

# Locating 'Boko Haram' in the Global War on Terror

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## Abstract:

The September 11th attacks on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon in the United States in 2001 ushered the world into an era marked by increasing focus on terrorism and counterterrorism and introduced the world to the Global War on Terror (GWOT). The GWOT has significantly militarized the foreign policy of the United States and many other nations. In the decades that have followed the September 11 attacks, the GWOT has lost its discursive currency. However, its legacy is still very apparent, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, which had not previously experienced terrorism. Most notably, Boko Haram in Nigeria has risen to become one of the deadliest terrorist groups in the world. Guided by three questions, the article establishes the linkages between Boko Haram and the GWOT, explores Mary Kaldor's New War thesis in relation to this relationship and explores the conditions that have sustained the legacy of the GWOT. Theoretical arguments on securitization theory, greed and grievance theory shape the discussion.

*Keywords: Global War on Terror, Securitization, State Terrorism*

## 1. Introduction

THE world changed in many ways on the 11th of September 2001. That day will forever be remembered as the day terrorist cells hijacked aeroplanes and launched simultaneous attacks targeting the World Trade Centre, the Pentagon and the White House. The first two targets were successful, with the third one being thwarted; the images of the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York burning and later crumbling will forever mark, in some quarters, America's vulnerability and ultimately its resilience.

The destruction of September 11, immortalised as 9/11 to represent the devastation and carnage, led to significant economic damage and the single greatest loss of human life to terrorist attacks [1]. Beyond this, however, it signalled a paradigm shift in security thinking, policymaking and international relations.

The decades before had seen the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the retreat of communism as a political and economic ideology and the arrival of the *Unipolar Moment* in American history. The threats of the Cold War, the arms race between the two superpowers and the escalation of conflict among nuclear powers ceded and this ushered in a new era of multilateralism, cooperation and a privileging of human security above state security.

The attacks on the United States, however, reversed this trend, returned the world to the primacy of state security over human security and provided the impetus for unilateral action by the world's sole superpower championed by the Neoconservatives who had found a home in the Bush administration. It also greatly militarised American Foreign

Policy, as well as that of its allies and introduced the world to the *Global War on Terror* (GWOT), later referred to as the War on Terror. The GWOT was a founding principle of President George W. Bush's foreign policy, what would later become known as the *Bush Doctrine*. The other three are unilateralism, pre-emptive war, the idea that a nation had a right to strike first once it identified a credible threat- and democratic regime change.

The GWOT would expand the network and labelling of terrorism far beyond their familiar footholds in the Middle East; it would draw a labyrinth of terrorist networks, sympathisers and state sponsors. Africa would eventually be drawn into this network through terrorist activities first in Algeria and later Mali and other sub-Saharan African countries.

Nigeria, though no stranger to political violence, having already experienced several military coups and a bloody civil war, however, was not a country readily associated with global or domestic terror. The same can be said for many Sub-Saharan African countries as well. Despite this, Nigeria has become a hotbed of terrorist activities. While these activities are still nationalised and regionalised, it still features one of the deadliest terrorist groups in the world, commonly referred to by their moniker, Boko Haram.

This article explores the linkages between Boko Haram and the GWOT; the questions that guide this study include are as follows; are there direct or indirect ties between the GWOT and Boko Haram? What conditions have led to the establishment of terrorism as a form of social and political discontent in Nigeria? Does the emergence of Boko Haram

represent a new kind of conflict in Africa?

To answer these questions, the article is divided into three broad sections and proceeds as follows; the section that follows provides a conceptual and theoretical framework for the article. The third section examines in detail the GWOT and the emergence of Boko Haram, while the last section explores the linkages between GWOT and the emergence of Boko Haram. The method of research is a review of the extant literature and analysis is conducted using inductive reasoning.

The article takes the following liberties, tempting as it is, it does not attempt to solve the definitional quandary for terrorism. Additionally, it also does not try to link the emergence of a terror network in Nigeria beyond the GWOT or to any one group, nor does it provide a historical perspective on terrorism.

