

DETERMINANTS OF THE CAUSES OF TERRORISM IN WEST AFRICA SUB-REGION

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Abstract: This study looked at the factors that contribute to terrorism in the sub-region of West Africa. The study evaluated a number of issues, including poor governance, religious extremism, political instability and greed, poverty, and foreign influence, as key contributors to terrorism in the West Africa sub-region using the regional security complex theory. Secondary data was obtained from the body of extant counterterrorism literature using the historical research design. Among other things, qualitative findings showed that the threat of poor governance has contributed to the rise of terrorism in the West African sub-region. More so, it was found that the nations of the region are still characterized by varying levels of stability and socioeconomic concerns among which is the ravaging terrorism in the region. Hence, the prolonged humanitarian crisis has had a devastating impact on food security and nutrition in the region, with millions of people in need of emergency food assistance as well as widespread displacement, violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, protection risks, and a deepening humanitarian crisis. To address the underlying factors that determine terrorism in the West Africa sub-region, the study recommends that governments in the sub-region should focus on improving the quality of governance and leadership so as to improve on the socio-economic and political stability of citizens in the sub-region. The study affirmed that the competition amongst the elites have contributed to terrorism, armed violence and conflict in the sub region.

Keywords: Africa; Terrorism; West Africa; West Africa sub-region; Counterterrorism;
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Introduction

Terrorist activities in the West African sub-region have been of immense security concern to individual States and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as a regional organization. A number of West African states have in recent years experienced terrorist attacks in which lives have been lost and public and private properties destroyed. Terrorism has become a major concern due to the comparatively lax security frameworks in West African States and the worsening effects of poor economies (Medu, Sanubi & Orhero, 2024). The majority of West African countries' security sector architecture is characterised by under-resourced security agencies, insufficient cooperation between the various agencies, a weak communication infrastructure, institutionalised corruption, and a general lack of logistical assistance. The problem has been made worse by a lack of funding for training, inadequate channels for gathering and sharing intelligence, and an outdated conception of security.

History is replete with events that impact negatively on humanity has necessitated diverse responses by mankind in an attempt to forestall recurrence or minimize its repercussions. Occurrences of this nature engender unilateral, bilateral or multilateral actions to deal with them. There are many examples of these events and the resulting responses. In the first half of the Twentieth Century, the First and the Second World Wars are examples of events that have drawn global responses. Due to the massive loss of life and the untold hardship the First and the Second World Wars caused, the world responded by forming the This is an open access article under the [CC BY-NC](#) license

League of Nations and the United Nations (UN) respectively to prevent future wars of such magnitude.

In contemporary times, one event has drawn international reaction and seems to have changed the international security system, arguably since the end of the Cold War. The terrorist attack on the United States of America (USA) on September 11, 2001 transformed the security systems of virtually every country across the globe. On this date, Al-Qaeda terrorists high jacked four aircrafts and flew two into the twin towers of the World Trade Centre (WTC) in New York and one into the Pentagon in Washington. A forth aircraft crashed into a field near Washington, District of Colombia (DC). It was later revealed by a high ranking Al-Qaeda detainee, Abu Zubaydah, that the forth aircraft was intended to crash into the White House. The attacks brought down the Twin Towers and caused massive damage to the Pentagon, the defence headquarters of the U.S.A. About 2,977 people of different nationalities died as a result of the attack (Francie, 2002).

In response, many countries started taking steps to strengthen both their internal and external security systems against terrorism. For instance, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) in the US quickly assumed control of airport security screening, requiring passengers to undergo much more thorough screening procedures and US airports to completely check checked baggage for explosives (Global Flight, 2014). Similar practices were adopted by numerous other nations, including all the main European nations. However, there were



significant terrorist strikes in Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, London, and Madrid.

Prior to and after September 11, 2001, serious terrorism also occurred in Africa. When car bombs decimated the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, the capitals of Kenya and Tanzania, respectively, in 1998, Kenya and Tanzania both experienced simultaneous terrorist assaults (Newman, 2007). At least eighty individuals were murdered in these attacks, while more than 1600 more were injured. Kenya, in particular, has had other terrorist attacks since September 11, including a significant attack that lasted from September 21 to September 24, 2013 at the Westgate Shopping Mall in Nairobi (Petrecca, 2013).

Furthermore, sixty-seven people were murdered in the attack, for which Somali militant group Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility and 175 more were injured. Most West African nations did not appear to have responded as necessary to these attacks in various parts of the world and in Africa. But recent occurrences have fundamentally altered the picture. Governments, corporate entities, civil society, and regular citizens have all become more aware of the threats posed by terrorism as a result of the rise or, more accurately, resurgence of terrorism in West Africa. In this study, we examined the determinants of the causes of terrorism in the West African sub-region.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptualization of Terrorism

Broadly speaking, it is widely recognised that defining terrorism has been an issue that has confounded policymakers and academics alike. For some, such definitional exploits are not worth the effort as the prospects for a universally agreed definition are remote indeed. While there have always been very good reasons for aspiring to reach such a definition from both a policymaking and an academic perspective, this study argues that there are further reasons for doing so in the post-9/11 environment. It will then propose three preliminary assumptions when approaching the definitional problem that there is no such thing as an act of violence that is in and of itself inherently terrorist, that terrorism is best conceptualized as a particular method of political violence rather than defined as inherent to any particular ideology or perpetrator, and that non-civilians and combatants can also be victims of terrorism.

