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The Boko Haram Conundrum: A Menace against the Contours of Liberal Societies (Case of Cameroon, Nigeria, Mali and Niger)

Gabsa Nyongbet Wilfred

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Yaounde II-Soa, Cameroon

Abstract:

This paper explores the relation between terrorism—from the standpoint of the Boko Haram insurgency in Cameroon, Nigeria, Mali and Niger and security in liberal societies. It argues that terrorism constitutes a major threat to the survival of liberal societies. The Boko Haram conundrum is a danger to the political, economic and social values of liberalism. Politically, it constitutes a danger for playing conventional politics in the regions affected including freedom of political association, support and participation. Economically, it disrupts, weakens and slows down the process of economic development initiated by affected states. Socially, it causes trouble to the social emancipation of the people of the affected regions.

Keywords: *Boko Haram, liberalism, religious fundamentalism, rights and freedoms, terrorism*

1. Introduction

One of the critical threats to the survival of liberal societies is radical 'Islamist' terrorism. Like most other radical Islamist groups¹, Boko Haram is demonstrating an ability to spread its ideology in some parts of the continent including Cameroon, Nigeria, Mali and Niger. In 2009, Boko Haram is said to have killed some 2000 people.² According to a recent United Nations Humanitarian Commission on Refugee (UNHCR) report, no fewer than 5,000 people have been displaced in the north east region of Nigeria and in recent months some 10,000 Nigerians have crossed into neighbouring Cameroon, Chad and Niger.³ While some 8,100 have sought refuge in Cameroon, the number of Nigerian refugees in Niger is 2,700 and in Chad 150.⁴ Since mid-2013, Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states in northeastern Nigeria are under a state of emergency. Human rights groups have reported serious abuses by Boko Haram but also by the Nigerian security unit known as the Joint Task Force. Amongst the world's most terrorized countries, Somalia and Nigeria in Africa occupy the 6th and 7th position respectively with a Global Terrorism Index (GTI) of 7.24 each under notorious countries like Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, India and Yemen.⁵ From these figures, the worldwide manifestation of terrorism is now evident in Africa and this is largely attributable to Islamist insurgents such as Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQMI), Al Shabaab and recently Boko Haram.

The terrorist attack of 11 September 2001 on U.S. soil, has not only created awareness that non-State actors could exploit the vulnerability of highly developed countries with non-military means; afflicting major damage against civilians during peacetime⁶, but that the liberal values out of which these countries were constituted and stand for is beginning to rest on a shaky foundation. Boko Haram has been perceived as one of the violent uprisings that threaten the secular nature of States by reinventing Islamic revivalism.⁷ The values of liberalism which African States have fought to achieve in the course of liberation movements and have jealously kept for over fifty years after independence are today under severe threat—threatened by Boko Haram.

¹ CARPENTER, S. et al. (2009). Confronting the Ideology of Radical Extremism. *Journal of National Security Law and Policy*, Vol. 3:303; p.303.

² MAURO, Ryan, (2015). Boko Haram: Nigerian Islamist Group. *Clarion Project Fact Sheet*, Available at www.clarionproject.org, Accessed on 10 February 2015.

³CHUKWUMA, Okoli Al and PHILIP, Iortyer. (2014). Terrorism and Humanitarian Crisis in Nigeria: Insights from Boko Haram Insurgency. *Global Journal of Human-Social Science*, Vol. XIV, Issue I, Version 1.0, pp.38-50, p.45.

⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Ibid. p.41. The GTI (2013) uses four critical indicators to scale the impact of terrorism. These are: the number of terrorist incidents; the number of deaths; the number of casualties; and the level of property damage.

⁶ BRAUCH, Hans Günter, (2005). Security Threats, Challenges, Vulnerability and Risks. *International Security, Peace, Development and Environment*, Vol. I, Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems (EOLSS).

⁷ ADESOJI, Abimbola. (2010). The Boko Haram Uprising and Islamic Revivalism in Nigeria. In *Africa Spectrum*, 45, 2, pp. 95-108,

1.1. Liberalism and Liberal Values

Liberalism derives from 'liberal' meaning 'freedom'. It is apparently the first political movement, ideology and system of government that has genuinely sought the welfare of everyone in society, and not that of a particular group. Like democracy, liberalism is a way of saying no to inequality, injustice and indiscriminate use of coercion. Liberalism also has a macro political dimension in the sense that it involves an attempt by society through the State, to recognize and thereof, protect the fundamental rights and liberties of individuals from threats of any kind including those from religious fundamentalist terrorist groups. In fact, the idea of natural or inalienable rights which today is commonly called 'human rights', originated from liberalism.⁸

As individuals, we may have and share the same liberal values and qualities, but we are different in some respects and in the extent to which we understand, exercise and evaluate ourselves with respect to the liberal values. Society represents a mark of 'difference' or 'other'. Nevertheless, our individual freedom only makes sense when it considers that the 'other'—exist and takes into account too, the freedom of that 'other'. Our ability to act out our freedom makes some sense when it reconciles with and considers the norms of society. The broader society through the State protects our freedom and liberty when it calls upon us to act in a way that does not hurt the 'other' or does not jeopardize the freedom and liberty of the 'other'. Most modern constitutions acknowledge that it is upon accepting and respecting the rights of others that our security and freedom make sense. Part of the preamble of the Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon is explicit on this as it clearly states that "Freedom and security shall be guaranteed to each individual, subject to respect for the rights of others...."

Thus, liberal societies are those in which a large margin of individual freedoms are attributable to its members with restrictions limited only to the extent that the exercise of the freedom does not threaten the survival of the said liberal values. This can be earned through tolerance, for, tolerance is above all, a matter of allowing people the liberty to be what they are and believe what they believe, so long as these are not harmful to the 'other'. It also consists in not condemning, protesting or interfering with an individual's values and/or preferences.⁹ Our freedom to act makes sense only when it seeks to enhance love, peace and happiness within the broader context of social harmony and integration. A prerequisite for an effective liberalism is that members of a liberal society keep with them a feeling of equality and where this exists; there is consideration and respect for the 'other'.

1.2. Power and Authority in Liberal Societies

Although power is sometimes necessary in liberal societies, authority is however, the basic framework upon which societal consent rests. Power is the ability to get things done, to get others to what you want and even when they do not want to do it. Authority on the other hand, is the quality that you have to get people do or not to do what you want and they do or do not do so because they feel that you have the right to tell them what to do or what not to do. Authority is the most appropriate term used to describe power in liberal societies. In liberal societies, authority is negotiated and bargained for whereas power is sometimes obtained by way of force and unilaterally. While liberals rely on authority to protect liberal values, illiberal believe in power and force. Power might be sometimes necessary in society but it depends on who has it, upon whom it is used and how it is used. In liberal societies, power is used by the State to regulate and control illiberal behaviours. Power is used against those who by way of illegitimate force or power, try to impose their alternative on the 'other'. Even a State (considered here as society's shaping organism) can sometimes make use of the illegitimate power. This is when by way of force or physical compulsion, and in the absence of society's consent, it brings people to adopt an orientation different from the pre-established one. Power and authority are necessary in liberal societies but it depends on who uses it, for what purpose and under what circumstance. Ordinarily, only the State has the moral right to take life—for purposes of military defense, police protection or punishment. But today, this moral right to use of force and the exercise of power is being claimed by non-state actors to impose an orientation different from the national one. The emergence of radical religious fundamentalist/terrorist's groups such as Boko Haram finds expression in this discourse. By way of force and violence, these radical 'Islamist' groups try to challenge pre-established norms.

1.3. Liberalism Versus (religious) Fundamentalism/Terrorism

One major challenge to liberalism is (religious) fundamentalism and terrorism. Fundamentalism is inimical to liberalism—it inhibits liberalism. It is an ideological orientation that does not pay attention to universal human rights. For example, it challenges the principle of laicism, and reacts politically to the culture of rights and democracy, as well as to egalitarian laws and settings. Most often, fundamentalism is interpreted in religious but also political terms. Politically speaking, fundamentalism is sometimes associated with conservative politics that is various forms of intolerance including, racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, and elitism. It is a political ideology that intends to impose traditions by resorting to violence if necessary.

