



Rethinking Boko-Haram: Contending Perspectives among Nigerians in Diaspora and Youths

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This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to God Almighty that gave me the strength and grace to finish my study despite all the challenges that came on my path as obstacles.

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List of Acronyms

AD	Alliance for Democracy
APC	Action People Congress
FG	Federal Government
FTO	Foreign Terrorist Organisation
JTF	Joint Task Force
MASSOB	Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of Niger- Delta
MUYAN	Muslim Youths Association of Nigeria
NADECO	National Democratic Coalition of Nigeria
NIDO-E	Nigerian in Diaspora Organisation Europe
NYCN	National Youths Council of Nigeria
NCYFR	Nigerian Christian Youths Fellowship of Reconciliation
OPC	Oodua People's Congress
PDP	People Democratic Party
CYCPN	Concern Youths Coalition for Peaceful North

Abstract

Over the past four years, a range of conflicting narratives have emerged around the Boko-Haram violence crisis, its causes and possible solutions. These conflicting and competing narratives have made it difficult for the government to devise a clear cut approach in dealing with the violence, and have contributed to worsening the relationship between the predominantly Muslim North and the mainly Christian South. The study critically puts to test a number of existing models that seek both to explain the origins of Boko-Haram and to propose solutions. It does this in relation to the publicly stated views of two groups: Nigerians in the Diaspora and Youth leaders. Although, there are a number of explanations, I organise these under three dominant school of thoughts: (i) the Economic or Human Development approach, which is embedded in an explanation based on poverty and deprivation; (ii) the Religious or Islamic State model that focuses on the role of ideology and religion, and (iii) the Political, which consists of Elite conspiracy or feud approach, which views power, greed, and elite machinations as the main causes of Boko-Haram violence. Without a doubt, The Boko-Haram phenomenon is extremely complex. Yet these three main theoretical explanations of the Boko-Haram violence crisis have a significant influence on public thinking about the problem. While the political feud or elite conspiracy theory seems to be mainly put forward by Southerners, Northerners tend to think that Human development issues of poverty are more important. It was found that there was no single dominant way of thinking about the problem in terms of explaining it. In terms of solutions, however, youth were overwhelmingly for a military solution, whilst the diaspora focused mainly on dialogue. The study hopes to contribute to findings ways out of the crisis, in a modest way

Relevance to Development Studies

The research is unique to other works that have been done in the past by other scholars because it will critically put to test the existing models that explains the origin of the Boko-Haram crisis. The will allow concerned stakeholders to critically assess and adjust policies on how best to tackle the Boko-Haram crisis after careful consideration of all possible perspectives that explain the motivation and origin of the sect. With the help of academic mapping analysis through the literature, the media and conversations with youths and Nigerians in Diaspora, the research will generate fresh data according to the research question which will be useful for future research.

Keywords

Boko-Haram, Political feud, Elite conspiracy, Islamic State, Human Development, Deprivation, Diasporas, Dialogue, Youth, Theories, JTF,

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

There are ongoing debates in various quarters that before the Nigerian Government counter Boko-Haram, there is first an urgent need to understand the genesis of Boko-Haram and the violent conflict that drives the insurgency. In reality, “counterinsurgency cannot be defined except by reference to the cause of insurgency” (Galula, 1956:3). It is now over four years since Nigeria’s army launched the first major operation against Boko-Haram in the Northern part of Nigeria, yet Boko-Haram has become more dangerous and sophisticated in their attacks. For the general civilian population, living in the northern part of Nigeria, the Joint Task Force (JTF) operatives and the Boko-Haram insurgents are equally a threat. Civilians are vulnerable to attack, given the apparent inability of the JTF to distinguish between Boko-Haram and members of the Muslim community in general. Many are questioning whether counterinsurgency is the best answer to the problem. Some literature, for example, Kienscherf (2011) and Weinstein (2007) has argued that the loss of innocent lives in counter-terrorism operations can itself fuel terrorism, reinforcing insecurity and making the State and overall civilian population more vulnerable to attacks in future.

Map 1.1 Map of Nigeria showing the areas control by Boko-Haram and JTF



Source: <http://www.polgeonow.com/2013/05/nigeria-conflict-map-boko-haram.html>

The main focus of this study is not the dominant government approach of counterinsurgency. Instead, this study puts to the test a number of theories that seek to explain the root cause of Boko-Haram. In particular, we ask how Nigerians in the Diaspora and Youth leaders perceive the Boko-Haram crisis. The Boko-Haram phenomenon is so complex that it requires critical thinking, and this study aims to be relevant to the government’s approach to solving the violence in the longer-term, and going beyond counterinsurgency. Three major schools of thought were identified, as already explained (Human Development/Deprivation, Islamic State theory, and Political feud or Elite conspiracy

theory). Each explains Boko-Haram violence in a different way. I analyse how, in Chapter two. However, there are those who believed that Boko-Haram is a myth and a phenomenon that is nothing other than camouflage for criminals, corrupt politicians and people with evil intentions. This fourth theory emerged from the fieldwork, and will be explored in Chapter 5.

This latest development has further complicated the Nigerian public's thinking and scholarly research about Boko-Haram violence. One Northern respondent from among Youths during my research said he believed that the group's activities were hijacked, since as he understood it the main aims of the original Boko-Haram group were non-violent.

“What I know about Boko-Haram is that, they are initially a peaceful Muslims sect [that]... was later hijacked or to put it in a plain term, transformed into a violent organization. When the sect started their activities, they were just like any other Muslim sect; there is no state in the Northern part of the country that you will not find them. They preach openly and spread their ideology but what they are doing now appears that the group has been hijacked. Although [now]... we have criminals and vicious people perpetrating violent acts and operating in the name of Boko-haram” (Respondents 17)

In all ramifications, it appears that Nigerian government is losing the battle against Boko-Haram due to lack of understanding the origin and motivation of the group violence actions. In order to have clarity about the Boko-Haram problem, it is crucial to look at Boko-Haram sect origin from scholarly perspective

1.2. Who or What is Boko-Haram?

According to Walker (2012) Boko-Haram has created havoc across Northern Nigeria with the capital, Abuja inclusive. It has coordinated attacks on government offices and security operatives, schools and churches in order to destabilize the country. The group first came onto the world's agenda in August 2011, when the United Nations compound in Abuja was bombed, and twenty-three people were killed, with many more injured. Some observers say Boko-Haram has allies in other global jihadist movements that have been emerging in recent years across the Sahel. The speed with which the group developed its capability suggests outside help (Walker, 2012: 2-4).

The agenda of Boko-Haram is to see Sharia Law imposed in the Northern States of Nigeria (Iduh, 2011:127). The group believes northern politics has been usurped by a group of dishonest, counterfeit Muslims. “It wants to wage a war against them and the Federal Republic of Nigeria generally, to create a “pure” Islamic state ruled by Sharia law” (Walker, 2012: 2). However, Boko-Haram is only an alias given to the group by residents of Maiduguri because of a strong tendency to reject western education, viewed as corrupting Muslims. Ekanem et al (2012) notes that, the official name of the group is Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda-awati Wal-Jihad which in Arabic means, “The people committed to the propagation of the prophet's teachings and Jihad”. They maintained that the term “Boko-Haram” was derived from the Hausa word *boko*, which means western or non-Islamic education.” *Haram* is a word with Arabic origin that metaphorically means “sin” or “forbidden”. Therefore, meaning Western education is forbidden or in local Hausa language translation. Ideologically, Boko-

Haram not only rejects and opposes western education, but also rejects western culture and modern science and theories such as Darwinism, and that the earth is spherical in shape, and that rain comes from water that evaporated by the sun, claims they argue contradict Islamic thinking (Ekanem et al, 2012: 232-233).

The palpable perplexity generated by the plethora of theories that attempt to elucidate the origin of Boko-Haram violence conflict also characterizes the determination of when the sect was first established and who the original founders were. For instance, in some quarters, it was believed to be founded as early as 1995 by Lawan Abubakar, who later handed over headship to Mohammed Yussuf when he left for the University of Medina in Saudi Arabia for further studies (Iduh, 2011:127, Madike, 2011). It was argued that Muhammed Yussuf, to whom the creation is now generally ascribed, only assumed headship after Abubakar's departure and "indoctrinated the sect with his own teachings, which he claimed were based on purity" (Adibe, 2012: 50). Meanwhile, Walker (2012) believe that the Boko-Haram's origins lies in a group of radical Islamist youth who worshipped at the Alhaji Muhammadu Ndimi Mosque in Maiduguri a decade ago (Walker, 2012; 3). Another narrative traced the origin to an evangelical group formed by Muslim students at the University of Maiduguri, Borno state, who apparently felt discontented with Western education (Uzodike and Maiangwa, 2012: 100). The murkiness surrounding its true origin conceivably informs why initially, the sect "had no specific name as its members attracted several descriptions where they operated based on the perception of the local population" (Okereke, 201: 450). Besides, Iduh notes that, "the sect had recruited about 500,000 members and is seen in some quarters as Nigeria Taliban because they operate and have all the features of Al-Qaeda". (Iduh, 2011:127)

Subsequent to the government crackdown on the group in late 2003, Zenn (2012:16-17) notes that, the group attempted four separate attacks in 2004 but remain peaceful between 2005 and 2006 (see also Cook, 2011, Adibe, 2012) except for the reported assassination of ShaykhJa'afar Mahmoud Adam in April 2007. Zenn is of the opinion that July 2009 marked the first turning point for Boko-Haram, when surviving members of the government troops had to retreat into Niger, Chad and other countries bordering Nigeria in order to re-organize. In September 2010, Boko-Haram then launched an attack to free their members imprisoned in Bauchi prison, and ever since their attacks have escalated in the North-East. Since then, Boko-Haram has expanded their operations, extending even into Niger and Cameroon (ibid).

1.3. The Research Problem: Three Approaches to Understanding Boko-Haram Violence

A range of conflicting narratives has developed around Boko-Haram, the group's origins, its driving force, and the best steps for solving the problem. All these remain a matter of debate in the Nigerian media, among politicians, scholars, and in daily discussions. Conflicting and competing narratives about Boko-Haram violence can make it difficult for government to devise clear strategies to deal with the problem. Divided opinions also intensify abrasion in the relations between the predominantly Muslim North and the mainly Chris-

tian South of the country. I conducted this study in order to find out how Nigerians in the Diaspora and Youth leaders see Boko-Haram. Do they view it as a terrorist group, or not? Do ethnic explanations arise, or is religion seen as the main cause of the insurgency? There can be expected to be a different set of responses from Northerners and Southerners, on the basis of their position vis a vis the problem. Thus, for example, it was not unusual when one youth leader from the South described Boko-Haram as:

“...a sect that is wildly spread in the north, their ideology and modus operandi suit the environment and profile of mainly Northerners. I have been in the north for a while and I don’t still see the basis for what they are fighting for. They said western education is bad but they are using western inventions such as IEDs, AK47, internets and others” (Respondent 16)

Correspondingly, a larger percentage of respondents from the northern region disagreed that Boko-Haram arose from northern elites’ resentment at losing power to southern elites. One example is Aminu (not his real name), who said that:

“I will state clearly that the root cause of this violence is not because the northern elite were angry that they lose power to the south. The violence started as a result of misunderstanding between Mohammed Yusuf, the leader of Boko-Haram and ex-Governor Alimodu Sherriff of Yobe state”.

