding came from one of two sources, either wealthy Salafi donors Yusuf met while on hajj to mecca or from the families of Yusuf and his followers. Many of the sect's core leadership were the sons of Borno's wealthy merchants and local politicians.⁶ To Nigeria's intelligence community, the true historical roots of Boko Haram dates back to 1995, when Abubakar

²ChinenyeNwabueze and Victoria Ekwughe, Nigerian Newspapers' Coverage of the Effects of Boko Haram Activities on the Environment, *Journal of African Media Studies* 6 (2014): 71-89.

³F. Copeland, "The Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria" Civil-Militray Fusion Centre.

⁴F. Copeland, "The Boko Haram

⁵F. Copeland, "The Boko Haram

⁶F. Copeland, "The Boko Haram

Lawan established the Ahlusunnawal'jama'ahhijra or Shabaab group(Muslim Youth Organization) in Maiduguri Borno State.⁷ Freedom Onouha in "Why do Youths Join Boko Haram" argued that Boko Haram draws its members mainly from disaffected youth, unemployed high school and university graduates, and destitute children, mostly from not limited to northern Nigeria. The group is known to sustain its operations through diverse sources of funding, including membership dues, donations from politicians, financial assistance from foreign terrorist groups, raiding of banks, and ransom from kidnappings.⁸The activities of Boko Haram became more worrisome in 2004 when students, especially in tertiary institutions in Borno and Yobe States, withdrew from school, tore up their certificates and joined the group.⁹

Its history of violence dates back to December 24, 2003, when it attacked police stations and public buildings for several days, hoisting the flag of Afghanistan's Taliban Movement over camps. Soldiers and police removed them only after killing 18 and arresting dozens more.¹⁰Freedom Onouha also argued that the July 2009 revolt was partly caused by the fatal shooting of sect members on June, 11 2009 by security forces involved in Operation Flush following a clash with sect members for not wearing crash helmet while on their motor bikes for a funeral procession. In retaliation, the members attacked and destroyed the DutsenTanshi police station on July 26, 2009, and this raised the curtain for a wave of unrest that swept through Bauchi, Borno, Kano, Katsina, and Yobe States.¹¹

Foard Copeland argued that the hostilities of 2009 transformed the group from a small sect of religious zealots into a radical Islamist militia capable of coordinating a country-wide insurrection. On 27 July, 2009, police killed approximately 150 individuals and between 26 and 30 July, the death tolls rose steadily as security forces killed hundreds of individuals believed to be Boko Haram members.¹²Boko Haram's principle mosque was shelled and on 30 July, Mohammed Yusuf was found hiding in his father-in-law's goat pen. He was allegedly executed by security forces and his 72 year old father in-law was reportedly killed while in police custody the following day¹³

Boko Haram-Ethnic or Ideological Motivated Group:

Daniel Byman in his work, "The Logic of Ethnic Terrorism" argues that Ethnic terrorism differs considerably from violence carried out for ideological, religious, or financial motives. Ethnic terrorists often seek to influence their

⁷Freedom Onouha "Why do Youths Join Boko Haram" United States Institute of Peace

⁸Freedom Onouha "Why do Youths Join Boko Haram"

⁹Freedom Onouha "Why do Youths Join Boko Haram"

¹⁰Freedom Onouha "Why do Youths Join Boko Haram"

¹¹Freedom Onouha "Why do Youths Join Boko Haram"

¹² F. Copeland, TheBoko Haram...

¹³F. Copeland, TheBoko Haram...

own constituencies more than the country as a whole. Ethnic terrorists frequently seek to foster communal identity, in contrast to an identity proposed by the state. Ethnic terrorists often target potential intermediaries, who might otherwise compromise on identity issues. A secondary goal of the attacks is to create a climate of fear among a rival group's population.¹⁴ Copeland further argued that Ethnic terrorism creates a difficult problem for the state: conventional countermeasures may engender broader support for an insurgency or a separatist movement even when they hamstring or defeat a specific terrorist group.