The study draws out the implications that these assumptions have for the definitional debate.

There have always been good reasons for attempting to generate a universally agreed definition of terrorism. From a policymaking perspective the most important of these have been to do with the facilitation of international cooperation against the phenomenon (Schmid, 2004). Often used as a pejorative label, a common and formidable obstacle to an agreed definition has been its subjective application (or non-application) according to where one's interests lie, and this has obfuscated a more dispassionate and analytical approach. Even before 9/11 'the term terrorism was so widely used in many contexts as to become almost meaningless' (Richardson, 2000).

While Imobighe (2009), remarked that, 'the word reverberates with moral opprobrium and as such is as far as the authorities and others are concerned, far too useful an insult to be pinned down and controlled'. Yet, since the events of September 2001 it has been employed so widely and carelessly in public and

political discourse that there appears to be a wholesale disregard for any serious endeavour to treat terrorism as an analytical concept. 'Terrorism' has been coined to refer to protestors in Thailand, Tunisia and Libya (BBC News, 2011). It has also been ascribed to the Israeli attack on a flotilla of ships attempting to break the Israeli blockade of Gaza, to the US invasion of Iraq and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, to US drone attacks in Pakistan, to Western and NATO airstrikes against Libya, to Syrian rebels attempting to overthrow the Assad regime, and to Wikileaks founder Julian Assange who was described by US Senator Mitch McConnell as a 'high-tech terrorist'.

Whether or not any or all of these should be classified as terrorism (or terrorists) the point is that the label is all too often used without any real rigour as to what terrorism is and what its parameters are. Crenshaw (2011), a respected scholar in the field, has argued that 'the term is often used in a careless or pejorative way for rhetorical reasons.' While a UN High Level Panel in 2004, lamented that 'a lack of agreement on a clear and well known definition undermines the moral and normative stance against terrorism and has stained the United Nations image.' The failure to craft an agreed definition of terrorism has left a vacuum for actors, whether they be state or non-state, to define terrorism in ways that serve their own perceived political and strategic interests, and, in the case of state responses, remits of 'counter-terrorism' are often determined accordingly (Saul, 2006). This undermines attempts to generate international cooperation against terrorism and can lead to unilateral and (even if unwittingly) counter-productive strategies.

Indeed, some have suggested that the failure to define the concept is itself a cause of terrorism. Schmid, (2004), has argued that a lack of definition is perceived widely as one of the factors likely to encourage future terrorism', and cites a study that places the absence of such a definition at the top of a list of ten factors and conditions 'likely to encourage future terrorism'. Despite problems with defining the term, certain scholars have presented definitions from a rigorous perspective. Weinberg (2005) sees terrorism as a snare and mirage, a means of diverting the attention of the public' from failings of Western government; the Americans and British ones in particular. Others have viewed terrorism as the rational and objective opposition of the people against state terrorism, neo-colonialism, mercantilism, liberalism, racism, colonialism and domination (Herman & O'Sullivan, 1989).

Weinberg (2005) showed how terrorism has become an aggressive issue affecting government policies, military actions, and the security and peaceful existence of people. He defined terrorism as a deliberate creation and exploitation of fear via violence or threats of violence in pursuit of political change. From the government viewpoint, perpetrators of such acts are termed 'terrorists' but supporters see them as freedom-fighters. Hence, terrorism can be defined in line with the three (3) main perspectives. Building on the definitions of terrorism, it is obvious that even government agencies have diverse conceptions of terrorism. The US Department of State defines terrorism as contained in Title 22, S.2656f (d) of the U.S. code as "pre-meditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience" (U.S. Department of State, 2007).

In line with the definition above, Hoffman (1999) described terrorism as "the premeditated creation and exploitation of fear via violence or threat of violence in pursuit of political, economic,

religious or ideological change.” Hoffman’s logic was that; terrorists are logical beings with capability to decide whether to engage in such act of violence or not. Thus, terrorist engagement in the exploitation of fear via violence is an aforethought move to realize specific goals. The above definitions pinpoint to some rudiments of duress, pressure and oppression justifying acts of terrorism. Poland (2011), had a view of terrorism slightly at variance with the above definitions, by highlighting culture to portray society’s abhorrence of terrorism acts. Hence, he defined terrorism as “culturally unacceptable use or threat of violence rapt towards symbolic targets to influence political behaviour.”

