

Money talks

A key reason youths join Boko Haram

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Recommendations

The following recommendations could assist the Nigerian government in combating Boko Haram:

- 1** Promoting a common Nigerian identity that transcends ethnic, religious and geographic lines by reviewing school curricula and programmes to mainstream national identity.
- 2** Declare, but don't negotiate the terms of amnesty with Boko Haram: government should declare a blanket amnesty for low- and mid-level Boko Haram militants who may wish to give up arms.
- 3** Establishing a criminal tribunal to investigate and prosecute Boko Haram militants and others who bear the greatest responsibility for the group's atrocities.
- 4** Preventing and combating sources of radicalisation by working with local communities and religious leaders to identify strategies for dissuading vulnerable individuals from turning to violent extremism.

Summary

This policy brief is an overview of key findings from a study aimed at understanding violent extremism in northern Nigeria, and identifying factors that are key in Boko Haram recruitment and membership.

This analysis contributes to knowledge about the political and socio-economic preferences of the individuals involved in the group.

This policy brief highlights one of the major findings of the study, namely the perception that financial incentives, not religion, are a key motivator for individuals who join Boko Haram.

THIS POLICY BRIEF PROVIDES an overview of the key findings of a study commissioned by the Institute for Security Studies, in partnership with the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers, based in Helsinki, Finland, and the International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID), based in Vienna, Austria, and Finn Church Aid with a view to understanding the drivers of violent extremism in northern Nigeria.

Boko Haram continues to make headlines, although at a diminishing pace. After reaching a peak in 2014 and 2015, the group's violence remains a major concern for Nigeria and the international community at large. Widespread human rights abuses and the persistence of an 'acute humanitarian situation' caused by the group's ferocious attacks have underscored the far-reaching ramifications of terrorist activities.

A communiqué issued by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) in November 2016 emphasised the serious and profound societal impacts of Boko Haram's activities in Nigeria. Recent offensives and robust military operations by the Nigerian government, aided by the multinational joint task force (MNJTF), have significantly weakened Boko Haram.

The group however, remains defiant and continues to carry out deadly and sporadic attacks, which have demonstrated that it will not be defeated in Sambisa forest, or through the barrel of a gun alone.

The final battle against the group will happen in the minds of people, and would mean tackling the fundamental factors that pull or push individuals toward the group – including the pathological, religious, political and economic reasons. As the United States Secretary of State, John Kerry, said during a visit to Nigeria, ‘the struggle against Boko Haram would only succeed if it tackled the reasons why people join militant groups and gained the public’s trust.’¹

Military operations by the Nigerian government and the MNJTF have significantly weakened Boko Haram

Understanding the underpinning ‘pull’ and ‘push’ factors for Boko Haram’s membership offers policy-makers empirically informed options for containing the group.

Research objectives, output and methodology

The purpose of the study was to understand the underlying causes of Boko Haram from the perspective of ordinary Nigerian citizens. In particular, the study sought to empirically investigate sources of radicalisation – or why individuals turn to or associate with Boko Haram, with a view to contributing to efforts to find acceptable and sustainable solutions to the crisis.

The sample population in the field survey comprised 1 607 respondents from five Nigerian cities: three from the north (Kano, Gombe and Yobe) and two non-northern cities (Abuja and Lagos). The selection of the sample population aimed to take into account key diversity factors in Nigeria such as religion, the north–south divide, gender, age and employment status. The respondents fell into two age brackets: 751 of them were aged between 18 and 29, and 856 were 30 or older. Respondents included 798 females and 809 males; 682 of the respondents identified themselves as Muslims and 912 identified themselves as Christians; 1 119 of the respondents indicated that they were employed and 488 said that they were unemployed.

The respondents were distributed across the five cities as follows: 316 in Lagos; 359 in Abuja; 319 in Gombe; 313 in Kano; and 300 in Yobe. Lagos and Abuja constituted ‘control’ cities, while Gombe, Kano and Yobe are in states at the epicentre of Boko Haram attacks.

The citizen surveys were conducted through on-the-street, short-form questioning and face-to-face interviews. Field managers trained and supervised the field teams tasked with data collection. The field data and social media posts were processed by Vibrand Research, a market research



UNDERSTANDING WHY PEOPLE
JOIN BOKO HARAM ALLOWS
POLICY-MAKERS TO TAKE
INFORMED DECISIONS

agency that specialises in research, field survey and social media analysis.²

Overview of the key findings

The key findings of the study are presented in three major areas: political participation, reasons for joining Boko Haram, and sources of Boko Haram funding. This brief focuses on the reasons for joining Boko Haram and highlights the study's key finding that the majority of those who joined Boko Haram voluntarily were significantly influenced by financial incentives, and not by religion.

The role of economic factors has been one of the most contested issues in the literature on the causes of violent extremism.

Reasons for joining Boko Haram

The question of what motivates some people to join terrorist and violent extremist groups has long been of concern for scholars and policy-makers. With the record rise in the number of recruits and foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) that groups like the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and al-Qaeda have attracted, the question has become even more pertinent among the counter-terrorism fraternities.

