Boko Haram Menance: A 21st Century Challenge to Peace and National Stability in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The fourth wave of terrorism (1990s–present) is characterized by a fundamentalist view of the belief system and justification of acts of terrorism. Using Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria as our unit of observation and analysis,the specific task of task of this paper include an examination of the politicization of religion(Islamism) and extremist Islamic movements in the country, and providing an eclectic viewpoint encompassing religious, socio-economicand political implications of the Boko Haram menance in Nigeria. The paper hightslights the fact that religious fundamentalism,and Islamic revivalism is not an epiphenomenal factor in politics and society,but a means to political ends targeting the institutionalization of Islamic state through Islamization. The paper argues,among others,that terrorism motivated by religious fundamentalism, whether at the domestic setting,or at the international arena , is a particularly dangerous form of terrorism because it derives its strength of religiosity from ideology, which carries a political and moral weight when invoked. This we demonstrate by providing a socio-historical analysis of the evolving ideological and political content of Boko Haram and its implication for religious tolerance and national security in Nigeria.
Keywords: Islamism; Boko Haram; Islamic movements.

INTRODUCTION
Problematique

Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are withus, or you are with the terrorists" [1,2,3]. However, operating at both a conscious and subconscious levels given the 'shared cultural universe' or 'collective cosmology' in term of the ideological (beliefs);the ritualistic (practices);the experiential (feelings); the intellectual (knowledge); and the consequential(effects) [4,5,6], if harmonized and used positively religion could provide or serve as a instruments of peace and conflict resolution for peaceful co-existance. What however, makes religion appear as conceiced by Max as 'the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions' [7], is not not religion in itself , but the perceptual difference in individual religious identity,and their modes of religious identification. It is this ethnicity of religion that makes it a way of life for so many people across the world. This sentimental attachment to it by people of different culture and background makes it a politically active instrument in both national and international politics [8].

Thus, in Islam there is a unity of the political and the religious, though,the political, though is often clothed in the religious. In otgher words,the religious fundamentalism,and Islamic revivalism is not an epiphenomenal factor in politics and society,but a means to political ends targeting the institutionalization of Islamic state through Islamization [9]. Terrorism motivated by religious fundamentalism, whether at the domestic setting,or at the international arena , is a particularly dangerous form of terrorism because it derives its strength of religiosity from ideology, which carries a political and moral weight when invoked [10]. However, looking at region, one distinction that many observers of faiths fail to make concerns the difference between revivalism and fundamentalism.While the religion of Islam is remarkable for its explicit precepts favouring cultural and religious pluralism [11],muslim practice has often fallen short of Muslim principles. The charcter of terrorism in its fourth

phase today has shown that religion provides a set of powerful political precepts and practices with universal implications [12]. One ,thus, understand why the latest manifestation of Sharia in the northern states of Nigeria, is a neo-fundamentalist project, degenerated from the overtly political religious agenda of a "return to Islam" into one that "is being replaced by a plan to implement the *sharia* and purify mores," [13], and the Boko Haram is not apolitical,even when it claims to be the "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad(in Arabic : والجهاد لـ لدعوة الـ سنة اهل جماعة, *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad*).