On the other hand, C.J.M. Drake in his work "The Role of Ideology in Terrorist Target Selection" stated that ideology plays a crucial role in terrorist's target selection; it supplies terrorists with an initial motive for action and provides a prism through which they view events and the actions of other people. Ideology also allows terrorists to justify their violence by displacing the responsibility onto either their victims or other actors, whom in ideological terms they hold responsible for the state of affairs which the terrorists claim led them to adopt violence. In some academic forums, it has been argued that Boko Haram originated as a reaction to underdevelopment and poverty in the Muslim-dominated northeast Nigeria. Another theory of origin of Boko Haram focuses on Islamic jihadist movements. Jude Aguwa in his work "Boko Haram, History, Ideology, and Goal" argues that Boko Haram falls within the tradition of jihadism in Nigeria, although it is the most radical form. This position is corroborated by proclamations by its factional leader Abubakar Shekau that Boko Haram is fighting a religious war against unbelievers with the goal of turning Nigeria into an Islamic theocratic state.

Sheik Ramadhan Aula Juma suggests that the fundamental problem of Boko Haram is construction of *fatwa* and misinterpretation of Islamic concepts that may easily confuse unsuspecting Muslims. Their ideology of hate of religious-other is anchored on the concept of '*alwalaawalbaraa*' (allegiance and disassociation) which is the driving force of their atrocious campaign.¹⁵ Sheik Aula Juma explained that *Al walaa* in Shari'a means 'love of Allah and His messenger, love of Islam and Muslims and helping in the cause of goodness so as to attain the pleasure of Allah through defense of religion and serving Muslims'. '*walbaraa*', on the other hand, means 'disassociation from that which is being worshiped beside Allah, disassociating from what Allah abhors. Boko Haram's interpretation of this concept is skewed to refer to love Islam and all that is associated with it, and hate everything that is considered, in their yard stick, as un-Islamic. This is where the name Boko Haram is derived from since, to them, anything that emulates the West including secular education is *haram* (prohibited in shari'a).¹⁶

This leads to the *takfir* ideology of Boko Haram where any Muslim is perceived as complicit in Western culture is considered *kafir*. With the concept of *al*

¹⁴D. Byman, "The Logic of Ethnic Terrorism" Journal Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, Vol. 21, 1988

¹⁵R.A. Juma, "The Anchor Ideology of Boko Haram" <http://horninstitute.org/takfir-theanchor-ideology-of-boko-haram/> Accessed 24 June 2023

¹⁶R.A. Juma, "The Anchor Ideology of Boko Haram"

walaawalbaraa, it is an obligation of their members to kill any non-Muslim and, by extension, any Muslim who associates with *boko*. Other ideologies include Jihad against non-Muslims. What should be remembered here is that a *kafir* in their interpretation also includes those Muslims who disagree with their interpretations. , Secular education is another area where they believe its aim is to Christianize Muslims. The other one is democracy and democratic practices that are viewed as a western invention (*boko*) and lastly, working for non-Islamic governments is in contradiction with '*al wall walbaraa*' ideology.¹⁷

Abdul Raufu Mustapha argues that for a movement as Boko Haram to mutate from a sectarian group splitting away from the Izala movement to a full-grown rebellion threatening the integrity of the most powerful state in West Africa, you need more than religious fanatics, violent salafist ideology, and intolerance. The Ingredients that fuel the fire spreading across north-eastern Nigeria are yet to be fully described. The situation is further compounded by domestic Nigerian narratives on Boko Haram which tend to be coloured by the fractious ethnic and religious politics of the country.¹⁸

The Boko Haram Phenomenon in Kukawa LGA

The pervasive insecurity as a result of insurgent activity in the North-east has destabilized communities, which in turn has worsened the welfare and quality of life in the region. This is a result of the unrelenting terrorist activities which have killed, maimed inhabitants, and dislocated communities in the affected areas. These activities of the insurgents do not only affect the social and economic lives of people living in these communities, it has resulted in huge internal displacements leading to mass evacuation of entire communities in the affected region. This has given rise to the emergence of internally displaced persons' camps in relatively less affected parts of the North east and neighboring states.

Kukawa, a local government area (LGA) in Borno state is one of the LGAs affected by the Boko Haram insurgency. It is located in the northern part of the state. Kukawaboaders Lake Chad and it is made of 10 wards, of which are Baga, DoronBaga, Cross Kauwa and Kukawa.¹⁹

Kukawa

¹⁷R.A. Juma, "The Anchor Ideology of Boko Haram"

¹⁸Abdul Raufu Mustapha, *Sects & Social Disorder: Muslim Identities & Conflict in Northern Nigeria*: James Currey, 2015, 156.

