Understanding Nigerian citizens' perspectives on Boko Haram

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Contents

Executive summary

Nigerians are divided over the factors that influence people's decisions to join Boko Haram. However, some of the key factors that make individuals vulnerable to Boko Haram's recruitment are poverty and unemployment, their social groups (i.e. friends, family members, ethnic kinship and the *almajiri* system of Islamic schooling), lack of education and the religious institutions that they frequent.

Contrary to expectations and conventional wisdom that, given the ferocity of the Boko Haram crisis and widespread corruption in Nigeria, people would generally be disillusioned and not participate in political processes, this study found high levels of participation in political processes, including elections, and interaction with the military and security forces. The study also found that people who are employed are more likely to participate in political processes, such as voting.

At the community or local level in Nigeria, the social contract is extremely weak, as ordinary citizens relate very little to their local leaders. There seems to be a general distrust of local-government structures and their leaders. This distrust is particularly high in areas that experience high levels of Boko Haram activity. Similarly, at the national level, with the exception of the president, there seems to be very little trust in the institutions of the federal government, such as the National Assembly and the Senate.

Again, with the exception of the president, the study found that Nigerians seem to have very little faith in politicians, who are seen as the catalysts of socio-economic and political problems in Nigeria. Most Nigerians believe that violent extremism, and especially Boko Haram, escalate because of the failings of politicians, who are also considered to be the financiers of the extremist group. A significant number of Nigerians believe that corruption is the biggest security threat to the country.

Friends, neighbours, relatives and community meetings are viewed as the most likely arenas to recruit or introduce people to Boko Haram. Young people between the ages of

15 and 30 who are not married and with little or no education are the most vulnerable to being recruited into Boko Haram.

Religion remains a huge factor in the Nigerian polity, which competes for legitimacy with the state. With the weak social contract, religion is what binds people in Nigeria. Many people who do not trust the government tend to trust religious institutions. Religion, however, has also been one of the factors that widens the north-south geographic divide in the country, an issue that continues to create tension among Nigerians.

There are a large number of people who feel that they are deliberately excluded from political governance and do not have access to equal opportunities because of their ethnic or religious background. This was evident in the way religious groups and people from certain ethnic groups perceived government and politicians, who are generally seen to be corrupt and sponsors of Boko Haram.

Interestingly, the study found that most Nigerians believe that Boko Haram is best addressed at the community or local level, rather than at the national or federal level. Nigerians are divided as to whether one should pursue military action or use non-military responses to Boko Haram. A significant number favour military action, while the majority, who advocate non-military measures, are also divided over issues such as negotiation, amnesty, religious solutions, developmental solutions and a criminal-justice approach. The police are still a relevant factor, as a significant number of Nigerians show faith in the police in dealing with emergency situations or when they are in danger. The military is also considered to be relevant, especially in the north, where a significant number of Nigerians said they would call the military when in danger.

Although there are certain distinctive elements in Boko Haram funding, it is also true that many of the group's sources and means of funding are similar to those of other terrorist groups elsewhere in Africa and in the world at large, such as al-Qaeda, al-Shabaab, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, etc. This is pertinent because Boko Haram appears to have had or continues to maintain collaborative relationships with such organisations.

Acronyms

AQIM	al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
ATM	automated teller machine
AU	African Union
CTC	Combating Terrorism Centre
CVE	Countering violent extremism
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
GIABA	Inter-governmental Action Group against Money Laundering (ECOWAS)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (also known as the Islamic States of Iraq and Levant [ISIL] or Islamic State [IS])
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
KAICIID	King Abdullah Bin Abdullaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (also known as International Dialogue Centre)
KFR	kidnapping for ransom
MNJTF	Multinational Joint Task Force
ONSA	Office of the National Security Adviser (Nigeria)
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
US	United States of America
WB	World Bank

Tables and figures

Tables

Figures

Chapter 1

Introduction

The 2015 Global Terrorism Index report ranked the Nigeria-based Jama'atul Ahlus Sunnah Lidda'awati wal Jihad[1] – commonly known as Boko Haram[2] – as the world's deadliest terrorist group in 2014.[3] The report estimates that Boko Haram's attacks in 2014 were responsible for 6 644 deaths,[4] as opposed to the 6 073 deaths attributed to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which was ranked second.[5] These fatalities were reportedly the result of 453 Boko Haram attacks in Cameroon, Chad and Nigeria.[6] The report also reveals that Nigeria experienced the largest increase in terrorist deaths ever recorded over the period of a year, with 7 512 deaths in 2014,[7] compared with 1 850 deaths recorded in 2013 – an increase of 300%. Boko Haram was responsible for 81% of those deaths in 2014 and 86% in 2013.[8]

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) also highlighted in a 2016 report the impact on children of Boko Haram's attacks,[9] beyond the high-profile Chibok schoolgirl kidnappings. The report estimated that in 2015, 1.3 million children from Chad, Nigeria, Niger and Cameroon were displaced – an increase of 60% over the period of one year. The report profiles 44 incidents of children used in suicide attacks in 2015, a massive increase compared to the four incidents reported in the previous year.[10]

These figures demonstrate the savagery of a group that is believed to have killed between 20 000 and 35 000 people, including Muslims and non-Muslims,[11] since its establishment in 2002,[12] and most of these deaths occurred after 2009.[13] However, in one estimate, Kashim Shettima, the governor of Nigeria's Borno State, which has experienced the highest number of Boko Haram's attacks, went as far as to claim that the group's violence has killed over 100 000 people.[14]

In March 2015, Boko Haram joined ISIS,[15] after the former's notorious leader, Abubakar Shekau, pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi,[16] which resulted in Boko Haram changing its name to the Islamic State West Africa Province in April 2015.[17] Many analysts had doubted the marriage between the two groups in view of the strong characters of

Figure 1: Map of Boko Haram attacks between July 2009 and may 2014
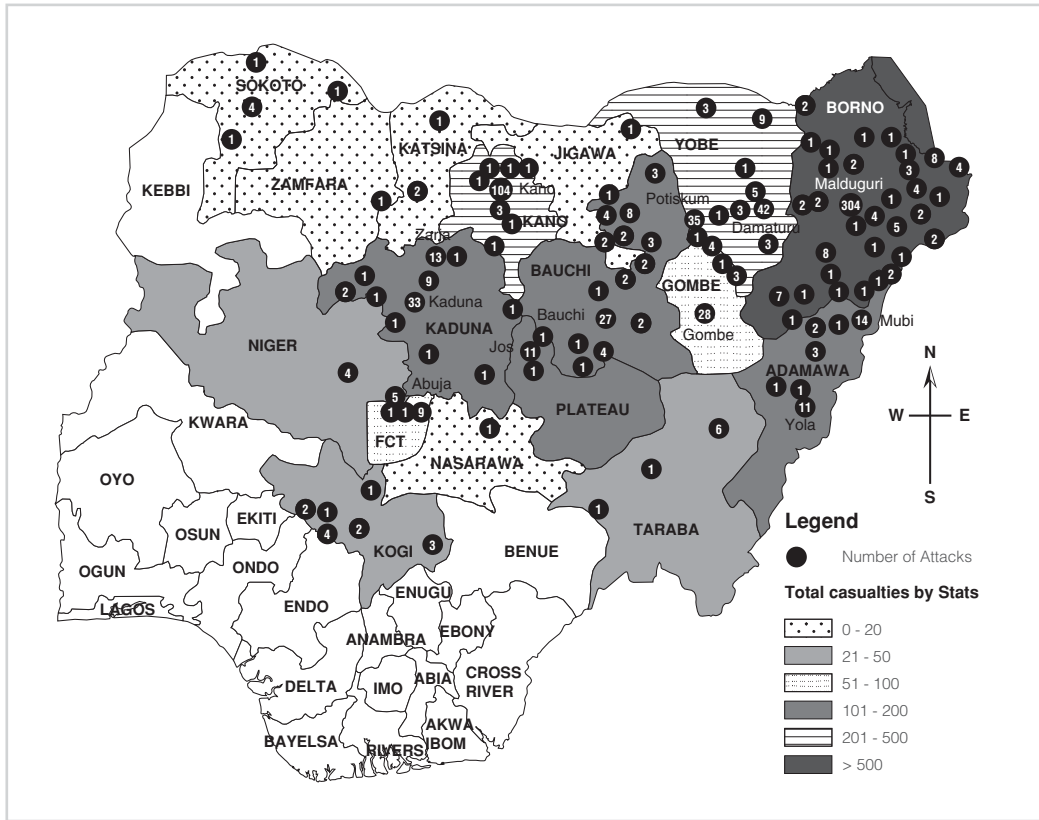
the two leaders, questioning how Boko Haram would benefit from it.[18] Their doubts were soon proven to be accurate when relations between al-Baghdadi and Shekau soured, resulting in the dismissal of Shekau and the appointment in August 2016, of Abu Musab al-Barnawi, the purported son of Boko Haram's founder, Mohammed Yusuf, as the *wali* (leader) of the Islamic State West Africa Province.[19]

Al-Barnawi's appointment sparked a fierce leadership contestation that led Shekau to split from ISIS and to revive his *Jama'atul Ahlus Sunnah Lidda'awati wal Jihad.*[20] The two groups clashed over ideological differences in their approaches to jihad. Al-Barnawi favoured less violence and a minimalist approach that confines jihad to non-Muslims, and to Muslims who participate in a conspiracy against Islam, by working with security forces to fight them. Shekau, on the other hand, continued to proselytise a doctrine of jihad that drew no line between Muslims and non-Muslims who opposed him. He espoused a broad concept of 'infidel', or apostasy, to include anyone who is not with them, and advocated the killing of such 'unbelievers',[21] as, according to Shekau's doctrine, they cannot coexist with believers.[22]

No single group has inflicted more violence on Nigerians than Boko Haram since the country's civil war of 1967 to 1970. Boko Haram has therefore been one of Nigeria's major

concerns, and certainly a top priority for the Buhari administration.[23] While the group's attacks have been concentrated mainly in the north-east, particularly among the three states under the state of emergency (Borno, Yobe and Adamawa), its violent activities and their impact have been widespread, affecting most states in northern Nigeria, albeit at different levels of intensity and frequency. Figure 1 maps the geographical spread and intensity of Boko Haram's violence in Nigeria. It is evident from the map that, with the exception of the north-western state of Kebbi, every state in northern Nigeria has experienced an attack attributable to Boko Haram.

Given the extent of the violence and its far-reaching ramifications on the country as a whole, it was deemed important to assess how Nigerian citizens view Boko Haram, and the group's impact on the country and its citizens.

> The main purpose of this study was to understand Boko Haram from the perspective of Nigerian citizens

The main purpose of this study was therefore to understand Boko Haram from the perspective of Nigerian citizens. In a democratic society, public opinion has long been held as an important source of authority, often referred to as 'the public conscience' or the 'the public will'.[24] How people feel, perceive or understand an issue often shapes their attitudes toward it. For Hogg Kruglanski and van den Bos, such perceptions or understanding provides a 'powerful motivation to protect and promote, perhaps at all cost, the ideological integrity and superiority of one's own views'.[25]

This study specifically sought to understand people's perspectives as to why Boko Haram exists, how they perceive vulnerability and how the Nigerian government should respond to the crisis. The ultimate objective of the study was to fill an important void in the search for solutions to the Boko Haram problem by offering empirically informed policy recommendations to the Nigerian government and other actors involved in the fight against Boko Haram.

This monograph is structured into nine main chapters. Following this introductory chapter, which establishes the context and objectives of the study, Chapter Two explains the methodology and scope of the study. The main findings of the study are discussed in Chapters Three, Four, Five, Six and Seven.

Chapter Three examines the broader political context Nigeria in which Boko Haram operates, with a view to providing understanding of citizen-state relations, through participation in political processes and trust in government. Chapter Four assesses the relationship between citizens and security forces, with a view to determine civic faith and perceptions of legitimacy of security forces in Nigeria. This is achieved by asking respondents to indicate who they would call when in danger. Chapter Five discusses the reasons why some people join Boko Haram. The chapter presents the findings of the

study with regard to a number of key variables, which are often considered as the drivers or triggers of violent extremism. The chapter discusses the specific influences of family circumstances, the need to belong, unemployment, financial incentives, religion, lack of education, and the need to be respected, as well as how and where people are likely to be introduced to Boko Haram.

Chapter Six examines broader security challenges in Nigeria with a view to identify the conditions conducive for the emergence of violent extremist groups such as Boko Haram. These include the roles that corruption, political, religious and ethnic exclusion, unemployment and lack of education play in fuelling violent extremism. Chapter Seven discusses the findings relating to the sources of Boko Haram's financing. The chapter highlights perceptions relating to drug trafficking, armed robbery, support of other terrorist groups, private businesses, taxes, patronage of politicians and other variables common to terrorist funding.

Chapter Eight analyses proposed solutions to the Boko Haram crisis. provided by the respondents to the citizen survey. This chapter highlights the overwhelming support for military responses to Boko Haram. Finally, Chapter Nine presents the conclusions of the study and recaps some of its key findings regarding the triggers and root causes of Boko Haram, as well as the factors motivating individuals to join the Islamist group. The chapter also offers empirically informed policy recommendations for consideration by the Nigerian government in its efforts to defeat Boko Haram and stamp out the scourge of violent extremism.

Chapter 2

Research methodology, limitations and structure

This study was conducted in two main parts. Part 1 was a desktop review of the available literature, and the use of a specialised software platform to analyse all publicly available social-media posts or conversations relating to Boko Haram. This part of the study sought to understand the following:

- How the vast literature on Boko Haram explains the reasons why some people join the group, and the socio-economic and political factors that influenced such decisions.

- The social-media conversation on Boko Haram and how Nigerians who express themselves on social media explain the factors that account for individuals joining the group.

- Boko Haram's sources of financing, as gleaned from the available literature and the social-media conversation.

Part 2 consisted of a field study conducted through a citizen survey containing 34 questions, which sought to assess ordinary citizens' perceptions of Boko Haram and how the interplay of socio-economic and political factors could explain the rise of Boko Haram in north-eastern Nigeria. In particular, this part of the study was aimed at understanding why people join Boko Haram. This part of the study was premised on the belief that the most effective way of eliminating the group is to begin by understanding the individuals who make up the ranks of the group, and the push and pull factors that account for their membership. In this context, the survey questions were broadly grouped into five main categories of questions, as follows:

1. What is your Identity?

2. How would you rate your political participation and trust (and faith) in government?

3. In your opinion, who is most likely to join Boko Haram and where?

4. What are the sources of Boko Haram's funding?

5. What would you suggest as a solution to deal with Boko Haram?

The number of respondents to the survey was 1 607, all of whom were Nigerians. The survey was conducted between 20 and 28 October 2015, through on-the-street, face-to-face interviews. Although care was taken to ensure as random a sample as possible within the sample population, predetermined quotas on age, gender and geographic regions were applied in the selection of the sample population, with the objective of obtaining responses from as diverse a sample as possible. To this end, the respondents comprised the following categories (or subgroups):

- Two main age brackets: 751 were between the ages of 18 and 29; and 856 were 30 or older

- 798 females and 809 males

- 682 of the respondents identified with Islam; 912 identified with Christianity

- 1 119 of the respondents indicated that they were employed; 488 were unemployed

The study was conducted in five states: Lagos (316 respondents); Abuja (359); Gombe (319); Kano (313); and Yobe (300). Every attempt was made for the sample numbers in each city to be as random and as diverse as possible, though this was affected by certain 'no-go' zones in some northern cities. Lagos and Abuja constituted 'control' states, while Gombe, Kano and Yobe lie in the targeted Boko Haram-affected states. The motive for capturing the perceptions of citizens from these two contrasting sets of states was to illustrate differences in the perception of Boko Haram among citizens closer to the epicentre of the group's attacks and among those outside the group's immediate area of concentration.

In terms of the limitations of this study, it should be noted that the data was collected in October 2015, just five months after Buhari's administration took power in Nigeria. It is therefore likely that some of the findings could have been overtaken by events. Wherever possible, the analyses in this study take into account more recent developments. The survey findings and analysis are also limited to Nigeria, and do not include Cameroon, Chad and Niger, countries where Boko Haram also operates. In the areas where the field study was carried out, Yobe was the only one of the three states under the state of emergency (i.e. considered by the government as heavily affected by the crisis). This is because security concerns and difficulty in obtaining authorisation meant that field studies could not be extended to the other two states, Borno and Adamawa.

The following Chapters Three to Eight of the monograph present the main findings of this study.

Chapter 3

The political context as a means of understanding Boko Haram

This chapter assesses the relationship between citizens and government with a view to identifying sources of grievances that may explain the rise of violent extremism in Nigeria, as manifested by groups such as Boko Haram. The common perception is that the rise of violent extremism is a function of a breakdown in the fabric of social cohesion, particularly in the relationship between the state and society, which often leads to alienation or exclusion of certain segments of society.[26] This can lead to various outcomes, including physical and structural violence.[27] Choi and Piazza observe in their analysis of domestic terrorism that 'ethno-political exclusion fuels domestic terrorism', and that when 'people are excluded from state power due to their ethnic background, they are more likely to resort to domestic terrorism in an effort to solve issues and avenge grievances'.[28] This argument is often associated with frustration-aggression analysis, which explains the rise of groups such as Boko Haram from the perspective that the recourse to violence is perceived as the last resort due to unattended injustices or failure to address structural, social, economic or political grievances. In this context, scholars like Anouar Boukhars assert that 'frustration and strong anti-system feelings are the two primary common denominators that drive political and religious radicalization,'[29] which lead to violent extremism and terrorism.

The political context and the relations between government and citizens can therefore provide key indicators for understanding the rise of violent extremism and its impacts on a society. How individuals participate in a country's political processes is largely influenced by their perception of its political system and their relationship with government. Political participation is generally defined as citizens' engagement with or involvement in decision-making processes.[30] This encompasses all civic activities, particularly voting in an election, undertaken by citizens to influence policies at all levels of government.[31]

In a democratic society, political participation provides a useful tool for measuring legitimacy of government and its institutions and programmes, and, to some extent,

as Weitz-Shapiro and Winters have argued, it suggests citizens' happiness and quality of life.[32] Lack of political participation could suggest political discontentment and disenfranchisement,[33] a state of being that might encourage individuals to seek alternative platforms for change. The political system could itself be a source of radicalisation if it is perceived to be unfair or to perpetrate structural violence, whereby socio-economic inequalities are entrenched.[34] In addition, terrorism may also become entangled in political rhetoric, whereby political actors use it as a form of blackmail or to bedevil one another. Such politicisation of terrorism is particularly prevalent in periods of electioneering.[35]

Boko Haram has unequivocally rejected the Nigerian political system, which is based on secularism and constitutional democracy, as adopted in 1999,[36] which the group blames for the chronic corruption, poverty and inequality in Nigeria, and for the country being 'un-Islamic'. Boko Haram espouses a Salafist ideology, which views democracy as an antithesis to Islam.[37] Democracy is conceived as a hallmark of Western civilisation, which is rejected in the name 'Boko Haram'. In addition, the practices of democracy, such as elections, are seen to be in direct contravention of Islamic tenets, such as the belief that 'no one rules but God' (Koran 12. 40) and 'Whoever does not rule by what God has revealed, they are the unbelievers' (Koran 5. 44).[38]

As Caroline Varin contends, Mohammed Yusuf rejected 'all institutions derived from secularism rather than sharia law, including democracy and partisan politics.'[39] Abubakar Shekau, his successor, has called for the killing of all those who practise democracy, and stated in a video message that Boko Haram's 'is a war against Western education, democracy and constitution'.[40] The literature review therefore suggests that Nigeria's secular system, as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution,[41] had, from its inception, been at odds with the radical Islamic theology espoused by the contemporary followers of Usman Dan Fodio.[42]

Bearing in mind this inherent tension in the relationship between the state and Salafi theocracy, which advocates replacing the secular system in Nigeria with sharia,[43] this chapter seeks to measure the degree of political participation in Nigeria, and particularly the attitudes of Nigerian citizens towards voting. The findings could help determine the legitimacy of the state and the role that political factors, such as marginalisation and disenfranchisement, have played in the rise of Boko Haram, and in its recruitment and support.

Indeed, a burgeoning literature on Boko Haram points to a growing theoretical proposition that economic marginalisation and disenfranchisement are the fundamental triggers of Boko Haram.[44] . Olojo, for example, observes that '[o]ne significant factor that has stimulated the drive towards violent extremism, recruitment and support for Boko Haram is economic deprivation'.[45] Using the structural-violence paradigm, Olojo argues that

'[a]bject poverty and economic dislocation of livelihoods have drastically reduced the options of many young Nigerians in the northern region'.[46] This is a view echoed by several analysts.[47]

With this paradigm, Boko Haram is seen as an inevitable outcome of deep-rooted governance and socio-economic problems.[48] As Wall puts it, Nigeria is a 'bifurcated country, with a productive south flush with oil wealth and an impoverished north, struggling to reconcile modernization with the dictates of the orthodox and rapacious power brokers'.[49] Wall describes the political and economic differences between the two regions as the 'starkest economic and political contradictions for a modern polity'.[50] Wall may well be right about the marked economic disparities between the two regions. However, there is little evidence to support the conclusion that the rise of Boko Haram is due solely to the impoverishment of the country's north. This is because the south – which is undoubtedly richer – has also been heavily affected by terrorism and violent extremism,[51] perpetrated by groups such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta[52] and the Niger Delta Avengers.[53] This suggests the need to look beyond solely economic reasons to explain the rise of Boko Haram. Other scholars have used frustration-aggression analysis to explain the rise of Boko Haram.

According to the marginalisation and disenfranchisement hypothesis, people who feel marginalised and disenfranchised are less likely to participate in political processes, such as elections, because they feel alienated. Their choice not to participate may be a strategy of resistance or dissent to a process imposed by elites. It may also be the result of a genuine feeling of disaffection, whereby individuals do not feel that the political system represents their interest or that their participation in the political process can make an impact or change the system. To empirically verify this hypothesis, the citizen survey used in this study was designed to assess respondents' attitudes to key political processes, such as voting, trust in the political elite and institutions, and their faith in the system.

> Studies have shown that terrorist attacks influence elections and electoral outcomes

Voting

Voting in an election is a key civic duty that sustains democracy and serves as an indicator for political participation.[54] There are many factors – personal, social, political, economic, security and safety – that influence people's decision to vote or not. There is a strong relationship between voting and terrorism. Studies on terrorist attacks in Israel, Spain and the UK, for example, have shown that terrorist attacks influence elections and electoral outcomes.[55] Berrebi and Klor, in their study on terrorism and Israel's elections, conclude that voters' preferences are significantly influenced by terrorism, indicating that voters are sensitive to terrorist attacks.[56]

The Boko Haram phenomenon in Nigeria shows that the links between terrorism and elections could go beyond just terrorist attacks or threats of attacks. As mentioned earlier, the philosophy of the group prohibits its followers from participating in political and social activities associated with Western society, such as democracy, which includes voting in elections.[57] As Shekau explained in one of his video messages, 'The reason why I will kill you is because you are infidels; you follow democracy.'[58] To emphasise his extreme hatred of democracy, Shekau has claimed that 'democracy is worse than homosexuality, worse than sleeping with your mother. … You are all pagans and we will kill you, even if you do not attack us we will kill you ... Allah commands us to kill without pity.'[59] In these chilling words, Shekau sends a clear warning to anyone tempted to take part in democratic processes, spreading fear and intimidating potential voters.[60] Such fear and intimidation could have a significant impact on voting patterns and electoral outcomes.

To test this hypothesis, respondents in the citizen survey were asked to indicate whether they had voted in the previous election. An overwhelming majority (or 1 135, representing over 70% of the respondents) indicated that they had voted in the 2015 election. Although this rate among the sample is higher than the actual national voter turnout in that election, which was 43%,[61] it signals however, high participation and a fair amount of trust in the electoral process. Table 1 and Figure 2 indicate how respondents replied when asked whether they voted or not in the 2015 election.

Table 1 and Figure 2 show that respondents from the north were more politically active than those in the south. This is evident in the 703 (or 75.4%) of the 932 respondents from the three northern states of Kano, Gombe and Yobe, who said they voted in the 2015 elections, compared with 432 (or 64%) from Abuja and Lagos. This outcome runs counter

Table 1: Number of respondents who voted or did not vote

Category of respondents	Voted	Did not vote	Total in category
Male	595	214	809
Female	534	255	789
Unemployed	263	225	488
Employed	872	247	1 119
Age 18–29	483	268	751
Age 30+	652	204	856
Christian	596	316	912
Muslim	530	152	682
Kano, Gombe, Yobe	703	229	932
Abuja, Lagos	432	243	675

Figure 2: Trends in voting among respondents
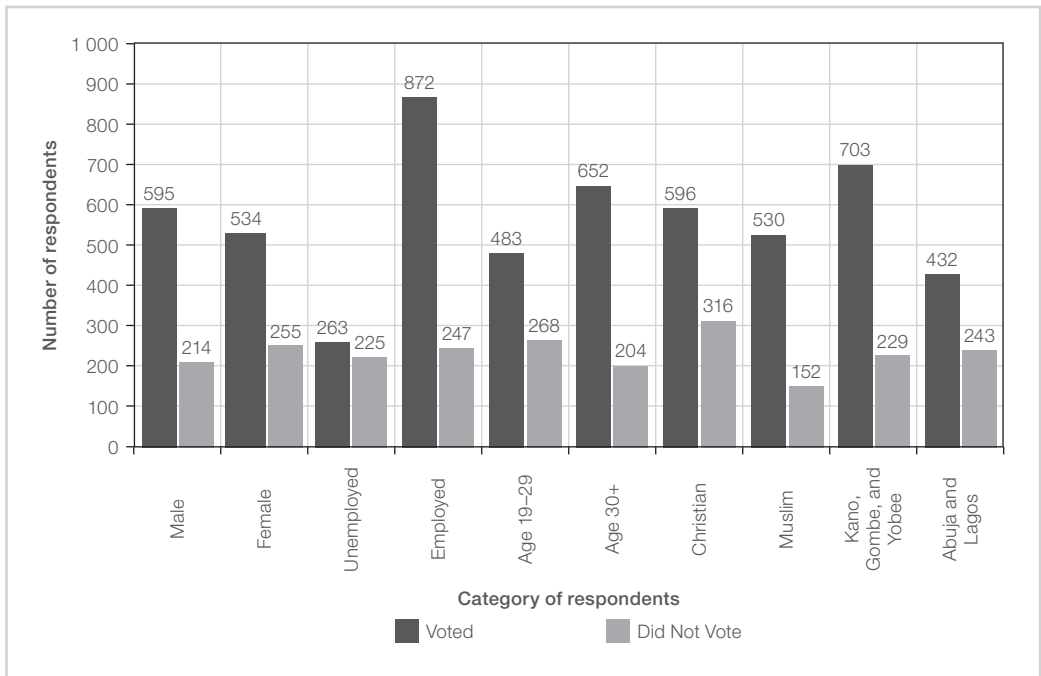
to conventional wisdom, as reflected in the hypothesis above and the conclusions from previous studies on the relationship between terrorism and elections. One would expect that, given the prevalence and intensity of Boko Haram's violence in 2014, when it peaked shortly before the elections in March 2015, that voters in the north, especially in regions such as Gombe and Yobe, would feel intimidated and yield to Boko Haram's demands. Instead, however, voters in the three sampled northern states defied the group, with great risk to their lives, and went out to vote in numbers.