What this shows is that the view of the causes of the Boko-Haram problem is divided among different narratives. However, later in the study, the findings are used to show that North-South views are not as polarised as this might imply. In some cases, they will be shown to overlap more than might be expected among both Nigerian in Diaspora and Youth leaders. After presenting the findings in Chapters 3 and 4, I explain further in Chapter 5 how competing narratives on the origin of Boko-Haram have affected both Nigerians in Diaspora and Youth, shaping their thinking in ways that may work against the prospects for peace in future. Against the backdrop that some people consider Boko-Haram to be a myth and the creation of criminals, a proactive way to start to address the Boko-Haram problem is to first understand how different groups of Nigerians people view the issue. Is there really one common enemy, a group, identifiable and the same for everyone? It seems not; and with my findings, the study critically puts to test some existing models explaining the origins of the Boko-Haram crisis and possible solutions. The three main approaches identified were (i) the Human Development model, based on poverty and deprivation indicators; (ii) the Islamic State model that stressed ideology and religion and is often detached from economic and social realities and (iii) the Political feud or elite conspiracy theory, which views power, greed, and elite machinations as the main causes of Boko-Haram violence. Since it was not possible to study the government’s responses to Boko-Haram in the same depth, these are considered only in relation to what the interviewees discussed in terms of their opinions of the government’s response.

1.4. Research Objectives

Thinking about Boko-Haram, most importantly, understanding the origin and the root cause of the violent crisis of the sect is the crux of this study. The objective of this study is to find about the views and theories of conflict that in-

form the opinions of youth organisations and Nigerians in the Diaspora, and their thinking about how to deal with the problem. Of course, by making a contribution to the thinking about the conflict it is hoped that this might help identify possible solutions in future. This is however not the aim of the study, which contributes mainly to understanding thinking around the Boko-Haram conflict, prior to making proposals about its future resolution.

1.5. Research Question

- What are the opinions of youth in faith-based youth groups, and Nigerians in Diaspora about the rise of Boko-Haram (especially about: origin, causes of resort to violence, government actions and solutions)?

Sub questions

- How do the main contemporary theories map the Boko-Haram conflict in terms of actors, institutions and processes?
- How are theoretical and public (i.e. youths and the Diaspora) understandings of the problem related to each other?

1.6. Methodology

The nucleus of this research was based on a qualitative methodology conducted via Interviews and analysis of scholarly and policy literature. Interviews were done to gain information on a particular topic or a particular area to be researched; “interviews are a useful tool which can lead to further research using other methodologies such as observation and experiments” (Jensen and Jan-kowski 1991:101). Of course, interviewing in most cases are time-consuming: with difficulties to transcribe, analyse, costly, feedback, and reporting. Yet I chose interviews because they are a useful method to investigate the origin of Boko-Haram violence in an in-depth way and discover how individuals think and feel about the crisis and why they hold certain opinions. Also it allows more detailed questions to be asked and usually achieves a high response rate with respondents' own words being recorded in some cases.

O’Leary (2010: 92) proposed that a good methodology design must address the research question, within the researcher’s capacity and interests and must be practicable and doable. I chose this method because my research design meets the criteria stated by O’Leary. The method of data collection is very important, it is imperative to consider who, where, when, how and what in order to have a clearly research design. Having this clarity will help answer research question more directly, and address unforeseen circumstances (O’Leary, 2010, 98). I used semi-structured interviews in this study to allow a few key questions to be addressed, allowing ample room for input from respondents and for diversions. Interview questions were in two parts: questions that dealt with the origin of the Boko-Haram violence and questions that dealt with government responses and possible future solutions to the problem of Boko-Haram violence. The structure of the interview questions was designed to answer the research question and sub-questions. Questions were also short and

self-explanatory for respondents, ensuring better understanding of what was expected from them.

My targeted interviewees were two groups in Nigerian society whose opinion is considered important, but is not always central in decision-making. Youths leaders from faith-based organizations (Christians, Muslims and Inter-faith) and the Nigerian Diaspora community whose opinion is increasingly been seen as important in supporting government responses to conflict and peace issues. According to Shain (2012), Diasporas now connect and identify with their homeland conflict because in most cases it affects them more directly. He maintained that, “Diasporic support help set the ideological parameters of a homeland conflict and the requirements for a termination of hostilities” (Shain, 2002: 125-126). I will discuss further in chapter 3 why the views of the diaspora are important. Giving the limited time and space available for this study, I was unable to review dominant discourse in media content and engage directly the government position by granting interviews for relevant government personalities.

For the purpose of this study, I made use of non-random sampling techniques in selecting the respondents. Non-random sampling entails “a limited sample using criteria chosen to assure representativeness, e.g selecting your sample based on a clearly defined population profile, individuals with the average age, income and education you are studying” (O’Leary, 2010, 165). Criteria for selecting Youths Interviewees depend on involvement in advocacy for religion tolerance, because Boko-Haram attacks appears to be along ethnic and religion fault lines and reprisal attacks on Muslims by Christian’s youths sometimes do occurred. While the Nigeria in Diaspora Interviewees was selected on continental bases because getting global views on Boko-haram is important and relevant to the research. It was interesting to explore whether Nigerians from the Diaspora who lived in China or Singapore would share the perspective of those based in the US or western countries.

The field data collection was done in Abuja for two major reasons. First of all, due to security reasons that arose from the intensity of Boko-Haram campaign. It is risky to conduct research where Boko-Haram and counterinsurgency operation is ongoing. Secondly, Abuja is rich with the data needed for this study, most especially the ones that will be generated from both the Nigerians in Diaspora and the Nigeria Youths. Considerably, apart from the fact that, the 6th National Diaspora Conference took place in Abuja, the National Secretariat of National Youth Council of Nigeria is also located in Abuja. This made it easier to access the respondents for interview in a short period of time. Sticking to Abuja pose little or minimal danger to the researcher because of high level alert of security in Abuja which has make it more impossible for Boko-Haram to carry out attacks in the city since the Police Headquarters building bombing in 2011.

In Abuja, my first point of contact was the Nigeria in Diaspora National conference that was held between 22nd and 27th of July in Abuja. I conducted Interview for 8 people from the Diaspora spreading across the 6 continents: Most people that I contacted for interview declined for security reasons and fear of reprisal attacks, and only few among those that ready to talk agreed to be recorded. The next move was to look for Youth’s leaders I have contacted before I left for Nigeria. Although I was unable to meet all of them but I was able to interview five (5) Youth leaders. Fortunately, I was invited by The Spe-

cial Adviser to the Nigerian President on Youths and Students Matters to All Nigerian Youths transformation program which was organized on the 30th July in Abuja by the federal government. More than 1000 Youth leaders from about 90 Youth's groups were present at the event. I was able to record the event, Interview more Youth's groups leaders that are relevant to my research on the spot at the event or later in another location via appointments. However, I faced same challenges on the reluctance of respondents to be recorded or making reference to their data due to security reasons. It was interesting that those who spoke at the event refused to mention the terms 'Boko-Haram' or 'terrorist', and instead used the terms 'insurgents', 'militants', and 'violent youth', for example. In all, I was able to conduct interviews with 12 Youth leaders of various groups that are relevant to the research. . In order to have balanced views abased on ethnic identity or religion affiliation, respondents were selected across the 6 geopolitical zones of the country. In total, I was able to conduct interviews with 20 people, eight from the Diaspora and 12 Youth leaders . The methodology was helpful to the success of this study because it provided data that could help me meet the objectives and goals around how the public view the Boko-Haram and the violent conflict this has engendered.

1.7. The Limitations and Possible Practical Problems of the Research

There are some limitations of this study. The first is my inability to conduct face-face interviews with any current or former members of Boko-Haram. This remains a limitation of this study, perhaps the main one. Consequently, one might argue that most of the respondent did not have first-hand experience of the Boko-Haram violent and might not be in a position to give a response based on direct experience. It would have been better if interviews could have been conducted with people living in the hotspots of the North eastern states of Yobe, Borno and Adamawa. This would have given more credibility to responses and data directly derived from the source. This shortcoming was however reduced by comparing responses from respondents from the Nigerian in Diaspora National conference and the Nigerian Youths Transformation program, both unexpected events. Future researchers should by all means invent strategies that will allow them to have interviews with insurgents, to personally hear the reasons behind their actions, and to interview the innocent civilian population caught up in the middle of the insurgency and the counterinsurgency operations of government.

1.8. Structure of the Study

Chapter one has provided the overall background and purpose of this study. In chapter two, the study engaged with the literature and reviews some theoretical perspectives that can explain the emergence of Boko-Haram violence by clustering them into three broad categories: the Human Development or Economic deprivation theory, the Islamic State theory and Political feud or Elite conspiracy theory. However, in order to have clarity on the study; I also give brief history of Nigeria diversity. Chapter three and four of this study focuses mainly on the findings that I gathered from the field in Abuja, Nigeria. It discuss the views of the Nigerians in Diaspora and Youths in relation to Boko-Haram in-

surgency emphasizing on (1) what they knew about Boko-Haram sect, (2) their opinions on the root cause(s) of the Boko-Haram violent conflict, (3) what they think of government tactics, response and most especial the counterinsurgency operation of Joint Task Force (JTF), and (4) How best they think the problem of the Boko-Haram violence can be solved. Chapter 5 put to test the theoretical explanation of the origin of Boko-Haram violent. It looks at how the theoretical, public (i.e. the Diaspora and Youths) understandings of the problem related to each other. The last chapter discuss the recommendation and conclusion based on the dominant views and opinions of the public in relation to the theoretical perspective.

Chapter 2 Boko-Haram: Three Competing Theoretical Explanations

2.0. Introduction

The main crux of this chapter focus on an in-depth analysis of three dominant competing narratives that have emerged in explaining the Boko-Haram crisis in terms of the origin, root causes of the violence and possible solutions. While the first part of this chapter introduces Nigerian history in brief, the second part will outline three main approaches to explaining the rise of Boko-Haram in recent years in Nigeria. The first school of thought is the Human Development approach, which focuses on grievances and inequality between South and North of Nigeria, as root causes of support for Boko-Haram. The second is a Religious explanation, which has variants such as the Islamic State theory, and theories about Islamic extremism or fundamentalism. The main focus is on belief and religion as forms of regional, quasi-ethnic identity and as motivating factors. The third explanation is the Political Feud or Elite Conspiracy theory, and focuses on the hidden political and economic interests of elites as underlying causes of the on-going violence.

2.1. Nigerian Diversity in Brief

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is located in West Africa and is composed of 36 states and a Federal Capital Territory (Abuja), with 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs), and six geopolitical regions¹. To be precise, the regions are North-east, Northwest, North-central, South-east, South-West, and South-South. The 'core' north consists of the Northeast and Northwest in particular. Nigeria shares borders with Niger in the North, Chad and Cameroon in the East, the Republic of Benin in the West, and the Gulf of Guinea on the Atlantic Ocean to the South. Following the amalgamation of Southern and Northern Protectorates by Lord Lugard in 1914, two protectorates consisting of 4 different empires (Northern Empire, Calabar Kingdom, Yoruba Empire, and Benin Empire) were combined into present-day Nigeria. After the October 1st 1960 independence, Nigeria become a republic in 1963, and remained mostly under Northern military control. The country returned to democracy after years of military rule between 1979 and 1983 and again in 1999, and since then has witnessed uninterrupted democratic rule². There is a presidential system of government with a bicameral parliament (Senate and House of Representatives), and more than 32 registered political parties, including the ruling part, the People Democratic Party (PDP). The Action People's Congress (APC) is the main opposition party,

¹<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Nigeria.pdf>

² ibid

Nigeria is Africa's most populous country with a total estimated population of 174,507,539 (July 2013 est CIA Factbook). However, the following ethnic groups are also important and politically influential: Hausa and Fulani 29%, Yoruba 21%, Igbo (Ibo) 18%, Ijaw 10%, Kanuri 4%, Ibibio 3.5%, Tiv 2.5%. The accuracy of Nigerian Population Census figures are generally contested because various ethnic groups consider the censuses to be rigged to give a specific group (generally believed to be the northern groups) numerical superiority (Lewis, 2007: 132). Nigeria remains a country rich in diversity and customs, with more than 250 ethnic groups and 500 languages. However the official language is English, but the dominant language for daily communication is Pidgin English, a blend of local dialects, street slangs and English language.