On a religious note, it has religious origins and it is increasingly finding expression in religious dogmatism. When used in relation to religion, the term 'fundamentalism' connotes the imposition of a single interpretation of religious doctrine and hostility towards contradiction and plurality.¹⁰ Religion itself, it appears, is naturally embedded in a logic of extremism, radicalism and violence.¹¹ It

⁸ PLATTNER, Marc F. (1998). Liberalism and Democracy: Can't Have One Without the Other. *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 77, No. 2, March-April, pp. 171-180.

⁹ EVERS, K. (1994). On the Nature of Tolerance. In UNESCO, *Democracy and Tolerance: Proceedings of the International Conference*, Seoul, Republic of Korea, 27-29 September, pp.3-20.

¹⁰ DERICHS, C. and FLECHENBERG, A. (2010). (Eds.), *Religious Fundamentalisms and their Gendered Impact in Asia*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Berlin, p.14.

¹¹ JUERGENSEMEYER, M. (2006). The Logic of Religious Violence. In HOWARD, R.D and SAWYER, R.L., *Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Understanding the New Security Environment*, McGraw-Hill, USA.

has been succinctly defined as a) effort to integrate everyday reality into a pattern of coherence that takes shape on a deeper level; b) attempt to reach beyond ordinary reality in the risk of faith that allows people to act in the face of uncertainty and unpredictability; and c) a commitment to the transcendent as to another reality.¹² In essence, religion seeks to understand life from another reality. Consequently, it departs from ordinary or rational reality and in this sense, it automatically runs into conflict with the existing order of doing things. Violence is a mark that has ran through the veins of all religions that are fundamental in character. But it will be an overstatement to say that terrorism has been a mark of all religious movements.

Religious fundamentalism is often anti-‘other’ and in the words of Claudia Derichs and Andrea Flechenberg, it is often dogmatic about the acceptance of the ‘other’ especially peoples of the other faiths.¹³ Through the prism of religious fundamentalism, radical ‘Islamists’ terrorists seek to control individuals’ identity and roles by trying to redefine who they are and what they have to or ‘must’ do. Nevertheless, the stereotyping of religious fundamentalists as ‘Muslim’ or ‘Islamist’ terrorists gives an incomplete picture of the concept. That is why Claudio reminds us that the Christian Right in the USA is also fundamentalist just as much as Al-Qaeda and its affiliates when it seeks to shape geopolitical relations globally.¹⁴

Religious fundamentalism and terrorism apparently feed on each other. The trademark of terrorism is the indiscriminate use of violence (particularly against presumed innocent people and symbolic targets), that of religious fundamentalism is the outright rejection of other faiths. To succeed in their project of spreading a faith dubbed and believed to be the ‘true’ and ‘only true faith’, religious fundamentalists may not hesitate to use violence, particularly where persuasion fails. And given that the violence used in this case is usually directed at people of other faiths, it becomes what we can appropriately call religious fundamentalist terrorism. Religious fundamentalists are likely to use terrorism as a weapon to further their aim and terrorists use religion as a justification of the violence they use. The objective of religious fundamentalists like terrorists is to obtain a new order that is to change the existing way of doing things. Religious fundamentalism and terrorism share at least one aspect: they have political motives at the back of their mind—that of reforming existing sociopolitical order. A plausible interpretation given for instance to the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism and which has been appropriated by the self-same Islamist fundamentals is that:

- There was a gradual shift of power from the Islamic world to the Christian world of Europe and the USA since the fourteenth century. World capital too has moved away from the Islamic countries. Muslims began to be conscious that they were no longer at the same level as the West in capital, science, technology, literature and art. Many Muslim territories were colonised by the West. The patron became the recipient. For the past several centuries, Muslims have not been creative in the scientific domain, nor have they been masters of technical development. They remain excluded. Secondly, most Muslim countries rich in resources became the target of western powers. This humiliation of Muslim countries and resentment as individuals and collectivity is exploited by persons like Bin Laden and is manifested through religious fundamentalism.¹⁵

Religious fundamentals try to change society by advertising a strong religious ideology and terrorists try to do so using violence and sometimes religious symbols. Boko Haram and others of the same kind are religious fundamentalist terrorist’s groups who manipulate the symbols of Islam to impose an alternative worldview by way of force and violence.¹⁶ Violence is characteristic of Boko Haram. Its history is characterized by patterns of violence, the gesture of its leader during public appearances in videos is marred with violence, the language used to address the public is violent, the display of weapons during video appearances depicts violence and above all, the mode of trying to convert people into their belief system is pricked with dreadful and scary scenarios. All these symbols might have increased Boko Haram’s propensity for violent action but this alone does not convincingly explain why violence is used. Although other religions, including Christianity have traces of violence and blood¹⁷, they, including mainstream Islam have refrained from the systematic use of violence and this we believe is thanks to the preaching of liberals. We may in this sense think of Boko Haram’s use of violence as a scapegoat and not as a culture associated with the symbols and practices of Islam perse. As Mark Juergensmeyer puts it, religion in fact is sometimes exploited, and it is thus important for us to understand why people who are engaged in potentially violent struggles do at times turn to the language of religion.¹⁸ Like many groups of the kind, Boko Haram uses violence to become notorious and religion to gain legitimacy.

Religious fundamentalist terrorism is a challenge to liberalism in several ways. It represents a backlash against the sociopolitical and economic emancipation of individuals. It works to regulate people’s behaviour, directing it towards a unique and predefined path. And this has led to impressive violations of individual rights and freedoms. According to Lobo Lancy, all religious fundamentalisms react violently to the onslaught of modernity, secularism and democracy.¹⁹ In doing so, they restrict human freedom, market freedom and value freedom. Their triumphalist character is expressed by attempts to establish a global church, nation to reclaim the moral high ground lost to modernity by influencing political agenda of governments largely through the media.²⁰ As shall be observed hereunder, the Boko Haram ideology and insurgency represents a threat to people’s willful ability to belong and to participate in any sociopolitical and economic activity of their choice.

¹² Cited in Ibid. p. 173.

¹³ Ibid., p.8.

¹⁴ Ibid.,p.14.

¹⁵ LOBO, L. (2009). Religious Fundamentalism—A Challenge to Democracy in India. *Social Action*, Vol. 59, April-June pp.143-158.

¹⁶ This conceptual clarification instructs us that there are other kinds of terrorist groups such simple terrorist groups (i.e. those without any religious connotation), secular terrorist groups, fundamentalist terrorist groups, radical terrorist groups and so on.

¹⁷ JUERGENSMEYER, op .cit. gives a fascinating description of violent symbols in Christianity stating that

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 175.

¹⁹ Lobo, *op. cit.* p. 143.

²⁰ Ibid.

2. Boko Haram as a Threat to Liberal Values

The religious fundamentalist and terrorist character of the Boko Haram is found in its origin, aims, evolution, membership and mode of operation. As a religious fundamentalist group, Boko Haram promotes a radical Islamist ideology and as a terrorist group, it resorts to unjust use of violence against harmless and innocent people.

2.1. Boko Haram: Origin, Ideology and Spread of the Movement

Boko Haram is a Jihadist militant movement that is based in north eastern Nigeria, parts of extreme north Cameroon, parts of south western Chad and south-eastern Niger. It originated precisely in Borno and Yobe states of Nigeria where it is firmly established. It grew out of a group of radical Islamic youth who worshipped at the Al-Haji Muhammadu Ndimi Mosque in Maiduguri, capital of Borno state, in the 1990s.²¹ The exact date of its origin is not known. Movements of the same kind had existed in the 1970s and 1980s but it was in 2002 that it really began to capture public attention. Mohammed Marwa, a young preacher from northern Cameroon organized a movement in the 1970s named the “Maitatsine” (meaning in Hausa the one who curses) which stood against Western influence and rejected the legitimacy of secular authorities.²² This movement was strongly implanted in Kano in Nigeria. Its activities brought it in confrontation with Nigerian authorities in the month of December 1980. Although Marwa died in the confrontation, pockets of violence spread to other areas. Boko Haram is an offshoot of the Maitatsine owing to its radicalization and hatred for Western education and secularism.

