University of Groningen – Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies – Religion, Conflict and Globalization

Terrorism: A Valuable Description or an Ideological Stamp?

Critical Terrorism Studies applied to Boko Haram

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Abstract

Since the events of 9 September 2001, terrorism has come to occupy a central place within both the politics and media and academia. Despite the term's frequent use, however, an overall consensus of what it exactly entails has not been reached, meaning that different things are meant when employing the term. A dominant interpretation of the concept concerns the new terrorism thesis with which come various biases about terrorists' goals and identity. This has serious consequences for what we know about the phenomenon and how we choose to deal with the challenges that we face through terrorism.

It is the aim of this thesis to take a step back and analyse these epistemological and ontological biases through the theoretical framework of Critical Terrorism Studies. In order to answer some of the major critique on Critical Terrorism Studies, this thesis will make use of a case study, namely that of Boko Haram. This way, it is aimed to provide the academic field with an empirical example and get away from a mere theoretical discussion. Furthermore, it allows for an analysis of the consequences that come with a terrorist designation through a social constructivist approach.

The goal of this thesis is twofold: on the one hand it aims to provide the reader with another picture of Boko Haram, and, on the other hand, it tries to show the consequences that come with the terrorist designation of the group. This way, the thesis provides both a theoretical and empirical discussion of the term terrorism, in the hope that it will pave the way for better reactions to the phenomenon known as terrorism.

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Introduction

> These are not acts of peaceful protest. These are acts of domestic terror.
>
> – Donald J. Trump

The phrase above was asserted on the first of June 2020, by US President Donald J. Trump in response to the violent protests against police violence that had spread across the United States after the death of George Floyd. According to Trump, the peaceful protests had been corrupted by angry mobs, inflicting terror upon innocent, law-abiding, American civilians.[1] Just a day before this assertion, Trump vowed to designate one of the groups behind the protests, Antifa, as a terrorist organisation, an action which many US officials regarded as highly problematic and in violation of the rights provided by the First Amendment.[2] The mere utterance of these statements and the critique that comes with it, show the problem that many have identified when employing the concept of "terrorism": not only is it a descriptive term, it is also a highly politicised term, used to discredit, in this case the protestors.

The word terror made its first appearance in the West's political vocabulary to refer to the "Reign of Terror" under the French revolutionaries after the revolution of 1789.[3] However, the more frequent use of the term in both politics and media started some 50 years ago. From the early 1970s onwards, events of political violence began to be named "terrorist".[4] Nevertheless, research on terrorism was carried out on the periphery of academia and was mostly focused on left-wing groups. From the 1990s onwards, this focus on left-wing political groups began to be complemented with research on Islamic forms of terrorism, although it was mostly still a peripheral research area.[5] This all changed with the events of 9/11. The attacks by Al-Qaeda on targets in the United States brought terrorism research to the centre of both politics and academia.[6] Furthermore, these events also marked a turning point in focus, with research after 9/11 concentrating heavily on forms of Islamic terrorism and suicide terrorism.[7]

New Terrorism Thesis

This new focus on forms of Islamic terrorism is in line with the rise of the "new terrorism" thesis which suggests that, today, we are witnessing a new form of terrorism, more dangerous than the terrorist forms of political violence witnessed before. This thesis proposes that, in contrast to the politically motivated "terrorists" of the 1970s, today's terrorists are religiously inspired and driven by

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[1] Donald J. Trump, "Statement by the President," White House, June 1, 2020, accessed June 4, 2020, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-by-the-president-39/.

[2] Donald J. Trump, Twitter post, May 31, 2020 (6:23 p.m.), accessed June 4, 2020, https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1267129644228247552?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1267129644228247552&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nbcnews.com%2Fpolitics%2Fpolitics-news%2Ftrump-says-he-will-designate-antifa-terrorist-organization-gop-points-n1220321; Mike Levine, "Trump vows to designate antifa a terrorist group. Here's why DOJ officials call that 'highly problematic'," ABC News, June 1, 2020, accessed June 4, 2020, https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/trump-vows-designate-antifa-terrorist-group-heres-doj/story?id=70999186.

[3] Charles Tilly, "Terror, Terrorism, Terrorists," *Sociological Theory* 22, no. 1 (March 2004): 8-9.

[4] Joseba Zulaika and William A. Douglass, *Terror and Taboo: The Follies, Fables, and Faces of Terrorism* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 45-46.

[5] Richard Jackson, Marie Breen Smyth, and Jeroen Gunning, eds., *Critical Terrorism Studies: A new research agenda* (London: Routledge, 2009), 61.

[6] Ibid., 47.

[7] Ibid.

extremism and fanaticism, causing them to inflict mass casualties upon civilians.[8] In accordance with the rise of these new ideas, terrorism has come to be constructed as a form of absolute evil which needs to be fought at all costs. Evidence of such ideas can be found in the speeches given by US President George W. Bush after the events of 9/11 in which he talked about 'the curse of terrorism' and 'terrorist parasites'.[9] In line with the "new terrorism" thesis, such statements have helped to create terrorism as something irrational, making terrorists unfit for any form of dialogue.[10] These beliefs, along with the events of 9/11, have caused terrorism to come to be constructed as a globally oriented war, instead of framing it as a local problem, as was done before 2001.[11] In thinking along these lines, President Bush constructed the events of 9/11 as an act of war which posed a threat to Western civilisation arguing that the perpetrators would not remain unpunished.[12] The subsequent US response to the events of 9/11 was its "War on Terror".

The belief in a new, more dangerous form of terrorism allowed for the legitimation and construction of new counterterrorism methods.[13] As such, the "War on Terror" has become part of a larger meta-narrative of "good" versus "evil" which links smoothly to the "new terrorism" thesis. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the rise and expansion of groups like Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State have been frequently covered in the media, highly debated among politicians and much researched within academia. What is striking in all of these cases, however, is the fact that there seems to be no clear definition on what "terrorism" exactly entails. An overall consensus on a definition for the concept has not been reached, with some scholars even arguing that attempts at reifying the term should be abandoned altogether.[14] Despite this ambiguity, however, the concept continues to be employed by a majority of academics when doing research on "terrorist" organisations or other terrorism-related topics. From the second half of the 2000s onwards, this undisputed employment of the term "terrorism" has come to be challenged: a critique that arises out of a new academic field known as Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS).

Meeting Critique on CTS: A Case Study

It is the aim of this thesis to work within this new research framework of Critical Terrorism Studies. As such, this thesis wishes to move beyond the discussion on what "terrorism" exactly entails, asking instead what the implications of the employment of such a concept are. CTS is not so much concerned with the question of *what* terrorism is, but *how* terrorism is conceptualised and what implications this has.[15] This means that it does not consider science to be objective nor value neutral, therefore regarding "terrorism" a social fact, rather than that it can be given a clear-cut definition.[16]

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[8] For examples of scholars who employ (part of) the new terrorism thesis see Louise Richardson, *What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Enemy, Containing the Threat* (New York: Random House, 2006), 61-62; Marc Sageman, "Preface," in *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), vii.

[9] Richard Jackson, "Genealogy, Ideology, and Counter-Terrorism: Writing wars on terrorism from Ronald Reagan to George W. Bush Jr," *Studies in Language & Capitalism* 1, no. 1 (2006): 176-177. For a research on how terrorists are constructed as the absolute form of evil in the media see Christina Spens, *The Portrayal and Punishment of Terrorists in Western Media: Playing the Villain* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

[10] Jackson, Breen Smyth, and Gunning, 71-72.

[11] Jacob L. Stump and Priya Dixit, *Critical Terrorism Studies: An introduction to research methods* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 114.

[12] Jackson, "Genealogy, Ideology, and Counter-Terrorism," 166, 168-169.

[13] Ibid, 167-168, 172; Edmund Leach, *Custom, Law, and Terrorist Violence* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1977), 36.

[14] Zulaika and Douglass, 98.

[15] Stump and Dixit, 21.

[16] Ibid., 27.

The academic field of CTS will be discussed in further detail in the first chapter of this thesis, for now, however, it can be stated that one of the main aims of CTS is to 'destabilise dominant interpretations and demonstrate the inherently contested and political nature of the [terrorism] discourse'.[17]

In order to meet this aim, this thesis will make use of a case study, namely that of Boko Haram. By employing a case study, this thesis reacts to one of the main critiques that has been voiced against Critical Terrorism Studies, namely that it focuses too much on methodological and theoretical concerns 'at the expense of substantive or particular analysis'.[18] By employing a specific case study, this thesis will link the broader critique of CTS (which will be provided in the first chapter) to the empirical world in which Boko Haram operates.

To meet this goal, this thesis will make use of the following research question: What are the implications of applying the term "terrorism" to the organisation known as Boko Haram?[19] The time frame that will be of relevance for the case study of this research is the period from 2002, the year to which most sources date the organisation's emergence, until August 2016, when an internal split occurred within the group after the Islamic State (which Boko Haram had sworn allegiance to) had replaced Abubakar Shekau by Abu Musab al-Barnawi as leader of the group.[20] This time frame will allow for inclusion of two distinct periods in the organisation's existence: the less violent period prior to 2009 when the movement was still led by its original founder, Mohammed Yusuf, and its shift to a more violent period over the subsequent years after Mohammed Yusuf was killed by security forces and replaced by Abubakar Shekau.[21]

The case study will be conducted through an extensive literature study. Although many CTS scholars have argued for more fieldwork to be done within the field of Terrorism Studies, a master thesis cannot meet this demand since it takes a long time to build a trust relationship with members of an organisation like Boko Haram and since such a process involves high risks. This thesis, however, will still try to incorporate the "Boko Haram-perspective" when discussing the movement's development and ideology by using (translated) primary sources. An important primary source that needs to be mentioned in this regard is the book written by Mohammed Yusuf around 2005.[22] In this book, the founder of Boko Haram explains the ideology of the group. Although some parts of the ideology have undergone a transformation in later years, the book is of major importance in understanding the origin of the ideas of Boko Haram. Furthermore, the group has published many statements, speeches and videos of its leaders and actions online. Although most of these are in Hausa (a Chadic language that is also spoken in Northern Nigerian), many of them have been directly translated without any further comments into the only sourcebook yet available. This book will also be of major importance in the analysis of the group's ideology.[23] By analysing these primary sources, this thesis will offer Boko Haram a voice, showing how the group portrays itself and the context in which it operates.

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[17] Jackson, Breen Smyth, and Gunning, 140.

[18] Steve Smith, Ken Booth, and Marysia Zalewski, eds., *International theory: positivism and beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 221-222, 320.

[19] Although the group is mostly known under its nickname Boko Haram, the official name reads Jama'at Ahl As-Sunna Lid-D'awa wal-Jihad. For the sake of readability, however, this thesis will stick with the most well-known name of the group.

[20] Alexander Thurston, *Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 84, 276.

[21] International Crisis Group, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency*, Africa Report no. 216. (April 3, 2014), 19.

[22] Mohammed Yusuf, هذه عقيدتنا و منهج دعوتنا (*This is Our Creed and Method of Call)*, (Maiduguri: 2005). The translations of this book were done by the author herself and can be found in the appendix of this thesis.

[23] Abdulbasit Kassim and Michael Nwankpa (eds.), *The Boko Haram Reader: From Nigerian Preachers to the Islamic State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

For the other chapters, a variety of secondary sources has been used. A problem with research on Boko Haram, however, is that the group started to attract academic attention only after its violent turn from the end of 2011 onwards. This means that documentation on the group before 2011 is especially limited. Therefore, this thesis will only provide mention of events before this date when they are mentioned in more than one source. Because of the thesis' theoretical framework, it will remain important to reflect upon dominant interpretations and to see if local sources would tell a different story. This means that documents published by NGOs such as Amnesty International or International Crisis Group, which contain interviews with local Nigerians, will also be of major importance for this thesis. By making use of both these primary sources and a variety of secondary sources, this thesis will provide an additional perspective on Boko Haram besides the "commonsensical" understanding of it being a violent terrorist group.

Organisation of the Thesis

The debate around the concept of "terrorism" will be further addressed in the first chapter of this thesis. By first introducing the reader to the dominant perceptions on "terrorism," it will then be possible to lay out the critique of CTS scholars on the field of Terrorism Studies. Afterwards, the ontological, epistemological and ethical bases of CTS will be discussed, as well as the social constructivist methodology that will be applied.

After this first theoretical chapter, the thesis will then provide the reader an overview of the political and socio-economic context in which Boko Haram was able to arise and expand. By paying significant attention to the fierce competition in the federal system and the corruption that came about as a result of the dire economic situation, an overview of the origins of much of Boko Haram's ideology will be provided. Furthermore, the chapter will pay attention to the crisis of religious authority within traditional Sufism and how this crisis created space for the rise of Salafist groups. By placing Boko Haram in its context, this chapter aims to show that Boko Haram is not unique in how it reacts to the context in which it finds itself.

After these two introductory chapters, the thesis will head to its core discussion, namely the implications of the "terrorist" label. First, the dominant worldview will be discussed, researching how Boko Haram can indeed be defined to be a terrorist group. Hereby, the thesis will make use of the reasons given by the Nigerian and US governments and the United Nations to designate Boko Haram as "terrorist.[24] These different reasons will then each be discussed separately in the remainder of the chapter: the group's violence, its alleged links to other "terrorist" groups, and its ideology. The chapter will not only provide proof of these reasons, but also try to critically review each of them. This way, the thesis will pose some questions concerning the terrorist designation, showing that it is not merely an objective process.

The last chapter will then engage in a short discussion on what consequences the terrorist designation has had. Three themes will be of major importance in this chapter: the direct regional consequences, external support, and the legitimacy of an all-out war against Boko Haram. Although it might be possible to write a separate thesis about this last chapter, the aim of the chapter is not so much to provide an accurate overview and debate of the consequences of this "terrorist" designation, but more to add to the previous chapters in problematizing a terrorist designation by showing the serious consequences it might have.

The conclusion will then build further on these last two chapters to see how the concept of "terrorism" is applicable to Boko Haram, but also to see how this "terrorist" identity obscures other characteristics of the group. As such, the conclusion will link back to the introductory chapter on CTS,

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[24] The US has been involved in the "War on Terror" and was among one of the first nations outside the region to designate Boko Haram as a terrorist organisation.

providing proof of its theoretical critique by linking this critique to an empirical analysis. As such, this thesis will meet its two major goals: on the one hand it will provide an additional perspective on Boko Haram compared to mainstream terrorism literature on the organisation, and on the other hand, it will provide CTS with references to the empirical world, taking away some of the critique expressed on the field.

1. The Terrorism Debate

Debates on the exact definition of the concept of "terrorism" have been ongoing since the term was first introduced during the French Revolution.[25] Whereas some scholars lay emphasis on the harming of non-combatants, others argue that the factor of fear is determinative in whether an act can be considered terrorism or not.[26] Hundreds of definitions have been given, but no consensus has ever been reached on what the concept exactly entails. This inability to provide a convincing definition has led some researchers to argue that we should abandon the attempt to reify "terrorism" altogether.[27] Yet despite this inability, one observation can be made with certainty: considering all the research output and analyses of "terrorism" in academia, media and politics, there appears to exist a category of political violence deemed different from other forms of political violence.[28] As much as the various definitions have been contested, there seems to be an overall consensus within academia regarding this observation.[29]

Instead of aligning with those scholars who argue against the employment of the term, this chapter will lay the basis for a broad approach to the concept of terrorism which will be of importance for later chapters of this thesis. In order to do so, this chapter will first engage in an analysis of some of the main definitions that have been given to the concept of terrorism in order to demonstrate how these definitions differ in emphasis. However, despite the ambiguity of the concept of terrorism, the field of Terrorism Studies (TS) is still involved in traditional terrorism research treating terrorism as an objective fact. After having laid out the two major critiques on this orthodox form of Terrorism Studies, the chapter will then continue with an analysis of the newly emerging field known as Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS). By observing how this field reacts to the critique expressed on TS, the ontological and epistemological perspectives of this thesis will be established. With the clarification of these viewpoints this thesis wishes to meet the demand of many CTS scholars who argue for the need to define one's ontological and epistemological viewpoints at the start of the research.[30] This way, political orientations are made more explicit, and CTS prevents itself from becoming vulnerable to the same critique which has been expressed on TS. The last part of this chapter will then provide the reader with a short discussion on the methodology of this thesis, social constructivism, and a plan on how CTS will return in the rest of the thesis.

Dominant Definitions of Terrorism

Richard Jackson, Marie Breen Smyth and Jeroen Gunning, all academics who argue for a critical turn in Terrorism Studies, have found that, despite small differences in more specified definitions of terrorism, a majority of scholars defines terrorism in broadly the same way attributing five characteristics to the concept. This consensus definition defines terrorism as (1) violence; (2) which is instrumental; (3) conducted for political ends; (4) to influence an audience wider than the immediate target(s) (this is where the three scholars incorporate the factor of fear); and (5) achieved through

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[25] Tilly, 8-9.

[26] An example of a definition focusing on the harming of non-combatants can be found in Virginia Held, *How Terrorism Is Wrong: Morality and Political Violence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 73. This book also includes a definition focusing on the aspect of fear. Another definition that includes fear can be found in Charles L. Ruby, "The Definition of Terrorism," *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy* 2, no. 1 (2002): 11.

[27] Stump and Dixit, 8; Zulaika and Douglass, 98.

[28] Held, 71-72.

[29] Some scholars would argue in favour of abandoning the term. The majority of scholars, however, still sees use in employing the term, even when an agreed definition is out of reach. This will be further elaborated on in the next section.

[30] Richard Jackson, "The Core Commitments of Critical Terrorism Studies," *European Political Science* 6, no. 3 (September 2007): 246; Stump and Dixit, 160.

the deliberate and systematic violation of the established norms surrounding the force.[31] As can already be observed, this definition does not include the focus on non-combatants discussed at the start of this chapter. This exclusion of non-combatants would lead some to reject this definition whereas others would argue that the definition given above is already too broad.[32]

The Oxford Dictionary provides one with a narrower definition: 'the use of violent action in order to achieve political aims or to force a government to act'.[33] The Oxford Dictionary thus includes only two of the abovementioned characteristics, leaving the issue of fear undiscussed. What is striking, however, is that the same dictionary employs a second definition of terrorism as the 'government by intimidation as directed and carried out by the party in power in France during the Revolution of 1789-94…' Regarding this specific case, the Dictionary does include the factor of fear in addition to its emphases on the political aspect of terrorism.[34]

Looking into the definitions provided by political bodies does not clarify things any further. The United States Code defines the concept of terrorism as 'premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents'.[35] Compared to the two definitions given above, this definition thus emphasises the role of non-combatants in determining whether an act or actor can be called terrorism or not. What is striking, however, is that this definition excludes states from the possibility of being named terrorist. On the other hand, the United Nations employs a definition with a strong focus on terrorism-as-a-crime perspective, whereby death or serious bodily injury to persons and/or damage to property is determining. This definition in turn leaves out the political aspect which is deemed so important by the other definitions provided above.[36]

Despite this big variation in defining aspects of the concept of terrorism, scholars in the field of Terrorism Studies still apply a positivist ontology, carrying out research only on those organisations and acts that have been designated as terrorist. It is precisely this stance on which one of the two major critiques on TS focuses.

Critique on Orthodox Terrorism Studies

Although there exists a variety of criticisms on orthodox Terrorism Studies, this chapter will focus on the two most prominent critiques that have been voiced. The first critique concerns the field's assumption of state-centrism. TS' adoption of a positivist ontology means that the majority of TS scholars takes the world as they find it starting from the assumption that terrorism is a phenomenon that can be studied fairly objectively using traditional social scientific methodologies.[37] This means that TS focuses on those organisations and acts that have been designated as terrorist because it does not question the concept itself. However, the problem with this strategy is that it are states who define what is terrorism and what is not.[38] Instead of questioning this correlation between a terrorist designation and state power, TS takes it as its starting point.

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[31] Jackson, Breen Smyth, and Gunning, 58.

[32] An elaborated discussion on various definitions for the concept of terrorism, including critique on each definition, can be found in Alex P. Schmid and Albert J. Jongman, *Political Terrorism: A New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Data Bases, Theories and Literature* (Amsterdam: SWIDOC, 1988).

[33] Oxford English Dictionary, 3rd ed., s.v. "terrorism," accessed June 5, 2020, https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/terrorism?q=Terrorism.

[34] Tilly, 8.

[35] Bureau of Counterterrorism, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2018*, United States Department of State Publication (October 2019), 331.

[36] Alex P. Schmid, "Frameworks for Conceptualising Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16, no. 2 (2004): 198-199.

[37] Jackson, Breen Smyth, and Gunning, 70.

[38] Schmid, 198.

As such, TS has been argued by many Critical Terrorism Studies scholars to be in service of existing power structures.[39] This is partly the result of a more prevalent practice within International Relations whereby the state is taken as the point of reference.[40] TS is no exception in this regard. The consequence of this adoption of the state as the basic entity, is that TS sees the state as being threatened by terrorism. And the problem-solving theory that dominates TS thus takes terrorism as the problem that needs solving and the policy-making by states as the solution to this problem.[41] Regarding these assumptions, it can indeed be observed that a majority of TS scholars is linked to state institutions in order to advise on proper policies to quell the threat posed by terrorism.[42] The relation between TS and state-centrism thus works both ways: states define terrorism and therefore the research field of TS, yet the scholars active in TS advise the state on what can be considered terrorism and what policies to employ in order to combat it. This dual relationship leads scholars who adhere to a more critical stance of TS to argue that this state-centrism reifies the status quo making it a problematic aspect of TS.[43]

The second major critique on TS is linked to this critique on state-centrism and concerns the delegitimization of non-state actors. Whereas TS naturalizes states and takes them as a basic entity, the other side of the story is that those designated as terrorist are almost all non-state actors.[44] The prevailing logic of the Westphalian system within TS, and International Relations in a broader sense, makes that states gain some form of moral legitimacy. As Caron E. Gentry, a Professor in International Relations, points out, this presumed link between legal status and morality is problematic as it denies non-state actors their legitimacy. This epistemic bias implies that violence by state actors is seen as more acceptable and legitimate compared to violence by non-state actors.[45]

The delegitimization of non-state actors is further strengthened by what Marie Breen Smyth has coined an "aura of moral certainty" that is prevalent within TS. Mainstream stories in the media and politics turn terrorism into some form of absolute evil in which "bad" people engage.[46] This moral outlook is coupled with the practice of dehumanisation in both the media and politics.[47] These practices cause a limited understanding of possible other identities that such "terrorist" actors might have.[48] Although TS does not fully participate in this practice, it does not actively seek to counter these stories either. Instead, there seems to be an overall practice of silencing within TS whereby other identities of a "terrorist" organisation remain unexplored.[49] This silencing, coupled with dehumanisation in the media and politics, makes that many of the arguments put forward by

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[39] Jackson, Breen Smyth, and Gunning, 6.