Nigeria is indisputably home to a mixture of religions which have a propensity to differ regionally. This circumstance intensifies regional and ethnic peculiarities and has over and over again been seen as a cause of sectarian conflict between the inhabitants (Osita, 2004: 6). The population was almost equally divided with Muslims 50%, Christians 40%, and a very minute minority who follow traditional religion to be 10%³. While Paden (2008) argue that the potency of religious identity in Nigeria is considered as one of the highest and strongest in the world, Osaghae and Suberu (2005) argued that, Nigerians are more probable to identify themselves in terms of religion than any other distinctiveness. The question of religion has always been an essential part of Nigeria and her political beliefs, influencing its nucleus facets from socio-economy to health development. We will now present each of the three identified theories about Boko-Haram's origins and meaning in turn.

2.2. Human Development Theory

This approach to understanding the roots of violence has its largest group of proponents from among scholars (e.g Midlarsky, 1975, Forest, 2012, Kabir-Isa, 2011, Mahmud et al, 2009, Dougherty and Pfaltzgrate Jr, 1990 among others). Most of these scholars are sociologists and development studies experts, including economists. They argue that government must attend to socio-economic deprivation, which is most pervasive in the north creating higher levels of poverty and inequality. From this standpoint, the bloodshed is attributed to failure to meet the human needs of social actors. Its fundamental hypothesis is that all humans have basic needs, and failure to achieve it can lead to violent conflict being seen as a way to survive (Rosati et al, 1990 cited in Faleti, 2006: 51). This model conceptualizes poverty as the real threat to the security not only of individuals, but of Nigeria as well. The solution that is urged is to pay more attention to sustainable development as the most functional way to prevent violent conflict rooted in economic deprivation.

In many ways, socio-economic deprivation can lead to frustration most especially in a country such as Nigeria, blessed with abundant mineral resources that can place her among the leading economy in the world. Manus Midlarsky, Professor of International Peace and Conflict Resolution at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, experts in International development and Political

³<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html>

Science argued that, the ever widening gap between the rich and the poor as a result of deprivation will not only produce frustration, but also bring out aggressive altitude. He maintained that, “deprivation is a perceived disparity between value expectation and value capabilities and that the lack of a need satisfaction – relies on the psychological state of frustration and aggressive attitudes emanating from it” (Midlarsky, 1975: 29). However, Dougherty and Pfaltzgrate (1990: 266) echoed Midlarsky’s argument about socio-economy deprivation as root cause of violent conflicts, and posit that aggression is constantly a corollary of frustration and relative economic deprivation.

However, the Human Development model also identifies northern elite’s arguments of socio-economic deprivation perspective as the root of the problem. For example, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) governor Lamido Sanusi, a scion of Northern elites, evidently raises the national resource allocation question. “The idea of a “direct link between the very uneven nature of distribution of resources – the 13 per cent derivatives going to oil producing states of the south and the rising level of violence – Boko Haram’s insurgency” (Thisday newspaper, 28 January, 2012)⁴. He elucidated further that the time is right for the country to focus resources as a matter of necessity on regenerating other regions of the country if Nigeria wants to secure durable stability. James Forest (2012) also reinforces the socio-economic deprivation argument as the root cause of the Boko-Haram insurgency. According to Forest, a Professor and Director of Security Studies at the University of Massachusetts Lowell and a researcher on insurgencies, an array of grievances and opportunities have laid the basis for Boko-Haram to extend its grip through extensive corruption among a political and well-to-do selected few elites that is heavily invested in the status quo (Forest, 2012: 88).

One possible criticism that can be made of this theory is that in spite of similar poverty and deprivation elsewhere in Nigeria, no similarly violent groups have surfaced in other impoverished parts of Nigeria. However the Niger Delta region, where deprivation is widespread, has also had insurgency problems in the past, which were resolved by granting of Amnesty, and additional development funding from oil revenues. So the theory may have some foundation. So it is true to a certain extent that some states (oil producing states) in southern Nigeria are richer through the benefit of 13% oil derivation allocation, it is worthy to notes that several states (Northern states inclusive) which did not benefit from the allocation percentage still have not witnessed the type of Boko-Haram violence or taken to militancy (see Adibe 2012). Economic deprivation may be a factor, therefore, but it cannot be the only factor.

2.3. The Islamic State Theory

The second school of thought views the Boko-Haram sect as a group that aims in relation to seize power from the Nigerian government, impose the Kuffur (unbelievers’) system, and in due course Islamize Nigeria. The proponents of this theoretical approach include mainly political scientists, international rela-

⁴<http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/sanusi-links-boko-haram-to-derivation/108039/>

tions, and religious studies experts (Mozayyan, 2009, Zenn, 2012, Uzodike and Maimangwa, 2012, Danjibo, 2009, Aghedo and Osuma, 2012 among others). Those who make up this broad school of thought make references to the resentment to the Sharia coexistence with secular federal system, viewed by many northerners that western education is incapable of stimulating meaningful development and wealth in the region. This theory argues that the Boko-Haram crisis has resulted from religious belief, in the form of political Islam: “the Boko-Haram is a militant sect driven by the ideology of a fanatical Islamic practice” (Aghedo and Osuma, 2012:858). Many of these scholars are based in universities in South and central Nigeria. However, Nathaniel Danjibo, lecturer in the University of Ibadan and a senior researcher on ethnic violence and conflict resolution and inter-religious conflicts in Africa argued that there is a link between the Maitatsine⁵ riot of 1980 and Boko-Haram violence of 2009. He argued that, Boko-Haram is the creation of the “Maitatsine” dogma which can be dated to groups of Islamic extremists who were active in northern Nigeria as early as 1945 (Danjibo, 2009: 3-11).

Indeed, Uzodike and Maimangwa (2012: 92) notes that the type of activities and campaign Boko-Haram has engaged in are not unique to the present, but can be traced back to the 1804 jihad launched by Uthman Dan Fodio, a religion revolutionary campaigner organising the use of force against corrupt authorities who practiced ‘impure’ forms of Islamic government. In a related way, Mozayyan, (2009: 241-242) argued that the main incentive that make political Islam to flourish lies in the corrupt and unproductive local political leadership promoting Western ideologies that failed to advance people’s well-being. He maintained that, the inspiration derived from the triumph of the Mujahedeen over the Soviet in Afghanistan denotes the accomplishment of Islam over secularity and other factors can be attributed to the root cause of the crisis. This version of the theory suggests that al Qaeda’s more recent influence has transformed Boko-Haram into being part of global political Islam which aims to overthrow all governments and create Islamic theocratic states.

However, Crenshaw (2009:403-404) hypothesized that, while the global call of jihad against “enemies of Islam” together with the jihadists victory in Afghanistan reinforce the universal thinking on jihadists across the globe, it also inspired young men and women to emulate what they considered as a jihadist model. It is highly doubtful that Boko-Haram operatives have fought in Afghanistan, but this analysis may explain why Boko-Haram members flew the black Taliban flag during one of their violent attacks on a police station in Kanamma, Yobe State, as a way of identifying with the Taliban in pan-Islamic solidarity (Lengmang, 2011 cited in Alozieuwa, 2012: 5).

Of course, the Islamic state theory is not a coherent whole; there are many disagreements among scholars in this field. The argument that Boko-Haram wants to overthrow a “kuffur” system of government in Nigeria and that their inspiration is from Mujahedeen victory in Afghanistan may not be realistic.

⁵A group much in the likes of Boko-Haram that preached against the westernization of the people with emphasis on campaign against western inventions such as use of bicycles and even watches. The deadly riots lead to thousands of death in the early 1980s

Boko-Haram may have no ideological premise, they may pronounce that “Western Education as a sin” and yet use western education and technology such as social media, phones, automatic weapons, explosives, both for carrying out attacks and for personal use. Despite this, they have declared war on democracy and are against holding elections. In Bornu state, where the group was first founded, the late leader of Boko-Haram, Mohammed Yusuf acted more as a political Godfather than a religious leader. Buji Foi, also a member of Boko-Haram, killed in the 2009 government crackdown, was himself a former commissioner for religious affairs in Borno state under Governor Alimodu Sherriff, and had clearly been part of the democratic government system (Al Jazeera, Inside Story 2012)⁶. This explanation ignored the fact that other parts of the North’s, for example, Sokoto, Kebbi, Kwara, Zamfara states population are predominant Muslims and the Boko-Haram type of violence have no place in their society and everybody are living peacefully. However, the aim of this study is not to critique the theory but to put it to test with the public thinking, how the Diasporas and Youths view the Islamic state explanation on Boko-Haram violence. I shall examine this in the next two chapters

2.4. Political Feud/Elite Conspiracy Theory

This school attracted a lot of scholars (Adibe, 2012, Alozieuwa, 2012, Kukah, 2012, etc) within Nigeria which focused on actors, both internal and external. This includes the frustrated northern power elite who, having lost power determined and committed to cause of bringing down Nigeria under a southern President in power. Jideofor Adibe, a lecturer of political science at the Nassarawa state university in Nigeria opined that, “the loss of power to the south is consequently seen as loss of the North’s politically, especially following the fall - outs from the ruling party’s bickering over zoning and power sharing arrangements and President Jonathan’s decision to contest the April 2011 elections” (Adibe, 2012: 57). Apart from Adibe (2012) and Alozieuwa (2012), Walker (2012) posits that the declaration of President Goodluck Jonathan declaration on Boko-Haram infiltration of his cabinet, and in particular the security apparatus echoed the conspiracy theory⁷. “The president painted a picture of a puppet group that was being used by aggrieved northern politicians to bring down his southern government” (Walker, 2012: 7).

The Political explanation also points to the Jonathan administration itself, which is viewed as sponsoring the crisis in order to rally southern support behind the incumbent administration. In this view: “essentially people from the North, point out that during the Abacha⁸ days, the government deliberately bombed some places and then blamed it on its arch enemy NADECO⁹, and

⁶<http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/insidestory/2012/06/20126275516425789.html>

⁷<http://www.punchng.com/news/boko-haram-has-infiltrated-my-govt-jonathan/>

⁸ The former Nigerian military dictator from 1993 to 1998, his regime was popular for human rights violations and allegations of corruption.

⁹The National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) was formed to fight mobilized against military government of Sani Abacha for the winner of the June 12, 1993 election, M. K. O. Abiola. The members mostly came from the southwest of the country.

that the Jonathan administration is doing the same” (Adibe, 2012: 58). Simeon H. O. Alozieuwa, a senior research fellow at the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution in Abuja, Nigeria, experts peace and security mechanisms in Africa and politics of resources emphasized on issues around Jonathan’s decision to contest the 2011 presidential elections. He maintained that, Jonathan decision to go against the power rotation principle designed by his own political party, PDP as the root cause to the violence (Alozieuwa, 2012: 59). Although none of the arrested suspected Boko-Haram members’ confessions suggest or confirm this theory of elite conspiracy and political feud. It is imperative to emphasise that, if Boko-Haram is a tool of conspiracy to cause ethnic division or ultimately breakup Nigeria, it is strange that almost all attacks and suicide bombing have occurred in the North, specifically in the Northeast and occasionally in Kano State in the Northwest. However unrealistic this theory, the concern in this study is not with evaluating it, but with understanding whether this theory is accepted, and by which respondents among the Diaspora and Youths interviewees.