Today,"religion is just a tool sometimes used to justify actions triggered by more mundane reasons [14]. Thus,discources on new" religious terrorism or terrorist *religious* organizations have a double legitimacy handicap, as both terrorist *and* religious .This leads quite naturally to the following questions: When we speak of Islam and terrorism ,which Islam are we discussing? Is Islam a static set of authoritative cultural norms, or is Islam a dynamic, spiritual response to life based on essential precepts? What explains the emergence of terrorist *religious* organizations from the broader social movement? What explains the terrorist *group'* selection of violence as a means of political opposition? Once this decision was taken, what enables terrorist *religious* organizations to survive as an armed group? ;what are the implications of religiously inspired terrorist activity [15]. This paper provides answers to the above questions from an eclectic,or multidisciplinary viewpoint encompassing historical, economic,religious, political perspectives for understanding the menance and challenges of Boko Haram *in Nigeria.* The paper is organized into four parts that answers the above questions.The first part presents a taxonomy of theorization on the Boko Haram phenomenon in Nigeria ,which *in turn provides a* concatenated framework of analysis for understanding the radicalizing role of religious ideology. The second part discuses how ignorance and poverty combine to explain the Boko Haram based on Almajirai -Tsangaya system which serves as the repository of the Boko Haram membership mobilization. The third part looks at the Philosophy of Boko Haram's and how it contradicts its claims. The fouth part discources how the state is implicated in the emergence of Boko Haram,and why the state is the major target of its attacks. The fifth part demonstrate why the re-emergence Boko Haram, is more political than religious.The sith part highlights the implications of religiously motivated terrorism in Nigeri. The final part synthesises the discourse [16].

TOWARDS A TAXONOMY OF THEORIZATION ON THE BOKO HARAM PHENOMENON IN NIGERIA

Though there are several well-known tropes such as the ''radicalizing'' role of religious ideology, the socio-economic and political exclusion of specific social groups, the ''misinterpreting'' of religious texts, and so on, about Boko Haram, it is possible to group some of the more 'reasonable' explanations of the sect around some theoretical constructs and then interrogate the validity of such 'theories' in understanding both why the sect came into being and the audacity of its activities.As specialists of political Islam have already indicated, Islamism can be usefully examined using multiple disciplinary lenses [17] ,rather than a too narrow analytical focus. At this juncture ,there is need to provide a concatenated fromwork of analysis for understanding the Boko Haram menace from multidisciplinary viewpoint that encompass historical, sociological, and religious and political as basis for appreciating Boko Haram as a religiously motivated terrorist group withing the paradigm of 'new terrorism [18].

Human Needs and Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis

To this end,the faith-based agencies see something beyond human security. The primacy of human rights distinguishes human security from traditional state-based approaches.For instance,the international community needs to be clear about "whose insecurity?" is the priority under the global war on terrorism"(GWOT) since terrorism accounts for only a tiny share of violence- related deaths. Poor

people suffer disproportionately from insecurity [19]. The Directors of the three

German church-based development agencies, in a 2003 statement, noted that:

> The absence of global justice is a fundamental challenge to us, because it has for a long time been violating the lives of billions of people day-by-day, and not because it has for a short time also been linked to the horrifying terrorist use of force. It is not fear that makes us act, but the conviction that another world is necessary and possible" [6].

The extended concept of human security by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) *Human Development Report* [20] as "*protecting the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment*" [21],is defeated ,once *the expansionist perspective of human development involve* Human Needs theorists would argue that one of the primary causes of protracted violence is people's drive to meet their unmet needs. The argument here is that the relative poverty in the North, especially in the North-east, the Boko Haram's main base, disposes people to violence. While there is some merit in this position, we argue that this cannot comprehensively explain the audacity of the sect's actions or why similar groups have not emerged in other impoverished parts of the country [22].

The argument here is that frustration causes aggression but when the source of the frustration cannot be challenged, the aggression gets displaced onto an innocent target. There are a number of explanations of the Boko Haram phenomenon that would seem to fit into this theory. For

instance the CBN Governor Sanusi Lamido Sanusi was quoted by ThisDay of January 28 2012 as blaming the rise of Boko Haram partly on economic inequality among states and regions caused by the principle of derivation, which gives 13 percent of oil revenue to the oil producing states. According to Sanusi, who had clarified that he was quoted out of context, "There is clearly a direct link between the very uneven nature of distribution of resources and the rising level of violence." A variant of this explanation is that the huge sums allocated in training former Niger Delta militants overseas under the Amnesty Programme of the late Umaru Yaradua may have had the unintended effect of triggering envy and frustration or sending a message that violence pays. This notwithstanding, while these may be partly true, they cannot comprehensively explain why the Boko Haram type of violence is not generalised in the North or why several states in the South which do not benefit from the 13% derivation or the amnesty programme have also not taken to militancy [23].

