



# Boko Haram Insurgency And The Threat To Contemporary Nigeria's National Integration

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**ABSTRACT:** *Since the return to democratic government in 1999, Nigeria has been experiencing all manners of insurgence activities. The most potent amongst them is the Boko Haram insurgency which started in full force in 2009 after the murder of Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf who was their pioneer leader. The group's unrelenting activities have seriously threatened the contemporary insecurity as well as in no small measure affecting the national integration of Nigeria and her neighbors, thereby rendering the Nigerian government's efforts to protect her citizen to be futile. This spurred academics to analyze the true state of the phenomenon. The situation has put the country's integration at risk. The paper examined the implications of the Boko Haram insurgency and its threat to contemporary insecurity and integration in Nigeria. Therefore, this study adopts the relative deprivation theory as the theoretical guide to explain the present state of insurgency in Nigeria. With the help of secondary data obtained, as well as their analyses, the study finds that- government insincerity is the remote cause of the insurgence activities in the country. Thus, the study recommends that the government should be sincere in policy implementation and governance which will go a long way to improve the well-being of the citizens and as well make them less frustrated and aggressive towards the system.*

**KEYWORDS:** Boko Haram, Insurgency, Threat, National, Integration

## I. INTRODUCTION

Boko Haram is a set of Islamist radical youth that adored at the Alhaji Muhammadu Ndimi Mosque in Borno state Maiduguri some time ago. Sprout of the youth in 2002, (yet to know as Boko Haram) professed Borno state as an Islamic establishment to be intolerably corrupt as well as irredeemable. This set professed it was boarding on hijra (a removal sideways the lines of the Prophet Muhammad's drawing from Mecca to Medina) [1]. The group left Maiduguri the Borno state capital to a village known as Kanama, in Yobe state, close to the border of Nigeria and the Niger republic, to establish a nationalist community run on hard-line Islamic ideologies [2].

Many factors led to the appearance as well as the growth of Boko Haram, knowing the general background of the area is imperative to understanding the drive itself. Poor governance and limited state presence are the major reasons that brought about the emergence as well the increase of Boko Haram. Other factors like unemployment and underdevelopment, environmental and desertification burdens improved by the retreating waters of Lake Chad Basin as well as the profound antiquity of Islamic liberalism [3]. Boko Haram originated in 1995 when Abubakar Lawan setup the Ahlusunnah waljama'ah hijra or Shabab set (Muslim Youth Society) in Maiduguri, Borno state as a non-



violent drive till 2002 when Muhammad Yusuf took over the leadership of the group[4]. This group has been overtime below many names such as Muhajirun, Hijra, Ahlulsunnahwaljama'a, Yusufiyya as well as Nigeria Taliban. [5]. Right from its founding in 2002, the set has long drawn out its reach and also led to progressively fatal spells.

The militants planting of bombs in churches or public places since August 2011 in north-eastern Nigeria have been almost every week. Boko Haram as well widened its targets, from the direct retaliation spells on the state to comprise other representations of specialists or authority. This extension comprises setting schools on fire as well as attacking newspapers' workplaces. 2012 March, twelve public schools in Borno state Maiduguri were scorched miserable at night, forcing 10,000 students out of school.

Boko Haram has brought numerous challenges complicating the local-level stabilization labors for many years now. The current insecurity presents the greatest test, mainly in Borno State[6]. The frequent spells by the Boko Haram group as well as the present military actions have deferred the return of exiled people, lengthy humanitarian disaster situations, and also made it problematic for assistance establishments to reach helpless societies. Since reintegrating ex-fighters for stopping farmer-herder battles as well as the transformation of rural economies, numerous of the issues fronting the Lake Chad area need cross-border tactics. Up till now, organization efforts continue mainly externally ambitious, and development in operation has been sluggish[6], making national integration difficult. Flowing the forgoing, this study seeks to examine the issue of Boko Haram threat to contemporary security and national integration in Nigeria with specific reference to North-East Nigeria.