A version held by Nigerian security forces dates the origin of the movement in 1995 when Abubakar Lawan established the Ahlulsunna wal jamaah hijra secte at the University of Maiduguri, Borno State.²³ This movement was originally non-violent and only became violent when Mohammed Yusuf assumed leadership after Abubakar Lawan left for further studies in Saudi Arabia in 2002. Under the leadership of Yusuf, the secte metamorphosed under various names like the Muhajirun, Yusufiyyah, Nigerian Taliban, Boko Haram and Jamaatu Ahlissunnah liddaawati wal Jihad.²⁴ Mohammed Yusuf is however known as the pioneer leader of Boko Haram.

A contingency explanation of the origin and spread of the movement is that it grew out of socio-economic flux that came with a process of democratic transition, coupled with the consequences of decades of mismanagement resulting from military rule and corruption.²⁵ This thesis further attributes the emergence of the movement in poverty, unemployment, feelings of frustration, alienation and inertia. In northern Nigeria, it is argued:

Educated young people, including a growing number of university and polytechnic graduates, seek ever more elusive jobs. Many youths in the north lack education, have few or no skills and are hardly employable. Idle, they are easily recruited by anti-State and militia groups.²⁶

Out of the six official zones that make up Nigeria, the North East, Boko Haram’s main operational field has the worst poverty rate.²⁷ The movement emerged out of a group of disgruntled and radical Islamist youths among them Mohammed Yusuf, a young preacher and leader in the youth wing Shababul Islam (Islamic Youth Vanguard).²⁸

Literally, the term Boko Haram means Western education/civilization is forbidden, evil or sinful. However, its members prefer the Arabic and official name of “Jama’atu Ahlis Sunnah Lidda’awati Wal Jihad” meaning people committed to the propagation of the Prophet’s Teachings and Jihad.²⁹ The choice of the name was influenced by the belief that Western education/civilization threatens the orthodox values, beliefs and customs among Muslim communities.³⁰ Nevertheless, this argument does not really hold, for, the self-same members of the movement make use of the technology and other products derived from Western education.

2.1.1. A Note on the Leaders of Boko Haram

Two remarkable leaders are known to have strongly influenced the growth and spread of the movement. Mohammed Yusuf and Abubakar Shekau are names that recurrently appear in discourses about the movement. They might not have been instrumental in bringing about the movement but they have played important roles in making it very popular.

²¹ CRISIS GROUP AFRICA REPORT N°216, “Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency”, 3 April 2014.

²² Crisis group, *op. cit.*, p.8.

²³ ONUOHA, Freedom C. (2012). Boko Haram: Nigeria’s Extremist Islamic Sect. *Reports*, Al Jazeera Centre for Studies, 29 February 2012, p.2.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ PEROUSE de Montclos, Marc-Antoine. (2014) Nigeria’s Interminable Insurgency? Addressing the Boko Haram Crisis. *Africa Programme*. Research Paper, Chatham House, September 2014, p.10.

²⁶ Crisis group p.3.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.* p.7.

²⁹ CHUKWUMA, Okoli Al and PHILIP, Iortyer. (2014). Terrorism and Humanitarian Crisis in Nigeria: Insights from Boko Haram Insurgency. *Global Journal of Human-Social Science*, Vol. XIV, Issue I, Version 1.0, pp.38-50, p.43.

³⁰ For instance, it is reported that Mohammed Yusuf, the founder of the movement’s literal interpretation of the Quran led him to advocate those aspects of Western education he considered in contradiction to that holy book, such as evolution, the big bang theory of the universe’s development and elements of chemistry and geography, should be forbidden: in Hausa “Boko Haram”. See Crisis Group, *op. cit.* p. 7.

2.1.2. Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf

It was under Mohammed (also Muhammad) Yusuf that the movement began to become popular. He was born on 29 January 1970 in Girgir village in Jalasko local government area, Yobe State near the borders with Niger.³¹ He dropped out of primary school after three years of studies and never succeeded to gain admission into the University of Maiduguri.³² However, according to Salaam Abeebe, Yusuf is said to be a secondary school dropout.³³ Whatever the case, to compensate for this Yusuf developed interest to learn and preach Islam. At one point, he began preaching in the mosque of Izala but was later sent away because he lacked the required qualification. He went for Quranic education in Chad and Niger but this cannot be scientifically verified. He was member and militant in many Islamic movements before settling on Boko Haram. In the 1990s, he joined the Islamic Movement of Nigeria, a Shiia Muslim group but he was not very satisfied with the principles which were soft to him. He then broke away and joined Jamaatul Tajdid Islam (JTI) in Borno State.³⁴ Again, he was still not satisfied and finally decided to join Ahlulsunna wal' jama'ah hijra where he succeeded Abubakar Lawan as leader. He decided to reform this movement by introducing strong ideologies and doctrines that vehemently condemned Western education and civilization as taqut (evil) and should be forbidden by every 'true' Muslim. He was harder and sterner in his perspectives than his predecessors and his oratorical skills attracted for him and the group more followers. The group then became known as Boko Haram owing to the anti-Western teachings of Yusuf but took the religious name Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal Jihad.

Although he was influenced by his mentors, he broke away from them by drawing into the fundamental principles and interpretations of the Quran. This caused him to often quarrel with his elders and other members over doctrinal matters.³⁵ His objective was to introduce a radical blood in the sect; independent of existing ideologies. In fact, he desired and worked out for a Sunni type of Islamic ideology instead of the Shiia type that he found too soft and corrupt. He was not to be one who would tolerate any liberal interpretation and/or understanding of Islamic principles. According to Salaam, his resolve to preach and engage in violent religious fundamentalism could have been a result of psychological deficiencies such as ideological intolerance, moral absolutes, vengeance, relative deprivation, selfishness and/or delusional thinking.³⁶ He preached against Darwin's theory of the evolution of mankind, the big bang theory of the universe's development and elements of chemistry and geography which were all Western interpretations of the world.³⁷

His skill and charisma led to the development and endurance of Boko Haram in Borno State. He established a welfare system that attracted the poor. For example, he arranged for cheap marriages for his followers in an otherwise very costly environment.³⁸ He advocated the implementation of Sharia law and believed that this would be possible with a change of political regime. Although he forbade his followers from working in the civil service and from voting in elections, he, however, compromised with Ali Modu Sheriff, a candidate for State elections certainly with the hope that the latter will implement the sharia law.³⁹ He began to sense that he could not rely on any government to implement the Sharia law; and resorted to the use of violence, particularly after 2003 when Sheriff won State elections and disappointed him by not implementing the Sharia law. He came in confrontation with security forces in July 2009. Clashes escalated into a full-scale armed insurrection targeting police headquarters, stations and officer's homes to establish an Islamic State in Maiduguri and some cities in the north including Bauchi, Potiskum and Kano. A brutal, multi-day military crackdown killed over 800, mostly Boko Haram members. Two days later Yusuf was captured by troops, handed over to police and shortly thereafter executed at police headquarters. This incident marked the end of Yusuf's reign and the beginning of a new twist for the movement: that of terrorism under the leadership of Abubakar Shekau.

2.1.3. Abubakar Shekau

Abubakar Shekau is widely believed to be the successor of Yusuf and current leader of the movement. Like his predecessor, he originated from Yobe State. However, he is a Kanuri from Shekau village on the border with Niger in Tarmuwa local government area. Unlike his predecessor, Shekau was more educated. In 1990, he moved to Mafoni area in Maiduguri and studied under a traditional cleric before going in for higher studies in Borno State College of Legal and Islamic Studies (BOCOLIS).⁴⁰ During the studies, he came in contact with a certain Mamman Nur, a Shuwa Arab born and raised in Maiduguri by Chadian parents who became his friend, and who purportedly introduced Shekau to Yusuf. It is alleged that Yusuf would have preferred that Nur succeeds him

³¹ SALAAM, A. (2013). The Psychological Make-Up of 'Muhammad Yusuf'. In MANTZINKOS, O., *Boko Haram: Anatomy of a Crisis*, E-International Edited Collections, Bristol, UK, pp. 46-52.

³² PEROUSE de Montclos, M-A. (2012). Boko Haram et le terrorisme islamiste au Nigeria : insurrection religieuse, contestation politique ou protestation sociale ? *Questions de Recherche/Research Questions*, No. 40, June 2012.

³³ SALAAM, *op.cit.* p.47.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ For example, he was believed to have quarreled with Sheik Jafar Muhammad, a well-known Kano-based preacher under whom he studied, over doctrinal matters.