The high voting rate in the north may be explained by a number of factors, including controversy surrounding the candidature of the then incumbent president, Goodluck Jonathan;[62] the religious and regional tensions stoked by the differences between the two main candidates – Jonathan, a Christian from the south, and the opposition leader, Muhammadu Buhari, a Muslim from the north; endemic problems of electricity and petroleum shortages; and frustration with the persistence of the Boko Haram violence, all of which had contributed to the unpopularity of Jonathan's administration.[63] The high voting rate might also suggest higher levels of political activism among northerners. It could also indicate that the anger felt towards Jonathan's government and the sense of expectation in the new contender, Buhari, had encouraged citizens to use the election as a platform to effect change in government at all cost.[64]

The Buhari factor as an explanation of the voting pattern is corroborated by several opinion polls conducted after the elections, in which an overwhelming majority of

Nigerians (over 80%) expressed confidence that the new president would be capable of fixing many of the country's problems.[65] For example, market-research group Taylor Nelson Sofres found in August 2015, after just 100 days of his being in power, that 86% of Nigerians were optimistic that the new president could solve the country's problems.[66] A similar survey, conducted by Buharimeter, a tracking mechanism launched by civil-society organisations, including the Centre for Democracy and Development, to monitor Buhari's performance in office against his campaign promises, found in July 2016 that 84% of Nigerians supported the president's anti-corruption approach.[67] In a similar vein, and remarkably consistent with the findings of this study, a survey conducted by NOIPolls, a Nigeria-based polling-services organisation, found in January 2016 that the greatest support for President Buhari came from the northern regions, with 82% in the north-eastern states and 80% in the north-west, while 71% came from the south-west, 29% from the south-east, 42% from the south-south region and 49% from north-central.[68]

Table 1 and Figure 2 also illustrate that the most active category of voters were those respondents who identified themselves as being employed, representing 77.93% or 872 respondents. Religion also seems to play a role in voting attitudes, as a significant number of respondents – 530 (or 77.71%) of those who identified with Islam and 596 (65.35%) of those who identified with Christianity – voted. Respondents in the 30+ age group also showed a high tendency to vote, with 76.17% of respondents in this category voting. In terms of gender, male respondents were more inclined to vote, with 595, or 73.55%. This is a higher proportion than their female counterparts, with only 67.67% of women voting. The lowest participation in the election was among respondents who said they were unemployed (53.89%), followed by those who belong to the age group 18–29 (64.31%). This seems to confirm that if people are unemployed, young and female, they are less likely to participate in the political processes.

Table 2: Reasons for not voting (Kano, Gombe and Yobe versus Abuja and Lagos)

Reasons for not voting	Kano, Gombe and Yobe	Abuja and Lagos
I did not think my vote would have had any impact	28	102
None of the political parties represented my opinion	96	7
I did not have time to register or to go to the polls	58	30
I do not recognise the political process	37	19
I do not trust politicians	7	39
Other	3	46
Total number of respondents who did not vote	**229**	**243**

To interrogate the results further, we analysed the responses of respondents who said they did not vote, to determine the reasons for not voting. Of the 1 607 respondents, 472 respondents, or nearly 30%, said they did not vote. As Table 2 demonstrates, there were more respondents from the south who did not vote (243 or 51.48%) than the north (229 or 48.52%). Most of those who did not vote from the south seemed to demonstrate characteristics of marginalised people. This was evident with the 102 respondents from Abuja and Lagos who did not vote because they felt that their vote would not make an impact. Table 2 and Figure 3 summarise the reasons for not voting given by respondents from the three northern states and the two southern cities.

Contrary to the south, where marginalisation seemed to have been a predominant reason for not voting, Table 2 and Figure 3 show that in the north, frustration, alienation and disenfranchisement seemed to have been the predominant reasons for not voting. This is demonstrated by the 96 respondents (41.92%) from Kano, Gombe and Yobe, who did not vote because of the feeling that none of the political parties represented their opnion. This is corroborated by the nonchalant attitude that some of the respondents (58) showed towards the election—not voting because they did not have time to register for the election or to go to the polls. This was complemented with a sizeable number of respondents (37 or 16.16%) who indicated that the reason for not voting was that they do not recognise the political process.

In a nutshell, frustration in the political process and disenfranchisement accounted for the primary reason for those who did not vote. Quantitatively, this represented the sum of those respondents who did not trust the political process (46), did not recognise the political process (56), did not think their vote would make an impact (130), and those who felt that none of the political parties represented their interest (103). This means that

Figure 3: Geographic trends in reasons for not voting
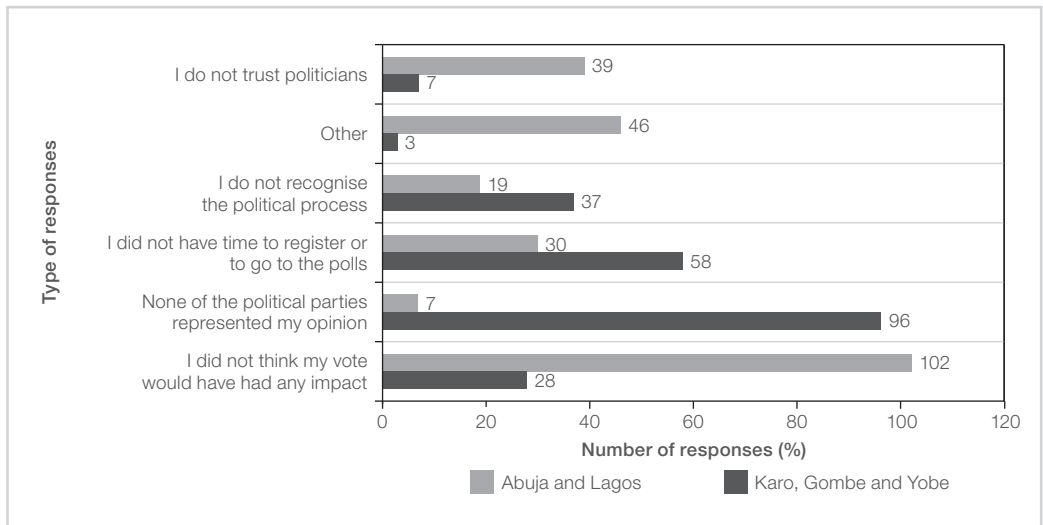
Figure 4: Reasons for not voting across categories of respondents (%)

		Kano, Gombe, Yobe	Abuja, Lagos	Muslim	Christian	Female	Male
	I did not think my vote would have had any impact	12	42	30	27	26	30
	None of the political parties represented my opinion	42	3	36	15	26	17
	I did not have time to register and to go to the polls	25	12	1	27	14	24
	I do not recognise the political process	16	8	24	6	14	9
	Other	1	19	7	12	12	9
	I do not trust politicians	3	16	2	14	9	11
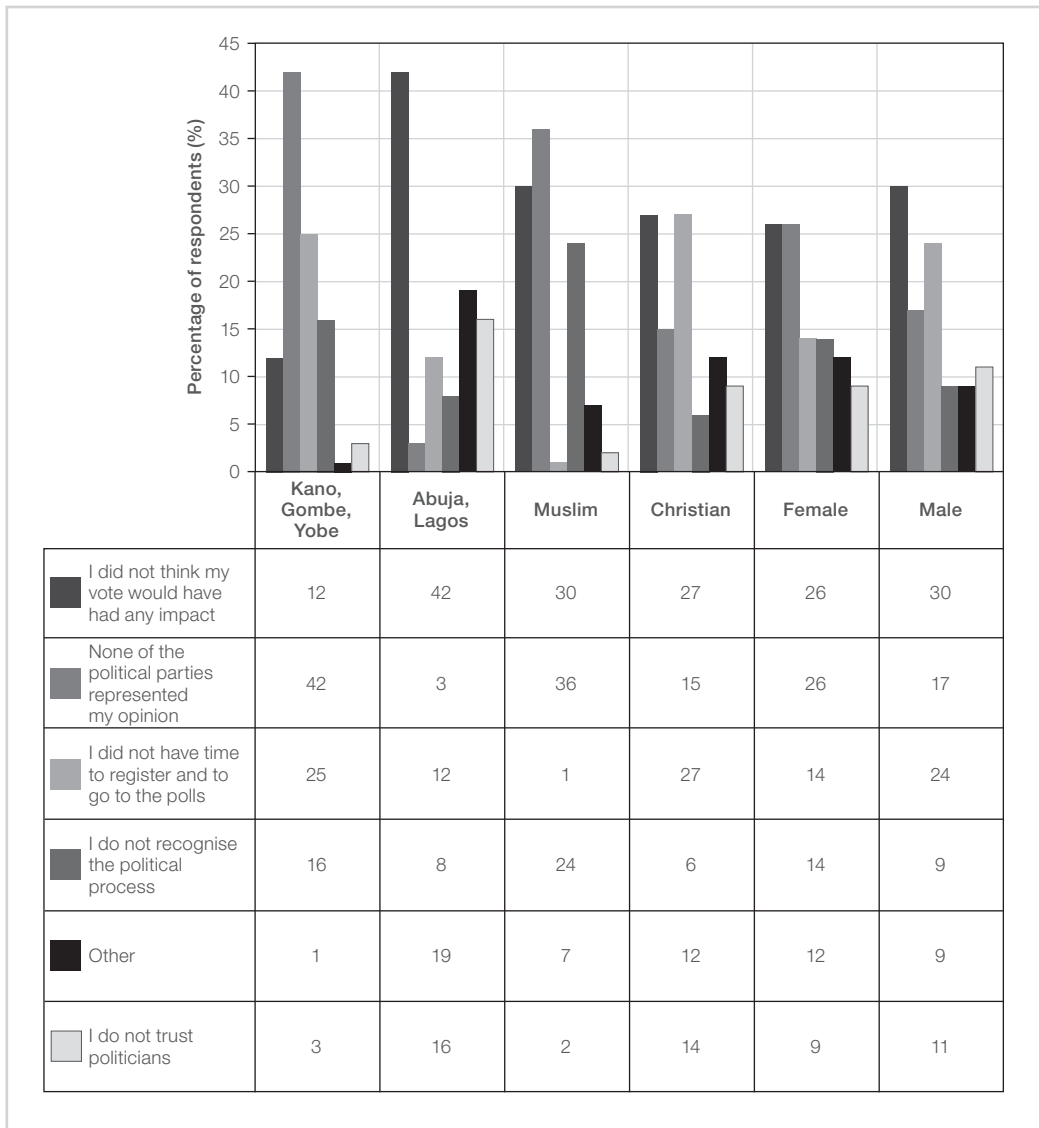
frustration and disenfranchisement were responsible for 335 respondents or 70.97% of the 472 respondents who did not vote. But this represented only 20.85% of the total number of respondents in the survey.

To interrogate these results in more details, the responses were broken down into the respondent categories. Figure 4 encapsulates visually the trends in reasons for not voting across the different categories of respondents.

Figure 4 seems to confirm some of the trends witnessed in Figure 3. Quite visible from the figure is the difference in perceptions between the north and the south. For the north, the majority (42%) did not vote because of the feeling that none of the political parties in the 2015 election represented their opinion, whereas for the south, the majority

(42%) did not vote because of the feeling that their vote would not have an impact. It is also evident from the figure that respondents who identified with Islam (Muslims) were more likely to not vote on the same reason as respondents from the north. Of the 152 respondents in the Muslim category, who did not vote (see Table 2), 36.18% said they it was because they not identify with any of the political parties, while 24%, or 36 of them, stated that they did not recognise the political process. Christians, on the other hand, were inclined not to vote on the basis that they did not think their vote would have an impact and because they did not have voters' cards. Female respondents showed a greater tendency not to vote because their vote would not make an impact and because none of the parties represented their opinion. Among their male counterparts, the main difference was the tendency not to vote because of lack of voters' cards. This means that for both sexes, voter apathy must have significantly influenced their decision not to vote.

The voting pattern in the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria does not provide a conclusive picture of the relationship between voting and violent extremism. Though it is likely that the high voting rate in the north could have been influenced by the prevalence of Boko Haram, a phenomenon that was blamed on the ineptitude of the Jonathan government, it could also mean that marginalisation and pervasive poverty may have instilled a desire for change among voters from the north, and the 2015 elections provided a platform to effect such a change.

The marginalisation thesis may find credence in the fact that the proportion of respondents who did not vote was highest among the unemployed, meaning that they were more disillusioned with the system and did not believe that their vote could change it. The marginalisation theory therefore does not fully explain the voting pattern in the 2015 election. The impact of violent extremism or terrorism on political participation depends on three main factors, namely:

- The extent to which people are intimidated and fear is widespread, which forces people to stay indoors –thereby affecting election turnout and outcome;

- The extent to which violent extremism or terrorist ideology mobilises people to boycott elections or vote in a certain pattern; and

- The extent to which violent extremism or terrorist attacks are perceived as a failure or ineptitude of government, which may mobilises people and generate an appetite for regime change.

This observation draws empirical strength from the 2015 presidential election – the only time in the political history of Nigeria that an opposition-party candidate has defeated an incumbent in open, democratic elections.[69] Coincidentally or not, these elections happened at a time that violent extremism was at its peak in Nigeria.

It was also not by chance that the loudest voices for change and the strongest support for Buhari came from the north – the epicentre of the country's violent extremism. Indeed, the anticipation that Buhari would win (and he had lost to Jonathan in the previous election in 2011) was so high that some opinion polls predicted a landslide victory for the northerner.[70]

This study also found that the major cause of political disenfranchisement was poverty or unemployment: the highest rate of people who did not vote were among respondents who said they were unemployed (46%), as opposed to 22% among those respondents who said they were employed.

Trust in leadership and political institutions

The main objective of this section is to measure the extent to which violent extremism, in this case Boko Haram's activities, affects people's trust in government. This debate is important because understanding the nature of trust in Nigeria's multicultural setting could help determine the strength and legitimacy of government institutions, as well as strengthen social capital, which is the ethical foundation and integrity of the state.

Trust[71] is a key indicator for the cohesiveness of the social contract between the people and their leaders or government.[72] It also provides a useful tool for measuring the performance of government or its leaders,[73] as well as the regime's legitimacy.[74] Fukuyama argues that trust is a precondition for the economic prosperity of nations. As he puts it, '[T]he level of trust inherent in a national culture can impact the economic development of a country …'[75]

Theoretical explanations view trust as one of the societal virtues that are essential for the stability of nations.[76] This is premised on the belief that when there is mutual trust between the people and their government, there is a high tendency for peace and stability.[77] Similarly, a lack of trust could signal disaffection in government institutions and political processes, which some scholars see as evidence of 'dissatisfaction with the performance of incumbent policymakers'.[78]

The literature review conducted for this study suggests that there is a causal link between trust in government and political stability, though the link is highly contested. Implicit in some empirical research is the axiom that the lower the level of trust in government, the higher the propensity for conflict,[79] terrorism and other forms of social violence.[80] Others found that the prevalence of violence diminishes levels of trust, fuelling a vicious cycle of conflict, terrorism and other forms of social contestation.[81] There is also 'a great deal of evidence linking the rise of violent extremism with a breakdown in state–society relations …'[82]

Blomberg, Hess and Tan found that terrorism destroys trust.[83] Whereas similar studies have observed that a lack of trust in government institutions is a potential driver of violent

Table 3: Level of trust in government and leaders

Institution	No. of respondents	Percentage score
President	561	35%
Religious leaders	414	26%
No trust	315	20%
Local government	118	7%
National Assembly	115	7%
Senate	84	5%
Total	1 607	100%

extremism,[84] others espouse the view that the fear of terrorism increases the propensity for trust in government.[85]

Respondents were asked to assess their trust in Nigeria's political and religious institutions and leaders, including the president, religious leaders, local government, the National Assembly and the Senate. Of the 1 607 respondents, 878 (55%) said they trust at least one of the institutions of government surveyed, namely, local government, National Assembly, Senate, as well as the president. A total of 729 (45%) of the respondents did not have trust in government. The majority of those who did not have trust in government, or 414 (57%), said they trusted religious leaders, and 315 (44%) said they did not have trust in any of the institutions or leaders. Table 3 and Figure 5 summarise how trust was distributed among the various institutions and leaders.

It is evident from the data that respondents were divided over the issue of trust in government. They allocated the president a level of trust that was far greater than that in any other institution. As Table 3 shows, 561 respondents, or 35% of those surveyed, said they trusted the president. And of the 878 respondents who indicated trust in government, nearly two-thirds trusted the president. For the other government institutions, local governments were given the highest level of trust, with 118, or 7.34% of the respondents, followed by the National Assembly, with 115 or 7.16% and the Senate, which was the

Figure 5: Trust in government and leaders
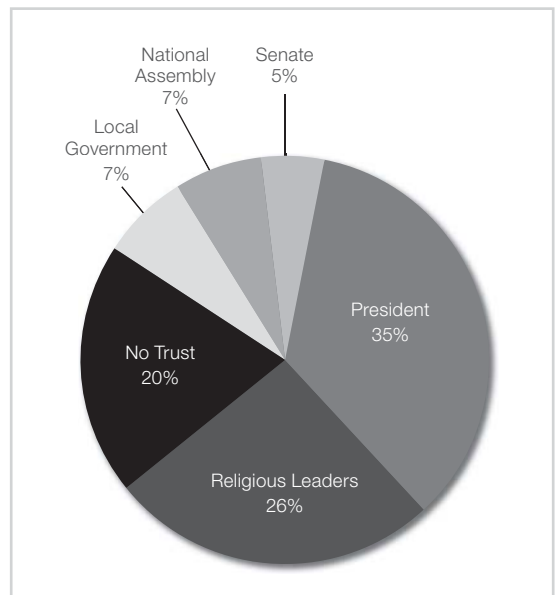
least trusted government institution, with 84 or 5.23% of the total respondents. Take away the president from the picture, and you are left with a mere 19% level of trust in government institutions.[86]

We interrogated the data on trust for the president to get a better understanding of the identity and background of those who put their trust in the president. Table 4 and Figure 6 provide a more detailed illustration of trust in the president by analysing the various categories of respondents. Respondents in the subgroups were asked to rank their trust in the president on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being the lowest level of trust and 5 being the highest). Table 4 and Figure 6 reflect the results.

Table 4: Trust in the president across categories of respondents

	Rank 3–5	Rank 1–2
Kano, Gombe and Yobe	788	144
Abuja, Lagos	402	273
Age 18–29	522	299
Age 30+	629	227
Muslim	544	138
Christian	598	314
All respondents	**1 151**	**456**

Figure 6: Trust in the president

	Kano, Gombe and Yobe	Abuja, Lagos	Age 18–29	Age 30+	Muslim	Christian	All Respondents
Rank 3–5	788	402	522	629	544	598	1 151
Rank 1–2	144	273	299	227	138	314	456

Table 4 and Figure 6 illustrate that more respondents from Kano, Gombe and Yobe ranked the president between 3 and 5, demonstrating a high level of trust in the president. This is evident in the 788 or 84.55% of the 932 respondents from the three nort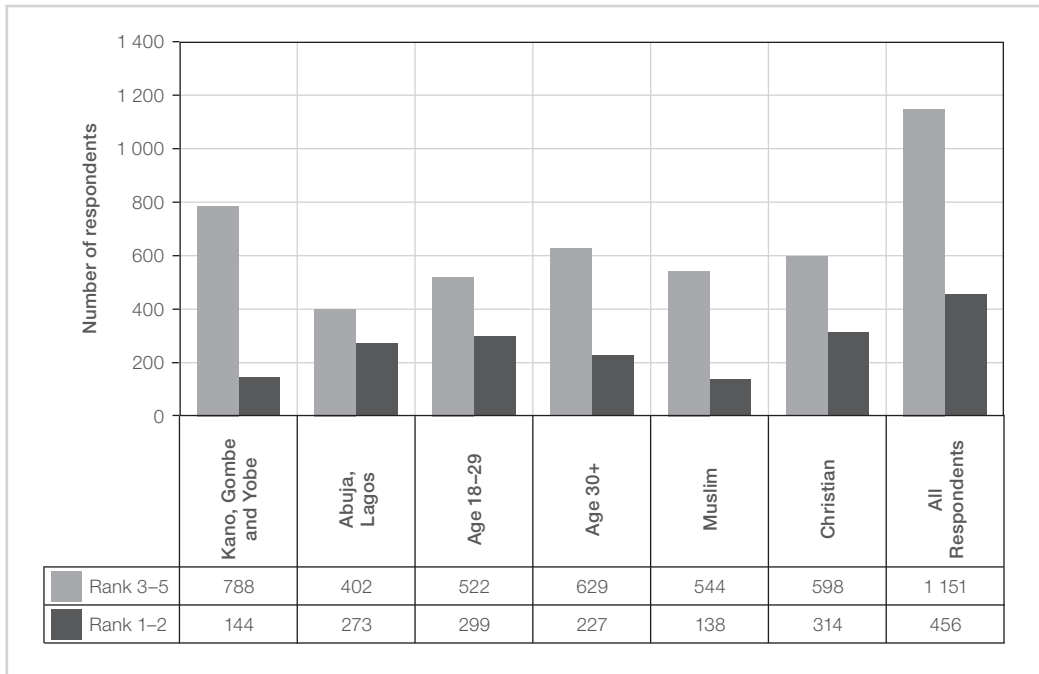hern states, who ranked the president between 3 and 5. Only 144 or 15.45% of the respondents from the region gave the president a lower ranking of 1 or 2. This high trust in the president from the north is consistent with the results of similar empirical researches. For example, a study conducted in the north by the Office of National Security Adviser (ONSA) of Nigeria found that, 68% of the valid responses saw and experienced government positively, and that 98% wanted support from government.[87]

Conversely, more respondents from Abuja and Lagos (273 or 40.44%) gave the lowest ranking for the president, while only 59.56% or 402 respondents ranked the president between 3 and 5. Though this is relatively lower if compared with the north, it however shows that the majority of respondents from the south trusted the president. Respondents who identified with Islam were the second most likely group to trust the president, scoring 80% of the 682 respondents in this category. Though Christians were also most likely to trust the president, with 598 (66%) of the

> Different categories of respondents seemed to trust different institutions

912 respondents in this category stating that they trust the president, there was also a significant distrust shown for the leader in this subgroup. The lowest level of trust for the president was recorded among respondents from Abuja and Lagos, where 40%, or 273 of the 675 respondents in this category, ranked the president at a below-average trust level. No significant differences were observed in the levels of trust recorded by the two age groups. Generally, trust in the president was very strong across the categories, and constituted one of the most consistent factors of the survey.

To understand the dynamics of trust, we analysed how trust was distributed among the other government institutions and leaders. The combined results are shown in Figure 7.

As Figure 7 shows, there were discrepancies in people's trust in government, as trust was not evenly distributed across institutions. Different categories of respondents seemed to trust different institutions. The figure, however demonstrates the consistency in the high trust for president across the different categories of respondents. It is notable that the highest support for the president came from Muslims or respondents who identified with Islam (45%). This was followed by participants from Abuja and Lagos with 39% and respondents in the age group 30+ with 37% of the respondents.