[40] Caron E. Gentry, "Epistemic Bias: Legitimate Authority and Politically Violent Nonstate Actors," in *The Future of Just War: New Critical Essays*, eds. Caron E. Gentry and Amy E. Eckert (Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2014), 21-22.

[41] Jackson, "The Core Commitments," 245; Stump and Dixit, 15-16.

[42] Ibid.; Richardson, xix-xx.

[43] Jackson, "The Core Commitments," 245.

[44] An exception is the speech given by President Bush in January 2002 in which he accused a list of countries to be supporting terrorism, better known under the name of the "axis of evil" speech. This accusation, however, does not conform to the definition of terrorism employed by the United States Department of State. George W. Bush, "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union," Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents 38, no. 5 (January 29, 2002): 133-139.

[45] Gentry, 22-24.

[46] Marie Breen Smyth, "A Critical Research Agenda for the Study of Political Terror," *European Political Science* 6, no. 3 (September 2007): 261.

[47] For an analysis on the dehumanisation of terrorists in the media see Spens. For dehumanisation of terrorists in politics see Jackson, "Genealogy, Ideology, and Counter-Terrorism," 174-175.

[48] Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell, "Introduction," in *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour* (London: Sage Publications, 1987), 7.

[49] Ken Booth, *Theory of World Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 160.

identified "terrorist" actors are depoliticized and found to be irrational, an argument which links back to the "new terrorism" thesis.[50]

Critical Terrorism Studies

By identifying the influence of the "new terrorism" thesis and the prevalence of the idea of fixed identities in Terrorism Studies, Critical Terrorism Studies is aware of the value judgements that come with the employment of a term like "terrorism".[51] Recognising this feature of the concept, many scholars have pointed out that the term might be employed as a term of abuse to condemn other parties.[52] Designating Boko Haram as a terrorist organisation makes it part of a list full of designated terrorist organisations like the Islamic State. At the same time, however, Trump's accusation of Antifa being a domestic terrorist organisation, adds this group to the list as well. As the term is being applied to a variety of organisations, it can be observed that the concept of "terrorism" is not a causally coherent phenomenon.[53] Building upon this observation, Joseba Zulaika and William A. Douglass, both researchers on Basque nationalism, ask whether the concept "terrorism" better clarifies the facts compared to when the term would not be employed. Their answer, along with many other CTS scholars, is no.[54]

Yet, few CTS scholars would argue in favour of abandoning the term "terrorism" or its modifier "terror" altogether. Instead, Jackson, Breen Smyth and Gunning have identified CTS as a research strategy between positivism and post-structuralism. While being aware of the shortcomings of the concept of "terrorism", CTS does not reject the use of categories of regularity. CTS does not deny the existence of a separate category of violence that could be named "terrorism", but it argues that one should be very self-aware and critical when employing the term because of its tendency to be misused.[55] This makes that most CTS scholars still argue in favour of using the term "terrorism." Yet they do so by warning to remain suspicious of the term's employment and to be aware of the term's contingency and political effect.[56]

Because of the issues raised above, CTS is very much concerned with the question of whom research on terrorism is for. Being aware of the fact that theory is always *for* someone and *for* some purpose, CTS scholars ask whose interests are being served when employing the term "terrorism" and doing research upon the phenomenon.[57] This implies a very different epistemological position compared to TS: CTS assumes that our knowledge about "terrorism" is linked to power.[58]

Because of this epistemological position, CTS also occupies a different stance in relation to knowledge. Whereas TS works from a positivist ontology, taking "terrorism" as it is, CTS adopts an ontology in which terrorism is considered a social fact, not a phenomenon "out there".[59] CTS acknowledges that research is always carried out from a particular point of view, indicating that

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[50] Gentry names this denial of credibility a form of hermeneutical injustice. For more on this concept see Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power & the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
[51] Jutta Weldes, Mark Laffey, Hugh Gusterson, and Raymond Duvall, eds., *Cultures of Insecurity: States, Communities, and the Production of Danger* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 9-10.
[52] Held, 76; Maxwell Taylor, *The Terrorist* (London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1988), 35; Zulaika and Douglass, 98.
[53] Jackson, "The Core Commitments," 248.
[54] Zulaika and Douglass, 100.
[55] Jackson, Breen Smyth, and Gunning, 93.
[56] Ibid., Robert W. Cox, "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 10, no. 2 (June 1981): 128.
[57] Booth, 150; Cox, 128.
[58] Jackson, Breen Smyth, and Gunning, 140; Stump and Dixit, 29.
[59] Stump and Dixit, 28.

whether someone or something is called "terrorism" depends on one's perspective.[60] Thus rather than arguing that "terrorism" can be studied objectively, CTS recognises the impossibility of objectivity within the social sciences and works from the observation that truth is relative. An often-heard phrase in this regard is that 'one person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter'.[61] Building on the observation that meaning is socially and culturally constructed, CTS also considers "terrorism" to be socially constructed.[62]

The ontological and epistemological position of CTS questions the dominant understanding of terrorism employed by TS scholars since it believes this knowledge to be inevitably linked to state power. CTS therefore wishes to move beyond these "commonsensical" interpretations. This means that an important aspect of CTS, as identified by Breen Smyth, is "othercentric" research: paying attention to the voices of those who are silenced and/or marginalized in the dominant terrorism discourse.[63] This way, CTS aims to show how identities such as "terrorist" are not fixed but can change over time. People change and so do the groups in which they organise themselves. This is in line with the argument that terrorism should, above all, be seen as a strategy that recurs across a wide variety of actors.[64]

This alternative conception of terrorism, leads CTS scholars to search for other alternative solutions to stop terrorism in addition to the mere policy-advisory role for states that most TS scholars occupy.[65] This is where the term emancipation comes in. Emancipation, as defined by Andrew Linklater, is

> [...] to increase the spheres of social interaction that are governed by dialogue and consent rather than power and force; to expand the number of human beings who have access to a speech community that has the potential to become universal; and to create the socioeconomic preconditions of effective, as opposed to nominal, involvement for all members of that community.[66]

Within CTS emancipation is identified as the main goal. From the quote above one can infer that this means emancipation for all, including the voices of those who are silenced by TS. As such, CTS aims to construct and facilitate a dialogue in which everyone can participate in order to put an end to terrorism and other forms of political violence.

Critical Terrorism Studies Applied

Concerning the main critique on Terrorism Studies, this thesis will adopt the ontological and epistemological position of Critical Terrorism Studies in order to prevent itself from falling into the same trap as orthodox TS. This means that it considers terrorism to be a social fact and knowledge of the phenomenon as social and linked to structures of power. Yet, instead of merely deconstructing the concept of terrorism, as would be done when one were to apply a more postmodernist or poststructuralist approach, this thesis will aim to move beyond issues of terminology and semantics by employing a social constructivist approach. This is done in order to show the reader the effects and implications of applying a terrorist label to an organisation like Boko Haram, albeit to a limited extent due to the confined length of this thesis.

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[60] Booth, 150; Leach, 12; Stump and Dixit, 55.
[61] Jackson, Breen Smyth, and Gunning, 149.
[62] Weldes et al., 13.
[63] Breen Smyth, 266; Jackson, Breen Smyth, and Gunning, 228; Stump and Dixit, 99.
[64] Schmid and Jongman, 28; Tilly, 5.
[65] Jackson, Breen Smyth, and Gunning, 104-105.
[66] Andrew Linklater, "The Changing Contours of Critical International Relations Theory," in *Critical Theory and World Politics*, ed. Richard Wyn Jones (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 31.

Social constructivism emphasises the role of ideas in constituting identities and interests. Therefore, it does not adhere to a positivist conception of "terrorism" but problematizes the social fact and explores how agents employ ideas to shape such a fact.[67] Ideas are thus argued to be created, instead of a priori given. This is where the term "structuration" comes in. According to Anthony Giddens, 'one of the main propositions of structuration theory is that the rules and resources drawn upon in the production and reproduction of social action are at the same time the means of system reproduction.'[68] Thus an agent's actions shape the social structure in which he finds himself, yet this social structure shapes and confines the agent in both his conscience and his actions. In order to exemplify what is meant, this thesis will thus consider the concept of "terrorism" and what is meant by it to be constructed by agents like politicians and the media. Yet, this meaning-making process forms the social structure in which these agents find themselves and so they start to behave accordingly. Whereas "terrorism" was a concept on the fringes of the political debate during most of the 20th century, the introduction of the concept by various influential politicians, academics and the media has made it part of how we, nowadays, make sense of the world. A result that has serious consequences for the policies we choose to employ in combatting terrorism.

Whereas the issues raised above have been part of a theoretical discussion, prominent scholars within CTS have been arguing for a link to be made to the empirical world.[69] This thesis will try to meet this demand by engaging in a case study on the group known as Boko Haram. Having discussed the ontological and epistemological position of this thesis, the subsequent chapters will try to answer the main research question of this thesis. In order to do so successfully, it is important first to see in what context Boko Haram operates.

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[67] Ron E. Hassner, "On Sacred Grounds," in *War on Sacred Grounds* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2013), 6.

[68] Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984), 19.

[69] Smith, Booth, and Zalewski, 221-222, 320.

2. Local Context

In line with the demand of some of the major scholars of Critical Terrorism Studies, this chapter will try to provide an overview of the local context of Northern Nigeria in which Boko Haram was able to emerge. As was put forward in the previous chapter, an over-emphasis on the "terrorist" identity of Boko Haram and its actors, limits our understanding of the group's other identities. While, outside of the local context, a Boko Haram fighter is primarily identified as a terrorist based on his mere membership of the group, this same person can also be identified as a father, a farmer, a clan member, and various other possibilities that come with one's personality. People are members of a variety of groups, they do not carry just one identity that defines who a person is and what he does.[70]

By keeping up the illusion of a unique singular identity and by strongly focusing on contemporary forms of terrorism, we tend to ignore other affiliations of the group's actors. This denial of plurality 'can produce an astonishingly narrow and miscredited view' of a group like Boko Haram.[71] In other words, we risk losing an understanding of the broader context and so to decontextualize "terrorist" groups.[72] So in order to be able to fully understand a group like Boko Haram, we need to be prepared to understand its actors in terms of the many affiliations that they carry by virtue of them participating in social life. This chapter will therefore aim to place Boko Haram within the wider political, economic, social and religious developments of the region and so to "de-exceptionalise" the group.[73]

The chapter will first provide a short account of the historical background of Northern Nigeria with a focus on the political developments of the country in general to make the reader familiar with the special position of Northern Nigeria. This discussion of Nigeria's political history will allow for an analysis of the socio-economic issues of the country, specifically of the Northern region. These two discussions provide a basis for the discussion of religion in Northern Nigeria and the rise of Salafism. By making use of a historical approach, it will be shown that Boko Haram's ideology is traceable to socio-political and religious developments in Northern Nigeria. This will shortly be discussed towards the end of the chapter, when a short overview of Boko Haram's development will be provided. This approach will conform to the demand set by CTS so as to take away some of the uniqueness that is attributed to the group.

A History of Political Competition

The region that comprises the territory of today's Nigeria has known a long and diverse history. When the country obtained its independence in 1960, it had a shared history of only 50 years under British colonial rule.[74] Before 1912, the country was divided up in several regions, each with its own unique political and religious history. It is thus little surprising that Nigeria is considered to be a very diverse place in many respects: political, cultural, ethnic, religious, et cetera. Within a population of 214 million people,[75] over 250 different ethnic groups are identified, and more than 500 languages

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[70] Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006), 4-5.
[71] Ibid., xv, 45, 67.
[72] Jackson, Breen Smyth, and Gunning, 46.
[73] Ibid., 96.
[74] Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton, *A History of Nigeria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 116.
[75] Making Nigeria Africa's most densely populated country.

are spoken.[76] Of these 214 million people, an estimated 53 million people live in Nigeria's Northern region who account for around 160 of the 250 ethnic groups in the country.[77]

Although there are various indigenous religions, most Nigerians adhere to either Islam or Christianity.[78] These two religions correspond to a clear geographical division within the country: whereas the north of the country is predominantly Muslim, the south of the country is identified as mostly Christian.[79] This division has its origins in the country's history: Islam spread from the Middle East and North Africa via the trans-Saharan trade routes into sub-Saharan Africa, a development that took place in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries when the leaders of the Hausa states adopted the religion.[80] Christianity, on the other hand, only came in the nineteenth century when the British first sought control of the coastal areas and from there gradually made their way inland.[81]

Although Islam was introduced about four to five centuries earlier than Christianity, it remained mostly an elite religion for these first centuries, allowing it to exist alongside indigenous religions. This all changed with the jihad[82] waged by 'Uthman dan Fodio, a cleric who preached internal reform for a proper Muslim way of life. Although there exists a debate on the exact causes of the jihad within academia (whether it was purely a religious affair or also ethnically inspired), what is of importance here is that the jihad brought all of the former competing Hausa states together into one political entity: the Sokoto Caliphate.[83] Starting in 1804 and lasting for a little more than five years, the jihad waged by Dan Fodio turned the Sokoto Caliphate into one of West Africa's most powerful pre-colonial states and still forms a source of great pride for many Muslims in the region today.[84]
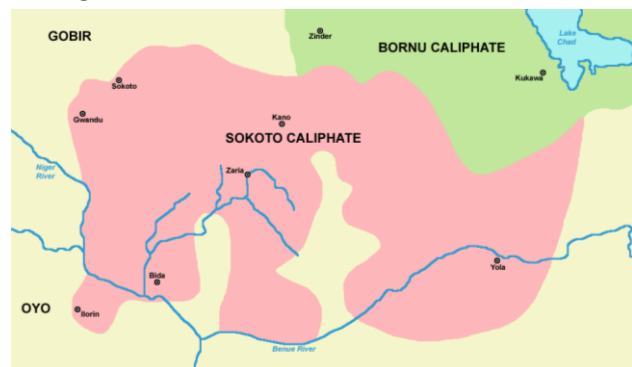
The Sokoto Caliphate in the 19th century

[85]Islam became the official religion of the Sokoto Caliphate and spread among all levels of the population. At the head of the caliphate was a caliph who ruled through local emirs at the top of

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[76] Central Intelligence Agency, "Nigeria," *The World Factbook*, last modified June 17, 2020, accessed July 5, 2020, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html.

[77] International Crisis Group, *Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict*, Africa Report no. 168 (Dakar/Brussels: ICG, December 20, 2010), i, 2.

[78] Islam accounts for around 53.5% of Nigerians and Christianity for around 45.9%. Central Intelligence Agency.

[79] Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1998), 1.

[80] Ibid., 25.

[81] Falola and Heaton, 93.

[82] Literally the term means "to strive". It is used to describe a struggle in the path of Allah. Classical theory distinguishes between two types of jihad: spiritual and physical jihad. Whereas spiritual jihad is aimed towards the inner soul and mind of the believer to attain and maintain faith, physical jihad is aimed at unbelievers to establish Islamic law (sharia) and so to live an Islamic way of life as commanded by the Koran. The jihad that 'Uthman dan Fodio led can be considered a form of physical jihad. For more information see *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, 2nd ed., s.v. "jihad".

[83] Falola and Heaton, 62-65, 71; Johannes Harnischfeger, *Democratization and Islamic Law: The Sharia Conflict in Nigeria* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 42-43; Lissi Rasmussen, *Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa: The Cases of Northern Nigeria and Tanzania Compared* (London: British Academic Press, 1993), 8.

[84] ICG, *Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict*, i, 4.

[85] Source map: "Sokoto Caliphate, 19th century," *Wikipedia*, last modified June 12, 2020, accessed July 6, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sokoto_Caliphate.

each emirate.[86] The Sokoto Caliphate undermined the former political and ethnic boundaries that characterised the Hausa states and created one economic and political market in which stress was laid upon the uniqueness of Islam. As several scholars have observed, this new political reality created a situation in which the people came to identify as Muslims first and saw themselves as part of a wider *ummah*.[87]

The Sokoto Caliphate existed as an independent political entity until 1903 when the British colonized Northern Nigeria and so completed their colonization of the area today known as Nigeria.[88] The two major reasons for the colonization of the Sokoto Caliphate were fears for rivalry with the caliph of Sokoto, who had already lost some territories to the British, and fear for French ambitions in the region. Whereas some elite rulers resisted the British colonization, resulting in the killing of the caliph and the flight of some prominent citizens eastwards, the British encountered an administrative system that was very functional and could easily be taken over.[89] The British therefore only replaced some rebellious emirs and implemented a system of indirect rule, ruling through the Fulani[90] aristocracy of the Sokoto Caliphate.[91]

This system of indirect rule has had some major long-lasting impacts in Northern Nigeria. Whereas before the authorities had to account for their policies to their subjects, they now answered to the will of the British.[92] The authorities thus lost credibility in the eyes of its subjects, especially so when colonial policy showed its negative consequences and Nigerians were hit harsh economically during the 1920s and 1930s.[93] However, the cooperation with the British also had advantages for the Fulani aristocracy: they retained their influence and were able to set some demands on colonial policy. This meant that sharia[94] remained the organized law and that the British would interfere with local culture as little as possible.[95] The most important consequence of this last policy, which will be of major importance in the later analysis of this chapter, is the fact that Christian missionaries were denied entrance to the Northern region. This meant that Western education, which was in the hands of these missionaries, was confined to the Southern region of today's Nigeria and to the few Christian groups that lived in the north.[96]

Whereas the British first ruled the different parts of Nigeria as separate regions, they amalgamated the Northern region and the two Southern regions in 1912 for economic reasons.[97] This meant that two very diverse areas in religious, political and socio-economic respects came together under the same banner, a reality that has resulted in the so-called Nigerian national question. Because of the high diversity of Nigeria's population, it is difficult to answer the question as to what constitutes Nigeria. Abdul Raufu Mustapha, an Associate Professor in African Politics, has argued that the national question in Nigeria manifests itself in a series of eight contradictions, among which 'the North-South divide; . . . the three major nationalities on the one hand, and the smaller

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[86] Administrative subdivisions of the caliphate; Falola and Heaton, 67.

[87] "Islamic community". For more information see *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, 2nd ed., s.v. "umma"; Benjamin F. Soares and René Otayek, eds., *Islam and Muslim Politics in Africa* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 179; Falola and Heaton, 72; Rasmussen, 8, 20.

[88] Falola and Heaton, 93.

[89] Ibid., 104-105.

[90] An ethnic group that rose to power following the jihad waged by 'Uthman dan Fodio.

[91] Falola and Heaton, 111; Harnischfeger, 50-51.

[92] Falola and Heaton, 110, 132.

[93] Ibid., 141.

[94] "Islamic law".

[95] Harnischfeger, 51-52.

[96] Abdul Raufu Mustapha, "The National Question and Radical Politics in Nigeria," *Review of African Political Economy* no. 37 (December 1986): 84; Falola and Heaton, 116.

[97] Falola and Heaton, 116.

nationalities on the other; inter-state rivalry between the current . . . states of the federation; [and] inter-ethnic rivalries in a mixed state'.[98]

What further hampered the creation of a national identity was the British policy of divide-and-rule whereby internal differences between the different groups and regions were emphasized so as to prevent the formation of a common Nigerian block against British colonial rule.[99] This policy of divide-and-rule has had major repercussions for Nigeria's later history. Fears of domination by another region prevailed during the process of decolonization and eventually led to the creation of a federal system in which each region would maintain control over its internal affairs. Especially the distrust between the northern and southern parts of the country is strong.[100] Whereas northerners fear domination by a southern well-educated Christian elite which advocates a secular system, most southerners fear a policy of Islamization were the north to be in power.[101]

Yet, this federal system has also countered the formation of a national identity as focus was, and is, laid upon the distribution of the "spoils of office" instead of working towards 'common objectives for nation-building'.[102] As Abubakar Momoh and Said Adejumobi, both scholars in African politics, argue, the national question is mostly linked to an uneven distribution of political power and economic resources which in turn creates communal rivalry.[103] Nigeria's federal system is organised in such a way that those who have political power decide on the distribution of the country's resources and jobs available in the national and local government administrations.[104] This has resulted in a political reality where competition at the national and federal level for political control has become very fierce. In this context, politicians have, since independence up to today, been using ethnic and religious identities as a rally base to gain votes, highlighting differences instead of erasing these divisive barriers.[105]

This politics of communal rivalry is not merely confined to the regional level but is also present among the different groups within a region. Since the majority group in a region most often holds power and distributes the available resources to its own people, many minority groups fear political domination and economic marginalisation by the majority group of their region.[106] In the case of the Northern region, many ethnic minority groups, which are most often Christian, fear domination by the Hausa-Fulani ethnic groups.[107] This intraregional fear for domination has resulted in repeated calls for a division of states so as to break the power of majority groups.[108]

With only four federal regions existing at the eve of independence, subsequent subdivisions have resulted in a federal republic with 36 separate states today (see the map on the next page).[109] The creation of these new states, however, has not resolved the national question. In some cases, it has even instigated political competition as well as discontent. On the one hand, many minority groups feel unheard in their demand for a new state, while on the other hand majority groups resent

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[98] Mustapha, 83.

[99] Abubakar Momoh and Said Adejumobi, eds., *The National Question in Nigeria: Comparative Perspectives* (Oxon: Routledge, 2018), 35.

[100] The Southern region is divided up into a Western region and an Eastern region. These two regions compete with each other as well but are united in their fear for domination by the north.

[101] Falola and Heaton, 150, 159-160.

[102] Momoh and Adejumobi, 43.

[103] Momoh and Adejumobi.

[104] Ibid., 60; ICG, *Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict*, 8.

[105] This will be elaborated on later on in this chapter. ICG, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria*; Momoh and Adejumobi, 52; Mustapha 89.

[106] ICG, *Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict*, 8; Momoh and Adejumobi, 60.

[107] Falola and Heaton, 159; Momoh and Ademuboji, 49, 60.

[108] Ibid., 190-191; ibid., 60.