## I. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### A. Definitional Quandry

Terrorism is in a definitional quandary, which is notable given the centrality of terrorism to foreign policy formulation and homeland security in the last two decades and more. From the alleged state-sponsored terrorism of Pakistan and Iran to old terrorist cells, like Al-Qaeda, to new groups like ISIS or Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab, it has become the centre-focus of many nations' defensive strategies.

The centrality notwithstanding, it has eluded a standard definition; most writers agree that terrorism continues to remain subjective. Jeffrey Record writing in 2003 during the advent of the GWOT, refers to terrorism as a semantic swamp. Record highlights a 1988 study that revealed 109 different definitions of terrorism that covered 22 definitional elements. Record relies on the United States National Security Strategy (NSS) which defines terrorism as "premeditated, politically motivated violence against innocents". Record, however, notes that the moral judgement on who is innocent or not itself is problematic. Record then moves to another definition; the U.S Department of Defence defines terrorism as "*the calculated use of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or intimidate governments or societies in pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological*". However, this definition also reveals another problem with the definition of terrorism; most definitions exclude state terrorism.

#### 1) The Non-State Actor Thesis

In keeping with the Weberian definition of the state as the monopoliser of violence, state violence is not regularly embraced as terrorism but is often legitimised as warfare or defence of sovereignty. Terrorism is often viewed as the actions of Non-State Actors (NSA).

Paul Pillar, a regular fixture in counterterrorism debates, writing in 2003, concurs that traditional warfare is state-reliant however the evolving nature of war means actors cannot be contained to just one operational sphere; terrorism has shown that countries now have to contend with combatants that are not fighting under one flag. However, even at that Pillar argues that has argued that terrorism is not as incongruous as the literature would make it appear; it is merely an old problem in a new era.

Pillar does well to avoid the politics of definition when it comes to terrorism, highlighting the key elements of terrorism as *premeditation, political influence, non-combatant targeting and involving sub-national groups*. Pillar believes that the threat of terrorism is itself terrorism, a position that is supported by Jeffrey Record's writing. These arguments lend credence to the claim that terrorism has become the centre-focus of many nations' defensive strategies. It was in response to possible threats that the Bush Doctrine was created as well as the Department of Homeland Security, and more recently, the rescinded ban on entry from select member countries by former President Donald Trump's administration [2].

Terrorism is not a phenomenon that is quickly dispensed with; Pillar notes that it is a problem to be managed and never solved. He further contends that if there is such a thing as a *Global War on Terror*, it is one that cannot be won. Pillar's reasoning suggests that wars have a fixed set of objectives and enemies, a reasonable expectation for closure either through a win or denouement- this does not apply to terrorism. Whether this speaks to the implacability of terrorism and counterterrorism or the shaping of a new kind of warfare is an argument explored in the subsequent sections.

Abram Paley writing in 2008, sees the relegation of terrorism to the actions of NSAs as part of the problem of the lack of clarity or theoretical grounding for terrorism. Paley believes the state-centrism of International Relations hampers the theoretical grounding of terrorism; the idea that foreign policies are made by unitary actors or by leader-based models privileges statism and leads to a paucity of theories to support the actions of NSAs who are becoming increasingly relevant in international relations. Nevertheless, Paley calls on the work of Bruce Hoffman to define terrorism but, more importantly, create a distinction between terrorism, insurgency and guerrilla warfare which are often used interchangeably.

### B. The distinction between Insurgency, Terrorism and Guerrilla Warfare

Noted terrorism expert Bruce Hoffman writing in 1997, distinguishes between insurgency and terrorism. Hoffman sees observable characteristics in terrorism that make it distinct from other forms of political violence. To begin with, it is political in its objectives; it utilises violence or the threat of violence. Additionally, it is designed to have psychological repercussions beyond the immediate target. It is usually conducted by a conspiratorial cell with a command structure which are non-state actors or a subnational group.

Hoffman continues with the distinction, stating that insurgencies and guerrilla, while employing similar tactics to those of terrorists, are territorial. Guerrilla warfare is carried about by larger groups and is not as clandestine as terrorists; they also have structures like military units and attack military forces and installations. Hoffman claims that insurgents seize and hold territory and look to administer it. Hoffman's claims are dated as modern terrorist tactics adopt these strategies too and the lines between terrorists, insurgents and guerrilla fighters are increasingly blurred [3]. However, Hoffman's distinction allows a demarcation between local and international terrorism; it still excludes the state's culpability in terrorism. Other writers are not as accommodating of state

violence.