The least trust in the president came from respondents who identified with Christianity (27%), followed by respondents age 18–29 (32%) and respondents from the north (32%). This low rating of the president from the north may seem contradictory to the high trust for the president seen in Figure 6. But when Figures 6 and 7 are read together, the result is

Figure 7: Trust in government and leaders across categories of respondents (%)

	President	Religious Leaders	None	Local governments	National Assembly	Senate
Christian	27	28	24	8	8	6
Muslim	45	23	14	7	7	4
30+ years	37	26	19	6	7	5
18–29 years	32	26	20	9	8	5
Abuja, Lagos	39	25	33	2	0	1
Kano, Gombe, Yobe	32	26	10	11	12	9
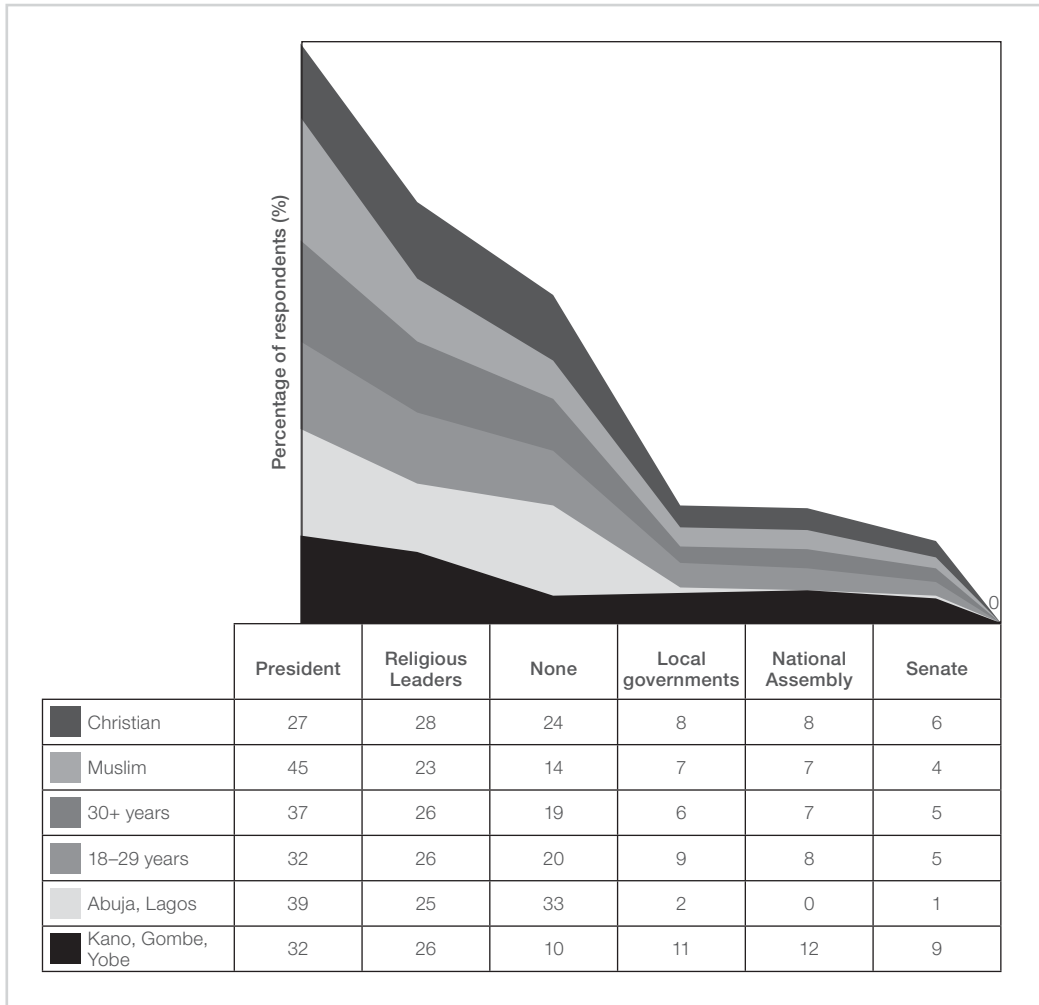
that trust in the north was more widely distributed than in the south. Though the president received the highest trust in Figure 7, when compared to other institutions, the total trust for the president was affected by the allocation of some trust to other institutions such as religious leaders (26%), local government (11%), National Assembly (12%) and the Senate (9%). The second most trusted institution was 'Religious leaders,' which received its highest trust from respondents who identified with Christianity (28%). Respondents from the northern states (26%), age 30+ (26%) and age 18–29 (26%) equally showed a strong tendency to trust religious leaders. Of the 729 respondents who did not trust the president, the majority (414, or 57%) said they did trust religious leaders. There was no significant differences in trust in religious leaders between northern and southern states, though the former showed slightly stronger inclination with 26% as opposed to 25% for the latter. Respondents from the north were also more likely to trust local government, National Assembly and the Senate than their counterparts from Abuja and Lagos.

Figure 8: Trust in President Buhari and local government
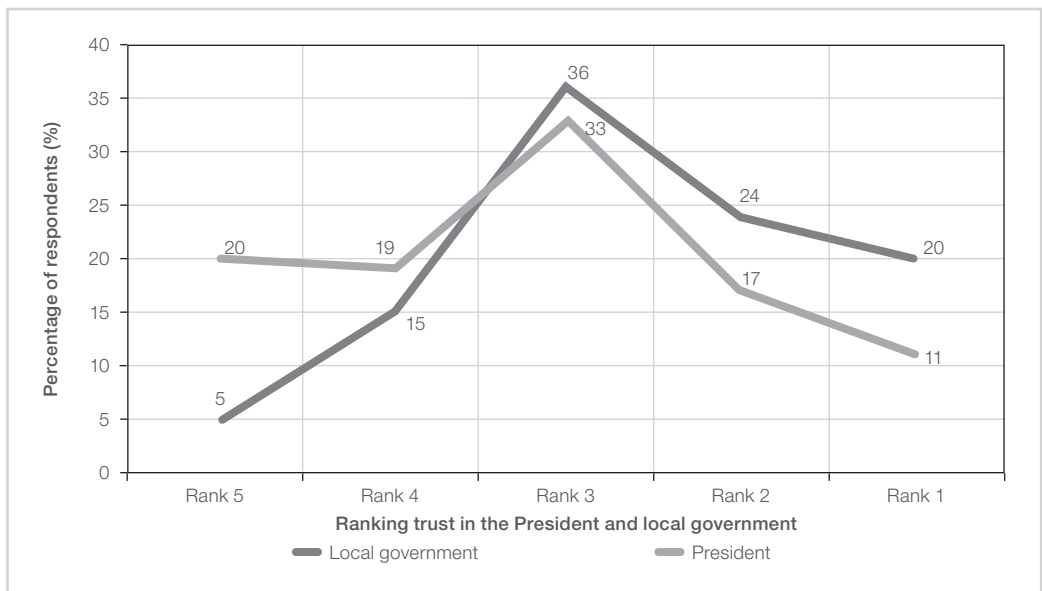
The lack of trust in the three government institutions, as Figure 7 shows, is consistent with the literature, in which poor governance in Nigeria has been highlighted as one of the causal factors for the rise of Boko Haram, to the extent that some analysts have described Nigeria as a 'failed state.'[88] Andrew Walker, for example, asserts that '[a] weakness in the institutions of politics and the security services has created a political situation where such threats [Boko Haram] to stability are not dealt with until violence is a certainty'.[89]

Similarly, Jacob Zenn, in his testimony to the US Congress in 2013, claimed that 'Boko Haram was also supported by Nigerian politicians'.[90] Even more worrying was when former president Goodluck Jonathan claimed that Boko Haram had successfully infiltrated the three arms of government – the executive, the legislature and the judiciary.[91] The arrest of a number of leading political figures, including Senator Mohammed Ali Ndume, and various allegations against northern governors in connection with their links to Boko Haram have provided further evidence of the unpopularity of Nigerian politicians in a country mired in corruption.

Figure 8 shows that as trust increases from 1 to 5 (right to left, with 1 indicating the lowest level trust, and 5 indicating the highest), so does the rating of the president against local government. The right-hand side of the graph illustrates Buhari's comfortable lead ahead of local government, with more respondents (19.66%) giving the president the highest ranking. More people also gave the president the second-highest ranking of 4 (18.86%, as opposed to 15.18% for local government). There were more people, however, who gave local government a ranking of 3 (35.53%, as opposed to 33.11%). This could be a mandate for the president to influence local government.

It is probable that the high level support for Buhari during and immediately after the election was influenced by a strong desire for change. The Jonathan administration was both blamed for the Boko Haram crisis and generally perceived to be incompetent in its handling of it, as well as other issues, such as the electricity shortage, a dwindling economy, widespread corruption and unemployment. The flagrant kidnapping of 276 schoolgirls from Chibok in April 2014, which attracted global condemnation, exposed what was perceived to be the ineptitude of the administration, and catalysed a sentiment for change.

If the new president fails to address the country's overarching social, economic and security problems, this support could rapidly evaporate. Indeed, after more than a year in power, with many of the issues that led to his election still present, opinion polls have begun to show diminishing support for the president. According to a NOIPolls report released in July 2016, 'President Buhari's approval rating for the month of June 2016 stood at 39% as against a very high rating of 80% in October 2015'.[92] This means that Buhari risks falling into the same predicament as his predecessor or facing even harsher consequences if the situation is not reversed. At the time of printing, the website *Buharimeter* (www.buharimeter.ng, accessed 28 January 2017) indicated that of the 222 Buhari's campaign promises, only two had been achieved, 55 were ongoing and 165 were still outstanding.

Our analysis of the responses to the citizen survey supports the finding that political participation in Nigeria is higher than expected. Disenfranchisement in the political system was not a pervasive sentiment among the respondents. Indeed, it only became visible when analysing the reasons for not voting.

Respondents from the north were more likely to show characteristics of disenfranchisement than their counterparts from the south. This means that the structural-violence hypothesis or the view that the marginalisation of the north constitutes one of the drivers of Boko Haram, may, in reality, only partly explain the root causes and drivers of Boko Haram. We observed that trust in government is mostly concentrated in the president, and that there is a deep distrust of federal institutions. Local governments still maintain some trust, but the political elites, especially senators and parliamentarians would need to do more to win back the considerable trust needed for their legitimacy and credibility.

Chapter 4

Who to call when in danger?

The relationship between ordinary citizens and the security forces is important in dealing with security challenges such as violent extremism. A poor relationship may also be a trigger for people to join criminal groups or find alternative means of security for their families, community or themselves.

The literature on violent extremism holds that police brutality and heinous human-rights abuses by security forces are among the drivers of radicalisation, leading certain people to turn to violent extremism. What this tells us is that certain individuals will take law into their own hands due to unjust and unproportionate law enforcement responses. In this context, people seem to equate impunity by law enforcement agencies to be as cruel as proscribed terrorist acts. Although there is no consensus among scholars about the historical narrative of Boko Haram, there is, however, a general agreement that excessive use of force applied by the security apparatus has played a critical role in the group's radicalisation process.[93] Indeed, Boko Haram gained significant sympathy between 2010 and 2012, when it demanded justice for the 'extrajudicial killing of its founding leader, Mohammed Yusuf.'[94] It is this desire for justice, to revenge what they see as impunity on the side of security forces that many analysts believed has radicalised many members of the group.[95]

This chapter seeks to evaluate the degree of faith people have in the security forces in Nigeria. This is particularly important in the context of the preponderance of current militaristic responses. Strong faith in the security apparatus would indicate people's approval; low faith signifies disaffection, raising issues of human rights and the rule of law. Low levels of faith in the security apparatus could significantly diminish the chances of success of government intervention programmes.

Faith in security forces

To determine the faith that citizens have in the security forces, respondents were asked who they would call when in danger. Respondents were given several choices, including the police, religious leaders, the military, community defence units, community members,

Figure 9: Who to call when in danger?
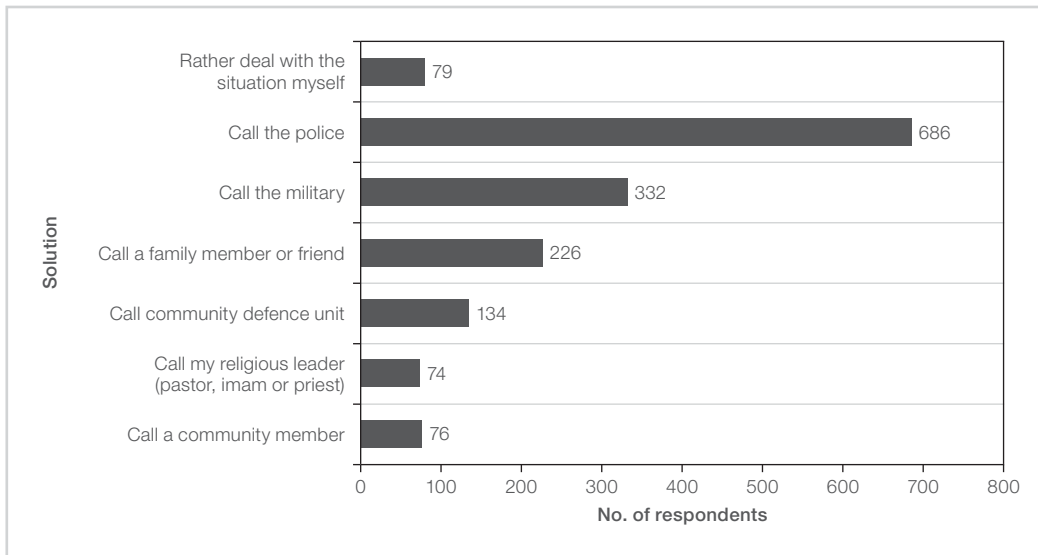
family members or friends, or whether they would deal with the situation themselves. A significant majority of the respondents said they would call the police. Of the 1 607 respondents, 686 (42.69%) indicated that they would call the police. Only 20.66% said they would call the military. This suggests that despite reports about corruption and human-rights abuses[96] in the police service, they are still considered to be trustworthy agents and closer to the people.

This high level of trust in the police did not corroborate the findings of a similar study conducted by Afrobarometer, which, in a survey conducted in 36 countries in 2014/2015, shows that trust in the police and the military were lowest in Nigeria, with 21% and 40%, respectively – way below the 51% average for the countries in the study.[97] Figure 9 summarises the responses to the question about who to call when in danger.

Figure 9 indicates that the majority of the respondents, 686 (42.69%), has more faith in the police than in any other institution or individual, when it comes to dealing with danger or an emergency. The military is the second most trusted security institution, with 332 (20.66%) of the respondents preferring to call the military when in danger. A considerable number of the participants (226, or 14.06%) said they would call family members or friends to deal with danger. When it comes to security, respondents did not show a significant tendency to call religious leaders or community members.

The strong level of trust shown in the police was not evenly shared by the different categories of respondents, however. Figure 10 shows the regional dynamics of trust in security institutions.

It is evident from Figure 10 that despite differences in perceptions, calling the police remained a popular decision in the two geographical regions, though respondents from

Figure 10: Geographical perceptions of trust in security institutions when in danger (%)
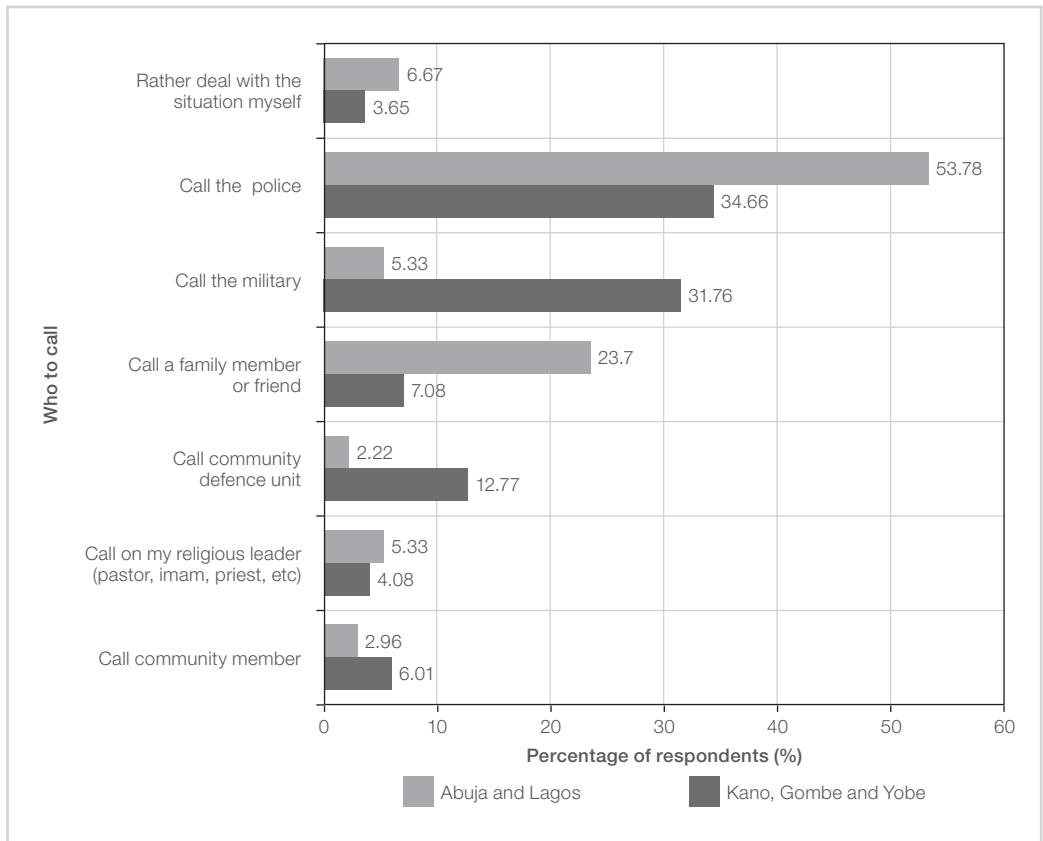
Abuja were much more likely to call the police than their northern citizens. Quantitatively, the survey indicated that respondents from Abuja and Lagos constituting 363 (53.78%), chose this option as to their counterparts from Kano, Gombe and Yobe, where 323 (34.66%) chose to call the police. However, when it comes to calling the military, respondents from Abuja and Lagos were much less inclined to do so, with only 5.33%, or 36 of the 675 respondents showing interest. This was in sharp contrast to respondents from Kano, Gombe and Yobe, where 296 (31.76%) of the 932 respondents, were likely to call the military.

These large discrepancies between the two regions may reflect their different regional realities. The military has a much stronger presence in the north, where it has been the first line of defence against Boko Haram. There, the police are believed to have failed to prevent the escalation of the group and have been linked to all sorts of corruption scandals. Especially damning to the police's image is the fact they have been accused of the extrajudicial killing of Mohammed Yusuf, the founding leader of Boko Haram, while in police custody.[98]

Respondents from Abuja and Lagos also showed a high tendency to call a family member or friend, with 23.70% of the respondents answering thus, as opposed to only

7.08% from the north. The two regions also showed different attitudes towards calling a community defence unit when in danger, with northerners expressing a greater likelihood of doing so, with 12.77%, as opposed to only 2.22% of respondents from the south. Again, here we see regional realities underscoring respondents' choices. The notion of a community defence unit is more entrenched in the north with the formation of vigilante groups, which have shown their worth in the fight against Boko Haram – particularly the highly regarded Civilian Joint Task Force, which is believed to have been instrumental in the fight against Boko Haram, especially as a partner to the security forces.[99] The preference for a community solution to a crisis is also confirmed by the higher proportion of the respondents from the three northern states who said they would prefer to call community members when in danger.

Other categories of respondents also demonstrated different characteristics in their faith in security institutions. Both male and female respondents exhibited similar tendencies to call the police when in danger. However, male respondents were significantly less likely to call on family or friends when in danger than their female counterparts. Female respondents were, however, slightly less likely to call the military than males: 22.50% of males indicated that they would call the military if faced with danger, compared with 18.80% of females. Although male respondents said they were more likely to deal with a dangerous situation themselves, the difference between the proportion of males who responded thus and that of females is small – 5.81% and 4.01%, respectively. Older respondents were significantly more likely to call the police than their younger counterparts.

Discrepancies in the perception of threats to security, seem to illuminate the north–south divide in Nigeria, and this could explain the emergence of groups such as Boko Haram. A historical understanding of the problem, in view of recurrent episodes of clashes between Muslims and Christians, and the undercurrents of radical Islamic tendencies (Salafism) entrenched in northern Nigeria during the holy war led by Usman Dan Fodio, seems to suggest that the thrust of the problem is one of cohabitation, rather than marginalisation. Radical forces may have exploited systemic fissures, such as poverty, to inflame differences. With the exception of the level of trust shown in President Buhari, the results of the study suggest deep distrust of the political system, especially federal institutions. Such conditions could fuel violent extremism and lend credence to accusations of bad governance and leadership failures in Nigeria. The high level of trust in and support for Buhari are only likely to prevail as long as he carries out his campaign promises. Though the president has not failed the people in his promise to crush Boko Haram, it cannot be said that he has accomplished his objective yet. Nonetheless, Boko Haram appears to have been significantly diminished, if one were to judge the group's strength by the fact it is unable to sustain the same level of intensity and attacks as witnessed in 2014 and 2015.

Chapter 5

Reasons for joining Boko Haram

Studies on countering violent extremism[100] are based on the assumption that each extremist organisation possesses unique attributes that shape the group's radicalisation and recruitment processes.[101] The motivations for violent extremism often include factors that are internal (i.e. within the individual); external (i.e. within the person's immediate environment); and international or global (i.e. trends caused by globalisation). These factors may be psychological, historical, political and socio-economic.[102] They may also include the nature of government responses to militants' activities.[103]

Studies on radicalisation in Kenya and Somalia, for example, found common trends among radicalised people who joined al-Shabaab and other terrorist organisations.[104] A study by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) on youth radicalisation in Africa found that this phenomenon has acquired colossal impetus as result of the rapid growth in access to information technology.[105]

It is important to note that violent extremism like terrorism, is about change, and those who participate in it believe that violence is an acceptable, or perhaps the only, means to bring about the changes they desire.[106] How individuals turn to violent extremism in a process referred to as 'radicalisation' is a topic of growing scholarly attention. According to Borum, '[r]adicalisation often starts with individuals who are frustrated with their lives, society or the foreign policy of their governments. A typical pattern is that these individuals meet other like-minded people, and together they go through a series of events and phases that ultimately can result in terrorism.'[107] It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss the drivers and processes of radicalisation,[108] as the focus here is to find out what motivates people to join Boko Haram. Generally, however, the literature on violent extremism posits that many of the people who join extremist groups have lost trust in politicians and the

> The motivations for violent extremism often include factors that are internal, external, and international or global

Table 5: Why people join Boko Haram

Reasons	Ranked 1	Ranked 2	Ranked 3
Peer pressure	27	31	55
Other	27	10	26
Family and ethnic pressure	30	59	44
For marriage	41	77	43
They are unhappy with the government	61	136	149
For status or prestige	79	109	47
They want to be feared	105	98	54
They want to achieve a religious aim	130	147	137
They lack education	157	182	198
They are unemployed and see Boko Haram as a job	171	236	152
They want to be respected	186	71	51
They want to belong to a group/movement (solidarity/brotherhood)	264	85	63
They want to make money	329	239	198

political system, and are frustrated by security forces, who are viewed as protectors of the regimes.[109] As a result, the personality or profile of a terrorist is often assumed to be a poor, uneducated and relatively deprived or isolated person.[110] New empirical studies have dismissed this profile and any attempt to give terrorists or those who join violent extremist groups a specific personality or identity. Shiraz Maher argues rightly that 'radicalisation is born of a multiplicity of factors which are often inextricably intertwined.[111]

Empirical evidence shows that governments' responses, particularly excessive use of force by the military and other security forces, often do more harm than good and fail to eliminate or prevent radicalisation.[112] An illustration of this can be seen in a quantitative study conducted by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. This reveals how the deliberate targeting of Boko Haram's leaders or networks through military intervention increased the likelihood of Boko Haram attacks.[113] According to the study, Boko Haram was more likely to carry out an attack in the period following a major military offensive against the group.[114]

This chapter presents the findings of the citizen survey and social-media analyses about what Nigerians believe are the reasons that people join Boko Haram. Understanding why people join violent extremist groups like Boko Haram is important to help provide insight into the root causes of extremism and the policy responses needed to address specific cases of violent extremism.

Citizens' perceptions of the reasons for joining Boko Haram

The citizen survey, supplemented by the social-media analyses conducted in this study, identified an interesting set of views on what motivates some Nigerians to join Boko Haram. These are summarised in Table 5 and Figure 11. As discussed below, these motivations or factors contributing to Boko Haram recruitment include monetary and personal benefits, economic and political marginalisation or disenfranchisement, education and religion.

Table 5 and Figure 11 show that the general perception among respondents was that people are motivated to join Boko Haram by financial reasons. This was substantiated by 500 respondents, representing 31.11% of the sample, who ranked financial-related reasons – 'They want to make money' and 'They are unemployed and see Boko Haram as a job' – as the top motivators for joining Boko Haram. In addition, 437 (27.19% of the

Figure 11: Trends in perceptions of why people join Boko Haram

	They want to make money	They want to belong to a group / movement	They want to be respected	They are unemployed and see Boko Haram as a job	They lack education	They want to achieve a religious aim	They want to be feared	For status / prestige	They are unhappy with the government	For marriage	Family and ethnic pressure	Other	Peer Pressure
Ranked 1	329	264	186	171	157	130	105	79	61	41	30	27	27
Ranked 2	239	85	71	236	182	147	98	109	136	77	59	10	31
Ranked 3	198	63	51	152	198	137	54	47	149	43	44	26	55

Table 6: Perceptions of reasons for joining Boko Haram, presented geographically

Reasons	Kano, Gombe and Yobe	Abuja and Lagos
Peer pressure	17	10
Other	8	19
Family and ethnic pressure	29	1
For marriage	35	6
They are unhappy with the government	32	29
For status or prestige	62	17
They want to be feared	67	38
They want to achieve a religious aim	79	51
They lack education	62	95
They are unemployed and see Boko Haram as a job	80	91
They want to be respected	144	42
They want to belong to a group or movement (solidarity/brotherhood)	177	87
They want to make money	140	189
Total	**932**	**675**

respondents) ranked 'They want to make money' second (239) and third (198); and 388 respondents ranked 'They are unemployed and see Boko Haram as a job,' second (236) and third (152). This means that, in total, 1 059, or 65.89% of the 1 607 respondents, said financial reasons were associated with the decision to join Boko Haram.