³⁶ SALAAM, *op.cit.* p. 48.

³⁷ Some saw Yusuf as an ardent anti-colonialist who was prepared to do away with the vestiges of colonialism through the prism of Islamic fundamentalism. This won for him not necessarily Muslims, but non-Muslims who were anti colonialists and who eventually saw Western civilization as a disguised form of colonial and post-colonial exploitation.

³⁸ PEROUSE de Montclos, *op.cit.* p.8.

³⁹ It is alleged that before Ali Modu Sheriff became governor of Borno State in 2003, he entered an alliance with Yusuf. Yusuf mobilized support for Sheriff in return for the full implementation of the sharia law in case he won elections. When he eventually became governor, Sheriff failed to live up to his pre-electoral promise and fell apart with Yusuf.

⁴⁰ Crisis Group, *op. cit.*, p.19.

because he was more knowledgeable, mature and level-headed but Shekau was chosen because he was more radical and aggressive. Shekau would be remembered as the leader who transformed the group into a violent, ruthless, destructive and less opened to dialogue one. This sudden turn of issues can be explained by the need to revenge the 2009 crackdown on the group that led to the killing of Yusuf and other members and that sent survivors including Shekau himself underground.⁴¹ That is why when he took over; he was animated with a strong spirit of revenge and vengeance which he expressed in indiscriminate and merciless killing of people including innocent ones. This process of violence by Shekau and other members is not only a serious challenge to liberal values but a fundamental threat to secular and liberal States.

2.2. *Constitutional and Social Foundations of Liberalism*

Liberal States have constitutions that recognize and accept liberal values as a matter of principle and fact. The preamble of the constitutions of Cameroon and Nigeria recognize the importance of fundamental rights including individual freedoms necessary to promote “good government and welfare of all persons” living not only in the countries concerned but in Africa and the world at large. The Nigerian preamble talks of the principles of “freedom, equality and justice”⁴², and the preamble of Cameroon’s constitution of 1996 (still in force) states, inter alia that “the human person, without distinction as to race, religion, sex or belief, possesses inalienable and sacred rights” including “equal rights and obligations...freedom and security...fair hearing before the courts...right to life, to physical and moral integrity and to humane treatment...freedom of religion and worship...freedom of communication...right of ownership...right to a healthy environment” which shall be guaranteed by the state.⁴³ African States endorse secularism as principle in order to protect the rights and freedoms stated above including freedom of religion. Hence, in Article 1 (2) of Cameroon’s constitution, it is stated that “The Republic of Cameroon shall be...one and indivisible, secular, democratic and dedicated to social service” and conforms to “democratic principles, human rights and the law”. Article 14 (1) of The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria also states that Nigeria shall be a State based on the principles of democracy and social justice so that the composition and exercise of any power and authority at every governmental level must “recognize the diversity of the people within its area of authority”. Furthermore, it prohibits discrimination on the bases of “place of birth, sex, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic association or ties...” Most importantly, the social order of the State in Africa is founded on ideals of “freedom, equality and justice”⁴⁴ which the State is bound to protect. However, the State only protects and promotes those practices which enhance “human dignity” and are consistent with fundamental rights.

For example, with regards to religious freedom, the Nigerian constitution reserves considerable paragraphs to what it is, what it is not and how it should be exercised. Article 38 (1) was written down to avoid any form of religious fundamentalism or intolerance. It states that:

- Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and in public or in private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.

In paragraphs two and three of the same article, it is written that:

- No person attending any place of education shall be required to receive religious instruction or to take part in or attend any religious ceremony or observance if such instruction ceremony or observance relates to a religion other than his own, or religion not approved by his parent or guardian. [And] No religious community or denomination shall be prevented from providing religious instruction for pupils of that community or denomination in any place of education maintained wholly by that community or denomination.

The constitutional paragraphs above indicate that religious fundamentalism, extremism or radicalism is not admissible. Religious flexibility is one of those instruments used to avoid religious rigidity. However, what is admissible is “religious tolerance” which is a constitutional imposition that must be observed by all. Religious tolerance in this sense is also seen as a means to enhance and protect religious freedom and to challenge religious fundamentalism. What is expected is that those who go against the legal provisions in the paragraphs above have irrevocably challenged not only the Nigerian constitution and Nigerian people but also the inalienable rights of mankind enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human and Peoples Rights. In doing so, they are exposed to the wrath of national and international justice.

With regards to political rights, the Nigerian constitution is seemingly more explicit on that whereas in Cameroon, it was acquired through a series of presidential decrees signed in the late 90s. In its Article 40, every person is entitled to assemble freely and associate with other persons and in particular, he may form or belong to any political party, trade union or any other association for the protection of his interest.

Political pluralism is a reality in countries affected by Boko Haram. A multiparty party system is in force and this is characterized by the presence of many political parties in competition for elective office at the regional, state (the case of Nigeria), local and national levels. Presidential, state, council and local elections have been organized at various intervals and have seen the effective participation of qualified parties and candidates. Although African political systems are still struggling to completely liberate themselves from the

⁴¹ Shekau was reported wounded by a bullet and it is said that he became leader at a time he was recovering from a 2009 gunshot wound.

⁴² Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Preamble.

⁴³ Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon, “Preamble”, Law No. 96-06 of January 1996.

⁴⁴ Article 17 (1)

bond of the monolithic system⁴⁵, more than 150 political parties and political associations have been recognized and operate in Cameroon alone. However, while some of them are truly national (in the sense that they are represented in all or at least majority of the electoral constituencies), such as the Cameroon people's Democratic Movement (CPDM) and Social Democratic Front (SDF), amongst others, others are still much localized. Nigeria formally has 59 political parties but most are irrelevant in the sense that they lack sweeping grassroots support. For example, a review of the 59 parties following from 2007 shows that only six of the parties have representation in the National Assembly (the People's Democratic Party-PDP, the All Nigeria People's Party-ANPP, the Action Congress-AC, the All Progressive Grand Alliance-APGA, the Labour Party and the Progressive People Alliance-PPA).⁴⁶

Most commentators and researchers have documented on the threats to political stability that come with the ethnicization of political parties. They argue that parties (particularly in Africa) are constructed on ethnic lines and this fragments society and bring about political instability. We do not want to get entangled in the debate over whether or not it is multi-party or one-party system that is suitable for stability in multi-ethnic societies. We consider the presence of many political parties as a measure of the extent to which political liberalism is at work. We believe that people form parties to protect their interest even if such interest could be minimal, personalized and/or ethnicized. Some people might see in parties a means through which the interest of the 'minority' is protected. The presence of several parties including ethnically-based ones is testimony of the dynamics of multiparty political competition. No party whether big or small, ethnically-based or national is ever contented with the actual or potential amount of electoral support: they keep striving for it. Boko Haram represents an external threat to conventional multiparty party politics given that the atmosphere of tension and fear that looms around areas where it is established discourage actual and potential electors from joining or voting for a party.

Economically, although States have a margin of control over the economy⁴⁷ and sometimes define major economic policies, the economic system remains essentially liberal. Citizens have a right to engage in economic activity within or outside the major sectors of the economy. Nobody, not even the state has monopoly over a particular economic sector. Hence citizens engage in the formal as well as the informal economic sectors independent of any (State) interference except otherwise. Thus, the liberal theory of resource allocation is at work in the sense that the rational and self-interested-free individual is at the centre of economic activity.⁴⁸ This further implies a market economy, with non-coerced exchange, private property and division of labour.