### C. State Terrorism

Paul Rogers writing in 2013, refers to an earlier definition by Grant Wardlaw which details how “*political terrorism is the use or the threat of violence by a group or individual whether acting for or in opposition to established authority [1]*”. This definition identifies the state as an actor and perpetrator of terrorism. Rogers believes the most egregious acts of terrorism are state-sponsored against their citizens. Rogers identifies Stalinist Russia in the 1930s and Maoist China in the 1950s as examples of countries that perpetrated violence against their citizens and were influential in casualties and instilling fear. Closer home, Rogers also identifies the practices of the colonialists and anti-colonialists as embracing some tactics of terrorism.

Relatedly, during the fourth wave of democratisation, many former colonies in Africa, Asia and Latin America resorted to the same tactics against their citizens to retain control; summary executions, internments and disappearances were often a common feature of state security. Rogers does not spare the United States from condemnation, stating that the lynching and violence of African Americans would easily fit this definition of terrorism.

Lashell Stratton continues with this description of terrorism, writing in 2002; Stratton is more interested in an actor-model of terrorism more so than the threat or use of violence or ideology [4]. The author's definition does not legitimise the deliberate destruction of non-military and civilian populations by governments during wartime. Eland's definition compounds the German air raids during the Second World War, the atomic bombing of Japan by the United States and even the nuclear posturing of *Mutual Assured Destruction* which targeted civilian populations as acts of terror.

The definitional quandary does not end with these writers, and the literature is no more settled on what terrorism is, nor is it any closer to a Grand Unified Theory. However, most writers agree that there are some common features among all definitions. For one, terrorism is not arbitrary, it is premeditated, and it is tied to an objective, which is often political or ideological. Terrorism also seeks to manipulate or modify behaviour through the threat or use of violence, so it is psychological as much as it is corporeal. Lastly, all writers agree that actors drive terrorist activities; what is left to contention is the description or the categorisation of the actor, either a state, sub-state or non-state actor.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Terrorism has not yet been theorised sufficiently to a point where a grand theory exists; for reasons already elaborated, the field has not received the same rigour other *high-politics* agendas receive, despite it being at the heart of many nations' foreign policy. What exists in the literature is a plethora of various theories spanning the spectrum of economic, political, social and psychological theories to understand terrorism.

Terrorism is still treated as a subset of security studies which has its roots in Realism; other theories are focused on Human Security. There have been attempts to create a modern,

flexible theory of terrorism; recently, Greenberg, Pyszczyński, and Solomon, 2002 writing in 2002 presented the *Terror Management Theory*, which combines psychology and existentialism to explain terrorism [5].

This study will build its argument on two theories which are relevant to this discussion, Securitisation Theory and the Greed and Grievance Theory.

### A. Securitisation Theory

The Copenhagen School is credited with introducing the securitisation theory; the Copenhagen School frequently refers to the collective of Ole Weaver and Barry Buzan and the writers associated with them. The school is named for its association with the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI). However, writing in 2010, Columbia Peoples and Nick Vaughan-Williams argue that the arguments of the school have transcended any geographical location.

Peoples and Vaughan-Williams reveal how securitisation theory explores the implications of introducing security to a broad range of issues [6]. Security concerns survival or an existential threat; in this case, the survival of a *referent object*—the referent object is either the state or the individual in international relations. However, securitisation theory notes that the list of *referent objects* is increasingly, ultimately, securitising or militarising everyday activities.

Peoples and Vaughan-Williams highlight three central elements of securitisation theory; one element is securitisation, which is shifting an issue from the political realm of low politics to high politics by presenting it as an existential threat. Another element is the securitisation speech act, which is the act of announcing or injecting security in a statement or speech and reveals the importance of discursiveness in securitisation—lastly, the *securitising move*, the attempt to securitise an issue by labelling it a security issue.