A significant number of respondents, or 264 (16.43%), said the primary motivator was that 'They want to belong to a group or movement'. A substantial number (537, representing 33.41%) associated the decision to join Boko Haram with lack of education, with 157 ranking it first and 182 and 198 ranking it second and third, respectively. Peer pressure was the smallest perceived factor influencing people's decision to join Boko Haram.

Overall, the perception among the citizens interviewed is that financial motivations and associated lack of education are the most prominent reasons why individuals are susceptible to Boko Haram's recruitment efforts.

It is important to note, however, that respondents' perceptions of why people join Boko Haram differed geographically – between the northern states (Kano, Gombe and Yobe), and Abuja and Lagos. Respondents in the north were significantly more likely to attribute membership to 'a need to belong to a group or movement' and to achieve a form of respect than those in the south. This is in contrast to the views of respondents in Abuja

Figure 12: Perceptions of reasons for joining Boko Haram, presented geographically

	They want to make money	They want to belong to a group / movement	They want to be respected	They are unemployed and see Boko Haram as a job	They lack education	They want to achieve a religious aim	They want to be feared	For status / prestige	They are unhappy with the government	For marriage	Family and ethnic pressure	Other	Peer Pressure
Kano, Gombe and Yobe	140	177	144	80	62	79	67	62	32	35	29	8	17
Abuja and Lagos	189	87	42	91	95	51	38	17	29	6	1	19	10

and Lagos, who were more likely to believe that a need to make money, unemployment and poor education were the primary factors influencing membership. Table 6 and Figure 12 below summarise the regional distribution of perceptions as to why people join Boko Haram.

As seen in Table 6 and Figure 12, the regional perceptions of the reasons for joining Boko Haram reflect the general perception and trends. Figure 12 illustrates that respondents were more inclined to consider financial conditions as having a major influence on people's decision to join the group. Respondents from Abuja and Lagos showed a greater tendency to consider financial conditions as reasons for membership. A total of 280 (41.48%) of the 675 respondents from the two cities indicated that 'They want to make money' (189) and 'They are unemployed and see Boko Haram as a job' (91) as principal reasons for people to join. Respondents from the northern area showed similar tendencies, with a total of 220 (23.61%) of the 932 respondents.

Northern respondents, however, were significantly more likely to consider personal and identity issues as push factors for people joining Boko Haram. A total of 531 (56.97%) of

the respondents from this region cited issues related identity, personal dignity and social interactions as factors underpinning decisions for joining Boko Haram. As Table 6 and Figure 12 illustrate, these issues include the desire to belong to a group or movement (177, or 18.99%); 'They want to be respected' (144, or 15.45%); 'They want to be feared' (67, or 7.19%); 'For status or prestige' (62 or 6.65%) and 'For marriage' (35 or 3.76%). Respondents from Abuja and Lagos were much more inclined to cite 'lack of education' as a reason.

The most prominent factors that respondents attributed to an individual's decision to join Boko Haram are discussed in the following subsections.

The need to belong and be respected

The human-needs theory has been used to explain the causes of ethnic conflicts in Africa. This theory posits that people turn to conflict or violence because of certain unmet fundamental needs to ensure their survival.[115] The need to belong and the need to be respected have become key sociological factors among youths, who are in search of a cause, heroism and justice. Such needs may arise as a result of deprivation or identity crisis, or both. Terrorist groups, such as Boko Haram, seem to provide a platform for such youths.

As stated earlier, we observed that respondents in the northern states were more likely to attribute membership to a personal need to belong to a group and a desire to be respected. Of the 1 607 respondents, 1 312 (81.6%) attributed membership to personal reasons as follows: a need to belong (27.3%); need to be respected (20.5%); need to be feared (17.5%); or for status or prestige (16.1%). Being closer as they are to the area most affected by Boko Haram's activities, that these respondents refer to personal circumstances provides valuable insights into the psyche of people in the north. The cognitive need to belong serves as a very powerful emotional association between the individual and the outside world. When an individual realises that being part of a collective brings with it respect, responsibility and a sense of being part of something or a purpose, a powerful association is established between the individual and the organisation.

Influence of family status on the decision to join Boko Haram

This discussion introduces another important element in understanding what makes people join Boko Haram, namely views about vulnerability to being recruited and how this relates to family status. The majority of respondents perceived that vulnerability has nothing to do with family circumstances, although those who are single and without children are considered to be more vulnerable than those who are married and with families. People who have grown up without a parent are classified as more vulnerable than those who grew up with one or both parents. Figure 13 summarises respondents' views of family status and vulnerability as influencing factors in joining Boko Haram.

Figure 13: Perception of the role of family status in joining Boko Haram
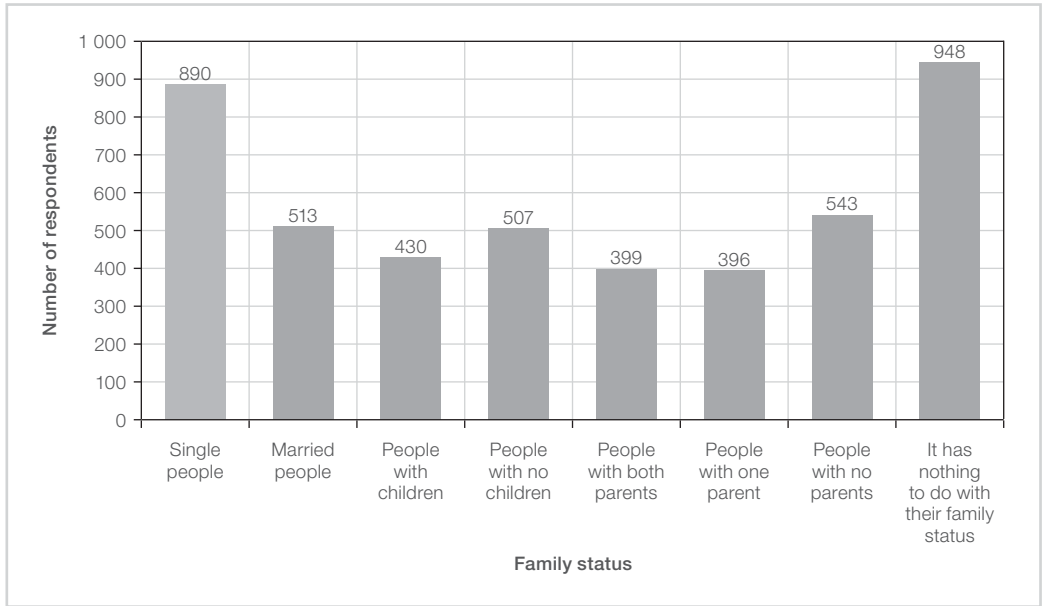
Figure 13 shows how respondents reacted to the question, 'Does individual family status affect vulnerability to Boko Haram's recruitment: Who is most likely to join Boko Haram?' The majority of the respondents (948 or 58.99%) did not believe that family status play a role in people's inclination to join Boko Haram. This seems to contradict the literature review. Indeed, similar empirical research conducted by RAND Corporation found that parental influence was significant on youth's decision to reject violent extremism and

Figure 14: Geographic perspectives of family status and membership of Boko Haram
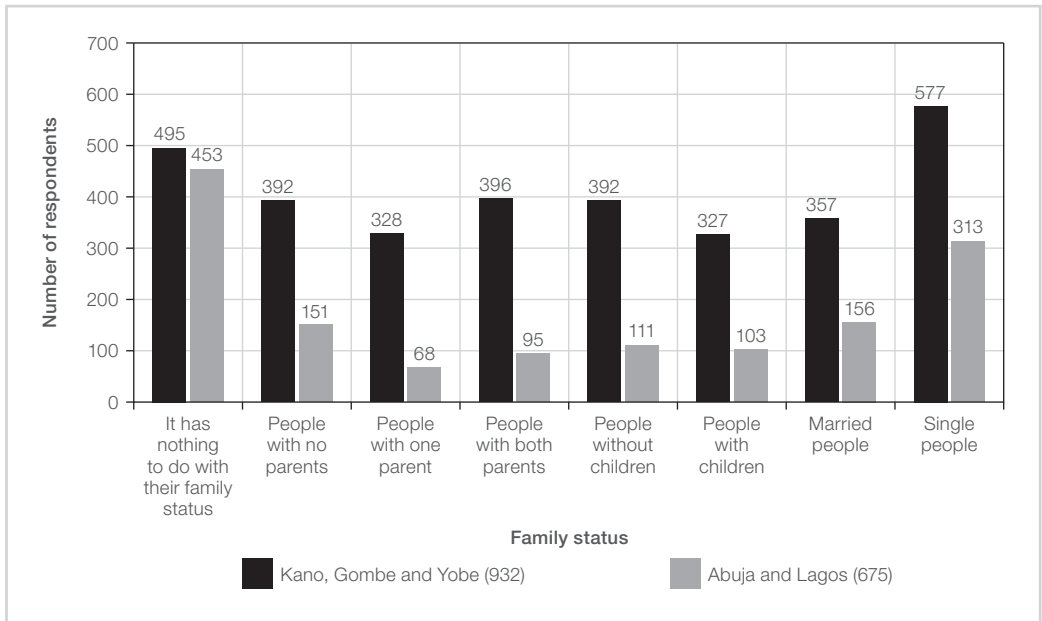
that family plays a greater role in shaping attitudes towards nonviolence.[116] On the other hand, a considerable number of the respondents (890, or 55.38%) did believe that family status plays a role and that individuals who were single or not married were more likely to join Boko Haram than others. This perception reinforces the view that participation in terrorism or violent extremism may be a form of de-alienation, or what Sarah Lyons-Padilla et al call the 'quest for significance' – a sense that people seek purpose and meaning in their lives, often referred to as the youth syndrome.[117]

Figure 14 reveals discrepancies in regional perceptions of the role that family status plays in influencing individuals to join Boko Haram. On this issue, the north outnumbered the south in every category.

Northern respondents showed a higher propensity to consider individuals who are single or not married as being most vulnerable to Boko Haram's recruitment. This was evident with 577 (61.99%) of the respondents, who said so. The finding here is logically consistent with the results of the ONSA study in northern Nigeria, which found that the family, particularly the parents play an important role in the northern society as they are the primary institution for enforcing core societal values of justice (*adalci*), respect (*grima, mutunchi*), endurance, toughness, patience and self-restraint, necessary for child upbringing.[118] The study also found that a father's injustice toward his child is also a source of radicalisation; and that youth who migrate from rural to urban cities without their families, where they are forced to fend for themselves are more likely to join violent extremist groups.[119]

The north and the south were almost of the same opinion, however (495 as opposed to 453), that family status contributed very little to decisions to join Boko Haram, which is consistent with the observed general trend. Also apparent is the north's greater perception that recruitment is more likely with people without children (392, or 42%); people with both parents (396, or 42.49%); people with no parents (392, or 42%); and individuals who only had one parent present (328, or 35.1%). In contrast, the majority of respondents from Abuja and Lagos (453, or 67.1%) did not see any correlation between family status and vulnerability to recruitment. Nevertheless, there is a significant number of respondents (313, or 46.37%) from Abuja and Lagos who did perceive a correlation between family status and vulnerability. Those respondents were more inclined to belief that people who are single or not married were more at risk of recruitment.

Where and how people are introduced to Boko Haram

Understanding where recruitment takes place and methods of recruitment, and where terrorist propaganda is spread is key to containing violent extremism. Figure 15 shows the general trend in perceptions of where and how people are introduced to Boko Haram:

UNDERSTANDING NIGERIAN CITIZENS' PERSPECTIVES ON BOKO HARAM

Figure 15: How and where are people introduced to Boko Haram? (%)

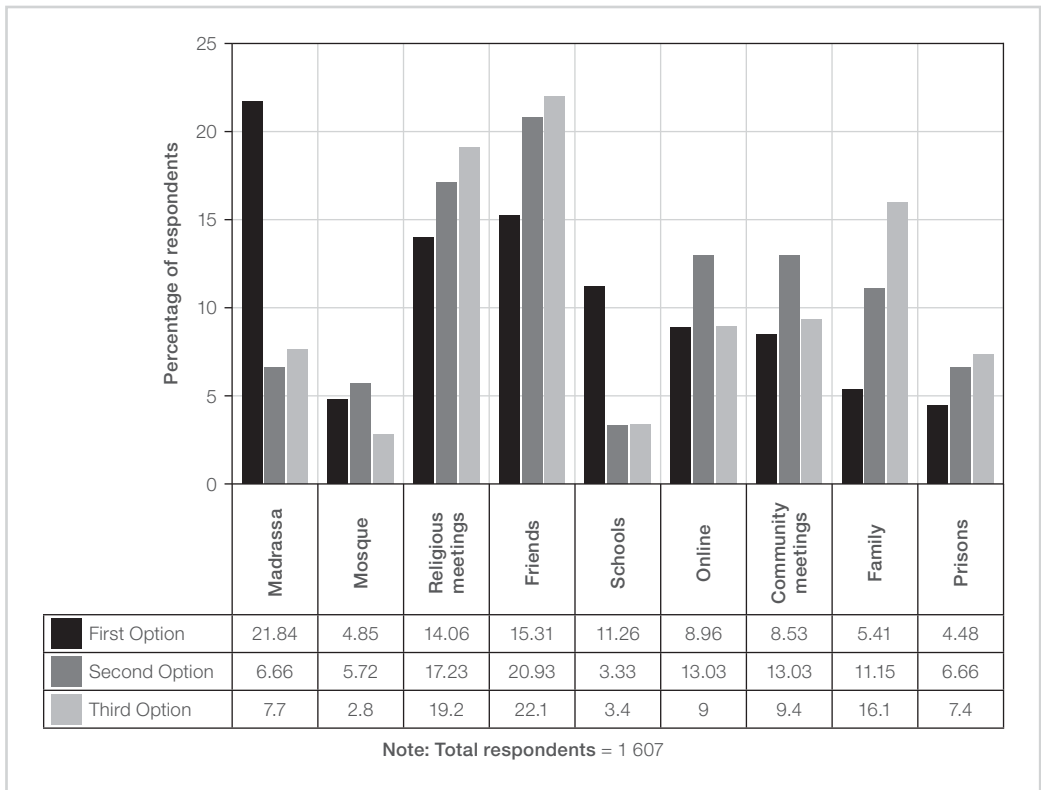|	Madrassa	Mosque	Religious meetings	Friends	Schools	Online	Community meetings	Family	Prisons
First Option	21.84	4.85	14.06	15.31	11.26	8.96	8.53	5.41	4.48
Second Option	6.66	5.72	17.23	20.93	3.33	13.03	13.03	11.15	6.66
Third Option	7.7	2.8	19.2	22.1	3.4	9	9.4	16.1	7.4

Note: Total respondents = 1 607

Figure 15 shows that although a significant number of respondents (351, or 21.84%) ranked madrassas (community schools) first as the institution or social environment where people are introduced to Boko Haram, the general trend among respondents was that people were most likely to be introduced to Boko Haram through friends and at religious meetings. This was evident in the 246 respondents (15.31%) who ranked friends first, and the 336 (20.93%) and 355 (22.1%) who ranked friends second and third, respectively. This was closely followed by religious meetings – ranked first by 226, or 14.06% of respondents, with a further 277 (17.23%) and 309 (19.2%), ranking this method or environment second and third, respectively.

The main finding here is that Boko Haram is exploiting traditional social networks for its recruitment. Online recruitment through social media is not as strong (though significant) as with other terrorist groups, such as ISIS.[120] The responses also suggest that peer pressure may have more impact on the decision to join Boko Haram. The important role friends play in introducing individuals to an extremist organisation cannot be overstated, because joining such organisations with friends strengthens social networks and group cohesion. In other words, being 'in it together' enhances the sense of belonging, thus mitigating feelings of alienation. Sociological analyses show that the influence of friends increases during early adolescence, at the time when a person becomes politically more conscious.

Table 7: How and where people are introduced to Boko Haram (selected categories of respondents)

	Kano, Gombe and Yobe	Abuja and Lagos	Islam	Christianity
Madrassas	17.60%	27.70%	15.40%	26.86%
Through a network of friends	14.91%	15.85%	17.89%	13.38%
Tribal or religious meetings	20.17%	5.63%	15.10%	13.27%
Schools	10.41%	12.44%	11.14%	11.51%
Online (social media)	6.97%	11.70%	7.48%	9.76%
Community meetings	7.19%	10.37%	8.94%	8.22%
Through family members	8.15%	1.63%	6.30%	4.61%
Other	5.47%	5.04%	8.21%	3.18%
Mosques	4.29%	5.63%	3.23%	6.03%
Prisons	4.83%	4.00%	6.30%	3.18%
Total respondents	932	675	682	912

Figure 16: How and where are people introduced to Boko Haram? (region and religion, %)
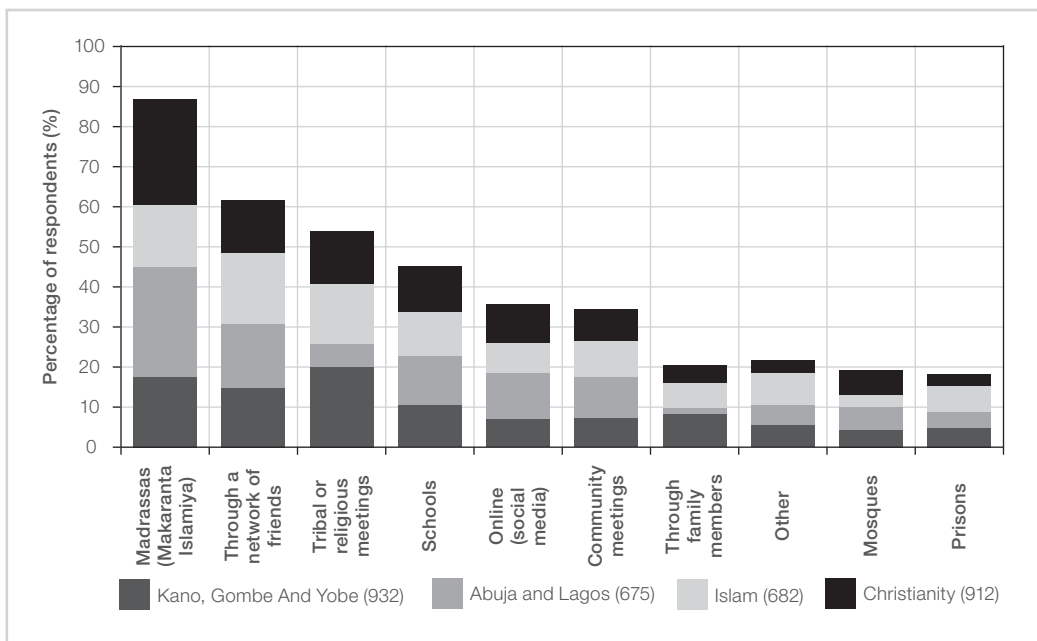
This is corroborated by empirical studies on violent extremism, which confirm that young adults are particularly vulnerable to the opinions of their peers.[121] As a result, peer pressure is one of the most popular recruitment factors for violent extremist groups like Boko Haram.

Table 7 and Figure 16 summarise the perceptions of where and how people are introduced to Boko Haram, subdivided by region and the religious orientation of respondents.

Although, overall, among the respondents, madrassas were not strongly perceived as the primary place where people are introduced to Boko Haram (see Figure 15), they were strongly perceived as such by respondents from Abuja and Lagos, as well as by those who identified with Christianity. This is evident in Figure 16, which shows that 27.70%, or 187 of the 675 respondents from Abuja and Lagos indicated that people are commonly introduced to Boko Haram at madrassas. This opinion is in contrast with only 17.60%, or 164 of the 932 respondents from Kano, Gombe and Yobe who shared this view.

The same disparities were observed along religious lines. Respondents who identified with Christianity were more inclined to see Madrassas as an influential environment for introducing people to Boko Haram, with 26.86%, or 245 of the 912 respondents in this category. This opinion was not as strong with respondents who identified with Islam, representing just 15.40% or 105 of the 682 respondents in this category.

> Madrassas were not strongly perceived as the primary place where people are introduced to Boko Haram

Interestingly, the north was more inclined to see tribal or religious meetings as a place where people were likely to be introduced to Boko Haram. This was the perception of 20.17%, or 188 of the 932 respondents from the north, as opposed to only 5.63% or 38 of the 675 respondents from Abuja and Lagos. Figure 16 also illustrates a strong perception of networks of friends as a source of Boko Haram propaganda. This was one of the areas of the survey where regional and religious differences were not conspicuous.

The literature supports the observation that kinship, particularly loyalty along ethnic lines, is a strong factor for terrorist recruitment.[122] In the case of Boko Haram, one can observe among their ranks the dominance of certain ethnic groups, such as the Kanuri, Fulani and Hausa, suggesting that kinship loyalty could be an important factor for joining Boko Haram.[123] A BBC report, for example, claimed that Boko Haram 'draws its fighters mainly from the Kanuri ethnic group, which is the largest in the three states [Borno, Yobe and Adamawa]'.[124] The Kanuri factor is further underscored by the fact that since its founding in 2002, Boko Haram has been led by Kanuris – from Mohammed Yusuf, the founding leader, to Shekau, the current leader, and several other Kanuri commanders. Baca notes that the predominance of Kanuris in Boko Haram has been strengthened through '[t]he use of existing adherents' social networks to facilitate recruitment efforts …'.[125]

Ethnic kinship has also been a conduit for Boko Haram's expansion into Cameroon, Chad and Niger. This is evident in the areas, where Boko Haram is active in Cameroon, Chad and Niger, which have significant Kanuri populations.[126]

Another remarkable observation from the responses is that there is little radicalisation occurring in prisons and mosques, reading from their consistent low scoring in this survey. The trend in schools and online social media as recruitment environments, however, seems to be growing and is a source of concern.

The influence of financial incentive on joining Boko Haram

Is personal economic gain a reason for participating in violent extremism? Put another way, to what extent are people who desperately need money, either because of poverty or unemployment, vulnerable to terrorist recruitment? Several studies have examined the causal link between poverty and terrorism or violent extremism.

For example, in their empirical enquiry, Krueger and Malečková, using Hezbollah and Palestinian Liberation Organization members as case studies, observed that economic and educational backgrounds of people who joined these groups were lesser considerations in terms of their decision to participate in terrorism.[127] They concluded that '[e]nough evidence has accumulated that it is fruitful to conjecture why participation in terrorism and political violence is apparently unrelated, or even positively related, to individuals' income and education'.[128] This is corroborated by other empirical studies, which have come to the same conclusion – that poverty and terrorism are not directly linked.[129]

More specific studies on Boko Haram, however, present a contrary view, arguing that socio-economic factors are among the drivers of radicalisation. Akinola takes a more inclusive approach, explaining the rise of Boko Haram from a complex interaction of politics, poverty and Islamic fundamentalism, while stressing the catalytic role of mass poverty in Nigeria.[130]

In *Boko Haram: The socio-economic drivers*, David, Asuelime and Onapajo contend that 'socio-economic indices, such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, economic underdevelopment, low education, inter alia, underlie the emergence and persistence of Boko Haram terrorism'.[131] Concurring with this view, Gheddo says, 'The lack of opportunities has led many young people to join those who offer a revolution in the name of the "faith in the true Islam", which comes with regular financial benefits.'[132] This is corroborated by Suleiman and Karim, who argue that continued high levels of 'poverty, illiteracy and unemployment among average Nigerians have created the perfect arena for breeding violent militancy in Nigeria,'[133] or what Rotberg calls the 'tasting menu' for political terrorists.[134]
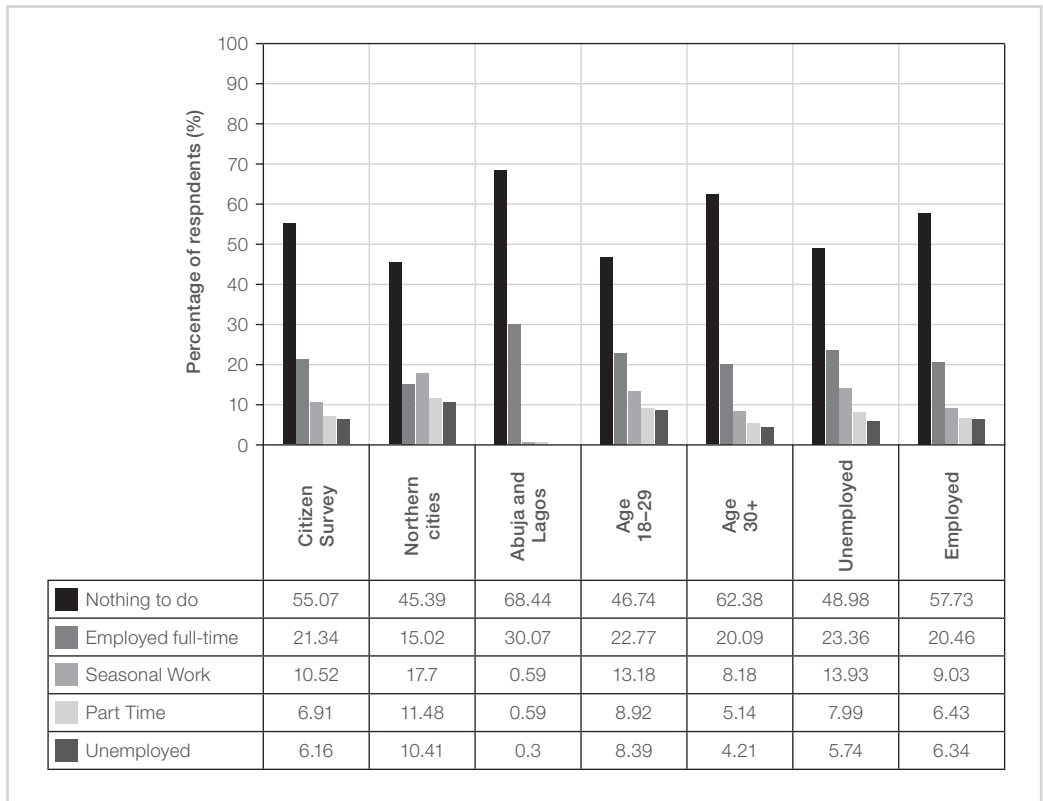
The role of poverty is also illuminated by the testimonies of certain Boko Haram members, who confessed that they were paid for attacks that they carried out. For example, seven Boko Haram members admitted they were paid 7 000 naira (US$42) to blow up a church

in Biu, Borno State, in June 2012.[135] Media reports contain numerous instances of Boko Haram's strategic use of economic circumstances to lure potential recruits. For example, the group is known to offer loans to youths as a bait for membership.[136] Members are also known to have benefited from motorbikes and small-scale businesses. The group has offered cellphones and airtime free of charge to potential recruits, while Christian recruits are reported to earn US$400 a month.[137] Gheddo says that recruits in Cameroon could earn 'up to 180 000 CFA francs' (US$400).[138]

The citizen survey sought to assess the role that poverty plays in people's decision to join Boko Haram. This was done by framing the question in terms of monetary benefit, which in this context refers to an income-generating event or activity that results in monetary or financial reward. Respondents were asked the question, 'Of the following, who, in your opinion is most likely to join Boko Haram—people with fulltime employment, people with seasonal employment, people with part time employment or people with no employment?' Figure 17 summarises the responses.

