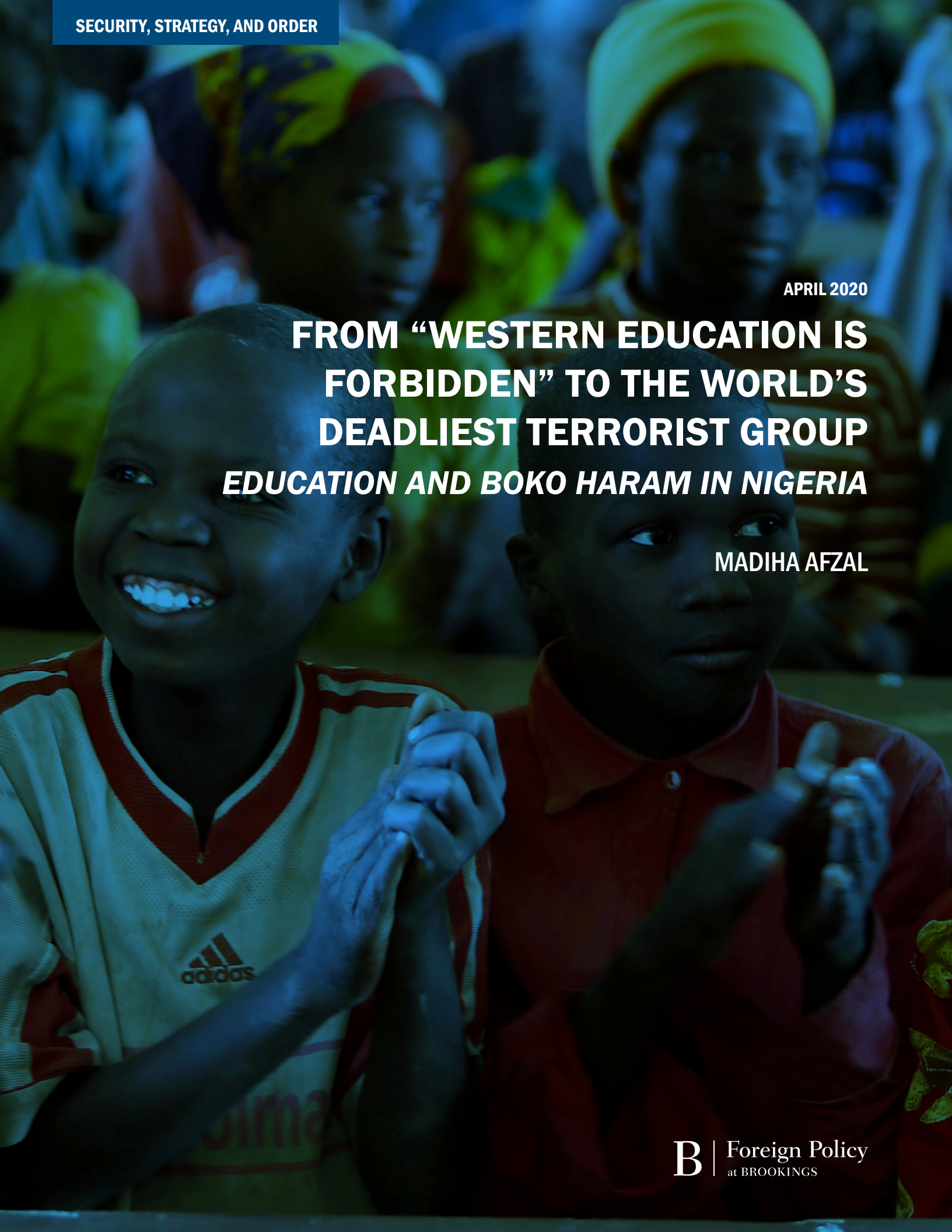


APRIL 2020

FROM "WESTERN EDUCATION IS FORBIDDEN" TO THE WORLD'S DEADLIEST TERRORIST GROUP

EDUCATION AND BOKO HARAM IN NIGERIA

MADIHA AFZAL

B | Foreign Policy at BROOKINGS

FROM "WESTERN EDUCATION IS FORBIDDEN" TO THE WORLD'S DEADLIEST TERRORIST GROUP

EDUCATION AND BOKO HARAM IN NIGERIA

MADIHA AFZAL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Boko Haram — which translates literally to "Western education is forbidden" — has, since 2009, killed tens of thousands of people in Nigeria, and has displaced more than two million others. This paper uses an interdisciplinary approach to examine the relationship between education and Boko Haram. It consists of i) a quantitative analysis of public opinion survey data, and ii) a qualitative approach, including interviews conducted with students, education officials, journalists and practitioners in the field of countering extremism during a September 2019 field visit to Nigeria, as well as a study of textbooks and curricula and a review of the broader historical narratives in the country.

Boko Haram arose in Nigeria's northeast, which is mostly Muslim and has poor educational outcomes relative to the south. The ideology of Boko Haram's founder, Mohammad Yusuf, explicitly attacked Western education as well as Nigeria's democracy and its constitution. Boko Haram's focus on education is unique among peer jihadist movements.

The terrorist group did not emerge in a vacuum: Yusuf capitalized on grievances that already existed in Nigeria's north against the country's Western education system. These grievances rest on several factors. First, there is a lack of northern buy-in for the Nigerian state's post-colonial, federally-imposed Westernized system of education. Many northern Muslims see this system as ideologically incompatible with their beliefs and as insufficiently representative. Second, Western education is also seen as responsible for poor educational outcomes in the north because it was imposed on a population not familiar with that system during colonization, in contrast to the south. Third, by virtue of the poor educational outcomes in the north, the system of Western education is then seen as responsible for the lack of job opportunities that even the educated in the north face — as a symbol of "dashed expectations," leading to the youth "tearing up their certificates," or degrees. Fourth, Western education is considered a symbol of the Nigerian state's corruption because it is Western-educated politicians and elites who are seen as presiding over that corruption.

My data analysis shows that support for Boko Haram in the north does not fall linearly with education, suggesting that the conventional wisdom that a lack of education is associated with support for extremism does not hold. The results *are* compatible with some Boko Haram supporters being uneducated, others being *al-majiri* (beggar children who live and study in religious seminaries), and still others being university graduates who "tore up their certificates." In fact, the results show that for northerners with some years of Western education — peaking in most cases for those who had attended junior secondary school — support for Boko Haram is higher than it is for those with less education, indicating that experience with the system furthered their grievances against it.

Ultimately, the rise of Boko Haram is inextricable from post-colonial identity formation in Nigeria, a singularly diverse state, where the Westernized method of schooling already adopted by the Christian south during colonial times was imposed on the Muslim north post-independence, resulting in dangerous fissures and tensions.

In terms of policy, Nigeria's government must go beyond taking kinetic action against Boko Haram to addressing the north's grievances against its federal system of education. Nigeria's northern citizenry requires a more representative education system than the current federal system, one that can both accommodate its religiosity and that can boost its educational as well as employment prospects.

INTRODUCTION

In 2015, at the height of its influence and control of territory, Boko Haram — which translates literally to "Western education is forbidden" — was ranked the world's deadliest terrorist group by the Global Terrorism Index, ahead of the Islamic State group (ISIS).[1] Since 2009, Boko Haram has killed tens of thousands of people in Nigeria, and has displaced more than two million others.

The group does not call itself Boko Haram; its preferred name is the Jamaat-u-Ahlis-Sunna-Lidda-Awati Wal-Jihad — "the organization committed to the propagation of the Prophet's teachings and jihad." Its founder, Mohammad Yusuf, was a preacher who rose to prominence in the early 2000s in the town of Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state in Nigeria's North East region (see Appendix Figure 1 for a map of Nigeria's states).[2] Yusuf's fiery sermons railed against the Nigerian state's corruption and its propagation of Western education and democracy, linking these to the backwardness of the northeast. The stand against democracy and against Western education formed the two main pillars of his ideology; the latter was much more explicit and overt in Boko Haram than in other jihadist movements.

EDUCATION AND EXTREMISM: A CONTEXT-SPECIFIC RELATIONSHIP

While some analysts argue that the word *boko*, in the Hausa language, denotes more than just Western education for Boko Haram — it includes more broadly "people who operate within Western-style frameworks and institutions" or "Westernized people"[3] — the group's specific, overt, explicit emphasis on education is worth noting and exists "to an unusual degree among peer movements."[4] It makes Nigeria a uniquely compelling place to study the links between education and extremism, a relationship that continues to be understudied across contexts. Shedding light on that relationship is the goal of this paper.

In the years after September 11, 2001, as the world grappled with the threat of terrorism and how to counter it, an empirical literature emerged to try to understand the roots of extremism and terrorism. At that point, the conventional wisdom held that the poor and uneducated were more likely to support terrorism than the rich and educated. It was notable that on my study visit to Nigeria in September 2019, many people with whom I spoke had the same initial response to the question of how they perceived the linkage between education and support for Boko Haram or recruitment into Boko Haram — a lack of education, they would say, is associated with such support — even if they were later able to draw out nuances in the relationship. Given that Nigeria's North East, where Boko Haram originated and operated, has far worse educational outcomes than the south, it is perhaps no wonder that that conventional wisdom holds in Nigeria. In many ways, it continues to hold across contexts because education is perceived as "good" and as enhancing understanding, while extremists are thought to be irrational. My interviewees in Nigeria also equated a lack of education with ignorance, and said only the ignorant joined Boko Haram.

A set of empirical studies across different contexts challenged this conventional view in the mid-2000s. In his 2008 book, *What Makes a Terrorist*, Alan Krueger documented that there was in fact no clear relationship between education and support for extremism across various contexts when the question was examined with data, whether at the individual or macro level.

With that as background, I used both empirical data as well as qualitative techniques — including open-ended interviews in schools and universities, as well as content analysis of textbooks and curricula — to examine the relationship between education and support for terrorist groups in Pakistan. The results, documented fully in my 2018 book, *Pakistan Under Siege: Extremism, Society, and the State*, show that while education, on net, appears to make people less favorable toward terrorist groups, there is also a worrying *increase* in favorability toward these groups at the secondary school level. My analysis of Pakistan Studies textbooks helped explain why that is the case: the books set up a framework of the world in which Pakistan is viewed as the victim of conspiracies of both India and the West, and Pakistanis and Muslims are pitched in opposition to other countries and religions. The textbook content is generally biased and one-sided, and expected to be memorized by rote. I argue that this content and a style of teaching and learning that does not encourage critical thinking, while not directly fostering support for extremist groups, helps inculcate a worldview that makes students more susceptible to terrorist propaganda when they encounter it.