The Almajirai -Tsangaya Thesis

Most analyst have misconstrued the contextual meaning of Boko Haram, by erroeusly suggesting that literally that because of the conquest of northern Nigeria and the eventual collapse of the original *almajirai* system , the new system of education as a rival to the religious belief of the majority of the people of northern Nigeria, is manifest in a tendency to view the mindset of the people as being made up by western education, which also increased the level of their hatred to it. The colonial invasion of Nigeria with particularly reference to the northern region led to the collapse of the *almajirai* system and the inability of the government to maintain those involved. In this invasion most of the Emirs were either killed or disposed, while those who were subjugated lost control of

their territories and accepted their new roles as mere traditional rulers used only for the system of indirect rule. In most of these areas the British did not give much recognition to the *almajirai* education system as emphasis was on western education.Under the new arrangement, the *almajirai* system did not get the type of attention earlier devoted to it under the Sarauta/Emirate system, especially as related to state funding.Thus, with the British withdrawal of state funding for the *almajiri* schools, the emirs lost fundamental control of the *almajirai* system and it collapsed. In this way, the disregard for the *almajirai* system in favour of western education ignited animosity and antagonism among the *mallams*, their pupils, and northern Nigerian society at large. There was much

fear that western education, which is of Christian-European origin, would lead graduates to lose their Islamic identity and embrace anti-social behaviour that negated the values and principles of Islam [24].

As a result, the people were made to believe that the colonialists were agents of perpetuating Christian faith and ideology with the target of converting everyone to the new religion. On the other hand, the educators, who were mostly Christian missionaries, were accused of preaching the equality of all men and their system of education was thought to be capable of causing "unrest and fanaticism" by bringing up a "separate educated class in rivalry with the accepted rulers of the people" [25]. They were also made to believe that the western education introduced by the infidels was the same thing as Christianisation, which had to be avoided at all cost. It was therefore not surprising that even as late as 1936 enrollment in newly established schools in the northern part of the country was still very low [3]. It must, however, be made clear that this sentiment was not shared by all northern aristocrats as some of them wholeheartedly accepted the establishment of schools and even provided land for the building of classrooms and staff quarters. For instance, the Emir of Bida did not only give a boy to Bishop Samuel Crowther to be educated, but also wrote to neighbouring Emirs appealing to them to allow the Bishop to begin missionary work in their territories [4]. As a result, the people were made to believe that the colonialists were agents of perpetuating Christian faith and ideology with the target of converting everyone to the new religion. On the other hand, the educators, who were mostly Christian missionaries, were accused of preaching the equality of all men and their system of education was thought to be capable of causing "unrest and fanaticism" by bringing up a "separate educated class in rivalry with the accepted rulers of the people" [7].

The *Almajirai* System as the Repository of the Boko Haram Membership Mobilizaion .

The larger and more numerous the goals of social movement organizations, the greater will be the requirement for mobilization of resources and support.All social movement organizations face the challenge of generating resources and support in order to attain their identified aims. To overcome this,patient construction of local institutions and social support of underprivileged Muslims combine local empowerment with Islamization [9]. In this framework, emphasis is placed on the internal operations of the group: how does it recruit members, how does it keep members (e.g. incentives, ideological motivation).

According to the Israeli historian Emmanuel Sivan, realizing the Islamic state is really a triangular path, with consecutive isolationist, educational, and violent steps [10]. First comes withdrawal from corrupt, neo-*jahili*, society. Believers start over by establishing their own small, puritan communities, typically near the desert or far from the city's (or the West's) corrupting influence. In this stage of meditation and self-purification, the reborn Muslim is in *hijra*, internal exile that may prepare him or her for the second stage: reentry. Peaceful educational and political work (*da`wa*, "call," or mission) will, it is now believed, bring one's co-Muslims to the correct view [8].