[109] For the maps of the historical changes in the division of Nigerian states see Falola and Heaton, 192-193.

their broken power base by their division over multiple states. This resentment is also present among the Hausa-Fulani in the north in addition to their perceived marginalization by the richer south.[110]

The diverse history of the different regions and the fears of domination which are present at every level of community formation, have created a politics of communal rivalry in Nigeria.[111] Fighting for the spoils of office (political power and economic resources) politicians have been more than willing to favour their own group and/or region at the expense of another. This politics of communal rivalry has more than once led to communal violence and in 1967 it even amounted to a civil war.[112] In this context of political instability, the military has frequently intervened, sometimes to restore order, other times out of pure self-interest, but oftentimes a combination of the two. Since its independence, Nigeria has witnessed eight military coups and four different republics. In 1999, the country returned to a democratic system which is still in use today.[113]

The increase in the number of states over the past century

Corruption and Economic Marginalisation

The traditional economies of the Hausa states and the later Sokoto Caliphate were focused on agriculture and trans-Saharan trade of goods and people (slavery). However, this economic system was transformed with the arrival of the British.[114] Colonialism made Nigeria part of an international economic market hence the import-export market came to dominate Nigeria. This new economic reality forced a transformation of the local economy whereby Nigerians would produce cash-crops for export and in turn import luxury items from Europe.[115] As a consequence, the Nigerian agricultural economy transformed significantly to producing just a fraction of the products it produced before and indigenous Nigerian enterprise was hit hard as it could not compete with the cheaper products arriving from Europe.[116] Thus instead of creating sustainable development, the colonial project was focused on incorporating Nigeria into an international market. And although Nigeria gained political independence in 1960, this colonial economy created an economically dependent model for years after its independence.[117]

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[110] ICG, *Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict*, 8, 22; Momoh and Ademuboji, 64; Wisdom Oghosa Iyekekpolo, "Boko Haram: understanding the context," *Third World Quarterly* 37, no. 12 (2016): 2215.

[111] ICG, *Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict*, 2.

[112] This civil war was about the secession of the Eastern region as the Republic of Biafra. One of the reasons for this secession, and probably the most important one, was fear of domination by the Northern region. For more see Falola and Heaton, 172-176.

[113] For a detailed history of Nigeria see Falola and Heaton.

[114] Ibid., 245-246.

[115] Ibid., 111; Falola, 51.

[116] Falola and Heaton, 119.

[117] Ibid., 147; Momoh and Ademuboji, 140.

A significant change in the economic situation of the country occurred in the 1970s when large amounts of oil were discovered. In just a few years Nigeria's economy developed from an agricultural economy into an economy based on oil. The oil boom brought massive amounts of wealth but due to corruption and regional and ethnic rivalry this new wealth remained mostly in the hands of the new elites.[118] Although the country grew in wealth, most Nigerians did therefore not experience this new prosperity. Instead, most even saw their economic situation worsen due to the fact that the oil boom caused the neglect of other sectors, in particular the agricultural sector in which most of the working population was active. The Sahelian drought at the start of the 1970s and a decrease in oil prices in 1978 generated a further economic decline, confronting especially the lower classes of society with unemployment and subsequent poverty at the start of the 1980s.[119]

This economic decline led to increased levels of urbanization, a trend that had already started during the colonial period. And as urbanization increased, rural neglect by the government grew as well, making the differences between the rural and urban areas ever bigger. This rural neglect, in turn, caused increased urbanization to take place, thus creating a vicious circle.[120] The increased levels of urbanization have had major consequences for the social make-up of society: as people left their families in the rural areas and went to live and work in the cities, many traditional relationships within both the rural villages and cities were altered.[121]

These altered relationships, the growth of a new urban class, and the increase in unemployment and poverty led to the growth of civil society organizations during the 1980s and 1990s.[122] Since many of the military governments that came to rule the country were pre-occupied with attaining and maintaining power and favouring their clientele power base, general needs of the population were neglected. Around this time, one could thus observe a failure of the Nigerian state to take care of its citizens.[123] It is in this context that many civil society organizations arose in order to demand changes, to provide for social services that the government failed to deliver and to provide newcomers in the city with a social base. In the north, these civil society organizations were mostly Islamic with some of them gaining a wide following.[124]

Another important issue that cannot remain untouched is the corruption that plagues Nigeria. In 2019, the country was ranked 146th out of 198 countries in the Corruption Perceptions Index.[125] The oil boom of the 1970s only increased corruption within the country.[126] As a consequence, the gap between rich and poor has grown significantly in Nigeria.[127] On the one hand there is an ever-richer-becoming elite, and on the other hand one finds more and more people falling

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[118] Falola and Heaton, 183-185; ICG, *Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict*, 9-10.

[119] Falola and Heaton, 195; Ousmane Kane, *Muslim Modernity in Postcolonial Nigeria: A Study of the Society for the Removal of Innovation and Reinstatement of Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 47-49; Paul M. Lubeck, "Islamic Protest under Semi-Industrial Capitalism: 'Yan Tatsine Explained," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 55, no. 4 (1985): 377.

[120] Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, eds., *Muslim Politics*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 115-116.

[121] An example of the transformation of social structures can be found in Lubeck's discussion of the *gardawa* social group (Koranic students who wander among Muslim communities seeking alms) whom he argues to be the support base of the Maitatsine sect which will be discussed below. Alexander Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 43; Eickelman and Piscatori, 115-116.

[122] Falola and Heaton, 241.

[123] Ibid., 183-184; Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 51.

[124] Tahir Haliru Gwarzo, "Activities of Islamic Civic Associations in the Northwest of Nigeria: With Particular Reference to Kano State," *Africa Spectrum* 38, no. 3 (2003): 294.

[125] "Corruption Perceptions Index," *Transparency International*, accessed July 7, 2020, https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2019/results/nga.

[126] Falola and Heaton, 183-184, 209; Gwarzo, 298.

[127] Lubeck, 379.

into poverty because of economic decline and rising unemployment. Especially the Northern region has been hit hard by poverty with a rate of over 60% of the Northern Nigerians living below the poverty line.[128] This has caused the contradiction that an increasing number of Nigerians participate in illegal and corrupt activities in order to ensure a daily income.[129] In addition to the elite corruption shortly discussed above, corruption has thus spread to all levels of society. This even includes the Nigerian police, which is considered by many Nigerians to be the most corrupt entity within the country.[130]

The gap between rich and poor is also reinforced because of an educational imbalance, specifically so between the north and south. As education has been mostly associated with Christian missionary activity in the colonial period, many northerners feared a missionary agenda being present in Western-style education, even after the British had left.[131] The fact that education has been mostly confined to the south and Christian groups in the north, has created an educational imbalance between the two regions.[132] Furthermore, many of those who did attend Western-style schools have not seen their situation being improved: many university graduates have remained jobless because of the economic decline of the past decades.[133] On the other hand, elite children who are send to Western-style schools do acquire jobs in the government administration. To many it thus seems to be the case that only the elites benefit from Western-style education. Yet, this elite is viewed as corrupt, a conception that has led many in the north to believe that there exists a common association between education and corruption.[134] This conviction in turn, creates a situation in which many northerners do not send their children to school, further enlarging the educational imbalance between the north and the south and thus the chances for obtaining a job.

In present-day Nigeria one will thus encounter a situation in which many Nigerians have seen their level of welfare decline over the past decades, while witnessing the already rich elite becoming even richer due to widespread corruption. Many Nigerians in the lower levels of society and those in the rural areas feel marginalised, especially so in the north because of rural neglect and an educational imbalance. This socio-economic context has caused frustration among many poorer Nigerians. Combined with the communal rivalry at the political level and a sense of political marginalisation, this has created a fertile ground for the rise of groups with Islamist agendas in the north.

A Crisis of Religious Authority and the Rise of Salafism

The roots of Islamic radicalism in Northern Nigeria can be found in the region's history and politics. Abubakar Dauda, a scholar in political science and African politics, has argued that Boko Haram should be placed in the broader historical context of Islamic reform movements.[135] This history started with the jihad of 'Uthman dan Fodio and the foundation of the Sokoto Caliphate. As was discussed above, the Sokoto Caliphate created the sense of an overarching Muslim identity in the north and still forms a source of great pride today. The jihad waged by 'Uthman dan Fodio would

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[128] Dauda Abubakar, "From Sectarianism to Terrorism in Northern Nigeria: A Closer Look at Boko Haram," in *Violent Non-State Actors in Africa: Terrorists, Rebels and Warlords*, eds. Caroline Varin and Dauda Abubakar (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 25.

[129] Falola and Heaton, 209.

[130] For a more extensive discussion on corruption within the Nigerian police see Oshita O. Oshita, Ikenna Mike Alumona, and Feedom Chukwudi Onuoha, eds., *Internal Security Management in Nigeria: Perspectives, Challenges and Lessons* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

[131] Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 37, 75.

[132] Mustapha, 84; Rasmussen, 43.

[133] ICG, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria*, 3; Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 73.

[134] Iyekekpolo, 2218; Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 76.

[135] Abubakar, 19.

therefore be of great reference in later times when other groups would claim to be purifying the region of un-Islamic influences in order to return to a state governed by true Islamic principles.[136] The origin of such statements and the receptive position of the Northern Nigerian audience to such statements can be found in the crisis of religious authority and the subsequent rise of Salafism and sharia politics in the region.

Although the British first tolerated Islamic law they came to restrict it more and more as their rule lasted, eventually creating a situation in which Islamic law was limited to civil cases only.[137] When Nigeria obtained independence, the new state was organised according to a secular model with a Penal Code. For many Muslims in the north, who had already witnessed the containment of sharia law under the British, this meant that they perceived of the situation as Christian jurisprudence or man-made laws being preferred over sharia.[138] In light of the political and economic hardships (communal rivalry, economic decline, and corruption), it is little surprising that towards the 1970s more and more northerners came to believe that these political failures had been caused by secularism.[139] It is in this context that a debate on the proper place of sharia in politics arose. One of the solutions proposed was Islamism.

The rise of Islamism coincided with a crisis of Sufi authority that had, until then, dominated the northern religious landscape. Because of internal competing networks, the *Tijaniya* and *Qadiriya* Sufi orders were weakened.[140] What is more important, however, is that these Sufi orders started to be challenged by religious thinkers from outside their network. The economic hardships and political marginalisation which many Nigerians encountered were not felt by Sufi leaders. Instead, they seemed to profit from the oil boom and their close ties with the ruling classes. This contributed to the emerging idea that Sufi emirs served as tools of the ruling class instead of being seen as an independent religious authority.[141] This idea that was reinforced by Muslim preachers from outside the Sufi networks who argued that the Sufi religious leaders were complicit to Western modernity.[142] Accordingly, this challenge to the authority of the Sufi emirs led to a fragmentation of sacred authority in the Muslim north.[143]

The anti-Sufi rise coincided with the rise of Salafism, a religious movement that had emerged towards the end of the 19th century in the Arab world. Salafism is a Sunni reform movement that advocates a purification of Islam by fighting *bid'a* (later Muslim innovations). Salafis take the first three generations of Muslims after the prophet Muhammad (the *Rashidun*)[144] as their base since they believe that these first Muslims adhered to a pure form of Islam which had not yet been corrupted by *bid'a*.[145] The new Salafi preachers in Northern Nigeria came to attack the Sufi orders because they considered them to be preaching a corrupt form of Islam, influenced by their ties to the Nigerian government. In addition to their anti-Sufi stance, the new Salafi thinkers also expressed much social criticism on the contemporary situation. Some even went as far as to proclaim that the Nigerian government consisted of infidels who merely served their own interests and those of the West.[146] With many northern Muslims being politically disaffected because of the increased socio-

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[136] Ibid., 19-21.

[137] ICG, *Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict*, 5.

[138] Frieder Ludwig, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Northern Nigeria since the Introduction of Shari'ah in 1999," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 76, no. 3 (September 2008): 608.

[139] Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 42.

[140] Gwarzo, 300.

[141] Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 54-55.

[142] Abubakar, 18.

[143] Eickelman and Piscatori, 68, 70-71; Soares and Otayek, 183.

[144] The rightly guided caliphs.

[145] For more information see *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, 2nd ed., s.v. "salafiyya".

[146] Falola and Heaton, 206; ICG, *Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict*, 23.

economic hardships they faced, the message of Salafi preachers met a receptive audience in Northern Nigeria.[147]

One of the preachers who advocated reformist Islamic ideas was Abubakar Mahmud Ghumi, the Grand *Qadi*[148] of Northern Nigeria. He asserted that the Sufi orders were heretical innovations and declared *takfir*[149] upon them.[150] His ideas have formed an important foundation for the Izala movement that arose towards the end of the 1970s. This movement became one of the most influential Salafi movements in Northern Nigeria and is essentially anti-Sufi and opposed to *bid'a*. It advocates an Islamic state as the ideal organization of society and favours an Islamic purification of Northern Nigeria.[151]

Another group that cannot remain unmentioned when providing a background for Boko Haram is the group known as Maitatsine[152] founded by Muhammad Marwa. This group took a more aggressive stance towards Western influence, even forbidding its followers to use any form of modern technology, and refused democracy.[153] Although it seems to be the case that the group was accepted by local elites before the 1980s, its militant activism at the turn of the decade put it at odds with the local governments and security forces leading to its annihilation.[154] Paul Lubeck, a professor in sociology, argues in his article on Maitatsine that the sect was mainly formed out of class frustrations of the urban poor. Although one has to remain cautious in pointing out explicit similarities, many identify the militancy of this group as a forerunner of Boko Haram.[155]

Political disaffection, economic hardships and the rise of Salafi thinkers who advocated greater adherence to Islam as a solution to these problems, put the sharia debate back at the centre of Northern Nigeria's politics. Instead of the contemporary secular system that governed the country, various Islamic preachers advocated an Islamic state governed by the principles of sharia as a key to societal and moral transformation, away from the "misery and chaos" that many experienced in their daily lives.[156] As this call for the implementation of sharia gained greater significance, traditional leaders also started to support this plea in order to regain some of the legitimacy that they had lost. From the end of the 1980s onwards, some northern political leaders joined this movement and began to advocate sharia implementation as well.[157] In addition to the changing religious landscape, the sharia debate should thus also be seen in light of the contestation for political support and legitimacy.[158]

Because the sharia debate came to occupy the political centre, the governor of Zamfara announced the formation of a committee to look into the implementation of sharia in 1999.[159] This call coincided with the transfer to a democratic system in which Northern Nigeria lost power to the

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[147] Falola and Heaton, 205.
[148] Judge of a sharia court.
[149] Declaring another Muslim to be an unbeliever.
[150] Abubakar, 21.
[151] The official name of the Izala movement is Jama'at Izalat al-Bid'a wa Iqamat as-Sunna (The Society of Removal of Innovation and the Establishment of the Sunna); Gwarzo, 304; ICG, *Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict*, 14.
[152] "The one who curses." The group is named after the nickname of its leader. It is derived from the Hausa word *tsine* which means "to curse".
[153] Abubakar, 22; ICG, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria*, 8.
[154] ICG, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria*, 8; Lubeck, 386; Rasmussen, 95.
[155] Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 62-63.
[156] Ibid., 115; Rasmussen, 97-98.
[157] Alexander Thurston, "Muslim Politics and Shari'a in Kano State, Northern Nigeria," *African Affairs* 114, no. 454 (January 2015): 31, 34.
[158] Ibid., 51; Soares and Otayek, 184.
[159] Thurston, "Muslim Politics and Shari'a," 34.

south.[160] The northern elite was thus bent on gaining political legitimacy among the local population in light of a political loss. Eventually, sharia came to be implemented in twelve of the northern states. The process surrounding the eventual implementation of sharia, however, differed significantly per state. Whereas the movement supporting the implementation of sharia was mainstream (around 70% of the northerners), the exact content of such a sharia law differed significantly among the different Muslim organizations and states.[161] This has led to accusations by hardliners that the sharia project is not taken seriously by the different political factions.[162]

An excellent example of how the sharia debate was used for political benefit can be found in Borno State, the home base of Boko Haram. Borno State governor Mala Kachalla established a committee for the implementation of sharia at the start of the year 2000. Kachalla, however, favoured a gradual implementation of sharia and in this, he was supported by the Sufi shaykhs in the committee. For many Salafis this meant a compromise on sharia, showing that both the governor and the Sufi shaykhs were not serious about their intentions to implement sharia.[163] They thus sought for a political ally who would be willing to implement sharia in a less compromising manner: the then-senator Ali Modu Sheriff. Although Sheriff keeps denying the existence of anything like a deal, various political analysts have argued that Sheriff stroke a deal with Muhammad Yusuf, the founder of Boko Haram: in return for political support, Sheriff would implement sharia. Because of Yusuf's wide support base, especially among the youth, Sheriff indeed won the elections of 2003 and replaced Kachalla as governor.[164] As soon as he got to power, however, the implementation of sharia seemed to be far from Sheriff's priorities leading to a break with Yusuf.[165] This example demonstrates how the sharia debate came to be used by political rivals for their own gain. In this process, many Salafis felt marginalised leading some to take on a more militant stance.[166]

Adding to the growth of militancy among Salafi groups has been the rise in Muslim-Christian violence which has become common in many parts of Northern Nigeria since the 1980s as a result of the re-emergence of the sharia debate. In case sharia were to be introduced, many northern Christians fear an Islamization policy which will further marginalise them or force them to adjust their faith.[167] On the other hand, many northern Muslims view it as their right to reinstitute sharia, and instead fear domination by the Christian south. This atmosphere of fear has caused regular clashes, sometimes even resulting in deaths.[168] In turn, this violence has created increased support for more militant groups like Boko Haram that go further than just advocating sharia implementation.

Boko Haram in the North Nigerian Context

Boko Haram, and more generally the violence in Northern Nigeria, should thus be seen in light of the socio-political and religious history of the region. The politics of communal rivalry that has dominated Nigeria since its independence, has created a suspicious sentiment towards the Nigerian government among many northerners. This, in combination with socio-economic grievances, has created a political reality in which many feel marginalised and search for alternative routes to ensure their interests. In a context of rejection of the traditional Sufi authorities, many turned towards Salafism.

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[160] ICG, *Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict*, 9.

[161] Gwarzo, 298; Soares and Otayek, 184-185; Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 112-113.

[162] ICG, *Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict*, 37-38.

[163] Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 116-118.

[164] Abubakar, 26; ICG, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria*, 11; Iyekekpolo, 2221; Thurston, *Boko* Haram, 120-121.

[165] ICG, *Curbing Violence*, 12; Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 123.

[166] Abubakar, 24.

[167] ICG, *Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict*, 12; Ludwig, 613.

[168] Falola and Heaton, 205-206; Ludwig, 603.

Boko Haram's call for a true Islamic state ruled along the lines of sharia should thus not be seen as an exceptional ideology, but as part of the Northern Nigerian context.

Precisely because the group was so "un-unique" in this regard, not so much is known about the group's origins. Most scholars date the group's genesis back to 2002 although it is believed that Mohammed Yusuf had already established himself as a public figure, with a following of a few hundred men, by 2001.[169] The group only began to attract attention with what is known as the Kanamma[170] uprising towards the end of 2003. It is believed that around this time, more violent elements within the group separated themselves and began to live separately in the vicinity of the village of Kanamma where they clashed with the local people, probably overfishing rights.[171] When the group also started to attack police stations in the nearby area, Nigerian security forces launched a counter-insurgency and successfully crushed the group after which it disappeared underground.[172]

Under Yusuf's leadership, the group was mostly a non-violent preaching movement, although more violent elements did aim to pull Yusuf into a violent direction. This, in combination with repeated denunciations by mainstream Salafis, resulted in Yusuf employing a more exclusivist and militant ideology from 2005 onwards.[173] For the remainder of his life, however, the group seemed to be loosely organised with different elements occasionally clashing with the police. Halfway through 2009, rising tensions between the security forces and the group led to a full-fledged insurgency which lasted from 26 July to 30 July.[174] Eventually, the security forces managed to restore order after a successful crackdown and what is widely believed to have been the extrajudicial killing of Muhammad Yusuf.[175] The group then went underground for about a year after which it made a violent comeback with the Christmas bombings of December 2010 and subsequent attacks over the next years.[176]

This turn to a more violent ideology and the resulting upscale in attacks has made the group to be merely considered in light of its terrorist identity. Although the group's use of extreme violence may be deemed unique, this practice has serious implications for how we deal with the group.[177] The next chapters will delve deeper into these issues.

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[169] There are also scholars who argue that the group has been in existence since 1995. Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, ed., *Boko Haram: Islamism, politics, security and the state in Nigeria* (Leiden: African Studies Centre, 2014), 115, 158; Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 84.

[170] A village close to the Niger border in the north of Yobe State. The name is also frequently spelled as Kanama.

[171] Iyekekpolo, 2221; Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 93.

[172] Pérouse de Montclos, *Boko* Haram, 168; Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 94.

[173] Abubakar, 30; Pérouse de Montclos, *Boko* Haram, 10; Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 91.

[174] Pérouse de Montclos, *Boko Haram*, 112, 116.

[175] Amnesty International, *Killing at Will: Extrajudicial Executions and Other Unlawful Killings by the Police in Nigeria* (London: Amnesty International Publications, 2009), 11; ICG, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria*, ii.

[176] Ibid.; Pérouse de Montclos, *Boko Haram*, 239.

[177] William T. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 207, 226.

3. Boko Haram's Terrorism

Boko Haram has been labelled terrorist by various countries and international organisations. This chapter will first embark upon an investigation of the exact reasons that have been given in favour of such a designation by the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the United Nations and the United States. The choice for these three specific entities was made consciously. First of all, Nigeria constitutes the birth-ground of Boko Haram, and it is the country in which the group has been most active. Boko Haram can therefore be considered a domestic affair of the Nigerian nation itself. Concerning the choice for the UN, it can be stated that the UN is the largest intergovernmental organisation with 193 sovereign member states and that the organisation's international conventions and agreements are acknowledged worldwide.[178] The UN Security Council's decision to add Boko Haram to the Al-Qaeda Sanctions List, can thus be seen as an act that represents the majority of countries worldwide, signifying a great shared condemnation of the group.[179]

The decision to include the United States might be more controversial considering the theoretical framework of this thesis.[180] However, the choice for a central position of the United States in this chapter was made based on two considerations. First of all, the United States has been selected because of its prominence in the "War on Terror". After the attacks of 9/11, US President George W. Bush launched a worldwide "War on Terror" in which many countries provided support.[181] The US' condemnation of Boko Haram can thus be seen as a hall mark after which many Western countries followed suit. Second, the aim of this thesis is to provide an analysis and commentary of the empirical world as we find it. Although one may criticize the prominent position of the United States in contemporary research on the topic of terrorism, one cannot ignore that this research reflects world politics. Ignorance of this empirical reality would do more harm to the analysis of terrorism and Boko Haram compared to when one would acknowledge this central position in order to see how it has affected the situation in Nigeria.