## II. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Insurgency is a term that refers to a forceful attempt to take control of a country. The term has grown in popularity equated with a people's revolt against the land's rule or ruling government. Insurgency typically claims or seeks to "overthrow an established government without a follow-on social revolution, establish an autonomous national territory within a state's borders, force the withdrawal of an occupying power, and extract political support that is unattainable through fewer means of violence" as part of its heinous claims[7].[8]. Opines that

insurgents have the nihilist goal of ensuring the government cannot function and it is easier to achieve the insurgent goal than governing, as it is easier and more directed to use military power than to apply political, economic, and social techniques. This implies that while insurgents might use violence to delegitimize a government, they cannot regain that authority with force alone[9]. Insurgency, according to scholars such as [10] is a fight between the governing and non-ruling groups to maintain or destroy the legitimacy of the government through the use of political resources (propaganda and protests) and violence. The author goes on to discuss anarchist, egalitarian, and conservative insurgencies, as well as Apocalyptic-Utopian, reformist, and preservationist insurgencies. The author also points out that insurgent groups' goals might change over time, as can the methods they use to achieve them.

National integration, also known as nation-building, national unity, national cohesion, national loyalty, or the national question, "requires agreement on the limits of the political community and the nature of the political regime"[11]. This simply refers to the formation of an agreement among the members of a state on the degree of unity desired as well as the type of political structure and institutions desired. It is also a "process of bringing a society together that tends to make it a harmonious city, based on an order that its members regard as equitably harmonious"[12]. This implies that integration fosters unity, which promotes smooth interaction among members of a given society based on certain established fairness principles. They are thus referring to a society of oneness whose members are willing to live and work in harmony with one another and share the same destiny. It has also been described as: a process by which members of a social system form links so that the system's boundaries persist (sic) over time and the boundaries of sub-systems become less important in influencing behavior. Members of the social system develop an escalating sequence of contact, cooperation, consensus, and community during this process [13, 11].

There are a number of theories through which the issue of insecurity and insurgency could be analysed. However, for the purpose of this article, the paper is anchored on relative deprivation theory. The proponents of the relative deprivation theory are Garry Runciman (1934 - 2020) and Ted Gurr (1936 - 2017)[14]. The theory explains the subjective dissatisfaction caused by one person's relative position to the situation or position of another. This can come as a result of a



lack of resources or time to support certain lifestyles, activities, and amenities that an individual or group has become accustomed to. Consequently, this often leads to social exclusion which in turn strongly influences behavior and attitudes that are often cited as reasons for the emergence of social movements, which in extreme cases lead to politics, such as terrorism, riots, civil wars, and other instances of social deviation[15].

[15].Relative deprivation mainly occurs when groups or individuals subjectively perceive themselves as unfairly disadvantaged concerning other people. The discontent that arises from relative deprivation is used to explain radical politics, as well as the emergence of messianic religions, the rise of social movements, and an abundance of crimes. It is generally believed that religious actions or the growing demand for political change stems from relative deprivation, and that crime is always the response.

To further explain why this study adopted the relative deprivation theory, the diagram below (figure 2.1) is used to illustrate the theoretical framework.

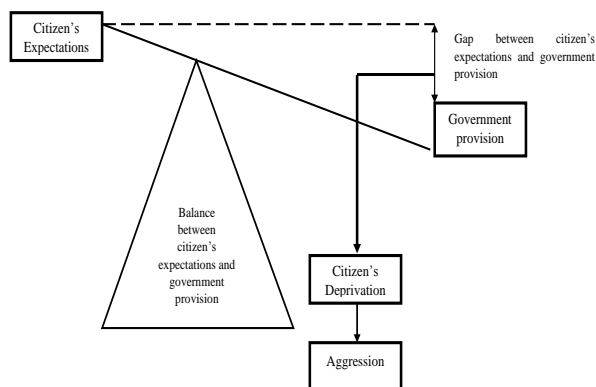


Figure 2.1 Theoretical Framework on Relative Deprivation Theory

(By the Author)

In applying this theory of relative deprivation to explain the problem of insurgency and its threat to contemporary insecurity and integration in Nigeria, one can easily conclude that the Boko Haram insurgency group began its radical response of bombing and killing Nigerians because of the level of political deprivation by the government. It is widely reported that the sect at the initial stage was not violent until the government of Borno State clamped down on them

which led to the death of the leader Mohammed Yusuf in 2009 [16, 17, 18, 19]. In response, the group has been terrorizing the country, particularly the northeast region killing over 30, 000 people, destroying properties worth billions of naira, and well displaced more than two million people[17].

