

# Interrogating the Enduring Triggers, Escalators and Sustainers of the Globalisation of Boko Haram's Terrorism in Nigeria

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Article DOI:

10.48028/iiprds/ijdshmss.v14.i2.03

## Keywords:

Globalisation,  
Terrorism, National  
Security, Arms  
Proliferation

## Abstract

This paper asks this simple question: Is globalisation a causative factor of terrorism in Nigeria? In particular, the paper asks if a correlation exists between globalisation and terrorism and if it is what are the factors that facilitate the globalisation of terrorism in Nigeria. The paper identified several factors that triggers, escalates and sustains terrorism in Nigeria through the instigation globalisation. This trend has caused enormous insecurity in Nigeria since the current democratic dispensation in Nigeria in 1999. The paper adopted historical and descriptive research methods, quantitative and qualitative research design as its methodology. The paper finds globalisation culpable for the proliferation of arms by the Boko Haram activities; especially in the North-east Nigeria. Amongst others, the paper recommends that governments at all levels in Nigeria should reorient the citizenry on the importance of harmonious and peaceful living as a prerequisite for national development.

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## **Background to the Study**

There are many claims and counter claims about the globalisation of terrorism and the implications of this on the security situation in Nigeria particularly with the Boko Haram challenges. It is on forgone premise this paper raises this simple question: How and to what extent has globalisation of terrorism impacted on the ongoing security challenges in Nigeria? In particular, it asks if a correlation exists between globalisation and terrorism and if it is, what are the factors that trigger, escalate and sustain the globalisation of terrorism in Nigeria? The salience in the foregoing question is being premised that terrorism has become a problem on a global scale, particularly after Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda terrorist organisation masterminded the September 11 2001 (hereafter 9/11) attack on the United States of America (Aksoy, 2002).

Following this assault on US home soil, there were further terrorist acts worldwide, giving terrorism a new face (Kia, 2013; Shola, 2015). Due to globalisation and the terrorist actions of organisations like Al-Qaeda, Hezbollah, Al-Shabab, and ISIS in the Maghreb, Lebanon, Somalia, Iraq, and Syria, respectively, the antiquated practice of terrorism has evolved into a modern tactic as a result of the 9/11 US terrorist attack (Shola, 2015). Nigeria has also not been abandoned by terrorist organisations as well in carrying out terrorist onslaughts on several locations in the country. There is no gainsaying the fact that globalisation has had mixed effects, particularly for the emerging countries of North America, Asia, and Africa (Botma, 2015). Whereas globalisation has benefited developed countries by giving them greater access to their markets and facilitating the transfer of technology, which has raised industrial production and raised living standards (Jean, 2002); it has also exposed a new degree of global insecurity (Brainard & Halon, 2004; Buzan, 2007; Willie, 2008). Indeed, globalisation has brought about increased insecurity and circumstances that are supportive to terrorist activities that has the consequence of changing the role of conflict in international politics and state survival (Betterton & Potion, 1996).

One of the effects of globalisation is the loosening of national borders brought about by technological advancements—a situation exploited by terrorist networks. This has increased Nigeria's vulnerability and posed a danger to its national security framework. One instance of this is the porous border that existed between Nigeria and Benin, which gave rise to a number of illicit cross-border terror operations.

At the risk of repetition, a relationship exists between globalisation and terrorism. This manifest in Nigeria through the globalisation of international terrorism and its networks like Boko Haram. This particular terrorist group has increased its brutality in Nigeria, particularly, in North East, Nigeria. Undisputably, globalisation is a major element that has contributed to increase in violence and terrorism in Nigeria. Whereas Nigeria is not known for producing weapons, the proliferation of illicit weapons and weaponry in the hands of criminal organisations in the country is as a result of the globalisation of terrorism. Apparently, the proliferation of small guns has been a major factor in almost all terrorist assaults in Nigeria, contributing to the escalation, intensity, and prolonged

settlement of these conflicts; a trend it is being feared that Nigeria is headed towards failure similar to many other African countries like Somalia (Louw-Vaudran, 2015).