2.3. Boko Haram as a Threat to Fundamental Rights and Freedoms

The inalienable rights of mankind include amongst others the right to life, liberty, ownership of property and security.⁴⁹ The movement is said to have killed thousands of (innocent) individuals, looted and seized the property of others, deprived some of their homes and caused the mass movements of others to resettle in places beyond their will. Although states share some responsibility in their insufficient efforts to protect and safeguard individual rights and freedoms, which we admit should be their primary responsibility, we believe that the absence of civil normalcy, the imposition of curfews and emergency rule which have restricted movement and communication in some parts of the countries concerned are a direct consequence of the activities of the movement. The forced conversion of people of other faiths to Islam, wanton attacks on churches and mosques, murder, torture and persecution of members of other religions, and the killing of women, children and (noncombatant) populations reveal deep violations of human rights.⁵⁰ Based on a recent UNHCR report, no fewer than 5,000 people have been displaced in the North-East region of Nigeria as a result of the raging insurgency. Some 10,000 Nigerians have also crossed into neighbouring Cameroon, Chad and Niger in recent months. Most – around 8, 100 – have sought refuge in Cameroon according to local authorities who say that Nigerians are continuing to arrive. The number of Nigerian refugees in Niger is 2,700 and in Chad 150.⁵¹

What has been considered as the most outrageous women and girl child abuse perpetuated by Boko Haram was the abduction of more than 200 Chibok school girls in April 2013. In spite of national and international efforts to recover the girls, there is no convincing feedback of their whereabouts and most of all, whether they are alive or not and doing well.⁵² The implication of the "Chibok case" for the rights of women and the girl child is that their identity and roles, their rights and protections, their sexuality and bodies have remained and continue to remain under the control of the movement. This also reveals the extent to which the movement is bent on disempowering the women. And in doing so, it participates in a process of reconstructing the purity and honour of the identity of the woman and girl child along lines of an Islamist community; certainly, different from what they would have loved to belong to if they were autonomous.

In Cameroon, though we have not had such abductions on a massive scale, the lives, liberty and property of those living in the Extreme North Region where the movement is trying to gain inroads have not been secured either. Initially, the movement used to launch isolated attacks until February 19, 2013 when a family of seven French citizens was kidnapped in the Waza national park. In

⁴⁵ In Nigeria for example, political instability has contributed to frequent regime crises and military interventions. For 32 out of the 49 years since independence, Nigeria has been under military rule. See DOMINGO, P. and NWANKWO, C., "Review of International Assistance to Political Party and Party System Development Case Study Report: Nigeria", *Overseas Development Institute (ODI)*, London, December 2010.

⁴⁶ For details, see INNOCENT, A.P. (2012). Party Politics and Intra-Party Democracy in Nigeria: A Historical and Contemporary Perspective. *Journal of Social Science and Policy Review*, Vol. 4, December 2012.

⁴⁷ State control of the economy in this context is understood in purely positive terms. It is meant to secure national welfare, ensure equal distribution of resources in order to ensure freedom and happiness of all citizens.

⁴⁸ When this model of liberal economic theory is followed, efficiency, growth, welfare and peace are achieved.

⁴⁹ See Article 3 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

⁵⁰ CHUKWUMA and IORTYER, *op. cit.*, p.45.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² As a result of the abduction, an international movement dubbed "Bring back our girls" has been mobilising the national and international governments to engage in more affirmative action to have the girls back safely.

November of the same year, a French priest, Rev. Georges Vandenbeusch was kidnapped. In April 2014, Italian and Canadian clergymen also fell into the dragnet of the movement and within that same period the traditional ruler of Goumouldi was found dead in Nigeria, apparently brutally beheaded by the movement. In the night of 16 to 17 May 2014, ten Chinese nationals were abducted from Waza. Although the victims above were later, the movement has multiplied attacks on a massive scale; killing individuals, raiding villages and looting property. The table below gives a panoramic view of the activities of Boko Haram in Extreme North Cameroon between September and December 2014.

| S/N | Dates | Location | Nature of attacks | observation |
|-----|-----------------------|---|---|---|
| 1 | September 1, 2014 | Fotokol | Attack on military station at the El Beid bridge linking Fotokol to Nigerian town of Gamburu | Caporal Bamabo Good Luck is wounded and some 40 insurgents killed |
| 2 | September 5-6, 2014 | Hodogo, a village near Mozogo | Incursion into private residence of Ensat Zouwa, a farmer. | Latter sustains a serious injury |
| 3 | September 8, 2014 | Ldaoutsaf, Mayo-Moskota | Attacks and raids | 8 people kidnapped but released the next day |
| 4 | September 10, 2014 | Amchidé | Members of secte shot rockets on the town | No victim |
| 5 | Sept. 18, 2014 | Achighachia and Gancé in Kolofata subdivision | - Heavily armed members of the secte on bord some fifty moto cycles and vehicles attacked the BIM and BTAP military command posts - invaded Gancé | -adjudant-chef Ekodo Pierre is wounded, two assailants are killed, in trying to escape they left behind 02 AK47 guns, and 06 gun loaders - Oumarou is assassinated in Gancé |
| 6 | September 20-21, 2014 | Vreket | Set fire on two homes and a prayer house for Christians. Also got a certain Marcus shot | Marcus died during evacuation to health centre. |
| 7 | September 21, 2014 | Mokolo | heavily armed members of the secte on bord motor cycles invaded Tourou and Ldobam and opened fire on the population | 24 people killed in Tourou and 17 others in Ldobam including military officer Lidjeck René & Baldina Timothée, a teacher |
| 8 | September 22, 2014 | Amchidé | Invaded the locality but faced stiff resistance from cameroon military forces | More than 10 assailants killed and 15 others captured and military weapons seized |
| 9 | September 23, 2014 | Kousserie | Police forces discovered and seized a weapons stock in the residence of Abakar Ali alias Moustapha Oumar, purportedly head of the cell of Boko Haram in that locality | Seizure of huge stock of military weaponry |
| 10 | September 27, 2014 | Sagmé | Invaded Sagmé village, near Fotokol. | A traditional ruler, Blama Moussa is assassinated, Walkoré is also killed and many houses set ablaze |
| 11 | September 28, 2014 | Achighachia | Incursion into the locality | Wawé Devile Houna is beheaded |
| 12 | September 29-30, 2014 | Gouloudjaoné and Ngoudouboul | Incursion into these localities situated in Mora and Kolofata subdivisions respectively | A herd of cow is taken away from Emeli, the herdsman in Gouloudjaoné and in Ngoudouboul about 200 heads of cow was taken away from herdsman Beleri Rimedou, himself wounded |
| 13 | October 03-06, 2014 | Koubougoué and Amchidé | Armed confrontation with Cameroonian forces and 04 heavy shots from the Nigerian town of Gamburu fell on Fotokol | 28 Boko Haram members, 08 Cameroonians and 03 Nigerians killed |
| 14 | October 13, 2014 | Zelevet | Armed confrontation between Cameroon military forces and Boko Haram | 25 Boko Haram members killed |
| 15 | October 14, 2014 | Talakachi and Fotokol | The residence of Ibrahim is invaded and Hassan Ibrahim is shot dead and Oumaté Ibrahim is transported to Mogodé health centre. 04 heavy gun shots fall on Fotokol in the Makambara neighbourhood. | Hassan Ibrahim dies, 02 refugees (Garba Lassane and Toudjani Moustapha) are wounded and an assailant is killed |
| 16 | October 15, 2014 | Amchidé and Tolkomari in Kolofata | Violent Boko Haram attack | 08 elements of the Rapid Intervention Battalion (BIR) killed, about 10 assailants killed, Adama Bouche resident of Tolkomari is killed, many houses set on fire, the police station, the gendarmerie and public primary school completely destroyed |