Expanding on the political definition of terrorism, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) sees terrorism as an unlawful use of force or violence against persons/properties to coerce a government, civilians, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social goals (National Institute of Justice, 2017); the US Department of States and FBI’s definition of “terrorism shares common attributes. Both definitions show the importance of including the use of coercion or violence to prompt a course of action that furthers inevitable political motives. However, while the US Department of States advocates the intentional dimension of terrorism as a precondition to commit terrorism acts without bringing to fore the likelihood of spontaneous acts of violence, the FBI emphasized on the method of committing the act which must be unlawful, thus, differentiating it from legitimate combatant acts (Hoffman, 2006). The US Department of State also requires that numerous persons act collectively in the act of terrorism hence limiting the definition to group(s) with no emphasis on destructive effect of lone terrorists. Its definition also fails to consider the psychological impact of terrorism.

Causes of Terrorism in West Africa

The political, security and economic environments of West Africa are dynamic, fluid, complex and often hostile. There are many factors that impact West Africa Region economic growth, stability and the security. The region is rich in natural resources, but many are wracked with economic decay, poverty, fragile democracies, transnational crime, famine, patronage, illegal immigration and the threat of civil war. The mounting tide of populism, factionalism, calls for secession and nationalism can be traced to the failure of politics and the way governance is applied or not applied in West Africa sub-region. This has resulted in grievances from the affected communities, sometimes resulting in armed conflict. In some cases, populism has mutated into a strong sense of nationalism which is the driver of conflict in the region. Enthused by religious terrorism, political and economic exclusion, an increasingly hostile social and mainstream media, transnational hostility, tribalism, oppression, xenophobia, race anger and other social factors: such ‘lost hope’ and populist elements are achieving traction in the sub-region of West Africa. Hence, the West Africa sub-region has become a fertile ground for terrorism to flourish (Bannon & Collier, 2003).

Terrorist activities in West Africa, in particular, have posed the most challenging and dreaded issues. It can be argued that contemporary terrorism in West Africa sub region is a result of persistent state failure to deliver good governance. When those who have been given the authority to govern, steal money that is meant to improve the lives of the citizenry, the youth are denied employment, health and good education. The youth will then be affected economically, socially and psychologically (Awoyemi, 2012). Their everyday lives are then filled with hopelessness,

frustration, dejection and they can become easy targets for recruiting, indoctrination, co-option into illegal activities and can be easily brainwashed. Abject poverty and underdevelopment can be predominantly benchmarked upon high levels of corruption in West Africa sub-region (David, 2013). Chukwu & Nghan (2018), have conceded corruptions prevalence and almost unstoppable dimensions as well as its contagious consequences in West Africa sub-region.

Farouk (2012), argues that corruption and terrorism have similar consequences on society and the citizenry in that they both kill. However, terrorism kills immediately while corruption kills by propagating chronic poverty and committing ethical genocide for future generations. Corruption generates absolute poverty, undermines good governance, rule of law, democracy and causes insecurity by destroying the capacity of the institutions of the state. If it is perpetuated by state employees, it creates social vices and unemployment which is also linked to the greed and grievance theory. Correspondingly, terrorism is equally destructive. It creates fear, insecurity and causes death. These are some of the effects that terrorism and corruption have to qualify being labelled as monsters.

The concept monster was put in inverted comers because it has become government rhetoric to talk about corruption and terrorism in the region in the same breath but often nothing is done about it. In many cases, those who have been appointed to root out corruption and stop terrorism in the region have often been accused of corruption themselves and some have been accused of aiding and sponsoring terrorism (Farouk, 2012). Boko Haram considers corruption to be a Western legacy and value, hence it wants to replace the Nigerian State with a Muslim State of Nigeria. As the Boko Haram leader Mohammed Yusuf said, all the government officials who claim they went to Western schools are involved in corruption. So, Western education is linked to corruption, injustice and inequality.

In this light, Boko Haram opposes anything that is Western and is of the view that Western values corrupt Muslims. Boko Haram has linked the level of poverty that exists in the north of the country to corruption. In its onset, the group based its operations in the poorest locations of Nigeria. It is in these parts where many people are not educated and unemployed, making it easier for Boko Haram to recruit and organise. A rallying cry for the group has been provided by corruption and poor governance in Nigeria. It is arguable that it would have been more difficult for Boko Haram to gain supporters if Nigeria was more of a functional state.

The injustice, lack of employment, corruption and other frustrations have made the Boko Haram ideology grow exponentially. The destitute poor recruits become foot soldiers for the group because the prospects of finding a job are very slim. Furthermore, if one looks at the economic and social conditions of other African countries, it does not come as a surprise that those with high levels of corruption and poverty have become terrorism hotbeds (Ikelegbe, 2005). For instance, Niger, Chad, Mali, Somalia and Sudan are countries where terrorism is flourishing because there are high levels of radicalisation, corruption, poor governance and poverty. Other terrorism hotspots in the world like Pakistan, Syria and Yemen are considered to be the most dangerous countries on the planet and are also among the poorest.