Figure 17 illustrates that a significant majority (55.07% or 885 of the 1 607 respondents) felt that there was no correlation between the need for employment and people's decision

Figure 17: The influence of employment in the decision to join Boko Haram (percentage of responses)

	Citizen Survey	Northern cities	Abuja and Lagos	Age 18–29	Age 30+	Unemployed	Employed
■ Nothing to do	55.07	45.39	68.44	46.74	62.38	48.98	57.73
■ Employed full-time	21.34	15.02	30.07	22.77	20.09	23.36	20.46
■ Seasonal Work	10.52	17.7	0.59	13.18	8.18	13.93	9.03
■ Part Time	6.91	11.48	0.59	8.92	5.14	7.99	6.43
■ Unemployed	6.16	10.41	0.3	8.39	4.21	5.74	6.34

to join Boko Haram. The responses of the respondents here seem contradict the findings presented earlier in this study in Table 5 and Figure 11, which show that, when asked, 'In your opinion why do people join Boko Haram?' a majority or 500 (31.11%) of the respondents indicated that people who joined Boko Haram do so because they want to make money. This was furthered confirmed by regional trends (see Table 6 and Figure 12), though respondents from Abuja and Lagos were more likely to see financial benefits as a reason. The denial of the existence of a correlation between the decision to join Boko Haram and the employment status of those who join, by more than 55% of the respondents, in figure 17 is quite unique and runs contrary to the finding of similar studies. For example, a study conducted by the CLEEN Foundation in 2014, found that 72% of the respondents identified unemployment and poverty among youths as a driver of Boko Haram's violent extremism.[139] What Figure 17 may be telling us is that employment per se (as in getting a job in a company) is not a popular reason but rather that individuals may accept cash payment or other forms of financial benefits from Boko Haram. Indeed, employment has not been an overarching issue in the decision of people joining violent extremist groups. A small study conducted by the Combating Terrorism Centre (CTC), in which 15 former members of al Shabaab were surveyed in 2012, found that only 5 or 33.33% of the respondents joined the group because of employment or because al Shabaab paid between $50 and $150 per month for salaries.[140] The study found that the most popular reason cited was earning a reputation (hero, be feared and respected).[141]

Figure 17 also shows that only 21.34% (343 of the respondents) believed that people with full-time employment were also likely to join Boko Haram. This seems to support the view that people's decision to join the group has little to do with their financial status. The most interesting finding was the low percentage attributed to unemployed people being likely to joining Boko Haram. Only 6.16% (99 of the respondents) perceived the unemployed as being likely to join Boko Haram, which was similar the number of responses for people who are employed part-time.

The results shown in Figure 17 reflect a general and consistent perception across the different categories of respondents: the consistently high blue columns show the general impression that employment status was not a decisive factor in becoming a member of the group. The two regions in the study shared this view, though respondents from Abuja and Lagos showed a higher tendency to reject employment as having an influence on the decision to join Boko Haram. This is evident in the significant majority (68.44% or 462) among the respondents from Abuja and Lagos, compared to 45.39% (or 423) of their counterparts from the north.

Respondents from Lagos and Abuja were also more likely (30.07%) to believe, than respondents from the north (15.02%), that people with full-time employment were likely to join Boko Haram. Even the unemployed respondents did not believe that their

employment status made them more vulnerable to recruitment. Instead, a significant number, 23.36% or 114 of the 488 unemployed respondents, felt that people with full-time employment were more likely to join Boko Haram.

Comparing the results of the two age groups surveyed, those age 30+ were more likely to see no correlation between the decision to join Boko Haram and the employment status of individuals. This was evident in the 534 (62.38%) of the 856 respondents in this category, who said employment status has nothing to do with people's decision to join Boko Haram. Although it was equally a popular choice for respondents age 18-29, however, only 351 (46.74%) of the 751 respondents in this category. When the perceptions of unemployed respondents were compared with those who were employed at the time of the survey, employed respondents (57.7%) were significantly more likely to believe that unemployment has nothing to do with the decision to join Boko Haram than unemployed respondents (48.9%).

The literature review supports the notion that people between the ages of 15 and 30, who are still trying to establish their own identities, are considered to be particularly vulnerable.[142] Being young and impulsive means being easily influenced, because they are not yet secure and confident in themselves and their beliefs and convictions. And it is during this period in life, when young people still need to impress their peers and to 'fit in', that they are vulnerable to outside influences. In addition, young people are seen as lacking in critical thinking skills, in the sense that they do not think their actions through, but are more prone to impulsive reactions, especially if they hope to experience some adventure and excitement.

> People between the ages of 15 and 30 are considered to be particularly vulnerable

In contrast, at the age of 35 to 40, most people would have found their purpose in life and established themselves with a career and family; they know who they are, have lived through many different life experiences and appreciate the value of peace, wanting to protect their way of life. Similar research has blamed poor child upbringing for vulnerability among the young to Boko Haram recruitment.[143] A recent survey by Nigeria's Vanguard Media found that young people with a poor upbringing, particularly those from extremely poor families, or with little education or those who have been separated from their parents either because of death or social factors, are easily lured into the group by financial offers or indoctrination.[144]

It is interesting that the overall perception among respondents corresponds with similar studies, which found no correlation between economic circumstances and vulnerability to radicalisation.[145] For example, Mercy Corps, an international development organisation, found that '[t]here is no demographic profile of a Boko Haram member. Members we

spoke to came from diverse backgrounds. Some had jobs, and others did not. Some had attended secular school, others Islamic school, and others had dropped out.'[146]

Nonetheless, some of the responses given by respondents from the north and by those between the ages of 18 and 29 suggest the view that there is a link between unemployment and a person's susceptibility to radicalisation.

The findings in Figure 17, particularly the view that there is no correlation between employment status and participation in violent extremism, corroborates a 2011 World Bank study, which reached a similar conclusion: 'There is no remotely convincing evidence at the cross-country, large-N level, at the quantitative case study level, or at the ethnographic, "qualitative" level, for any bold claims that unemployment is a mechanistic causal factor in violent conflicts in developing countries. The evidence on youth unemployment is even weaker.'[147]

What the findings of the present study tell us is that even if poverty were not the initial trigger for joining Boko Haram, its prevalence in northern Nigeria has accentuated and enabled the sustenance of the crisis, as individuals in destitute conditions are more gullible to recruitment, suggesting the need for multifaceted and multidimensional intervention measures.

Accepting the proposition that poverty causes terrorism could give a falty perception that poor people are potential terrorists and that eliminating poverty could eliminate terrorism. Nevertheless, refuting it may not adequately reflect reality. This means that the dynamics of recruitment into Boko Haram appear to be more complex and suggest the need for multifaceted explanations. This survey found that the majority of the respondents believe that poverty or financial reasons constitute a key motivating factor for people to join Boko Haram. It is also simultaneously evident from the responses that the respondents were conscious of the conjunctive factors. This finding is reminiscent of the literature on Boko Haram, as discussed above.

Lack of education

Like poverty, lack of education has been seen as one of the drivers of radicalisation and recruitment into terrorist groups, raising the question of whether people who are not educated are more vulnerable to terrorist recruitment.

The literature seems to support the notion that uneducated people or those with a low level of education are more credulous and easily influenced by others, and therefore more likely to be manipulated by extremist groups. Using Boko Haram as an example, Sule *et al* state:

> [T]hose without education in the society form the ready and willing recruits, the jobless and miscreants who perpetrate considerable vandalism and terrorism on innocent citizens as in the case of Boko Haram's prevalence in the northeast, where some youths engaged in *almajiri* [a system of Islamic schooling in Nigeria] practices

Figure 18: Influence of lack of education on decision to join Boko Haram (%)
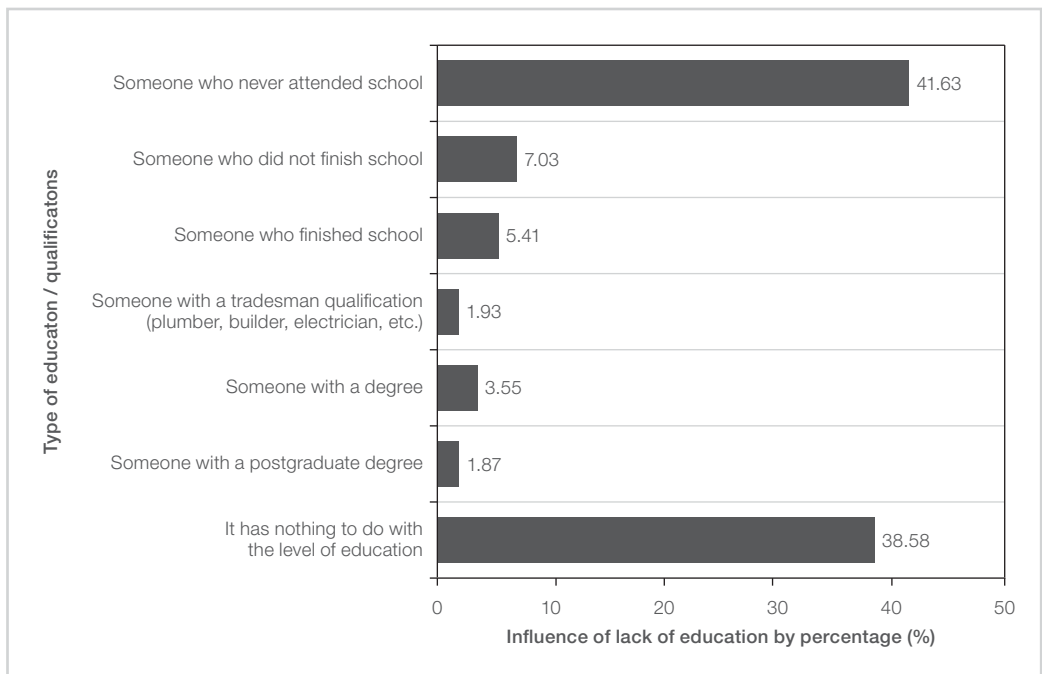
instead of schooling thereby making them readily available for recruitment into Boko Haram insurgents.[148]

This is echoed by Onuoha, who, drawing from the results of a mapping study in six states in northern Nigeria, found that ignorance of religious teachings caused by little or lack of education is 'the leading factor influencing the adoption of extreme religious views, especially among youth'.[149] It is therefore interesting to see if, in reality, ordinary citizens in Nigeria share this perspective.

In response to the question of why people were drawn to Boko Haram, the citizen survey revealed that 38.3% of respondents indicated lack of education as one of the reasons (this drew the third highest response of the options). 'Individuals who never attended school' were considered by 41.6% of respondents to be more vulnerable to being recruited.

Figure 18 shows the general perception of the 1 607 respondents with respect to the influence of lack of education on people's decision to join Boko Haram.

Clearly, responses given in Figure 18 show a dichotomy between respondents who think that the decision to join Boko Haram has nothing to do with level of education (38.58%) and those who think that people who never attended school are more likely to join Boko Haram (41.63%). This dichotomy may indeed, reflects reality, where there is no real conclusive empirical evidence on the specific role that lack of education plays in driving violent extremism. Education here refers to the development of cognitive skills, whereby

someone with a tertiary education or a postgraduate degree is believed to possess most advanced cognitive skills and societal values. In the violent extremism literature, the belief is that persons with limited or no education have low cognitive skills which make them easily indoctrinated and susceptible to manipulative terrorist narratives. A study by the Blair Faith Foundation found that:

> Education is a double-edged sword used by both extremists and for CVE. Formulated or conducted improperly, education can indoctrinate and develop a fear of others, as well as reinforcing attitudes that predispose people to accept monochrome understandings of the world. However, if prepared and properly led, education can instil in young people the ability to critically assess, engage and rebut extremist ideas.[150]

As the dichotomy in Figures 18 and 19 suggests, both educated and uneducated people are likely to join Boko Haram. This point is stressed by Danjibo, who argues that at the early stages of the group's recruitment in 2004, 'students, especially in tertiary institutions in Borno and Yobe states like the University of Maiduguri, Ramat Polytechnic Maiduguri, Federal Polytechnic Damaturu and others who constitute their members withdrew from school, tore their certificates and joined the group for Qur'anic lessons and preaching.'[151] Among those who joined the group were teachers, engineers, chemists, medical doctors and journalists, and even police and military officers.[152] This means that lack of education may have played a role in the recruitment of some members but was certainly not a major or decisive factor that generally influenced people who joined Boko Haram.

The dichotomy that one observes was also seen in each category of respondents. For example, in Kano, Gombe and Yobe, the majority (50.75%, or 473 respondents) were of the view that someone who never attended school was more inclined to join Boko Haram than someone with a postgraduate degree (2.79%, or 26 respondents). Yet a considerable number of respondents (221 or 23.71%) did not see any correlation between somebody's educational level and his or her decision to join the group. A slightly different trend was observed in Abuja and Lagos, where a much larger majority (59.11%, or 399 of the 675 respondents) said that the decision to join Boko Haram has nothing to do with someone's level of education, while only 29.04%, or 196 respondents, stated that those who never attended school were more vulnerable to Boko Haram's recruitment.

Significant differences were not observed with respect to gender and religion. For male respondents, someone's educational level was less likely to influence his or her decision to join Boko Haram (38.07%, or 308 of the 809 respondents), whereas 37.95%, or 307 of them, believed that someone who never attended school was more likely to join than someone with a postgraduate degree (1.48%, or only 12 respondents). Female respondents showed significantly higher inclinations to see a correlation between someone's level of education and vulnerability to Boko Haram's recruitment. This was evident in the 45.36%,

Figure 19: Influence of lack of education on decision to join Boko Haram (by categories)
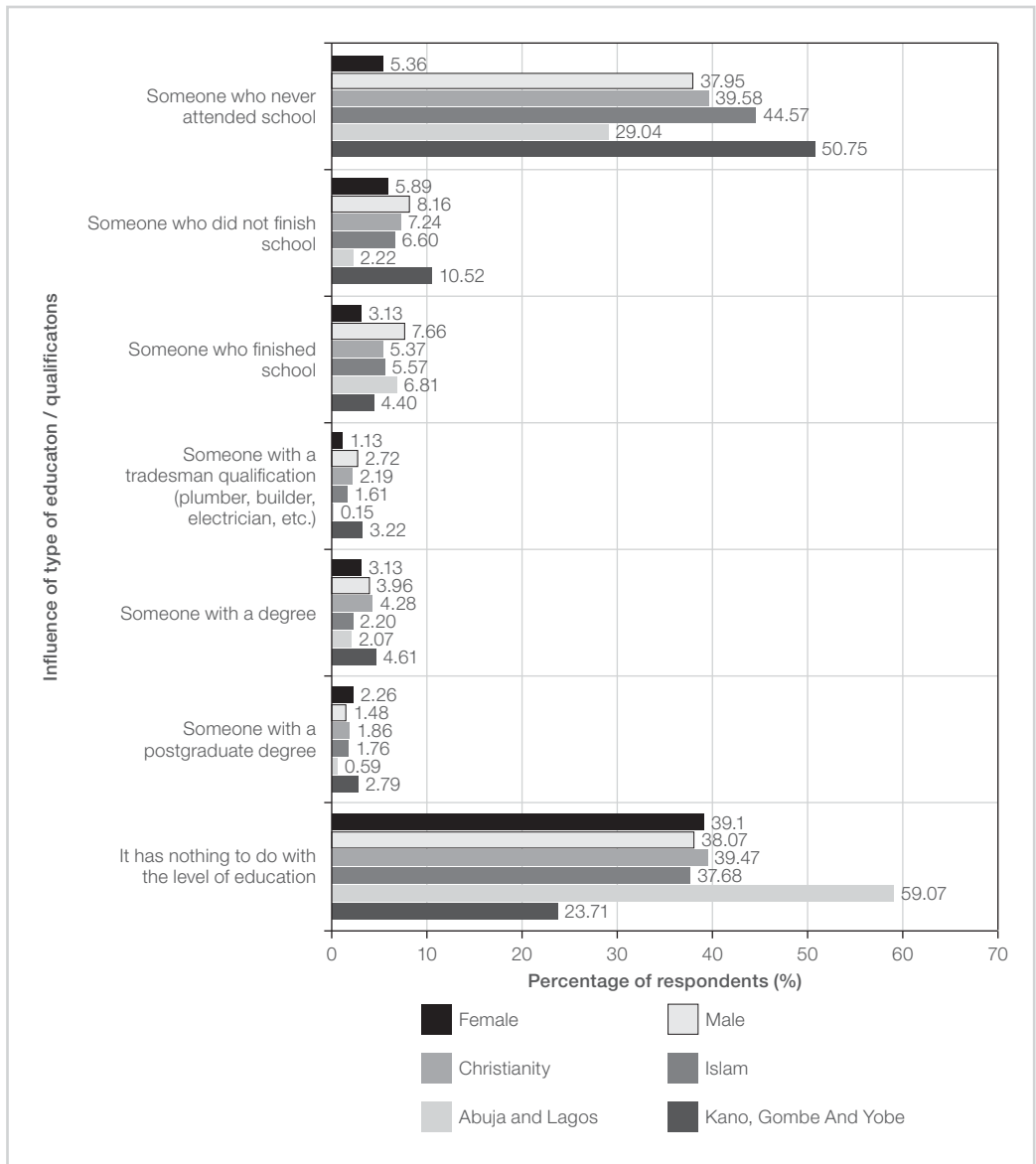
or 358 of the 789 respondents, who stated that someone who never attended school was more likely to join the terrorist group, whereas only 39.10%, or 308 respondents, were of the view that there is no correlation. People who never attended school were considered more vulnerable to join Boko Haram by 44% of respondents who completed secondary school, compared to 38.3% of respondents who had studied after school.

Muslim respondents (44.6%) were more inclined to believe that lack of education influenced a person's decision to join Boko Haram than Christian respondents (39.6%). Figure 19 illustrates these trends – how respondents in the various subcategories viewed the influence of education on people's decision to join Boko Haram.

In its 2014 study, the CLEEN Foundation found that by far the most important reason – given by 40% of respondents – was the belief that youths engaged in religious-based violence primarily because they were ignorant of the full teachings of their religion.[153] This is consistent with the findings of this study, in which, 41.63% of the respondents were of the view that someone who never went to school was more likely to join Boko Haram.
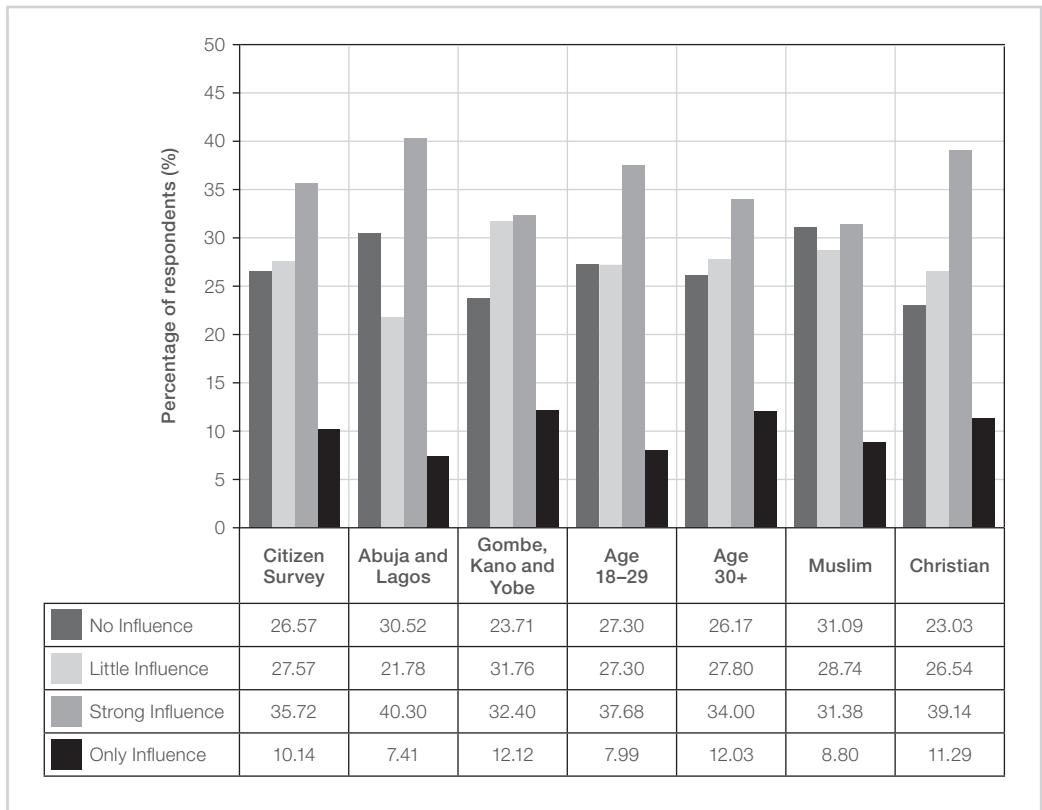
The role of religion

Religion is at the heart of the Boko Haram discourse, principally because of the group's primary identification with radical Islam, even if its practices and doctrine are perceived to be inconsistent with the tenets of Islam. This observation is indicated in the findings of empirical studies. For example, Mercy Corps found that '[t]he road to Boko Haram is paved with religion' and that many recruits joined Boko Haram 'to become more devout' or because they were 'drawn to a promise of paradise, while some youth became more interested in religion after joining'.[154]

Given that this insurgency is often believed to be the latest version of Nigeria's perilous history of Islamic revivalism punctuated by the Maitatsine uprising[155] and intermittent Muslim–Christian clashes, religious matters are of key significance to this study. Nigeria's deeply religious society, the tensions between Muslims and Christians, and the partial religious rapprochement that has taken place create a complex setting in Nigerian society. At the same time, questions on the role of religion in promoting radical and violent ideologies are at the centre of terrorism debates around the world.[156]

In order to investigate the role of religion, respondents to the citizen survey were asked, 'In your opinion how much influence does religion have on someone's decision to join Boko Haram?' Interestingly, the citizen survey found that the majority of respondents (54%) believed that religion had little or no influence on people's decision to join Boko Haram. When respondents were asked, 'In your opinion, how much influence does religion have on someone's decision to join Boko Haram?', 35.7% said they believed that religion had a strong influence, while 10.1% considered it to be the only influence in a person's decision to join Boko Haram. The older respondent group showed a greater propensity to consider religion as the only influence on someone's decision to join Boko Haram (12%) than the younger respondent group (7.9%).

Christian respondents were more likely than other religious groups to cite religion as a determining factor, with 39% recognising it as a strong influence and 11.3% as the only influence. In contrast, 31.4% of Muslim respondents considered it as a strong influence and 8.8% as the only influence. While this may be a defensive position on the part of Christian respondents, another possibility is that Muslim respondents are more aware of the challenges Boko Haram presents to other Muslims. This was also supported by the geographical location of respondents (see Figure 20), as 44.53% of respondents in Gombe, Kano and Yobe, compared with 47.7% in the south, were of the opinion

Figure 20: Influence of religion (percentage)

	Citizen Survey	Abuja and Lagos	Gombe, Kano and Yobe	Age 18–29	Age 30+	Muslim	Christian
No Influence	26.57	30.52	23.71	27.30	26.17	31.09	23.03
Little Influence	27.57	21.78	31.76	27.30	27.80	28.74	26.54
Strong Influence	35.72	40.30	32.40	37.68	34.00	31.38	39.14
Only Influence	10.14	7.41	12.12	7.99	12.03	8.80	11.29

that religion was a strong influence or the only factor influencing the decision to join Boko Haram.

Perceptions regarding the role that religion plays in the radicalisation process have a direct impact on the policies and strategies that will be developed and implemented to counter the threat of Boko Haram. There is also a need for initiatives to build trust between the Muslim and Christian communities in Nigeria.

It is evident from Figure 20 that, though it is a significant factor, religion was not considered as a major influence for joining Boko Haram by the majority of the respondents. The findings also show that they were divided on this issue along geographical and religious lines. While the majority of respondents did not consider a correlation between religion and a person's decision to join Boko Haram, the small minority of just over 10% who identified a strong influence were possibly swayed by the religious ideology and propaganda of extremist groups or by the small minority of their members, who are convinced that they joined for the religious ideals that the organisation represents.