¹⁹World Food Programme, *Rapid food security assessment in Doro Baga, Baga, Kukawa and Cross Kauwa (Kukawa LGA)* 2018, 4.

Kukawa is a town and Local Government Area in the northeastern Nigerian state of Borno, close to Lake Chad. The town was founded in 1814 as capital of the Kanem-Bornu Empire by the Muslim scholar and warlord Muhammad al-Amin al-Kanemi after the fall of the previous capital.²⁰

Cross Kauwa

Cross Kauwa (sometimes referred to simply as Kauwa) is a town located within Kukawa Local Government Area. The town is located along a road that runs from Baga to the east (formerly at the shore of Lake Chad)²¹

Baga

Baga is a town close to Lake Chad, and lying northeast of the town of Kukawa. It is located within the Kukawa Local Government Area. The town is approximately 196km from Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State.²² Doron Baga, a fishing community in Baga. Doron Baga's fish economy is built around the Lake Chad area where the community is located. In terms of volume of activity, the Doron Baga fish trade transcends the borders of Borno State to other parts of Nigeria, and even the West African sub-region. It has been described as the fish depot of Nigeria. The value of trade is estimated to be about half a Billion Naira annually. Baga reputation and by volume of economic activity is a major economic hub in Borno State.

The town is also located within the epi-center of the political insurgency in North-eastern Nigeria. The violent insurgency in the North-east, which began in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital, had rapidly spread to other parts of the zone. By 2009, Doron Baga had become significantly affected by the terrorist activities of the insurgents, with the community experiencing frequent violent attacks and even long periods of territorial occupation by the insurgents. Over the period of the conflict, media reports on the insurgency have indicated varying degrees of direct loss of lives and properties, displacement of inhabitants in the areas affected by the conflict and even the destruction of the environment²³

Actual estimates of human and material losses due to the conflict vary according to the source and nature of specific incident recorded. Added to this is the fact that areas that are most affected by terrorist attacks and insurgents activity are usually remote and spread across farflung territories in the North-

²⁰World Food Programme, *Rapid food security*, 4

²¹World Food Programme, *Rapid food security*, 7

²²World Food Programme, *Rapid food security*, 7

²³ChinenyeNwabueze and Victoria Ekwughe, *Nigerian Newspapers' Coverage of the Effects of Boko Haram Activities on the Environment*, *Journal of African Media Studies* 6 (2014),

71-89.

east.²⁴ Therefore, terms of actual measure of direct material losses due to Boko Haram activity, actual numbers are usually not conclusive. Sometimes different formal and informal sources provide conflicting figures on the extent of loss and impact. In spite of the reported scale and regularity of the activities of the insurgents, very little material exist within academic literature to measure, empirically, the impact of the insurgency on the people of the affected areas, i.e. Kukawa LGA.

Y. Mukhtar and W. Gazali provides the most comprehensive background material of DoronBaga as a centre of trade for fish within Northern Nigeria and even the sub-region. According to Gazali, the origin of the fish trade from the waters of Lake Chad is a long standing one. However, while local trade in the commodity has a very long history, the long distance segment appears to have been a relatively recent phenomenon. This has to do with various factors that limited the expansion of exchange and markets in the pre-colonial period. For instance, the availability of local supplies the problem of transportation (besides the high cost involved, the transportation of fish over long distances carries many risks because it could easily deteriorate) and relative insecurity for long distance traders, all limited the expansion of trade in dried and smoked fish during the pre-colonial period. The coming of modern transport system, the rise in population and the increase in earnings have greatly contributed to the expansion of the trade in fish. The coming of motor transport in the 1920s and especially the completion of the Maiduguri-Kano and Maiduguri-Jos highways in 1947, and the extension of the Nigerian railway to Maiduguri in 1964 significantly boosted the fish trade from Lake Chad. Furthermore, the expansion of trade in general since the colonial period has equally created a well-developed marketing system for processed fish (smoked and dried) in the North-east region of Nigeria, with DoronBaga as the most important market.²⁵

Amnesty International (AI) in 2015, said the attack on Baga and neighbouring DoronBaga, in Kukawa LGA, was the largest and deadliest Boko Haram assault that it had analysed. It said about 620 structures was destroyed in Baga, and more than 3,100 in Doron Baga.²⁶ As a result of the conflict, households were displaced to Maiduguri (about 70%), other states in Nigeria, while some to neighbouring countries like Chad, Niger and Cameroun.²⁷The Washington Post reported that Boko Haram, committed a massacre in Baga. It killed about 2,000 people in an attack on the town and the surrounding towns prompting more than 20,000 people to flee their areas.