No consensus exists as to what factors account for decisions to participate in terrorist and violent extremist groups. Psychological, ideological, philosophical, political, and socioeconomic factors,³ as well as the nature of government responses to militants' activities,⁴ are often advanced in the narrative of the reasons people join extremist groups. According to Cottee, a lecturer in criminology at the University of Kent, 'the roots of terrorism lie not in the individual, but in the wider circumstances in which terrorists live and act.'⁵

Cottee therefore believes that the reasons are external – rather than internal to the individual. Similarly, Vetlesen argues that wrongdoing 'springs from a combination of character, situation, and social structure.'⁶ To reinforce this perception of external element that influences people to join terrorist and extremist groups, ethicists such as Bandura, emphasise the importance of recognising conducive social conditions, rather than viewing people

as monstrously aberrant, in atrocious acts such as those relating to terrorism.⁷ As he puts it, '[g]iven appropriate social conditions, decent ordinary people can do extraordinarily cruel things.'⁸

Due to this external or environmental influence, the reasons people join and participate in terrorist and violent extremist groups, as well as the drivers of radicalisation differ from country to country and from group to group.

Therefore, what might motivate Somalis to join al-Shabaab may differ from the factors that motivate Nigerians to join Boko Haram. This also means that policy designs for responding to violent extremism are also case specific and not a one size fit all. This emphasises the need for each case of violent extremism to be well-studied and understood in order to tailor solutions. This section documents new empirical evidence that explains some of the factors responsible for fuelling the Boko Haram crisis and why individuals participate in it.

The role of economic factors has been one of the most contested issues regarding the causes of violent extremism

Nigerian citizens' perspectives of what motivates people to join Boko Haram

The citizen survey asked respondents, 'In your opinion why do people join Boko Haram?' Table 1 below summarises the key findings:

The table demonstrates a strong perception among respondents that individuals who join Boko Haram do so because 'they want to make money.' Of the 1 607 respondents, 329 (20.47%), a considerable majority ranked it first and additionally, 239 (16.15%) and 198 (16.27%) respondents ranked it second and third, respectively.

This is followed by the perception that they want to belong to a group/movement, with 264 (16.43%), 85 (5.74%) and 63 (5.18%) respondents ranking its first, second and third, respectively. Though more respondents (186) ranked 'they want to be respected' first, than 'they are unemployed and see Boko Haram

Table 1: Why people join Boko Haram

Reasons	Ranked 1	Ranked 2	Ranked 3
Peer pressure	27	31	55
Family and ethnic pressure	30	59	44
For marriage	41	77	43
They are unhappy with the government	61	136	149
For status or prestige	79	109	47
They want to be feared	105	98	54
They want to achieve a religious aim	130	147	137
They lack education	157	182	198
They are unemployed and see Boko Haram as a job	171	236	152
They want to be respected	186	71	51
They want to belong to a group/movement (solidarity/brotherhood)	264	85	63
They want to make money	329	239	198
Other	27	10	26

as a job’ (171), overall, more respondents perceived unemployment as a major reason for joining.

With 171 (10.64%), 236 (15.95%) and 152 (12.49%) respondents ranking it first, second and third, respectively, unemployment was the third most popular reason for joining Boko Haram. Interestingly, social pressure, which included peer pressure, family and ethnic pressure, status/prestige, marriage, constituted a combined total of 177 (11.02%) respondents, making it one of the major influences on people’s decision to join Boko Haram.

Financial benefits

As illustrated in the table above, the general or popular perception among respondents was that people are motivated to join Boko Haram because of financial rewards.

Statistically, this was substantiated by a total of 500 (31.11%) of the 1 607 respondents, who ranked financially related reasons – such as ‘They want to make money’ (329 or 20.47%) and ‘They are unemployed and see Boko Haram as a job’ 171 (10.64%) – as top motivators for joining Boko Haram. Additionally, 825 (51.34%) of respondents considered financial reasons second and third most influential factors for joining Boko Haram. These comprise 239 (16.15%) and 198 (16.27%) of respondents,