2.5 Conclusion

In many ways, there are substances and flaws in the three dominant competing narratives about the Boko-Haram violence crisis, but this does not take away the impact they have in shaping the public thinking. Significantly, I have engaged the three dominant theoretical perspectives explaining the root cause of the Boko-Haram violence. I discussed the Human Development theory that lay more emphasis on poverty and socio-economic deprivation as the causal factor of violence altitude of the unemployed youths. I maintained that, the violence actions of Boko-Haram are just a symptom of expressing their anger against a non-responsive government to the yearnings and aspiration of the citizens. While I analysed the Islamic State ideology, embedded in global jihad and political Islam as another attributed factor to the emergence of Boko-Haram violence. I noted that this Boko-Haram type of violence is not strange to the Nigeria, in particular the Northern part. I also discuss the Political feuds/Conspiracy theory that is deeply entrenched in the perspective of elite’s machination of greed and quest for power. However, I argued that, despite the strengths and weakness of these three theoretical frameworks, it is imperative that we put the three theoretical frameworks to a test. In the next two chapters, the three models will be put to test with the public opinion about the Boko-Haram violence. I will make use of the Nigerians in Diaspora and Youths thinking about Boko-Haram to see which one of the dominant explanation inform the thinking of the public.

Chapter 3 Nigerians in Diaspora Thinking about Boko-Haram.

3.0 Introduction

This chapter will concentrate on my main findings from the field based on themes derived from data analysis. These themes include the opinions of Nigerians in Diaspora on what they knew about Boko-Haram, their explanation on root cause of the Boko-Haram violence crisis, the assessment of government actions and responses in tackling the menace and the best way they felt that the Boko-Haram crisis should be handled or managed. It is worthy to note, of the eight Diaspora interviews conduction which is used in this chapter, only 2 were with Northerners. This is not unusual for the Nigerian diaspora, since Southerners tend to be much more common in the Diaspora generally. Even so, it is important to briefly discuss why the views of the Nigerians in Diaspora are important on the Boko-Haram violence.

3.1 Introducing Nigerians in Diaspora

In the recent past, there are lots of researches that have linked the involvement of Diaspora in both financing and resolving conflicts. According to Baser and Swain (2008), although, there are to a large extent on hand researches that criticize Diaspora communities for financing war, they assert that Diasporas have also contributed to peacemaking attempts in their mother country conflicts. "Through lobbying governments and international organizations and aiding transition and post-conflict reconstruction, Diasporas are increasingly playing an important roles and peacebuilding" (Baser and Swain. 2008: 7). Consciously, they elucidate further, it is now a fashionable belief that Diaspora are growingly occupying key roles in conflict resolution in homeland through lobbying governments, above all of the host nations, and international organizations and supporting the course of action of transition and reconstruction (ibid: 11). Shain (2002) echoed Baser and Swain (2008) argument on the role of the Diaspora relevance in peace building, "The diaspora's role in homeland conflict perpetuation and conflict resolution can be so powerful that homeland leaders ignore diaspora preferences at their own peril" (Shain, 2002: 116).

However, the views of the Nigerians in Diaspora are important because Nigerian government give credence and pay more attention to their opinions on National issues. Indeed, the respondents from the Diaspora belongs to the working upper class in the Nigerian context, they are professionals working in different establishment (UN and related organizations, host countries governments, companies), academics (professors, PhDs, researchers in Universities in host countries), students (Masters and Doctorates), successful entrepreneurs and Businessmen and women, and politicians (Councillors, MPs, Mayors) doing well for themselves in their fields and career paths. The government is serious in integrating the Diaspora in the Nation Building process; this led to the

establishment of the Nigerians in Diaspora commission under the office of the Secretary to Federal Government¹⁰. Also, there is a house committee on Diaspora in the National Assembly, headed by Honourable Abike Dabiri¹¹. This effort shows that, the government is aware of the danger in ignoring the thinking of the Nigerians in Diaspora on the Boko-Haram crisis as described by Shain (2002). The next session will interrogate their thinking on the Boko-Haram violence and the linkage with the theoretical framework used in this study

3.2. Who or What is Boko-Haram?

Based on responses from Nigerians in Diaspora, not surprisingly much of their knowledge of Boko-Haram sect history was based on the media and documentaries on the internet. The majority of respondents, most especially those from the South-South and South East extraction considered Boko-Haram as a terrorist organization committed to Islamise Nigeria through the campaign of Sharia law with more emphasis on Western Education as a sin. According to Ikenna, NIDO-E Italy chapter secretary

“All what I know about Boko-Haram are based on media Information and documentaries by some organizations. As far as my knowledge, they are rebellious group acting on religious ground by denouncing western education. Literally, the organization denounces western education but from all indications, they have been using all sources of media which in itself a product of western education. They have launched a kind of Military and terrorist attacks on the Nigerian state targeting civilians, women and children and vulnerable groups. In summary, they are a terrorist organization that is working against the interest of the Nigerian state, to undermine it efficient and the people at the helms of affairs”.

Another respondent, a lawyer by profession believes that Boko-Haram is a terrorist group with a political affiliation

“They are a terrorist group and their existence has been on political affiliation, they kidnap, Kill and destroy properties of innocent people. They create fear and terror in the country all in the name of fighting against western education” (Smart, South Africa)

However, there are minority that viewed Boko-Haram as an Islamist fundamentalist. One respondent described Boko-Haram as

“...they are bunch of fanatics and extremist that have been brainwashed and live in the fantasy of 70 virgins waiting for them in paradise if they kill an infidel. I am a Muslim and I can tell you that Islam is a religion of peace, (Respondent 1, Singapore)

Apparently, majority of the respondents see Boko-Haram as a terrorist organization with agenda to Islamise Nigeria, hiding under the menace of western education as the root cause of the problem facing the country. It was evi-

¹⁰<http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/diaspora-nigerians-and-national-development/154805/>

¹¹<http://diasporacommittee.com/>

dent from the respondents views, the acclaimed dominant discourse of Boko-Haram being against western education is invalid because the group use social media, (facebook, twitter and YouTube) print and electronic media, explosives and automatic weapons to advance their cause shows that they are ready to use fruit of western education. Notwithstanding, it is imperative to be conscious to analyse the real goals of the group existence before they turn violence. “Boko Haram is not against western education but ‘yan boko’ which means child of the book; it refers to the elite created by the policy of indirect rule used by the British to colonize Nigeria..... To be yanboko is to be spiritually and morally corrupt, lacking in religious piety, and guilty of criminally enriching oneself” (Walker, 2012; 7)

3.3. Root Cause of Boko-Haram Violence

The responses of the respondents challenge my initial bias of extra-judicial killing and abuse of the sect right by the Nigerian government as the root cause of the Boko-Haram violence, rather the views of the Nigerians in Diaspora took a different dimension. Majority of the respondents from Diaspora identified political, reinforced by economy factor as the root causes to the violence. According to Ikenna,

“the group came into existence during the civilian dispensation in Bornu state under the leadership of Governor Alimodu Sherriff. The politicians that are using them lost the game against then, the sect activities went beyond control. I will say the origin of Boko-Haram is political, the root cause of the violence crisis is also political but both the origin and root cause that I mentioned was reinforced by economy and poverty. The extremist explored the economic bend to target the youth’s vulnerability” (Ikenna, Italy).

However, Smart strongly believes that the root cause of the violent attacks unleashed on the society by Boko-haram is strictly political motivated, this opinion supported the Political feud and conspiracy theory.

“The Northerners believed that leadership is their birth right and the crisis started after the death of former President Umar Yaradua. I believed that the Boko-Haram crisis was Political motivated by the aggrieved Northern elites, the terrorist attacks and suicide bombing started immediately after the 2011 general election when a southerner emerged as the president”.

Considerably, quite a number of commentators have argued that the power shift to the south from the north is the root cause of the Boko-Haram violence reinforcing the Political feud/Conspiracy theory that I have discussed earlier. Adibe (2012:57) posit that there is a general assumption that the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria have a history of specializing in a particular sector of the society. It was a belief that the Yoruba’s controls the corporate economy, the Igbo’s are in charge of commercial economy and the north, controls political power. The shift in power to south from the north is seen as the loss of the generational right of political domination which many northerners considered as birth right.

Olalekan, a respondent from the south-western Nigeria have a different perspective on the root cause of the violent crisis of Boko-Haram. Even though he considered them as a terrorist organization, he fervently argues in

line of the Human Development theory entrenched in economy dissatisfaction of the youths and high level of unemployment.

“To be honest with you, bad governance and Corruption is the root cause of this violence. Many people that have been opportune to listen to one of the late Boko-Haram leader (Mohammed Yussuf) sermon has testified that he used to condemn the governments and politicians for under-developing the country by embezzling money and diverting funds that can alleviate the poverty condition of the youths. This scenario created a fertile ground for recruitment of unemployed youths to join the radical group” (Olalekan, UK).

The respondent from the United State who is a Northerner shared similar view with Olalekan on Socio-economic deprivation theory embedded in poverty and unemployment as the root cause of the violence; he is of the opinion that, the hopelessness that faced the timing population of the youths made them as a raw material for violence.

“All this bombing and violence is due to poverty and illiteracy, I don’t think that anybody that has a good job, earning good salary that can take care of his family will engage in Suicide bombing. As report had it that 5 million naira was discovered in the bank account of a Suicide bomber in one of the attacks is clearly an evidence of how far people can go when hungry”(Respondent 3, United State).

The emergence of Boko-Haram can also be traced to corruption and the inability of the governments to provide jobs for youths which made them to blame the state for their condition of hopelessness. “ In the early 2000s, graduates from universities in Nigeria’s Borno and Yobe States, including the University of Maiduguri and Federal Polytechnic Damaturu, tore up their graduation certificates and began following Muhammad Yusuf’s Quranic lessons, which taught that the institutions of government represented by the security agencies, police, military and schools had to be eliminated” (Zenn, 2012:6). It is true that the economic disparities between the north and other part of the country are severe most especially the north eastern part of Nigeria, “the main base of Boko Haram’s activities - has one of the poorest populations in Nigeria” (Adibe, 2012: 55).

However, another respondent from the Southern Nigeria dismissed both the Political and Economy factors as the main roots cause of the violence. While he blamed the British Colonial Masters for the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914, he believes that the violence was deeply rooted in the Islamic fundamentalism that has its historical origin in the northern Nigeria. Considerably, the thinking of the respondent can be associated with the Islamic state theory.

“This is not the first time a group such as Boko-Haram will emerge, we have the Maitasini in the early 80s and the 1999 Sharia Law introduction by Zamfara state among many other examples I can give. I will say that Islamic fundamentalism is the root cause and the blame should be put on the British Colonial Masters violence crisis. Amalgamating different regions with contradicting norms and values, culture, religion, history, language e.t.c together to become Nigeria is the greatest mistake in the World history. Even if the governments defeat Boko-Haram today another Islamic sect will arise tomorrow in the North” (Respondents 4, China)

Historically, the active regions where Boko-Haram is active were dominated by the Kanuri Muslims under the Bornu Empire. According to Adibe, “ due

to the suspicion of the Kanuri's of the early Christian missionaries using Western education as a tool for evangelism, there was an assumption that the roots of religious fundamentalism were sown among the Kanuri's and in the North-east in general during this period" (Adibe, 2012:53). Since the 1903 British conquest of the Sokoto caliphate, that stretch to what was known now as some part of Southern Cameroon, Niger and Northern Nigeria which ruled parts of what is now northern Nigeria, there has been strong opposition to western education by many Muslims. This explains the main reason why many Muslim household are still adamant in sending their children to Madras rather than "Western schools"¹².

3.4. Government Actions and Responses to the Boko-Haram Crisis

The views of the Nigerians in Diaspora were equally divided, although those that give kudos to the reaction of governments make reference to the new approach of the government some few months ago, most especially the declaration of state of emergency in the three North-eastern states of Yobe, Bornu and Adamawa. This is what Ikenna have to say about Nigeria government response to Boko-Haram.