Buzan et al. [7], writing in 1998, contend that securitisation occurs when an issue is treated as a security matter and unlocks restraints or controls on ways to deal with it. Once it has been sufficiently securitised, it can be treated as an emergency in the same way a military threat would be dealt with. Buzan et al. present a spectrum to demonstrate how securitisation occurs; an issue is non-politicised at the beginning of the spectrum, it then becomes politicised and enters national debate at a point it becomes securitised, and at this point, it is represented as an existential threat and encourages the government to take extraordinary measures to deal with it.

Securitisation, at its core, has elements of constructivism; security can be constructed, and Buzan et al. believe securitisation begins with the simple act of mentioning it. This process is represented by the *Speech Act Theory* which draws on the idea that many utterances and declarations are equivalent to an act itself; the act of mentioning them is simultaneous with performing them. Ole Weaver in his 1995 conception of securitisation, argues that once a state agent mentions security while discussing any issue, the issue automatically becomes securitised and confers authority to pursue urgent measures.

Securitisation is, however, not automatic; there are conditions that Weaver, updating his securitisation thesis in 2000 [8], refers to these as *felicity conditions*; some of these

include the presentation of an existential threat, the legitimacy of the securitising actor- the actor should be considered an expert. Additionally, an existential threat makes it easier to identify if there is a history of danger or hostility.

### B. Greed and Grievance Theory

Paul Collier, the former World Bank director of research and Oxford scholar, presents an economic theory of conflict premised on greed and grievance over the control and distribution of resources. Collier's theory does not countenance ideology, historical background, or cause; conflict is sustained by economic or pecuniary interests.

Writing in 2006, Collier's thesis, which explains the conflict in West Africa, notably the Liberian conflict and the sale of conflict diamonds, highlights two different motivations for conflict, greed and grievances [9]. Collier believes that conflict is driven more by financial gain than grievances. Collier presents a relationship between the existence of commodities, youth unemployment especially among young men and the lack of education and civil war or unrest. Anke Hoeffler who has contributed to the Greed and Grievance debates, writing in 2011, believes that the balance of Greed and Grievance produces public good [10]; greed concentrates attention on the need for financial gains while grievance coalesces public opinion on the need for a rebellion or insurgency.

There are other theories which are relevant to terrorism; notably, the Lockean Social Contract theory and its call to revolution can explain some terrorists or insurgencies. Theories on Identity and Conflict can also explain terrorist movements, as well as Johan Galtung's Cultural and Structural Violence. However, the two theories selected have particular import for the GWOT as will be explained in the subsequent section and later on in the article.

#### 1) Theoretical revelations for the Global War on Terror

It can be argued that the Global War on Terror was borne out of securitisation; it became a high-priority agenda for America and its allies by the declarations by President George W. Bush. President Bush presented an existential threat to American freedom and the liberal economic order and was able to call for extraordinary measures to confront it. The discursive power of securitisation was on full display when America declared war on terrorism and declared there was an *Axis of Evil*. All these declarations legitimised military campaigns when a military response is just one of many counterterrorism options available to a state. The insertion of weapons of mass destruction also heightened the fervour and the response to the events of 9/11. Securitisation theory explains how American foreign policy became securitised.

Admittedly, while the Greed and Grievance theory theorises sub-state actors and rebel groups, it has relevance to the GWOT in its current conception. Collier's theory, at first glance, appears counterproductive to the conflict-sensitive approach as it appears to discount the need to compute other factors- however, greed or economics itself is a cause for conflict. Additionally, grievances which are acknowledged by other writers explain why terrorist movements are created. Collier's presentation of the positive correlation between socioeconomic factors and the prevalence of conflict is also

pertinent to the explanation of terrorist activities.

Both theories also present explanations that describe the actions of the state actor (securitisation) and the non-state actor (greed and grievance).

### III. THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR IN AFRICA

Despite terrorism itself being a security matter, there appears to be some agreement that the GWOT was needlessly securitised; the GWOT which has lost currency in international relations lexicon, was introduced in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. Record notes that the GWOT is not a conventional war and contains elements of war and non-war, Record believes that the GWOT has elements of military campaigns, but they were part of a much broader strategy [11].