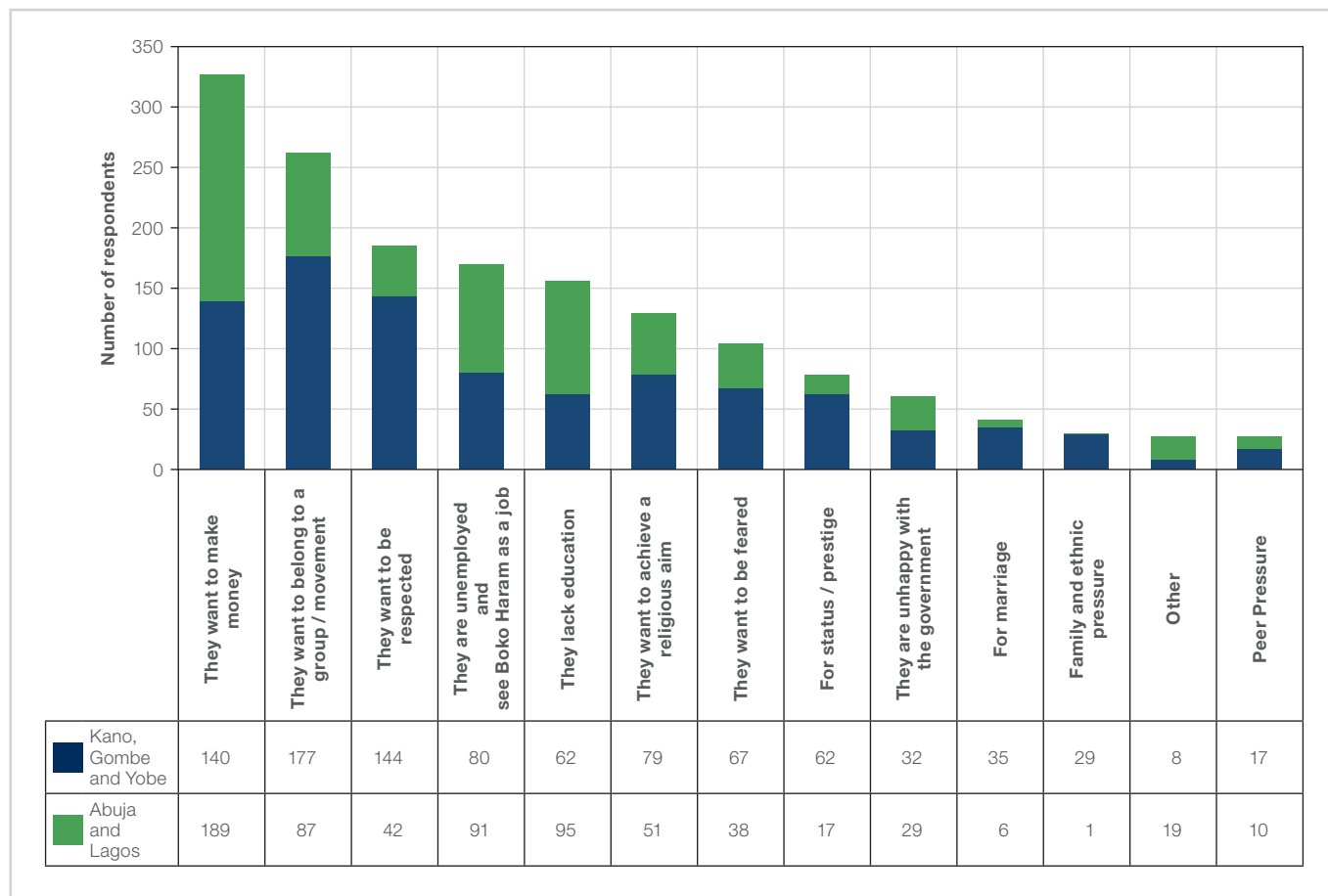
who ranked ‘They want to make money’ second and third, respectively; and 236 (15.95%) and 152 (12.49%) of respondents who ranked ‘They are unemployed and see Boko Haram as a job’), second and third respectively.

In total, 1 059 (65.90%) of the 1 607 respondents said that financial reasons were associated with the decision to join Boko Haram. As the figure below shows, this trend was also evident in the geographical perception of reasons for membership.

Respondents from Abuja and Lagos showed a greater tendency to consider financial conditions as reasons for membership. A total of 280 (41.48%) of the 675 respondents from the two cities shared this perception. Respondents from the northern cities showed a similar tendency, accounting for a total of 220 (23.61%) of the 932 respondents.

This seems to challenge a commonly held view that poverty has no direct causal effect on terrorism.⁹ Similar studies on other terrorist and violent extremist groups have not found a strong correlation between financial incentives and the desire to join such groups. In his study on why youth join al-Qaeda, United States’ army Colonel Venhaus, for example, identifies four main reasons – or what he calls the ‘four seekers,’ namely, the revenge seeker, who looks for outlet for frustration; the status

Figure 1: Perceptions of reasons for joining Boko Haram (geographical trends)



seeker, who wants recognition; the identity seeker, whose aim is to belong; and the thrill seeker, who is out for adventure.¹⁰

Although he recognises that some of al-Qaeda’s recruits ‘had been unemployed for years and were living in poverty’,¹¹ he does not, however, contend or conclude that poverty or financial incentive is an appeal for joining al-Qaeda. Similarly, a study by the US-based National Institute of Justice on radicalisation and violent extremism, identifies 19 potential risk factors for radicalising to violent extremism,¹² but makes no reference to poverty or financial incentives.

This study however, seems to corroborate the findings of similar studies on violent extremism in Africa. For example, in a 2014 study on why youth join Boko Haram, Onuoha, a research fellow at Nigeria’s National Defence College, proffered six main reasons, namely ignorance of religious teachings; unemployment and poverty; upbringing; high levels of illiteracy; excessive military

responses; and widespread corruption.¹³ Though an overwhelming majority of his interviewees in northern Nigeria, reaching in some cases 83%, as in Kaduna State, stated that unemployment and poverty were important factors in youth engaged in religious-based violence, Onuoha shied away from any conclusion that unemployment and poverty had any direct causal correlation with violent extremism.¹⁴

In their field research on radicalisation and al-Shabaab recruitment in Somalia, which involved interviews with 88 former al-Shabaab fighters and seven others, Botha and Abdile found that economic and religious factors were central to people’s decisions who joined al-Shabaab.¹⁵

The findings of this study that financial incentives are a major appeal for joining Boko Haram is further corroborated by testimonies of some Boko Haram members, who claimed that they were paid cash to carry out attacks. For example, seven suspected Boko Haram members confessed that they received 7 000

Naira (\$42) to blow up a church in Biu, Borno State, in June 2012.¹⁶ Studies on radicalisation in northern Nigeria have pointed out the important role played by economic and social forces,¹⁷ and how terrorist groups such as Boko Haram have exploited such conditions through material rewards that accrue to members,¹⁸ especially financial reward, which the group uses to lure recruits.

If financial incentives are considered a major appeal for joining Boko Haram, this will have policy implications on future strategies for addressing the activities of the group. For example, it will require a sharpened focus on economic responses – including the necessity to identify populations at risk, as well as to create or expand on developmental programmes that seek to provide population at risks with income generating activities. It will also require specific and robust strategies aimed at eliminating the sources of Boko Haram revenue, with a view to deprive the group of financial capabilities and other terrorist assets.