As will become clear from the discussion, the arguments given in favour of this terrorist designation can be subcategorized into three headings. The rest of this chapter will then discuss these three arguments in more detail. In all of these discussions, the dominant "terrorist" view on Boko Haram will be juxtaposed with critical perspectives upon this worldview in order to show the reader how one may come to question such a terrorist designation. This way, this chapter will lay the foundation for the subsequent chapter where the consequences and implications of such a terrorist designation will be researched.

Why Boko Haram is Labelled Terrorist

As was already put forward in the first chapter of this thesis, the concept of "terrorism" has been defined in many different ways, and the entities discussed in this chapter are no exception in that regard. Because of the different definitions that they apply, it thus follows that the reasons for designating Boko Haram as a terrorist organisation also vary. In analysing this discrepancy, one can observe a difference in geographical focus: whereas Nigeria focuses more on Boko Haram as a

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[178] "Member States," United Nations, accessed January 9, 2021, https://www.un.org/en/member-states/.

[179] United Nations Security Council, *Security Council Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee Adds Boko Haram to Its Sanctions List*, SC/11410 (New York: UN Department for Public Information, 2014).

[180] Various CTS scholars have argued that the events of 9/11 and subsequent research on terrorism have "exceptionalised" the experiences of the United States and Al-Qaeda. They argue against this "excpetionalisation" since they believe that it obscures a real empirical analysis of terrorism. Breen Smyth, 260.

[181] George W. Bush, "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the United States Response to the Terrorist Attacks of September 11," *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* 37, no. 38 (September 24, 2001): 1347-1351.

domestic affair, the United Nations and United States tend to emphasise Boko Haram's terrorism as a global threat.

The overall concern of the Nigerian government seems to be with the threat that Boko Haram poses to Nigeria as a federation. Although the official Terrorism (Prevention) Act also names the intimidation of a population as a possible defining aspect of a terrorist act, Nigeria's concerns in case of Boko Haram seem to be with the other three aspects that can define an act as terrorism, as is laid out in chapter 1 of the Act. These include (1) compelling a government or international organisation to perform or abstain from performing any act; (2) destabilizing or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or international organisation; or (3) influencing a government or international organisation by intimidation or coercion.[182]

This Nigerian focus on Boko Haram as a threat to the federation can be concluded from the announcement by former Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan to install a state of emergency in the three north-eastern states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa back in 2013.[183] The state of emergency was imposed in order to provide the security services with the means to restore authority and end impunity in the region. In his speech, the President does not name Boko Haram specifically, but he refers multiple times to the insurgents as "terrorists." Whereas Jonathan does pay attention to the fear that the insurgents and "terrorists" have caused among the local population by their various attacks on civilians and their property, his overall concern seems to be with the threat that they pose to the Nigerian state itself: 'already some […] parts of Borno state have been taken over by groups whose allegiance is to different flags and ideologies. These terrorists and insurgents seem determined to establish control and authority over parts of our beloved nation […]'.[184]

This apprehension corresponds to a defining aspect of terrorism that has been identified by the UN and US' legal authorities as well: the intention to 'influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion'.[185] The US' documents on the designation of Boko Haram as a terrorist organisation, pay specific attention to Boko Haram's violent campaign against government forces. In addition, however, attacks on the local population are also put forward by the US' authorities as a reason to designate the group as terrorist.[186] This last reasoning forms the argument on which the United States bases its support to the Federal Republic of Nigeria: 'All of our assistance to Nigeria stresses the importance of protecting civilians and ensuring that human rights are respected'.[187] Although the UN does apply the intimidation of the government as a legal defining aspect of terrorism as well, it is not referred to in the two documents on Boko Haram that were published by

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[182] Terrorism (Prevention) Act, 2011, chap. 1 (Federal Republic of Nigeria).

[183] Channels Television, "Jonathan Declares State of Emergency in Borno, Yobe, Adamawa States" (presidential speech), *YouTube*, last modified May 14, 2013, accessed January 9, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3GglRw0urlw.

[184] Ibid.

[185] George W. Bush, Executive Order 13224, "Blocking Property and Prohibiting Transactions With Persons Who Commit, Threaten to Commit, or Support Terrorism," *Federal Register* 66, no. 186 (September 23, 2001): 24025.

[186] For the full statements on Boko Haram's terrorist designation see: Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence Committee on Homeland Security House of Representatives, *Boko Haram: Emerging Threat to the U.S. Homeland* (Washington: 2011); Office of the Spokesperson, *Terrorist Designations of Boko Haram Commander Abubakar Shekau, Khalid al-Barnawi and Abubakar Adam Kambar* (Washington: U.S. Department of State, 2012), accessed January 15, 2021, https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/06/193574.htm; Office of the Spokesperson, *Terrorist Designations of Boko Haram and Ansaru* (Washington: U.S. Department of State, 2013), accessed January 15, 2021, https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/11/217509.htm.

[187] Office of the Spokesperson, *Terrorist Designations of Boko Haram and Ansaru*.

the international organisation. Instead, attention is paid to the violent attacks on innocent civilians and Boko Haram's alleged connections to other identified terrorist groups.[188]

This last allegation seems to be of major importance in determining whether Boko Haram is terrorist or not for both the UN and the United States. Although both entities forbid communication with and support for terrorist groups, it has not legally been given a defining weight in deciding whether or not a person or group is to be considered terrorist.[189] However, in case of Boko Haram, its potential links to other terrorist groups seem to have been decisive in identifying it as terrorist. When analysing the statements provided by the UN, one can read that Boko Haram is presumed to maintain a relationship with Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)[190] for purposes of training and material support.[191] This supposed link is even necessary for the UN in order to impose sanctions on the group.

The case is a bit different for the United States. Here, sanctions can be imposed based on the formal definitions of terrorism. Yet, the presumed link between Boko Haram and AQIM and al-Shabab[192] has been a source of major worry to the US authorities and a decisive factor in taking measures against the group. In a report published in 2011, the Committee on Counterterrorism and the Intelligence Committee on Homeland Security warned for the potential threat that Boko Haram might form to the security in the United States itself based on a comparison of the group with Al-Qaeda and Tahrik Taliban Pakistan (TTP).[193] Arguing that the United States had underestimated potential threats of AQ and TTP in the past, the report claimed that such a miscalculation could not be made again and thus urged the US House of Representatives to impose sanctions on the group.[194] In the eventual statement that was published after the designation of Boko Haram as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO), the link to AQIM was again emphasised, along with attacks on government forces and civilians.[195] These supposed links between Boko Haram and other terrorist groups create a situation in which Boko Haram is not seen as a threat in and of itself, but as forming a threat based on its presumed participation in a global terrorist network.

Whereas Nigeria thus seems preoccupied with the threat that Boko Haram poses to the nation as a domestic affair, the arguments put forward by the UN and United Sates tend to focus more on a language of human rights (killing of innocent civilians) and the potential international

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[188] UNSC, *Security Council Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee Adds Boko Haram to Its Sanctions List*; United Nations Security Council, *Jama'atu Ahlis-Sunna Lidda-Awati Wal-Jihad* (Boko Haram) (New York: UN, 2014).

[189] For the formal definition that the UN employs see: United Nations Security Council, *Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts*, Resolution 1566 (New York: UN, 2004), 2; United Nations Security Council, *Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts*, Resolution 2083 (New York: UN, 2012), 3-4. For the formal definition that the United States uses see: George W. Bush, Executive Order 13224; Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, *US Code* 8, § 1189; Foreign Relations and Intercourse, *US Code* 22, § 2656f.

[190] A group who has sworn allegiance to Al-Qaeda and is active in North Africa. For more information see: "Qa'ida, Al-," *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, ed. Richard C. Martin (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004), 922.

[191] UNSC, *Security Council Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee Adds Boko Haram to Its Sanctions List*; UNSC, *Jama'atu Ahlis-Sunna Lidda-Awati Wal-Jihad*.

[192] A militant Islamist youth group active in Somalia advocating Wahhabi ideology and fighting against the Somali government. For more information see: "Somalia," *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, ed. Richard C. Martin (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004), 1074.

[193] Pakistani branch of the Taliban that has as its goal to install a sharia state in Pakistan. For more information see: "Taliban in Pakistan," *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, ed. Richard C. Martin (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004), 1143-1146.

[194] Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence Committee on Homeland Security House of Representatives, 1-4, 11-13.

[195] Office of the Spokesperson, *Terrorist Designations of Boko Haram and Ansaru*.

threat that the movement might form. The next sections of this chapter will delve deeper into these issues.

A Notorious Name for Violence

Whereas Boko Haram started as a non-violent preaching movement, the group slowly evolved into what today has become one of the deadliest terrorist groups in the world.[196] However, before 2008, the group was relatively moderate within the Northern Nigerian context. Although Mohammed Yusuf did preach an exclusivist reading of Islam and did sometimes declare other Muslim scholars *takfir*, Boko Haram was still engaging with the Muslim establishment and occasions of violence can be considered rare in this period of the group's existence.[197] If violence was perpetrated, it was merely aimed at the security forces with Boko Haram being very keen on not making civilian casualties.[198] As Yusuf stated in an interview with the BBC Hausa service in October 2008: 'The people have misunderstood us as a sect of people prone to fighting. We are only against the government and not [against] the people'.[199]

Concerning this anti-violent stance of Boko Haram's original leader, it should not come as a surprise that there is a vivid academic discussion on the precise reasons as to why the group turned violent. On the one hand, scholars tend to point to internal factors such as the pressure of more radical elements within the group, an eventual change of leadership, and the imprisonment and subsequent radicalisation of many of the group's members after the events of 2009.[200] Yet at the same time, it is widely agreed that this radicalisation has not been an isolated process but was also triggered by repeated clashes with the security forces and disproportionate reactions on their side.[201] Although the exact reasons for the group's change in behaviour are beyond the scope of this study,[202] it can be stated that Yusuf's preaching turned more radical in the period 2008-2009 when he openly started to call for jihad.[203] This change of focus eventually led to the clashes of July 2009 which are believed to have been a major turning point in the group's ideology and behaviour.

Following the crackdown, the group disappeared underground, only to return towards the end of 2010 when it started a violent campaign unprecedented by the group's actions before 2009.[204] In the initial phase, this violence was mostly aimed at security forces and those people that had collaborated with the government.[205] It is from 2011 onwards that one can witness a clear radicalisation and professionalisation of the group, as is evinced by Boko Haram's perpetration of some major attacks such as the bombing of the UN headquarters in Abuja and the attack on the Saint Theresa Catholic Church.[206] Furthermore, it is around this time that Boko Haram openly started to

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[196] According to the Global Terrorism Index of 2015 Boko Haram was the most lethal terrorist group in the world in 2014, being responsible for 6,644 deaths. Institute for Economics and Peace, *Global Terrorism Index 2015*, Report 36 (November 2015), 4.

[197] Kassim and Nwankpa, 83.

[198] Khalifa Aliyu Ahmed Abulfathi, "The Metamorphosis of Boko Haram: A Local's Perspective," Abulfathi, 2016, accessed July 17, 2020, http://sheikhahmadabulfathi.org/content/metamorphosis-boko-haram-0.

[199] Kassim and Nwankpa, 75.

[200] Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, *Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency? Addressing the Boko Haram Crisis* (London: Chatham House: Africa Programme, September 2014), 11; Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 83.

[201] Pérouse de Montclos, *Boko Haram*, 23.

[202] For more detailed information on the group's evolvement and the question of why it turned violent see Pérouse de Montclos, *Boko Haram* and Thurston, *Boko Haram*.

[203] Kassim and Nwankpa, 83.

[204] Amnesty International, *Nigeria: More than 1,500 Killed in Armed Conflict in North-Eastern Nigeria in Early 2014* (London: Amnesty International Publications, 2014), 5.

[205] Pérouse de Montclos, *Boko Haram*, 25.

[206] Ibid., 241; Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 159.

attack Christian civilians and sanctuaries.[207] This change in behaviour and especially the attacks on Christian targets, attracted international attention towards the group. It is around this time that Boko Haram came to be seen as a potential terrorist threat, as is evidenced by the discussion in the US House of Representatives on whether or not to designate the group as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation.

Yet, although these actions signified a major break with the Boko Haram under the leadership of Mohammed Yusuf, the actions did still fall within the major strands of the group's ideology. Government sites were targeted because the group viewed the Nigerian government as un-Islamic and corrupt, and Christian people and places were targeted because it was argued that they collaborated with Western forces in the submission of Muslims.[208] A major ideological rupture occurred when the group extended its operations and started to deliberately target (Muslim) civilians. Over the subsequent years, Boko Haram would engage in suicide attacks at busy places like markets and carry out attacks on civilian locations such as schools and health clinics.[209] Furthermore, the group got involved in big abductions such as the kidnapping of the 276 Chibok schoolgirls in March 2014, an event that provoked international outcry over the group's use of violence and seems to have induced the UN's decision to add Boko Haram to the Al-Qaeda sanctions list.[210]

Within the space of just a few years, Boko Haram thus developed from an obscure insurgent group in the border areas of Northern Nigeria into being perceived as an international terrorist threat. Whereas fatalities of the group's violence before 2009 were only among security personnel and occasionally political opponents, the number of fatalities rose over the subsequent years coming to include many civilian casualties as well. Estimates offer an exponential scheme with a 1000 deaths between June 2010 and August 2012 and more than 6600 deaths in the year of 2014 alone, making it the most lethal terrorist group worldwide.[211] Although it is hard to offer exact data because of the limited access into the region, it has been argued that the conflict has claimed at least 17,000-20,000 civilian lives between the events of July 2009 and 2015.[212] So far, the terrorist designation of Boko Haram might thus seem a very fair decision considering the high number of civilian casualties and the human rights violations perpetrated by the group such as attacks on the freedom of religion and the right to education.[213]

However, for a precise understanding of the group's behaviour it is necessary to place these numbers within the larger Nigerian context, a practice that offers a whole other perspective on the situation. Despite the high number of violent deaths on the account of Boko Haram, it is believed that the group was responsible for only 5% of all violent deaths in Nigeria between 2009 and 2014.[214] Whereas a high number of homicides provides part of the explanation, this percentage points to

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[207] Amnesty International, *Nigeria: Trapped in the Cycle of Violence* (London: Amnesty International Ltd., 2012), 13.

[208] Kassim and Nwankpa, 49-51; Pérouse de Montclos, *Boko Haram*, 21.

[209] Amnesty International, *'Our Job is to Shoot, Slaughter and Kill': Boko Haram's Reign of Terror in North-East Nigeria* (London: Amnesty International Ltd., 2015), 23; Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 157.

[210] Jacob Zenn, "Boko Haram and the Kidnapping of the Chibok Schoolgirls," *CTC Sentinel* 7, no. 5 (May 2014); Pérouse de Montclos, *Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency?*, 13.

[211] Amnesty International, *Nigeria: Trapped in the Cycle of Violence*, 11.

[212] Amnesty International, *Stars on Their Shoulders. Blood on Their Hands: War Crimes Committed by the Nigerian Military* (London: Amnesty International Ltd., 2015), 4-5; Signe Cold-Ravnkilde and Sine Plambech, *Boko Haram: From local grievances to violent insurgency* (Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, 2015), 38.

[213] Amnesty International, *'Our Job is to Shoot, Slaughter and Kill'*, 25, 30; "Nigeria: Boko Haram Targeting Schools: Attacks Threaten Children, Undermine Right to Education," Human Rights Watch, March 7, 2012, accessed July 16, 2020, https://www.hrw.org/news/2012/03/07/nigeria-boko-haram-targeting-schools.

[214] Pérouse de Montclos, *Boko Haram*, 198.

another widespread problem within Nigeria, namely the disproportionate amount of violence and human rights abuses on the part of the security forces. Although there are no precise numbers available, sources indicate a situation in which the Nigerian security forces are not so different from Boko Haram in lethal terms. One local Nigerian even stated that, from 2010 to 2012, the army made at least three times as many casualties as Boko Haram did.[215]

It is widely believed that the conduct of the security forces led to an escalation of violence.[216] Because of blatant corruption, bad equipment and underpayment, a situation was created in which the security forces were unable to react adequately to the threat posed by Boko Haram.[217] Witnesses described scenes in which the security forces would not come near the place of an attack until Boko Haram had left in order to prevent a violent confrontation and possible heavy losses.[218] Frustration over this impotency and the will to show control of the situation, have created an environment in which major retaliatory attacks by members of the security forces have come to be tolerated. Over the years, Amnesty International has documented various incidents in which the Nigerian police and army are believed to have killed a few hundred people at a time.[219] An example includes Boko Haram's raid on Giwa barracks in March 2014 whereby it freed around a thousand detainees. In a retaliatory attack later that day, the security forces rounded up and killed more than 600 people, mainly escaped detainees.[220] Since none of these re-arrested detainees were armed, such actions demonstrate a breach of the international laws of war.[221]

Such events confirm a picture of the security forces as being prone to human rights abuses. In the context of Northeast Nigeria, the security forces have engaged in indiscriminate killings of both Boko Haram members and civilians.[222] Furthermore, numbers on killings and arrests suggest that, over the years, the security forces have come to prefer killings instead of arrests when faced with potential Boko Haram members. A security official confirmed to Amnesty International that, towards the end of 2014, very few suspects had been taken into custody, suggesting that most Boko Haram suspects were immediately killed.[223] Since official records often include only a proportion of the actual deaths, exact numbers are unknown. Yet, separate records point to a situation in 2013 and 2014 in which several hundreds of people died every month at the hands of the security forces.[224]

Furthermore, there are numerous accounts that accuse the security forces of human rights abuses in detention. Many people have been victim of arbitrary detention in which they are sometimes held captive for several months without ever seeing a lawyer or facing trial. In addition, there are many stories of torture, overcrowding, denied medical treatment, and enforced

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[215] Abulfathi.

[216] Amnesty International, *Nigeria: Trapped in the Cycle of Violence*, 57; Pérouse de Montclos, *Boko Haram*, 203-205.

[217] Pérouse de Montclos, *Boko Haram*, 29, 205-6; Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 213-215.

[218] Amnesty International, *Nigeria: Trapped in the Cycle of Violence*, 48.

[219] For examples of such incidents see Amnesty International, *Killing at Will* 21-22; "Nigeria: Horror in Numbers," Amnesty International, June 3, 2015, accessed March 10, 2021, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/06/nigeria-horror-in-numbers/.

[220] Amnesty International, *Nigeria: More than 1,500 Killed*, 12-16.

[221] The Federal Republic of Nigeria signed the Geneva Conventions, including part 3 on the treatment of prisoners of war. "Treaties, State Parties and Commentaries," International Committee of the Red Cross, accessed May 19, 2021, https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/INTRO/375?OpenDocument.

[222] Cold-Ravnkilde and Plambech, 22-23; Pérouse de Montclos, *Boko Haram*, 25.

[223] Amnesty International, *Nigeria: "Pragmatic policing" through extra-judicial executions and torture* (AI Index: 44/006/2008, May 16, 2008), 2; Amnesty International, *Stars on Their Shoulders*, 59; Pérouse de Montclos, *Boko Haram*, 207.

[224] Amnesty International, *Nigeria: More than 1,500 Killed*, 7-8, 11.

disappearances.[225] In the years of 2013 and 2014, the situation in some prisons got that bad that more than 5,000 detainees are believed to have died in Giwa barracks alone.[226] Yet again, exact numbers are not available as mortuaries have been forced not to keep track of the numbers brought in and several mass graves have been discovered.[227]

Considering this misconduct and the high number of human casualties, one may question why members of the security forces are not being persecuted for war crimes. Overall, there seems to be an environment of impunity in which civilians are caught in the middle. And although Boko Haram did become more violent in the years after 2009, the security forces are believed to have been responsible for more casualties at least up to 2011.[228] This created an environment in which local civilians preferred to ask Boko Haram for protection since the security forces had lost all confidentiality and appeared less powerful.[229] The focus on this thesis' time frame begs the question as to why Boko Haram, when enlarging the severity and scope of its attacks, was designated terrorist, and why the security forces could seemingly do as they like. For a local Nigerian, there appears to be no difference between the two fighting parties, and one might even state that Boko Haram is on the more humane side of the spectrum. A critical reading of the numbers thus leaves one with the question as to precisely why Boko Haram was designated terrorist. Perhaps the other two reasons will provide one with a clearer answer.

A Global Terrorist Network?