"Successive government related with Boko-Haram differently at different level and with different motives. Boko-Haram became more confident and violent because the government did not act accordingly by not having a clear cut approach due to the political sensitivity of the problem. I believed that the new approach (state of emergency) of this administration has been able to suppress aggressive attacks, although they still have a long way to go considering the 2015 general election factor"

However, Ikenna is not the only Nigerian in Diaspora that thinks in line of government success in fighting Boko-Haram, Olalekan also see recent government action as the best way to tackle the crisis, and he believes that the stick and carrots approach of the Government has really helped

"Initially the government did not see the group as a serious threat and the government was complex in their dealings with the sect because of the political element in the root cause but recently the action of the government has really reduced the violence. Although I am not in support of the amnesty program because what Boko-Haram are doing is criminal, but the amnesty program also worked at least some of them have agree to a cease fire"

But Smart counter the arguments of Ikenna and Olalekan, they argued that, unless Nigerian government adopt a proactive measure and apply real time counterinsurgency strategy to defeat Boko-Haram, the sects will continue to gain more ground and violence.

"The government action has not helped; they need to look at for a more proactive method of tackling terrorism which includes the securing the trust of the local communities. Many have said that Boko-Haram is not Nigerians, the

¹²<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13809501>

government should come up with a good data base system of all Nigerians and most especially they need to secure our borders”.

Without been grandiloquent, one may argue that there is a need for the Nigerian Government to have a re-think in the way it approach the Boko-Haram crisis, it was reported that the Boko-Haram insurgents are not Nigerians and they move freely within the borders of Nigeria-Chad and Niger republic. It is important to secure the border if there is going to be any meaningful counterinsurgency operation (For similar view See Sepp, 2005: 9-11).

3.5. What should be Done?

All the respondents have a unison view on dialogue as the immediate solution to the Boko-Haram crisis, despite the fact that they differ on the root cause of Boko-Haram crisis and their assessment of government response to the Boko-Haram crisis. Even though, they differ on the long term solutions, they still held the same belief of engaging the youths and gaining the trust of the Nigerian citizens, most especially the areas where Boko-Haram are dominant.

I believe that government should dialogue with Boko-Haram, involving all stakeholders, political parties and opposition groups because involving them will prevent the opposition groups to be playing politics with Boko-haram crisis to Witch-hunt Government in power. Also, there is a need for engagement and the engagement should be at different layers, for example, empowering the Youths by investing in education small scale enterprises (Ikenna, Italy).

Smart also supported the ideal of Ikenna but he argued that the government should have a long term strategy and not the “fire brigade” approach of dislodging Boko-Haram for 3 months and to reappear more dangerous and devastating.

“The government should adopt a strategy or a program that will outlive this present administration that will secure and protect its citizens. They can ask for help and ask other countries how they tackle their own insurgency. Although, I am in support of Dialogue but not Amnesty because Boko-Haram is complex and some people and criminals are not Boko-Haram, they are just acting under the disguise of the group”.

While Olalekan suggested both economy and political solution to the crisis, he is also of the opinion that civil society groups should be engaged to educate the society on the needs to support the government counterinsurgency operation against Boko-Haram.

“There is no way the government can address the Boko-Haram issue without addressing the extreme poverty in the country. The members of Boko-Haram are largely poor, uneducated youths that will be given 5,000 naira to go and kill. Also there should be a political situation where people can negotiate because it is obvious that the crisis have political coloration. It is important to engage civil society groups to educate the communities on the needs to cooperate with government. When u look at most of the arrest the government made recently, it was not because of the forced they deployed but the neighbours of Boko-Haram”.

The respondents from United States opinion emphasized more on the need for Nigerian government to organized training for the counterinsurgency force. They argued that it is important for the JTF to distinguish between a civilian and Boko-Haram sect.

“I believe there is nothing dialogue cannot resolve; at least it reduced the Niger-Delta violence crisis even though it did not eradicate the violence. I believed that dialogue is the key, because all the wars eventually got resolve on the round table. But, don't let me deceive you; I was angry and sad when I read news about civilian casualties, most especially the Baga incident. You need to gain the support of the community you claimed you are protecting. If you said you are fighting to protect me from Boko-Haram and you kill my family members in the name of fighting Boko-Haram, please you don't think that sounds odd and weird” (Respondent 3, United States).

3.6. Conclusion

Undoubtedly, majority of the respondents considered Boko-Haram as a terrorist group hiding the under Islamic jihad to demand for Sharia law implementation in the country. The dominant response on the root cause of the Boko-Haram crisis is Political but reinforced by economy disadvantage of the country most especially the core north where the Boko-Haram activities are active. Nevertheless, there are minority views on Islamic fundamentalism and poverty as the main root cause of the violence. It is worthy to notes that there was equally split opinions on the method of the government in responding to the Boko-Haram crisis. Although, some argued that it action of the government has reduced the Violence but they emphasized on the need to have a long term strategy which includes, addressing the poverty and the pervasive unemployment rates among the youths. Others argued that the government responses have intensified the violence and call for caution in government response. The Diasporas opined that, engaging the youths through empowerment programs through the civil societies will go a long way to prevent the future occurrence. Nonetheless, they all agree to dialogue as the key suggestion to resolve the Boko-Haram crisis.

Chapter 4 Boko-Haram Violence Crisis: The Youths Thinking

4.0 Introduction

This chapter discuss the thinking of the Youths about Boko-Haram. It took the same dimension of the Nigerians in Diaspora by asking the respondents question that can allow them to express freely their opinion of what they know about Boko-Haram, the root cause of the violence, their assessment of the government response to the crisis, and the best approach they consider as an option that might resolve this Boko-Haram violence.

4.1. What is Boko-Haram?

From the response of the respondents, it was evident that the Youth's opinion about how they see Boko-Haram is fragmented. Although, some considered them as a criminal group, a larger number sees Boko-Haram as violent group that is embedded in ethnicity.

“Boko-Haram is a group of people predominantly in the northern part of Nigeria, which believes that western education is not appropriate .Although they have been exiting for long but they are well known after the 2011 general election because of what they perceive as bad governance in northern Nigeria, they have been using this ideology to cause havoc in Nigeria. Conclusively, I will say Boko-Haram is an ethnic group doing evil and terrorizing the Nation” (Ajani, NYCN President).

While Ajani, and many others thinking about Boko-Haram tend toward ethnicity, there are strong minority views from the North that contend such assumptions. From their own perspective they see Boko-Haram as a criminal organization because they lack any credible agenda. One respondent says

“I consider them (Boko-Haram) as a criminal group and murderers. They are not fighting the cause of Allah. Prophet Mohammed (SAW) fought jihad against idol worshipers and not against fellow Muslims. They are not true Muslims; they are murderers because more than 70% of their victims are Muslims and Northerners. Although, the press make it look like the Christians and southerners are more affected” (Respondent 12).

However, there are others that see them as Islamic Fundamentalist group that are committed to enforce their ideology on the whole country. Tope said that

“Boko-Haram is an organization, an Islamic movement that was established by Mohammed Yusuf in the year 2001 with the aim to establish or propagate Sharia law across Nigeria making it an offence that western education is a sin. By so doing they have resulted to different kind of violence and killings, attacking schools, churches and government installation and they have been responsible for deaths of thousands. I escape death by a whisker when our church was attack with explosive last year in Jos, as you can see the scars is still on my hand”. (Tope, NCYFR)

4.2. Root Cause of the Violent Crisis

There is similarity in the thinking of the Youths and that of the Diaspora on the roots cause of the Boko-Haram Crisis. Out of 12 respondents, six were of the opinion that the root cause is purely a political motivated violence

“If we want to be sincere with ourselves, it is basically political because all the people that are perpetrating all this evil have resources although some comes from abroad but their activities have a political undertone. It might be forces that want to disintegrate Nigeria, forces that did not believed in the current government or forces that believed that they been short-changed in the political calculation of this country. However, when you look at the core membership of Boko-Haram, they are mostly youths that are poor and have little or no education; I believed that the political root cause was reinforced by economy factor” (Ajani, NYCN).

Ajani is not the one that thinks in the direction of political root cause of the violence which was reinforced by economy and poverty factor. Temitope also supported the thinking that Boko-Haram violence was a political creation,

“This is an Islamic movement that have been peaceful before the political dispensation in 1999,i believed that the violence started when the politicians that empowered them during elections refused to meet their demands. All this bombing is nothing but to send a message and issue a political statement to force amnesty, a similar package that Niger-Delta Militants enjoyed” (Tope, NCYFR).

Apart from Adibe (2012) and Alozieuwa (2012), President Goodluck Jonathan declaration in January 2012 that Boko-Haram have infiltrated his cabinet¹³, most especially the security apparatus did not only support the Conspiracy theory but also supported Ajani, Tope and other respondents that share the views of different forces that are committed to disintegrate Nigeria. According to Walker, “The president painted a picture of a puppet group that was being used by aggrieved northern politicians to bring down his southern government” (Walker, 2012: 7). In line of Aghedo and Osumah (2012: 866) analysis, the escape of Kabiru Sokoto, a suspect for the 2011 Christmas day bombing that killed 43 people in Madalla 24 hours after he was arrested. One may argue that President Jonathan have the rights to be suspicious of Boko-Haram infiltration into the Security apparatus of the country. The arrest of a serving senator that was accused of having links to the group makes it difficult to ignore conspiracy theory.¹⁴

Another respondent, a Northerner challenged the conspiracy theory that the Boko-Haram crisis is related to President Goodluck Jonathan emergence in 2011 general elections.

“I know that a lot of people will say that the root cause of the violence is political and this problem will stop when the power return to the north. But the root cause of the problem started when the Governor stop paying Boko-Haram “security money”. I can tell you if the governors of Niger-Delta states

¹³<http://www.punchng.com/news/boko-haram-has-infiltrated-my-govt-jonathan/>

¹⁴<http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/jtf-boko-haram-member-arrested-at-senator-s-home/128302/>

stop paying the Militants security money, you will be surprise how there will be resumption of violence in the region. Why don't we witness bombing in Bauchi, Gombe, Kaduna and some other states that have the presence of Boko-Haram members, it is obvious that the governors are paying them. Dont be deceived, this crisis has nothing to do with power shifting from North to south but criminal activities” (Respondent 14).

This supported the view that although the root cause might be political but it was not related to the emergence of President Jonathan in 2011. However, Olawale (2010) argued that the Borno state government was against the Boko-Haram not because of its teachings against western education, but for Yussuf fondness in abusing government officials for being corrupt and not representing the interest of the people (Olawale, 2010: 5). It was widely reported in the media that the sects indicated the stoppage of their monthly allowance was part of the reason they started launching attacks against the government of Borno and Bauchi states¹⁵. The governors refute the allegation as scandalous, however, it important to question the rationale behind the payment of 100 million naira to the Boko-Haram sects to pacify them for the death of their leader in 2009 (Aghedo and Osumah, 2012: 865). Therefore, it is essential to pay close attention to clash between two senators in the National Assembly, Senator Alimodu Sherriff, the Ex-Governor of Borno State and Senator Ahmad Zanna alleging each other as the Kingpin and sponsor of Boko-Haram.¹⁶

The beauty of investigating the thinking of the Youths is, one can be sure to encounter varieties of opinions. Kasali is of the opinion that the Human Right abuse, constant persecution and extra-judicial killing of Boko-Haram leader is the root cause of the violence and that they are out on a revenge mission against the state. In Kasali words,

“the root cause of this full blown war against Nigeria started when the Boko-Haram leader was killed in custody alongside over 700 members of the group in 2009. The surviving members went into hiding and came back in 2010 to launch a revenge attacks on police and Alfas that they felt betrayed them, jail breaking to free their members detained without trials but the group changed focus and started targeting civilians because they felt the government did not felt the impact enough” (Kasali, MUYAN).