Turning to the relationship between education and extremism across contexts, there are two takeaways from my Pakistan study: one, the relationship between education and extremism should be studied with both qualitative and quantitative approaches in any context. Two, the relationship is necessarily context-specific, affected by, among other things, the quality of the education system, the content of curricula, the goals of the education system, the variation within the system, and the broader historical context and political environment.

For these reasons, it is important to conduct in-depth, rigorous studies of the relationship between education and extremism in other countries. This is why I turned to Nigeria. The idea is that while the education-extremism relationship in any context is specific to it, robust findings from different contexts can shed light on the relationship at large. Nigeria, of course, is also a natural choice to study this relationship, given the centrality

of denouncing Western education in Boko Haram's ideology and the group's terrible violence. It is also the world's seventh most populous nation (and by UN estimates, on track to be the world's third most populous nation by 2050) and is unique in that it is roughly half Christian and half Muslim, and dealing with a violent Islamist insurgency.

As the first in-depth study of education and extremism in Nigeria, the goal of this paper is to establish the baseline evidence that can be established given existing public opinion data as well as a short study visit, described further below, to conduct interviews. The interdisciplinary approach that I use has two elements: a quantitative analysis of public opinion polls combined with a qualitative approach, including interviews with students and education officials as well as a study of textbooks and curricula and the broader historical narratives in the country. This paper aims to tell the story that emerges from a joint analysis of these elements.

STUDY VISIT TO NIGERIA

During the fall of 2019, I traveled to Nigeria for a week, to explore Nigerian narratives on Boko Haram and to complement my empirical analysis with observations from the field. I visited the capital, Abuja, over the week of September 23 to 28, with a day trip to the town of Madalla in neighboring Niger state. Both Abuja and Niger state are in Nigeria's North West region (see Appendix Figure 1). My facilitators were Finn Church Aid's partner on the ground, a local organization focused on countering violent extremism (CVE). They arranged the interviews and, along with Finn Church Aid and the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers, provided logistical and thematic support.

Over five days, I met with a prominent veteran journalist reporting on Boko Haram; visited the federal curriculum center; met with a curriculum specialist from Niger state; met with two officials from the ministry of education in Borno state (for security reasons, we flew them in to meet with me); met with officials in the federal ministry of education; and met with university professors from Borno and Yobe states (they also flew in to Abuja). I also met with CVE specialists in the field. In addition, I visited a government school in Abuja — where I also attended a civics class — and an Islamiyya school in Madalla, and held focus group discussions with students from these schools. Finally, I held a focus group discussion with students from a government school in Minna, Niger state, who traveled to Madalla by car to meet with me.

BOKO HARAM: A BRIEF BACKGROUND

Boko Haram was largely allowed to function unchecked in Borno state before 2009, under political cover from the state's governor, Ali Modu Sheriff. But in 2009, security forces led a crackdown on Boko Haram, killing more than 700 members, including Yusuf. The group became radically more deadly after that, taking on its current incarnation under Yusuf's successor, Abubakar Shekau.

The operation against the group began with a shocking incident, over a seemingly small pretext. In 2009, the Nigerian Police Force had begun stringently implementing a law requiring motorcycle riders to wear helmets. Operation Flush — a police task force that had been created in 2005 "to combat political thugs" — stopped members of Boko Haram in February 2009 as they were traveling to a funeral.[5] These members were not wearing helmets and in that encounter, police shot and killed several of them.

Sheriff, who had relied on Yusuf for electoral support among Maiduguri's youth, especially in the run up to his first election in 2003, needed Yusuf less by 2009; by then, Boko Haram had become more of a nuisance for security forces. By all accounts the incident seems to have been planned.

In response, Yusuf upped his rhetoric on jihad. The police raided Yusuf's base, captured hundreds of members, and killed some of them. Boko Haram retaliated with a rampage of violence — brutally killing police and dozens of civilians in Maiduguri. Then Yusuf was captured and killed by police, setting the stage for Shekau to be his successor. Shekau heightened the group's campaign of violence.

In August 2011, Boko Haram conducted its first attack on an international target, the United Nations headquarters in Abuja. The terrorist group's international profile was raised when it began kidnapping hundreds of schoolgirls — especially in April 2014, when it kidnapped 267 schoolgirls from the town of Chibok in Borno state, sparking the global "bring back our girls" campaign. Appendix Figure 2 shows estimates of numbers of civilians killed by Boko Haram between 2011 and 2018, according to two different sources.[6] 2014 and 2015 have been the most violent years of its insurgency to date.

The Boko Haram insurgency has by and large affected the north, and within the north, mainly the North East — states that not only have a higher concentration of Muslims relative to the south (though it is a mistake to classify the north as exclusively Muslim and south as exclusively Christian) but are also vastly poorer and less educated than the south, where Nigeria's oil wealth is concentrated. Borno state has borne the brunt of the violence in the insurgency, with nearly 30,000 deaths reported from July 2011 to date (these can be attributed to Boko Haram, state actors, or sectarian actors).[7] Adamawa state is second, with nearly 4,000 deaths reported. Other northern states follow.

As Boko Haram's violence intensified after 2011 and its control of northern territory increased, especially after 2013, backlash grew against President Goodluck Jonathan's lackluster response to the insurgency. This was arguably one of the reasons Jonathan was voted out of office in the 2015 election, a rare event for West African incumbents. The former military dictator Muhammadu Buhari, who had promised to wage a powerful military campaign against Boko Haram, replaced Jonathan. Over the next two years, the military claims that it decimated the terrorist group. While Boko Haram certainly lost control over territory, continued violence by the group puts the entirety of that claim into doubt. Human rights groups also allege widespread abuses by the military in areas formerly held by Boko Haram, where the military has treated the terrorist group's victims the same way it treated militants, engaging in indiscriminate killing in villages suspected of including militants.[8]

Boko Haram pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group in 2015, which led to infighting and the group splintering apart. Boko Haram now consists of four separate sub-groups: the faction led by Abubakar Shekau; Ansaru al-Musulmina fi Bilad al-Sudan (Ansaru), which broke away and aligned with al-Qaida in 2012; the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), which broke away in 2016 and was headed by Abu Masab al-Barnawi; and a fourth entity, Bakura, that remains loyal to Shekau but is at odds with ISWAP. In this analysis, I refer to the group at large. Boko Haram now functions largely out of the Lake Chad region, where the borders of Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria meet, making occasional incursions into each of those countries and thus internationalizing the conflict.

Boko Haram's violence continues. On July 27, 2019, exactly ten years after the terrorist group was created, a Boko Haram attack killed 65 mourners at a funeral in a village north of Maiduguri. On February 10, 2020, militants linked to Boko Haram burned at least 30 people to death as they slept in their cars during the night in Auno on their way to Maiduguri.

THE IDEOLOGY OF MOHAMMAD YUSUF

Boko Haram's founder Mohammad Yusuf was born in Yobe state, which neighbors Borno, in 1970, and moved to Maiduguri at an unknown date, sometime before 2001. By 2001, Yusuf had already achieved a level of prominence in Borno, as seen in the fact that he was appointed a member of the state's Sharia Implementation Committee (the committee followed the adoption of Sharia by 12 northern states in 2001; this is discussed in further detail below).

Yusuf was a charismatic speaker whose views and rhetoric hardened over time. In the early 2000s, he established the Ibn Taymiyyah mosque in Maiduguri as his base. His speeches were apparently taken "wholesale from the writings of a small, hardline group of Saudi clerics," complete with misquoted verses from the Quran.[9]

Yusuf argued that Islam forbade Western education. "These foreign, global, colonialist schools," he said, "have embraced matters that violate Islamic law, and it is forbidden to operate them, support them, study and teach in them."[10] In a book he published in 2009 on Boko Haram's doctrine, one chapter was titled: "The foreign Western colonial schools: their poisons, harms and dangers to the nation." In it, Yusuf claimed that education in "Western" schools — government schools that followed Nigeria's official curriculum — was "Christianization in itself," saying their teachers were missionaries, and that their education was "blasphemous."[11] Yusuf further associated Western education with "fornication, lesbianism, homosexuality, and other [corruptions]" as well as "Darwinism."[12]

Yusuf's ideology went beyond targeting Western education to attacking Nigeria's democracy, its constitution, its national anthem, and other formal symbols of its nationhood, including its national flag and pledge of allegiance. And it did not emerge in a vacuum, but operationalized sentiments, including those against Western education, that already existed in Nigeria's north. Muslim parents in the north had long worried that these government schools would make their children Christians or atheists.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN THE NORTH

In the early 19th century, northern Nigeria formed part of the Sokoto caliphate under the rule of Usman Dan Fodio. After the British established political control over the south of Nigeria in the late 19th century, they moved toward the north, gradually establishing indirect political control through religious emirs. The protectorate of Northern Nigeria was established in 1906, and control continued to be exercised by the British via "indirect rule" through the emirs.

In the colonial southern Nigerian protectorate, the medium of instruction in schools was English, and the curriculum was based firmly on Western education, with missionaries also playing a role.

But the north was traditional, religious, and resistant to change, and the British were careful not to disturb the status quo, even after the northern and southern protectorates were merged in 1914. The Hausa language was recognized in northern schools, and Quranic and Islamic schools dominated; although some Western schools were established, they operated in conjunction with the Islamic schools. No Christian missionaries operated in the north. While the British directed funding toward the Christian or Western schools in the south during this time, they denied funding to the Islamic schools in the north.

Nigeria became independent in 1960. At that point, Western education became the gold standard in the country — and the passport to employment — giving the south, which by then had decades of experience with Western-style schooling, a clear advantage over the north at the country's inception. That advantage has persisted and even widened over the six decades since independence: Appendix Figure 3 shows how secondary school enrollment varies by state in Nigeria; the northern states have far lower enrollment rates relative to southern ones. A similar pattern holds for female literacy rates (Appendix Figure 4). The North East has adult literacy rates of 40% relative to 90% in the South South region (around the Niger River delta).