A religious institution mentioned in the literature as a source of Boko Haram's recruitment is the *almajiri* school system. Aghedo and Eke, for example, argue that Boko Haram

draws a substantial number of its foot soldiers from the *almajiri* demographic cohort.[157] The term '*almajiri*' is derived from the Arabic 'Al-Muhajir', meaning a seeker of Islamic knowledge.[158] *Almajirai* (plural form) therefore refers to young Koranic students, who are often sent to pursue Islamic virtues. They are often exposed to some of the harshest and deplorable living conditions, forcing them to become street beggars. The word has become synonymous with abject poverty and destitution in northern Nigeria. It is believed that the *almajirai* have been exploited by religious and political elites to do their dirty laundry. As Abiodun Alao puts it, 'Many youths, unable to make a living, became tools in the hands of those who had a hidden agenda.'[159]

The literature review suggests that some *almajirai* are involved in petty crime, and that they have played an instrumental role in riots and Islamic insurgencies in Nigeria. Some authors have referred to the *almajiri* phenomenon as the social root of Islamic radicalism in Nigeria or the laboratory for recruitment,[160] particularly in view of their role in the Maitatsine movement and Boko Haram.[161] If this is true, and with more than 10 million *almajirai* (as estimated by the Nigerian government) roaming the streets of Nigeria,[162] Boko Haram may still have a vast pool of potential recruits. *Almajirai* currently have a huge presence in the ranks of Boko Haram membership, to the extent that some analysts think that there is no difference between the two.[163]
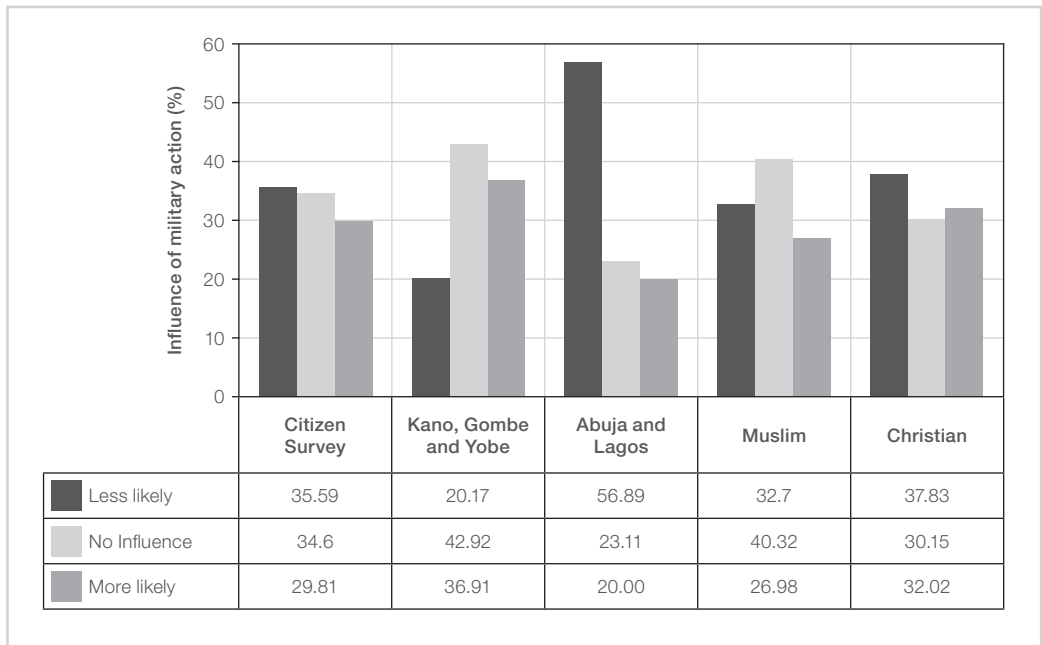
The findings of this study demonstrate that there is no consensus or common perception among Nigerians when it comes to the key factors that motivate individuals to join Boko Haram. This division is most visible along geographic (north–south) lines. Nigerian perceptions of the reasons, however, are more likely to converge around the view that poverty or economic-related reasons are the key motivating factors for joining Boko Haram. This issue resonates in the debate about bad governance in Nigeria, which is seen as the root cause of poverty, inequality and all other factors that underlie insecurity in Nigeria. In the *almajirai*, there seem to reside all the factors of vulnerability to violent extremism, which explains their high levels of participation in Boko Haram.

Influence of military responses on the decision to join Boko Haram

Respondents were asked if government's responses to the threat presented by Boko Haram might have contributed to the decision to join the group. The overall responses were fairly similar. In the full citizen survey, 35.59% of respondents said that military responses were less likely to have an impact on the decision; 29.81% said they were more likely; and 34.60% said that it had no influence.

However, the proportion of respondents in the northern states who perceive that military action has increased the likelihood of people joining Boko Haram is significantly higher (36.91%) than respondents in Abuja and Lagos (20%). The perception among respondents in Abuja and Lagos is that military action has significantly less influence (56.89%), compared to that of northern respondents (20.17%). Additionally, significantly

Figure 21: Influence of military action on the decision to join Boko Haram (%)

	Citizen Survey	Kano, Gombe and Yobe	Abuja and Lagos	Muslim	Christian
Less likely	35.59	20.17	56.89	32.7	37.83
No Influence	34.6	42.92	23.11	40.32	30.15
More likely	29.81	36.91	20.00	26.98	32.02

more Muslims (40.32%) than Christians (30.15%) among the respondents, believe that military actions have no influence on people's decision to join Boko Haram. Figure 21 summarises these perceptions.

Figure 21 shows that respondents from Kano, Gombe and Yobe (63.09%), and those who identified with Islam (73.02%) were generally of the view that military action was not a major influence on the decision to join Boko Haram. According to 29.81% of all respondents, military action could have an influence on a person's decision to join Boko Haram. Similar impressions were expressed by respondents from Abuja and Lagos (80%), and by respondents who identified with Christianity (67.98%), who also felt that military action was not a major influence on people's decision to join Boko Haram.

Given the current context of military successes against Boko Haram, the perception that military responses have little influence on whether people join the group may seem out of touch with the reality of Boko Haram. It is now common knowledge, for example, that the killing of Mohammed Yusuf by security forces in 2009 has engendered an incredible zeal among Boko Haram militants to seek justice or revenge.[164] Respondents did not raise this issue of revenge, however, which some analysts believe to be one of the key factors influencing people's decision to join Boko Haram. The extent to which people join Boko Haram out of revenge is still to be determined by empirical research.[165]

Despite the short-term political gains associated with military responses, the objective should rather be to implement effective long-term strategies that will not only bring immediate stability, but also contribute to preventing others from joining Boko Haram.

The role of revenge

Revenge is believed to be one of the drivers of violent extremism. The literature review holds that when an individual or group feels that they have been 'treated unfairly, discriminated against, or targeted by others,'[166] they may feel the urge to seek revenge as a means of justice. Revenge or retribution is said to be a critical component of the Boko Haram ideology, and the group's attacks turn to be more frequent after military attacks or whenever group's members feel that injustices have been done against them.[167] Revenge may be collective or an individual goal.[168] The latter suggest that individuals may support or decide to join Boko Haram in order to revenge a wrong that has been done to them.[169] As mentioned earlier in this monograph, the resurgence of Boko Haram in 2010, was to seek revenge or retribution for the military crackdown in July 2009, which led to the killing of many of their members including the founding leader Mohammed Yusuf.

In order to find out the extent to which revenge is a driver of Boko Haram's insurgency, the citizen survey asked respondents, 'In your opinion how much influence does desire for revenge / retribution have on someone's decision to join Boko Haram?' Figure 22 presents the findings of the survey.

Consistent with the literature Figure 22 illustrates that the majority of the respondents believed that the desire for revenge has a major influence on people's decision to join Boko Haram. This is evident with the 43.7% or 702 of the 1 607 respondents that took part in the survey. This was further complemented by a sizeable number of respondents 13.45% or 216 of the respondents, who believed that desire for revenge was the only influence on people joining Boko Haram. This means that 57.15% or 918 of the respondents felt that it was a major influence. A considerable number of the respondents

**Figure 22: Influence of revenge on decision to join Boko Haram (%)**
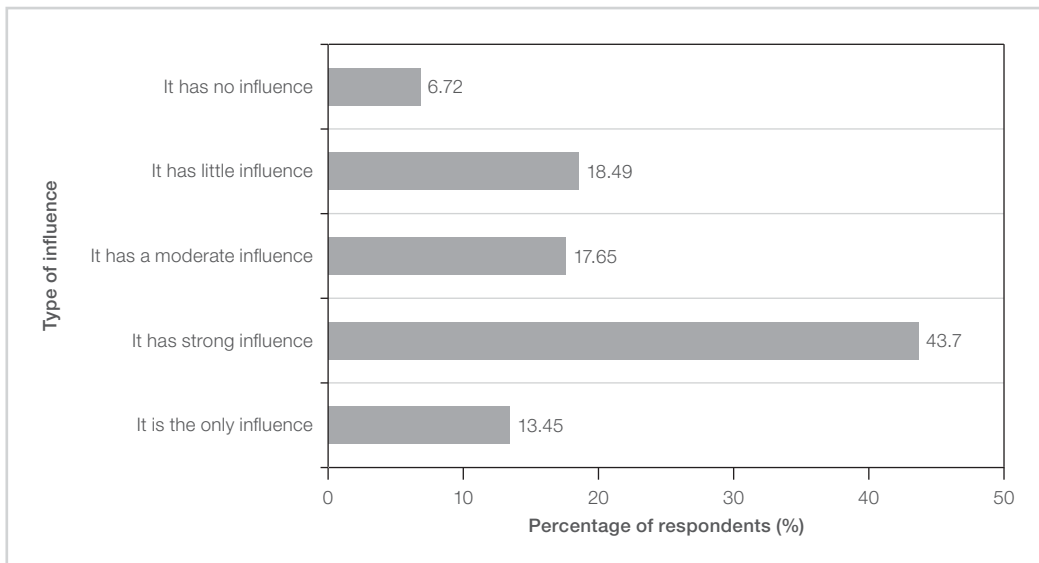
constituting 18.49% believed that the desire for revenge had a little influence. Only 6.72% of the respondents believed that the desire for revenge did not have any influence on people's decision to join Boko Haram.

Analysis of social media

The findings from the analysis of social-media posts, which was conducted as part of this study, revealed slightly different results regarding why people join Boko Haram. Figure 23 summarises the reasons for joining Boko Haram, as expressed on social media.

From the analysis of 13 008 social-media posts, the most influential factor motivating people to join Boko Haram is coercion or use of force (17%) and threat of death (23%), which, combined, account for 40%. Economic gain was rated as the second most influential factor, at 28%. According to the social-media analysis, the perception is that Boko Haram pays less than US$1 (300 naira) for information and about US$50 000 (15 million naira) for a suicide bomber (with the money being paid to the family).[170]

Figure 23: Factors influencing membership in Boko Haram, according to social media

Total social-media posts: 13 008
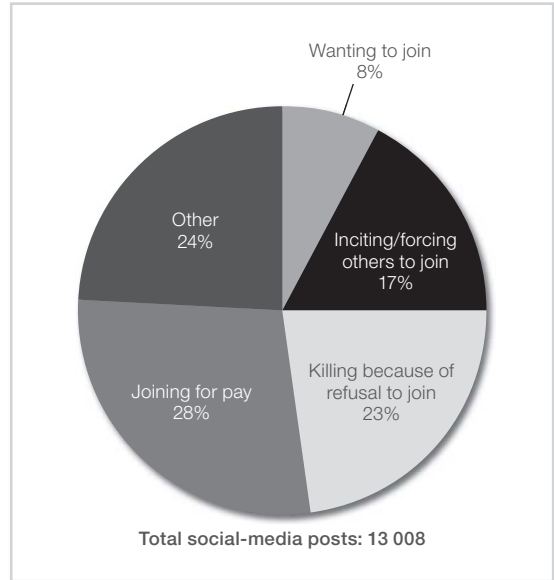
Chapter 6

The security environment fuelling Boko Haram in Nigeria

Insecurity has blighted the history of Nigeria and has been one of the unfortunate consequences of the ill-managed complexity and diversity of the country.[171] The security environment in Nigeria has been characterised by military coups, clashes between Christians and Muslims, ethnic conflicts, civil war, cultism, clashes between herders and farmers, insurgencies and terrorism – all of which have threatened to tear the country apart, returning it to its pre-1914 status, when the north and south were amalgamated to form the modern state of Nigeria.[172]

Like most terrorist groups, Boko Haram did not emerge from a vacuum. It is part of the dynamics of the structural design of the Nigerian state. According to Niels Kastfelt, the historical roots of the radicalisation of religion can be found in 1950s Nigeria with the emergence of constitutional regionalism, and ethnic and religious-based politics.[173] The common narrative on Boko Haram points to historical precedence, underlying socio-economic and political factors, particularly inequality, as well as the nature of inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations in Nigeria.[174] These are the same factors that have been used to explain the causes of other conflicts and security challenges in Nigeria.[175]
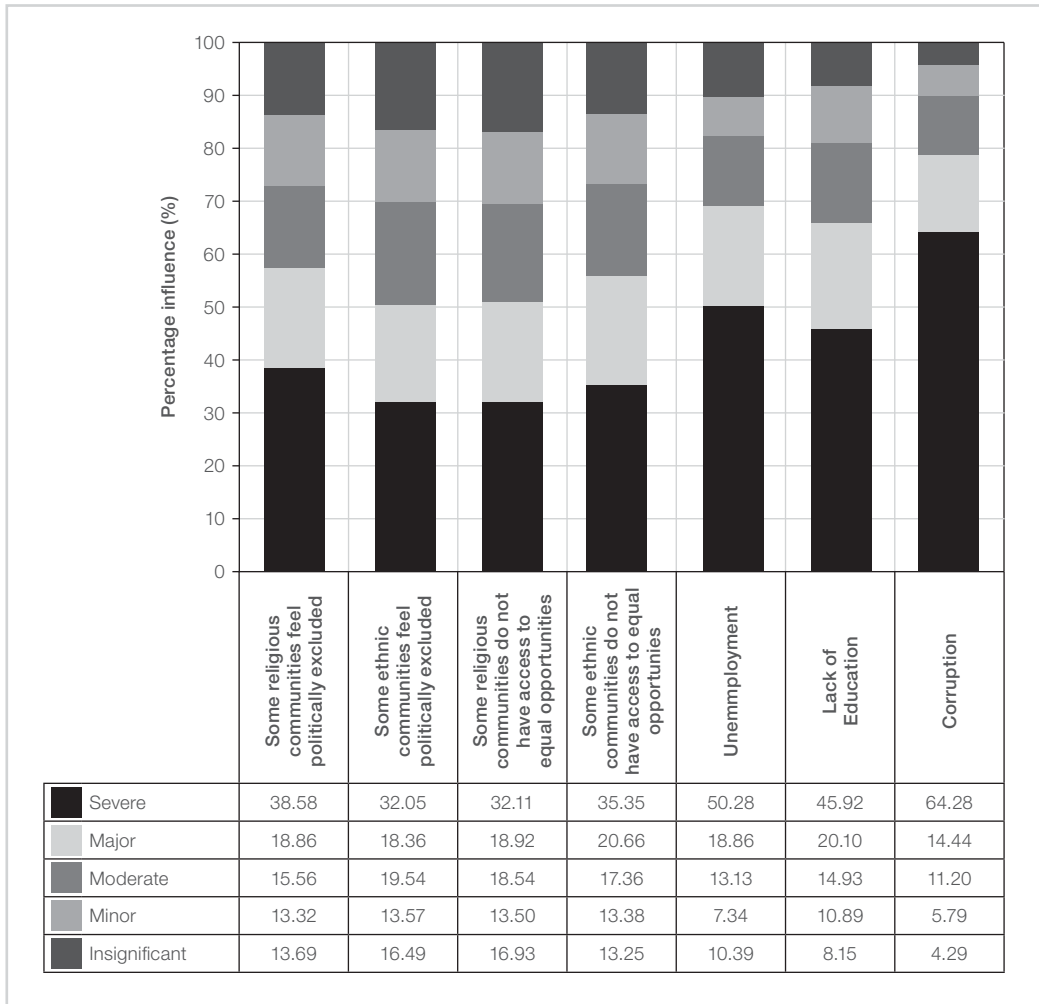
But, to what extent do we know that these factors are indeed the undercurrents of the Boko Haram crisis? Nigeria is not the only country with inequalities, and certainly not the only one with high youth unemployment or with Muslims and Christians living together. Why, then, is insecurity so endemic in Nigerian society, and not in similar countries? Some notable scholars, including the late Chinua Achebe, have viewed the security challenge, like any other Nigerian problem, solely as a failure of leadership. According to Achebe,

> The trouble with Nigeria, is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, or to the challenge of personal example, which are the hallmarks of true leadership.[176]

Attempts to fit the Nigerian experience into various theoretical paradigms, such as state failure, politicisation of religion and a failed nation-building project, have proffered vague, inconsistent and cacophonic explanations that provide little to help us understand the factors that fuel insecurity in Nigeria.

The purpose of this chapter is therefore to identify some of the precipitants of insecurity or the main sources of dissent and discontent, and how the interplay of such factors may offer empirical evidence of the drivers of violent extremism and the emergence of groups such as Boko Haram. This is important for understanding the context of Boko Haram in Nigeria. To achieve this, the citizen survey was designed to assess respondents' perceptions about some of the issues often cited as sources of dissent, discontent and rebellion, particularly the notion that some religious and ethnic communities feel politically excluded; that some religious and ethnic communities do not have access to equal opportunities; that there is high youth unemployment; that there is a high rate of illiteracy

Figure 24: Assessing security challenges in Nigeria (%)

|	Some religious communities feel politically excluded	Some ethnic communities feel politically excluded	Some religious communities do not have access to equal opportunities	Some ethnic communities do not have access to equal opportunies	Unemmployment	Lack of Education	Corruption
Severe	38.58	32.05	32.11	35.35	50.28	45.92	64.28
Major	18.86	18.36	18.92	20.66	18.86	20.10	14.44
Moderate	15.56	19.54	18.54	17.36	13.13	14.93	11.20
Minor	13.32	13.57	13.50	13.38	7.34	10.89	5.79
Insignificant	13.69	16.49	16.93	13.25	10.39	8.15	4.29

or little education; and that there is widespread corruption. These factors, together with sentiments of injustice and structural violence, can lead to destitution, frustration and anger, which make societies highly vulnerable to all forms of instability, conflict and violent extremism.

In order to investigate this, respondents to the citizen survey were asked to rank the security threats according to their severity. Figure 24 shows how respondents perceived the security challenges in Nigeria.

According to respondents, as Figure 24 illustrates, corruption is the biggest challenge to security, followed by unemployment and lack of education. Political exclusion based on religion and the perception that ethnic communities do not have access to equal opportunities are regarded as 'severe' by a smaller sample: 38.58% and 35.35%, respectively.

As shown in Figure 25, an overwhelming majority of the respondents perceived corruption as the biggest security challenge (78.72%) fuelling the presence of Boko Haram. This is followed by unemployment (69.14%), lack of education (66.02%), religious exclusion (57.44%) and ethnic exclusion (50.41%).

Figure 25: Perceptions of security challenges contributing to Boko Haram
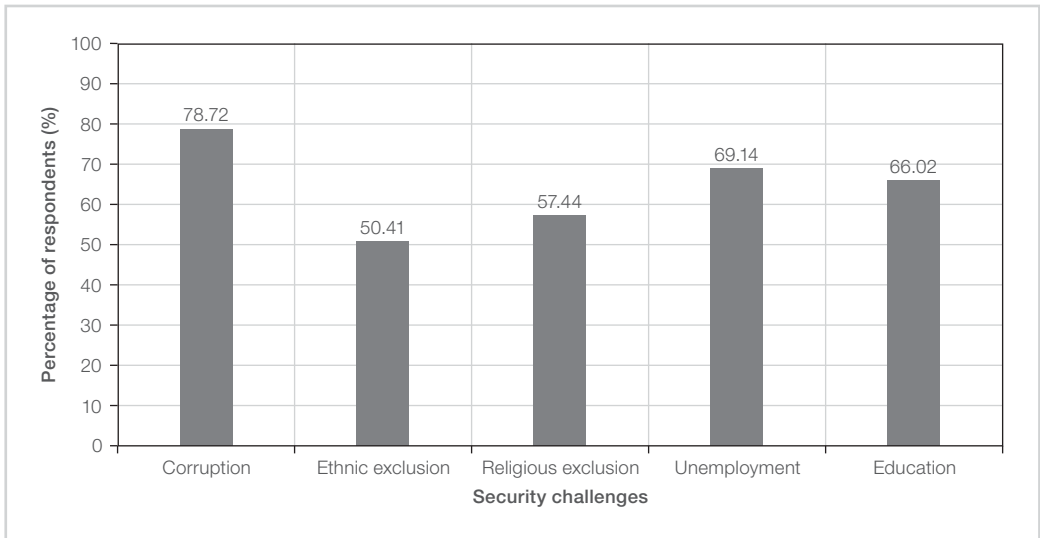
Chapter 7

How Boko Haram is financed

Financial assets are the lifeline of every terrorist group, without which their ability to recruit, plan and execute operations can be extremely limited.[177] In the view of former US attorney-general John Aschcroft, the importance of terrorist financing cannot be overstated: 'Terrorists cannot terrorize without money, without resources; training costs money, planning costs money, and explosives cost money, plane tickets cost money.'[178] The 2016 Global Terrorism Index states that Boko Haram has an annual revenue of $25 million, generated from the following sources: kidnapping for ransom and extortion, bank robberies, illegal mining, external donations and drugs.[179]

The literature review revealed a complex terror economy involving legitimate and illegitimate transactions and networks. According to Steve Barber, these include legitimate and illegitimate sources. Legitimate sources include sympathetic governments (Saudi Arabia and Iran); Islamic charitable organisations; legitimate businesses exploitating financial markets, especially the unregulated commodity markets; money laundering and trade diversion; international trade, which can, for example, convert cash into precious commodities such as diamonds and gold. Illegitimate sources include criminal activities in the context of both petty crime and organised crime, such as extortion; smuggling; kidnapping; prostitution rings and people trafficking; credit-card fraud, identity theft and counterfeiting; pirating of videos, compact disks, tapes and software; arms dealing; and narco-terrorism, or the illegal trade in drugs, such as heroin, cannabis, cocaine and methamphetamines.[180]

The financing aspects of Boko Haram are the most under-researched, largely because of the difficulty of obtaining empirical data on the group. This has resulted in speculative work based on scanty intelligence reports. In February 2014, US intelligence sources claimed that Boko Haram was 'stupendously rich' and that the group was 'flush with cash'.[181] Boko Haram's wealth was estimated to be US$70 million (11 billion naira), accumulated between 2006 and 2011, making it the seventh richest terrorist group in

the world.[182] Some analysts have claimed that Boko Haram is using Internet fraud or the so-called Nigeria 419 scams through members of the Nigerian diaspora in Europe to fund its activities.[183] Although no concrete empirical evidence supports this, some reports have stated that some victims of the 419 scam or the 'romance fraud and sextortion' scams have paid amounts of between US$7 300 and US$57 000 to money launderers and Boko Haram recruiters.[184] Even if this is true in some instances, the key question remains—to what extent can Boko Haram rely on such 'good fortune' or once in a while cash payment from 419 cases?

This study attempts to understand the group's financing means through the perspectives of ordinary citizens and by analysing the social-media conversation about the sources of Boko Haram's financing. The social-media analysis and the citizen survey provided important data on popular opinion about Boko Haram's sources of funding. Indeed, this was one of the issues that preoccupied Nigerian social-media users. The issue of funding attracted 47 205 posts of conversations in Nigeria between 2009 and 2015.

What social media say about Boko Haram's funding

According to social-media posts, a significant number of Nigerians (30%, or 14 162 of the 47 205 posts) believe that the Nigerian government funds Boko Haram. This is remarkably consistent with the distrust shown in government and Nigerian politicians reported above.[185] A substantial number of respondents (16%) believed that the Borno government was providing funds to Boko Haram. This also corresponds with the existing literature, which shows that some states in the north, including Borno, Kano and Bauchi, have bought their way out of Boko Haram by bankrolling the militants in exchange for security and protection.[186]

Another significant finding from the social-media survey is that 14% of respondents believe that Boko Haram is funded through banks and prisons. The notion of funding from the banks gained traction in the Nigerian media in 2014, when an Australian negotiator, Stephen Davis, alleged that wealthy Nigerians, including some in the government, had been 'siphoning huge sums of money to bankroll the activities of the Boko Haram sect'.[187] According to Davis, these financiers had created a powerful network that helped them to wire large sums of money via the Central Bank of Nigeria to an agent in Egypt for the purchase of arms, military uniforms and vehicles for Boko Haram.[188] Although the Central Bank of Nigeria castigated this allegation and denied its involvement,[189] it, however, raised a red flag in the search for sources of Boko Haram funding. Table 8 summarises perceived sources of funding, according to social-media conversations in Nigeria.

Table 8 shows that views in the social media on the sources of Boko Haram funding are very divided. However, a significant number of the posts – 14 162 (nearly 30% of the posts on this topic) – said the Nigerian government was the group's major funder. This perception reaffirms the distrust in government revealed earlier in this study.