Although, Kasali opinion follows the argument of Human Right, it can still be categorized with the Human Development explanation because both Human development and Human right are broad concepts that are inter-related. According to Walker (2012) , “the abuse of human right and government reliance on extrajudicial execution as a tactic in “dealing” with any problem in Nigeria not only created Boko-Haram as it is known today, but also sustains it and gives it fuel to expand” (Walker, 2012:12). Also Olawale (2010) notes that the police forces use to subject members of the sect to a long period of extra judicial detention, such detainees are neither taken to court nor released and in the worse scenario often get killed. (Olawale, 2010: 3).

¹⁵<http://allafrica.com/stories/201201240026.html>

¹⁶<http://saharareporters.com/news-page/senator-zanna-boko-haram-kingpin-says-former-borno-governor-modu-sheriff>

4.3 Government actions and response

In assessing if the government actions and response has intensified or reduced the Boko-Haram violence, quite a large number posit that the decisive action of government to declare the state of emergency in the three North eastern states of Yobe, Adamawa and Borno have reduce the violence but give acknowledge the efforts of the Civilian JTF¹⁷ as key reason for the success recorded so far. The youths president, Ajani is of the opinion that,

“The government is trying but there are lot of saboteur in this current government. We are all living witness when President Jonathan said Boko-Haram members are in his cabinet. From the little that I know, the government actions have reduced the violence but I will credit the success to the emergence of the Civilian JTF that come out strongly against the Boko-Haram which eventually weaken their position” (Ajani, NYC President).

Kasali assessment of the government also recognizes the emergence of Civilian JTF as the key to the effective counterinsurgency operation of the government, which in turn reduced the Boko-Haram violence. This is what they have to say:

“The latest effort of the government has yielded results in comparison with the Cosmetic approach they applied years back, If you go to Maiduguri now people are now doing business because before you can be killed at any time. Civilian JTF has increase the success of the counter-insurgency operation because before the JTF use to kill and arrest people indiscriminately and this have made is difficult to win the battle against Boko-Haram”.

But in the view of a respondent, he is of the opinion that government response has not reduce the violence, rather there is a new dimension to the way Boko-Haram cause havoc in the society which is important for JTF to tackle .

“Yes, the actions and response of government has reduced the bombings and suicide attacks but not the violence. There is no doubt that, the recent actions and response of the government has weaken Boko-Haram capacity to carry out sophisticated attacks, but what about the new dimension of attacks that targeted school children and their teachers. There is a need for government to create a balance in fighting Boko-Haram and protecting the civilians; the main objective of the JTF should not be limited to the defeat of Boko-Haram alone” (Respondent 8)

It is noticeable the acclaimed success of the JTF in tackling Boko-Haram can be linked to the active involvement of the Civilian JTF, or rather the population that was caught in the middle of the violence. As I discussed in Chapter 1 of this paper, this follows the path of Kienscherf (2011) and Weinstein (2007) emphasise on the need for the counterinsurgency to apply caution in their response in order to gain the population support.

¹⁷The volunteer youth group, tagged, ” Civilian JTF”, assisting the men of the Military Joint Task Force. The vigilante group are untrained young men and women armed with machetes and sticks for their fight against Islamists.

4.4. What should be done?

Quite a large number of the respondents proffer solutions that tend toward sustained Military actions with emphasis on the need for government to motivate and protect the civilian JTF that has put their lives on the line doing battle with Boko-Haram that is adequately equipped with sophisticated weapons. Nevertheless, all the solutions suggested by the respondents are multifaceted. Hafez is of the opinion that:

“Civilians, especially the youths should be their own watchman as the youths in Bornu state (Civilian JTF) are doing. The action of Civilian JTF has yielded more arrest than the whole counterinsurgency operation of the past 3 years. However, I will like to wake up one day and see people in high places sponsoring Boko-Haram being dealt with and face justice.” (Hafez, CYCPN)

The Youths President also shared the same sentiments as Hafez, but elucidated on the need for the government to be responsive and shun corruption in order to deliver the dividend of democracy

“Involving the civilian most especially the young people is the best way for government to tackle Boko-Haram. And they can only win the trust of the communities by shunning corruption, accountable and responsive by delivering the dividend of democracy” (Ajani, NYCN).

However, there are people that believe that a space for dialogue should be created, even if the civilian JTF and the Military JTF continue fighting the insurgents. Kasali shared the sentiment on negotiating with the sects,

“On a short term, I believed that the military actions should be sustained and incorporate the civilian JTF because nobody is paying them, what they are doing is just volunteering because they are directly affected too. But on a longer term, government should deal with poverty, dialogue group should be created with the group through the communities leaders because they live in the communities, let their parents talked to them”.

Evidently, majority of the youths subscribed to “kill them all” slogan by advocating for sustaining the military actions against Boko-Haram, but Tope a Christian from Southern Nigeria believed that, the only way to solve the problem is via dialogue.

“I will suggest dialogue via roundtable conference in order to know what they want, most especially. I believed that granting them Amnesty will work”.

It is obvious that the youths thinking on the solution are multifaceted; however, the sentiment on the need to formally incorporate the civilians into the counterinsurgency operation against Boko-Haram was share by many. In the main, the future and the sustainability of the civilian JTF is bleak due to casualties they suffer frequently from counter attacks launched against them by Boko-Haram, one of such attacks that occurred recently led to the death of 24 members of the group in borno state¹⁸.

¹⁸<http://www.punchng.com/news/bharam-kills-24-members-of-civilian-jtf/>

4.5. Conclusion

In many ways, it was glaring that the thinking of the youths about Boko-Haram is polarized. Quite a considerable number of the respondents see Boko-Haram as another ethnic violent group of predominantly Northerners, notwithstanding their devastating attacks and actions that is tantamount to terrorism. While they share visible contrary opinion on how they perceive Boko-Haram, it was agreed by majority that the Boko-Haram crisis was deeply embedded and entrenched in political feud/conspiracy theory, albeit some few respondents that supported poverty and other factors as the root cause of the violence. It was agreed upon that the actions and response of the government have reduce the violence most especially, the latest declaration of state of emergency in the three north eastern states. While majority suggested that government should sustain the military action and formally incorporate the Civilian JTF in their fight against the insurgent. Only few are in support of dialogue as a short term solution to the crisis. In the next chapter, I analyses further the thinking of the Diaspora and the Youths on Boko-Haram in relation to the theoretical explanation of the Boko-Haram violence

Chapter 5 Rethinking Boko-Haram: the limits of Theoretical Explanations

5.0. Introduction

This chapter focus on the analysis of the relationship between the three main theoretical explanations on the Boko-Haram violent crisis and that of the youths and Nigerians in Diaspora. It shows, at the start, that how the respondents framed Boko-Haram was not always consistent with the three main theories used in this study. This chapter will show how youth leaders and Diaspora Nigerians view Boko-Haram, and will critically put to the test the three theories (Human Development/Islamic State/ Elite Conspiracy) about Boko-Haram violence and relate these to the responses from interviews. Some surprising findings about public thinking as expressed in interviews. The third part of the chapter considers government responses to Boko-Haram, and the fourth part makes some modest suggestions, based both on perceptions and opinions of Youth leaders and Diasporic Nigerians, and on the analysis in this study. Chapter 6 then forms the overall conclusion of this study

5.1. Who or What is Boko-Haram: Respondents Frames and Analysis

Following the responses of Nigerians in the Diaspora and youths respondents on various issues that were discussed with them during the interview, it was apparent that Boko-Haram is a complex phenomenon with a conflicting narrative about it among these two groups of Nigerians.

Table 5.1 How respondents framed Boko-Haram

Public	Terrorist	Ethnic	Islamist Fundamentalist	Criminals
Diasporas	6	0	2	-
Youths	0	7	2	3

Source: Author 2013

To be precise, as can be seen in Table 5.1, six of the diaspora respondents considered Boko-Haram as a terrorist group with external links to Al Qaeda and its affiliates, hiding under the guise of Islamic jihad to demand for Sharia law implementation in the country, most especially fighting against western education. This is similar to some definitions in the literature (see for example Zenn 2012). The remaining two respondents see Boko-Haram as an Islamic radical and fundamentalist sect (for a similar view, see Uzodike and Miangwa2012). In the latter case, the Boko-Haram group is viewed as being motivated by an ideology of global political Islam. It is important to stress that, the six Diasporas that viewed Boko-Haram as terrorist are from Southern extraction. It is generally believed that Nigerians in the Diaspora are mainly of Southern extraction, thus responsible for the imbalance in the respondents' number between Southern and Northern Nigerians. This may explain why

their thinking about Boko-Haram appeared to be in unison in considering Boko-Haram as a terrorist group. Based on responses from Nigerians in Diaspora, not surprisingly much of their knowledge of Boko-Haram sect history was based on the media and documentaries on the internet. Throughout last year, the media and the Internet were flooded with the debates on labelling Boko-Haram as a terrorist organization by US and Nigeria Governments.

Despite the resistance of FG to US in designating Boko-Haram as a terrorist organization¹⁹, the US government, last year designated three Boko-Haram leaders as terrorists²⁰. Of course, the pressure from the US congress to label the group FTO and the refusal of FG to designate the group as a terrorist group created a discourse around what is Boko-Haram. In many ways, it can be argued that the dominant discourse in the media is responsible in shaping the thinking of the Diasporas. The framing in media undoubtedly have influence on the Diaspora since they all rely on media source about information on Boko-Haram. Framing is a concept that helps in comprehending how texts in the media are used to generate a particular understanding of a problem (Robinson, 2001:532). The Diaspora thinking were shaped by the foreign media because, frames used by media to cover terrorism influence the society's perception (Papacharissi and de Fatima 2008: 54). This explains why the Youths and Diaspora thinking about Boko-Haram are different. The Youths rely more on local media that refused to label Boko-Haram a terrorist group and real life events to shape their thinking.

On the contrary, as Table 5.1 shows, among the Youth, when thinking about who or what Boko-Haram represents, it can be noted that there is a sharper distinction than among the Diaspora respondents, between those who considered Boko-Haram a violent ethnic group, fomenting trouble and causing havoc in the country. While three respondents considered Boko-Haram as a criminal group and in some cases, raised question of Boko-Haram as a myth, this I will discuss later in this study. Two respondents see Boko-Haram as an Islamic fundamentalist group. Of the 12 youths that were interviewed, the thinking of seven tends towards ethnicity rather than religion or political conspiracy even though. As I said, these were specifically the youth of mainly Southern extraction, and it is important to note that Northern Nigeria is predominantly Muslim (roughly 80 per cent or more).I will argued that, the staunch position of the FG against labelling Boko-Haram as terrorist group, coupled with the fact that they are from Southern Nigeria is not impossible to shape their thinking towards ethnicity instead of terrorists.