As I mentioned earlier, some analysts argue that for Boko Haram, Western education is part of "a larger, evil system."[13] According to Alexander Thurston, "[Yusuf] saw total continuity between northern Nigerian Muslims' experience of subjugation to Britain from 1900 to 1960 and their position in post-colonial Nigeria."[14]

Nigeria's post-colonial education system is a fundamental part of why the north continues to be poorer and less educated than the south: the imposition of a system of Western education in the post-colonial decades in the north weakened it relative to the south because that was not its (the north's) system. As James J. Hentz argues, "the dominance of secular education as advanced in the South has held the north back."[15] The federal government has also ensured Islamic schools do not receive funding from it, continuing the trend that existed pre-independence.

While Nigeria's constitution is secular, the transition to democracy in the country in 1999 was followed by 12 northern states demanding Sharia law, making apparent how they see themselves as different from the south. In the following years, Sharia was instituted in nine states (Zamfara, Kano, Yobe, Borno, Jigawa, Kebbi, Bauchi, Katsina, and Sokoto), and for only majority-Muslim areas in three others (Niger, Kaduna, and Gombe).

A NOTE ON YUSUF'S FOLLOWERS

Yusuf didn't come up with his rhetoric out of the blue: As mentioned earlier, he operationalized sentiment on religion, democracy, and education that already existed in the north. It is no wonder that the anthropologist Gerhard Müller-Kosack "doesn't believe Yusuf sparked this up-swell in religious fervor, but that he somehow harnessed a zeitgeist."[16] And it is no coincidence that it is precisely in one of the northern states that had called for instituting Sharia that Yusuf's rhetoric resonated. Alexander Peeples also situates Boko Haram within Salafist movements that previously existed in the north; while essentially non-violent, he notes that they paved the way for Boko Haram's violent interpretations of religion.[17]

In his years of preaching, Yusuf amassed a large number of followers, drawn, by all accounts, from all manner of people in society, "a wide socioeconomic spectrum."[18] When seen in videos, his mosques would be filled with hundreds of attendees.

According to one senior Nigerian official, Yusuf's "initial followership was largely from among secondary school students and primary school pupils who abandoned their studies…As he got more followers, his power and influence also grew."[19] Thurston records that "the whole area [of Yusuf's mosque compound] would be lined by exotic cars."[20]

Evidence suggests that mosques and madrassas appear to have been a venue for Boko Haram recruitment. According to researchers Anneli Botha and Mahdi Abdile's interviews with 119 former Boko Haram fighters, over a quarter of them said that they had been introduced to the group through mosques (14%) or madrassas (13%).[21]

As mentioned earlier, Yusuf had political cover in his activities before 2009. There was speculation of a deal between him and the governor of Borno state, Ali Modu Sheriff, under which Yusuf was allowed to conduct his activities and was promised a greater implementation of Sharia in Borno in return for mobilizing his supporters to vote for Sheriff in 2003. Once Sheriff was in power, Yusuf seems to have wanted guarantees of a stronger Sharia and Sheriff wanted Yusuf's help in winning reelection. Ultimately, when the tide turned against Boko Haram, and when Sheriff felt that he no longer needed Yusuf and Boko Haram, he ordered Operation Flush to target them.

UNDERSTANDING ORDINARY NIGERIANS' VIEWS ON BOKO HARAM

No in-depth quantitative analysis has been undertaken to date on Nigerians' views of Boko Haram to understand how much support there is in the population, as well as how it has changed over time, how it varies across regions and by religion, and to identify the drivers of such support. What do those who have lived under Boko Haram's terror think of the group? In many cases, non-militants have been doubly persecuted: Boko Haram has brutally targeted those who did not support the group, and the military has been hard-handed against those who live in Boko Haram strongholds. Nigerians living in areas outside the reach of Boko Haram also conflate the perpetrators and their victims, accusing the latter of being accomplices of Boko Haram. Given this context, this paper establishes the first quantitative evidence on Nigerians' perceptions of Boko Haram.

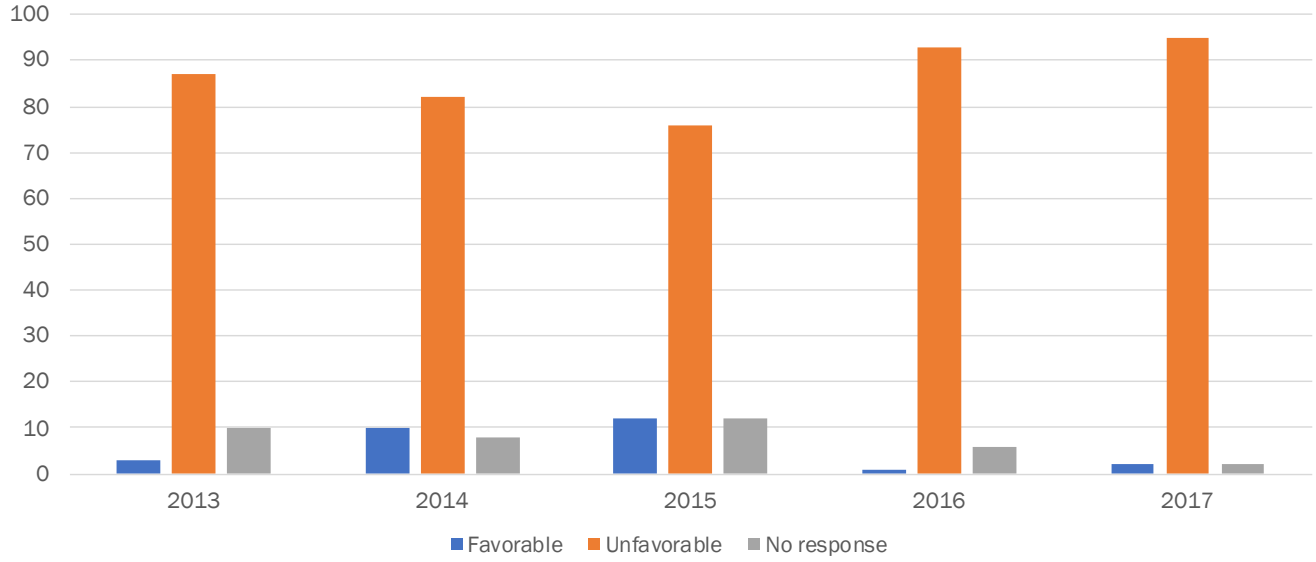
I use data from the Pew Global Attitudes Polls that are conducted yearly in Nigeria to assess attitudes towards Boko Haram, and to understand how they vary within the population.[22] Pew surveys about a thousand people each year in Nigeria representatively across its six geopolitical zones, or regions, and Lagos, although it excludes Borno and Yobe states, and some areas in Taraba, out of security concerns. That means that my empirical results do not include respondents from the epicenter of Boko Haram. That should be kept in mind when looking at the analysis.

Nigeria's six regions, defined in the 1990s, are: North East, North North, North West, South South, South East, and South West. The country's 36 states are divided among these regions; while Lagos is officially part of the South West region, it is broken out for representative sampling by Pew due to its large population. A note below Appendix Figure 1 lists the states by region.

During each year between 2013 and 2017, Pew asked Nigerians a question about Boko Haram. The question simply asks the respondent if they have favorable (very or somewhat) or unfavorable (very or somewhat) views toward Boko Haram. Respondents may choose not to answer.

Assessing support for terrorist groups using public opinion polls provides a concrete measure of such support, although it is necessarily imperfect because it is self-reported and subject to the usual biases in survey data, including nonresponse. Such questions are also sensitive in a context where terrorism is a reality; respondents may condition their response depending on their perceptions of the interviewer, or due to fear. This has to be figured into the analysis. The value, however, of this data is greater than the potential problems with it. Studying support for terrorist groups is crucial to understanding how terrorist groups grow and survive (they need a permissive population to do so), where they might recruit, and to serve as a proxy for extremism.

FIGURE 1: NIGERIANS' VIEWS ON BOKO HARAM BY YEAR



Source: Author's graph, using Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Surveys for Nigeria, 2013-2017.

Interview question: Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of Boko Haram?

Figure 1 shows tabulations of the responses to the question about Boko Haram by year for all respondents in Nigeria. The low overall levels of nonresponse are notable despite the sensitive nature of the question. Questions about terrorist groups tend to elicit far higher nonresponse rates in other contexts such as Pakistan — although perhaps it makes sense given that the question was not asked in the areas hardest hit by Boko Haram. Nigerians' overall favorability toward Boko Haram declined decisively after 2014 and 2015, Boko Haram's most violent years.[23] Why favorability is as high as it is in 2015 after the violence of 2014 (with 12% of respondents expressing favorable views toward Boko Haram and only 76% expressing unfavorable views), is somewhat of a puzzle. This is something I'll return to. Favorability reduces dramatically by 2016 as the military campaign against Boko Haram begins in earnest, likely reflecting respondents' recognition of the state finally turning against the insurgency.

I also tracked other questions that can measure support for terrorism and groups beyond Boko Haram: views on violence against civilians in the name of Islam, and on al-Qaida and the Islamic State group, to understand how support for those groups has varied over the years.

The first was the following Pew question on violence against civilians, directed only to Muslims, in 2013, 2014, and 2015: "Some people think that suicide bombing and other forms of violence against civilian targets are justified in order to defend Islam from its enemies. Other people believe that, no matter what the reason, this kind of violence is never justified. Do you personally feel that this kind of violence is often justified to defend Islam, sometimes justified, rarely justified, or never justified?" Eight percent of Muslim respondents in Nigeria in 2013 said this kind of violence was often or sometimes justified. This number rose to 19% in 2014 and to an astounding 43% in 2015. This is similar to the pattern with views on Boko Haram, but cannot be tracked after 2015 because the violence against civilians question was not asked in 2016 and 2017 in Nigeria.