Furthermore, it then becomes quite easy to make the connection. For destitute individuals living from hand to mouth, their lives are a series of struggles often ending in anger, despair

and resentment. These are precarious combinations in the minds of the young who do not see any hope of escaping their desperate situations. For terrorist organisations, these young minds can be manipulated to pick up arms. By promising a sense of community, stoking covert frustrations at poverty, and providing a sense of brotherhood, a recruiter will find it easy to convince a recruit to carry arms and be a kidnapper of a suicide bomber. Chronic corruption has been a major contributor to the failure of the Nigerian state to perform its constitutional duties.

According to the traditional Westphalian model, threats to international peace tend to come from aggressive states. An unprovoked attack on another state for the purpose of punishment or reparation at the expense of another state constitutes an aggressive state (Weber, 2013). In the 21st century, threats are equally more likely to come from non-state actors, weak states or failed states. This study would like to argue that the absence of effective governance and quality institutions creates suitable settings for the emergence of armed conflict. To begin with, state institutions are created to serve the general public and they are expected to be proficient, impartial and non-discriminatory in implementing state policies. Citizens need to know that they can trust their government and that the state is legitimate for them to support and cooperate with the ruling government (Taydas, Peksen & James, 2010).

Poor governance in the form of weak courts, corruption and inefficient administration makes citizens lose confidence in the political system of the state. A gap is then created between the citizens and state institutions. This gap will generate dissatisfaction, grievances, and distrust with the political system. If the legitimacy gap continues to increase, the risk of a domestic conflict can increase and social tensions between different ethnic groups can worsen (Shock, 1996). Weak state institutions can contribute to the opportunity for terrorism and rebellion. State weakness is revealed if a state is not able to perform its duties and control its citizens as it has been the case in Nigeria.

Citizens become frustrated as the frustration-aggression mechanism argues. Under such conditions, rebellion and terrorism become possible. On the other hand, as argued by the opportunity theory, if the legitimacy of the state improves, then the cost of labour and recruitment go up for rebels. The promises made by terrorist groups will become unattractive and less credible hence recruiting new members will become a difficult task (Taydas, Peksen & James, 2010). State weakness also has another important component in the form of globalisation. Globalisation has facilitated neoliberal economic forces to weaken state capacity as well as weakening its capacity to provide public goods to the public. The privatisation of violence has accompanied state failure. It does not come as a surprise that Nigeria is facing a challenge in stopping the trafficking of arms through its porous borders that end up creating instabilities.

The impact of Boko Haram has led to the forced movement of people across borders with insurgents spreading across neighbouring borders causing instability in the region. Newman (2007), argued that Nigeria has a war economy. Goods smuggling, drug trafficking and people smuggling are common criminal activities in a war economy; that is criminal activities and networks prosper in states that cannot effectively control their population. The Nigerian weak state has resulted in religious and ethnic violence, the spread of weapons, humanitarian disasters, forced migration and suppressed nationalism. In this globalised world,

state weakness in the Nigerian context does not only pose a threat to its population, but also to its neighbours. The Nigerian state has failed to provide basic services to most of its citizens which connects directly to the relative deprivation theory.

Nigerian citizens have resigned to providing basic services such as water for themselves. Because of the high violent crime rate, there is big insecurity in property and lives. Residents and neighbourhoods sometimes provide their own security or resort to hiring ethnic militias to provide protection. Those tasked with running state institutions have benefited from the inefficient Nigerian state (Uadiale, 2012). It can be argued that this linkage between armed groups and the elites produced the phenomenon of Boko Haram (Alao, 2013). This phenomenon is a result of mobilisation and manipulation by the elite as well as class opportunistic competition. The elites have mobilised youth to kill non-Muslims in the north and to overthrow the ruling elite (Mbah, Nwangwu, & Edeh, 2017).

The youth have channelled their frustration and anger into the Boko Haram insurgency which feeds into the frustration aggression mechanism. The aforementioned 'monsters' created by the elites have become loose cannons, not only haunting the northern region but Nigeria and the neighbouring countries as well. Uadiale, (2012), argues that Boko Haram has close connections to Nigerian state governors and that they are directly funded by the state to sustain their activities. Boko Haram is not a secret society because they teach openly in their mosques and are well known by government officials who use them as pawns in pursuit of power. At post-independence Nigeria, the elites structured and consolidated power in a way that promoted a zero-sum game in politics.

Power struggles between elites soon mutated to warfare with some elites using armed gangs to accumulate and retain power. It politicised and deepened divisiveness, leading to elite struggles to adopt religious, ethnic, regional moulds which personalised power. Unfortunately, the end product of this divisiveness was violence, which became a tool used for appropriating and perpetuating power from other groups. This form of elite competition turned the Nigerian state into a predatory and marauding force. In this light, state agents became suppressive, brutal, repressive and abusive against their citizens, activists, opposition and protesters (Uadiale, 2012). With the government losing support due to corruption, economic decline and ineffective governance, the government turned to state violence to repress resistance, challenges and dissent.