The needs 'to belong and be respected' have become key sociological issues for young people who are in search of a cause, heroism and justice

Need to belong

The human needs theory has been used to explain the causes of ethnic conflicts in Africa. This theory posits that individuals turn to conflict or violence due to certain unmet fundamental needs for their survival.¹⁹ The needs 'to belong and be respected' have become key sociological issues for young people who are in search of a cause, heroism and justice. Such needs may arise as a result of relative deprivation, identity crises or both. Terrorist groups such as Boko Haram seem to provide a platform for such youths.

A significant number of respondents, 264 (16.43%), said the primary motivator was because 'They want to belong to a group/movement.' As stated earlier, we observed that respondents in the northern cities were more likely to attribute membership to 'a personal need to belong' to a group, and a desire to be respected.

The cognitive need to belong serves as a very powerful emotional association between individuals and their association with the outside world. When individuals realise that being part of a collective brings with it respect, responsibility and having a sense of purpose, there seem to share stronger bonds and individuals are willing to go at length to serve the purpose of the organisation.

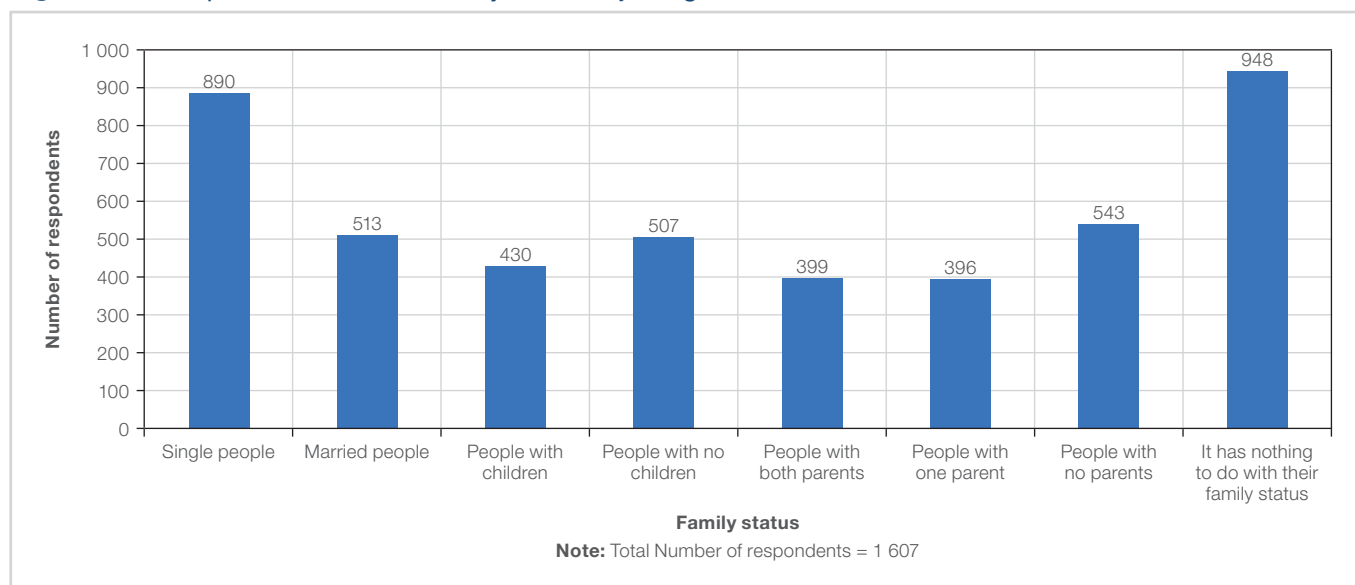
Influence of family status

Studies have argued that family background or how individuals were brought up has a significant influence on their propensity to join violent extremist groups, which has brought a new focus on the family as an important actor



JOINING A TERRORIST ORGANISATION MIGHT SPEAK TO THE NEED TO BELONG AND FEEL RESPECTED

Figure 2: Perception of the role of family status in joining Boko Haram



in the countering violent extremism architecture.²⁰ As Figure 2 illustrates, a significant majority of the respondents, 948 (58.99%), did not believe that family status played a role in the decision of individuals who join Boko Haram. However, a considerable number of the respondents, 890 (55.38%), stated that family status played a role, and that individuals who were single or not married were more likely to join Boko Haram than others.

This perception reinforces the view that terrorism or participation in violent extremism may be a form of de-alienation or what Lyon-Padilla *et al.* call a ‘quest for significance’ – a sense that their lives have purpose and meaning, often referred to as ‘youth syndrome.’²¹

Of the 1 607 respondents, 543 (33.79%), stated that people with no parents were more likely to join Boko Haram; 513 (31.92%) said people who are married; 507 (31.55%) said people without children; 399 (24.83%) said people with both parents; and only 396 (24.64%) said people with one parent.

Lack of education

In response to the question of why people were drawn to Boko Haram, a considerable number, 157 (9.77%) of the 1 607 respondents ranked the lack of education first among factors that influence people’s decision to join Boko Haram. Another 198 (12.30%) ranked it second

and 261 (16.27%) ranked it third. The lack of education is therefore considered one of the major factors for joining Boko Haram. Furthermore, as the Figure below shows, respondents were asked to indicate who is most likely to join Boko Haram. Figure 3 encapsulates how respondents perceived the role of lack of education in people’s decision to join Boko Haram.