Much more controversially, Jeremy Keenan writing in 2010 on GWOT in Africa, makes an argument that the GWOT was fabricated in Africa by American and Algerian intelligence as a precursor for the creation of US African Command (AFRICOM) [12]. This regional combatant command was established in 2008. Keenan illustrates how the Central Intelligence Agency and Algerian intelligence orchestrated the kidnapping of 32 tourists in 2003 [11, p.29] to bring Africa into the GWOT. Keenan believes it was essential to securitise Sub-Saharan Africa, which had till that point not experienced terrorism consistently outside of Somalia, to extend American imperial interests, especially in the oil-rich Gulf of Guinea. Keenan's illustrations show how terrorism took a foothold in Algeria and Mali and subsequently in the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa. Keenan's claims may appear unsubstantiated; however, when considered with the lack of evidence of WMDs in Iraq presents a pattern of securitisation by America to establish a presence in other states.

The GWOT represents, for some, a new kind of warfare, following Mary Kaldor's *New War* thesis. Muhammad Dan Suleiman et al. reject the contention that terrorism represents a new kind of conflict in Africa. Writing in 2017, they contend that the newness of terrorism represents a misrepresentation of conflict in Africa and a lack of a conflict-sensitive approach [13]. According to the writers, identity as a driver of conflict is often overlooked in Africa; Michel Arrous and Robert Feldman made the same observation in 2014; they argue that the drivers for conflict are often overlooked when discussing African conflicts [14]. To the extent that conflict is new in Africa, it is the drivers, such as ideology and religious proxy wars that give it this nascency.

Religion and identity have carried conflict in Africa into the 21st century, most notably in Nigeria, a country while no stranger to conflict, has been besieged with insurgency and terrorist activity over the last decade. The following section will introduce Boko Haram and in keeping with a conflict-sensitive approach, it will provide *the conflict profile, the actors, causes and dynamics*.

#### A. Boko Haram

##### 1) Conflict Profile

Boko Haram emerged as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lida'awati Wal Jihad (*People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad*) in 2002. Boko Haram has evolved into a terrorist group opposed to the propagation of western culture and government in Nigeria and which wishes

to return the country to rule by Islamic laws and culture (Matfess, 2016). The group's activities have been mainly constricted to Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (BAY) states in Northeast Nigeria.

At inception, it received little attention; however, that changed in 2009 when the leader of the group, Muhamad Yusuf, was killed extra-judiciously by the Nigerian security forces [15].

The killing of Yusuf spurred the group, who used this as a recruitment tool and began engaging in tactics like suicide bombings and attacks on security instalments that were previously not part of their *modus operandi*. Another dimension to the growth in Boko Haram's philosophy was violence against civilians and gender-based violence, most notably with the kidnapping of 280 schoolgirls in Chibok, Borno which gained worldwide attention [16]. The 2020 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) also notes their deployment of female suicide bombers; the group has been responsible for 87 per cent of deaths from female suicide bombing [17]. The 2020 Global Conflict tracker of the Council of Foreign Relations shows that since 2011, the group has been responsible for 37500 deaths, the displacement of 2.5 million people in the Lake Chad Region and 244,000 Nigerian refugees [18]. Writing in 2016, Hilary Matfess believes these numbers are closer to 50,000 [19].

The low human index also determines the conflict in the region. The people of the region have often felt marginalised and on the outskirts of development and power. A 2016 World Bank reports details how the Lake Chad region, where the Nigerian North-East belongs, is characterised by high youth unemployment, poverty, illiteracy and a population boom, which all contribute to an environment of insecurity [20]. Young unemployed men find it more viable and prosperous to work for Boko Haram or the different militia groups battling them than to remain unemployed.

## 2) *The Actors*

Conflict Parties – The Nigerian Government, specifically the Nigerian military, is a primary actor in this, and so is Boko Haram. The Boko Haram conflict has transcended any single actor, three different administrations have inherited it, and though it is usually tied to the charismatic Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau, a campaign of information and disinformation by the government and the sect has made it difficult to verify if Shekau is alive [21]. The interests of these actors are self-evident; the government is interested in ensuring territorial integrity and security and avoiding state failure. Boko Haram's interest, while not always evident, is concerned with installing a theocracy based on Islam.