The legislature and the executive have been divided along religious, ethnic and regional lines in the battle for supremacy, constituting a hindrance in the advancement of democratic values and practice (Ladan-Baki & Enwere, 2017). From the above, this study argues that this competition amongst the elites has contributed to terrorism, armed violence and conflict in Nigeria. The exclusion of new aspirants and the monopolisation of political power has produced a syndrome of insufficiency of elite competition, with connotations for stability, development, and democracy (Agara, 2007). The struggle for those who aspire to be elite and elite competition feeds into the wider dissolute societal deprivation, alienation, and marginalisation. This has encouraged the mobilisation of religious, ethnic, and regional sentiments through manipulation, propaganda, mobilisation to formulate the right conditions for the rise of groups like Boko Haram. In Nigeria, struggle for elite power has necessitated the manipulation

of religious beliefs for both Muslims and Christians. The elites have used religion to gain political influence and legitimacy (Bribena, 2019). It can be argued that the behaviour of the elite is driven by greed which gives birth to grievances.

Theoretical Framework

The study hinged on the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) which was propounded and developed by Barry Buzan and Ole Waever in their seminal work "Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security" (2003). Other scholars and theorists credited with the development of RSCT are Aradau (2004), Bach (2005), Balzacq (2005), Hammerstad (2005), Kelly (2007) and Holslag (2010). The end of Cold War experienced revived interests in rethinking ties, underlying axioms and practices concerning security which led to the proliferation of works that deviated from the conventional framework of national security to a robust framework that incorporates inter-state security cooperation. The RSCT facilitated immensely the advancement of the understanding of securitization of regionalism or from a regional perspective.

Region, according to RSCT, implied a group of geographically contiguous states identified by stronger links and more frequent interaction among members than between members and actors outside regional constellation (Hammerstad, 2005; Kelly, 2007). Theorists using this perspective contended that the regions may be connected on the basis of economic and identity dimensions and environmental externalities requiring regional security complex. Buzan, Waever and Wilde (1998) conceptualised regional security complex as a multiplicity of units whose main processes of securitization, desecuritization or both are so interconnected that their security challenges cannot reasonably be resolved apart from one another.

According to RSCT, the relative autonomy of regional security comprises of patterns of international security relations radically dissimilar from the stiff structure of superpower bipolarity that defined the Cold War. According to Manis and Kavajlek (2020), this relation structurally altered the international security system and security interdependence and led to a new sub-regional security complex. Consequently, the global security environment has transformed in a way that "nations deal with their security issues, insecurities and neighbours by voluntarily engaging, cooperating and competing unilaterally, bilaterally, multilaterally or multilaterally." RSCT posits that actors' actions and motivations in the field of international security are heavily regional in character. This means that an actor's security concerns are primarily generated in their immediate neighbourhood.

The security of each actor in a region interacts with the security of the other actors. As a result of the rise in cross-border terrorism in recent years, countries now engage in a variety of regional activities for the stability and security of their internal and cross-border dynamics. To build an integrated global society, these strategies and tactics include, but are not limited to, diplomacy, international law, trade, collaboration with other groups or organisations (such as foreign NGOs, domestic NGOs, multinational corporations), and other exchanges (Snedden, 2018). The exchanges are primarily carried out through regional security platforms like ECOWAS, the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), and MNJTF under the aegis of regional security architecture.

In applying the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) to the subject matter of West African cooperation in the fight against regional terrorism, the theory provides explanatory powers to the needed apparatus for the operational success of the regional counter terrorism efforts as well as the methods and the means of combating the non-military drivers of terrorism in the West African sub-region. Accomplishing such a regional operational mandate of regional cooperation against terrorism, according to the RSCT, depends mostly on the voluntary actions, interactions and cooperation of member states in the West African sub-region. Making such a regional cooperation like the fight against terrorism effective depends largely on "level of commitment of member states, shared values and interest, financial, material capacity, institutional and legitimacy of involvement.

Strong regional institutions with the consistency of views and policies, an ability to act coherently, a willingness to pay costs, a basis of economic power which would attract for other states of the region, and a strong military capability are the conditions by which security regionalism can be a mitigating force in the counter terrorism initiative. With most economies struggling among the ECOWAS States and fractured regime in places like Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea and ensuing combative activities of various terrorist groups in the sub-region, the military and non-military commitments of governments in west Africa have been hampered. This obviously provides the needed justification for the adoption of the RSCT in this study.

In the context of this study, the theory of Regional Collective Security (RSCT) argued that the fight against terrorism is not a job which can be undertaken by one single agency or nation. It requires team work and input from a wide range of national and international organisations including law enforcement agencies, the military, the intelligence services, the financial sector, the diplomatic service and health organisations. Basically, to record substantial success in the fight against transnational terrorism requires organisation, cooperation and coordination. According to RSCT, ECOWAS as an institution collaborates with state and non-state actors regionally and internationally in the fight against terrorism.