| S/N | Dates | Location | Nature of attacks | observation |
|-----|----------------------|--|---|--|
| 17 | October 16, 2014 | Fotokol | Explosive from Boko Haram lands between the council hall and the DO's office. A rocket lands in Makambara neighbourhood | 06 civilians are wounded in Makambara |
| 18 | October 20-21, 2014 | Fotokol | Boko Haram attempts an incursion | |
| 19 | October 25-26, 2014 | Kouboudé village in Fotokol | Boko Haram members make an incursion | 05 people killed, 01 wounded, 07 girls taken away from their parents, bags of cereals and fertilizer carried away, traditional ruler Mamoudou Ndouva is arrested for investigation |
| 20 | October 28-29, 2014 | Magdemé village in Mora and Yegoua village in Kolofata | Boko Haram members shoot the Imam of the mosque of the locality, Boukar Goni Abba An incursion into the residence of Blama Djougoudoum who successfully runs away | The Imam dies of his wounds |
| 21 | October 29-30, 2014 | Kidjimatari-Kolofata and Kolofata | Boko Haram raids the locality and confrontation with military forces. Boko Haram lands 03 explosions in Kolofata | 01 assailants killed, 406 munitions seized from Boko haram, 02 people wounded |
| 22 | Oct. 30, 2014 | Zamga village, two kilometers from Achighachia | Boko Haram combatants are caught by motorised patrol BIR elements trying to make away with cattle | 02 Boko Haram members killed and 02 arms seized from them |
| 23 | October 31, 2014 | Nguetchewé situated 06 km from Mozogo and Fima and Medina | Boko Haram attack cattle rearers. A vehicle of the elements of BIR with soldiers on board drive over a land mine that explodes. | About 200 cows are taken away by Boko Haram. 01 BIR soldiers killed and many others wounded |
| 24 | November 01-02, 2014 | Achighachia | Boko Haram kidnap two people and behead one of them | A Cameroonian is beheaded |
| 25 | November 02-03, 2014 | Maltam | Cameroonian soldiers shoot and kill Atiya Mahamat who was driving a Peugeot 504 on the Kousseri-Fotokol highway. The latter refused to obey to a decision of the police to stop. Bags of military weapons are discovered in the vehicle that was destined for Kousseri | A driver of a Peugeot vehicle killed and bags of armed weapons discovered |
| 26 | November 03, 2014 | Zida and Lding-Lding villages in Mokolo | Boko Haram raids the villages and set ablaze the homes of Kalda Zra and Baldena Matakone | 10-year-old son of Baldena Matakone dies in flames and two homes destroyed |
| 27 | November 04, 2014 | Fotokol, Tacha-Sigal and Sadigo villages in Makary subdivision | Boko Haram fighters shoot two rocket bombs in Fotokol. Boko haram invade Sadigo in search for a liquor vendor and they removed the Cameroon flag hoisted in the Sadigo palace. | The flag of Cameroon is destroyed |
| 28 | November 05-06, 2014 | Achighachia | Boko Haram assailants attack the neighbourhoods of Arabes and Tallamasaleh | 01 vehicles are taken away by Boko Haram as well as 500 cows. |
| 29 | November 06, 2014 | Woula-Hankou village in Mokolo subdivision | Incursion into the locality and confrontation with Cameroon armed forces | Boko Haram wounds a Cameroonian and in turn 02 of them are killed |
| 30 | November 07-08, 2014 | Kerewa | Boko Haram launch an armed attack against Cameroon armed forces | 01 cameroon soldier dies, 03 others wounded and many assailants killed with a pick-up vehicle seized from assailants |
| 31 | November 09, 2014 | Kalakachi and Kolofata | Boko Haram members on board 04 moto-bikes enter the village and seize a herd of cattle and also hold hostage Boukar Blama, traditional ruler of Kalakachi. In the village of Blablime, Boko Haram beheads the Imam of the mosque, Mal Abba, aged 75. They also kill Malloum Moudou in Mallouri. | A traditional ruler is taken hostage, an Imam and another resident killed |
| 32 | November 10-11, 2014 | Amchidé | Boko Haram try to invade the locality but face stiff resistance from BIR | Many assailants killed, 15 pick-up vehicles destroyed by Cameroon army |

| S/N | Dates | Location | Nature of attacks | observation |
|-----|----------------------|---|--|--|
| 33 | November 12, 2014 | Kousseri | Police forces discovered in a vehicle driven by Ousman Oumar weapons composed of 11 firearms 12.7 made in China; 06 AK 47; 02 (DPK) firearms of Chinese origin; 01 rocket RPG 7; 758 cartridges 5,56; 109 AK 47 cartridges; 114 cartridges 764. Elements of the Kousseri police station intercept a Peugeot vehicle driven by Ousmane Oumar, member of Boko Haram in it they find arms &ammunition | An important stock of weapons seized from Boko Haram and a member of the secte arrested |
| 34 | November 13-14, 2014 | Goldavi village, 12 km from Mozogo and Tolkomari in Kolofata subdivision | Boko Haram raid the villages and make away with 240 cows and in Tolkomari, they set the shop of Abba Ouza. | 240 cows taken away and a shop destroyed |
| 35 | November 15, 2014 | Bodo village | Members of Boko Haram on board moto bikes raid and kill Abakachi Abouna, aresident of the locality in his home, burn 04 vehicles, destroy the home of Kaka Ita Diguio and set 03 lorries on fire. They also destroy the Cameroon flag in the palace | A Cameroonian is killed, and an important property is damaged including houses and vehicles. |
| 36 | November 16, 2014 | Nguetchewé and Kidji-Gangawa | Boko Haram invades Nguetchewé, loot the Catholic health centre and seize the moto-bike of the head of the health centre. In Kidji-Gangawa they kill Zeved Gagala, loot many homes and attacked the palace of the chief who managed to escape | 01 persons killed, a health centre and other property destroyed |
| 37 | November 18, 2014 | Vreket and Hourbech villages in Mayo Moskota subdivision | 33 years old Oumar Kouboua and 35 years old Talaka Guidjo are assassinated in their homes respectively by Boko Haram members | 02 deaths and 02 moto-bikes taken away |
| 38 | November 19-20, 2014 | Leimari village | Boko Haram penetrate the village and publicly behead the village head and his son | 02 deaths |
| 39 | November 21-22, 2014 | Bornori (Mayo-Sava) near border with Nigeria | A Boko Haram training camp is identified and destroyed by Cameroon forces | |
| 40 | November 23-24, 2014 | Dougdjé-Kerawa | Lawane Modou is assassinated in his home by Boko Haram | 01 deaths |
| 41 | December 06-07, 2014 | Guidi village in Kolofata | 350 cattle heads seized from owner | 350 cows disappear |
| 42 | December 08-09, 2014 | Yegoua village in Kolofata | Boko Haram invades the village and slain five people | 05 Cameroonians killed |
| 43 | December 09, 2014 | Goldavi village in Mayo Moskota and Touski village in Mora | On board some 10 moto-bikes, Boko Haram infiltrates the village and make away with 04 moto-bikes & a bicycle. In Touski, the assailants assassinate 04 herdsmen | 04 deaths, 04 moto-bikes and a bicycle disappear |
| 44 | December 10-11, 2014 | Achighachia and Gouzda-Vreket | Cameroonian soldiers push back 03 Boko Haram members in to Nigeria. In Gouzda-Vreket an armed confrontation between Cameroon forces and assailants erupts | 02 assailants killed |
| 45 | December 11-12, 2014 | Oubi-cheri and Kangueleri villages in Mora subdivision. Kaliari and Nguetchewé, Gouzda-Vreket | Boko Haram invades the villages and assassinate 04 people. Many houses are set on fire and 02 transport lorries. On board moto-cycles, they infiltrate Kaliari and Nguetchewé made away with cows and moto-bikes and loot shops. In Gouzda-Vreket, confrontation between Boko Haram and Cameroon forces | 04 Cameroonians killed, property damaged, shops looted and 53 assailants killed |
| 46 | December 13, 2014 | Djibrili in Mayo Moskota | Landmine explodes a Cameroon forces pick-up vehicle | 02 Cameroon soldiers killed & 04 others wounded |