There are other secondary actors involved in the conflict; regional neighbours, such as Chad, Niger and Cameroun. A joint task force was created with Chad and Niger to tackle the menace; relatedly, the late President Idris Derby had won accolades for his chivalry and ruthlessness in dealing with the group [22]. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and Al-Qaeda are also actors, as Boko Haram had declared allegiance to these groups and indeed changed its operations to capture and hold territories in the Northeast. Vanda Felbab-Brown writing in *Foreign Affairs* in 2018, reveals that Boko Haram splintered with ISIS for its failure to provide essential services

for the territory it captured and for refusing the replacement of Shekau as the leader [23]. Another group splintered from the group when it changed tactics and began attacking civilians, women, children and Muslims. There are other stakeholders such as civil society, foreign powers-notably France, The United States and The United Kingdom-and the media who maintain an interest in the Boko Haram conflict.

Private Military Contractors (PMCs) also have an interest in the propagation and the continuation of conflict; Arrous and Feldman reveal that there are over 300 PMCs active in Angola and many more active in Nigeria, Congo and Algeria, where oil is produced [14]. These PMCs are traded on European Stock Exchanges and account for over 100 billion US dollars in sales. Keenan who is sceptical about the presence of AFRICOM in Africa and the GWOT also corroborates this position [12].

## 3) *The Causes*

On the surface, the cause of the conflict is Boko Haram's desire to eradicate all forms of Western culture and government in Nigeria, especially in the Northern region, which is predominantly Muslim. The conflict presents as an ethnoreligious conflict; however, a more in-depth investigation reveals that the causes for this conflict, and indeed most conflicts, are multi-layered. Writing on ethnic conflicts in 2003, James Fearon and David Laitin do not believe that ethnicity or religion are drivers for conflict alone but are associated with other structural factors such as poverty, unemployment and other conditions that favour insurgency [24].

Delving deeper into the idea of identity as a conflict driver, Eghosa Osaghae and Rotimi T. Suberu, writing in 2005, believe that identity itself is constructed and situational; members of a group can choose to identify as religious rather than ethnic and vice-versa depending on the situation [25]. The writers show how groups in Northern Nigeria have often done this depending on the level and scope of conflict.

There are other causes for the conflict beyond identity; climate variability and the lack of economic opportunities in the Lake Chad region, as the environment is degraded is a factors. Other factors to consider are youth unemployment, corruption, and illiteracy; approximately half of the population of North-East Nigeria is uneducated according to a 2018 World Bank Report [26].

There is also the perceived and actual distance between the government and the citizens as another factor; there is a void of leadership and governance which allows empathy or sympathy for terrorist or insurgent groups. Lastly, the movement of small to light weapons and the proliferation of arms from regional conflicts contribute to terrorism and insurgency in West Africa.

## 4) *Conflict Dynamics*

Violence is a form of political expression in Nigeria; the country has experienced two bloody coups, one bloody government overthrow, a civil war, countless community clashes and, notably, a protracted insurgency in the Niger Delta [27] Within this context, the Boko Haram conflict is not new.

In recent times, owing to a coordinated campaign by the

Nigerian army and the Tri-Nation Joint Task Force, the group, which was at the height of its insurgency in 2014, has been weakened and the caliphate it claimed has been taken by Nigerian forces [28]. The attacks on Muslims and innocents have caused the group to splinter and the brutal campaign by Chadian forces significantly has further weakened the group. An unproven result of this is a new kind of conflict; the Fulani Herdsmen conflict; militarised nomadic cattle herders have increased their attacks against indigenes for grazing rights in what is being described as indigene-settler-based conflicts [29]. These conflicts are not new to Nigeria but have become increasingly militarized. It is claimed however that the militant Fulani herdsmen have mutated from Boko Haram and have succeeded in transplanting the conflict which was mostly restricted to the North-East and North-Central geopolitical zones to other zones.