Accordingly, the *almajirai* education system, originally called the *Tsangaya*, is one of the oldest educational system established in the area under a system extending from the frontiers of northern Nigeria across the Chadian region up to the borders of Libya.This system took root as far back as between the 9th and 11th centuries with the establishment of Islam in the northeastern corner of present-day Nigeria (Kanem-Borno). It was established as an organised and comprehensive system of education for learning Islamic principles, values, jurisprudence and theology. It was a replica of Islamic learning centres in many Muslim countries, such as the *madrasah* in Pakistan, Malaysia, Egypt and Indonesia, etc, [1].

The Hausa word *almajiri* (plural *almajirai*), derived from the Arabic *al-Muhajir* (plural *al-Muhajirun*),is hinged on the Islamic concept of migration, which is widely practiced especially when the acquisition of knowledge at home is either inconvenient or insufficient [2]. It bests describes an emigrant with specific reference to early scholars as well as

others in quest for knowledge, who migrates from the luxury of his home to other places or to a popular teacher in the quest for Islamic knowledge. In a more specifdic term, Sheik Abba Aji, a renowned Maiduguri-based Islamic scholar [4], noted that:

> The word *almajiri* is a word borrowed from Arabic language and derived from the word "*al-Muhajir*" meaning a seeker of Islamic knowledge. The *almajirai* system of education practised in northern Nigeria has its origin in the migration of Prophet Mohammed from Mecca to Medina. Those who migrated with the prophet to Medina were called "*al-Muhajirun,*" meaning emigrants, while those they met there were referred to as "*Ansar,*" meaning helpers.These emigrants (*al-Muhajirun*) because of the circumstances of their migration had no means of livelihood for getting to Medina, but based on the fraternity established by the prophet between the two groups, they did not engage in begging but rather were co-opted by the *Ansar* in their various trades and vocations as apprentices were paid for their services." .... Islam frowns at begging in any form because it reduces a Muslim's self-esteem and dignity.

Due to the relevance attached to this system, and the fact that it was the major source of training both in cultural and Islamic education (even for the ruling houses), it was funded directly by the state treasury and the state *zakat* funds, and under the control of the emirs of the traditional government system that existed during the period. It was thus not difficult to ensure the welfare of both the students and their teachers, as the community readily supported these *almajirai* most of whom came from faraway places to enroll in the *Tsangaya* schools. In return, the *almajirai* offered services such as laundry, cobbling, gardening, weaving and sewing among others as charity to the community that contributed to their well-being. Writing on the organization of the system, [6] stated the following:

> The *almajirai* system, though funded, was not over-dependent on the state. The students were at liberty to acquire a vocational and occupational skill in between their Islamic lessons and so were involved in farming, fishing, well construction, masonry, production, trade, tailoring, small businesses, etc. Many of them were the farmers of the northern Nigerian cotton and groundnut pyramids. They formed the majority of the traders in the commercial city of Kano. They were the leather tanners and leather shoe and bag makers in the old Sokoto Empire. The cap weavers and taylors in Zaria city were said to be *Almajiris*. Thus, they formed the largest percentage of the community workforce and made significant contributions to the economy of the society before the introduction of white collar jobs. After colonialization, they were recruited by the British as columbite and tin miners in Jos city, which was then under Bauchi before the creation of plateau state.

Owing to the current socio-economic situation characterized by northernization of poverty as reflected in largely unemployed youths, there has been the apprehension that this sorely neglected section of the young population could be dragged into major political crises, if urgent steps are not taken to integrate them into the mainstream of the socio-economic life. Owing to widespread poverty, some parents are left with no choice than to continue sending their children into the street disguised as *almajirai*. According to the 2010 National Bureau of Statistics' poverty profile, though poverty permeates the entire country, it is more profound in the North.