The same pattern holds for favorability towards al-Qaida; a question about views on al-Qaida analogous to the question about attitudes toward Boko Haram was posed to Pew respondents in 2013, 2014, and 2015: favorability toward al-Qaida increased from 10% in 2013 to 18% in 2014 and 19% in 2015. Pew respondents in Nigeria were only asked about the Islamic State group once, in 2015, and 14% said they had a favorable view of the group. In 2015, respondents were also asked about the Nigerian state's actions against Boko Haram; 61% said that they thought the Nigerian military was making progress in its fight against Boko Haram.

This means that views became more supportive of terrorist groups — not just Boko Haram but also al-Qaida — and supportive of violence in Nigeria after Boko Haram's violence increased, at least for two years. This stands in contrast to the pattern in Pakistan, where support for all terrorist groups, even those that attacked Pakistan's foes, and for violence declined after the Pakistan Taliban's attacks increased, though it did take a year or so of sustained violence.[24] In Pakistan, the group began conducting large scale terror attacks in 2007, and in 2009, support for both the Pakistan Taliban and al-Qaida declined.

It seems that as Boko Haram's influence spread, and as their control of territory increased between 2013 and 2015, support for the group increased, in spite of its violence. In contrast to the Pakistan Taliban, Boko Haram actually acquired and held territory; in fact, it was once it acquired territory that support for the group initially increased (from 2013 to 2014). That support sustained as the group held territory until 2015. Support declined only after Boko Haram was countered militarily by the Nigerian state. In Pakistan, support for the Pakistan Taliban declined after the Taliban's sustained attacks for a couple of years, more than five years before the military began countering it.

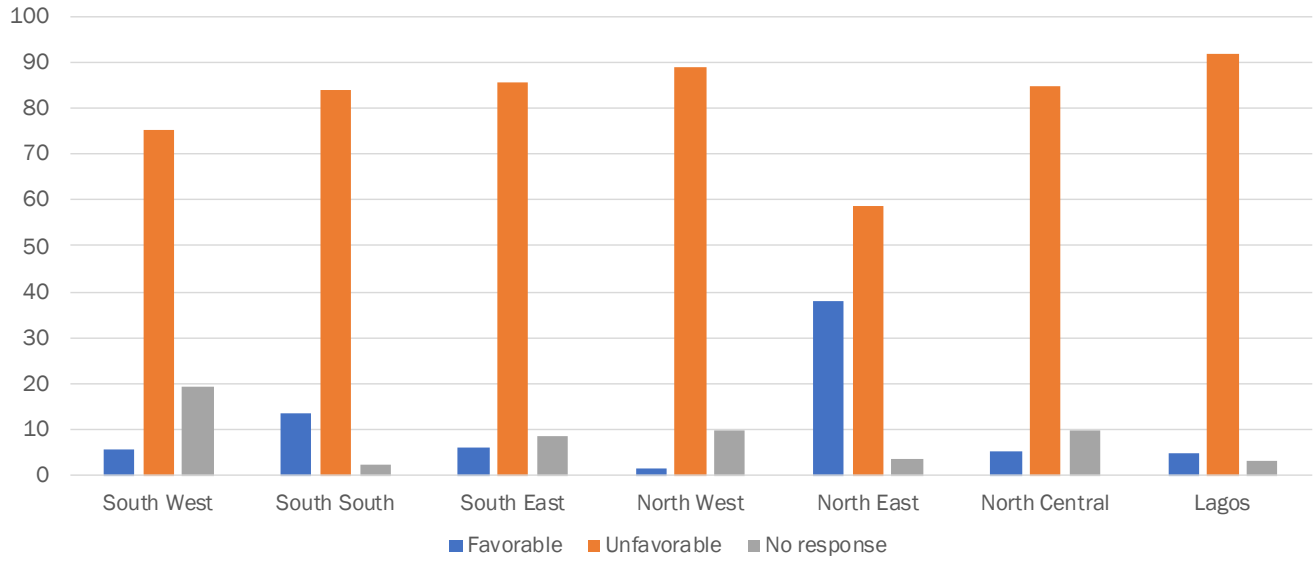
The decline in support for Boko Haram appears to be sustained — at least in the two-year time horizon for which we have data, 2016 and 2017, there is no evidence of a backlash against the military resulting in a rebound in support for Boko Haram as the military mistreated civilians in Boko Haram strongholds.

HOW THE REGIONS VARY IN SUPPORT FOR BOKO HARAM

Figures 2a and 2b show regional differences in views of Boko Haram for 2014 and 2015, respectively, the two years where support for the group was significant. It is immediately clear that the higher favorability for 2014 is driven by respondents in the North East; in 2015 it seems to be driven by all three northern regions: North West, North Central, and North East. Note that this data excludes Borno and Yobe, and some areas in Taraba, as mentioned earlier, because of security concerns.

Interestingly, in 2014, the South South also has favorability for Boko Haram above 10 percent, though it is lower than the North East region; this could in fact reflect the south's biases against the north. A Nigerian writer, Adaobi Nwaubani, reported that in those months she often heard southerners saying, "Those stupid northerners. Let them continue killing themselves. Is that not their stock in trade?"[25]

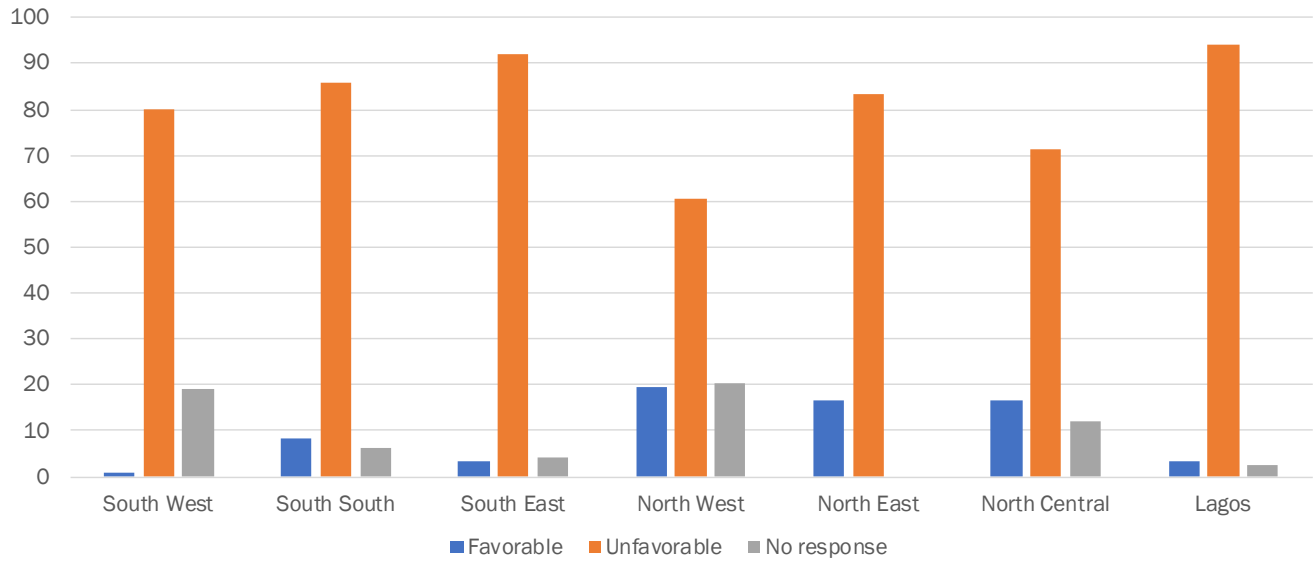
FIGURE 2A: VIEWS OF BOKO HARAM, BY REGION (2014)



Source: Author's graph, using Pew Research Center's 2014 Global Attitudes Survey data for Nigeria.

Interview question: Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of Boko Haram?

FIGURE 2B: VIEWS OF BOKO HARAM, BY REGION (2015)



Source: Author's graph, using Pew Research Center's 2015 Global Attitudes Survey data for Nigeria.

Interview question: Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of Boko Haram?

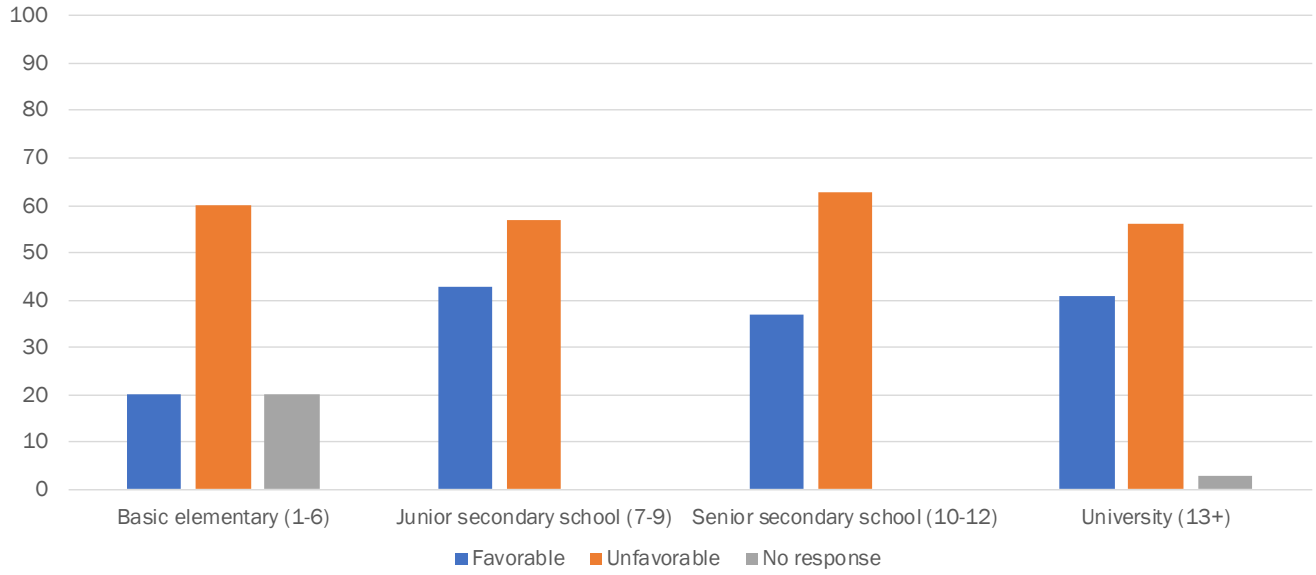
EDUCATION AND SUPPORT FOR BOKO HARAM

The formal Nigerian education system prior to university has three levels: basic elementary, which runs from grades one to six; junior secondary (JSS), which runs from grades seven to nine; and senior secondary (SSS), which runs from grades 10 to 12. The formal schools follow a system of Western education, in which the curriculum is formulated federally by the National Council on Education Research and Training (which I visited while in Nigeria). As the next step, Education Resource Centers in each province recommend textbooks from a list of federally approved books, from which schools can in turn choose their textbooks. In the north, as well as in other parts of the country, there are also some Islamiyya schools which cater to Muslims; these combine the official education system with a formal religious seminary.