Regionally, ECOWAS has been a platform for collaborations for member states to develop and implement counterterrorism measures. For instance, outside the establishment of GIABA which focuses on combating terrorism financing, ECOWAS has also conceived some other counterterrorism mechanisms and these include ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism Coordination Bureau (ECOCTB); ECOWAS Arrest Warrant (ECOWARRANT); ECOWAS Black List of Terrorist and Criminal Networks (ECOLIST); ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism Training Centre; and Counter Terrorism Technical Assistance Directory (ECOWAS, 2013). In the international scene, ECOWAS has a relationship on terrorism and related issues with development partners such as the UN, EU, African Union (AU), World Bank and many countries within and outside of Africa.

Through the lens of RSCT, lack of a well-coordinated effort against terrorism in Africa can be linked directly to the proliferation and intensification of conflict situations. War which in turn, have hampered development efforts, threats to peace in a neighbouring counties if not carefully managed and resolved could lead to massive exodus of refugees, weapons proliferation, trans border crimes and general insecurity that could threaten other stable polities and compromise national economies. Thus, in the

era of globalization, at a time of grave challenges to national and international security, related terrorism and transnational criminal networks, RSCT advocates for absolute commitment to regional and international peace and security as panacea to the menace.

The RSCT also pinpoints a few elements that may hinder regional collaboration in the war on terrorism. One of these is the sub-region's porous borders, which makes it simple for dangerous weapons to be transferred to insurgents and non-state actors operating there. Another is the lack of commitment on the part of some member states, which makes it difficult for ECOWAS to carry out COIN operations effectively. In the evolving global security context, there are a number of reasons why a region-centered approach can be more important than a state-led approach, notwithstanding the difficulties involved with security regionalism. For instance, the regional spill overs and regionalization of many so-called 'domestic' conflicts require regional solutions, which is particularly evident in most cases around Africa. The regional approach is also more efficient than unilateral mechanisms in terms of closeness and commitment.

In conclusion, RSCT emphasises the necessity for ECOWAS member states to establish a collaborative alliance in order to better coordinate cross-border law enforcement and surveillance efforts to prevent and combat terrorism. It is also concerned with the degree of resolve of such regional cooperation, like ECOWAS, to ensure strong regional institutions with consistency of views and policies, the capability to act cogently, material resources, and the legitimacy of involvement. RSCT has the ability to explain the phenomenon under research, notwithstanding this. Wolff (2011), however, has attacked the theory for continuing to have a state-centric perspective that is biased and does not adequately account for the growing prominence of non-state actors in the fight against terrorism.

Methodology

By drawing on earlier research on terrorism in the West Africa sub-region and globally, this study used a historical research design; more precisely, earlier research on terrorism was evaluated. Three (3) nations from the West Africa sub-region - Nigeria, Cameroon, and Nigeria - were investigated in this context. The study aims to accomplish two goals: first, we evaluated the factors that contribute to terrorism in the West African sub-region by using literature.

The second goal was to proffer measures aimed at countering terrorism in the West African sub-region. Additionally, secondary data was the primary tool used for data collection; therefore, secondary data were gathered from government websites, statistical bulletins, conference papers, and published academic journals that concentrated on terrorism in West Africa, as well as from a wider range of literature on terrorism outside of the West Africa sub-region.

Results and Discussion

The West African sub-region has been faced with a wave of terrorism and terrorist attacks, resulting in the death of hundreds of people, destruction of public and private properties, and the displacement of millions. Boko Haram and Ansaru in northern Nigeria, Ansar Dine (or Ansar Eddine), al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MOJWA), as well as al-Mourabitoun and Front de Libération du Macina (FLM), AQIM affiliates, are notable terrorist

groups in the sub-region based on their operations and connections to well-known international terrorist networks. These organisations have frequently carried out deliberate violent assaults on civilians, government employees, infrastructure, national and international organisations, and national and local governments, compromising the sub-region's peace, security, and stability. States and multilateral organisations both inside and outside the sub-region have created and implemented various mechanisms to deal with the problem in response. The effectiveness in the use of this different mechanism towards addressing the issue relies strongly on understanding the root cause of Terrorism in the region.

Benin Republic, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo are just a few of the autonomous and sovereign states that make up West Africa. Recent terrorist acts in a few of these countries resulted in the loss of life and the destruction of both private and public property. For instance, terrorist attacks occurred in Mali, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, and Cote d'Ivoire during 2015 and 2016. While terrorist organisations attacked the Hotel Splendid and Cappuccino Café in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in November 2015, between January and March 2016, terrorist organisations also targeted the mosques in Maiduguri, Nigeria, the Radisson Blue Hotel in Bamako, Mali, the Grand-Bassam tourist beach near Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, and the Hotel Splendid in Bamako, Mali. This study focused on the causes of terrorism in Nigeria, Cameroon and Niger Republic specifically. There are several causes of terrorism in the West Africa sub-region and they have been discussed as follows:

Bad Governance and Terrorism in West Africa

Over the years, IS and al-Qaeda-affiliated terror groups have increased their murderous footprint in sub-Saharan Africa. Terror groups are active in Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, Mali, Mauritania and Burkina Faso in West Africa. In East and Central Africa, the jihadists are present in Somalia, Mozambique and Central African Republic. Somalia, more than any other African country, has bled the most. Terrorist bombing outside the Education ministry in Mogadishu killed more than 100 people and injured countless others. There is a common denominator in all these countries where terrorists are gaining ground. They are all characterised by weak governance and corruption