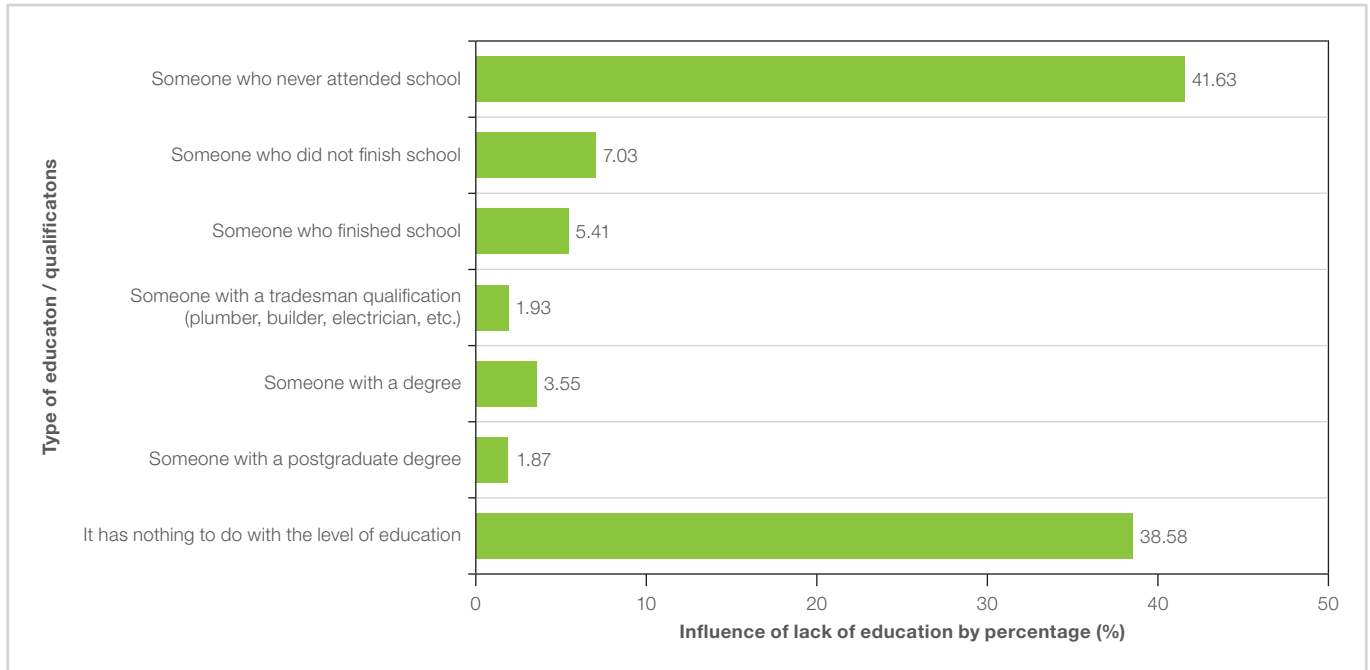
The above figure reveals a dichotomy between respondents who thought that the decision to join Boko Haram had nothing to do with level of education 620 (38.58%) and those who thought that people who never attended school were more likely to join Boko Haram 669 (41.63%).

This dichotomy seems to suggest that educated *and* non-educated people are likely to join Boko Haram. This point is stressed by Danjibo, who found that during the early stages of the group’s recruitment in 2004:

...students especially in tertiary institutions in Borno and Yobe states like the University of Maiduguri, Ramat Polytechnic Maiduguri, Federal Polytechnic Damaturu and others who constitute their members withdrew from school, tore their certificates and joined the group for Qur’anic lessons and preaching.²²

Among the recruits were teachers, engineers, chemists, medical doctors and journalists, and even police and

Figure 3: Influence of lack of education on decision to join Boko Haram (Percentage of total respondents, 1 607)



military officers.²³ This means that lack of education may have played a role in the recruitment of some members, but was certainly not a major or decisive factor in influencing people’s decision to join Boko Haram.

Role of religion

Like poverty, religion has been a sensitive issue in violent extremism discourse. It is sometimes dismissed as a non-issue or not having a direct relationship and at times discussed as the heartbeat or the primary driver of violent extremism. The study explored the links between religion and Boko Haram.

One of the key findings of the study is that religion plays little or no role. The data show that the majority of respondents, 870 (54.14%), believed that religion had little or no influence on people’s decision to join Boko Haram. Only 574 (35.72%) of the 1 607 respondents believed that religion had a strong influence, with an additional 163 (10.14%) respondents, who considered it the only influence on a person’s decision to join the Islamist group. There were some discrepancies among respondents along age, religion and geography. With reference to age, 103 (12.03%) of respondent age 30+ were more likely to consider religion to be the only influence on someone’s decision to join Boko Haram;

whereas only 60 (7.99%) among respondents age 18-29, who considered it to be the only influence.

Christian respondents were more likely than other religious groups to cite religion as a determining factor; 356 (39.14%) respondents in this category recognised it as a strong factor and 103 (11.29%) viewed it as the only influence. In contrast, 214 (31.38%) Muslim respondents considered it as a strong influence, with an additional 60 (8.80%), who considered it as the only influence.

While this may be a defensive position on the part of Christian respondents, another possibility is that Muslim respondents are more aware of the challenges Boko Haram presents to other Muslims. This was also supported by the geographical location of respondents, as 415 (44.52%) respondents in Gombe, Kano and Yobe compared with 322 (47.71%) respondents in the south, who were of the opinion that religion was a strong influence or the only factor influencing the decision to join Boko Haram.

Perceptions regarding the role that religion plays in the radicalisation process also have a direct impact on the counterterrorism policies and strategies that will be developed and implemented. It equally calls for initiatives to build trust between the Muslims and Christians in Nigeria.