The probability of Boko Haram being part of a large global terrorist network has been a major motivational factor in designating the group as terrorist for both the United Nations and the United States. Especially the group's potential links to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) have been a topic of major concern and debate. It is widely believed that the group's change in tactics, which were observable after 2010, indicate the influence of foreign terrorist groups. This is because Boko Haram will have needed specific technical expertise in order to be able to build and use improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and to engage in suicide attacks.[230] Furthermore, there are general suspicions that Boko Haram has received foreign funding and weapons from groups loyal to AQIM.[231]

These suspicions of foreign influence increased after the new leader of Boko Haram, Abubakar Shekau, announced the creation of an Islamic caliphate in Northeast Nigeria in August 2014, and especially after he pledged allegiance to the group known as Islamic State (IS) about half a year later.[232] After this pledge of allegiance, a clear professionalisation was observable in the group's media productions with better camerawork and the inclusion of subtitles in both Arabic and English. Various Nigerian and US' government officials have argued that this change hints at a close

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[225] Between 2011 and 2015 Amnesty International compiled a list of more than 1,200 people who were reported missing after having been detained. Amnesty International, *Nigeria: "Pragmatic Policing"*, 4-5; Amnesty International, *Stars on Their Shoulders*, 4, 8, 9, 41, 59, 61, 86.
[226] Amnesty International, *Stars on Their Shoulders*, 59-62.
[227] Ibid., 25, 44.
[228] Pérouse de Montclos, *Boko Haram*, 25.
[229] Cold-Ravnkilde and Plambech, 33; Pérouse de Montclos, *Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency?*, 15.
[230] James Adewunmi Falode, "The Nature of Nigeria's Boko Haram War, 2010-2015: A Strategic Analysis," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 10, no. 1 (February 2016): 45; Pérouse de Montclos, *Boko Haram*, 172.
[231] Pérouse de Montclos, *Boko Haram*, 141.
[232] Amnesty International, *'Our Job is to Shoot, Slaughter and Kill'*, 29; Wale Odunsi, "Boko Haram will continue to kill" – Full text of Shekau's speech declaring caliphate in Northern Nigeria," Daily Post, August 25, 2014, accessed April 12, 2021, https://dailypost.ng/2014/08/25/boko-haram-will-continue-kill-full-text-shekaus-speech-declaring-caliphate-northern-nigeria/.

collaboration with IS.[233] Furthermore, there is the less commonly held view that the group might also have links with al-Shabaab, a suspicion that especially grew after the latter issued a statement in support of the abductions of the Chibok girls by Boko Haram.[234]

This observable influence from various foreign terrorist groups has generally been taken as an indication of a global jihadist network across the Sahel in which Boko Haram participates, a threat that should be compelled.[235] Yet, one may question to what extent such an assumption is verifiable. As various scholars argue, such a collaboration with foreign terrorist groups is most probably an overstatement. Freedom C. Onuoha, an expert on Boko Haram, argues that there is a clear distinction between affiliation and solidarity.[236] Although both Mohammed Yusuf and Abubakar Shekau were inspired by Islamic scholars throughout the Middle East, also the more radical ones, such an ideological link should not automatically be taken to validate the existence of an operational link.[237]

Despite the many assumptions, there is a clear lack of evidence for far-reaching collaborative bonds between Boko Haram and other terrorist groups in the Sahel. Although Boko Haram has adjusted its tactics indicating a clear professionalisation, the goals of the group remain mostly local: Boko Haram views itself as the legitimate heir of the Sokoto Caliphate and wishes to create such a state in the northeast of Nigeria.[238] The professionalisation and extension of the group's attacks can thus also be viewed as a way to further implement its local agenda, instead of seeing it as an apparent link with foreign terrorist groups as UN and US' officials did. Although Boko Haram has also contributed to the creation of an image of itself as a global jihadi threat, this is believed to be mainly a strategic propaganda tool of the group in order to garner support for its local agenda. By pledging allegiance to IS and making reference to other terrorist groups, the movement has sought to reclaim legitimacy, even in the face of territorial losses over the year of 2015 and various leadership crises.[239] Furthermore, it is believed that externalizing the conflict has helped Boko Haram to obtain foreign aid from other terrorist groups. As such, the global jihadi narrative can actually be argued to have been a self-fulfilling prophecy, yet the focus of the group remains within the Nigerian context.[240]

Therefore, the most likely theory is that contacts or coordination with foreign terrorist groups are only active on a personal level or among certain elements of Boko Haram. As opposed to the common assumption of Boko Haram being a coherent group with a clear hierarchical order, reality shows that Boko Haram has a loose command and control structure in which different elements operate on their own initiative.[241] Evidence of such a premise can be found in the splinter group Ansaru. This group officially announced its split from Boko Haram in January 2012, being

[233] Falode, 45-46; Yossef Bodansky, "The Islamic State in West Africa – Boko Haram Up-Date III," *ISPSW Strategy Series: Focus on Defence and International Security* no. 368 (August 2015): 5.

[234] Cold-Ravnkilde and Plambech, 25; Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 176; Tres Thomas, "Al-Shabaab Expresses Support for Boko Haram Abduction of Schoolgirls in Nigeria," Somalia Newsroom, May 13, 2014, accessed January 21, 2021, https://somalianewsroom.com/2014/05/13/al-shabaab-expresses-support-for-boko-haram-abduction-of-schoolgirls-in-nigeria/.

[235] UNSC, *Security Council Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee Adds Boko Haram to Its Sanctions List*; Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence Committee on Homeland Security House of Representatives, 12, 14.

[236] Pérouse de Montclos, *Boko Haram*, 178.

[237] Ibid., 16; Kassim and Nwankpa, 27; Pérouse de Montclos, *Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency?*, 19-20.

[238] Abubakar, 20-21, 29.

[239] Islamic State, "The Bay'ah from West Africa, *Dabiq* 8 (March 2015), 14-15; Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 271-274.

[240] Falode, 45-46; Hussein Solomon, *Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism in Africa: Fighting Insurgency from Al Shabaab, Ansar Dine and Boko Haram* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 102, 122.

[241] Christina Barrios and Tobias Koepf, *Re-mapping the Sahel: transnational security challenges and international responses* (Paris: EU Institute for Security Studies, 2014), 22; Pérouse de Montclos, *Boko Haram*, 161.

dissatisfied by Boko Haram's many civilian casualties and wanting a more international agenda.[242] Because of its focus on international targets, Ansaru's leadership is believed to be far more likely to have close collaborative contacts with AQIM than Boko Haram does.[243] Yet, the latter's loose and incoherent structure might mean that elements still operating under the banner of Boko Haram do have closer coordination with AQIM. However, assumptions in the direction of close bonds between Boko Haram and other foreign terrorist groups are argued by many scholars to be a misrepresentation of reality when applied to the group itself or its leadership.[244]

If one wants to explain Boko Haram's activity in other countries than Nigeria, one should search for this explanation in the weak context of the Sahel. The porous borders of the Sahel have created an environment in which people can easily engage in cross-border activities such as illegal trafficking of arms and people.[245] This is no less true for Boko Haram. The amassment of weapons is thus not unique to Boko Haram, but can be considered a widespread problem across the Sahel in which many, including the Nigerian police, participate.[246] After the crackdown of 2015, many of Boko Haram's members took refuge in neighbouring countries.[247] Furthermore, there have been reports of Boko Haram members receiving training in Mali.[248] Such alliances with other groups, however, are constantly shifting in the Sahelian context and do not indicate a lasting link with foreign terrorist groups.[249] The various UN and US' debates on the group's foreign links can thus at least be considered problematic since it "exceptionalises" a practice that is found to be very common in the region.

Challenging Nigerian Sovereignty

Considering the critical review of the first two arguments above, the last argument identified for the designation of Boko Haram as a terrorist organisation might come closest to a fair and balanced representation of reality. This last reason is the threat that the group poses to the sovereignty of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Through its attacks, Boko Haram has destroyed vital state structures and so destabilised the Northern region.[250] The three entities discussed above, all believe that this is a clear example of the group's terrorist identity.[251] However, it should be noted that these tactics are part of a larger agenda, namely, to establish a separate state. Boko Haram does not merely aim to destroy but pursues a serious ambition towards building a new Islamic caliphate.[252] In order to better understand this aspect of the group's identity, it will be necessary to discuss the main elements of the ideology of Boko Haram.

Oftentimes, Boko Haram is described as a religious group that preaches a unique version of radical Islam. Yet, as was already demonstrated in the previous chapter, one needs to understand Boko Haram within the context of Northern Nigeria and the recent rise of Salafism in that region.

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[242] Pérouse de Montclos, *Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency?*, 25.

[243] Barrios and Koepf, 22; Cold-Ravnkilde and Plambech, 25; Pérouse de Montclos, *Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency?*, 6, 11-12.

[244] Barrios and Koepf, 11.

[245] Ibid., 29; Cold-Ravnkilde and Plambech, 52

[246] For more on arms proliferation in the Sahel see: Freedom C. Onuoha, "Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation and Human Security in Nigeria," *Conflict Trends* no. 1 (2011): 50-56.

[247] Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 238; Zenn.

[248] Barrios and Koepf, 15-16; Pérouse de Montclos, *Boko Haram*, 141.

[249] Barrios and Koepf.

[250] Pérouse de Montclos, *Boko Haram*, 143.

[251] Office of the Spokesperson, *Terrorist Designations of Boko Haram Commander Abubakar Shekau, Khalid al-Barnawi and Abubakar Adam Kambar*; UNSC, *Security Council Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee Adds Boko Haram to Its Sanctions List*.

[252] ICG, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II)*, 9.

Boko Haram can be classified into Salafi jihadism, a branch of Islam that wishes to return to the "true" Islam of the first generations through armed struggle.[253] Salafi jihadists believe that the world is involved in a global struggle between two warring parties: the followers of Allah versus the unbelievers or *taghut*.[254] They believe that the Muslim world has come under the siege of the West because Muslims do not adhere to the true version of Islam anymore, a situation which has allowed the Muslim world, including Northern Nigeria, to come into a state of decadence.[255] According to Boko Haram a return to the "true" Islam is needed in order to solve the problems of northern Muslims, something that can only be achieved by fully implementing sharia on all levels of society.[256]

Religion, however, does not solely explain the ideology of Boko Haram; the organisation also has a clear political agenda.[257] Because of the political and socio-economic grievances, which were described in the last chapter, many northerners have come to feel marginalised. In addition, the blatant corruption in the Nigerian government and the harsh conduct on the part of the security forces have created an atmosphere of impunity.[258] As the mainstream religious institutions failed to address these grievances, disaffected people who have been victim of these policies and feel marginalised have formed a major recruiting pool for Boko Haram.[259] Boko Haram's criticism of the Nigerian government is a central component of its ideology and for many northerners, the group offers a hopeful alternative to the failing Nigerian state.[260]

This alternative is based on what Alexander Thurston, a leading scholar on Boko Haram, has come to identify as the three basic doctrines of Mohammed Yusuf.[261] First, there is the idea of *al-wala' wa-l-bara'*, literally translated "loyalty and enmity". Boko Haram preaches exclusive loyalty to "true" Muslim leaders and disavowal of all others.[262] This means that Boko Haram believes that a "true" Muslim cannot follow an unbelieving ruler such as the President of Nigeria.[263] According to Boko Haram, those that work for the Nigerian government are all infidels. Therefore, a "true" Muslim cannot work with or for the government since such an act would amount to unbelief.[264] In many of his sermons, Yusuf has paid specific attention to explaining how joining the security forces would be an act of unbelief, especially since they are involved in the killing of Muslims.[265] Boko Haram therefore believes that a new Islamic state should be established in which "true" Muslims can live freely and according to sharia.

Secondly, the idea of "ruling by other than what God has revealed" (*al-hukm bi-ghayr ma anzala Allah*) is central to the ideology of Boko Haram. This means that Boko Haram believes that it is only allowed to rule by the law of God, the sharia.[266] According to Boko Haram, democracy amounts to unbelief and is a clear example of polytheism.[267] As Abubakar Shekau stated in a preaching in 2009: 'So how can someone say that democracy is not polytheism? What is the meaning of

[253] Guilain Denoeux and Lynn Carter, *Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism* (USAID, 2009), 86-87.
[254] Kassim and Nwankpa, 150.
[255] Soares and Otayek, 185; Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 71.
[256] ICG, *Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict*, 18.
[257] Pérouse de Montclos, *Boko Haram*, 136-137.
[258] Oshita, Alumona, and Onuoha, 145.
[259] Amnesty International, *Stars on Their Shoulders*, 19-20; Kassim and Nwankpa, 10; Pérouse de Montclos, *Boko Haram*, 38, 201.
[260] Pérouse de Montclos, *Boko Haram*, 135.
[261] Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 109.
[262] Ibid.
[263] Kassim and Nwankpa, 27-28.
[264] Ibid., 13, 25, 96.
[265] See the lecture by Yusuf which he probably gave on January 12, 2009: Kassim and Nwankpa, 103-110.
[266] Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 109.
[267] Yusuf, 66.

government of the people by the people and for the people? Whatever the people want, even if it contradicts the law of Allah, will be accepted.'[268] For Boko Haram, the fact that democracy takes the people as its starting point, means that the will of Allah can be opposed.[269] Boko Haram believes that there is no need for such a democratic system since Allah has handed down the sharia from which to rule. Therefore, Boko Haram views the Nigerian democracy as an infidel form of government that contradicts the will of Allah.

Furthermore, the group believes that the democratic system allows for other sorts of unbelief, leaving space for people to follow another religion and demanding the separation of religion and state.[270] This idea of secularism poses a serious problem for Boko Haram since they believe Allah's will to be all-encompassing and not confined to the private sphere. As Muhammad Yusuf stated in his book, which he wrote in 2005:

> And the text of the glorious and most high God has stated that Islam is [a] religion and a country and [a form of] politics, and [a] rule and [a] legislation, and it is much too broad to be confined to rites or between the walls of the mosques. And all of those who interpret Islam as a religious angle[,] not ruling over politics and government, and [other] areas of human life[,] all of [them] did not understand the intention of Allah and His messenger, and he has changed the notion of Islam to another concept, and in this is no doubt a clear disbelief in the religion of God the most high, […][271]

This rejection of secularism is also the point where Boko Haram's refusal for Western education comes in, the one ideological idea that gave the group its nickname.[272] Boko Haram rejects Western-style education because it views this education as unbelief.[273] In Yusuf's book, which he wrote in a reaction to the Muslim scholars that were challenging his legitimacy, he devotes one chapter to explaining why "true" Muslim children should not go to Western-style schools since they preach unbelief and violate sharia. To prove his point, Yusuf names nine reasons, among which his criticism of the evolution theory which challenges the teachings of the Koran:

> Third: the theory of Charles Darwin: that focuses on the laws of natural selection, and survival of the fittest, and his theory of infidelity has made the origin of humanity as a small germ dispersed in a stagnant swamp for millions of years, cut down in phases of animals and monkeys [to] stages of human development. Glory to you this is a great falsehood, between what God glory to Him decides on the origin of humanity and that he created it out of dust and water, and this doctrine[274]

In various areas, from the democratic state system to the secular school system, Boko Haram thus criticizes the Nigerian government. According to the group, all that is associated with this government amounts to unbelief since it does not honour the will of Allah but rules according to other laws, the laws of "idols".[275]

Such unbelief should be confronted through struggle which brings one to the third central idea of Yusuf's ideology, namely *Izhar ad-Din*, "manifesting religion". In order to solve the problems of the Muslim society, both Yusuf and Shekau taught that it is necessary to confront the fallen

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[268] Kassim and Nwankpa, 122.
[269] Ibid., 78-79; Yusuf, 66.
[270] Kassim and Nwankpa, 30-31.
[271] Own translation of the author. Yusuf, 73.
[272] Iyekekpolo, 2212.
[273] Kassim and Nwankpa, 17, 31, 60.
[274] Own translation of the author. Yusuf, 85; For the whole chapter see ibid., 80-2-94.
[275] Kassim and Nwankpa, 46.

Nigerian society through struggle.[276] Only towards the end of Yusuf's life, however, this struggle came to mean a violent battle waged by engaging in jihad. Boko Haram believes that it is the duty of every Muslim to take up jihad and that there is no room to stay silent.[277] It is therefore that the group portrays other Muslim scholars as unbelievers since they choose to work with the Nigerian government and thus stay silent on the latter's unbelief.[278] According to Salafi jihadists this specific behaviour has caused the problems of Muslim society in the first place and should thus be avoided.[279] Boko Haram is therefore very outspoken in its *takfirism* of other Muslim scholars, declaring them to be "untrue" Muslim leaders.

For Boko Haram, the solution to the problems that many northern Muslims face, lie in the establishment of a true Islamic state in Northeast Nigeria in which Muslims are not governed by unbelievers. In order to achieve this goal, the group is engaged in a violent jihad against the Nigerian state and its allies. The last reason that was put forward for the terrorist designation of Boko Haram is thus very true: Boko Haram does indeed undermine the sovereignty of the Nigerian state. Yet, this does not only involve destruction but also a clear vision for the future with an alternative Muslim state. Questions, however, may be put forward in asking whether this is still really the group's goal or that the terrorist tactics of the group have taken over as Boko Haram grew more violent over the years of 2013-2015.

As has been shown by the discussion in this chapter, the terrorist designation of Boko Haram can be considered a very obscure process that raises some questions. Yet, this labelling has had serious consequences in the Northern Nigerian context. This will be further elaborated on in the last chapter of this thesis.

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[276] Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 110.
[277] Pérouse de Montclos, *Boko Haram*, 21.
[278] Kassim and Nwankpa, 120-121.
[279] Ibid., 85; Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 118; Yusuf, 77.

4. The Consequences of the Terrorist Label

This chapter will try to lay the foundation for answering the main research question of this thesis. In the previous chapter, a critical review was offered of the various reasons that have been put forward for designating Boko Haram as a terrorist organisation. Building on these findings, this chapter will discuss the consequences of such a designation. First, this chapter will provide a discussion of direct international and regional responses to the terrorist designation of Boko Haram such as the implementation of international sanctions against the group and its adherents and the foundation of a regional task force to combat the group. Next, attention will be paid to the policy choices in the implementation of these responses. This will mainly include a discussion on the observance of human rights and a critical review of the policies employed by both international and local actors. By first focusing on the consequences of such a designation, the groundwork will be laid for the conclusion in which the discussion will be lifted to an analytical level whereby the implications of Boko Haram's terrorist label will be discussed in relation to the field of Critical Terrorism Studies. This way, the road for an alternative reading of Boko Haram and the fight against the group will be cleared, which links back to the theoretical framework of this thesis.

International and Regional Cooperation to Quell a Threat

A first direct consequence of the terrorist designation of Boko Haram is the implementation of sanctions against the group and its leaders. Oftentimes, the implementation of sanctions is part of a legal process when a group is designated terrorist. For all three entities discussed in the last chapter, a formal terrorist designation has as its direct legal consequence that a terrorist group or person is subject to a variety of sanctions such as the seizing of the terrorists' property, the imposition of a travel ban and the prohibition of transactions with a terrorist group or person.[280] Furthermore, in its Terrorism (Prevention) Act, Nigeria has also included that it is forbidden to provide refuge to persons affiliated with a terrorist organisation.[281] The United States implements a similar policy in addition to fighting terrorist financing on a global scale.[282] The European Union has also aimed its efforts at countering terrorist funding. As part of its counterterrorism policy, this is done in order to deprive terrorist groups and persons of their financial resources.[283]

For Boko Haram, the sanctions following upon its terrorist designation have thus mostly affected the group in a legal financial sphere. The Nigerian government adopted several laws to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorist activities such as the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act of 2011 and the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Act of 2018. These laws aim to fight money laundering and the financing of terrorist activities by obliging financial institutions to report on the transfer of large sums of money and other suspicious transactions.[284] Furthermore, it allows for the government to shut down any financial accounts associated with, or suspected of being associated with, terrorist groups or persons.[285] By implementing such legal prohibitions, Boko Haram

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[280] Bush, Executive Order 13224: 24025; Office of the Spokesperson, *Terrorist Designations of Boko Haram and Ansaru*; United Nations Security Council, *Fact Sheet on the Security Council Committee Pursuant to Resolutions 1267 (1999) 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) Concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and Associated Individuals Groups, Undertakings and Entities* (Security Council Report, March 15, 2021); Terrorism (Prevention) Act, 2011, chap. 1 (Federal Republic of Nigeria).

[281] Terrorism (Prevention) Act, 2011, chap. 1 (Federal Republic of Nigeria).

[282] Bush, Executive Order 13224: 24025.

[283] Beatrix Immenkamp, Patryk Pawlak, and Georgios Barzoukas, *EU efforts on counter-terrorism – Capacity-building in third countries* (European Parliamentary Research Service, December 2017), 5, 11.

[284] Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act, 2011, chap. 2 and 6 (Federal Republic of Nigeria).

[285] Nigerian Financial Intelligence Act, 2018, chap. 16 (Federal Republic of Nigeria).

has been forced out of formal financial institutions making it impossible to finance its terrorist activities via this route.

Although these measures probably caused hardships on the side of Boko Haram, the group has many other ways through which it finances its activities such as kidnapping for ransom, robbery, smuggling of goods and persons, and financing by other like-minded organizations and individuals.[286] The Nigerian government has thus also tried to limit the group's financial resources through other measures. One of these has been the shutdown of Borno's major trade routes between Maiduguri and Baga, and Maiduguri and Ngala. Additionally, the government also implemented a ban on the trade of fish and cattle, another major financial resource for the group.[287] These measures, however, have mostly had an opposite effect as they also caused significant hardships on the local population. In order to still secure their livelihoods, many local northern Nigerians instead moved to Boko Haram territory where they were allowed to practice their jobs.[288] Furthermore, the shutdown of the major trade routes has benefitted Boko Haram since the group has vast control over the other illegal routes in Borno State.[289] It thus remains to be seen to what extent the financial sanctions have affected the group's operational capability.[290]

Another consequence, as has been laid out in the Terrorism (Prevention) Act, is the denial of refuge to Boko Haram members. With the ensuing security crackdown in 2015, which will be discussed below in more detail, many Boko Haram members fled across the border to seek refuge, mainly in Cameroon. This might indicate an unwillingness on the part of the local Nigerian population to provide refuge to members of the group, especially after the group's terrorist designation made it illegal. However, Cameroon has also served as a site of refuge before the group was designated terrorist, in the years before and directly after 2009.[291] It is therefore difficult to grasp the exact impact of this non-financial sanction on the group's activities. It seems to be the case that the implementation of these sanctions reflects more of a legalistic framework than a clear change in the reality on the ground.[292]

Another consequence that needs to be discussed, is the foundation of the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to fight Boko Haram. Gaining support across Nigeria's borders and owing to the group's transnational roots, Boko Haram began to perpetrate attacks in Cameroon as well from 2013 onwards.[293] Over 2014 and 2015, the group would extend its area of operations to also include Niger and Chad.[294] Thus whereas before, the group was seen as a domestic Nigerian affair, it increasingly came to be viewed as a threat to the Lake Chad Basin's regional security.

[286] Kelly Mua Kingsley, Samuel F. Johnson-Rokosu, and Rasaq Alabi Olanrewaju, "Combating Boko Haram Terrorism Financing: Case of Nigeria and Lake-Chad Basin," *International Journal of Current Research* 7, no. 11 (November 2015): 22855-22856.

[287] Malik Samuel, "Economics of terrorism in Lake Chad Basin," Institute for Security Studies, July 10, 2019, accessed May 20, 2021, https://issafrica.org/iss-today/economics-of-terrorism-in-lake-chad-basin.

[288] Samuel.

[289] Kangdim Dingji Maza, Umut Koldas, and Sait Aksit, "Challenges of Combating Terrorist Financing in the Lake Chad Region: A Case of Boko Haram," *SAGE Open* (April-June, 2020): 6-8.

[290] Conclusions on the research of Boko Haram terrorist financing are hard to draw because of its "under the radar" activity.