This paper takes its departure on the contending drivers and motivations of the ongoing globalisation of international terrorism into Nigeria. The balance of the paper is structured as follows. Following this introduction is Section II examines theoretical framework adopted in the paper. Whereas Section III is a statement on the methodology deployed in undertaking this research endeavour, Section IV interrogates the factors that are complicit in triggering, escalating and sustaining terrorism in Nigeria as an ugly biproduct of globalization. Section V concludes the paper.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper adopts the following theoretical frameworks to guide the discourses surrounding the nexus between globalisation and its impact in internationalising terrorism:

#### **Psychological Theory of Terrorism (PTT)**

Psychological theory of terrorism (PTT) was propounded by American Psychiatrist Jerrold Post (1990) in his paper, *Terrorist Psycho-logic: Terrorist behaviour as a product of psychological forces*. This theory posits that it is the psychological mindset and orientation of the terrorists that determine their actions. Psychological theories of terrorist behaviour primarily emphasise individual factors. Since the early twentieth century, a fierce controversy has roiled the psychiatric community, dividing psychoanalytic approaches to the study of individual psychology, primarily derivative of Freudian theory, from non-psychoanalytic approaches (Wallerstein 1995). Ozdamar (2008, p. 98) argues that psychological approaches to the study of terrorism:

*“are concerned with the study of terrorists' profiles (that is, personalities), their recruitment into terrorist groups, beliefs, motivations, and careers as terrorists. That is, this line of literature attempts to produce profiles of terrorist individuals to answer questions like who are terrorists? Why are they involved in terrorism? What are the common characteristics of these individuals (if any)?”*

The theory was literally derived from concept of physics, which explains that mental and libidinal energy is conveyed and suppressed. The psychological theory contains some modifications that have three opinions as it is parenting and not inherent disposition that defines psychological disposition and health; energetic, unconscious factors does not hostile beliefs from the cognizance; and finally, that relationships with others, that is, object relations are guided by unconscious factors like prediction – being the theory that an irrationally features of one person to another (Wallerstein 1995; Gabbard, 2000).

Psychological theoretical analysis of terrorism places its centrality in the evaluation of the profile of terrorists, the dynamics of how they are recruited and their ideological orientations as terrorist (Ozdamar, 2008). This approach studies the profiles of terrorist

individuals to answer such questions as who are terrorists, why are they involved in terrorism and what are the common characteristics of these individuals (if any)? Psychological theoretical model is strengthened by the following two schools of thought:

### **Psycho-Pathological Theory**

Psycho-Pathological theory treats members of terrorist groups as individual in order to find divergent character in each member. The common notion among terrorists is that a member that does not have violent character is not qualified to be a member. This explains that terrorists are abnormal members of the society with different personality traits like being tainted, upset, unfriendly and scheming, stubborn, unreasonable and addicted (Schmid & Jogman, 1988). In corroboration, Post (1990, p. 25) argues that:

*“There is a special logic of terrorist reasoning. He terms this the 'terrorist psychology' – referring to his research proposition that terrorists are driven to commit acts of violence as a consequence of psychological forces, and that their special psycho-logic is constructed to rationalize acts they are psychologically compelled to commit.”*

Terrorists are also ascribed as diagnosed as “as mentally disturbed individuals, and portraying terrorism as violence just for the sake of violence itself, explanations like these de-politicize terrorism” (Skjølberg & Lia, 2000, p. 7). Such psychological interpretation of terrorism has, however, been marred by criticisms because the approach cannot withstand empirical explanations and the approach has also deprived the terrorism some sociological, economic and political understanding. Corrado (1981), for example, concludes that political terrorism is tremendously not seen from the standpoint of the fact that terrorists have some element of mental maladies. Many terrorists are viewed as being driven by ideological disposition and orientation, which is enough to justify their actions. Heskin (1984, p. 26) observes that “the best documented generalisation of terrorists is negative, terrorists do not show any striking psychopathology”. This was, otherwise, seen as the distinguishing features of terrorists and they are normal (Turco, 1987; Ruby, 2002; Weatherston & Moran, 2003; Silke, 2004).