The role of employment

Responses to the citizen survey reveal that a significant majority of the 1 607 respondents, 885 (55.07%), felt that there was no correlation between the need for employment and the decision to join Boko Haram, hence employment has nothing to do with the decision to join Boko Haram. Furthermore, 343 (21.34) of the respondents stated that people who are employed fulltime are most likely to join Boko Haram. This is contrary to the finding of a similar study conducted by the CLEEN Foundation in 2014, which found that 72% of the respondents identified unemployment and poverty among young people as the driver of Boko Haram's violent extremism.²⁴ In this study, only 99 (6.16%) of the respondents stated that unemployed people are most likely to join Boko Haram.

Perceptions of the role of religion in radicalisation have an impact on counter-terrorism policies

The two regions shared the same opinion, although respondents from Abuja and Lagos demonstrated a higher propensity to reject employment as having an influence on the decision to join Boko Haram. This was evident in the significant majority of respondents from Abuja and Lagos, 462 (68.44%), compared to only 423 (45.39%) of their counterparts from the north. Respondents from Abuja were also more likely 203 (30.07%) to believe that people with full-time employment were more likely to join Boko Haram. Even unemployed respondents did not believe that their employment status made them more vulnerable to recruitment. Instead, a significant number, 114 (23.36%) of the 488 unemployed respondents, felt that people in full-time employment were more likely to join Boko Haram.

In comparing the results from the two age groups surveyed, the opinion that employment has nothing to do with the likelihood to join Boko Haram, was slightly more prevalent among the older respondent group, with 533 (62.38%) compared to 351 (46.74%) among the younger respondent group. When the perceptions of unemployed respondents were compared to those who were employed at the time of the survey, employed respondents, 646 (57.73%), were significantly more likely to believe that unemployment had nothing to do with the decision to join Boko Haram than unemployed respondents, 239 (48.98%).

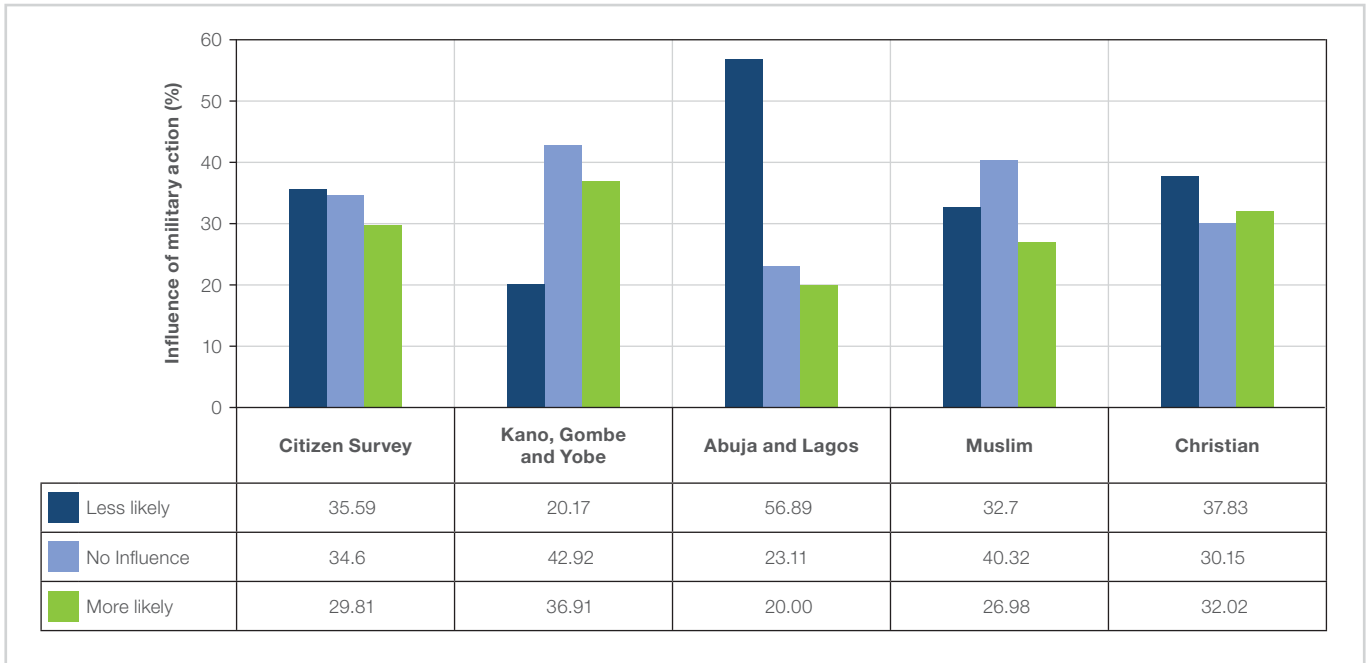
Influence of military responses on people's decision to join Boko Haram

The perception that aggressive or excessive military actions fuel violent extremism because they provoke sentiments for vengeance requires further empirical study. This is even more important as international peacekeepers increasingly deploy to situations of violent extremism.



MOST RESPONDENTS BELIEVED THAT RELIGION HAD LITTLE OR NO INFLUENCE ON WHY PEOPLE JOIN BOKO HARAM

Figure 4: Influence of military action on the decision to join Boko Haram



The study explored the implications of Nigeria’s military actions on the Boko Haram crisis. As Figure 4 below demonstrates, respondents were split between the perception that, it had made it less likely that people would join Boko Haram 572 (35.59%), that it had made it more likely 479 (29.81%) or that it had no influence 556 (34.60%). There were major discrepancies among respondents particularly along geographic lines. Respondents in the northern cities 344 (36.91%) were significantly more likely to believe that military action had increased the likelihood of people joining Boko Haram, than respondents in Abuja and Lagos 135 (20%).