[291] Nikolas Emmanuel, "External Incentives and the African Subregional Response to Boko Haram," in *African Border Disorders: Addressing Transnational Organizations*, ed. O. Walther and W.F.S. Miles (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 139; Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 250-251.

[292] Solomon, 107.

[293] Jean Cottin Gelin Kouma, "Cameroon Fighting Boko Haram," *Vestnik RUDN. International Relations* 17, no. 4 (2017): 727-728; Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 244-249.

[294] Emmanuel, 139-140.

With the idea of a growing terrorist threat, a sense of urgency to confront Boko Haram's terrorism developed among the different countries of the Lake Chad Basin.[295] Yet, the failure of larger intergovernmental bodies, like the African Union, to respond to such a threat, led the governments of Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria and Benin decide to set up their own multinational force.[296] Although the MNJTF was already in existence for security purposes, its mandate was extended in 2012 to include fighting terrorist groups.[297] Still, at the start of its newly extended mandate, mistrust existed between the different countries resulting in a reluctance to allow an infringement on their

The Lake Chad Basin. Boko Haram's area of activity is believed to be mostly in Nigerian territory and in the direct areas surrounding Lake Chad.

sovereignty, especially so on the part of the Nigerian government. This all changed with a major attack by Boko Haram on the MNJTF military base at Baga (Nigeria) in which about 400 people were killed. With this major loss, the different participating countries changed their position, allowing for a further consolidation of the MNJTF as a full fighting force.[298]

The goal of the MNJTF is to fight Boko Haram and to protect the civilians in the Lake Chad Basin.[299] The MNJTF is made up of the national forces of the different countries that participate in this task force and consists of 8,500 personnel.[300] The MNJTF forces are allowed to engage in cross-border activities in the areas linked to Boko Haram operational activity. This transnational nature of the task force means that it is better able to confront Boko Haram, being able to respond faster and more effectively.[301] The activities of the MNJTF include joint border patrols, military cooperation, and the exchange of intelligence information.[302] Furthermore, its funding resources are more flexible compared to organisations founded by intergovernmental bodies.[303] Due to these advantages, the MNJTF was able to significantly reduce the territory under control of Boko Haram between January and December 2015.[304] This was mostly achieved through a military approach pursued by the MNJTF

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[295] "President Jonathan's speech at the regional summit on security in France," Vanguard, last modified may 18, 2014, accessed May 7, 2021, https://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/05/president-jonathan-speech-regional-summit-security-france/; Source map: Elias Ntungwe Egalame and David Akana, "Could COP21 Save Shrinking Lake Chad?" InfoCongo, last modified November 19, 2015, accessed May 15, 2021, https://infocongo.org/en/could-cop21-save-shrinking-lake-chad/.

[296] Matthew Brubacher, Kimball Damman, and Christopher Day, "The AU Task Forces: an African response to transnational armed groups," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 55, no. 2 (2017): 282.

[297] Moda Dieng, "The Multi-National Joint Task Force and the G5 Sahel Joint Force: The limits of military capacity-building efforts," *Contemporary Security Policy* 40, no. 4 (2019): 485.

[298] Brubacher, Damman, and Day, 292-293; Emmanuel, 141.

[299] African Union, *484th Meeting at the level of Heads of State and Government* (Addis Ababa: January 29, 2015).

[300] African Union, *484th Meeting*; Emmanuel, 142.

[301] Brubacher, Damman, and Day, 280.

[302] African Union, *484th Meeting*.

[303] Yf Reykers and John Karlsrud, "Multinational rapid response mechanisms: Past promises and future prospects," *Contemporary Security Policy* 38, no. 3 (2017): 424.

[304] Brubacher, Damman, and Day, 294.

as well as other factors such as the change of leadership in Nigeria and extra funding by external actors.[305]

This last aspect brings one to another consequence, namely the intervention and support of external actors like the United States and various European countries. The kidnapping of the Chibok girls has been a significant turning point after which Boko Haram received worldwide attention. This event provoked an international outcry and was a major motivation for the United Nations to designate Boko Haram as a terrorist organisation.[306] Furthermore, it allowed the president of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan, to reinforce his call upon the international community to recognize Boko Haram as a terrorist group, to impose sanctions against the group, and to ask for support in the fight against Boko Haram.[307] By portraying Boko Haram as a new front in the global "War on Terror," Jonathan and the leaders of neighbouring countries have successfully gained international support in their fight against the group.[308]

In particular, the MNJTF has been provided with external support. In July 2015, after authorizing the MNJTF's mandate, the UN called upon the international community to finance the MNJTF and so to quell the terrorist threat posed by Boko Haram.[309] Various countries followed suit. Besides the provision of support in trying to find the Chibok girls, the United States has provided training, equipment and funding to the MNJTF.[310] Between 2012 and 2017, the US contribution to the MNJTF comprised 363 million dollars.[311] Furthermore, the United States has provided training, intelligence and policy advice to the Nigerian government as well as setting up programmes of humanitarian assistance and a deradicalization programme.[312] The European Union followed a similar pattern, providing funding to the MNJTF and setting up deradicalization programmes.[313] Special attention needs to be paid to the role of France in this regard. Because of its colonial ties to many of the countries in the Sahel, France has had a special interest in the region, providing additional support in the form of training MNJTF forces and embarking on reconnaissance flights in the fight against Boko Haram.[314] Through external support, the capacity of the states involved in the MNJTF to confront Boko Haram has thus been enhanced significantly.

Counterinsurgency Taking Precedence over All Other Concerns

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[305] Dieng, 491-492; Olawale W. Ismail and Alagaw Ababu Kifle, *Nouveaux arrangements de sécurité collective au Sahel: étude comparative de la MNJTF et du G-5 Sahel* (Dakar: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2018), 20.

[306] Zenn; John Irish and Elizabeth Pineau, "West Africa leaders vow to wage 'total war' on Boko Haram," Reuters, last modified May 17, 2014, accessed May 5, 2021, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nigerian-violence-summit-idUSBREA4G06120140517; Pérouse de Montclos, *Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency?*, 13.

[307] "President Jonathan's speech at the regional summit on security in France."

[308] Pérouse de Montclos, *Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency*, 21.

[309] Kouma, 733.

[310] John Campbell, *U.S. Policy to Counter Nigeria's Boko Haram*, Council Special Report no. 70 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, November 2014), 15; Office of the Press Secretary, "FACT SHEET: U.S. Efforts to Assist the Nigerian Government in its Fight against Boko Haram," The White House, last modified October 14, 2014, accessed May 7, 2021, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/10/14/fact-sheet-us-efforts-assist-nigerian-government-its-fight-against-boko-.

[311] Dieng, 489.

[312] Office of the Press Secretary, "Daily Briefing by the Press Secretary John Earnest, 01/15/15," The White House, last modified January 15, 2015, accessed May 7, 2021, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/01/15/daily-briefing-press-secretary-josh-earnest-011515; Office of the Press Secretary, "FACT SHEET: U.S. Efforts to Assist the Nigerian Government in its Fight against Boko Haram."

[313] Dieng, 489-490; European Commission, *European Peace Facility: Annual Report 2017* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2018), 16; Immenkamp, Pawlak, and Barzoukas, 5-11.

[314] Emmanuel, 8-9.

Before going into detail about the policy choices in the implementation of the responses discussed above, the decision by both international and regional actors to fight Boko Haram will be shortly examined. When taking a look at other political opposition groups, it can be observed that governments or the international community sometimes opt for negotiations. Yet, in the case of Boko Haram, this option seems out of sight. Boko Haram's terrorist designation has placed the group outside the sphere of legitimate political interaction: being portrayed as an absolute evil, it is generally assumed that the group is not open to any form of dialogue.[315] This has also been the policy of the Nigerian government for the past few years, repeatedly stating that it cannot engage in negotiations with terrorists.[316] But as the group is not being invited for negotiations, addressing their grievances becomes a lot more difficult. A report published by the International Crisis Group has argued that there is a need to engage with jihadists in order to de-escalate conflicts, otherwise one might run the risk of further alienating terrorist groups.[317] This decision of non-negotiation on the part of the Nigerian government and the larger international community is thus at least striking but falls in line with the other policy choices that are pursued when dealing with the group.

Merely focusing on Boko Haram's terrorist identity has created a group that stands apart from its context. This depoliticized understanding of Boko Haram has allowed for a pure military approach in the fight against the group, something that can be observed in the operational mandate of the MNJTF.[318] Being tasked to fight Boko Haram, the MNJTF's rules of engagement are more flexible and less strict compared to the conduct expected from national armies, something that has been authorized by both the African Union and the United Nations.[319] Furthermore, the militarized security-centred agenda makes that support programmes for the MNJTF and its activities concentrate merely on information-sharing, material assistance and military training activities.[320]

Solely concentrating on a militarized approach, however, might have the opposite effect. Harsh counterinsurgency policies, which include indiscriminate killings and the legitimization of impunity, tend to aggravate the reality on the ground.[321] It has been found that many Boko Haram members and supporters feel alienated by their government.[322] Considering this sense of alienation, many researchers have argued that a policing approach would be more effective than the militarized approach currently applied.[323] For many Nigerians living in the Northeast, the main challenges they face are not linked to jihadi terrorism but to issues of political and economic marginalization as was discussed in chapter two.[324] Various researchers who have done research on the situation in the Sahel therefore argue that military approaches against terrorist groups will have no effect if impunity

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[315] Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 280, 283-284.

[316] At different times, the Nigerian government denied negotiations with Boko Haram. A critical side note that should be added is that Boko Haram has also repeatedly ruled out dialogue. Agence France Press, "Nigeria not talking to Boko Haram Islamists: president," The Daily Star, last modified November 19, 2012, accessed January 26, 2021, http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/International/2012/Nov-19/195500-nigeria-not-talking-to-boko-haram-islamists-president.ashx; Pérouse de Montclos, *Boko Haram*, 240; Pérouse de Montclos, *Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency?*, 28.

[317] Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 303.

[318] Ibid., 297.

[319] Brubacher, Damman, and Day, 294.

[320] Dieng, 488; Ismail and Kifle, 20.

[321] Nathaniel Powell, "The Destabilizing Dangers of U.S. Counterterrorism in the Sahel," War on the Rocks, last modified February 8, 2018, accessed May 12, 2021, https://warontherocks.com/2018/02/the-destabilizing-dangers-of-american-counterterrorism-in-the-sahel/; Solomon, 122, 131.

[322] Campbell, 5; Obi Anyadike, "The Road to Redemption? Unmaking Nigeria's Boko Haram," IRIN, last modified October 1, 2015, accessed May 5, 2021, http://newirin.irinnews.org/boko-haram-road-to-redemption/.

[323] Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, *Rethinking the response to jihadist groups across the Sahel*, Research Paper Africa Programme (Chatham House, March 2021), 23; Powell.

[324] Pérouse de Montclos, *Rethinking the response to jihadist groups across the Sahel*, 23.

continues to prevail.[325] Tiffiany Howard, specialised in state failure and conflict and security studies, suggests a correlation between the rise of terrorism and poor governance in weak states.[326] As long as such root causes are not addressed militarized counterinsurgency methods will thus have only limited effect and might even worsen the situation, creating more sympathy among the local inhabitants for groups like Boko Haram.

This argument in favour of a policing approach has been adopted by many countries and intergovernmental bodies as well. For example the African Union and UN have both argued for the need to improve livelihoods as part of the MNJTF mandate.[327] At the same time, the United States and European Union have also adopted various documents in which they advocate a comprehensive approach in combatting terrorist threats: an approach that addresses both humanitarian and development needs as well as military approaches.[328] However, in the context of Northeast Nigeria both the European Union and the United States have put aid destined for humanitarian ends into service of security goals.[329] Despite legal documents, the terrorist threat thus seems to overrule and downplay the attention paid to issues of development and humanitarian assistance.

This is also the case when one looks at the concern for human rights observance. All countries directly participating in the MNJTF have been accused of human rights abuses. These include a crackdown on the freedom of press, illegal detention, inhumane treatment of prisoners, and, in some cases, indiscriminate killings.[330] It can thus be stated that the discussion on human rights abuses by the Nigerian security forces in the previous chapter is not unique to Nigeria but illustrative of the human rights situation in many of the Sahelian countries, albeit to a lesser extent. Yet, as the discussion above illustrates, the governments of these countries are still provided with a lot of external support, mainly because of their fight against the "terrorist" Boko Haram. As is the case with humanitarian and development aid, human rights observance is thus also made less important and there seems to be a general policy of "looking away".[331]

In reaction to reports on human rights abuses in Sahelian countries, the European Union, the United States and the United Nations have made repeated calls to live up to international human rights standards.[332] These calls, however, have been met with little response from the Sahelian governments.[333] Instead, Boko Haram's extension to other countries has been met with authoritative reactions by these countries' governments, causing a further infringement on human rights.[334] And

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[325] Ibid., 2; Ismail and Kifle, 27; Powell; Solomon, 118, 131.

[326] Tiffiany Howard, "Failed States and the Spread of Terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 33, no. 11 (2010): 962, 982.

[327] African Union, *484th Meeting*; United Nations Security Council, *Statement by the President of the Security Council*, United Nations, May 13, 2016, https://undocs.org/S/PRST/2016/7.

[328] European Commission, 6, 16; Office of the Press Secretary, "FACT SHEET: Partnering to Counter Terrorism in Africa," The White House, last modified August 6, 2014, accessed May 7, 2021, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/08/06/fact-sheet-partnering-counter-terrorism-africa; Office of the Press Secretary, "FACT SHEET: U.S. Efforts to Assist the Nigerian Government in its Fight against Boko Haram."

[329] Dieng, 492-493; Stephen Emerson, "Back to the Future: The Evolution of US Counterterrorism Policy in Africa," *Insight on Africa* 6, no. 1 (2014): 52-53.

[330] "Chad 2020," Amnesty International, accessed May 12, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/defense-secretary-mattis-to-meet-with-sen-mccain-after-subpoena-threat-over-niger-attack/2017/10/20/7a4a12de-b5bf-11e7-9e58-e6288544af98_story.html; Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 255, 260-261.

[331] Campbell, 15-17.

[332] Campbell, viii; Immenkamp, Pawlak, and Barzoukas, 4; Office of the Press Secretary, "Daily Briefing by the Press Secretary John Earnest, 01/15/15."

[333] Pérouse de Montclos, *Rethinking the response to jihadist groups in the Sahel*, 8.

[334] Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 253.

whereas both the European Union and the United States have adopted legal measures that prevent them from providing military support to governments that are known to have a poor record of human rights, these measures seem to have been (partially) abolished in the specific case of Boko Haram.[335]

One exception in this regard is the country of Nigeria. Much attention has been paid to the human rights abuses perpetrated by the Nigerian security forces. Both the European Union and the United States have made repeated calls for an improvement on human rights abidance by the Nigerian security forces.[336] This has also resulted in a situation in which the United States denied specific support to the Nigerian government out of a fear that it would amount to greater human rights abuses.[337] Yet despite this denial, the United States continues to rhetorically support Nigeria's fight against Boko Haram and raises, in the context of the "War on Terror", no obstacles to its support of other Sahelian countries, notwithstanding their poor human rights records.[338] This can be observed from the extensive support that both Cameroon and Chad received, also from other countries outside the Sahel.[339]

In the "War on Terror" human rights thus seem to be made subordinate to at least two other considerations on the part of those countries that provide external support in the fight against Boko Haram. First of all, there is the fact that external support can serve as some form of self-interest through which foreign countries can extend their sphere of influence over the Sahel.[340] An example involves the support provided by France. The French government perceives of Boko Haram as a threat to its interests and its allies in the Sahel.[341] This means that the support provided is thus not merely open-ended assistance, but also serves to further the political and economic interests of France. Furthermore, the support delivered allows these external actors, be it a country or an intergovernmental body, to set demands on the desired outcomes of the provision of such support.[342] The consequences of the terrorist designation are thus not solely objective processes in reaction to the rise of Boko Haram, but also serve a particular agenda of these countries.

Secondly, external actors like the European Union and the United States seem to prefer strongmen who can put up a "credible" fight against the "terrorists" of Boko Haram.[343] The Nigerian government's portrayal of Boko Haram as absolute evil that needs to be fought at all costs, has been taken over by the international community.[344] This has resulted in a preference for harsh and effective policy choices instead of prioritizing human rights. As has been argued by Amnesty International and various scholars, the disregard of human rights should raise alarm bells since it amounts to approving impunity and thus makes external actors indirectly complicit to the human

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[335] Campbell, 17; Dieng, 495; Immenkamp, Pawlak, and Barzoukas, 10.

[336] U.S. Department of State, *Daily Press Briefing*, (Washington: U.S. Department of State, November 12, 2014); Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 282.

[337] U.S. Department of State; Eric Schmitt and Dionne Searcey, "U.S. Plans to Put Advisers on Front Lines of Nigeria's War on Boko Haram," New York Times, last modified February 25, 2016, accessed May 4, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/26/world/africa/us-plans-to-help-nigeria-in-war-on-boko-haram-terrorists.html.

[338] Campbell, 15.

[339] Amnesty International, *Right Cause, Wrong Means: Human Rights Violated and Justice Denied in Cameroon's Fight Against Boko Haram* (London: Amnesty International Ltd., 2016), 15-16; Kouma, 730-733.

[340] Ismail and Kifle, 22; Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 298-299.

[341] Emmanuel, 10.

[342] Ibid., 2, 8.

[343] Kouma, 733; Powell; Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 256.

[344] Campbell, 9; Cold-Ravnkilde and Plambech, 5; "President Jonathan's speech at the regional summit on security in France."

rights abuses perpetrated by Sahelian governments.[345] It can indeed be observed that the provision of external support in the case of the fight against Boko Haram has prevented the Sahelian governments from reforming their human rights policies and instead allowed political elites to consolidate their power base.[346] An example includes a much debated policy move of the United States when the country facilitated the prevention of a coup against the late Chadian President Idriss Déby.[347]

Although Boko Haram's terrorist designation has thus increased regional and international cooperation, these alliances come with a dark side of human rights abuses. The limited focus on Boko Haram's "terrorist" identity has allowed for harsh counterinsurgency methods and the legitimization of human rights abuses. This runs the risk of further alienating local inhabitants of Northern Nigeria, which might eventually result in a worsening of the situation on the ground. Instead of thus ending the conflict, or making it easier to fight, it seems to be the case that Boko Haram's terrorist designation has allowed for policies that might eventually cause a continuation of the conflict. The implications of this terrorist designation will be further discussed in the conclusion of this thesis.

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[345] Adotei Akwei, "Turning a Blind Eye on Impunity in Nigeria," Amnesty International USA, last modified March 2, 2016, accessed May 4, 2021, https://blog.amnestyusa.org/africa/turing-a-blind-eye-on-impunity-in-nigeria/; Dieng, 495; Emerson, 49; Pérouse de Montclos, *Rethinking the response to jihadist groups across the Sahel*, 21; Powell.

[346] Dieng, 491; Pérouse de Montclos, *Rethinking the response to jihadist groups across the Sahel*, 5.

[347] Dieng, 495; Elizabeth Schmidt, "From the Cold War to the War on Terror, 1991-2010," in *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From the Cold War to the War on Terror* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 217.

Conclusion

Considering the research and findings of this thesis, it can be stated that Boko Haram is not a unique movement in itself. The group, and more generally the violence in Northern Nigeria, arose out of political and socio-economic frustration. The politics of communal rivalry that have dominated Nigerian politics since the country's independence, has created a suspicious sentiment towards the Nigerian government among many northerners. Adding to this the socio-economic grievances that many encounter in their daily lives, makes that many inhabitants of Northern Nigeria feel marginalized. In order to still secure their interests, many northerners have sought for alternative routes. One of these routes has been to join (militant) Salafi groups which advocate the implementation of sharia so as to cure Nigerian society from its ills. Boko Haram is one such a group.

It is thus far more useful to perceive of the group as a socio-political movement than considering it part of a global jihadi threat. As has been argued by Alexander Thurston and Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, both leading experts on Boko Haram, treating the movement as a domestic or regional insurgency would provide a far better reflection of reality.[348] Boko Haram arose out of political opportunity: the group filled the power vacuum that was left by the waning authority of the political and religious establishments in Northeast Nigeria. In reaction to the widespread sense of frustration and marginalization, Boko Haram proposes the creation of an Islamic state as the solution. In order to realize such a state, the group is involved in a violent jihad against the Nigerian state and its allies. The terrorist tactics employed by the group are thus more of a political strategy, than a mere ideological conviction to destroy everything as is proposed by the new terrorism thesis.

Yet, contrary to the findings above, the terrorist label implies that Boko Haram is a unique group. As has been put forward in the first chapter of this thesis, the terrorism discourse creates an "aura of moral certainty". "Terrorists" are treated as if they possess only one identity, namely that of the terrorist. These ideas that come with Boko Haram's terrorist designation have "exceptionalised" the group and its behaviour. The number of victims as a result of Boko Haram violence is treated differently compared to other actors that have a similar, or in some cases even worse, fatality rate. Furthermore, practices that are common throughout the Sahel such as arms proliferation, illegal trafficking of goods and persons, and the formation of alliances with other insurgent groups, are seen through a different, "terrorist" light when dealing with Boko Haram. These narratives, and the ideas that come with the "new terrorism" thesis have placed the group outside of its context, obscuring the underlying political grievances that gave rise to Boko Haram in the first place.

These "decontextualized" ideas have had serious consequences for how we deal with the group. As was shown in the last chapter, the terrorist designation legitimizes a different form of response. By only focusing on Boko Haram's terrorist identity, the Nigerian government has successfully downplayed the political messages of the group, and instead advocated a harsh counterinsurgency. This concerns a militarized approach involving an easing of the rules of conduct when fighting the group. Furthermore, one can observe a clear neglect of human rights. Since harsh and effective measures are preferred, various countries providing external support are willing to close their eyes to the excessive use of violence on the part of the various Sahelian governments.

This links back to another major critique expressed by CTS scholars (the first being the delegitimization of terrorist actors), namely the state-centrism upon which Terrorism Studies rests. As was demonstrated in chapter three, the process of a terrorist designation is never a fully objective process and serves the interests of certain state actors. In the case of the Sahelian countries, the terrorist designation has helped them to acquire external support and legitimize harsh counterinsurgency methods. In the case of foreign powers, the terrorist designation has allowed

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[348] Kassim and Nwankpa, 10; Pérouse de Montclos, *Boko Haram*, 197-198; Solomon, 122; Pérouse de Montclos, *Rethinking the response to jihadist groups across the Sahel*, 22.

them to enlarge their influence in the Sahel. Furthermore, the provision of external support points to the automatic legitimization of states' actions: despite widespread human rights abuses, many foreign actors still choose to support the Sahelian governments because they perceive of terrorism as being a greater threat to their own security and interests.