Figures 3a to 3d show how views on Boko Haram vary by the respondents' education levels for the regions where support for Boko Haram is significant: this is the North East in 2014 and all three regions in the north in 2015. The topline result is that there is a non-monotonic relationship between education and support for terrorism in all these cases, i.e., support for Boko Haram does not linearly rise or fall with greater education. There also seems, in most cases, to be higher support among respondents who attended junior secondary school. As a first cut, these results contradict the conventional wisdom, still strong in the Nigerian case, that the less educated are more likely to support terrorism.

Making the jump from support to recruitment, this is also in line with research that suggests that most Boko Haram fighters had received some form of schooling; only 10% of the 119 former Boko Haram fighters interviewed by Botha and Abdile did not receive any form of education.[26] The researchers also found that 56% of the Boko Haram fighters they interviewed did not finish secondary school, which is consistent with somewhat higher support for Boko Haram among those who attended junior secondary school.

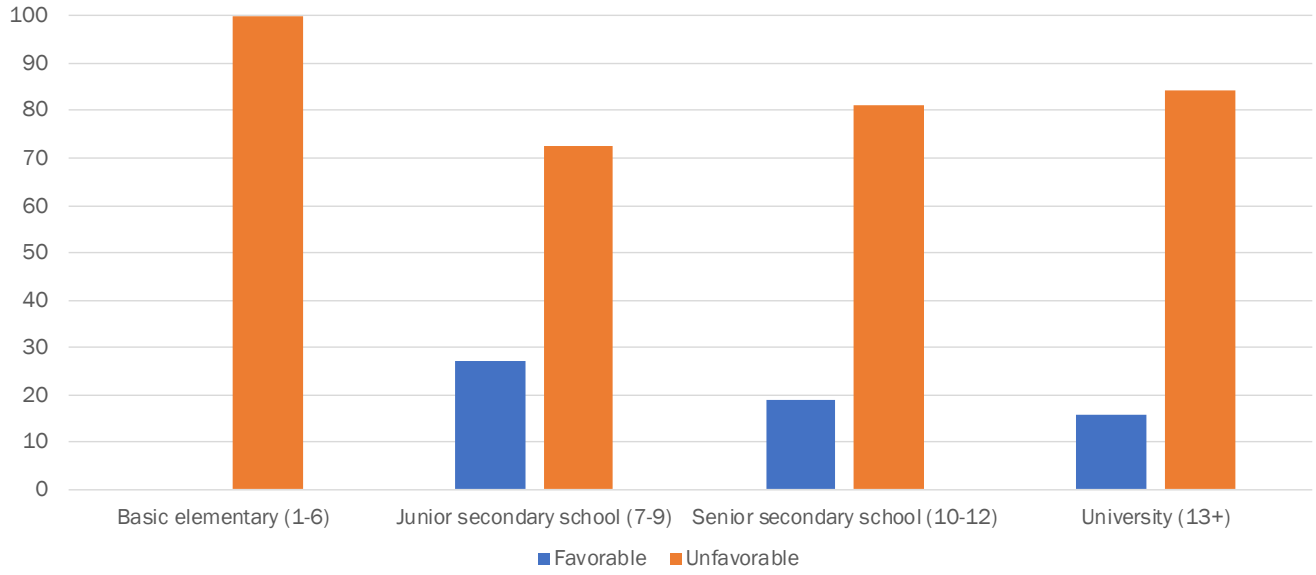
FIGURE 3A: VIEWS OF BOKO HARAM, NORTH EAST REGION, BY EDUCATION (2014)



Source: Author's graph, using Pew Research Center's 2014 Global Attitudes Survey data for Nigeria.

Interview question: Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of Boko Haram?

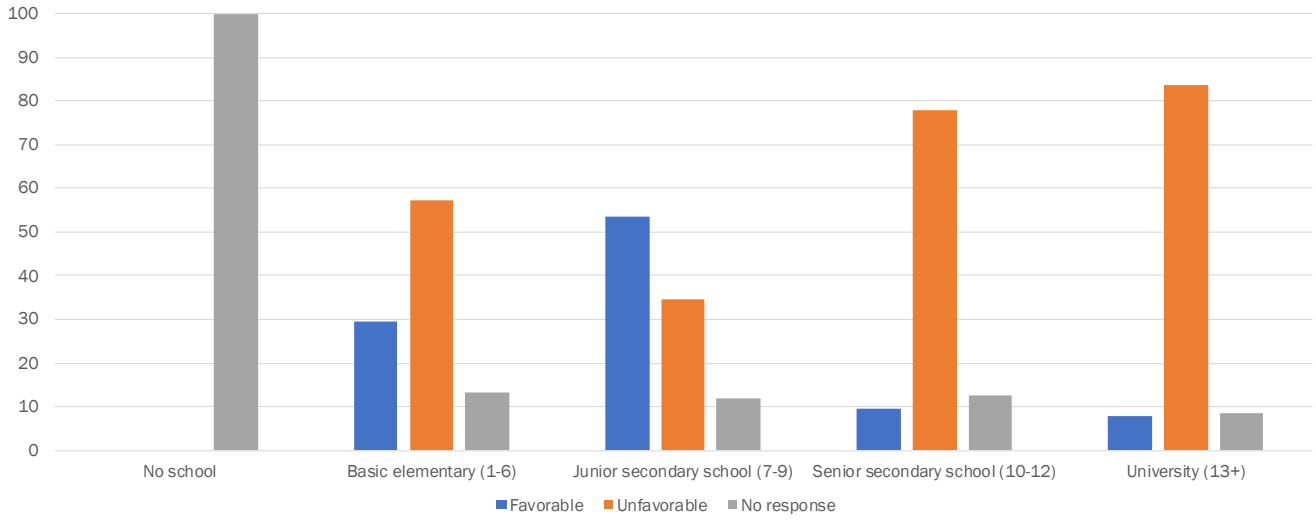
FIGURE 3B: VIEWS OF BOKO HARAM, NORTH EAST REGION, BY EDUCATION (2015)



Source: Author's graph, using Pew Research Center 2015 Global Attitudes Survey data for Nigeria.

Interview question: Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of Boko Haram?

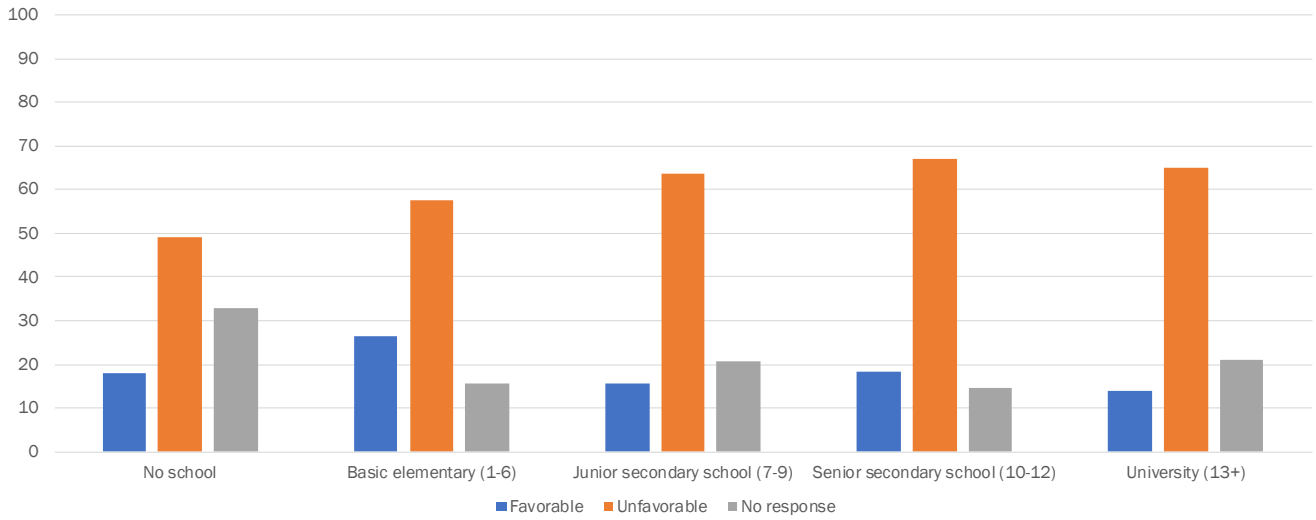
FIGURE 3C: VIEWS OF BOKO HARAM, NORTH CENTRAL REGION, BY EDUCATION (2015)



Source: Author's graph, using Pew Research Center's 2015 Global Attitudes Survey data for Nigeria.

Interview question: Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of Boko Haram?

FIGURE 3D: VIEWS OF BOKO HARAM, NORTH WEST REGION, BY EDUCATION (2015)



Source: Author's graph, using Pew Research Center's 2015 Global Attitudes Survey data for Nigeria.

Interview question: Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of Boko Haram?

REGION AND RELIGION

I also examined how views vary for Christian and Muslim respondents by region for both 2014 and 2015. The results are fascinating: for both years, I found that Muslim respondents' support in the southern regions is either zero, or close to it. But the story is entirely different in the North East. In 2014, support is very high among Muslims in the North East, at 49%; it is also significant among Muslims in the North Central states, at around 11%; it is low among Muslims in the North West, at only 2%. Things change by

2015: support for Boko Haram among Muslims in the North East declines, so that it is lower even than support for Boko Haram among Christians (18% among Muslims versus 25% among Christians in the North East), though this is still a significant number; but it increases to 20% among Muslims in the North West, and 24% among Muslims in the North Central region.