Governance can be said to refer to the way power is exercised in the management of the country's economic and social resources to the development of a society agrees with the above conceptualization and states "that governance encompasses the state's institutional and structural arrangements, decision-making processes, and policy formation and implementation capacity. Other indices include development of personnel, information flows and the nature and style of leadership within the political system" (George-Genyi, 2012). It is the ability of the government to efficiently and effectively promote the economic well-being of its people. Monga, (2008) sees governance as a fundamental process through which the lives and dreams of the citizenry are collectively pursued by deliberate and systematic strategies and policies, for the realization of their maximum potentials. Monga, (2008) argues that this process is a combination of responsible leadership and enlightened public participation.

Adopting the UN Report, George-Genyi (2012) which sees good governance as "the complex mechanisms, processes, relationships and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their rights and obligations and

mediate their differences” (Monga, 2008, citing Ndehfru, 2007). Olowu and Akinola (2000) identify good governance as an approach or view which focuses on the state and institutions crafted by the people, the relationship between them and how rules are made in societies which are accepted as legitimate by individuals and organizations within the collectivities, (cited in Coker & Obo, 2012). Olowu and Akinola (2000) further observed two dimensions of the processes: the first has to do with the governors or leadership whose responsibilities are derived from the principle of effective governmental group; the second, with the governed, that is, with the masses of the people who have a responsibility to participate in the socioeconomic and political affairs of the society.

The type of governance a society enjoys depends on the substance of not only the leaders but also on that of the followers. Indeed, even in a situation where the citizens play ‘spectatorial’ roles in the society (Dowse & Hughes, 1972), their participation in watching what is ongoing in the complex society; and, their reaction to it would predominantly determine or modify the behaviour of the leadership. It is very clear that the level of bad governance by the leadership in Nigeria has been to a great extent enhanced by the political orientations of the followers. For instance, in Nigeria, for ethnicity, prebendalism, and other forms of corrupt and related vices to thrive the formidable solidarity and cooperation of both the leadership and followers must take the central stage. Again, it is very common to observe leaders commit crimes with impunity and walk the Street free and even rewarded with higher offices and honours while the followership looks the other ways simply because those involved share the same primordial ties or belong to the same religious and/or cults group.

Bad Governance has been understood to reflect a general tendency of a public institution not being able ‘to manage public affairs and public resources’ Bad governance becomes more pronounced when a state or government fails (abysmally) to meet the needs of the society even though it makes use of the best of all the resources at their disposal”. Broadly speaking, Owoye and Bissessar (2009) see bad governance as a symptom of institutional and leadership failures, explicitly manifested by its long list of dictatorial leaders, non-free media and undemocratic elections.

Owoye and Bissessar (citing Klitgard, 1998) note that Africa performed well in the early years of its independence, but failed in its performance tests past 1973 as the region is now characterized by low growth rates, declining agricultural production, stagnating manufacturing, rising imports, and rapidly expanding external debts. ... has had many coups, civil unrest, ethnic violence; and widespread bureaucratic corruption alongside administrative inefficiency, and institutional ineptitude or outright failure. Highly manifest corruption and its related practices have been identified as major constraints on Africa’s economic, political, and social development (Owoye & Bissessar 1992, citing Klitgard, 1998). The United Nations Economic & Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (UNESCAP) confirms that, Bad governance includes governments that are ineffective and inefficient, not transparent, not responsive to the people, not held accountable for their actions, inequitable and exclusive to the elites, non-participatory; do not follow the rule of law and lacking policies that are consensus driven (Owoye & Bissessar, 2009).

Further corroborating this position, Owoye citing Calderisi (2006) averred persistent problems of inept leadership, institutional failure, and pandemic corruption as factors of bad governance in

Africa. For Calderisi, “Africa’s problem is that it has never known good government ..., and no continent has experienced such prolonged dictatorships” (cited in Owoye, 1992). Also, agreeing with Owoye, and Calderisi citing Ayittey (2012) states that “corruption epidemic in African nations owes its existence to the long term tenure of their dictators, and he made this explicit by providing a graphic exposition of a long list of African dictators most of whom have held on to political power ranging from 30 to 42 years. Ayittey demonstrated that these dictators owe their successes to their effective control on the central bank, civil service, judiciary, the electoral commission, media as well as the security forces. Indeed, corruption remains unabated in the continent because “weak or failed institutions cannot control the excesses of their dictators”, due primarily to the fact that they were built on the unstable foundation of bad governance and pandemic corruption.