Also, relative deprivation theory was used in this study because, the theory's construct demonstrates that a society's systemic failure or structural fault is strongly linked to frustration and aggressiveness, which leads to criminality and violence. The high rate of unemployment among graduates and non-graduates in contemporary Nigeria reflects systemic failure. Youth militancy in the Niger Delta [20].Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast [21], high rate of kidnapping in the southeast[22], political assassination[23], etc. are all linked to unemployment.

### III.INSURGENCY AND CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA'S NATIONAL INTEGRATION CHALLENGES

The nation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has faced an empress of insecurity in many ways, research has it that Nigeria's security issues are part of the national security policy that needs to be checked[24].[24].Apart from other national challenges like ritual killings, cyber-crimes, car theft, car hijacking, advanced free fraud, drug trafficking, human trafficking, and what have you, that pose threat to the country's national security, the most bedeviling ones are the armed violent action from Niger Delta crises, kidnapping, frequent clashes between herdsmen as well as the farmers in the northern region of the country and the most potent amongst them is the Boko Haram Insurgency.

[25].Nigeria's Boko Haram insurgency group has since its inception constituted crucial threats to the people as well as property; these have in no small measure impacted the socio-economic improvement of the country. The Boko Haram insurgency group in people's opinion does not have clear reasons for their actions, also in the other way no clear-cut aim as regards their inactions as well as their actions. [26].The Boko Haram insurgency, which began its activities as a peaceful religious organization, disorganized, loosely coordinated as well as rudimentary change, evolved to cause threats to the country's security and integration. The group advanced a level of strategic power prediction, and strategic intelligence as well as creating large-range connections to subvert the



country.[27].The group's success in its operational area and its methodology sophistication as well as its harsh ways of operation have raised major concerns among the people. The Boko Haram insurgency group has brutal as well as boldness in their system of attacks which has to do with the selection of geographical area to operate as well as the selection of targets. Government workers, worship centres', media houses, security formations, private organizations, national bodies as well as foreign institutions have been the major areas of focus by this deadly group. The group in August 2011 attacked badly the United Nations Headquarters building in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

[28].The connection among insurgency organizations in central as well as West African states has many effects on the security, integration as well as stability in West African regions.[29].Posit that the strategic position of Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria placed insurgency groups at a very good advantage in the Sub-Saharan Africa regional power. The insurgency objective is to disorganize the source of integration, security, and stability in the region and lessen the overall insurgency check-in in Africa. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) efforts to bring peace, integration, and stability to the continent are being affected by the activities of the insurgency groups, the worst of all is that of the Boko Haram insurgency organization, their continuous violent activities in the north-eastern part of the country as well as parts of West Africa for organizing jihadist movement all over the West Africa region.[30].The depth or seriousness of their violent actions raised people's attention over the attack capacity by the non-Nigeria focuses in Nigeria as well as Africa in general.[30].The challenges are more severe with the indications that the Boko Haram organization as announced by the former president of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan, has invaded the larger security formation of the country but the particular arm of the security was not measured, which makes it difficult to check since the arm of the security Boko Haram has infiltrated is not known.

[31].Some remarkable successes have been made in recapturing the area of Boko Haram through counter-attacks by the country's army as well as that of Cameroon, Niger, and the Chad Republic. But the continuous violent acts by the Boko Haram on the Nigerian army and communities is a major threat since the inception of suicide bombing.[32].Posits that the continued violent act by the Boko Haram insurgency group is

only not affecting a segment of society but also the integration and development of the nation are affected. The warfare act of the insurgency group has led to severe effects on business, tourism, markets, banking sector, transport system, hospitality, foreign and local investment, companies as well as other business activities. As a result of the insurgency activities in the above-mentioned sectors in the northern region of the country, the human resources, as well as the investors ran away from their area of business to other areas in search of safety.

#### IV. BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY: IMPLICATIONS FOR NATIONAL INTEGRATION AND SECURITY IN NIGERIA

**Socio-Economic:** [33].There is a complementary relationship among the regions in Nigeria. They assist each other in the area, and they have comparative cost, and natural advantages in the Northern region of the country that lacks access to the sea, they depend on the south in that aspect. The North has 78 percent of Nigeria's land that is suitable for agricultural cultivation i.e. (food, livestock as well as cash crops).The Southern-West region has a suitable environment for both local and international commerce as well as the import/export route that pave way for global and local trade. The South-South area of the country as well as part of the South-Eastern region of Nigeria is known and blessed for oil resources.