| S/N | Dates | Location | Nature of attacks | observation |
|-----|----------------------|--|--|--|
| 47 | December 16, 2014 | Zelevet-Gouzda-Vreket highway and Mozogo | Landmine ambushes a Cameroon military pick-up vehicle with soldiers on board. In Mozogo, the assailants make away with a herd of cattle | 03 Cameroon soldiers killed, 05 other wounded |
| 48 | December 17, 2014 | Amchidé, Limani and Kossa village | Boko Haram attacks the military stations. Aladmine explosion destroys a military pick-up belonging to Cameroon army | 02 Cameroon soldiers killed, 06 others are seriously injured, houses are set ablaze, assailants took away with 03 pick-ups, 02 military lorries and more than 100 assailants killed, 16 years old girl is kidnapped, a resident of Kossa is murdered |
| 49 | December 19, 2014 | Kouyapé in Kolofata and Tchakramari village | Boko Haram invades the market square and attack a merchant lorry. In Tchakramari village, assailants ambush a Bicec Bank pick-up vehicle & there on the spot two employees of the bank are killed while other passengers sustain injuries and assailants carried way the vehicle | The driver of the lorry is killed, 01 persons is kidnapped, 10 moto-bikes are belonging to residents are taken away, |
| 50 | December 19-20, 2014 | Guirvidig in Maga | Cameroon forces arrest some 300 suspected Boko Haram militants | 45 instructors and coranic teachers of Cameroonian nationality, & about a hundred of their students between the ages 09 and 12 are placed under preventive detention |
| 51 | December 22, 2014 | Fotokol, Bame-Kerawa village, Waza national park | A rocket shot by Boko Haram explodes in the town. In Bame-Kerawa, assailants ambush two transport vehicles. Assailants try to enter Waza on board moto-bikes but are pushed back by Cameroon forces at Tagaza-Waza. | A 07 years old child is wounded, property seized, 01 hostages taken. |
| 52 | December 23-24, 2014 | Gouzoudou in Kolofata and Madjina I | Attacks and seizes property of residents. | 08 moto-bikes taken away, 21 herds of cow and 02 moto-bikes belonging to village head all taken away |
| 53 | December 24-25, 2014 | Zenemé II and III villages in Mayo Moskota | Invades village and loot compounds | 03 residents executed, 24 compounds destroyed, 02 prayer houses destroyed, 360 bags of seeds and 25 tons of cotton taken away |
| 54 | December 26, 2014 | Beljoel and Soueram | Set the entire Beljoel village on fire. A patrolling pick-up vehicle of BIR is attacked living 01 soldier dead and 03 others wounded. A counter attack is launched by Cameroon soldiers in Soueram village | 30 people killed in Beljoel, 03 churches destroyed, about 53 assailants killed |
| 55 | December 28, 2014 | Achighachia, Goldavi and Tchakramari | Boko Haram attacks 42 nd BIM military base. In Goldavi, the entire village is set on fire. The military base in Tchakramari is attacked and 02 Cameroon soldiers are killed and 08 others are injured. | 10 Cameroon soldiers taken away by assailants including important stock of military weapons |

Table1: Some Incidents of Boko Haram attacks in Extreme North Cameroon, September-December 2014

Source: Fieldwork, 2015

The psychological torture that has come with the activity of the movement is also a matter of urgency. The people around the areas where Boko Haram has acted live and continue to live in perpetual fear. In spite of the massive (re)deployment of military forces to secure life and property, the fear of the unknown still looms very much in the air. Given that Boko Haram members cannot be overtly identified, the fear of the 'other' has become ever pressing. No one knows when it is going to be his/her turn to be attacked or be confronted by any Boko Haram member but everyone knows that it is a possibility. The fear of Boko Haram is the beginning of psychological trauma that can be plausibly compared to a general state of claustrophobia. Although no state of curfew has been imposed in the Extreme North region, the governor's decision to restrict movement as from 7:00 pm in the entire region is a necessary measure to partly ensure security but at the same time restrict freedom of movement.

2.4. Boko Haram as a Threat to Conventional Political Participation

Another threat to public life is the disruption of conventional political life. Political violence and instability are a major outcome of the activity of Boko Haram. Election time represents critical moments for the life of voters, polling agents and other political stakeholders. Polling day brings people out of their homes to polling stations. These are moments when the secte is likely to strike. In times of

elections, the Boko Haram conundrum could be instrumentalised by politicians who try to use violence as a political weapon against their adversaries. Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos has found evidence that as elections approached it became more difficult to distinguish Boko Haram attacks, politically manipulated attacks and violent political militias that may or may not claim to be Boko Haram affiliates.⁵³ The possibility of constructing and/or deconstructing the positions of political adversaries during political competition using the Boko Haram discourse cannot be overstated. Indeed, evidence in the State of Borno in Nigeria is worth mentioning. Ali Modu Sherif, a well-known wealthy Borno State politician and candidate for the governorship was accused on several occasions by his opponents of financing Boko Haram and making Yusuf, Boko Haram's leader to rise to prominence. In a counter accusation, Sherif and his associates have denied any alliance with Yusuf and in turn, they accused the PDP of creating Boko Haram. In the absence of evidence to support each other's case, it is however, widely believed in the region that Sherif won the 2003 elections with the support of Yusuf, who had become popular and had a large following which represented a base of electoral support for Sherif. Boko Haram members have testified that Sherif entered an alliance with Yusuf and according to the terms of the agreement, Sherif promised financial support to Yusuf in return for electoral support and the eventual implementation of the Sharia law from Boko Haram.⁵⁴

The emergence of the phenomenon in Cameroon fragmented public opinion and belief about its true origin. It was initially believed to be a construction of some elites of north Cameroon who were opposed to the ruling government. This belief was particularly strong owing to the fact that it was the first time Cameroon was confronted with such a phenomenon and investigations had not gone far to bring some clarification. A faction of the opinion believed it was a conspiracy. One version held that it was a rebellion to bring down President Paul Biya from power. Proponents of this version argue that Biya's longevity in power can only come to an end through a rebellion and not through elections. According to them, the most credible threat to Biya and his government came from the north following the April 1984 "abortive" military coup d'état purportedly instigated from and by some elites of that part of the country. The emergence of Boko Haram was simply interpreted as a kind of political history repeated. Another one was that it was a group that emerged to revenge the trial and imprisonment of Marafa Yaya, a son of that part of the country who purportedly is a political rather than an economic prisoner. These multiple interpretations are a consequence of the absence of true or at least convincing information about the Cameroon origin of Boko Haram. However, and as of now, the official sensitization of Cameroonians against the movement has made many to believe that Boko Haram is an external enemy without any explicit internal support.

Following from the above, however, it is likely for the opposition and the majority to throw responsibility on each other. For its part, the opposition is likely to point to the crisis as evidence of weak and incompetent leadership at the centre. In Nigeria, where the movement has long operated during election time, and despite accusations and counter-accusations, neither party has presented evidence to support its claims. But it seems very likely that the movement limits the scope of action of the opposition. Under such circumstances, the opposition is exposed to dangers of being tagged a terrorist. The majority is likely to fear that the opposition enters an alliance with such groups as a strategy to widen its scope of action and potential of toppling the ruling government. Thus, it is likely that the ruling government thinks that such opportunistic circumstances give room for the opposition to engage in political instrumentalism and the eventual disruption of public life. In this sense, it can be said that the fight against Boko Haram may serve as leverage to arrest and imprison political opponents suspected of cooperating with the movement.⁵⁵

The anti-terrorism bill adopted by Cameroon's parliament as a reaction to the ongoing Boko Haram conundrum has been interpreted by the opposition as a government strategy to limit its scope of political action.⁵⁶ Government might have justified this anti-terrorism law on the precept that it prioritizes security but the opposition has not bought over this reason. The opposition finds in the law a violation of part of human/political right—the right to public manifestation. In Nigeria, the Boko Haram phenomenon has been partly perceived to be a deliberate way to develop a doctrine of necessity that would prioritize security over democracy and economic development during election time. It is believed that the people of Borno State Boko Haram's stronghold feel that they are being neglected or being punished because they did not vote for Goodluck Jonathan in the 2011 presidential election. National opposition strongholds may feel a sense of being stigmatized and alienated if they do not overtly display support for the ruling government in the

⁵³ Pérouse de Montclos, 2014, p. 23.

⁵⁴ For further details of the purported Sheriff-Yusuf alliance, see Crisis group, *op. cit.*

⁵⁵ There is evidence of such events in the political history of Cameroon. During the Cold War period, the opposition UPC was accused by Ahidjo's government in collaboration with France of having links with Communist China and of being a terrorist group. This was according to the government of the time enough justification to neutralize the Union des Populations du Cameroun (UPC) by 1) making a ruling banning the party and 2) brutally suppressing its activities and even some of its militants and leaders.

⁵⁶ Chapter 2 section 2 sub-section 1 defines acts of terrorism and lays down sentences committed as at under: whoever, acting alone, or as an accomplice or an accessory, commits or threatens to commit an act likely to cause death, endanger physical integrity, cause bodily injury or material damage, destroy natural resources, the environment or cultural heritage with intent to intimidate the public, provoke a situation of terror or force the victim, or government and/or a national or international organization to carry out or refrain from carrying out an act, adopt or renounce a particular position; disrupt the normal functioning of the public service or create a crisis situation among the public; create widespread insurrection in the country; shall be punished with the death penalty; Sub-section 2: whoever: provides and/or uses war weapons and equipment; provides and/or uses micro-organisms or any other biological agents, in particular viruses, bacteria, fungi or toxins; provides and/or uses chemical, psychotropic, radioactive or hypnotizing substances; perpetrates hostage taking; in order to attain the same objectives as those referred to in sub-section (1) above shall be punished with the death penalty. Sub-section 3: the penalty shall be life imprisonment where the visible consequences of the acts referred to in sub-section (1) above are animal disease or plant destruction », end of quote.

ongoing struggle against the movement.⁵⁷ The risk of political participation and disruption of public life are a consequence of Boko Haram.