²⁴AgbonkhianmegheOrobator, Why is Boko Haram Succeeding? Commonweal Magazine 29 June 2015

²⁵YakubuMukhtar and W. Gazali, "The Dyanamics of Fish Trade in North-East Nigeria: A case Study of DoronBaga" *Berichte* 268 (2000): 83-91

²⁶W. Ross, Nigeria's Boko Haram: Baga Destruction "Shown in Images", BBC News 15 January 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-30826582>

²⁷ World Food Programme... 6

In a news report in Premium Times, it stated that armed men suspected to be members of the Boko Haram attacked and killed 56 fishermen in Doron-Baga, a community in Kukawa Local Government Area of Borno State. The fishermen were returning from a fishing expedition when they were ambushed. They slaughtered 48 of them whose corpses were found near the river, while corpses of 8 others whose necks had bruises were found floating near the river bank.²⁸

A large body of literature has identified several causes of conflict and insecurity in Nigeria that are inimical to socio-economic and national development. These causes have been classified into external and internal causes. According to Ewetan, the internal causes of insecurity in Nigeria pose major challenge to socio-economic development than the external causes of insecurity.²⁹ These internal causes of insecurity include ethno-religious conflicts, politically based violence (mostly associated with electoral politics); general insecurity due to socioeconomic deprivations arising from systemic and political corruption; conflict over allocation and distribution of resources; pervasive material inequalities and perceived injustice; conflict arising from unemployment/poverty; conflict caused by organized violent groups and ethnic militias; conflicts caused by weak security system; conflict arising due to porous borders and conflicts expressed through acts of terrorism.

Ewetan and Urhie linked the state of insecurity in Nigeria to what he described as the low socio-economic indicators which includes life expectancy, death rate, access to water, poverty rate, mortality rate and crime rate. The situation, according to the author, has contributed to security challenges that have bedeviled the country, with grave consequences for socioeconomic development. There is no nation that can achieve socio-economic development in an environment of social and physical insecurity.³⁰

Conclusion

The pervasive insecurity as a result of insurgent activity in the North-east have destabilized communities, which in turn has worsened the welfare and quality of life in the region. This is a result of the unrelenting terrorist activities which have killed, maimed inhabitants, and dislocated communities in the affected areas such as in Kukawa LGA. These activities of the insurgents do not only affect the social and economic lives of people living in these communities, the persistent attacks of the sect create widespread insecurity and fear, the prevalent dread of the militant sect has stifled normal processes of trade and investments as well as the performance of routine security functions.

Economic experts have described government's economic reform as an effort that may yield no results due to the insecurity in Nigeria. Aside human lives

²⁸O. Audu, "Boko Haram kills 56 Fishermen in DoronBaga, Borno" Premium Times 23 November 2015, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/171778-boko-haramkills-56-fishermen-doron-baga-borno.html>

²⁹OlabanjiEwetan and E. Urhie, "Insecurity and Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria" *Journal of Sustainable Development Studies* 5(2014):61. Accessed 14 June 2023.

³⁰OlabanjiEwetan and E. Urhie, "Insecurity and Socio-Economic Development

lost, mass exodus of people whose contributions to the economy of the concerned states, is devastating their economies. This is because in analyzing the importance of factors of production, economists are unanimous on an empirical evidence that where all the factors – Land, Labour, Capital are provided in the right proportion, the absence, or inadequacy of entrepreneurship or human capital will render the other factors useless. Insecurity and violence in the north, especially the northeast, have further prevented humanitarian and development organizations from investing in and providing aid to the area. In addition, the harsh and rural environment makes it difficult to traverse the terrain and reach those in need. Food insecurity in the region is rampant due to continuous failed crops and difficulty identifying where resources are needed most. Hundreds of thousands of people displaced also puts an incredible amount of economic strain on nearby communities attempting to host those in need. Theorizing the Boko Haram phenomenon helps us to understand generally the Boko haram sect and placing it in its proper context. This work however focuses on the impact of the sect's activities and their impact on Kukawa LGA of Borno state.