Contributing to this scholarly debate, Weatherston and Moran (2003) believe that though, terrorists may be normal in their actions, there is the likelihood of a synergy that exists between an individual member of a terrorist group and his emerging mental malady. It has, also, been identified in the view of Sprinzak (1995) that psychopathological reasons cannot be ignored totally. This is because the development of some terrorist organisations that are poorly constituted should not be seen from a political point of view in their activities. Examples of these small and poorly organised terrorist groups that are not do not have any political and religious ideologies but operate as cults groups like the Aum Shin-rikyo and the Rajneshees in Japan and America respectively.

### **Psycho-Sociological Theory**

This is the second component of psychological theory of terrorism which focuses on the features and devices of the terrorists. It is enhanced by recognizing the impact of the

environment where terrorist groups operate from. This argument has been documented in literature on violence from historical perspective (Skjølberg & Lia, 2000). For example, Wilkinson (1987) argue that whereas there are myriads of scholarly works on the diverging personality characters of terrorists and the inability of sociological and economic research to clarify how terrorists engage and disengage into terrorism in the same environment, to explain terrorism one should focus attention on the social milieu of the ideologies and beliefs of the terrorists. And the best way to understand terrorism is to discover the political incentives in terrorism. This also should be compared with the exceptional political, historical, cultural and ideological perspectives in line with the objectives of the terrorist organisations.

In his contributions to psychological theory of terrorism, Crenshaw (1990c) argues that psychological factors should be considered alongside factors that are environmentally induced at different stages. He insists this will help to understanding the bases under terrorism strive; because terrorism at inception was an issue of individuality on what motivate and understanding of social circumstances and the choice of individual members of the group involved in the crime, which also explain how long an individual will indulge in terrorist act. For this fact, terrorism should be explained from sociological perspective. In their contributions to psychological theory of terrorism, Wilkinson and Stewart (1987) suggest there are two main types of fanatics in terrorism. First are religious fanatics where some religious groups employ terrorism for their political purposes; specifically, to overthrow 'evil' regimes and replace them with religious ones (Merari 1990). On the other hand, in the words of Ozdamar (2010) single-issue fanatics are characterized as an obsessive group of people who want a certain policy to be changed, like on abortion or animal rights. In line with this argument, psychological approach does not profile the behaviour of terrorists. It, rather, suggests that terrorism is all about an individual mindset that is filled with a particular perspective about the world that is so powerful that produces violent acts. This is because “the individual and group levels of analysis draw mostly upon psychological explanations (major tasks in this field would be to identify why individuals join a terrorist group in the first place, and, secondly, why they continue to stay with the group” (Crenshaw, 1990, p. 125).

### **Methodology**

This paper adopted a descriptive and historical research approach. Through a thorough examination and review of textbooks, newspapers, magazines, journals, periodicals, Internet-based resources, archival materials, bulletins, and other documented materials that have addressed the topic of this study. Secondary (indirect) sources of data were used as the method and sources of data. It is solely grounded in non-statistical study. Data were evaluated in accordance with their applicability to the relationship between globalisation and terrorism and how it has triggered, escalated and sustained Nigeria's security issues.

### **Factors that Facilitate the Globalization of Terrorism in Nigeria**

Scholarship argues that recent terrorist attacks have occurred primarily on an account of globalisation (Lutz, & Lutz, 2015; Asongu & Biekpe, 2018). They maintain that terrorist

attacks are almost never the result of internal causes but rather of foreign meddling masterminded by globalisation, the process that knits numerous nations together. In Nigeria and beyond, several factors such as technology, terrorism funding, migration and the “irrelevance” of national boundaries, amongst others, have been found complicit in triggering, escalating and sustaining insecurity in Nigeria due to globalisation (Botma, 2015). This section of the paper discusses the factors culpable in promoting terrorism in Nigeria.