2.5. *The Socio-Economic and Religious Dimensions of the Threats*

In times of war, particularly one dubbed asymmetric a general feeling of insecurity and uncertainty is likely to grip everyone—the northerners and southerners, the rich and poor, the young and old, the literate and illiterate, the educated and uneducated, Christians, Muslims and Traditionalists/Animists, politicians and parochials, women and men, children and adults, the young and elderly, military/security officials and civilians, traditional rulers and subjects, the governors and the governed, etc. For example, the rich can be suspected of fueling and funding terrorist activities and the poor because they are a vulnerable group. In Nigeria, while federal state officials express fears that members of the Boko Haram have infiltrated the military and security circles, the same fear looms in the air among the authorities of Bamako, Niamey and Yaounde.

Furthermore, the State may exacerbate control over the economy in the name of checking those business tycoons likely to financially back terrorists. Investors may no longer be free to invest and make profits as it is the case under stable conditions. In Cameroon, the ongoing national solidarity campaign to support defense forces and victims of Boko Haram might be a welcome initiative for many but the process is economically coercive. The political and economic elite from various communities across the national territory have mobilized their community peers to support the anti-Boko Haram campaign in cash and kind. Indeed, the national solidarity campaign against Boko Haram and in support of defense forces and victims of the movement may not be regarded as having a negative direct bearing on the country's economy but it has certainly disrupted or even slowed down individual/community process of economic growth and development. Firstly, it is a process of misplaced economic priority; secondly, it is symbolically coercive and thirdly, the "returns" expected are not explicit. Officially, it is known that it is a campaign aimed at showing national solidarity and by extension patriotism. However, the competition among elites to mobilize the most resources from their community of origin also reveals there is a lot of expectation underlying the campaign. Could it be that the campaign conceals informal forms of (re)investment? A faction of public opinion believes that the national solidarity campaign provides opportunities for the instrumentalism of the State. Communities through engineering elite could use it to curry for State favours and as a bargaining tool to get the most out of the State. It is believed those who have contributed little or nothing at all risk being stigmatized.

With regards to the national economy, there are fears that the struggle against Boko Haram disrupts or slows down the economic development plan initiated by national authorities. The reason is that it prioritizes security over the economy.

Terrorism accentuates polarization. Boko Haram could be instrumentalised to accentuate a north-south divide. The north is essentially perceived as Muslim-dominated area while the south is perceived as Christian-dominated zone. Tension may arise as a result of misconception and misperceptions of the other. The infiltration of Boko Haram in the north is likely to influence the way, people of the south perceive their northern counterparts. In the same way, the manner in which those of the south deal with the issue can cause northerners to reconceive their relationship with the southerners and by extension their identity as true citizens. The central government in Yaoundé in the south under the leadership of a southerner is expected by northerners to show affirmative action and commitment in the struggle against the movement; the failure of which tantamounts as an exclusion of northerners by southerners. In fact, with the presence of Boko Haram in the regions of the north, there is a risk of northerners being stigmatized. The nature of north-south relations in Nigeria and Cameroon in terms of reconsideration or not will depend on governmental responsiveness to the crisis. The more government is committed and efficient in dealing with the crisis, the less likely northerners are to question their identity as Cameroonians or Nigerians. On the other hand, the less committed and inefficient, the central government is in dealing with the crisis, the more likely northerners will feel different from and even excluded. This suspicion was observed in Nigeria with Goodluck Jonathan, the southern president. It was alleged that he was not very committed to dealing with Boko Haram because he was not from the north. It is also partly assumed that his being outvoted in the north during the 2015 presidential election is a sanction for his "reluctance" in curbing the crisis.

Although the fear of polarization in Cameroon is critical, southerners have generally remained supportive of their northern counterparts and the northerners have also remained confident and have acknowledged the support they received from the south. Again, the "national solidarity" campaign is evidence of the general will among Cameroonians to support northerners in the anti-Boko Haram campaign.⁵⁸ Thus, although the risk of polarization remains ever present, particularly in Nigeria; in Cameroon, the crisis appears to have reinforced national solidarity among Cameroonians.

The activities of the movement have affected transport and communication as well. Motorbike is the easiest, cheapest and fastest means of public transportation in both urban and rural areas. However, the fear of its use in recent times remains present among the people living in areas affected by the movement. The perception people have of motorbike riders has changed from that of confidence to suspicion. One of the reasons is that members of Boko Haram sometimes preferred to use the two-wheelers to access the rocky terrain of the northern regions. Thus, the image of Boko Haram has been associated with motorbike riders rightly or wrongly to the point of scaring people from getting on board the two-wheelers. That is why Cameroon's administration banned its use in remote areas

⁵⁷ The major opposition party in Cameroon—SDF has, through its leader, taken some affirmative action in support of government's efforts against Boko Haram. John Fru Ndi its leader has shown gesture of "national solidarity" toward defense forces by paying visit to military victims of the arms struggle against the sect in the Yaoundé Military Hospital.

⁵⁸ We will like to stress here that although the raids of Boko Haram provoked a stampede that led to the massive displacements causing some southerners living in the north to move further south, this is in no way an indication that northerners are being stigmatized. It is in our opinion a general insecurity problem that affects the displacement of everyone who feels affected including the self same northerners.

and limited it in major towns and cities like Maroua to no later than 8pm, as part of the measures to curb the activities of the movement.⁵⁹

The polarization of religion is a likely consequence of the Boko Haram. Fundamentally, Cameroon, Nigeria, Mali and Niger are secular States in which political parties are not rooted in any specific religion. There is no such thing as a Christian or Muslim party. The fear however is that rhetoric from the movement could push parties toward religious bias. The fear of dividing Christian and Muslim citizens is a serious challenge posed by the Boko Haram. As described above, Boko Haram is a religious fundamentalist movement with a strong Islamist ideology. It is also a Jihadist movement which tries to impose a variant of Islam different from the mainstream Islam by way of violence. When these characteristics are put together, it is observed that the movement is *par excellence* a zero-tolerant movement. In essence, it preaches hatred for other religions including the 'soft' variant of Islam or mainstream Islam. Consequently, it can lead to religious intolerance if some people adhere to its preaching of hate of Muslim and non-Muslims. In Nigeria for instance, many Muslim Northerners strongly believe that Boko Haram is a Christian ploy to justify a religious partition of the country and US military intervention in order to seize Nigeria's oil fields in the south.⁶⁰

3. Conclusion

The threats of terrorism to a free society cannot be overstated. Terrorism remains an ever-pressing challenge to liberal societies. In the USA, known as the world's most liberal society, the tragedy of 9/11 demonstrates how a single day and few hours event can reshape and redefine America's stature in the world. Yesterday, it was Al Qaeda that revealed the vulnerability of liberal societies when it attacked America. Today, it is AQIM in Maghreb, Al Shabaab in Kenya, and now, it is Boko Haram in Cameroon, Nigeria, Mali and Niger. Politically, terrorism tries to set an alternative government, economically, it represents a backlash to economic development and socially, it causes real trouble to the social emancipation of the people affected. Although the military response to the threats is promising, more still has to be done. National and international governments have to reinforce existing dominant liberal discourse by denying terrorists groups access to their bases of popular support. In this way, terrorism could be significantly controlled.

⁵⁹ It is alleged that the curfew on the use of motorbikes is a consequence of the abduction of the wife of Cameroon's vice prime minister and minister of Justice, Ahmadou Ali, along side other members of his entourage on the eve of Ramadan.

⁶⁰ Perous de Montclos, p. 23. The same author observes that since the kidnapping of the Chibok school girls in Borno state in April 2014, which drew an unprecedented level of international media attention to the movement, Boko Haram has been portrayed as anti-women, anti-Christian, anti-education and terrorist.

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