The report shows that among the six geopolitical zones of the country, the Northwest and Northeast recorded the highest poverty rates of 70 per cent and 69 per cent, respectively. The projection of the Bureau for 2011 was also gloomy with predictions of 71.5 per cent, 61.9 per cent, and 62.8 per cent poverty rates for North-Central, Northeast and Northwest, respectively [7]

Several studies such as [8,10,13], among others , have pointed to how Almajiri Breeds future terrorists.The allegations of the involvement of *almajirai* in the spate of sectarian crises which bedeviled the Northern states in has been substantiated by the fact that the *almajirai* institution

provides repertoire and repository from which Islamic fundamentalists in the North draw their membership. This institution nurtured over the past century in northern Nigeria, is now open for the taking in extending wars of attrition at different times in the name of God by radical Islamic groups.

Wither Anti-Semitism: A Decontruction and and *Double Reading* of Boko Haram's Philosophy

Despite anti-Semitism being part of Boko Haram, is a jihadist terrorist organization based in the northeast of Nigeria,also interpreted as People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad (جماعة اهل السنة لدعوة ل جهاد وال, *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad*), religious fundamentalists,generally, and Boko Haram,in particular adopt many aspects of modernity (especially weaponry, the Internet and other forms of communication, as well as decentralized organization) [7]. Also, Boko Haram's propaganda machine reaches its prospective constituency through many aspects of modernity modern technology, the Internet. Boko Haram's print media outreach generally takes the form of leaflets ,and video clips usually conveying its "acts of valour",and statement of assertion of its responsibility for acts of terrorism. These are accessible over the Internet in various languages, which effectively complements Boko Haram's media propaganda [8].

Thus, the mediascape and cyberspace ,a product of Western modernity allows them to construct a virtual Islamist community that is frequented by members, prospective members and sympathizers. Boko Haram's targeted web-surfers are often Muslims who feel alienated from the

societies in which they live. The virtual community constructed by Boko Haram's provides its virtual citizens with a forum to exchange ideas and a "news room" to provide "education" on current events. All those with access to the Internet can feel that they are part of the brotherhood and the *dawa* (the spreading of Islam) [7]. Supposedly,Boko Haram's philosophy is not compatible with Western notions of modernity, unlike Wahhabism ,it pursues its objective through the very products of Western modernity.Contrary to the literary [mis]interpretation of Boko Haram's ideology as Western education" is "sin/bad", the contextual interpretation of its ideology had to be first and foremost understood from the view point the products of the *Almajiranci System [the* non Western educational seytem] who claim to be socially,economically,and politically, disempowered vis-à-vis their Northern elite" ,who the "sinful" Western education produced and is empowered to be dominating them [9].

This simple logic of reasoning shows that the ideology of Boko Haram goes beyond this. The textual interplay' of a contextual interpretation of Boko Haram's ideology of Western education" is "sin/bad is supplementary and mutually constitutive of its goal. Textuality promotes greater 'theoretical reflexivity' through a double process: the first is 'self-consciousness of one's own historical time and place which determines the questions that claim attention', the second is 'the effort to understand the historical dynamics that brought about the conditions in which these questions arose' by ruling out the possibility of objective knowledge [12].

The Failed or Failing State Thesis

In addition, [15] has highlighted poor governance and management of State resources as stimulating the emergence of all sorts of messianic groups in the name of providing alternatives to the unemployed, underemployed, hungry, poor, cheated, uneducated and to a certain extent, the unenlightened but educated and rich ones. What can be seen as the failure of governance is the army of jobless youth and collection of semi and stark adult illiterates scattered all over,

due to government's inability to provide functional education and gainful employment for its citizens. Similarly,crime rate and state of insecurity , youth restiveness and other criminal activities in Nigeria have been linked to the issue of youth unemployment , spiritual poverty and joblessness of the youth, the effect of which there is palpable fear for security of lives and property all over the country [5]. As a result, [13] contends that Nigeria has lost enormous

human and material resources that are critical to national development as a result of ethnic and religious violence since the enthronement of democratic rule in Nigeria in 1999. Given the expected role of the state as the guarantor of security, [15] regrets that:

> The inability of the state to effectively perform its core functions of providing or guaranteeing security for the people as well as act as regulator has led to a weakening of its bargaining strength and capacity in relation to the ethnic and religious groups in society, which poses a serious challenge to national security.