### **Technology as a Facilitator**

The last 23 years have seen a huge increase in the use of new media (the Internet). In Nigeria today, it is estimated that about 43 million Nigerians have access to the Internet. In addition, this is complemented by the growing popularity of mobile phones (Musa, 2012). Boko Haram terrorist group by its name condemns anything that has to do with Western education; inclusive of the Internet as well. Unfortunately, the group in all ramifications has explored and used all the same Western education it condemns vehemently including the Internet, the social media, GSM phones, arms and ammunition they use in their criminal acts (Walker, 2012). In line with the argument that Boko Haram has used and is still using everything about Western education in its acts, Musa (2012, p. 116) explains that:

*“The group has made use of the Internet and mobile phones in the coordination of its activities as well as to communicate messages to the world. The Internet enhances Boko Haram's ability to reach out to people; their use of YouTube to upload propaganda videos is a case in point as YouTube is accessible to millions of people. The group also used to have an official webpage in the form of a blog, but it has been removed.”*

Earlier, an Arabic-language Twitter account, @Alurwa\_Alwuthqa was launched, claiming to be the official outlet for a new Boko Haram media group called Al-Urwah al-Wuthqa (BBC Monitoring, 2015; Laing, 2015). Following this launch, it was believed that there is the influence of ISIS in the media operations of the Boko Haram sect. Within a few days of the launch, the account had gained 4000 followers. Boko Haram has used the feed to publish a stream of propaganda, including several new videos. The Twitter feed revealed short statements about the activities of the group and claiming operations in a timely manner. For example, the group tweeted that they had successfully captured Monguno, a strategic town close to Maiduguri (BBC Monitoring, 2015; Laing, 2015).

However, there have been several disruptions and inconsistencies in the media operations of Boko Haram, which suggests lack of competence in the activities of these propagandists. For example, a video coverage featuring Shekau, the presumed leader of the terrorist group, giving speeches in Arabic have appeared online on several occasions, but failed to be disseminated on the Twitter feed. In addition, the account has been suspended several times, reappearing quickly but without the original tweets. The suspension of the original account has led to the feed becoming less prolific (BBC Monitoring, 2015). Though Boko Haram has made some use of the Internet and

technology, they have not exploited it to the extent that they could have. Apparently, but on a sad note “globalisation has promoted the development of terrorism. Besides all its positive aspects, globalisation could be the growth and coordination of terrorism's supporters; especially with the help of Internet” (Aksoy, 2002, p. 48).

### **Funding for Terror as a Facilitator**

International commerce networks are frequently used by terrorist organisations as a channel for selling products and services. The proceeds from the sale of these goods and services are subsequently used to fund terrorist activities carried out by the relevant organisations. However, the products majorly traded by terrorist organisations are either illicit or smuggled (Li & Schaub, 2004, p. 235). Furthermore, globalisation is said linked "directly fostering the growth of politico-criminal networks which in turn multiplies the opportunities for terrorism...prospects for such terrorist operations are significantly increased by outside state or group backing (Zimmermann, 2011, p. 155). The Boko Haram in Nigeria is not an exception in this context; where funding for Boko Haram has come from the effects of globalisation.

The sources of finance for the operations of Boko Haram are still presumably unknown and remain hidden. This secrecy linked to the group's employment of elusive human couriers to transport money, its reliance on regional financing sources, and their participation in sporadic financial collaborations with another extremist and terrorist organisations. In practice, terrorist groups like Boko Haram do not use banks (Stewart & Wroughton, 2014). However, additional financing sources have been discovered to include the deployment of bank robberies, kidnappings for ransom, and illegal trafficking (Campbell, 2014, Stewart & Wroughton, 2014; Pate, 2015); where up to 40% of Boko Haram's revenue has come from the trafficking and trade of illicit rhino horns and ivories (Sterley, 2014, p. 56).