[34]. The high rate of Boko Haram violence activities bring tension, insecurity as well as a hardship to the people as a result of the insurgence warfare and the counter-military actions, causing the non-combatant citizens to be humiliated, brutalization, extortion, and soon in the region. In July 2009 for example, more than 3,500 internally displaced people were recorded, out of which 1,264 were children whose parents were killed by the insurgence, while more than 392 were widowed women that lost their husbands in the violent attacks of the terrorists. So many properties like leaving buildings, their primary schools, over 12 Churches as well as a magistrate court were destroyed by the Boko Haram insurgence group.

**Fragile Unity Of Nigeria:** [35].Posit that the effect of Boko Haram violence is the regular threat caused to the country's fragile unity and peace and its fault lines of dissolution coming and rapidly growing daily with religion, tribe, as well as ways of ethnicity. [36]. Boko Haram's rejection of Modern Education, as well as its plans to bring in



an Islamic state to bring division to the country, affects nations' integration, and the government structure, as well as institutions, are weakened without National Unity and identity which can create violence and political unrest in the country.

**Loss of Human Lives:** [37]. Says the violent acts of the Boko Haram extremists caused a lot of citizens their lives as well as led to the movement of people most especially the non-indigenes to leave the North-eastern part that is the theatre of the insurgence, the violent acts of the insurgence group in the country brings displacement of more than 1.3 million Nigerians in their operational region. [38]. The degree of their violent activities is epitomized by the Nigerians that are killed in a higher number. According to the former Governor of Borno State Kashim Shettima, the terrorist groups are responsible for more than 100,000 deaths.

**Closure Of Business Centres:** [36]. The violent activities of the Boko Haram insurgence group led to people closing as well as abandoning their business centres in the northeast region where their activities go on regularly: According to the Former Minister of Information, Mr. Labaran Maku, the insurgence group launched an attack in Kano State in an important area which affected Multi-Billion Naira, the Kano Textile Market popularity known as Kanti – Kwari Market, which is the oldest as well as the biggest textile markets in Sub-Saharan Africa, this affected the economic Biller as well as the social lives of the people in the Northern region of the country.

[39]. There is a decrease in people's purchase of goods from the Northern area of the country as a result of information that went around that the insurgence set (Boko Haram) plan to poison the products coming from the area to the other parts of the country. This alone reduced business by up to 97% in the northern axis of the country [39]. [40]. State violent action of the insurgence group in the Northeastern region of the country has in no small way affected the nation's scheme established by the Federal Government to bring National Integration which is the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). It is glaring that corps members refuse to accept their posting to the Northeastern area of the country for fear of being captive or being killed by the Boko Haram insurgence group, they often ask for redeployment to their choice states. [40]. Information has it corps members mobilized to Kano for their one-year service to the nation and asked for redeployment to the states of their choice but of the northern region. Specifically, some told the scheme's management to stop the

posting of corps members to those states in the north where the activities of the uprising set are high pending the time the insecurity situation is calm in that region.

**Socio-Cultural and Political:** [41]. The Boko Haram rebellion and violent crises in the Northern region lively will cause psychological implications of anxiety, and suspicion as well as give discord to the political relationship among the religious groups, Muslims and Christians again will bring political division among the regions i.e., the Southerners and the Northerners. [36]. The socioeconomic structure of the country has greatly been tampered with by the Boko Haram violent activities, the national economy, as well as the development, is no longer business as usual since the insurgence attacks pave way for investors to relocate to the crisis-free area for their businesses i.e., other countries. Because of the insecurity issues in the country, investors, that is, the agents of development will not want to operate in an unfavorable environment; this will harm the Nation's economy. The 2011 World Investment Report (WIR) of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), says the country's economy lost over ₦1.33 trillion to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) due to the violent attacks of Boko Haram. Over the year FDI flows to the nation have been expended. CBN statistics show that FDI coming decreased to 4693.83 million USD in 2014 from 5608.45 million USD in 2013, and again decreased to 3064.17 million USD in the year 2015. The CBN figures are related to that of the World Bank that has FDI coming decreased from 8841.11 million USD in 2011 to 7069.93 million USD in the year 2012, 5562.87 million USD in the year 2013 as well as the 4655.85 million USD in the year 2014 falling in the FDI is persistent due to the crisis.