Additionally, the continued conflict has exposed the structural decay of the Nigerian Military, perennially ranked as one of the powerhouses in Africa [30]; the protracted conflict has shown the lack of discipline, morale, equipment and corruption at the heart of the faltering campaign. Lastly, the election of Muhammadu Buhari, a Northern Fulani and retired military general and former head of state, which was expected to restore security and appease the insurgents, much in the same way the election of his predecessors appeased the Niger-Delta militants, has done little to abate the conflict. It could be argued that insecurity has worsened under Buhari and become widespread; it has also led to the creation of regional security outfits championed by different ethnic groups [31]. According to the GTI, Nigeria recorded the third-highest number of deaths from terrorist activities in the 2017-2018 period; it also noted extremism from the Fulani herdsmen rose by 261 per cent in a single year.

#### IV. LOCATING BOKO HARAM IN THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR

There are four discernible ways the Boko Haram conflict is linked to the GWOT; they are linked by ideology, securitisation, and a transnational network. Each of these is considered below.

##### A. Ideology

Where conflict in Africa appears to be new is the introduction of ideology as a driver for conflict. Moving beyond the identity, nationalist or resource-based conflicts that usually beset African states, the GWOT has coalesced conflict around religion in a way that had not been previously apparent. Previous conflicts in Africa would not have paid attention to the religion of combatants; these conflicts essentialise Muslim participation. For instance, Foday Sankoh, who was Muslim, led the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) which had both Christian and Muslim rebels. In today's world post-9/11 world, he may be seen as leading a Muslim charge [13, p. 272].

Katherine Zimmerman writing in Foreign Affairs, argues that the GWOT is unwittingly in a fight against a bigger theology, *Salafi Jihadism* which has united terrorist groups [32]. It is no coincidence that Boko Haram, which, as has been discussed, began as a non-violent Islamic Sect in 2002, began

to adopt terrorist tactics in 2009 as the GWOT itself lost currency. The GWOT highlighted a globalised ideological awareness and a lack of a competing ideology to match, especially in Africa. The eschatological appeal of this version of Islam is demonstrated in the uptick in suicide bombings [3]; this has application to Boko Haram; they were responsible for more suicide attacks than any other group in 2018.

##### B. Securitisation

The war on terrorism, while being a security matter, was nevertheless needlessly securitised; as a result, Muslims and Africa have become securitised too. The act of declaring war on Terror by Bush in response to the 9/11 attacks had the same impact as creating one and presenting a conspiratorial network of terrorist cells working in concert to limit the liberties of Americans and reverse the liberal international order. Suleiman et al. highlight how *terrorspeak* has sustained the GWOT in much the same way *nukepeak* sustained the Cold War [13 p. 272]. The securitisation of Africa itself has become a self-fulfilling prophecy, especially in West Africa and the Gulf of Guinea. The GTI shows that Nigeria and Mali recorded the second and third-largest increases in terrorist attacks deaths in the 2017-2018 period ranking just after Afghanistan. Comparatively, in 2002 Nigeria was the 36th country in the world most impacted by terrorism; at the height of the Boko Haram activities in 2014, it ranked second and since then has consistently ranked third [16].

The securitisation of Africa and the presence of AFRICOM on the continent, despite it being unwanted- it is still headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany- has become counter-intuitive. The presence of the American military is being used as a recruiting tool for groups against American overreach and imperialism, especially in the Sahelian region and the Horn of Africa [11, p.36]. Securitisation in Africa has provided previously disparate terror groups with an ideology and affinity; it has created the very network it was trying to dismantle.

##### C. Transnationalism

Relatedly, the GWOT has globalised terror; by securitising Africa and the response to 9/11, it has created a network of terror cells that can copy-cat each other, mimic each other and ultimately compete. The internet revolution has made terrorism more DIY than ever; information on creating unsophisticated explosive devices is abundant on the internet, as are videos on the exploits of terror groups. ISIS notably uses high-produced content, often resembling a Hollywood production to recruit fighters. It is also notable that attacks have become more brutal, dastardly and daring, almost as though each group was trying to outdo other groups or get more media attention. Michel Arrous and Robert Feldman [11, p.55] note that terrorist attacks are becoming extremely brutal, especially against unarmed civilians, women and children. They also note that it is no longer hidden or secretive; terrorist groups seem intent on publicising it competitively [11, p.63]. Boko Haram guaranteed their infamy with the abduction of the Chibok Girls, which was publicised, sparked a social media movement and was widely condemned.