Financial and strategic modes of operations of Boko Haram in committing crimes in Cameroon indicate that the criminal activities of the sect are politically coordinated. This assertion is based on two related developments. First, the sect perceived to have received and still receiving financial support from the northernmost region of Cameroon, known as Borno State, and its adjacent districts. These financiers support the terrorist organisation by providing it with weapons and access to the Cameroonian government for negotiations, particularly when the organisation kidnaps people and demands ransoms of varying amounts. Second, there are connections between Boko Haram and arms dealers in Cameroon that contribute to a network of political and criminal activities (Zenn, 2014).

These developments are not without consequences. Of course, the presence of these politico-criminal networks increases the potency of the activities of Boko Haram. Furthermore, it also opens the door for terrorism since these networks give Boko Haram weapons or money. The operational capacity of Boko Haram would not have been successful if not the accessibility to the money or weaponry it needs to carry out its

operations and aids it receives from external networks. In addition, Boko Haram has reportedly received funds from outside organisations such as the Al Muntada Trust Fund<sup>44</sup>, located in the United Kingdom, the Saudi Arabian Islamic World Society, an unidentified Algerian sect that has given the organisation training, and a 400-million-naira contribution. Training given Boko Haram sect members has also been linked to international terrorist groups such as Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda.

The aforementioned finance and training sources of Boko Haram are in consonance with Zimmermann's causal model which holds that chances for terrorism are created when an outside state or group supports it (Botma, 2015). For instance, Shola (2015, p. 13) argues that:

*“Late Mohammed Yusuf and Mohammed Bello Damagun were tried for terrorism related offences. Mohammed Damagun was arraigned in a federal high court in Abuja on three count charges, namely belonging to Nigerian Taliban, receiving a total of US \$300,000 from Al Qaeda to recruit and train Nigerians in Mauritania for terrorism and aiding terrorists in Nigeria. Mohammed Yusuf was arraigned on five count charges, among which includes receiving monies from Al Qaeda operatives in Pakistan to recruiting terrorists who would attack residence of foreigners, especially Americans living in Nigeria.”*

It was found out that one of the sources of funding of Boko Haram is bank robbery. This revelation was made by some members of the group arrested after the 2011 Christmas Day bombing of a church in Madalla, near Abuja. One of the sect members, Kabiru Abubakar Dikko Umar, popularly known as Kabiru Sokoto, was the leader of the terrorists that carried out Madalla attack. Kabiru Sokoto in his confession revealed that the loot from the bank robberies were shared by five different people – including the less privileged, the widows of those that died in course of jihad, Zakat, those that brought in the money, and to the leadership for use in propagating the course of jihad (Onuoha, 2012).

Another confession of how the Boko Haram is being financed was made another member of the group, Sheriff Shetima, who was arrested for the bank robbery of the Damola branch of First Bank Nigeria PLC in 2011 in Borno State. It was reported that a policeman was killed and twenty-one million naira was taken away during the robbery. Also, in 2011 there were up to 100 bank robberies and 30 out of this number was carried out by the Boko Haram (Thisday, 24, 2011).

Thus, the support of the aforementioned groups has allowed Boko Haram to operate efficiently in carrying out their terrorist attacks. These sources of support have, in effect, created an opportunity for Boko Haram to carry out terror attacks. However, mainstream Salafist and Al Qaeda funding decreased as a result of a couple of misfortune including the various massacres the Boko Haram sect suffered, the collapse of Ansaru's shura in Kaduna in 2012, and the 2013 French-led military intervention in northern Mali, which in



turn disrupted AQIM's supply line to Boko Haram (Zenn, 2014). It is, therefore, possible to argue that funding for Boko Haram has in some ways been facilitated by globalisation given that it fosters the growth of politico-criminal networks, which creates opportunities for terrorism.