In this context, terrorism is thus framed as being the problem and the different policies put forward in chapter four are the proposed solutions. As has been shown, however, these "solutions" run the risk of having the opposite effect: instead of pacifying the situation, they might further alienate the population of Northeast Nigeria and cause a continuation of the conflict. This observation indicates that the problem might lie somewhere else, namely in the political and economic reality of Northeast Nigeria. Terrorism, in this regard, is merely a signal of the bigger misconceptions and does not form a problem in itself. Instead of thus employing a harsh militarized approach, there will be a need to deal with the "real" problems in order to quell terrorist violence.

This thesis has provided the reader with an empirical example for the field of Critical Terrorism Studies and an additional perspective on Boko Haram. This way, it has been tried to destabilise dominant interpretations of the group and instead show the contested and political nature of the terrorism discourse. However, as was put forward at the start of this thesis, a complete abolishment of the term would do no good. Instead, one should be very careful when employing the term. As has been demonstrated in this thesis, the current employment of the term is too much linked to the biases that come forward from the "new terrorism" thesis. These misleading tendencies create a "reality" which has serious implications for how one sees the group and deals with it. We should be aware of these facts when employing the term in order to create policies which will provide a better answer to the challenges that one finds in a "terrorist" context.

Appendix 1

This appendix includes the translation of pages 62 to 94 of هذه عقيدتنا و منهج دعوتنا [This is Our Belief and Method of Call] by Mohammed Yusuf (2005). This book was written by Mohammed Yusuf around 2005 in reaction to other Islamic scholars who denounced his beliefs. The translated pages cover two chapters of the book, the first one being "Beware of the Temporal Democratic Infidel Sedition[,] the Idol of th[is] Era, and her Method is Religion with Hope" (pages 62 to 80-2), which focuses on Yusuf´s arguments against the system of democracy. The second chapter is called "Foreign Western Colonial Schools" (pages 80-2 to 95) in which Yusuf discusses his objections towards Western-style schooling.

Although not much reference has been made to this book in the thesis itself, the book has been of major importance for the author of this thesis in order to understand the ideology of Boko Haram. The translation of the chapters provided below has been done by the author herself. In translating, it has been tried to stay as close to the original text as possible. This may explain for wrongful English sentence constructions in grammar or style. The same applies to the lay out of the text which reflects the lay out of the original Arabic text. If the author deemed the original translation too obscure or difficult, own additions have been provided in square brackets. Sometimes, a word occurred which was illegible due to the quality of the original Pdf in Arabic. This has been indicated by putting the word illegible in italics between square brackets. Furthermore, the author has chosen to keep some Islamic words in the text as it was feared that the meaning of these words would get lost when translating them. These words have been put in italics and have been provided with a short explanation in the footnotes. Throughout the text, Allah has been translated as God and references to Him are indicated by capitalizing the first letter of a word.

The citations of the Quran that have been provided in the text have been translated according to the translations given online on quran.com.[349]

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[349] Quran.com, accessed June 10, 2021. https://quran.com/?locale=en.

[**page 62**] Beware of the temporal democratic infidel sedition[,] the idol of th[is] era, and her method is religion with hope

[**page 63**]

Beware of the temporal democratic infidel sedition[,] the idol of th[is] era, and her method is religion with hope

And we do not believe, and do not deal, and do not use democracy, because it is an ideology of the infidel, and to follow it and deal with them, or use her system is disbelief. It is not permissible for a Muslim to nominate himself, nor to vote for others, under the shadow of the democratic system.

And the first who came across democracy was Plato.

He defined her: "rule of the people by the people" as the word is composed of two Greek words:

The first of her; "Damus" and her meaning is the people.

The other; "Kratus" and her meaning is the rule or the power.

And Sheikh Mohammed bin Saleh bin Uthiman and Abdallah bin Jabreen said the Almighty God in [verses …]:

"… and this is a return to her apocalypse for the people, the people become the legislator, and it is rule without God Almighty, this is a grave breach for our religion Al Hanifa said the Almighty: "there is no other rule than God." But democracy says "there is no other rule than for the people", so it does not prevent one from her rule by an infidel or hypocrite [**page 64**] or immoral under the shadow of the democratic system, and in this is the great danger of serious evil that is in her. So we emphasise and assert the saying that democracy is idolatrous under her infidelity and refuse her and do not accept her, [*illegible*] slave in his faith when there is no other than the infidelity and idolatry on the first place, when the faith in God is second.

The Almighty said: "So whoever renounces false gods and believes in Allah has certainly grasped the firmest" [Al-Baqarah 256]. And democracy is a doctrine of the unbelievers and of their call, so it is not correct for us – as Muslims – to correct their doctrine, as well as acting on it and promoting it in the circles of the Muslims, that we correct the doctrine of the infidels and contradict the contradictors of Islam. Lose came that out believe *Ahl-as-Sunnah*[350] and the group 'whoever believes the disbelievers, or doubts in their disbelieve or corrects their doctrine is an unbeliever." It are their words.

And whoever not doubts in it; that dealing with the democratic method after correction of the Western Christian doctrine, and that the Western Christian, as money to this Greek paganism when one adds on his belief the changed character.

The big difference between Islam and democracy, or secularism, appears that in the principle, and the origin, and the way, and the destination, out of alleged freedoms:

1 - Freedom of belief
2 - [**page 65**] Freedom of opinion
3 - Freedom of possession
4 - Personal freedom

The fighter Abu Musab Ahmad Al-Zarqawi, may God have mercy on him, said: "And democracy came to tell us: that the people in the democratic system are the government and the reference, and for it a word of separation and oppression in every matter. As his reality in this system of *taghut*[351]

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350 Followers of Sunni Islam.
351 Unbelievers. See explanation chapter 3.

unbelief says no return to judgement of the people, and no pursuer of wisdom, and no pursuing of his rule[,] and they go back to it. Her will is sacred in democracies, and her selection is binding, and it is an introduction, and her rule is allegedly wisdom and justice of unbelief, of raising this system above, and the disease of our law and system and sharia is significant, and it is except with no sanctity and no values and no authority, and that was a strong religion, and the wise sharia of the Lord of the world. And this slogan – namely "rule of the people by the people" – is the heart of the democratic system, and its essence and axis, and its pole, which spins on all matters and issues. The presence of democracy is not except so, that belief of democracy which is worship [**page 66**] and glorifies publicly daily. And this is what her theorists and thinkers read on [*illegible*] witnesses, and we witness it and touch it in reality that which we see and looks like democracy on different her different ramifications and interpretations, and it rises on principles and foundations of which summarize the most important in the following points:

First: That democracy builds on the principle that people are the source of power, as in power of legislation, and this is done in a way by voting representatives for the people, [who] act on important legislation and rules, in other words; that the obeyed legislator in democracy is humans and not God. And this means that the familiar of the obeyed idols of the side of legislations, and of analysis, and of prohibition, is [the] people and nothing but the people and the creature, and not the high God, and that is the eye of polytheism and unbelief and error, a contradiction of the origins of the belief and *tawhid*,[352] and it includes engaging weak ignorant oppressed people with the glorious and high God. Which does not share with his Godhead including His creation, and His behaviour, and his handling, and it does not share with His divinity, including His prohibitions, His analysis, and His legislation; command forbids worship/cult. And it does not share with His names and His qualities to describe and guide to His rule, and His power, and His defeats, and His government, and His power, and His rule on creation. "The creation and the command belong to Him alone. Blessed [**page 67**] is Allah – Lord of all worlds." [Al-A'raf 54] This is the reality of the pure *tawhid* which honours the creation of God the creator, and the transmission of the messenger and the book which was sent down to the people to believers and unbelievers, and a market of paradise and hell arose, but these polytheists made the people with God in special properties of the divine except is the rule and legislation, he said the following: "It is only God Who decides. He has commanded that you worship none but Him. That is the upright faith, but most people do not know." [Yusuf 40]. And he said the following: "And he shares His command with none" [Al-Kahf 26] And He said of those who said: "Whatever you may differ about its judgement rests with God, That is God – my Lord. In Him I put my trust, and to Him I always turn" [Ash-Shuraa 10]. And not to the people, or the masses, or the abundance of the abundant, and He said the following: "Is it the judgement of pre-Islamic ignorance they seek? Who could be better a judge than God for people of sure faith?" [Al-Ma'idah 50]. And His Majesty said: "He said, Shall I seek for you a god other than God while He has honoured you above the others?" [Al-A'raf 140]. And the Glorious said: "or do they have partner-gods who have ordained for them some polytheistic beliefs, which God has not authorized?" [Ash-Shuraa 21]. The so-called religion prescribes partners of God Almighty for the people without power. And the Most High said: "But no! By your Lord, they will never be true believers until they accept you o prophet as the judge in their disputes and find no resistance within themselves against your decision and [**page 68**] submit wholeheartedly" [An-Nisa 65]. I swear on the Glorious and Almighty and Holy[,] denial of faith to those who do not rule with the legislation of God in religious and worldly affairs, and His Majesty and Honoured said: "They have taken their rabbis and monks as well as the Messiah, son of Mary, as lords besides God, even though they were commanded to worship non but One God. There is no god

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[352] The absolute unity of God, also referring to the fact that He is the sole creator and that all judgement lies with him. For more information see *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, 2nd ed., s.v. "tawhid".

worthy of worship except Him. Glorified as He above what they associate with Him" [At-Tawbah 31] [*illegible*] Talking about Udai bin Hatim that he did not come before the prophet, peace be upon him, and he is a Christian, at that time the messenger of God[,] peace be upon him[,] heard him read this verse "take their rabbis and monks as lords besides God" he said so I said to him: "we do not worship them". That is we don't worship them in terms of asceticism, and supplication, and prostration, and kneeling, he thought that worship was confined to this meaning solely.

So he disclosed to the prophet[,] peace be upon him[,] and said to him: "Are they not solving what is forbidden by God to solve it? And are they deprived of what God solved so they forbade it?", he said. So that was said to their servants. And Said Qutb may God have mercy on him said: "That the people in all earthly systems, take each other as lords instead of God. It is located in the democracy, like it is located in the basest dictatorships."

[**page 69**] And he said: "He showed the divine properties of the worship of slaves, and legislation in their lives, and put scales for them, and he claimed nothing of this all is lost and he claimed for himself to show the divine properties, and naturalize for the same for the people of the divine God." And he said: "That God alone owns the right of prohibition and analysis and not one of the humans, nor an individual, and not [even] a layer, and not the *ummah*,[353] and not all the people. There is no other authority than that of God and according to the sharia of God. Those are his words.

Second: Democracy departs from the principle of freedom of belief. The shadow of the system of democracy is that one worships whatever thing, and one worships the religion that he wants, and he reverts to any religion as he pleases, and this bouncing back was a performance of exiting the religion of the almighty God to atheism and worship without the Almighty God, and this command is no doubt an annulment and corruption and contrast for much of the texts of the sharia, which emphasizes that the Muslim draws back on his religion and his sharia to disbelief in his rule and in finishing Islam, as what is narrated in the Hadith by Bukhari and others: "of changing and killing his religion" and this does not leave him indifferent, as an apostate does not regard or hold a covenant, and no sincerity, and no vicinity, and not for him the religion of God other than repentance or the sword.

[**page 70**] Third: Democracy stands on the consideration that the people are the reference to respond to conflicts and disputes, and if a difference or conflict between the ruler and the government happens, it takes that both of the parties threaten one another so it returns to the will of the people and to their choice, to separate the people from what was between them on conflict or difference. And this is immoral and contradictory to the origins of *tawhid*, which reads that the ruler who decides on judgement and conflicts is the Almighty God, and no one else. The Almighty said: "Whatever you may differ about, its judgement rests with God" [Ash-Shuraa 10] Between them democracy says "Whatever you may differ about, its judgement rests with the people and not with one other than the people". And the Almighty said: "O believers, obey God and obey the messenger and those in authority among you. Should you disagree on anything, then refer it to God and His messenger, if you truly believe in God and the last day. This is the best and fairest resolution" [An-Nisa 59].

And Ibn Al-Qayim[,] may God have mercy on him[,] said in his book [information for those who write on behalf of the lord of the worlds]: "make this response obligations of faith and his accompaniments, if this response is denied the faith is denied with neglection of the obligatory and neglection of the needed. Then the will of the judge to the people or to any other party is without God Almighty and considered without consideration of sharia and the control by the *taghut* which must be his infidelity, [**page 71**] and the Most High said: "Have you not seen those who claim to have believed in what was revealed to you, [O Muhammad], and what was revealed before you? They

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[353] Islamic community. See explanation chapter 3.

wish to refer legislation to *taghut*, while they were commanded to reject it" [An-Nisa 60]. And God[,] may He be praised and exalted[,] made [*illegible*] and falsely, no reality in it, just because he gets the will in their judgement to the *taghut* and to His legislation, and since all legislation is without the legislation of God, or [the] ruler not ruling according to what God sent down, in it enters the meaning of the *taghut* that must be his infidelity.

Fourth: Democracy stands on the principle of freedom of expression, whatever this expression is, and it is a corruption curse and insult for the same God and the rituals of religion. In a democracy there exists nothing specific that is forbidden to engage in, or to insult it with an ugly saying, the Most High said: "God does not like the public mention of evil except by one who has been wronged." [An-Nisa 148]. And the Most High said: "And if you ask them, they will surely say, "We were only conversing and playing." Say, "Is it God and His verses and His messenger that you were mocking?" Make no excuse; you have disbelieved after your belief. If We pardon one faction of you – We will punish another faction because they were criminals." [At-Tawbah 65-66] [**page 72**] {And He said[,] blessing and peace be upon him[,] "that the servant speaks the word and in it comes out that the rebellion/fire is far from the east"} The Most High said: "Man does not utter any word except that with him is an observer prepared [to record]" [Qaaf 18].

Fifth: Democracy departs on the principle of separation of religion from country, and from politics and life. So what God is from God and he is the performance of worship in […] and […], but this is in the area of political life, and economics and society, and without it, in it – they have – privacies of the people, and a saying of the Almighty one on the polytheists is: "And the polytheists assign to God from that which He created of crops and livestock a share and say, "This is for God," by their claim, "and this is for our partners [associated with Him]." But what is for their "partners" does not reach God, while what is for God – this reaches their "partners." Evil is that which they rule." [Al-An'am 136]. You find them preferring the high court over the court that they call the court of sharia, so what is the ruling of the governor of the High/Majesty court: it does not reach the judge of the alleged sharia court. And the ruling of the judge of the sharia court reaches the judge of High court. [**page 73**] O God I seek your refuge from delusions, disbelief, and following passions. How is the Muslim satisfied with this ruling? The Most High said: "Evil is what they judge" [Al-An'am 136]. It is in this saying. And this saying of them is known as religious necessity of their corruption and their annulment, and disbelief that they say in it, in order to guarantee the truth of exiting the way, like what is known of religious necessity. In it is an exit of the path to the righteous God. And the text of God[,] may He be praised and exalted[,] has stated that Islam is a religion and a country and a politics, and a rule and a legislation, and it is much too broad to be confined to rites or between the walls of the mosques. And all of those who interpret Islam [from] a religious angle not ruling over politics and government, and areas of human life all of it[,] did not understand the intention/meaning of God and His messenger, and he has changed the notion of Islam to another concept, and in this is no doubt a clear disbelief in the religion of God the Most High, as the Most High said: "So do you believe in part of the Scripture and disbelieve in [another] part? Then what is the recompense for those who do that among you except disgrace in worldly life; and on the Day of Resurrection they will be sent back to the severest punishment. And God is not unaware of what you do." [Al-Baqarah 85] And the Most High said: "Those who say we believe in some and disbelieve in others and they wish to adopt a way in between." [An-Nisa 150]. [**page 74**]

Sixth: Democracy stands on the principle of formation of political groups/gatherings and parties and others among it, whatever doctrine or ideas or opinions or origins these parties have. And this principle is legally invalid, and this is the point of it: that it includes voluntary acknowledgement and recognition without coercion of the legitimacy of parties and groups, with all its blasphemous persuasions and polytheism, and that it has the right to exist, and spreads its invalidity and disbelief and corruption among the countries and between the people. And this is

contrary to much of the legal texts, that proves to the people in its dealings with evil and disbelief; deny it and change it, and no acknowledgement or recognition of its legitimacy, the Most High[,] may He be blessed and exalted[,] said "whoever you see denying or changing his hand, if he cannot with his tongue and not with his heart, and this is weaker faith. And said the Most High: "And fight them until there is no fitnah and [until] the religion, all of it, is for God. And if they cease – then indeed, God is Seeing of what they do" [Al-Anfal 39]. And Ibn Taymiyyah said[,] may God have mercy on him: "All inactive sects are not committed to sharia of the canons of Islam and this is a frequent/incurring phenomenon of these folks – meaning – the Tatars – and others, and that you must fight them until they adhere to His canons, and that was with speaking the Shahada, and committed to some of his canons."

[**page 75**] Until he said: "Fighting is a duty until all of the religion is of God, and until there is no war [anymore], so when the religion of God was changed fighting was a duty" and he said "I don't know of a difference in this between the scholars."

Including: that this voluntary recognition with legitimacy on unbelieving parties includes satisfaction with disbelief, and that not uttering one's tongue is [also] satisfaction with disbelief. And satisfaction with disbelief is disbelief. The most high said: "And it has already come down to you in the book that when you hear the verses of God [recited], they are denied [by them] and ridiculed; so do not sit with them until they enter into another conversation. Indeed, you would then be like them. Indeed God will gather the hypocrites and disbelievers in Hell all together" [An-Nisa 140].

Including: One of the necessities of recognition of this principle, is allowing unbelieving parties – of all trends – to spread their disbelief and infidelity and to divide society by all varieties of corruption and temptation and passions, so establishing them [forces] the *ummah* to accept these parties and their destruction and devastation of countries and people, and corruption of the education of generations and their offspring, and the spread of religious chaos, and magic, and sorcery and showing/adornment of the unveiled.

Seventh: Democracy stands on the principle of consideration of the position of the majority, and adoption of what meets this majority, even when this meets invalidity and delusion and blasphemy. [**page 76**] The law in considering democracy which may not be astonished or commented on, and is what is decided by the majority, and society on its truth is not changed and this principle is invalid and not permissible on its release, because the law considered in Islam is what the book and *sunnah*[354] approve and not what meets the disputes which the whole earth faces, and the Most High said: "And most of them believe not in God except while they associate others with Him." [Yusuf 106] And said the Most High: "And if you obey most of those upon the earth, they will mislead you from the way of God. They follow not except assumption, and they are not but falsifying." [An-Na'am 116] As the noble verse indicated that abiding and following much of the earth is a delusion from the path of God the Most High, because the majority is delusion, they do not know God and they do not believe in God the Most High. Ibn Masoud[,] may God be pleased with him[,] said: "And the audience of the community are those who left the community, and the community will not reconcile with the truth even if they are alone". And said Al-Hassan Al-Basri[,] may God the Most High have mercy on him: "*Ahl As-Sunnah* and the community was the minimum of the people in the past, and is the minimum of the people that remain [today]. Who do not go with the folks of extravagance in their extravagance, and not with the folks of heresy in their heresy. And they were patient with their *sunnah* until they threw out their God, since they are like that."

[**page 77**] And what should be drawn attention to, and what strengthens and amazes him, is that despite what took place[,] the democratic experiment on Muslims was of bad and dire consequence

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[354] The example set by the prophet Muhammad as recorded in the different hadiths about his speech and actions. For more information see *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, 2nd ed., s.v. "sunna".

and resulted in weakness, and the democratic political movement sprouted mixed divergent movements, despite all of that, and other things that insult the will of polytheism and corruption, and disobedience in the nation until they shudder on acting ugly and unashamed of the almighty God, as people are not targeting democracy, and they fight for it as if they are its masters and makers. They drunk love for democracy in their hearts, just as they drunk in their hearts of love for hurry before the coming of Israel, as their hearing does not benefit them nor their eyesight and nor their hearts, then it was solving Quranic verses and the texts of the sharia. And the reality of the bitter situation, in Algeria, and in Egypt, and in Turkey, and in other Muslim countries indicates, corruption of the way. And some of them could not be with suspicion of interest and accessibility with the decision and leadership of the way of democracy, and they took it as a path of attainment of the purposes of sharia, and the religious [purposes], and they did not turn the legitimacy of these means and provisions in the debt of God almighty, and they entered in bargaining and exchanging on the path of the doctrine and method in the name of reconciliation and destination. Remember what At-Tabbari narrated in his biography saying: "He found Walid ibn al-Mukhaira, and al-Aas [**page 78**] ibn Wa'il, and al-Aswad bin al-Mutalib, and Umayyah ibn Khalaf [they] said to the messenger of God[,] blessings and peace be upon him: "O Muhammad let us worship what you worship, and you worship what you worship, and let us share with you in our command all of it, if that what came with it is their good in our hands we share with you in it and we took our luck of it, and if that which was in our hands was their good in your hands we already shared in our command, and you took from us our luck. As God the Most High brought down: "Say, 'O disbelievers, [1] I do not worship what you worship [2] Nor are you worshippers of what I worship [3] Nor will I be a worshipper of what you worship. [4] Nor will you be worshippers of what I worship. [5] For you is your religion, and for me is my religion." [6] [Al-Kafirun]. Look[,] o wise people, so consider first the eyesight. The polytheists requested from the prophet[,] may God bless him and peace be upon him[,] for a compromise, and to give up and let them give up, and they agreed on one point, that is worship of God alone and no partner for him among the *sunnah*, [nor] worship of polytheistic gods. Can you not see that their demand looks like the interest that it claims to advocate democracy? Do you not see that the people of our time are the ones who deduced the mind thinking that when the polytheists began worshiping God alone and not his partners they understood the religion before the expiration of the period/time lapse, but how far how far, the issue is a matter of principle and doctrine, there is no compromise "I do not worship what they worship" "you have your religion and I have [my] religion" "And if they deny you, [O Muhammad], then say, "For me are my deeds, and for you are your deeds. You are disassociated [**page 79**] from what I do, and I am disassociated from what you do." [Yunus 41]. Democracy is not hold by anyone except to renounce a pillar of the pillars of monotheism, and this is anything except innocence and loyalty, you cannot find with the Jews and the Christians and the polytheists a system saving the religion of the Muslims, nor their spirits, nor their souls, nor their money, nor their statements, nor their chickens, one can only know the most important of the false religion, "and do not condemn the religion of the right/law," their religion is false, their doctrine is corruption, so how do you find interest in them "And never will the Jews or the Christians approve of you until you follow their religion" [Al-Baqarah 120]. Hold on to the book of our Lord reciting, and meditating, and understanding, and abiding to the *sunnah* of your prophet learning, and working, and spreading, and searching guidance from God[,] night and day[,] who is the guider to the straight path. Look[,] o Muslims, says the Most High: "Neither those who disbelieve from the People of the Scripture nor the polytheists wish that any good should be sent down to you from your Lord" [Al-Baqarah 105]. Remember well and know that he who does not like and does not want that God comes down on them is good, He does not bring to them any good by Himself, do not be deceived by them. Then you know that he preferred this nation and its benevolence as it took the monotheism of God the Most High, and achieve sincerity in prayer and trust. And the authority of Ibn Abbas, may

God be pleased with them[, and] the authority of the prophet[,] blessings and peace be upon him[,] he said "I offered to the nations and saw the prophet and with him Al-Raheit,

[**page 80**] And the prophet with him the man and the 2 men, and the prophet was not alone as he raised great darkness to me, I thought they said this to me that Moses and his strength but as I looked to the horizon I saw great darkness, as he said this to me among our nation seventy thousand will enter Paradise without account nor torment" then he got up and entered his house, as the people fight in those, and he said that perhaps some of them might accompany the messenger of God[,] blessings and peace be upon him, and said some of them perhaps were born into Islam but they did not engage in anything with God, the messenger of God[,] blessings and peace be upon him[,] went out on them as they informed him he said: "they who do not steal, or burn, nor fly and trust in their Lord."