The results together suggest two things: First, support for Boko Haram's "religious" ideology does not extend to Muslims beyond the north. I'll return to this. Second, support for Boko Haram does shift with the experience of violence: for Muslim respondents in the North East, the main target of Boko Haram, support for the group declines from 2014 to 2015. This, however, does not extend to Muslim respondents in the North West and North Central regions, where support for Boko Haram significantly rises among Muslims in 2015. One explanation is that Boko Haram's ideology resonates among respondents in the north, and rises as they see it gain territory, but it falls if they are on the receiving end of its violence. This appears to follow the pattern I observed in a time series of support for the Pakistan Taliban (which declined with sustained terrorist attacks, as mentioned earlier).

THE ROLE OF FEAR?

Two findings suggest that respondents are not reporting that they support the group out of fear, at least not completely. First, the sustained favorability for Boko Haram in 2015 is driven by the North Central and North West regions, which were not the focus of Boko Haram's attacks; and though the North East should have been fearful of the group in 2015, support there did decline. Two, the pattern is mirrored for views on violence against civilians and on al-Qaida; if fear of Boko Haram were a dominant factor in explaining support, the pattern would hold for Boko Haram but not necessarily for al-Qaida or for violence in general.

THREE POPULAR NARRATIVES ON BOKO HARAM AND EDUCATION

Based on discussions during my study trip to Nigeria and a review of narratives on Boko Haram, there are three popular narratives on Boko Haram and education:

The "lack of education" narrative

Given that the North East has far poorer educational outcomes than the south, the conventional wisdom that poverty and a lack of education explain terrorism is a popular Nigerian explanation for the rise of Boko Haram. Over and over again, when I asked people I met in Nigeria how they thought education and support for Boko Haram were related, their first response was: through a lack of education. This had some variants; some people would relate this to poverty, or to ignorance. Notably, a number of education officials I met subscribed to this notion, but this idea extended beyond them, even to those engaging in CVE.

The al-majiri *narrative*

Another narrative points to the *al-majiris* — children educated in Islamic seminaries (some analysts say there are 10 million such children in northern Nigeria) — as Boko Haram recruits. These students beg in the streets, and in return the *mallam* or religious leader provides them with food, shelter, and religious education, while teaching them

that northern Nigeria is ignored by the corrupt rulers of the country, and that the north's Sharia-based legal system does not go far enough. Accounts suggest that Mohammad Yusuf himself was an *al-majiri*.

The Economist, in a 2014 article on Boko Haram, focused on *al-majiri*s as a major source of the group's recruits.[27] Education department officials whom I met also suggested this. This narrative is related to the lack of education narrative, but it assumes additional ideological training from the *mallam* and puts the onus on that.

The "tearing up certificates" narrative

One popular story (with some actual documentation) about Boko Haram recruitment is that university students in northern Borno and Yobe, after listening to Mohammad Yusuf's sermons in which he railed against Nigerian institutions, tore up their diplomas, including medical degrees (commonly called "certificates" in Nigeria), saying their education was useless as it did not help them get jobs, and joined the movement. The prominent journalist I interviewed said that Yusuf would point to students, and say: "Your elder brother graduated six years ago — is he employed?" — thus linking recruitment directly to high unemployment in the North East. Yusuf combined this with ideological exhortations, telling these students and graduates that joining his movement instead would guarantee them a better hereafter. The journalist said he too knew young men who tore up their certificates or left school in this timeframe.

The young men who were tearing up their certificates reportedly included the Yobe state governor's nephew, the Borno state secretary's son, and five sons of a successful businessman who dealt in government contracts.[28] Thurston argues that this reflected pre-existing grievances: "Students at the university of Maiduguri in the 1990s… would have been exposed to discourses castigating western-style elites for the corruption in Nigeria… many would have also doubted whether their degrees would actually get them jobs."[29] Andrew Walker reports that the argument goes something like this: "We've seen those that go to school, they don't speak well or write well, they don't get a job, so why bother?"[30]

Some of those I met in Nigeria pointedly disputed that there were many such students in number: A curriculum officer from Borno state said that there were few degree holders who were recruited by Boko Haram; those who joined were brainwashed, misled, or abducted. She argued that it was the *al-majiri* or the uneducated or unemployed youth who would willingly join the group.

This "tearing up certificates" narrative, of course, posits that the educated joined Boko Haram, and contradicts the lack of education and *al-majiri* narratives about the dominant source of recruits for the group. The notion that the unemployed join Boko Haram fits with all three narratives, though those who postulated it most often linked it to the *al-majiri* or lack of education.

HOW EDUCATION AND BOKO HARAM RELATE

Based on both my data analysis as well as my interviews, it seems Boko Haram, as the group grew in the 2000s, gathered a fair number of adherents in the north. Beyond disaffected youth and the poor in urban areas, its followers also included the wealthy.[31] A number of people I talked to seemed to know those who either initially became Boko Haram members and then left after the group started engaging in mass violence or those who sympathized with the group. According to the journalist I interviewed: "We [he and Boko Haram members

or sympathizers] all grew up together, played football together." In the words of the two professors I met from the north: "There are many [Boko Haram members or sympathizers] in our communities."

Note, of course, that the three narratives above point to Boko Haram recruits (not counting the significant numbers the group recruited through forced measures such as kidnappings) and active supporters; my empirical analysis, as well as inferences from my qualitative analysis, deal with the group's supporters and sympathizers, including those who may be latent sympathizers. How do the two relate? The assumption is that a more intense form of support or sympathy could potentially lead to recruitment; in addition, sympathizers also form a base from which recruits and the group at large draw logistical support and legitimacy.

The data analysis in this paper shows that support for Boko Haram in the north does not fall linearly with education, suggesting that the conventional wisdom that a lack of education is associated with support for Boko Haram does not hold. The results are compatible with some Boko Haram supporters being illiterate, others being *al-majiri*, and still others being university graduates who "tore up their certificates."

The grievance against Western education

Taken together, my data analysis, interviews, and background research suggest the following theory of the case: The education system played a fundamental role in the grievances of the north against the Nigerian state, via the lack of northern buy-in for its post-colonial, Westernized system of education, which is seen as ideologically incompatible with the beliefs of many northern Muslims. Second, that system of education is also seen as responsible for poor educational outcomes in the north because it was imposed on a population not familiar with it, especially relative to the south. Third, by virtue of the poor educational outcomes in the north, the system of Western education is then seen as responsible for the lack of job opportunities that even the educated in the north face — as a symbol of "dashed expectations."[32] Fourth, Western education is disliked because it is Western-educated politicians and elites who are considered to preside over Nigeria's corruption.

These sentiments — these "existing cultural, financial, and pedagogical frustrations with Nigeria's education system"[33] — were already prevalent among the northern states' populations before Yusuf emerged onto the scene. Yusuf simply operationalized them effectively. It is no coincidence, then, that Boko Haram "emerged in one of the parts of Nigeria where mass government education registered its greatest failures."[34]

In the north, as mentioned earlier, a "rising generation of Muslims was primed to view government and Western-style education with mistrust and even hatred."[35] The sentiments on which Boko Haram capitalized were common in northern elites; but various people I spoke with noted that once Boko Haram began its reign of violence, northern elites denounced its tactics.

According to the two professors I met from Borno and Yobe states, the post-colonial imposition of Western education in the north disempowered the entire system of Islamic education that existed prior to independence in the north by rendering it obsolete: Those who could read the Quran and write Arabic but could not read or write in English were deemed illiterate. Thurston reiterates this as well, saying that Western education post-independence "challenged Muslim scholars' monopoly… over literacy and access to positions, resources, and prestige."[36]

Both professors also argued that northerners felt that the federal curriculum in the north did not sufficiently incorporate Islam ("Our [text]books are from a different culture," they said), and that Muslim northerners felt that Sharia had not been properly implemented in the north after 2001. It was in this environment, they noted, that Yusuf's claims that he would restore the status of the Quran in the north resonated.

Northerners also do not seem to buy in at all to the federal curriculum's assertion of "one Nigeria" — a nationalism based on the boundaries of the post-colonial Nigerian state itself, as espoused in Nigeria's national anthem and its constitution, without religious, ethnic, or cultural grounding — and Nigeria's "federal character" (See the note below on Nigeria's curriculum).

To that point, one of my facilitators, when sitting in on a secondary school civics class in Abuja with me, pointed out how the assertion of "good" elements of culture in that class was based on examples from the south, while the teacher associated the north only with Boko Haram and the "bring back our girls" campaign. The journalist I met argued: "We have a curriculum that doesn't reflect our diversity in Nigeria." The Nigerian north's grievances run deep.

This all explains why northerners with some schooling, especially junior secondary schooling, display higher support for Boko Haram, as my data analysis shows: Northerners' interaction with the Western education system draws out their grievances against it.

On the other hand, the "one Nigeria" concept is something that my student interviewees — both Muslims and Christians — in Abuja and Niger state seemed to buy into wholesale, showing no hint of the northern grievance against that Nigerian concept of nationhood.

A note on Junior Secondary School textbooks and the formation of the Nigerian curriculum

Civics is a core course in junior secondary schools in Nigeria (history is not); it is part of the Religion and National Values curriculum. I read over civics textbooks for junior secondary schools for this study. The modules of the civics curriculum are: national values; governance; human rights and the rule of law; consumer rights and responsibilities; and representative democracy. The textbooks stress the unity of Nigeria, the importance of its federation, and note the "dangers of ethnocentrism."

Nigeria's "federal character" is imbued upon the curriculum; it follows from its constitution. The concept was instituted into the new constitution in response to the country's civil war, which lasted from 1967 to 1970, in which the Igbo ethnic group fought the rest of the country to secede and create the separate state of Biafra in the southeast. The concept of "federal character" is based on the simple principle that "no ethnic group would monopolize leadership of the government or be excluded from national economic and political opportunities."[37] Some argue that the principle fossilized and hardened ethnic identities and created resentments.

Beyond the "federal character," how is the curriculum created? This was the focus of my interviews at the federal curriculum center in Abuja as well as with state curriculum officers I met, both from Niger state as well as Borno. It seems curriculum formation is dictated from the center, with invited "stakeholders" from all states. While it is supposed to be representative, there is potential for corruption in both the selection of stakeholders and the awarding of textbook rights. As a result, states that are closer to the federal government or more aligned with it are likely to have a greater say in the curriculum; it is easy to sideline marginalized states, whether intentionally or not.