The popular perception among respondents in Abuja and Lagos with 384 (56.89%) respondents was that military action had made joining significantly less likely, compared to northern respondents 188 (20.17%). Muslim 275 (40.32%) and Christian 274 (30.15%) respondents believed that military actions had no influence on people’s decision to join Boko Haram. The lack of a clear-cut consensus among respondents may be due to conflicts of conscience, whereby respondents are caught between moral imperatives that sanction the brutal and disproportionate use of force and the reality that such military actions in northern Nigeria have contributed to the diminished Boko Haram’s attacks. This therefore

suggests a balance between the use of the military and other non-military strategies to defeat Boko Haram.

Social media perceptions of the reasons for joining Boko Haram

The study also included analysis of 13,008 social media posts relating to reasons for joining Boko Haram (2010–15). This analysis revealed that, economic benefits were rated as the second-most influential factor motivating people to join Boko Haram. The most prominent reason provided was coercion or use of force (40%). This comprises threat of death (23%) and inciting/forcing others to join (17%) – with reference to direct payment in more than one-quarter (28%) of the posts. According to social media, the perception is that Boko Haram pays between less than US\$1 (300 naira) for information and up to US\$50,000 (15m naira) for a suicide bomber (paid to the bomber’s family).²⁵

Where and how people are introduced to Boko Haram

Understanding where recruitment takes place and methods of recruitment, and where terrorist propaganda is spread is key to containing violent extremism. Figure 5 shows the general trend in perceptions of where and how people are introduced to Boko Haram:

Figure 5: How and where are people introduced to Boko Haram? (Percentage of total respondents, 1 607)

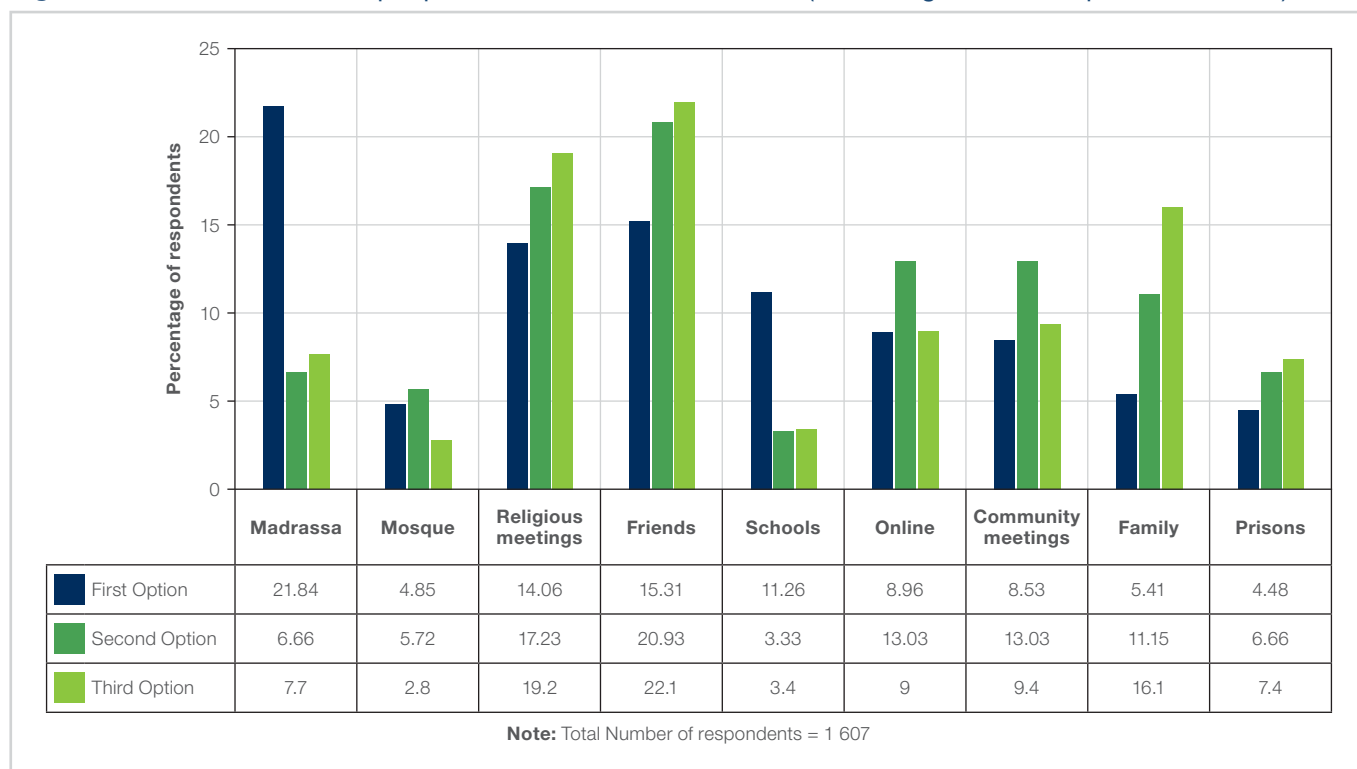


Figure 5 shows that although a significant number of respondents (351, or 21.84%) ranked madrassas (community schools) first as the institution or social environment where people are introduced to Boko Haram, the general trend among respondents was that people were most likely to be introduced to Boko Haram through friends and at religious meetings. This was evident in the 246 respondents (15.31%), who ranked friends first, and the 336 (20.93%) and 355 (22.1%) who ranked friends second and third, respectively. This was closely followed by religious meetings, which was ranked first, by 226 (14.06%) of respondents, with a further 277 (17.23%) and 309 (19.2%), ranking this method or environment second and third, respectively.