And this hadith[,] as the scholars said[,] indicates that the monotheists leave the hated things with their need to her, trust in God and fulfilment of monotheism, and until they leave some things are permissible for the realization of devotion to God in subjection [to Him], and the Hadith does not indicate that they do not start the causes originally, and that the direct causes are essentially instinctive/natural, for one to separate from Him, taking the reasons not with suspicion but trusting in God, and there are many texts in the book and the *sunnah* indicating the monotheism of God the Most High in divinity. [**page 80-1**] This is the foundation and the truth. And victory of God the Most High for the monotheists in the world and the hereafter which he obtained for these monotheists. O God make us one of them. This is what we meant in the statement of this doctrine [and not] disbelief and atheism, and misguidance. What was right is from God[,] the Most High[,] and what was an error is from my soul of weakness and of evil, and God and his messenger are innocent "we ask you[,] o God for your forgiveness and the destiny is to you" and the curse of God [successive] is on evil and disbelief.

Foreign Western Colonial Schools

[**page 80-2**] Foreign Western Colonial Schools
Its toxins and its malice and its danger in the nation

And came the role of the colonial Christian, after the Ottoman Islamic state was overthrown in the late thirteenth century. The Christians entered in Muslim countries, and their entrance of missionary [activities], and they killed a great many Muslims and violated the sanctities of Muslim women, and they colonized [the] Muslim countries for years, and they governed it by Christian and polytheistic rule, and they did not leave the Muslim countries until after they changed the religion, and they damaged the Islamic scientific methods, and they took their methods. The first and biggest of their toxins is that which they broadcasted in the Islamic *ummah* (in the school), which is the point that they invaded the thought and culture, and changed the teachers of the religion, and educated the Muslim children since the softness of their success, from the kindergarten to the primary school, and medium, and third, and college, on leaving their religion. There was no difference in this between Christianization/evangelical schools and non-evangelical [ones], which carries the banner of the rulers which founded from before colonialism in Muslim countries.

[**page 80-3**] Sheikh Bakr Ibn Abdallah Abu Zaid said – may God have mercy on him – in his book [the colonial foreign global schools their history and their risks]: "But the foreign schools, and colleges, and universities, without a difference between missionary ones and non-missionary [ones], [of them] were the greatest blackness the missionary in all its cases."

The majority of the people drank in their hearts love for these schools of disbelief because of love for the world, and they do not even see what is in it of the irregularities of the sharia. Sometimes they claim [it] necessity, and sometimes they differentiate between missionary schools and government [schools]. And this indicates their ignorance of the colonial history and the schools of disbelief, because it first started not having teachers only missionaries, and they were the organizers of their affairs. And when the colonizers left and they left the Muslims in a disbelief that they charged on them, and among the citizens arose a teaching of these sciences that came with the colonizers without a distinction of an increase or decrease. It is Christianization by herself.

This said sheikh Bakr in his abovementioned book "that there are a great many number of jealous reformers among scholars and others in various countries of the world [:] the Islamic Kingdom, and Egypt, and Sudan, and Iraq, and al-Sham and its four divisions, and in Turkey, and India, and Pakistan, and in Kuwait, and the UAE, [**page 80-4**] and in the four states of the Maghreb, and in Indonesia, and in Malaysia, and others: they announced their explicit Islamic attitude from schools with broken links to Islam[ic] doctrine, and method, and language, and history (the foreign colonial schools), which opened in Muslim countries to be children's homes of generations of Muslims, warnings of it, and do not let children of Muslims enter in it, shown its risks on the Islamic *ummah* in its present and its future, and that it is a stronghold for betrayal of Muslims by colonizing their generations ideologically and intellectually and culturally, and what is in this is dissolving of the Islamic personality and shaping the thought and mind so to reject Islam, and that is the truth (the dark house), and that is a clear intellectual war of the worshippers of the cross, deeper than their armed crusader wars, and that is (the crossed swords) in the hearts, so that when they raised their words on the necks of the Muslims they brought it to their hearts, and that is (the poisoned dagger).

And said Sheikh Muhammad Rashid Rida – may God have mercy on him – in [tafsir Al-Manar 10 – 514]: "and many of them ignored this obligation, so they went mad on their religion and their gods? and their nation, so they became the worst of all nations immediately in their financial [and] political interests, until they lost their property, and their conquests, and their honour, and became dependent on people of another sect for education of their sons and their daughters, so they cast them in schools of advocates of Christianity, or advocates of atheism, and they corrupted [**page 81**] their religion [and their religion], and broke the bonds with Bedouins and nationality, and punished them for being servants of foreigners over them.

And if they said to them why do you not establish schools for yourself like the schools of those monks and missionaries? [and] atheist pornography? And they said: We cannot find money in doing this. But the truth is that they do not find certainty nor intelligence nor high spirits and jealousy is what exposes them to this, so they see children of the other religion building schools, and universities [and] charities and politics, [something] what is not necessitated on them by their religion, and if brought to their minds and [if it] changed their religion and nationalism, and it is not obligated on them by their religion, and they are not jealous of them, but they want to be dependent on them. They left their religion scattered it lost them "they forgot God so he forgets them themselves or those that are immoral" to end.

Said Sheikh Hassan Manat – may God the Most High have mercy on him – and he is one of the scholars of the sacred mosque – in his message [rule of the Islamic sharia in Muslim education of their children in the foreign schools S 31-32]: "Wake up o parents, wake up from the sleep of negligence, and come back to your Majestic Lord, [**page 82**] "and do not leave to those who wronged you so the fire touches you", and know that if you allow your children to enter these schools you allow them to enter the churches, and to witness rituals of unbelief, and to hear the challenge of the religion of Islam, and in all that the glorious sharia forbids, and its care for human virtue.

And be careful that you leave this what is obliged by God on you to your children, from their education [in] Islamic teachings, and [to] correcting them of all what it violates.

And know that in preserving the religion and the ethics and the goodness and the happiness, and that what you fancy of prestige and money as a result of learning in foreign schools has no weight besides preserving the religion and virtuous morals: "Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire – of women and sons, heaped-up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle and tilled land. That is the enjoyment of worldly life, but God has with Him the best return" [Ali Imran 14]. And believe the messenger of God[,] blessings and peace be upon him[,] when he said: "Nations from all horizons are about to crumble on you just as the eaters crumble from their bowls. And we said o messenger of God [is there] a lack of security for us that day? He said: you are many, but you are a scum like a scum of a stream; nurture prestige from the hearts of your enemy, and make in your hearts weakness[.] They said: but what weakness o messenger of God? [**page 83**] He said: Love the world and hate death". And he also said[,] peace and blessings be upon him: "Good news and hope is what you please, by God what I fear for you is poverty, but I fear that the world will be simplified for you as it was simplified before you, compete it as they competed it, it will destroy you as it destroyed them." End.

And said Sheikh Abubakr Mahmoud Gumi – may God have mercy on him – in his book – [the correct belief with approval of the sharia]:

The enemies of Islam launched their raids of all ways against him, and they will not prevail over the Muslims except in terms of [their] destructive culture, and it distracts the children of Muslims from learning their religion, and [from learning] the Arabic language which is the language of the religion, as from its ignorance is ignorance of the true religion, as it leans on the enemies of the religion first; to writing books that destroy the *sunnah*, in name of the revelation and the state, and they penetrated into the Islamic *ummah* by sheikhs of sects, who glorified them and gave them absolute power, and they switched knowledge with ignorance, and reason with passion and rationality with delusion and the law with myths.

Then secondly they built schools for teaching the culture of the destructive west, so they began with teaching the children of the pagan infidels whose parents walked on the land [**page 84**] naked, and they do not know what morals are, nor what chivalry is, nor what humanity is, so they put them in sensitive government jobs, and they became rulers over the Muslims whose minds slept in a fantasy of myths, so when the Muslims paid attention and found that for them [there was] no decoration except that they learnt their children their way, so they isolated the religion from their children, and the taught them as a hunter teaches a dog his hunting, so it either became the Muslims hunting dogs in the hands of foreign hunters, or being prey of the hunt [themselves], o its words. Look how this great world comes out openly with the truth, although this government is contemporary, and many of its children study at these schools, but look his understanding of these schools which he named "destructive" or "the culture of western destruction". Because the sheikhs made their efforts in a statement of truth, and not correcting nothing that is not the origin of their practice or their mixing of [things], O God we ask you guidance and repayment.

So what are these foreign worldly colonial schools? It includes violations of the sharia, its practice is forbidden, and its subsidization, and its study, and its teaching, we will mention nothing of it in the following:

First: spreading destructive doctrine such as "singularity", and Darwinism, and Marxism, and the so-named evolution of morals (Levy Bruhl), and the evolution of society (Durkheim), and the focus on existentialist thought and science, and alleged freedom. [**page 85**] So this opposes the legal texts that focus on following the thoughts of the prophets, and the sharia intentions. Said the Most High: "And whoever desires other than Islam as religion – never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers" [Ali Amran 85]. And said the Most High: "And whoever opposes the messenger after guidance has become clear to him and follows other than the way of

the believers – We will give him what he has taken and drive him into hell, and evil it is as a destination." [An-Nisa 115].

Second: It spreads *dahriya* [a doctrine of the eternity of the world, a materialistic, atheistic trend in medieval Islam, materialism]. They say the saying of the *dahriyans* and the Most High has said: "And they say, "There is not but our worldly life; we die and live, and nothing destroys us except time." And they have of that no knowledge; they are only assuming." [Al-Jathiyah 24]. So these [people] believe that the origin of things is in nature. And this is disbelief in itself because it is neither a creator nor a instigator/mastermind, nor a lover, nor a dead person, except the glorious God alone, and this is the counterpart of the theory of engaging with God almighty.

Third: the theory of Charles Darwin: that focuses on the laws of natural selection, and survival of the fittest, and this theory of infidelity has made the origin of humanity as a small germ dispersed in a stagnant swamp for millions of years, cut down in stages/phases of animals and monkeys [to] sages of human development. Glory to you this is a great falsehood, between what God glory to him decides on the origin of humanity and humanity, and that he created it out of dust and water, and this doctrine [**page 86**] from Islamic doctrines and from the knowledge of monotheism God the Most High said: "And of His signs is that He created you from dust; then, suddenly you were human beings dispersing [throughout the earth] [Ar-Rum 20]. And said the Most High: "It is He who created you from clay" [Al-An'am 2]. And said the Most High: "And certainly did We create man from an extract of clay" [Al-Mu'minin 12]. And said the Most High: "Who perfected everything which He created and began the creation of man from clay. [7] Then He made his posterity out of the extract of a liquid disdained" [Al-Sajdah 7-8]. And said God the Most High: "So let man observe from what he was created. [5] He was created from a fluid, ejected" [At-Tariq 5-6]. And he said[,] blessings and peace be upon him: "God created the angels from light, and he created the elves from what shook from fire, and he created Adam from what was described to you." Where is this monotheistic truth [in] the Darwinistic disbelieving theory[?]

Fourth: the belief that the sun is instituted and does not move nor drag and that it is the earth that spins around the sun, and it is what they call "rotation of the earth" because the world is spherical they claim, glory to you and this is great falsehood the Most High said: "And the sun runs [on course] toward its stopping point. That is the determination of the Exalted in Might, the Knowing." [As-Sin 38] And Bukhari and Muslim narrated on Abu Dharr[,] may God be pleased with him[,] [that] he said: I was with the prophet[,] peace and blessings of God be upon him[,] in the mosque at sunset, and he said [**page 87**] o Abu Dharr do you know where the sun sets? I said: God and His messenger know. He said: so it goes until it kneels under the throne so this is its saying of the Most High "And the sun runs [on course] toward its stopping point. That is the determination of the Exalted in Might, the Knowing."

Fifth: The belief that the rain returns in the summer when it returns in spring, and this belief is invalid and contradicts the belief that God is "free of need the praiseworthy" they think that the rain is as waterfalls which people produce glory to God, said the Most High: "And we have brought down rain from the sky in a measured amount and settled it in the earth" [Al-Mu'minin 18]. And said the Most High: "Do you not see that God drives clouds? Then He bring them together, then He makes them into a mass, and you see the rain emerge from within it." [An-Nur 43]

And said the Most High: "Do you not see that God sends down rain from the sky and takes it flow as springs [and rivers] in the earth" [Az-Zumar 21].

And from the hadiths that are narrated by Muslim from the hadith of Anas that said: One day the rain hit us [while we were] with the messenger[,] peace and blessings of God be upon him, and he said: he lost his garment while he was hit by the rain and he said: "that it is a new covenant of His Lord". And from their corrupt doctrine on irrigation with influences from August[,] narrated Bukhari and Muslim that Zayd Ibn Khalid said: God's messenger[,] peace and blessings be upon him[,] led the

morning prayer [**page 88**] in Al-Hudaibiya and it had rained the previous night. When he had finished the prayer he faced the people and said: Do you know what your Lord has said? They replied: God and his messenger know better. He said: God says: In this morning some of My worshipers remained as true believers and some became non-believers; he who said that it had rained with the blessing and mercy of God is the one who believes in me and does not believe in a star, but he who has said it had rained because of such and such is a disbeliever in me and is a believer in stars". Its saying "because of such and such" in the Hadith; [and] August entered in this direction]. And God knows best.

Sixth: It is an imitation of the Jews and the Christians, attitude and behaviour, until that some of the losers believed in the religion of the Jews or Christians, or [in] their method, or [in] the coming of progress for mankind, and not [that] power nor strength is except to God Almighty the Great, and this is like secularism, and nationalism, and patriotism, and tribalism, and capitalism, until you find some Muslims leaving their names that the sharia named [gave] them and changed them with Jewish Christian blasphemy titles and epithets. And the Almighty said: "O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are [in fact] allies of one another. And whoever is an ally to them among you – then indeed, he is [one] of them. Indeed, God guides not the wrongdoing people" [Al-Ma'idah 51]. And [the prophet] said peace and blessings be upon him "I sent with the sword in my hand the time until God alone is worshipped and no partner [besides] him, and he made [**page 89**] my livelihood under the shadow of my spear, and he made the humiliation and littleness for disagreeing with my command, and who[ever] is similar to the people is one of them." Take the youth of the Muslims they look like the infidels in their behaviour, there is no division between them and between the children of infidels, and this may reach up to outlaw or infidelity, as what is established in the book of loyalty and disavowal.

Seventh: The belief that energy can neither be created nor destroyed, this is blatant disbelief, because this is an attribute of the attributes of God Almighty: "There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing" [As-Shuraa 11]. And the Almighty said: "Everyone upon the earth will perish, [26] and there will remain the Face of your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honour" [Ar-Rahman 27].

Eighth: The belief that semen has a soul that moves with it this is a lie according to God Almighty: "So who is more unjust than one who lies about God and denies the truth when it has come to him" [az-Zumar 32]. The Almighty said: "How can you disbelieve in God when you were lifeless and He brought you to life; then He will cause you to die, then He will bring you [back] to life, and then to Him you will be returned." [Al-Baqarah 28]. And [the prophet] blessings and peace be upon him said: "The creation of you [humans] is gathered in the form of semen in the womb of your mother for forty days, then it becomes a clinging thing in similar [period], then it becomes a lump of flesh [**page 90**] like that, then God sends an angel who breathes the life into it; and [the angel] is commanded to record four things about it its provision, its term of life [in this world], its conduct, and whether it will be happy or miserable." The hadith, see o Muslims will not be […] in these fours until it develops into three developments, semen, a clinging [thing], a lump, then he sends an angel to it so it blows [life] into the soul.

Ninth: The disruption of Islamic months and Islamic days, and holiday occasions of the Jews and the Christians and the secularists. The Almighty said: "Indeed, the number of months with God is twelve [lunar] months in the register of God [from] the day He created the heavens and the earth; of these, four are sacred. That is the correct religion, so do not wrong yourselves during them. And fight against the disbelievers collectively as they fight against you collectively. And know that God is with the righteous [who fear Him]. [36] Indeed, the postponing [of restriction within sacred months] is an increase in disbelief by which those who have disbelieved are led [further] astray. They make it lawful one year and unlawful another year to correspond to the number made unlawful by God and

[thus] make lawful what God has made unlawful. Made pleasing to them is the evil of their deeds: and God does not guide the disbelieving people." [At-Tawbah 37] Sheikh Mohammed bin Saleh Al-Uthmayn said in his book [the bright light from the sermons of the mosques] "Worshippers of God it is on us that we thank God in what he passed to us from this simple and bright account, that the Islamic *ummah* makes for itself an existence and structure, independently derived from the spirit of the Islamic religion, and that it is distinct from other [things] in all what should differentiate for it from the morals, and the etiquettes or the treatments, to remain a prominent, prestigious nation, not dependent on others, [**page 91**] hell is in imitation of other blind traditions, not pulling benefits to it and not paying harm on it, rather it appears with the appearance of weakness and dependency, and it forgets what was on its ancestors, "and it will not be correct [for] the last of this nation except what was correct [for] the first of it." So the daily history, begins with the time of sunset; and the monthly [history] begins with the crescent moon [half moon], and the yearly [history] begin with the *hijrah*. This is what took place on it [and] the Muslims worked with it, and the jurists considered it in their books in solutions of the terms of religion and helpless/embarrassed God's words and mercy.

And "the permanent commission for scientific research and fatwas" was asked the following: The third question of fatwa no. (3326),

Question: What is the rule of holidays on its school[s] [concerning] Saturdays and Sundays, and [what] does it read on Thursdays and Fridays, and is it permissible to lead Muslims in prayer or not?

Answer: It is not permissible to allocate a Saturday or Sunday as a holiday, or to obstruct them collectively, [because] it is similar [to that] of the Jews and the Christians, so that the Jews hold off Saturday and the Christians hold off Sunday, glorification for them, and it was established by Ibn Umar may God be pleased with him and the prophet blessings and peace be upon him said: I sent down in my hand the time with the sword until God alone is worshipped and no partners to Him, and He made livelihood under the shadow of my spear, and He made humiliation and littleness for those who disagree with my command, [**page 92**] and whoever resembles a nation/people is one of them," narrated by Ahmad, and Abu Ali, and At-Tabari, and Ibn Abi Shaybah, and Abd Ibn Hamid.

The sheikh of Islam Ibn Taymiyyah and his good chain of authority said, this hadith forbids the imitation of another group than the Muslims, and it includes forbidding the imitation of Jews and Christians generally in all what is named from them, and from this obstruction is that the Jews [have] the Saturday and the Christians the Sunday.

And there is no obstacle in leading Muslims in prayer if it is not in objection except mentioning with his advice and his warning from imitating the enemies of God in their feasts and other [things].

And God is the grantor of success and may God's blessings and peace be on our prophet Muhammad and his people and his companions.
[signed by]

Member	Member	Vice President of the legacy	President
Abdullah Bin Qaoud	Abdullah bin Ghadian	Abdul-Razaq Afifi	Abdul-Aziz Ibn Abdullah bin Baz

And what is forbidden in foreign schools:
1 - Mixing/chaos: this is forbidden in our Islamic religion, and its taboo is known from the religion necessarily.
2 - [**page 93**] The displaying: with that God says: "And abide in your houses and do not display yourselves as [was] the display of the former times of ignorance." [Al-Ahzab 33]
3 - Sports of concern for the religion; like football, and handball, and Olympic competitions, and others.

4 - The travelling of women alone without a *mahram* nor a husband, with the definite prohibition of it [by] the prophet may Gods blessings and peace be upon him, his saying: "It is not permissible for a woman who believes in God and the last day, that she travels [during] day and night without a mahram or her husband."

5 - It spreads abominations and vices: like adultery, and lesbianism, and sodomy, and others.

The sheikh of Islam Ibn Taymiyyah[,] may God have mercy on him[,] said in his book [evidence between the supporters of the merciful and the supporters of Satan]: "And talking about those – meaning the philosophers and those others – who are happy in another position in [rejecting a conflict of the mind and what was brought down] and others, and the unbelief of them is greater than the unbelief of the Jews and the Christians, [**page 94**] and even [of] the Arab polytheists, and all of them say that God created heaven and earth, and that he created creatures with his will and power. And Aristotle and other Greek philosophers, worshipped the planets and idols, and they did not know the angels and the prophets, and in the books of Aristotle nothing is mentioned on these things, and most of the sciences of the people are natural things, as for divine things all of them are a little right, much an error. And the Jews and Christians after the transcription and the replacement are much more knowledgeable about the bodies than them, but their being late like the son of Sinai they wanted to make up between those words, and between what the messengers said.

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