Islamism, Re-Emergence Boko Haram, Political Social Movement , More Political than Religious. Though,emerging studies have established a link between poverty, ignorance, violent crisis and terrorism, especially in most parts of the Third World [8,9,14], in the case of Nigeria (with specific reference to the northern part as well as evidence from the Niger Delta area), terrorism is a tactic used by the weak to intimidate the strong and by the strong to intimidate the weak [16]. Thus,as Gurr explains terrorism is a tactic but it may also be a strategy.Religiously inspired terrorist activity has been linked with radical Islamists, who employs it as a strategem at the national and international levels [9] for political end.

Indeed, they are drawing strength from the inability and unwillingness of the federal, state, and local governments to either improve ordinary Nigerians'standards of living, or fully respect their politicaland civil rights.In actual fact, based on the experiences of othercountries with large Muslim populations in NorthAfrica and the Middle East, the current political, economic,and social conditions in northern Nigeria suggestthat the region is ripe for infiltration by radical Islamic groups [9].

In retrospect, a careful analysis of the the 'modus operandi' of the Yantatsine and the Shiites suggests that they were a misunderstood social movement against the present level of social injustice in Nigeria; they were simply reformist organization expressing what were supposed to be popular grievances, but using unpopular strategies. When testifying before the Aniagolu Tribunal, the Emir of Kano, His Royal Highness, Ado Bayero, noted that though the desire to make money could explain some of the things Mohammed Marwa did during his life time, the over-riding agenda of his religious fundamentalism was political. According to the Emir, Marwa saw himself first and foremost as a reformer who needed political power to effect his reformation of the society [13].

IMPLICATIONS OF RELIGIOUSLY MOTIVATED TERRORISM IN NIGERIA

While religious extremists are willing to murder because they embrace theologies that sanction violence in the service of God and have no sympathy for their victims, because they view those victims as enemies of God, they "maintain the pure state of their religion knowingly or unknowingly by violating the rights of other people" [11]. Religious extremists readily sacrifice their own lives because they expect huge and immediate afterlife rewards in return form "martyrdom" [6]. Thus,by pursuing more radical strategies for political and social change men have been very willing to "kill in the name of God" This is suggestive of the themes of several studies such as "The Rise of Religious Nationalism and Conflict: Ethnic Conflict and Revolutionary Wars, 1945 – 2001," *Religious Resurgence and Politics in* *the Contemporary World;and Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence by* [8]; [3],and [4],*Religious Resurgence and Politics in the Contemporary World* [8] by Emile Sahliyeh (ed.),*Terror in the Mind of God:The Global Rise of Religious Violence* [15] by Mark Juergensmeyer,among others.

This militantly political re-appropriation of religious precepts by those who act under the "veil of ignorance" raises the question of whether "God has a favourite religion [4],or whether a religion is better and more acceptable to God than some others.Harkening to this notion of ethnicity of religion explains the reason why men actually kill in the name of god for several reasons,other than religious.This has had the implication, that

religiously motivated killings across the polity [1,2,3].