The main finding here is that Boko Haram is exploiting traditional social networks for its recruitment. Online recruitment through social media is not as strong (though significant) as with other terrorist groups, such as ISIS.²⁶ The responses also suggest that peer pressure may have more impact on the decision to join Boko Haram. The important role friends play in introducing individuals to an extremist organisation cannot be overstated, because joining such organisations with friends strengthens social networks and group cohesion.

In other words, being ‘in it together’ enhances the sense of belonging, thus mitigating feelings of alienation. Sociological analyses show that the influence of friends increases during early adolescence, at the time when a person becomes politically more conscious. This is corroborated by empirical studies



FRIENDS PLAY A SIGNIFICANT
ROLE IN INTRODUCING
INDIVIDUALS TO AN
EXTREMIST ORGANISATION

Table 2: Citizen survey: ranking of Boko Haram sources of financing

Source	Ranked 1	Ranked 2	Ranked 3
Politicians	729	293	146
Other terrorist groups	234	372	206
Armed robbery	189	145	92
Drug trafficking	183	107	58
Arms smuggling	138	128	243
Private businesses	102	245	80
Other	23	17	41
Taxes	8	9	17
Total respondents	1 607	1 316	883

on violent extremism, which confirm that young adults are particularly vulnerable to the opinions of their peers.²⁷ As a result, peer pressure is one of the most popular recruitment factors for violent extremist groups like Boko Haram.

Sources of Boko Haram financing

As the Table 2 below illustrates, respondents expressed a strong perception that politicians are the main source of Boko Haram funding. Of the 1,607 respondents, 729 (over 45%) ranked politicians as the primary source of funding for Boko Haram. Other terrorist groups were also perceived as a major source of Boko Haram funding, with 234 (14.56%) respondents believing it is the primary source of funding, while 372 (28.27%) respondents ranked it as the second most probable source of funding, and 206 (23.33%) ranked it third. Additionally, drug trafficking and armed robbery were perceived to be significant sources of funding for the group. There was also a considerable perception that arms smuggling (8.59%) was a source of funding for Boko Haram.

Taxes, which include membership dues, tax for business and *jizya* (tax for non-Muslims), were perceived to be a minor source of funding, accounting for 8 (0.50%) respondents, who viewed it as the number one source of funding. Although taxes were important, particularly membership dues, in the early stages of Boko Haram's existence, they do not, however, constitute a major

source of funding. This is also because Boko Haram does not administer any territories.

In light of the study findings, it is most probable that Boko Haram's funding is coming from a wide range of sources including 'donations of rich Nigerians from the north, Governors, Senators, Muslim communities in Europe, drugs and arms traffic and foreign terror groups within and outside the African continent',²⁸ mostly in the form of *zakat*²⁹ and *hawala*.³⁰

Conclusion

The findings of this study, particularly the observation that people join Boko Haram because of financial rewards, challenges the popular scholarly proposition that poverty has no direct causal link with terrorism and violent extremism.

Although, it is not the only cause, poverty or financial reward does, however, play an important role in people's decision to join Boko Haram. The despicable poverty in northern Nigeria has made terrorism, like most conflicts in Africa, a matter of bread and butter.

Boko Haram seems to offer an alternative to or a vent for those frustrated with the Nigerian government. The group has successfully exploited historical, religious, social, governance, economic and political injustices or gaps in order to create a support base in northern Nigeria. This study has also demonstrated deep divisions among

Nigerians, particularly along geographic and religious lines on the causes and how to deal with Boko Haram.

There are however some areas, where there is a strong tendency for consensual agreement, particularly with respect to the role of financial incentive as a driver of radicalisation, and the important role of the military in the quest for solution. Importantly, the study underscores the need to design specific strategies to counter Boko Haram recruitment and sources of financing.

Boko Haram has successfully exploited historical, social, and political injustices to create a support base

It underscores the urgency for policies to prioritise employment and other developmental and financial solutions in the fight against Boko Haram. Implementing the recommendations of the study could go a long way to resolving the complex issues surrounding the Boko Haram crisis. There is therefore the need for a multi-sector and integrated approach that reaches out to all stakeholders, including civil society organisations. To ensure the long-term security of Nigeria, in which Boko Haram cannot resurrect, and to prevent future insurgencies in the country, Nigerians must collectively address the impunity gap that has plagued the country since independence, as well as put in place the institutional mechanisms to check against the formation of such groups. Without this, Boko Haram could be defeated today, but tomorrow another insurgency will flare up.

Notes

- 1 Speech by United States Secretary of State John Kerry during a visit to Nigeria, on 23 August 2016; quoted in L Wroughton, As Kerry lands in Nigeria, air force says top Boko Haram fighters killed, Reuters News, 23 August 2016; <http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFKCN10Y18M>.
- 2 For details, see <http://vibrand.co.za/about-us/>.
- 3 See for example, R Hinds, Islamic Radicalisation in North and West Africa: Drivers and approaches to tackle radicalisation, *Rapid Literature Review*, United Kingdom: GSDRC, University of Birmingham, 2013, 2–7.
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