### **Migration and "Irrelevance" of Boundaries**

Globalisation has made cross-border travel easier and more "freer". As a result, it has opened up migratory routes that terrorist groups exploit to maximum use. Ascertaining the deployment of migratory routes by Boko Haram sect members as an attack vector remains shrouded in secrecy, but it is reported that international combatants have joined Boko Haram using these mediums. For instance, one source claimed to have assisted in the capture of foreign combatants, but unable to provide the identities of those apprehended.

The government of Cameroon has also identified two Taureg combatants among the Boko Haram terrorists killed in a September 2014 conflict to have used migratory routes to join the Boko Haram sect. Still, other sources indicated that victims of Boko Haram attacks described their attackers as non-Nigerians and non-Kanuri, but especially Tauregs. Cameroonian authorities insist that Boko Haram recruits at the Nigerian border (Zenn, 2014). However, the identity of these foreign combatants remained a secret, making it hard to determine whether or not they entered Nigeria through porous migratory routes. It is quite probable that these foreign combatants were enlisted in Nigeria's surrounding nations. Given the porous nature of the boundaries, it is likely that combatants have taken advantage of them rather than the actual migrant channel.

There are reports that the tenacity of Boko Haram became very severe because of Nigeria's porous borders with Cameroon, Niger, Benin, and Chad. This is gleaned from the backdrop that there has been no proof that Boko Haram has recruited militants from "Western" nations. It is, therefore, impossible to claim that people have joined Boko Haram by using the migratory channels made feasible by globalization given the scant information on the existence of foreign fighters inside the ranks of the sect. These foreigners within the fold of Boko Haram most likely took advantage of border porosity in the same way that Boko Haram had in order to conduct cross-border assaults.

### **Conclusion**

This paper addresses how globalisation contributes to terrorism and the detrimental effects it has had on Nigeria's security circumstances. It predicated its discourse on the Boko Haram terrorist organisation that decimated Northeast Nigeria. The Psychological theory of terrorism (PTT) was adopted as the theoretical frameworks to explain the connection between terrorism and globalisation. This is due to the lack of a universally accepted definition of what constitutes a definition of terrorism. A further challenge is that the phenomena of globalisation has varied meanings for various individuals, wherein defining it has proven rather difficult. This also holds true for the explanation of how terrorism and globalisation work together. The paper, while linking the nexus in

globalisation and international terrorism using the Boko Haram sect as a unit of analysis, identified technology, terror funding and migration and irrelevance of boundaries as facilitators that triggers, escalates and sustains insecurity in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

Arising from the above, the paper makes the following recommendations:

- a. Nigeria must invest heavily in new technology cross border control. Some radars can be used as primary detection sensor for long range remote surveillance platforms. Mobile Surveillance System and Blighter Radar which are cost effective should be introduced to survey both land and air zone simultaneously;
- b. Government should as a matter of urgency, initiate a long-term solution to the issue of terrorism, which should be inform of ideological re-orientation especially from the religious perspective;
- c. Nigerian government should become proactive in the implementation of regional security among ECOWAS member states. ECOWAS member state and governments should enter into agreements in the areas of cooperation and collaboration in the fight against transnational criminal activities and terrorism, which will help to reduce security threats. This has become a global practice, especially among member states of the European Union;
- d. There is the need to create a special unit within the Nigerian military to be called National Guard or Special Force. This is a normal practice in some advanced countries. This special unit in the military should be made to spread across all the states but controlled by federal government. The body should undergo trainings in terrorism and counterterrorism, and warfare strategies and tactics. The special unit should be funded adequately as it is the practice in the developed countries of the West; and,
- e. The government of Nigeria our government in the words of should swallow pride and engage international help in order to decapitate jihadist sects in the country. If American forces mentored the Iraqi forces that recently pushed ISIS out of Iraq, Nigeria explore such an option in the country.

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