Without a doubt, chain of attacks by Boko-Haram that targeted ethnic fault line has a negative impact on the Southern Youths Thinking around Boko-Haram. For instance, Boko-Haram gave three days ultimatum to all Southerners to leave the Northern Nigeria last year²¹. It is not impossible for the Southern Youths to think along religion line if Boko-Haram attacks follow the Al-Shabab separation of Muslims during the Kenya Mall attack in Septem-

¹⁹<http://www.thenationonlineng.net/2011/index.php/news-update/54862-don%E2%80%99t-label-boko-haram-terrorist-group,-says-fed-govt.html>

²⁰<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/06/193574.htm>

²¹<http://www.punchng.com/news/police-dismiss-boko-harams-ultimatum-to-southerners/>

ber 2013²², but the group kill indiscriminately, Muslim or Christian since you are not from North. For example, four Yoruba traders were separated from other passengers before they were shot dead on May 7th in Borno state²³ and 10 Yoruba traders, in which six are Muslims, were slaughtered on July 1st in Maiduguri²⁴. It is important to note, the Yoruba ethnic group is from the South-western part of the country with almost equal representation of Muslims and Christians population. In fact, the Yoruba's are not the only one targeted by Boko-Haram; the Igbo's ethnic group have also suffered from Boko-Haram onslaught. The bombing of Sabon-Gari, an area dominated by non-indigene in Kano state July this year²⁵, reinforced the thinking of the youths on Boko-Haram as an ethnic group targeting other ethnic groups. In many ways, the political class in Northern Nigeria reactions against FG decision to proscribe Boko-Haram sect with emphasis on the ethnic bias of GEJ, definitely created a platform for southern Youths to think along ethnic line. For instance, Abubakar Tsav, former Lagos State Police Commissioner was quoted in an interview

“Why did the President not include MEND(Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta), NDVF (Niger Delta Volunteer Force), OPC (Odua People's Congress), Ombatse, etc in the ban since these organisations also engage in acts of terrorism..... Laws are made for all but GEJ's²⁶ law is discriminatory and with ethnic bias”²⁷(The Punch News Paper, July 3rd, 2013).

However, after critical analysis it is not strange that the thinking around ethnicity will be found among youths from the southern part of Nigeria. It is true, in various incidents; Boko-Haram attacks transmit the representation of ethno-religions colouration by targeting churches and Christian' southerner's populated areas, but in most cases it targeted ethnic fault line. “Since 2009, bombings and shootings by the Nigerian extremist group Boko-Haram have targeted Nigeria's religious and ethnic fault lines in an apparently escalating bid to hurt the nation's stability” (Agbibo, 2013: 65). Now, I will examine the three dominant theoretical explanation with the Diasporas and Youths opinions.

5.2. Putting the Theories to Test: The Root Cause of Boko-Haram Violence

The dominant response on the root cause of the Boko-Haram crisis is Political but reinforced by economy disadvantage of the country most especially the core north where the Boko-Haram activities are active. Nevertheless, there are minorities' views on Islamic fundamentalism and poverty as the main root cause of the violence.

²²http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-202_162-57604591/al-shabab-says-it-singled-out-non-muslims-in-kenya-mall-attack/

²³<http://sunnewsonline.com/new/cover/boko-haram-kills-four-yoruba-produce-buyers-in-borno/>

²⁴<http://www.cknnigeria.com/2013/07/boko-haram-kills-10-yoruba-traders-in.html>

²⁵<http://www.punchng.com/news/20-die-in-sabon-gari-kano-bomb-blasts/>

²⁶ Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, The President of Nigeria

²⁷<http://www.punchng.com/news/north-kicks-against-ban-on-bharam-ansaru/>

Table 5.2 : Root causes of Violence

Public	Human Development	Islamic/Religion	Political Feud/Conspiracy	Others
Diasporas	2	1	5	0
Youths	3	1	6	2

Source: Author 2013

Out of the Nigerians in Diaspora respondents, five argued inline of political feud/conspiracy; two believe that poverty and socio-economic deprivation, and one is of the opinion that, the idea of global jihad and political Islam is responsible for the Boko-Haram violence. From the Youths, six shared the opinion of political feud, poverty was expressed by three respondents and one response each for political Islam, extra judicial killing, and breakdown of values and norms in the society as the root cause of Boko-Haram violence.

5.2.1.Human Development Theory-Diaspora-Youths Relationship

The explanation that informed the Diasporas and most of the Youths thinking from the North about Boko-Harm Violence lies in the Human Development theory, embedded in poverty and economic deprivation. Kabir-Isa (2011) argued that, Boko-Haram only capitalized on the abject poverty that is pervasive in the north to mobilize unemployed, unskilled, and extremely poor youths to join its campaign. He maintain that, government must enact both social and economic policy in order to guarantee the actualization of rights, equity and justice for every single one in Nigerian, regardless of their ethnic, religion and regional identity (Kabir-Isa, 2011: 331-334). As Adibe (2012) pointed out that, irrespective of the controversies that surrounded the origin and motivation of Boko-Haram violence, it was obvious that Yussuf (the late Boko-Haram leader) explore the abject poverty in the society to mobilized members to the group. “What is not in dispute is that Yusuf was responsible for raising its profile. He was in fact said to have established a religious complex that included a mosque and a school where many poor families from Nigeria and the neighboring countries enrolled their children” (Adibe, 2012: 50-51). He maintained that even though there was suspicion that some Nigeria elites are members, majority of the members are mainly impoverished northern Islamic students and clerics in addition to university students and many unemployed professionals (Johnson 2011 cited in ibid: 51).

With regard to the thinking of the Nigerians in Diaspora and Youths from the North that is deeply entrenched in the Human Development theory as the root cause of Boko-Haram violence. The confession of 35 kids whose age ranges from 9 to 15 years, arrested in Borno state in connection to burning of schools after receiving #5,000 each²⁸ corroborate the argument of poverty and socio-economic deprivation that is omnipresent in the North, in particular the stronghold of Boko-Haram in the Northeast. Personally, as a former National Association of Nigerian Student’s National officer, I have being to all the 19 Northern states and lived in Borno States for 6 months before, to say that

²⁸<http://www.punchng.com/news/boko-haram-paid-us-n5000-each-to-burn-schools-kid-suspects/>

there is poverty in the region is an understatement. I can say emphatically that, even though, poverty is a national phenomenon that can be used to discredit this claim on why poor Nigerians in other regions did not result to terrorism, the truth still remain that the poverty level of the north is more severe compared to other part of the country. Besides this is what informs the thinking of the public in the North and such thinking should be put in consideration when talking about solution to Boko-Haram violence. It is imperative to make it clear that, even though the majority of the respondents that subscribed to the political view are southerners, and those that subscribes to Human Development and Islamic State theory as the root cause are Northerners on the one hand. On the other hand, in some cases these views overlapped across the two regions of North and South.

5.2.2. Islamic State Theory

Nigeria is not alien to violent and devastating conflict linked with Islamic fundamentalism; the most recent is the Boko-Haram violent crisis. Even if the Islamic theory has little impact on the thinking of Diasporas and Youths, it does not take away the significance of the theory explanation of the crisis. Empirically, the main menace to national security in Nigeria has been Religious violent behavior, championed by some Islamic sects in the northern Nigeria – in particular Borno, Kano and Bauchi States. This extreme violence include the opposition of Christians to Sharia legal system 1999 and 2000, US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, the publishing of cartoons on prophet Mohammed in a Danish newspaper (Olawale, 2010: 1). Also Kano city riot 1982 &1991, nationwide crisis over Nigeria's membership in the OIC in 1986, /Kaduna/Zaria/ Funtua religious riots in 1987 just to mention a few (Adesoji, 2011: 97).

Although, Danjibo (2009) and Adesoji (2011) made a strong comparison between Boko-Haram sect and the Maitasine sect, with emphasis on the fact that Nigerians are not strangers to fundamentalist creating chaos in the country. Walker (2012: 5) disagreed by arguing that, Boko-Haram have proven they are not in the same league with the Maitasine sect of the 1980s that is responsible for hundreds of deaths in the northern part of the country. Agbiboa (2013) however, acknowledge the role of religion in Nigeria as a power for mobilization as well as an identity marker. He argued that the Boko-Haram insurgency is much related to the anger of a Christian Southerner in power; this is obvious from the call of Boko-Haram on President Jonathan to resign from office or embrace Islam (Agbiboa, 2013: 66-68). Considerably, the Islamic State theory is germane to the discourse around Boko-Haram. Because this inform the thinking of few Nigerians across the regions in the country unlike the Political feud/Conspiracy theory that shaped the thinking of the Southerners and Human Development that embrace the thinking of the Northerners, it is crucial to reflect on the impact of this theory.

5.2.3. Political feud/Conspiracy Theory-Diaspora-Youths Relationship.

Certainly, the political feud/conspiracy theory remains the most credible explanation around the thinking of the majority of Southerners. A reasonable amount of Scholars have identified the significance of this theory, the most

prominent are Aloizeuwa and Adibe. Adibe (2012) analysis with reference to the argument of Senator Chukwumerije, a respected leader from the southeastern part of Nigeria, give useful insight to the Political feud/ conspiracy theory. In Chukwumerije view, he argued that the manifestation of Boko-Haram is all about 2015 general elections and because the materialization of President Goodluck Jonathan as president was made possible by the actions of the Niger Delta militants in 2011. While he argued that the MEND violence activities forced the elites to consider the shift in power to the minority Ijaw oil producing region in order to have peace due to massive loss in revenue on the one hand. On the other hand, he equally believes the emergence of a Yoruba President, Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999 was facilitated by militancy of the OPC in the Yoruba campaign to win the Presidency. "For Senator Chukwumerije who represents Aba North in Nigeria's Senate, Boko-Haram, is merely trying to follow in the footsteps of MEND and OPC. He called on the Igbo militia MASSOB, to devise a means of constructive engagement with the youth" (Adibe, 2012:56-57).

It is thought-provoking to see how politicians indoctrinate their kinsmen with the argument of marginalization to approve violence conduct; one should not be surprise if another militant group emerges in the nearest future to demand for a shot at the presidency under the guise of marginalization of their ethnic group from power. While there are visible flaws that make it difficult for someone to accept the Political feud/conspiracy theory explanation of Boko-Haram violence, yet it will be unwise to disregard the significance of its impact in shaping the thinking of the public. Notwithstanding, Adibe critique the assumption that Boko-Haram is a tool to actualized the Northern president in 2015, he argued that:

"It is doubtful if MEND struggle would have succeeded in making someone from Niger Delta to become the President without the death of Yaradua and the support of other Nigerians that Jonathan should succeed him. Largely because of this, it is doubtful if Boko-Haram, which formally says it wants to establish an Islamic state and MASSOB which wants the State of Biafra would be able to mobilize sufficient support from other Nigerians to achieve their avowed objectives"(ibid).

At this juncture, Adibe critique sounds apolitical, any keen follower of political events in Nigeria since 1999 will definitely pay more attention to the political feud/conspiracy theory as flawed as it may appear. It was apparent that the agitation of OPC militants that clearly threatened the interest of the elites (Northern elites most especially) influenced the decision of the two main political parties to unanimously picked Yoruba men (Olusegun Obasanjo for PDP and Olu Falae for AD) as their flag bearers in the presidential election in 1999, with the agreement that power will return to the north after eight years.

This action definitely pacified the aggrieved OPC militants and calms the agitated NADECO on the June 12, 1993 annulled election saga by a Northern Military President, believed to have been won by a Yoruba man Moshood Abiola (MKO) which later died in Prison (Ihonybere, 1999: 60). The Yoruba's became contented because any which way, the election results of 1999 will definitely produce a Yoruba man as the president, which was the case eventually. Fair enough, it is unfeasible for an Ijaw minority to stand for election and win without the support of other ethnic groups, and if not of the death of President Umar Yaradua, Jonathan would not have become president talk less of

running in 2011. I will argue that, in the first place, the selection of Jonathan as running mates of Yaradua, the highest position in the history of the Ijaw's was done to pacify the Niger-Delta militants (Inokoba & Imbua, 2010: 114).