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

In some ways the rise of Boko Haram is inextricable from post-colonial identity formation in Nigeria, a singularly diverse state, where the Westernized method of schooling already adopted by the Christian south during colonial times was imposed on the Muslim north post-independence — by a new political entity, the Nigerian state, that had been created by British colonialism.

In Pakistan, my work showed that it was the content of education — designed to inculcate a particular form of religious nationalism — that made people vulnerable to terrorist propaganda. In Nigeria, it was the disillusionment with Western education — taken in the northern context also to be a stand-in for the whole education system, and of Westernization — on which Yusuf and Boko Haram capitalized.

This could perhaps lead to the conclusion that education ends up being the vehicle for engendering extremism in contexts where there is a struggle over identity. When the state or a dominant group imposes its definition of national identity on the whole country through education, that is bound to create fissures and tensions (as in Nigeria), or to inculcate a one-sided world view that ultimately proves harmful (as in Pakistan).

These problems of identity and representation manifest especially in post-colonial societies. The education system is a vehicle that can be used to deal with them constructively, or, by papering over fissures, to exacerbate them in such a way that they result in conflict. In both Nigeria and Pakistan, education has played the latter role.

LOOKING AHEAD

This paper's findings have important policy implications. That a violent terrorist group was able to survive and recruit young people because of how its narrative resonated with them, and that its founder was able to capitalize on grievances and build a terrorist group with rhetoric based on those grievances, suggests that Nigeria's nationalism conceals dangerous fissures. A blanket federal education policy that ignores those tensions (and that in fact resulted in some of those tensions) is the place to begin reform. That is the way to deprive extremist groups such as Boko Haram of the popular support that gives them oxygen and helps sustain them.

Prescribing the exact measures to be taken will require a more in-depth study focused on the north, ideally a study that further sheds light on schools, curricula, and textbooks and how they are received in the north, including through interviews with teachers and students; and that looks at alternative models, including Islamiyya schools. Security concerns make such a study difficult at the current moment. This paper suggests the direction that this policy must take. It is clear that the north is alienated from the federal system of education, and its citizenry requires a more representative system that both accommodates its religiosity and can boost both its educational and employment prospects. Northerners will want to see their curricula reflect both their religion and the north's cultural history, and also see an acquisition of education yield results in the job market. They will also want accommodation for those who may have studied in non-Western schools, as was the case before independence.

Nigeria's government seems to have partially recognized some of these grievances, although it overtly espouses a narrative that argues *al-majiris* are Boko Haram recruits. It has begun to build schools that merge Islamic and Western education in the north.[38] How successful they may be remains to be seen.

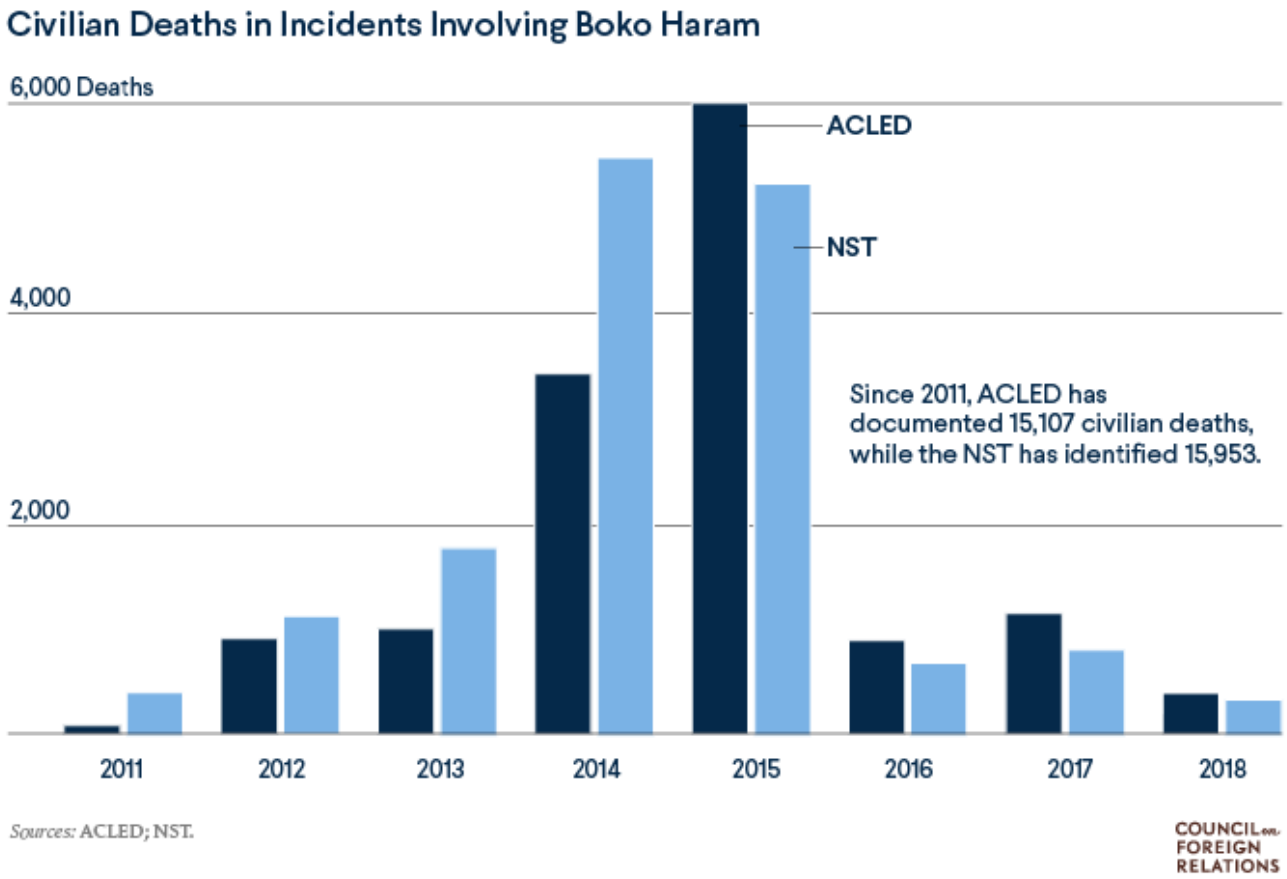
APPENDIX FIGURE 1: STATES OF NIGERIA

Source: Central Intelligence Agency[39]

Nigeria's geopolitical zones comprise the following states:

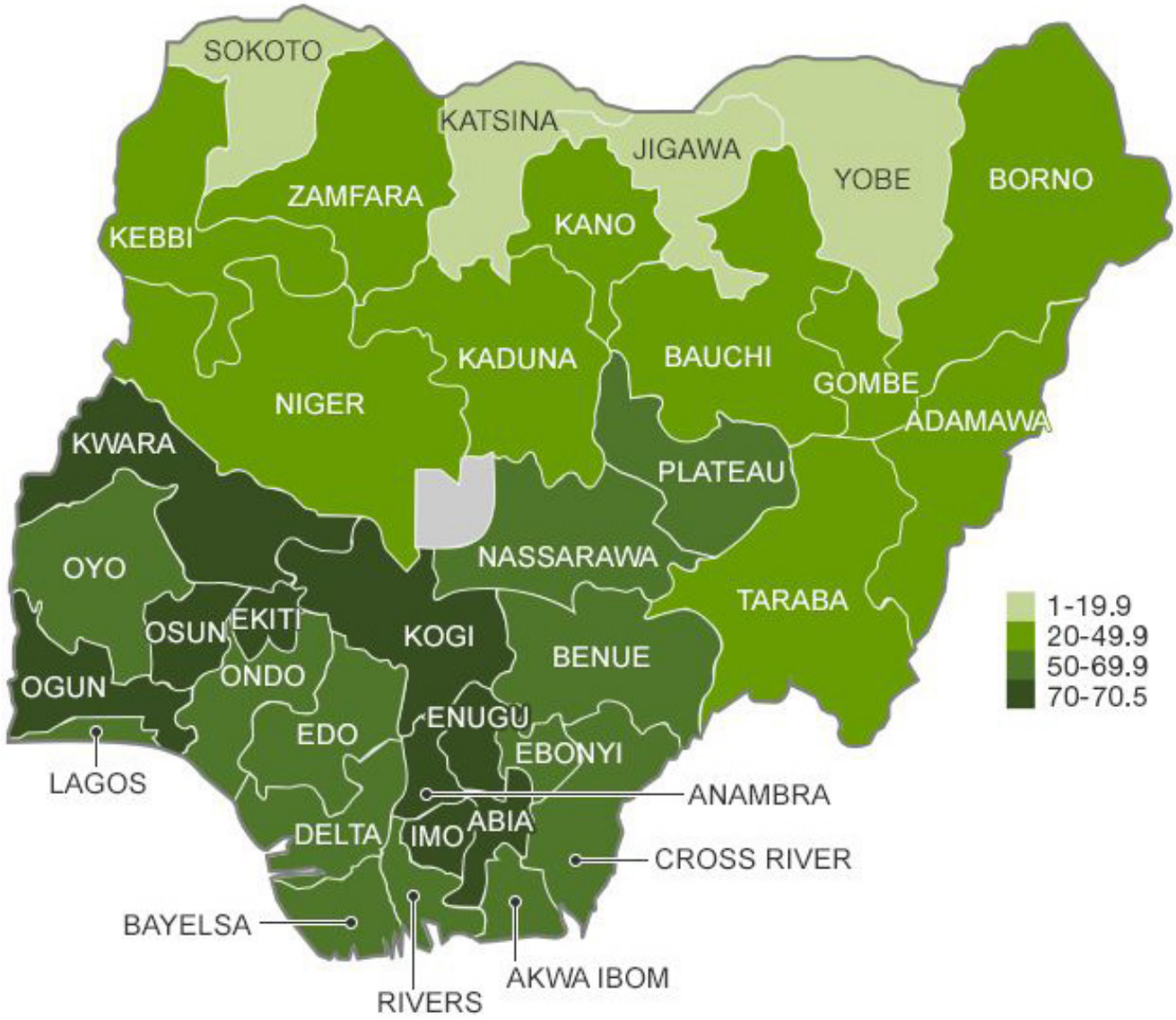
- **North Central**: Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau, and Federal Capital Territory
- **North East**: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe
- **North West**: Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, and Zamfara
- **South East**: Abia, Anambara, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo
- **South South**: Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Rivers, Delta, and Edo
- **South West**: Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Oyo