Table 8: Perception of sources of funding in social media (raw data)

Source of funding	Conversations
Wealthy Nigerians	3 776
Nigerian government	14 162
Borno State leaders	7 553
Banks and prisons	6 609
Oil	4 248
Kidnapping	3 304
The West	4 248
Other terror groups	3 776
Total number of conversations	47 205

Figure 26: Perception of sources of funding in social media

Note: Total social-media posts = 47 205
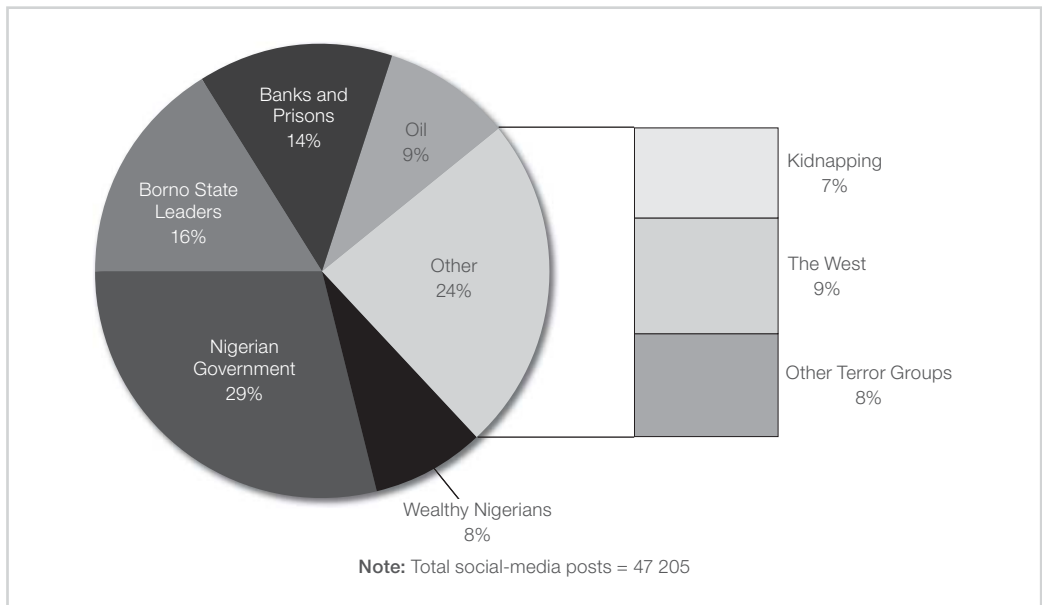
A considerable number of the posts, 7 553. and 6 609 (16% and 14%) show the belief that Borno State leaders and banks and prisons, respectively, fund Boko Haram. Figure 26 illustrates the social-media conversation on the perceived sources of Boko Haram funding.

It is apparent from the figure that individuals who expressed themselves on social-media perceived the Nigerian government as the main source of funding for Boko Haram, representing 29% of the total conversation. This perception may have been influenced by widespread allegations of politicians financing the terror group, especially when

President Jonathan stated that there were Boko Haram supporters in all three spheres of government.[190] The pie chart also shows that, in total, politicians and government accounted for 45% of Boko Haram funding, which is more than twice the contribution from the group's criminal activities, such as armed robbery and kidnapping.

Citizen survey's findings on sources of Boko Haram's funding

In the citizen survey respondents were asked, 'What, in your view, are the sources of Boko Haram financing?' They were asked to rank their answers on a scale of 1 to 3 (1 being the most probable and 3 being the least probable). Table 9 and Figure 27 summarise the responses.
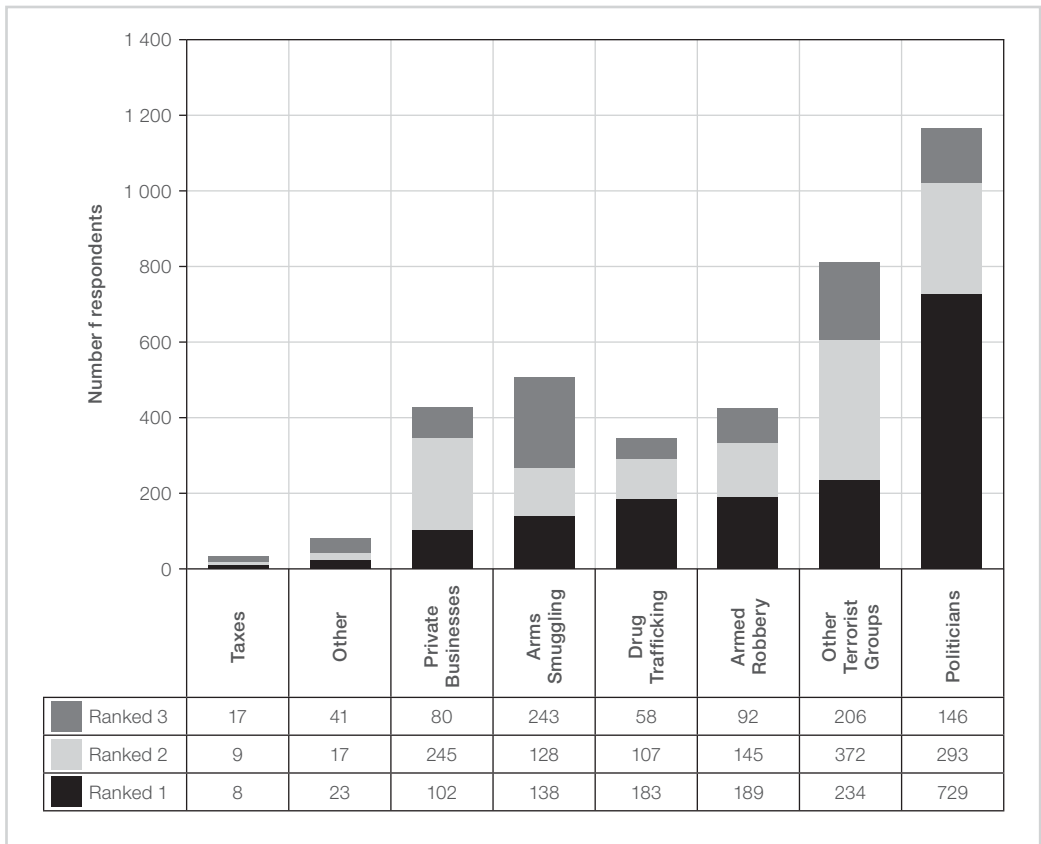
Figure 27 shows a strong perception that politicians are the main source of Boko Haram's funding. Of the 1 607 respondents, 729 (45.36%) ranked politicians as the primary source (rank 1) of funding for Boko Haram, with additional 293 (22.26%) and 146 (16.53%) respondents, who ranked it second and third source of funding, respectively. Other terrorist groups were also perceived as a major source of funding for Boko Haram, with 234 (15.56%) of the respondents ranking this as the primary source of funding, and an additional 372 (28.27%) and 206 (23.33%) respondents who ranked it as the second and third source of funding, respectively.

Drug trafficking and armed robbery were also perceived to be significant sources of funding for the Islamist group, with 183 (11.39%) and 189 (11.76%) respondents ranking them as top sources of funding, respectively. There is also a perception that arms smuggling (selected by nearly 9% of respondents) constitutes a means of funding for Boko Haram. The role of private businesses in funding the terror group was not insignificant. Indeed, a total of 337 (20.97%) of the 1 607 respondents ranked it first (102) or second (245) or third (80). Taxes, which include membership dues, tax for business

Table 9: Citizen survey: Ranking of Boko Haram sources of financing (raw data)

Source	Ranked 1	Ranked 2	Ranked 3
Politicians	729	293	146
Other terrorist groups	234	372	206
Armed robbery	189	145	92
Drug trafficking	183	107	58
Arms smuggling	138	128	243
Private businesses	102	245	80
Other	23	17	41
Taxes	8	9	17
Total respondents	**1 607**	**1 316**	**883**

Figure 27: Major sources of Boko Haram financing

	Taxes	Other	Private Businesses	Arms Smuggling	Drug Trafficking	Armed Robbery	Other Terrorist Groups	Politicians
Ranked 3	17	41	80	243	58	92	206	146
Ranked 2	9	17	245	128	107	145	372	293
Ranked 1	8	23	102	138	183	189	234	729

and *jizya* (tax for non-Muslims), are considered to be a minor source of funding, with less than 1% of the respondents ranking this category as the number one source of funding. Though taxes were important, particularly membership dues, at the early stages of Boko Haram's emergence, they are not a major source of funding. This is also because Boko Haram does not administer any territories.

Surprisingly, kidnapping for ransom (KFR), which constituted 7% of Boko Haram's funding, according to the social-media research part of this study, was ranked as insignificant as a source of finance in the citizen survey. This is contrary to the authors' findings from the literature review, which shows that kidnapping is a growing source of funding for Boko Haram. Ransom payments have been a major source of funding for terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda. According to a report published by *The New York Times*, the group earned at least US$125 million from KFR between 2008 and 2013, while the US Department of the Treasury put the figure at US$165 million for the same period.[191]

Boko Haram, however, initially shunned the practice of KFR until the group split with Ansaru[192] in 2012. Since then, Boko Haram may have kidnapped between 2 000 and 5 000 people, mostly children and women. Though kidnapping has been used for various

Table 10: Sources of Boko Haram financing across sample categories (%)

Source	Kano, Gombe, Yobe	Abuja and Lagos	Female	Male	Age 18–29	Age 30+	Muslim	Christian
Politicians	40.02%	52.74%	47.62%	43.14%	43.68 %	46.85%	47.81%	42.52%
Other terrorist groups	10.19%	20.59%	15.41%	13.72 %	12.65%	16.24%	14.04%	14.81%
Armed robbery	15.59%	6.67%	9.77%	13.72%	13.05%	10.63%	11.29%	12.61%
Drug trafficking	14.59%	6.96%	10.65%	12.11%	12.38%	10.51%	11.62%	11.00%
Arms smuggling	9.98%	6.67%	8.02%	9.15%	9.99%	7.36%	7.89%	9.53%
Private businesses	8.80%	2.96%	6.14%	6.55%	6.52%	6.19%	5.59%	7.18%
Other	0.54%	2.67%	1.63%	1.24%	1.46%	1.40%	1.21%	1.76%
Taxes	0.43%	0.59%	0.75%	0.2%5	0.27%	0.70 %	0.55%	0.44%
Total respondents per category	**932**	**675**	**789**	**809**	**751**	**856**	**682**	**912**

purposes – forced recruitment, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, domestic servitude, exchange of prisoners and human trafficking (which also provides revenue through the slave trade)[193] – it has also been a growing source of funding for the group. Various KFR operations in Nigeria and Cameroon have earned Boko Haram substantial revenue. Some examples are a US$3.15 million ransom for kidnapping a French family of seven in Cameroon;[194] US$600 000 for the kidnapping of Cameroonian Deputy Prime Minister Amadou Ali's wife;[195] and US$320 000 for kidnapping 92-year-old Ali Monguno, a Borno Elders' Forum member and father of a senior general in the Nigerian army.[196] The amount earned for kidnapping mid-level officials in Nigeria is said to be about $10 000,[197] and for wealthy Nigerians about $1 million.[198]

To provide a more detailed picture of attitudes towards Boko Haram's sources of revenue, Table 10 shows the responses to the question, 'What in your view are the sources of Boko Haram financing?' Respondents were allowed to provide multiple answers. The Table summarises the set of responses across the different categories of the sample population.

The citizen survey shows similar kinds of discrepancies among respondents to those we found in the social-media posts. The perception that politicians are the primary funders of Boko Haram is strongest among respondents from Abuja and Lagos, where nearly 53% of the 675 respondents supported this perception. Female respondents are also most likely to see politicians as backers of Boko Haram. Respondents from Abuja and Lagos are more likely to blame other terrorist groups for funding Boko Haram (20%), a perception supported by 15% of females. This perception was also common among respondents age 30+ (16.24%), whereas younger respondents were more inclined to perceive armed robbery and drug trafficking as the key sources of Boko Haram's revenue. Religious cleavages did not significantly affect perceptions on armed robbery and drug trafficking.

> The belief that politicians are financing Boko Haram is shared by the majority of respondents
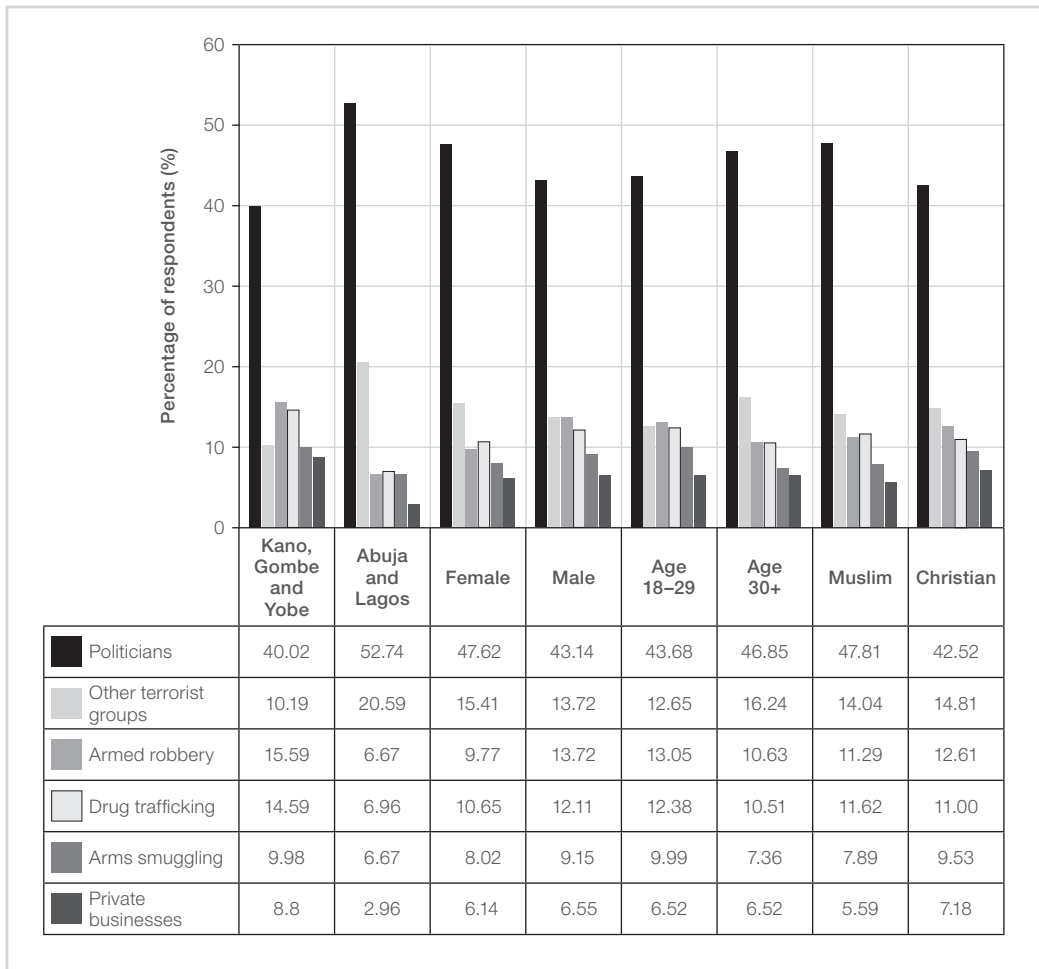
Politicians: patrons or financiers?

Allegations about politicians supporting and financing Boko Haram are not new. The very formation of Boko Haram was mired in political intrigues. Mohammed Yusuf, the recognised founder of the group, was both a cleric and a politician. Yusuf served in the Borno State government as a member of the Sharia Law Implementation Committee created in February 2001,[199] during which he made many powerful political allies, including governors and local and federal politicians, who would later support Boko Haram.[200] Figure 28 below illustrates the popular perception among the respondents that politicians are financiers of Boko Haram.

Figure 28 shows that the belief that politicians are financing Boko Haram is shared by the majority of respondents and a popular view across the different categories of respondents.

Figure 28: Politicians financing Boko Haram

	Kano, Gombe and Yobe	Abuja and Lagos	Female	Male	Age 18–29	Age 30+	Muslim	Christian
■ Politicians	40.02	52.74	47.62	43.14	43.68	46.85	47.81	42.52
▨ Other terrorist groups	10.19	20.59	15.41	13.72	12.65	16.24	14.04	14.81
▨ Armed robbery	15.59	6.67	9.77	13.72	13.05	10.63	11.29	12.61
▢ Drug trafficking	14.59	6.96	10.65	12.11	12.38	10.51	11.62	11.00
▨ Arms smuggling	9.98	6.67	8.02	9.15	9.99	7.36	7.89	9.53
▨ Private businesses	8.8	2.96	6.14	6.55	6.52	6.52	5.59	7.18

With 52.74%, respondents from Abuja and Lagos were far more likely to accuse politicians. Muslim respondents also demonstrated a significant amout of scepticism toward politicians with 47.81% convinced that politicians are behind Boko Haram's funding. The second most popular choice was the belief that other terrorist groups were bankrolling Boko Haram. This view was most popular with respondents from Abuja and Lagos (20.59%), followed by respondents age 30+. Respondents from Kano, Gombe and Yobe were more inclined to see armed robbery (15.59%) and drug trafficking (14.59%) as sources of Boko Haram financing. Private businesses were the least perceived source of revenue for Boko Haram, though respondents from the north were more likely to see them as financiers (8.8%) followed by respondents who identified as Christians (7.18%).

Nigerian political parties and politicians are often accused of recruiting the services of thugs to pursue political objectives. Boko Haram is believed to have provided such services to various politicians in the north, though political parties blame each other for sponsoring the group.[201] Wole Soyinka, Nigeria's Nobel Laureate, confirmed that there

were politicians who actually supported what Boko Haram was doing for various reasons, 'because in their lust for power and pursuit for power, they were ready to sacrifice anything or to ally with anything …'[202]

Some scholars have blamed the politicisation of Boko Haram and its connection to some politicians on the tension among Nigeria's political parties and the zero-sum democratic game, which Boko Haram also exploited.[203] Others view it as an extension of elite greed and competition for resources.[204] In explaining the rise of Boko Haram, Martin Uadiale says that 'the elite-class through its continued contrived, scheming, conniving and manipulative tendencies either, "secured" the "services" of existing cults and gangs or facilitated the formation of new ones to attain their electoral objectives'.[205]

The perception that politicians are a major source of Boko Haram financing is therefore shaped by various allegations that have been laid against a number of key Nigerian politicians. The past two elections in Nigeria, in 2011 and 2015, have been fraught with accusations and counter-accusations between the two major political parties, each accusing the other of sponsoring Boko Haram. This politicking and witch-hunting over terrorism reached a point where no one was taking them seriously.

The most serious accusations against politicians are those that have been made against former governors of Kano, Bauchi and Borno, as well as some senators.[206] For example, it is alleged that former governor of Kano Ibrahim Shekarau's administration 'made a monthly N10 [naira] million donation to the group'.[207] Despite arrests, it has been extremely difficult to prosecute those implicated in court because of difficulty in obtaining evidence. The notion that politicians finance terrorism is not uncommon: it is a practice of terrorist funding acknowledged by the West African Inter-governmental Action Group against Money Laundering (GIABA), which describes the financial contributions made by Nigeria's political leaders to Boko Haram.[208]

> Despite arrests, it has been extremely difficult to prosecute those implicated in court

The financial support of other terrorist groups to Boko Haram

Many of the respondents said that other terrorist groups were one of the major sources of funding for Boko Haram, and there is certainly a historical context that supports this view. The origins of Boko Haram are a combination of internal and external factors. As the Nigerian terrorist group was formed in the wake of 9/11, al-Qaeda would have made an indelible impression on them. The influence was not just ideological inspiration, but also financial support. Various reports show that Osama bin Laden dispatched US$3 million as seed money for Boko Haram in 2002.[209] In 2011 a Boko Haram spokesperson claimed, 'Al-Qa'ida are our elder brothers. We enjoy financial and technical support from them. Anything we want from them we ask them.'[210]

There are also reports that link Boko Haram to a US$250 000 donation from al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) to facilitate kidnappings of foreigners for the purpose of obtaining ransoms to buy weapons from AQIM.[211] Boko Haram is also believed to have received financial support from al-Shabaab, the Movement for the Unity of Jihad in West Africa and from al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. Although no concrete evidence exists, Buhari is reported to have stated that Boko Haram is being funded by ISIS,[212] after the former pledged allegiance to the latter in March 2015. There is therefore plenty of material that supports the fact that other terrorist groups sustain Boko Haram financially, although the financial value of these relationships is unclear.

Armed robbery

A large number of the respondents believe that armed robbery is a major source of Boko Haram funding. Indeed, nearly 12% ranked it as the number one source of the group's funding. The three northern states were more likely to consider it a major source, followed by male respondents and those in the 18–29 age bracket. A considerable percentage of Christians also saw armed robbery as a potential funding source.

Armed robbery includes bank robbery, cattle rustling, and breaking and entering police stations, businesses and homes to steal weapons and cash. A growing practice has been cattle rustling, which provides the group with livestock to sell for cash or to barter.[213] Boko Haram is also believed to have raided numerous banks, including ATMs in Borno and other northern cities, from where they have stolen large amounts of cash. Although it is believed that this has been a popular fund-raising tactic for the group, it has been difficult to establish its true value. Armed robbery is common in Nigeria and it has been a challenge to determine which robberies are attributable to Boko Haram. Nonetheless, researchers estimate that armed robbery is worth millions of dollars to the group, with some estimates putting the figure at US$6 million.[214]

Drug trafficking and arms smuggling

The claim that drugs or drug trafficking is funding Boko Haram is one of the weakest in terms of available empirical evidence. Although terrorist groups are known to exploit the drug trade, evidence that Boko Haram is involved in it is nebulous. Drug trafficking could include cocaine, heroine, marijuana, contraband products, cannabis, Indian hemp or 'banga', as it is called in Cameroon, illicit trade in cigarettes and other banned substances. The extent of Boko Haram's involvement in drug trafficking is not known, but a number of military raids on the group's camps and arrests of suspicious individuals have uncovered evidence linking the group to extensive drug use and trafficking. The arrest of one Baba Haruna, for example, a drug peddler who was caught selling cocaine and other banned substances at a camp for internally displaced persons in Dikwa, Borno State,[215] confirms that Boko Haram is using such camps as hubs for selling and trafficking drugs. In addition, in June 2013, during a raid on a Boko Haram base, the Nigerian

military uncovered packs of used and unused condoms, syringes and narcotics believed to have been used by the insurgents to get high before embarking on a deadly attack.[216]

As with drug trafficking, the degree of Boko Haram's involvement in arms smuggling is not known but the group has been associated with the Libyan black-market arms trade. After the fall of the Gaddafi regime, Boko Haram replaced its mostly home-made and crude weapons, including redesigned AK-47s and Kalashnikovs, with weapons that the UN believed, according to an assessment report, to be from Libya. These included rocket-propelled grenades for attacking long-distance targets, improvised explosive devices for ambushing military and police convoys,[217] machine guns with anti-aircraft visors, automatic rifles, grenades, explosives, light anti-aircraft artillery (light-calibre bi-tubes) mounted on vehicles and ammunition.[218]

The group is believed to run an arms market in Maroua, Cameroon.[219] Several arrests in Cameroon, Chad, Nigeria and Niger have helped uncover a complex trade. It is not clear, however, whether Boko Haram is both an importer and exporter of arms. Evidence so far has shown the group only smuggling weapons for its own use, some of which come through other terrorist groups, such as AQIM and al-Shabaab.

Private businesses

Of the 1 607 respondents in the citizen survey, 97 believed that private businesses were the number one source of Boko Haram's funding. This view was corroborated by 305 others, or 19%, who ranked it as the second major source and another 19% who ranked it third.

As is the case with funding from politicians, it is also very difficult to prove that businesses finance the group. The issue is complicated by certain Islamic cultural practices, such as *hawala*[220] and *zakat*[221]. The latter is one of the five pillars of Islam, requiring all Muslims to donate 2.5% of their annual earnings to charity. Though there is an understanding that *zakat* entails donations to the poor, it is often exploited by criminal and terrorist groups as a source of revenue. In this case, charity groups serve as brokers that help to conceal the actual destination of funds through a laundering process. Though Boko Haram is known to exploit *zakat*, the extent and value of donations received from private businesses remain elusive.

> *Zakat* is often exploited by criminal and terrorist groups as a source of revenue

Several reports, as well as arrests made by the Nigerian authorities have, however, helped to shed light on a complex process often involving very discreet transactions. The case of Muhammed Damagun,[222] and allegations that Boko Haram may have received financial support from al-Muntada al-Islami Trust, a British-based Islamic organisation associated with Saudi Arabian charity the Da'awa Institute,[223] prove that this is a practice used by

Boko Haram. It is therefore most probable that Boko Haram's funding comes from a wide range of sources, including, in the words of Doukhan, donations made by wealthy 'Nigerians from the north, governors, senators, Muslim communities in Europe, drugs and arms [trafficking] and foreign terror groups within and outside the African continent',[224] mostly in the form of *zakat* through *hawala*.

This chapter has highlighted what the Nigerian public perceives to be the sources of funding for Boko Haram. From the citizen survey and by analysing social-media conversations, it is evident that many Nigerians believe that Boko Haram is a political construct sponsored by politicians. This corroborates the distrust in politicians that we saw in the findings on the political context. The social-media posts and respondents to the citizen survey also show divergent views with respect to sources of Boko Haram financing. This reflects the complexity of the issue and the fact that no single paradigm has been able to fully explain the Boko Haram phenomenon. With the exception of the emphasis laid on politicians, the other sources of funding identified by the social media and the responses to the citizen survey seem to be consistent with the literature on terrorist funding.

Chapter 8

Citizens' perspectives on how to deal with the Boko Haram issue

The citizen survey also explored what Nigerians believe to be the potential solutions to containing the Boko Haram problem in Nigeria. Respondents were asked**, '**What would you suggest as a solution to deal with Boko Haram?' Figure 29 summarises the findings.