Indeed, the advocates of the Political feud/Conspiracy theory to some certain extent are right, but I will argue base on this study that the theory only shape the thinking of an average Southerner, to be precise the South-South. For Instance, there have been series of threats and drumbeats of war by the Niger-Delta militants²⁹ lately that if President Jonathan did not emerge as the President in 2015, they will resume hostility and start bombing oil installations. There reasons, mainly; Boko-Haram is used to destabilize their kinsmen administration and to prevent him from running in the 2015 elections. This will have devastating impact on the Nigeria economy that relies exclusively on oil from the Niger-Delta region. It is an open secret that majority of the northern elites of the highest echelon have oil blocks and strong business ties in the Niger-Delta region, this might force them to consider Jonathan as the flag bearer of the ruling party.

5.3. Boko-Haram A Myth? The new explanation

This perspective emanated from the field work results; there are some youth's leaders that believed there is nothing like Boko-Haram but the existence of criminals terrorizing the country. They argued that many of the violent attacks attributed to Boko-Haram were carried out by criminals and bandits, for example the cattle market massacre, in Potiskum, Yobe State in 2012 (The Guardian, May 12, 2013)³⁰. Although, the respondents that share this view are few, in many ways, the explanation is significance; it needs critical attention in order to have acritical understanding about the Boko-Haram phenomenon. However, it is arguably that, the dilemma of fake Boko-Haram posed more threat than that of the so call real Boko-Haram. According to the Nigeria's Minister of Special Duties and Inter-Governmental Affairs, Alhaji Kabiru Turaki,

“fake members of the Boko-Haram sect whose mission was to collect money showed up when dialogue was going on with key members of the Boko-Haram sect to end the insurgency in parts of the north”³¹ (PM NEWS, 8th October, 2013).

Besides, there are incidents where suspected Boko-Haram members were arrested and later turned out not to be Boko-Haram members but impersonators who used the name of Boko-Haram to cause havoc. Armed robberies are sometimes credited to Boko-Haram and there are some politicians that used Boko-Haram as a cover to carry out assassinations. For example, on the 10th of March 2012, it was reported in Sky news and major media houses in Nigeria, Boko-Haram spokesman denied the involvement of the group in both the kid-

²⁹<http://sunnewsonline.com/new/cover/2015-presidency-its-either-jonathan-or-war-asari-dokubo/>

³⁰<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/may/03/nigeria-market-attack-kills-dozens>

³¹<http://pmnewsnigeria.com/2013/10/08/fake-boko-haram-show-up-for-dialogue-says-minister/>

napping and the killing of British Chris McManus and Italian Francesco Molinara after the government and media put the blame on them³², it was apparent with the denial from Boko-Haram spokesman, some elements do orchestrate evil in the name of Boko-Haram.

However, the arrest of a “fake Boko-Haram” member using the sect name to terrorize and extort money from people in Enugu state by Security operatives make it imperative for us to start thinking in the direction of Myth³³ (Vanguard, October 25th, 2013). In another example cited by Walker (2012), “a failed bombing in March 2012 of a church in Bauchi was said by the police to have been plotted by a rival Christian organization. Had the bombing gone to plan, it is easy to see how the attack would have been blamed on Boko Haram” (Walker, 2012:7). The main challenge now is, who is real and who is fake Boko-Haram?, do we even have Boko-Haram in the first place?

5.4. Government Response

Table 5.3 Government Response

PUBLIC	REDUCED	INTENSIFIED
DIASPORAS	4	4
YOUTHS	9	3

Source: Author 2013

There is a sharp difference on the thinking of Nigerians in Diaspora and the Youths on the government response as shown in Table 5.3 above. I must emphasize that, for the first time in this study, opinions shared by both Diasporas and Youths clearly overlapped between Northern and Southern respondents. While there is an equal split in the opinions of the Diasporas on if the government responses to Boko-Haram violence has reduced or intensify the crisis. Substantial number of Youths agreed that the actions and responses of the government have reduced the violence most especially, the latest declaration of state of emergency in the three North-eastern states. They maintained that the success recorded by the government counterinsurgency operation can be credited to the emergence of the civilian, in particular the Civilian JTF. However, it is worthy to note, Diasporas and Youths respondents that disapprove the method of the government in responding to the Boko-Haram crisis argued that, it is important for the government to apply caution in fighting Boko-Haram in order to reduce collateral damage. They maintained that, it will prevent the population to in turn return support for the lesser threat between the JTF and the Boko-Haram Insurgent. They are of the opinion that the way government reacted to Boko-Haram has intensified the crisis because the more the governments go with brute force against the sect, the more they become stronger.

³² <http://news.sky.com/story/2160/boko-haram-denies-nigeria-hostage-killings>

³³ <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/10/fraud-dss-parades-fake-boko-haram-member-enugu/>

5.5. Solution.

The responses to the question of the possible solution to Boko-Haram took the reverse situation between the youths and Diasporas in comparison to the government response. Table 5.4 show clearly, the unison in the responses of the Diasporas on dialogue, however, it was fascinating to see how the Youths called for Military actions against the sect.

Table 5.4 Suggested Solutions

Public	Sustain Military actions	Dialogue
Diasporas	0	8
Youths	8	4

Source: Author 2013

However, the Youths argued that, the military actions should be sustained. They suggested that the government should formally incorporate the communities (Civilian JTF) in their fight against the insurgent and should provide adequate security for the population that is helping them against retaliation from Boko-Haram insurgent. Meanwhile, the Diaspora suggested dialogue as the short term solution to the crisis and on the longer term, they emphasized on the need to have a strategy which includes, addressing the poverty and the pervasive unemployment rates among the youths. The Diasporas believe that, engaging the Youths through empowerment programs through the civil societies to sensitize the society will go a long way to prevent the future occurrence.

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, it was obvious that the three theoretical explanation ion explaining the Thinking around Boko-Haram do have strong ties with the how the Nigerian in Diaspora and Youths see Boko-Haram. Nevertheless, it is vital to make a clear distinction that Political feud/Conspiracy theory did not necessary influence the thinking of Northerners on Boko-Haram Violence rather they were influenced by the Human Development arguments. It was also evident that, despite the fact poverty is a national phenomenon, majority of Southerners embrace the Political feud/Conspiracy hypothesis as the genesis of Boko-Haram violence. Surprisingly, regardless of Boko-Haram claims to be fighting against infidels and non-Muslims which painted their campaign with religion coloration, the political Islam ideology impact in shaping the thinking of both the Diaspora and Youths, Northerners or Southerners is insignificant. Yet, none of the theories can be ignored irrespective of the region that embraced them. This Chapter was able to show that while media and documentaries influence the thinking of Diaspora to see Boko-Haram as a terrorist group, Boko-Haram attacks that targeted ethnic fault lines made the Southern Youths to see the sect as an ethnic group of mainly Northerners. Even though, Southern and Northern Youths differ on what is Boko-Haram, majority of the Youths call for Military actions, while all the Diasporas call for dialogue.

Chapter 6 Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear that the three main dominant theoretical explanations to the Boko-Haram violence crisis have a significant impact on the thinking of the public, in particular the Nigerians in Diaspora and the Youths. This study has been able to show that, these theoretical explanations, as significant as they might be in shaping the thinking of the public; there was none that can be accepted as a unanimous dominant thinking about Boko-Haram. I hypothesize that, while the political feud/Conspiracy theory clearly has fervent relationship with the thinking of Southerners on Boko-Haram violent crisis, the Northerners thinking was apparently informed by the Human development theory. This balkanization of the thinking on Boko-Haram to regional perspective, reinforced further the decades of existing friction in the Northern and Southern Nigerians relationship. One would have expected a more significant impact of the Islamic State theory to be prevalent due to the religion sensitivity of Nigeria, but the study has been able to show that the theoretical explanation only have little impact on the thinking of the public despite the fact that Nigeria is considered as one of the most religious country in the world. Although, the only explanation that did not divide the thinking around Boko-Haram into predominantly North and South dichotomy, the study show that the majority of the Nigerian public did not see Boko-Haram as religious motivated crisis.

In many ways, the study exposed the sharp contradiction on how the Diasporas and Youths see Boko-Haram, opinions about government response to the Boko-Haram violence crisis and their views on possible solutions. For example, the majority Diasporas considered Boko-Haram as a terrorist organization but on the contrary, majority of the Youths, most especially the ones of southern origin see them as a violence ethnic group, mainly of Northern extraction. I was able to show that, while the ongoing discourse on whether to designate Boko-Haram as a terrorist group influenced Diaspora thinking around the perception of Boko-Haram. Series of attacks by Boko-Haram targeting ethnic fault line is responsible for Boko-Haram to be viewed with ethnic lens by the Southern Youths. It can be concluded that, the ethnic or regional toga has no impact in the assessments of government response to the crisis and the proposed solutions by both the Diaspora and the Youths. I also emphasize on the need to start asking questions around the Boko-Haram Myth. I argued that in some cases, crime committed by bandits and criminals are attributed to Boko-Haram. Perhaps, what we all see as Boko-Haram might not be the same Boko-Haram we are analysing, and if they really exist, the sect might not be as dangerous as we might think.

To summarize, larger percentage of the youths call for the government to sustain the ongoing military actions against Boko-Haram because the actions of the government has reduced the violence. The Diasporas, although split in opinions on the impact of the government responses to the violence, unanimously agree to dialogue as the best solution to the problem albeit the provision of basic needs to tackle poverty and unemployment to curb the restiveness of the youths. Reasonably, I have been able to show with this study that the most proactive way to solving the Boko-Haram problem is by first under-

standing how people view it. Unless we do, we are talking about different things and counterinsurgency assumes there is one enemy, a group, identifiable and the same for everyone. At least one need to identify the enemy before planning to wage War, in the Boko-Haram case, there can never be a counterinsurgency operation without identifying who and what is Boko-Haram? However, with my findings, there is no one enemy and that is what this study ends up showing.

6.2 Recommendations

The main objective of this study is not to make suggestion to how Boko-Haram problem can be tackled; rather it aimed at contributing mainly to understanding thinking around the Boko-Haram conflict. Government have called for series of dialogue with Boko-Haram, apparently it seems that there are no one Boko-Haram and which Boko-Haram they are talking to. It is essential we know who and what is Boko-Haram, or how do we fight unknown enemy as establish in this study the possibility of Boko-Haram as a myth. Having said it all, I will recommend that further research should be conducted in order to understand the Boko-Haram violence, so that efforts can be concentrated into the right direction. Otherwise, Boko-Haram will remain a ghost.

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APPENDIX: Details of Respondents (NB: Some did not allow me to use their names)

Appendix 1

NAME	RESIDENCE	OCCUPATION	RELIGION	REIGION
Ikenna Igwu	Italy	Work with UN	Christian	South-East
Olalekan Oshunkoya	UK	Consultant/Student	Christian	South-South
Kasali-Omotayo	Abuja/Nigeria	Contractor/ NGO	Muslim	South-West
Smart-Nwobi	South-Africa	Lawyer	Christian	South-East
Aminu(not real name)	Sokoto/Nigeria	Photographer	Muslim	North-West
Hafez Abbey	Abuja/Nigeria	Student	Christian	North Central
Temitope-Ogunosebikan	Osun/Nigeria	IT Consultant	Christian	South-West
Ajani-Olawale	Abuja/Nigeria	Entrepreneur	Christian	South-West
Respondent 3	USA	NA	Christian	South-South
Respondent 1	Singapore	NA	Muslim	North-East
Respondent 4	China	NA	Muslim	South-South
Respondent 16	Benin	NA	NA	South-South
Respondent 17	Adamawa	NA	Muslim	North Central
Respondent 12	Gombe	Student	Muslim	North East
Respondent 11	Ondo	Lawyer	Muslim	South-West
Respondent 18	Aba	Social Worker	Christian	South East
Respondent 19	Enugu	Lecturer	Christian	South East
Respondent 15	Kebbi	Student	Muslim	North East
Respondent 13	Zairia	Unemployed	Muslim	North West