**Government Responses:** With the assistance of neighbouring countries, the Nigerian security outfit has in no small way made sizeable achievements against the Boko Haram insurgence group, but the drive to completely stamp the deadly insurgency group out seems to be very slow at the moment, thereby making their operational area (the northeast region of the country) to still stand beleaguered [42]. A state of emergency was declared in Adamawa, Yobe, as well as Borno, states in 2013 by President Goodluck Jonathan by launched a series of attacks against the deadly insurrection group which made the national forces record some success in driving away from the insurgence of these states, make the attacks in the



rural areas to remain with regularity. The nation's security forces have been accused of abuses of fundamental human rights as well as the extrajudicial killings of citizens[42].

### **V. BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY IN NORTH-EAST NIGERIA: THE WAY FORWARD**

Boko Haram insurgency no doubt poses a threat to national integration. However, as huge as the challenges are, they are not insurmountable. This article therefore makes the following recommendations that could aid the country to overcome the threats:

The government of Nigeria should remain in their teamwork with outside countries like the United Kingdom as well as the United States of America that have prospered in fighting against insurgency as a source of info sharing, intellect as well as examples erudite from their previous experience would be of great assistance. Additional personnel should be taken into Nigeria's security agencies, especially in the military to increase their morale to be able to overpower the Boko Haram group. Again, the government should make the welfare of personnel the utmost, and scholarships, as well as remuneration, should be given to the fallen hero's children. To increase confidence in their fight against the rebels

Security agencies of Nigeria should be efficient by giving its men a way to search for the rebellion group to evade extra-judicial murders as well as other forms of human rights misuse of the group members as well as additional blameless people of the country. The people who are alleged to be among the Boko Haram group should be made to face prosecution and when guilty, capital punishment should be given to the persons. Intelligence-gathering gadgets should be upgraded by the national government. Capital should be expended on sophisticated arms as well as equipment that are technical that can be used to suggest the position of the group, detection as well as use for the effective bomb's demotion. Conflict resolution of a context-specific, as well as multi-layer, is needed, local broad-based management and prevention initiative(s) encapsulating, also needed is the collaboration among all regional as well as international concerned stakeholders.

Nigeria's government should check the unemployment problem in the Northern part of the country in particular and the entire country in general. It can be by way of introducing socio-

economic programs to provide jobs for jobless Nigerian youths used by Boko Haram as tools to carry out their violent actions.

Nigeria should be an educational policy in the Northeast region that could accommodate children of the poor especially the Almajiri system operated in the Northern Nigeria to get western education by building schools or colleges.

Those indicted for aiding the Boko Haram group should be made to face prosecution by the Nigerian government to cut the group's source of getting funds unbearable to buy urban arms for their violent actions. Yet, a national conference should be encouraged by the national government that will bring people from diverse ethnic groups together as well as form a platform for dialogue inter-religious to bring harmonious co-existence between the collections.

### **VI. CONCLUSION**

Boko Haram insurgency is a threat to the peace and stability of Nigeria as well as neighbouring countries. Many violent attacks have been lodged by this group. Until the government efficiently attacks the real remedial activities, the issues that raised aggression of the Boko Haram group, a threat to contemporary insecurity, as well as integration in Nigeria, would not gain productive outcomes. The group will remain in the North-Eastern area of the country to destabilize as well as its violent actions will spread to other fragments of Nigeria. Therefore, the issues of poverty and corruption should be addressed by the government and also should hearten investment in the northern region, to endorse the transparency and public discourse this will pave way for the maintainable answer to the ferocity as well as an insurrection against the country, this will bring lasting security and foster national integration to the citizens and the nation.

The significance of the Boko Haram disasters on the ethno-religious, cultural, political, and socioeconomic frame of the country requests additional scholarships for a visual investigation of not just the Boko Haram group alone, but of additional battle tendencies in the nation similar to the Fulani, herdsman-farmers clashes in the middle-Belt area. Conflict tendency may be connected to the Boko Haram disaster, as a result, a faction of Boko Haram can decide to adopt a separate strategy as well as the approach to spread and realize its ideal; position crushed soldiers to



concurrently devastate communities as well as groups (recall some of the main motives for leadership rift in the primary place are the very violent ideas, strategies as well as spells on even parallel Muslims by Shekau the Boko Haram leader). In addition, the insurgency sect has stood to be a thorn in the flesh of the country's army with insurgence having access to dangerous weapons. Thus, the military, as well as the academics, are duty-bound to undo the bases of small as well as light arms proliferation to comprehend to censored Boko Haram group's source.

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