Figure 29 shows that 48.54% (780) of the respondents recommended use of military force to deal with the Boko Haram crisis. What this finding here tells us is that, majority

Figure 29: Citizens' perceptions of possible solutions (%)
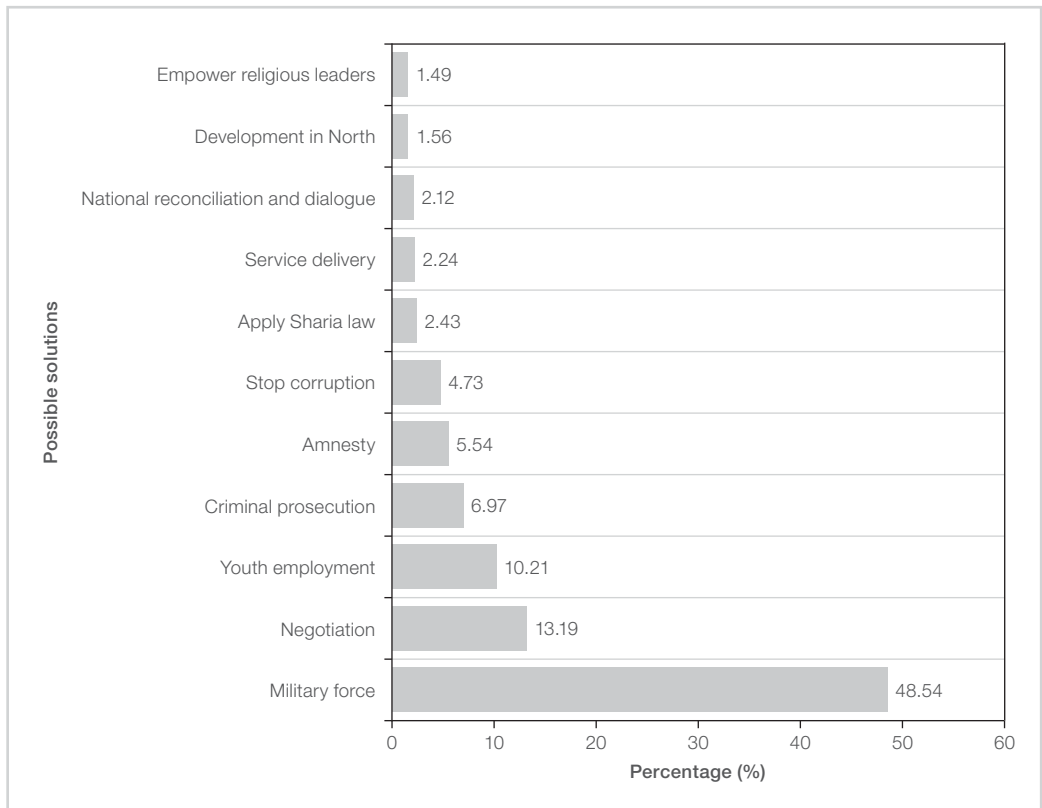
of the respondents did not believe that military action influence people's decision to join Boko Haram, but rather that, it hinded or prevented people from joining the group. The recommendation for military action as a panacea to Boko Haram may sound morally controversial for a country with a perilous history of military intervention, it however speaks to the cultural perception of the military in the Nigerian society. For example, many Nigerians believe that groups such as Boko Haram would have been unthinkable during the period of military rule in Nigeria. This recommendation could have also been influenced by the situation of Boko Haram at the time. At the time the survey was conducted, Buhari had taken a series of military offensives including the transfer of the command headquarters to Maiduguri, increased deployment of troops, change of military commanders, increased defence budget, increased air power, partial deployment of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and tackled the corrupt practices that had brought low morale to the military. The impact of these majors was a weakened Boko Haram. According to the Global Terrorism Index for 2015, 'there were at least 4,422 battle-related deaths from the conflict between Boko Haram and the Nigerian Government in 2015, down from 8,233 in 2014.the significant decline.'[225] This decline was due largely to the weakened Boko Haram by the military.[226]

In the literature review, military responses are conceived as a poison chalice in efforts to crush Boko Haram. This is well captured by Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos:

The actions of Nigeria's security forces have been a significant determinant in the trajectory of the crisis. Since the July 2009 repression, continued massacres, extra-judicial killings and arrests without trial have widened the gap between communities and the armed forces, to the point where some civilians have sought the protection of Boko Haram, even if they did not initially sympathize with, support or subscribe to the actions and doctrine of the movement.[227]

Since the founding of the group, the military has not proved efficient in obliterating Boko Haram. This is due in part to the general nature of repressive military actions, which often allow terrorists to cast themselves as freedom fighters, as well as the strong belief in retribution inherent in the Boko Haram philosophy.[228]

It is when the above solutions, however, are compared with the perceived reasons why individuals are susceptible to the ideology of Boko Haram that inconsistencies are identified. For example, although the majority of respondents identified corruption as a key contributing factor, only 20.73% of the same sample group proposed that initiatives should be introduced to stop corruption. Similarly, 69.14% of citizens identified unemployment as the second most prominent contributing factor, yet only 10.21% proposed initiatives to address youth unemployment. Furthermore, 66.02% regarded education – or lack thereof – as a security challenge.

Figure 27 also indicates that the majority – 51.46% of the 1 607 respondents – were of the

view that peaceful or non-military approaches were necessary to resolve the Boko Haram problem. Of the 827 respondents who favoured non-military responses, 13.19% favoured negotiation with Boko Haram; 10.21% said the problem could be resolved through youth employment; 6.97% advocated criminal prosecution of Boko Haram suspects; 5.54% recommended amnesty for Boko Haram militants; 4.73% said stopping corruption could be the solution to Boko Haram; 2.43% said the application of sharia law could resolve the problem; 2.24% said improving service delivery could provide the solution; 2.12% advocated national reconciliation; 1.56% preferred development in the north; and 1.49% called for a solution by empowering religious leaders.

Chapter 9

Conclusion, recommendations and summary of key findings

This study has explored various dimensions of Boko Haram with a view to gaining an understanding of the drivers of violent extremism in Nigeria from an empirical perspective. No single factor can fully explain the Boko Haram phenomenon, including its causes or why people join in the group. This is perhaps because groups such as Boko Haram are not monolithic or consistent in a rational way. They function and survive on the basis of opportunities, camouflage and violence (a key indicator of existence). Understanding the rationale or logic behind their existence and survival is key to understanding the choices they make and why they act in the way they do. The Nigerian government may wish to consider the following recommendations:

Recommendations

1. The president should seize the opportunity of the mandate that the people have entrusted in him to develop and implement sweeping programmes. Given the pattern of responses to the survey, it is evident that the president was voted in because of his promise to deal effectively with the Boko Haram issue. This must remain one of Buhari's top priorities. The focus given to anti-corruption is in consonance with this responsibility. This should be accompanied with transparency and openness in government, and any allegations against politicians holding public office, irrespective of their political party affiliation, should be thoroughly investigated, and those involved, if found guilty, should be prosecuted and punished to the full extent of the law.

2. President Buhari should also impress on politicians, especially office holders and members of the bi-cameral legislature, to do more to put Nigerians first – above their own private or personal interests. They should reach out to Nigerians of all creeds to change the negative perception and mistrust that Nigerians have of them. This will strengthen the legitimacy of government and the effective implementation of government programmes, particularly in the fight against Boko Haram.

3. Promote a common Nigerian identity that transcends ethnic, religious and geographic lines. This could be achieved by setting up national, state and local government programmes that reach rural and remote communities in Nigeria. The government should also review school curriculums and programmes, including faith-based schools and institutions to streamline national identity as a priority in civic education.

4. Declare, not negotiate an amnesty. Most agree that negotiation between Boko Haram and government is important to establish common ground and agree on a way forward. Unfortunately, however, this has not been possible. It is therefore advisable that the government declare a blanket amnesty for low- and middle-level Boko Haram militants, who may wish to voluntarily give up arms and return to normal life. In this context, the government may wish to set out clear conditions and timelines for those who wish to do so. This is similar to the strategy used by the Algerian government to discourage militants and isolate the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (which later became AQIM). The amnesty should also include a programme for disarmament, deradicalisation, rehabilitation and reintegration of former Boko Haram combatants. This initiative should encourage and provide a safe space for those wishing to defect.

5. Set up a criminal tribunal to investigate and prosecute Boko Haram militants and other individuals who bear the greatest responsibilities for the group's atrocities. It is important to address the historic impunity gap in Nigeria. Since the civil war, Nigeria has failed as a nation to bring certain individuals to criminal accountability for their role in the perpetration of crimes against humanity. Until this impunity gap is addressed, terrorism, violent extremism and other forms of violent acts against the citizenry will continue recurrently in Nigeria. It is therefore advisable that this special criminal tribunal serves to prosecute not only Boko Haram militants, but all those who participate in organised violence against the state or citizens, such as groups in the Niger Delta region. As part of this process, victim support and witness-protection programmes should also be introduced to ensure an effective criminal-justice system. Too many Nigerians have been affected by the Boko Haram crisis, which may have left many people with grievances that risk degenerating into other forms of salient conflicts. The government may wish to explore possibilities for community healing, including reconciliation and truth commissions. Experiences from Rwanda, Sierra Leone and South Africa show that impunity can only end if the nation rises to the challenge and sets up appropriate and effective criminal-justice mechanisms to deal with it.

6. Promote religious diversity and cohabitation. The citizen survey showed that perceived religious and ethnic exclusion, and lack of opportunities appeared to be the most prominent factors facilitating recruitment. This suggests that individuals in the sample population view their communities as polarised and that this polarisation influences the ultimate threat Boko Haram presents. Therefore, the more polarised

a community is perceived to be, the greater the supposed threat from Boko Haram, particularly through an increased number of individuals susceptible to recruitment. A ground-up, inclusive approach to community building would go a long way towards reducing this pool of recruits.

7. Prevent and combat sources of radicalisation. Strengthen intelligence on potential sources of radicalisation, including youth centres and institutions, to ensure that religious propagations, sermons and other messages do not incite individuals to violence or hatred, or provide a twisted interpretation of religious texts that has the potential to radicalise an individual. Set out guidelines for preaching and propagation of religious messages. Empower and train religious clerics, imams and other Islamic figures to promote mainstream Islam by correcting misguided beliefs around Islam, and educating youths on the orthodox interpretation of the Koran. Monitor prisons to ensure that inmates do not use the prisons to radicalise others.

8. Prevent and combat radicalisation on social media. Increase social-media intelligence and enhance government's capability to govern cyberspace efficiently to ensure that it is used for peaceful purposes, and not for the propagation of terrorist doctrine and recruitment. The effective governance of cyberspace should start with the adoption of effective laws that clearly define criminal offences and the corresponding punishment. While countering violent extremism on the Internet, it is important, however, that the government does not trample on people's legitimate right to privacy.

9. Promote education for all. Adopt a policy of 100% literacy to ensure that no Nigerian is left behind or is vulnerable to manipulation from terrorist groups such as Boko Haram. Include in the educational curriculums in schools and colleges subjects on terrorism and counterterrorism, so that young people are well educated on its horror, and to propagate a rhetoric that counters Boko Haram. Education is key to correcting misconceptions about different religious and ethnic communities.

10. Prioritise measures to cut off Boko Haram's sources of financing. Combating the sources of Boko Haram's financing is crucial in the efforts to defeat the group. Nigeria has a solid framework for countering the financing of terrorism, anchored in the 2011 Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act and the 2013 Central Bank of Nigeria (Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism in Banks and Other Financial Institutions in Nigeria) Regulation, which incorporate some of the key recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force. The challenge, however, has been effective implementation, particularly with respect to proactive investigation and detection of the sources of financing. The government should therefore enhance the ability of the Financial Intelligence Unit and other agencies to fully implement the existing framework and to enable financial institutions to share information on suspicious activities more easily, both between and among institutions at the national

and international levels. There should also be increased coordination at inter-agency level – between the Financial Intelligence Unit, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency and Customs.

Conclusion

Boko Haram is incredibly complex and this study cannot pretend to have uncovered all the major drivers of the group. The research has found, however, much empirical evidence supporting the key historical, political, social, economic and religious factors that continue to galvanise and mobilise the group's militants. Among these are corruption, unemployment, unequal access to political (governance) and economic structures and resources (particularly among certain communities and ethnic groups), extreme interpretation of religious scriptures and intolerance, lack of education and historical tensions over cohabitation between Muslims and Christians, as well as dependable sources of financing. The study also found that Nigerians are divided along geographic and religious lines over the causes and drivers of Boko Haram, as well as on what should be the solutions.

The complexity of Boko Haram underscores the need for multifaceted and multi-level interventions that address the root causes as well as the symptoms of violent extremism. Clearly, the Nigerian government cannot do this alone and military solutions have proved to be inadequate. There is therefore a need for committed and strategic partners, including civil society and community role players, academic institutions, the private sector, regional and continental partners (e.g. the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its institutions, and the African Union (AU) and its institutions), international partners (e.g. the UN, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and the European Union (EU)), and international development partners (the US, the UK, France, etc.).

Nigeria already has the basic legislative framework for combating terrorism in the form of the 2011 Terrorism Prevention Bill as subsequently amended. A key starting point is therefore to fully implement this bill, which had been one of the failings of the previous administration.

Summary of key findings of the study

1. Nigerians are divided over the factors that infl uence individual decisions to join Boko Haram, however, some of the key factors that make individuals vulnerable include poverty and unemployment, social group (friends, family members, ethnic kinship, and almajiri) and lack of education and religious institutions.

2. Contrary to expectations that, with the Boko Haram crisis and wide spread corruption people will generally be disillusioned and not participate in political processes, this study found higher levels of participation in political processes including elections,

and interaction with the military and security forces. The study also found that people who are employed are more likely to participate in political processes including voting.

3. At the community or local level in Nigeria, the social contract is extremely weak as ordinary citizens relate very little to their local leaders. There seems to be a general distrust for local government structures and their leaders. This distrust is particularly high in areas with high Boko Haram activities.

4. Friends, neighbours, family relatives and community meetings are viewed to be the most likely to recruit or introduce people to Boko Haram and that young people between the ages of 15 and 30, who are not married and with little or no education are most vulnerable to join Boko Haram.

5. Similarly, at the national level, with the exception of the President, there seems to be very little trust in the federal government institutions, such as the National Assembly and the Senate.

6. Again with the exception of the President, the study found that Nigerians seem to have very little faith in politicians, who are seen the catalyst of socio-economic and political problems of Nigeria. Most Nigerians believe that violent extremism, especially Boko Haram escalate because of the failings of politicians, who are also considered to be the financiers of the extremist group.

7. Religion remains a huge factor in the Nigerian polity, which competes for legitimacy with the state. With the weak social contract, religion is what binds people in Nigeria. Many people, who do not trust the government tends to trust religious institutions. Religion, however has also been one of the factors that widens the north-south divide, an issue that continues to create tension among Nigerians.

8. Interestingly, the study found that most Nigerians believe that Boko Haram is best addressed at the community or local level rather than at the national or federal level. Nigerians are divided as to whether to pursue military action or to use non-military responses to Boko Haram. A significant number favour military action, while the majority that advocates non-military measures are also divided over issues such as negotiation, amnesty, religious solutions, developmental solutions and criminal justice approach.

9. A significant number of Nigerians believe that corruption is the biggest security threat to the country.

10. The survey found that there is a strong belief that the desire for revenge or retribution was a major influence on people's decision to join Boko Haram—this desire may be based on personal or collective group grievances.

11. There are still a large number of people who feel that they are deliberately excluded from political governance and access to equal opportunities because of their ethnic or religious background. This was evident in the way religious groups and people from certain ethnic groups perceived trust in government and in politicians, whom are generally seen to be corrupt and sponsors of Boko Haram.

12. Whereas there are some distinctive elements in Boko Haram funding, the study found that many of the group's sources and modus operandi of generating revenue are similar to other terrorist groups seen elsewhere in Africa and the world at large, such as al Qaeda, al-Shabaab, al-Qaeda in the land of Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), ISIS, etc. This is even more pertinent because Boko Haram appeared to have had or continues to maintain collaborative relationships with such organisations.

13. The police is still relevant as a significant number of Nigerians showed faith in the police in dealing with emergency or when they are in danger. The military was also considered to be relevant especially in the north, where a significant number of Nigerians said they would call the military when in danger.

Appendix:
Questionnaire of the field study

01. What is your gender?

a.   Male

b.   Female

02. Which age bracket are you?

a.   15–19

b.   20–24

c.   25–29

d.   30–34

e.   35–39

f.   40–44

03. Which of the following is your region of origin?

a.   South-East (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo)

b.   South-West (Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Oyo, Osun)

c.   South-South (Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Rivers)

d.   North-East – (Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, Yobe)

e.   North-West – (Kano, Kaduna, Jigawa, Kebbi, Katsina, Sokoto, Zamfara)

f.   North-Central – (Abuja FCT, Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau)

04. Are you employed?

a.   Yes

b.   No

c.   Partially (seasonal employee)

05. If employed, which of the following applies?

a. Self-employment (business)

b. Private-sector employment

c. Agriculture (farming)

d. Government (public) employment

e. NGO (civil society advocacy organisation)

f. Other (specify) _____

06. If not employed, which of the following applies?

a. Unemployed

b. Student

c. Conduct odd jobs (working when the need or opportunity arises)

d. Professional seeking employment

e. Just finished tertiary education and seeking employment

f. National Youth services

g. Other (specify) _____

07. Educational level

a. Primary school

b. Secondary school

c. Finished secondary school

d. College/Polytechnic

e. University

f. Vocational training

g. Post Graduate Studies

08. What is your religion?

a. Islam

b. Christianity

c. Traditional belief

d. Atheist

e. Other (specify) _____

09. To which ethnic group do you belong?

a. Igbo

b. Yoruba

c. Hausa

d. Fulani

e.   Kanuri

f.   Gwari

g.   Other (specify) _____

10.   Did you vote in the previous elections?

a.   Yes

b.   No

11.   If NOT, provide the most prominent reason

a.   I did not have time to register or to go to the polls

b.   I did not think that my vote would have had any impact

c.   I do not trust politicians

d.   I do not have a permanent voters card

e.   None of the political parties represented my opinions

f.   I do not recognise the political process

g.   Other (specify) _____

12.   When in danger, I prefer to

a.   Call the police

b.   Call the military

c.   Call a community defence unit

d.   Call community members

e.   Call on my religious leader (pastor, imam, priest, etc)

f.   Call a family member or friend

g.   Rather deal with the situation myself

13.   Which of the following do you trust the most?

a.   President

b.   National Assembly

c.   Senate

d.   Local government

e.   Religious leader

f.   None

14.   On a scale of 1–5, where 1 is the lowest score (do not trust him at all) and 5 is the highest score (trust him completely), how much do you trust the President?

1   =   No trust at all

2 = A little trust

3 = Some trust

4 = Strong trust

5 = Complete trust

15. On a scale of 1–5, where 1 is the lowest score (do not trust them at all) and 5 is the highest score (trust them completely), how much do you trust the local government?

1 = No trust at all

2 = A little trust

3 = Some trust

4 = Strong trust

5 = Complete trust

On a scale of 1–5, where 1 is the lowest score (No it is not a security challenge at all) and 5 is the highest score (yes it is a big security challenge), how much do you agree that the following is a security challenge in your country?

16. Some religious communities feel politically excluded

1 = It is not a security challenge at all

2 = It is a small security challenge

3 = It is a moderate security challenge

4 = It is a big security challenge

5 = It is a very big security challenge

17. Some ethnic communities feel politically excluded

1 = It is not a security challenge at all

2 = It is a small security challenge

3 = It is a moderate security challenge

4 = It is a big security challenge

5 = It is a very big security challenge

18. Some religious communities do not have access to equal opportunities

1 = It is not a security challenge at all

2 = It is a small security challenge

3 = It is a moderate security challenge

4 = It is a big security challenge

5   =   It is a very big security challenge

19.   Some ethnic communities do not have access to equal opportunities

1   =   It is not a security challenge at all

2   =   It is a small security challenge

3   =   It is a moderate security challenge

4   =   It is a big security challenge

5   =   It is a very big security challenge

20.   There are insufficient employment opportunities

1   =   It is not a security challenge at all

2   =   It is a small security challenge

3   =   It is a moderate security challenge

4   =   It is a big security challenge

5   =   It is a very big security challenge

21.   There is limited education

1   =   It is not a security challenge at all

2   =   It is a small security challenge

3   =   It is a moderate security challenge

4   =   It is a big security challenge

5   =   It is a very big security challenge

22.   Corruption

1   =   It is not a security challenge at all

2   =   It is a small security challenge

3   =   It is a moderate security challenge

4   =   It is a big security challenge

5   =   It is a very big security challenge

23.   Please rank the following in the order of their importance and seriousness to you (multiple answers, maximum 3, ranked):

a.   Electricity problem

b.   Water scarcity

c.   Fuel shortages and high prices

d.   Boko Haram Crisis

e.   Niger Delta Crisis

f.   Herdsmen problem

g.   Kidnapping and armed robbery

h.   Rising food prices

24. In your opinion why do people join Boko Haram? (multiple answers, maximum 3, ranked)

a.   They want to belong to a group / movement (solidarity/ brotherhood)

b.   They want to be respected

c.   They want to be feared

d.   For status/prestige

e.   For marriage

f.   They want to make money

g.   They want to achieve a religious aim

h.   They are unemployed and see Boko Haram as a job

i.   They are unhappy with the government

j.   They lack education

k.   Family and ethnic pressure

l.   Peer pressure

m.   Other (specify) _____

25. In your opinion, where are people most likely to be introduced to Boko Haram? (multiple answers, maximum three, ranked)

a.   Schools

b.   Madrassas

c.   Mosques

d.   Online (e.g. social media)

e.   Community meetings

f.   Tribal or religious meetings

g.   Through a network of friends

h.   Through family member(s)

i.   Prisons

j.   Other (specify) _____

26. In your opinion, how much influence does religion have on someone's decision to join Boko Haram?

a.   It is the only influence

b.   It has a strong influence

c.   It has little influence

d.   It has no influence

27. Of the following, who is most likely to join Boko Haram?

a.   Unemployed people

b.   People who are employed part-time

c.   People who have seasonal work

d.   People who are employed full-time

e.   It has nothing to do with employment

28. Of the following, who is most likely to join Boko Haram?

a.   Someone who never attended school

b.   Someone who did not finish school

c.   Someone who finished school

d.   Someone with a tradesman's qualification (e.g. plumber, builder, electrician)

e.   Someone with a degree

f.   Someone with a postgraduate degree

g.   It has nothing to do with level of education

29. Who is most likely to join Boko Haram? (multiple answers)

a.   Single people

b.   Married people

c.   People with children

d.   People without children

e.   People with both parents

f.   People with one parent

g.   People with no parents

h.   It has nothing to do with their family status

30. How has military action against Boko Haram influenced people's decision to join the group?

a.   It has made it more likely

b.   No influence

c.   It has made it less likely

31. What would you suggest as a solution to deal with Boko Haram?

a.   Military force

b.   Negotiation

c.   Amnesty

d.   Criminal prosecution

e.   Perfecting the application of Sharia in Nigeria

f.   Youth employment

g.   Better service delivery

h.   National reconciliation and interfaith dialogue

i.   Elimination of corruption

j.   Increased development projects in the north

k.   Empowering religious leaders

l.   Other (specify) _____

32.   What, in your view, are the sources of Boko Haram financing? (multiple answers, maximum 3, ranked)

a.   Armed robbery

b.   Drug trafficking

c.   Politicians

d.   Private businesses

e.   Other terrorist groups

f.   Arms smuggling

g.   Taxes

h.   Other (specify) _____

33.   Which of the following comes immediately to mind when you think of 'us'?

a.   Family

b.   Other people from my village

c.   Other people from my state

d.   Members of my religious community

e.   Members of my ethnic community

f.   Other Nigerian nationals

34.   Which of the following comes immediately to mind when you think of 'them'?

a.   People from other villages

b.   People from other states

c.   Other religious communites

d.   Other ethnic communities

e.   Other countries

Authors' biographies

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Notes

1   The name of the organisation is a Hausa phrase, commonly translated as the Group Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad. See, for example, Signe Marie Cold-Ravnkilde and Sine Plambech, From local grievances to violent insurgency, Danish Institute of International Studies Report 21, 2015, 14, www.diis.dk/publikationer?f[0]=field_topic%3A26&f[1]=field_region%3A55, accessed 6 September 2016.

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3   Institute for Economics and Peace, Global Terrorism Index 2015, http://economicsandpeace.org/reports/, 24 March 2016, 22.

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6   Ibid.

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8   Ibid., 33.

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12   It is not clear exactly when Boko Haram was founded but there seems to be consensus in recent

literature that the group was formed in 2002 by Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf. See, for example, Virginia Comolli, *Boko Haram: Nigeria's Islamist insurgency*, London: Hurst & Company, 2015, 33.

13   The year 2009 is often considered a turning point in Boko Haram's radicalisation and insurgency. Following an uprising against security forces in July 2009, in which between 800 and 1 000 people died (mostly the group's members, including its founding leader, Yusuf), Boko Haram was believed to have been decimated. A year later, however, the militants regrouped under a new leader and a former deputy to Yusuf, Abubakar Shekau, who has since 2010 overseen the most violent and deadliest manifestation of the group. For more on the group's timelines, see CNN Library, Boko Haram fast facts, http://edition.cnn.com/2014/06/09/world/boko-haram-fast-facts/, accessed 10 March 2016.

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About this monograph

This monograph presents the findings of a study aimed at understanding Boko Haram from the perspective of ordinary Nigerian citizens. Using field and desktop research, the study analyses a cross section of perspectives on the political context of Boko Haram and the dynamics surrounding the group's existence. The study identifies complex factors, including financial incentives, that motivate individuals to join the group, and underscores the need for multifaceted and multi-layered responses.

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