APPENDIX FIGURE 2:



Source: Council on Foreign Relations.[40] *ACLED is the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, an independent nongovernmental organization based at the University of Sussex. The NST is the Council on Foreign Relations' Nigeria Security Tracker.*

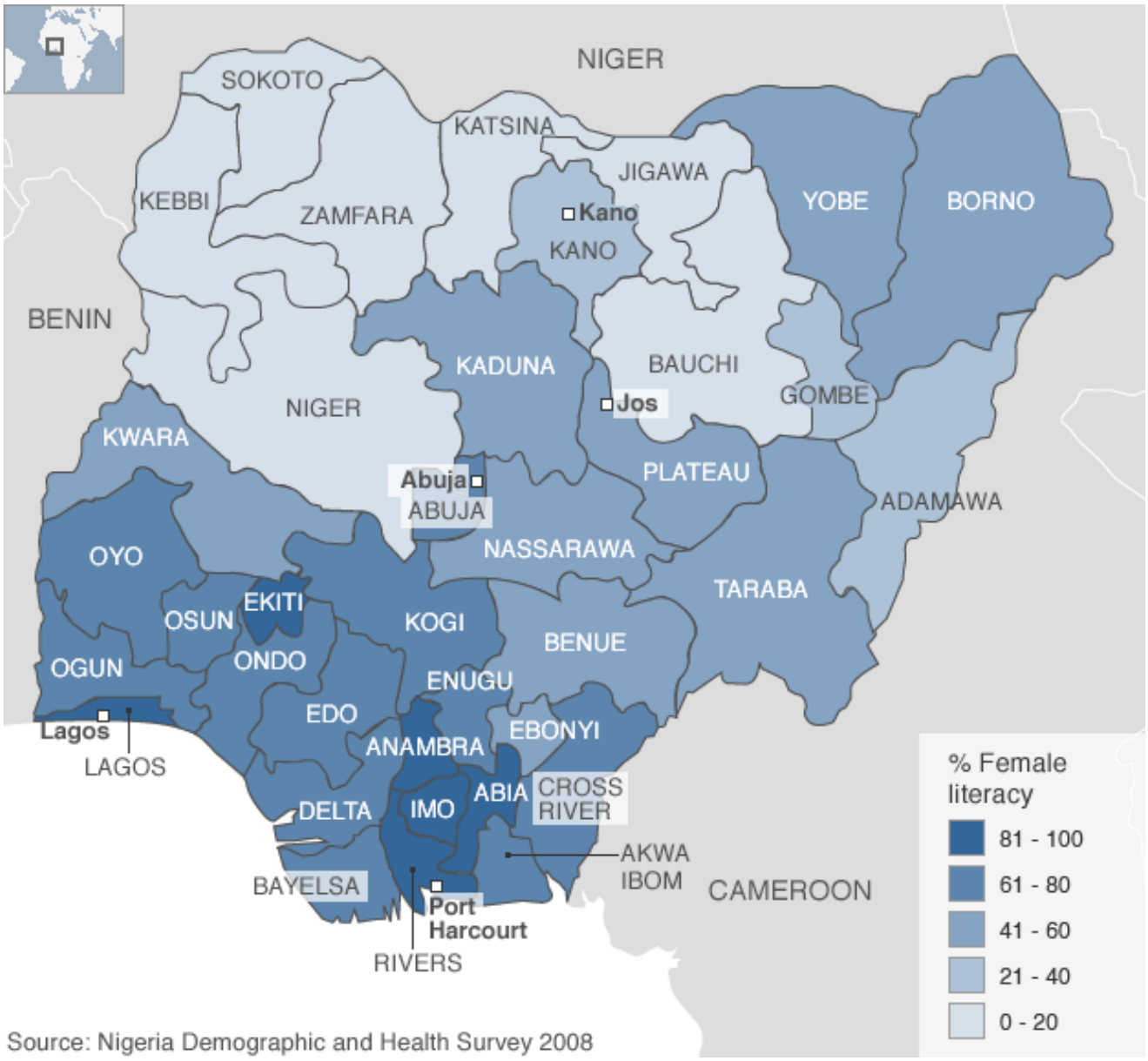
APPENDIX FIGURE 3: SECONDARY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT, 2013 (AS A PERCENTAGE OF 13-18 YEAR-OLDS IN THE STATE)



Source: Nigeria Demographic and health survey 2013

Source: BBC News[41]

APPENDIX FIGURE 4: FEMALE LITERACY RATES, 2008



Source: BBC News[42]

REFERENCES

1 Katie Pisa and Tim Hume, "Boko Haram overtakes ISIS as world's deadliest terror group, report says" CNN, November 19, 2015, https://edition.cnn.com/2015/11/17/world/global-terror-report/.

2 The North East region is composed of the states of Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Gombe, Taraba, and Bauchi (see Appendix Figure 1).

3 Alexander Thurston, *Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), 15.

4 Ibid., 5-6.

5 Andrew Walker, "Join us or die: The birth of Boko Haram," *The Guardian*, February 4, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/04/join-us-or-die-birth-of-boko-haram.

6 John Campbell and Asch Harwood, "Boko Haram's Deadly Impact," Council on Foreign Relations, August 20, 2018, https://www.cfr.org/article/boko-harams-deadly-impact.

7 John Campbell, "Nigeria Security Tracker," Council on Foreign Relations, https://www.cfr.org/nigeria/nigeria-security-tracker/p29483.

8 Dionne Searcey, "'They told us they were here to help us.' Then came slaughter," *The New York Times*, February 28, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/28/world/africa/nigeria-civilian-massacre.html.

9 Andrew Walker, *'Eat the Heart of the Infidel': The Harrowing of Nigeria and the Rise of Boko Haram*, (London: Hurst Publishers, 2016), 145.

10 Alexander Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 14.

11 Andrew Walker, '*Eat the Heart of the Infidel*,' 145.

12 Alexander Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 110.

13 Ibid., 1-2.

14 Ibid., 14.

15 James J. Hentz, "The multidimensional nature of the Boko Haram conflict," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 29, no. 5-6 (2018): 839-862, https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2018.1519295.

16 Andrew Walker, '*Eat the Heart of the Infidel*,' 158.

17 Alexander Peeples, "Terrorizing Schooling: The Evolving Education Politics of Boko Haram," *Towson University Journal of International Affairs* 52, no. 1 (Fall 2018): 71-84, https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/wp.towson.edu/dist/b/55/files/2018/12/Terrorizing-Schooling-The-Evolving-Education-Politics-of-Boko-Haram-2mld73f.pdf.

18 Alexander Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 89.

19 Ibid., 88.

20 Ibid., 89.

21 Anneli Botha and Mahdi Abdile, "Reality Versus Perception: Toward Understanding Boko Haram in Nigeria," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 42, no. 5 (2019): 493-519, https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2018.1403152.

22 "Global Attitudes and Trends," Pew Research Center, Spring 2013-2017 survey data, https://www.pewresearch.org/global/datasets/.

23 Favorability is low in 2013, 2016, and 2017 (1-3% of respondents express favorable views of Boko Haram). In 2016 and 2017 these low levels of favorability are also accompanied by unfavorability higher than 90%; in 2013 unfavorability is slightly lower than 90%, because of a 10% nonresponse.

24 Madiha Afzal, *Pakistan Under Siege: Extremism, Society, and the State* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2018), 10.

25 See the account in Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani, "The Karma of Boko Haram," *The New York Times*, February 22, 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/23/opinion/the-karma-of-boko-haram.html.

26 Anneli Botha and Mahdi Abdile, "Reality Versus Perception."

27 "Mixing the Modern and the Traditional," *The Economist*, July 26, 2014, https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2014/07/26/mixing-the-modern-and-the-traditional.

28 Andrew Walker, "Join us or die."

29 Alexander Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 79.

30 Andrew Walker, '*Eat the Heart of the Infidel*,' 74.

31 Ibid., 147.

32 Alexander Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 37.

33 Alexander Peeples, "Terrorizing Schooling," 73.

34 Alexander Thurston, *Boko Haram*, 74.

35 Ibid., 37.

36 Ibid., 76.

37 Max Siollun, "Nigeria is Haunted by its Civil War," *The New York Times*, January 15, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/15/opinion/nigeria-civil-war-anniversary.html.

38 "Mixing the Modern and the Traditional," *The Economist*.

39 "CIA Maps: Nigeria Administrative," Central Intelligence Agency, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/cia-maps-publications/Nigeria.html.

40 John Campbell and Asch Harwood, "Boko Haram's Deadly Impact."

41 "Nigeria elections: Mapping a nation divided," BBC News, February 9, 2015, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-31101351.

42 "Nigerians living in poverty rise to nearly 61%," BBC News, February 13, 2012, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-17015873.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Madiha Afzal is a David M. Rubenstein Fellow in the Foreign Policy program at the Brookings Institution. She previously worked as an assistant professor of public policy at the University of Maryland, College Park, and has consulted for various organizations, including the World Bank and U.K.'s Department for International Development (DFID). She is the author of *Pakistan Under Siege: Extremism, Society, and the State* (Brookings Institution Press, 2018), as well as several journal articles, book chapters, and policy reports. Her analysis and commentary has appeared in *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, Lawfare, *Dawn*, *Newsweek*, and *The Washington Post*. She holds a Ph.D. in Economics from Yale University.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was funded with the help of a grant from Finn Church Aid, the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Network of Religious and Traditional Peacemakers. The author would like to thank Mahdi Abdile and the team at the Islamic Education Trust for their support and help with the field research. Many thanks to Michael O'Hanlon and a second reviewer for helpful comments. Thanks also to Andrew Moffatt for support of the grant, as well as Brookings' Global Economy and Development Program for help getting the project off the ground. The author thanks Israa Saber for assistance with the textbook study. Ted Reinert edited this paper, and Rachel Slattery provided layout.

BROOKINGS

The Brookings Institution
1775 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20036
brookings.edu