Although most of the terror pepetrated care often gabbed with religious colouration, it has been established over time that the actors had appropriated religion in the pursuit of other ends.This was the case of Maitatsine Uprising and several other violent outbursts and/or religious riots that followed sequentially,including the Bullum-Kutu (Maitatsine) in October 1982, Rigasa (Kaduna) in 1982, Jimeta-Yola; Gombe (Bauchi state) in 1984. As Similarly, Hussaini Abdul (n.d.) had observed:

Since the 1980s, Ethnic and Religious crises have become a reoccurring decimal in Northern Nigeria. There is virtually no state out of the 19 states that constitute the Northern Nigeria that crisis of this nature has not raised its ugly head. Since the middle 1980s the spate of violence has continued to increase. Among these includes: Maitatsine crisis in Kano 1980, Bullum- Kutu 1982, Maiduguri 1982, Yola 1984, Ilorin 1984, Bauchi 1984, Ilorin 1987, Kano 1984, Kafanchan 1987, Zuru 1980, Birnin Kebbi 1990, Katsina 1991, Tafawa Balewa 1991, Kano 1991, Jalingo 1992, Kaduna Polytechnic 1992, Kasuwar Magani (Kaduna) 1994, Gure Kahugu 1987, Kafanchan 1987, 1999, Kaduna 2000 Jos 2001, Kano 2001, Tafawa Balewa (since 2000), Nasarawa 2001. Others include Chamba-Kuteb crisis in Taraba state since 1975 Tiv-Jukun crisis, Bassa-Igbira crisis in Toto and a host of others. While these crises continue to exhibit ethnic and religious colorations, and portray clear manifestation of criminality and frustration resulting from sociological and economic alienation coming from wide spread poverty and unemployment, there are other forces whose identity and character are difficult to define. Many people lost their lives as a result of these crises, some sustained injuries of various degrees, some had their properties worth millions of Naira either destroyed or looted; yet others get permanently dislocated and psychologically depressed. These crises have created a general threat to the security of the citizens, it has resulted in the violation of the rights of citizens. Many people "either through miscarriage of justice or through the failure of the state to prosecute perpetrators and instigators of these clashes" have been unjustly treated.

TOWARDS A SYNTHESIS

From the foregoing discourse ,an attmpt have been made to present a concatenated analysis of the Boko Haram menace in Nigeria .We have demontreated that while virtually everything about Boko Haram is contested, including the reasons for its radicalisation after some seven years of being a peaceful group, what is not contested, however, is that it is a religiously inspired terrorist group linked with Islamism.Also, we have shown that Boko Haram(the People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad–(which in Arabic جماعة اهل السنة لدعوة ل والجهاد, *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad*) is first and foremost a social movement ,constitutive of overlapping of religious, ideological, economic, political and other factors.Its sympathizers range from political thugs to fanatical zealots, its ranks include jobless street youth,mobilized from the successful businessmen and sitting Senators in the Nigerian National Assembly. In addition, we identified the institutionalization of the *almajirai* education system, originally called the *Tsangaya* whose origin dates as far back the 9th and 11th centuries in the northeastern corner of present-day Nigeria (Kanem-Borno), with the repository from which Islamic fundamentalists in the North are drawing their membership. We also noted that despite anti-semitism being part of Boko Haram's philosophy ,virtually all religious fundamentalists, generally, and Boko Haram,in particular, adopt many aspects of modernity (especially weaponry, the Internet and other forms of communication). As a religiously motivated terrorist group, though civilians are often the victims, the state is generally,seen as an actor that needs to be destroyed and not negotiated with. In view of these, the observation is that religion is both the point of departure and the end of the road, in any analysis of new terrorism.Henece,whether as a tactic or a strategy, ideological uses of religion vi-a-

vis religious motivated terrorism, entails a rational choice that may have a wide range of political goals. This is a fact we demonstrated in the Nigerian context, religiously motivated violence targeted at Christians to illustrate the fact violence is a function of political competition, and a strategic tool aimed at winning this competition.Thus,religion has never been apolitical; throughout history, religion has played an important role in shaping societies' economic, cultural, and political behaviours.However, this has the potemtial of polarizing the society along religious lines, which may have the effect of reinforcing ethnicitization of religion and politics. This will be the greatest greatest challenge to the Nigerian state in the near or distant future, as has already been demonstrated by reintroduction of Sharia law in the 12 Northern states.

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