The effects of globalisation can also be seen in how Boko Haram pledged allegiance to the Islamic State and declared a

caliphate in the BAY states in which they were most active. They were unable to administer it or hold onto it. However, the switch in tactics is reflective of how Boko Haram and indeed all terrorist groups have moved from terrorism to insurgency and even administration. ISIS was able to finance its activities from the sale of oil in territories it captured, presenting an economic model for terrorism and conflict as advocated by Paul Collier. Boko Haram has also adopted this with kidnapping for ransom.

Globalisation or transnationalism is evident in transborder cooperation. Evidence from the AFRICOM shows that there has been cooperation between Al-Shabaab in East Africa, Boko Haram in West Africa and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) [26]. There is also evidence of fighters being transplanted across borders, fighters moving from Syria, Iraq, Mali, Nigeria, and Chad into different theatres of action. The GWOT was created as a result of securitisation and provided an ideology that was often missing in some conflicts; globalisation has accelerated the effects of the GWOT and created the very thing that the GWOT had been conceived to dismantle, a network of terror.

## V. CONCLUSION

This article concludes where it began, asking the questions that it sought to explore in the beginning. *Are there direct or indirect ties between the GWOT and Boko Haram? What conditions have led to the establishment of terrorism as a form of social and political discontent in Nigeria? Does the emergence of Boko Haram represent a new kind of conflict in Africa?*

All these questions have been answered in part or thoroughly; there are direct and indirect ties between the emergence of Boko Haram and the GWOT, both are products of securitisation, but the GWOT has coalesced Boko Haram around an ideology which has been further accelerated by globalisation. Boko Haram is now able to connect to a network that had not existed before the GWOT.

Conflict in Nigeria is not new, and the conditions necessary for the perpetuation of terrorism have always existed; they are structural. Indeed, where Boko Haram was once touted as being technically defeated, they seem to have mutated as Fulani herdsmen or have simply found other targets across the border, making the conflict regional. As a corollary, terrorism does not represent a new kind of conflict in Africa either; what is new is religion and more so, identity as a driver of conflict; what had been absent or obfuscated in the past was ideology.

However, the arguments made in this article only represent a fraction of more significant issues. For one, while identity and ethnicity as a subset receive adequate attention in the literature, scholarship so far has shied away from interrogating the role religion plays as an ideology for conflict. Some writers have suggested that lack of interest may be a result of the sensitivity of the topic, and caution is wise; it is possible to see how easily identities can be securitised, especially with the attempts by Donald Trump's administration to impose a Muslim ban. The reluctance to engage with religion, however, denies a more comprehensive understanding of how it fuels conflict, the way ethnicity, gender, and youth might.

This is particularly true for Boko Haram, whose philosophy

is anti-western but has so far not targeted American targets or interests; apart from the 2011 attacks on the United Nations offices in Abuja, have not deliberately confronted American or Western interests. More so, indiscriminate killing has seen them attack their fellow faithful and makes it hard to discern precisely what their philosophy is. Nor can religion be analogous to the Nigerian situation; the Shia-Shiite dichotomy is present in Nigeria as well, as the current administration led by a Shia Muslim has been unusually antagonistic toward the Shiite minority. The role of religion in the Boko Haram insurgency is an area for further reflection and falls outside of the scope of this article. Additionally, if it is agreed that Boko Haram is a product of securitisation, is there a way it can be *desecuritised* and this is true for the GWOT, such as it is?

Lastly, the GWOT now appears to be an anachronistic term, as most are agreed that it is an inaccurate depiction of the post-911 world; wars have a beginning and an end, are usually fought between recognised state combatants and are not waged against an ideology. The resurgence of violence in Afghanistan and Iraq is a clear indication that if there was ever a war against terrorism, then there is no winning in sight. The GWOT is a representation of the discursive power of securitisation and the power dynamics in labelling and classification. Today's terrorists can become tomorrow's freedom fighters; it all depends on who is setting the agenda.

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