There is no doubt that the menace of bad governance has partly been responsible for triggering terrorism in West Africa sub region. Despite that the Lake Chad Basin Commission was established in 1964 by Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon to ensure sustainable use of Lake Chad and the fertile surrounding land as well as to promote regional cooperation and security, all the nations are still characterized by varying levels of stability and socioeconomic concerns among which is the ravaging terrorism in the region. The sub-region has experienced violent conflict, from decades of guerrilla activity in Chad, to the Tuareg rebellions and several coups in Niger, to ongoing clashes in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon. Lake Chad is an inland waterway measuring about 17,000 square kilometres, but its drainage basin covers some 2,335,000 square kilometres, extending into Algeria and to the border of Libya to the north, to Sudan in the east, and to the Central African Republic in the south. It is the major freshwater source in a mostly arid, Sahelian region, and its economic potential has been recognized for a long time.

A key part of the military force confronting the insurgency in northeast Nigeria is under the mandate of the Multinational Joint Task Force, which most recently has operated under the African Union and the LCBC. The complex ethno-religious nature of the immediate Lake Chad Basin and the equally complex historical alliances that define identity are key factors in governance in the region, given the potential for ethnic rivalries and politicization of non-state actors. Conflicts can also break out between informal groups maintaining checkpoints and traditional merchants. These reasons highlight the necessity of developing a new strategy to confront the unique problems of the region, backed by an efficient coordination and cooperation mechanism that can hold these non-State actors accountable and gradually absorb them.

Nigerian state had been engulfed with bad governance since 1999, a selfish government that does not have the interest of the masses as uppermost in their heart, and does not made prevail what is called altruism, is the type of government Nigeria state has been experiencing for years now, and the selfishness cut across the three arms of government. The Executive head only governs in favour of itself, its party and party godfathers and the legislative only make laws to suit themselves not the masses while the judicature is always at the mercy of the executive and adjudicate to the favour of the executive head that appoints them. None of the arms of government in Nigeria is really working towards the betterment of the lives of the masses, and the adverse effect of this is poverty and an increase in crime rate. According to Jeremy Bentham (1789), the father of utilitarianism he argued it is an

explanation of pain and pleasure, that every government is its executive, the legislature should govern and make a law that will call for the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people.

The Nigerian government had failed on this as they have even failed to give the basic necessities of lives that will enhance citizens' livelihood and guarantee a high standard of living to the people. In an undeveloped society where citizens lack in terms of employment, education, food, shelter, housing, clothing and have no access to social amenities, in this case, citizens are being frustrated and tends to look for a way of survival at all means, based on this, citizens are being brainwashed easily, and bought over cheaply by the terrorist groups to act as an instrument of terror in the state. The social problems and the causes of Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria are youth unemployment, endemic job creation, failing economies, regime corruption and repression, and religious sectarianism.

McNamara (1968) argued that a country that is not developed is not secured, and end up equating development with security. Nigeria's government has failed to develop the country and that has become a security challenge on the state (country) as crimes such as armed banditry, kidnapping, terrorism, Fulani herdsmen, yahoo and drug trafficking have now become a means of survival to the citizenry. More and idler hands amongst the youths of Nigeria are being employed by the Islamic sect Boko Haram to act as a fighter for the group because an idle mind is the devil's workshop. The day the government of Nigeria starts alleviating the citizenry economically, Boko Haram will gradually become a thing of the past in Nigeria. Another act by the Nigerian government and the military leadership that has called on the continued existence of the Boko Haram in Nigeria is the ineffectiveness of the Nigerian military and the inability of the military to win the war due to low morale.

The Nigerian military has now been made to lack effectiveness, as they are now the toothless dog that cannot bite. The military is not secured, even though they are soldiers, they needed to be secured, and they are saddled with the responsibilities of securing their country against internal insurrection and external aggression. However, in carrying out this responsibility, they (the military) needed to be secured as well. They needed to be secured by given them enough military equipment (arms and ammunitions) needed to carry out operations. Allowance and salaries of soldiers on the war have to be paid as at when due, and soldiers should not be made to stay more than enough time on the war. This will definitely boost the morale of soldiers, as they will be ready to fight at any point in time and feel well secured.

Nnenna (2019) reported that soldiers fighting in some part of Adamawa and Borno lamented against the reduction of allowances and overstay on the war without seeing their families. They said that #9,000 was deducted from their January allowances and that some soldiers have stayed up to five years on the war without visiting their families. It is quite unfortunate that the Nigerian military is presently lacking arms and ammunitions, with incessant payment of allowances to soldiers fighting Boko Haram. They also lack the necessary intelligent information needed to effectively prosecute the war. The moral of the soldiers engaging Boko Haram is now very low, as soldiers die on the war in large numbers. When soldiers are not secured invariably the country is not secured, that is the case in Nigeria.

Poverty and Terrorism in West Africa

Undeniably, poverty and terrorism both are the burning issues during recent times. Countries around the globe and most especially in West Africa sub-region are adding into their efforts for poverty eradication and reduction of terrorism. Social instability, internal insurgencies and political upheavals are various reasons for existing levels of poverty, unemployment and terrorism in West Africa Sub-region. Poverty is seen simply as the lack of access to resources which are necessary to actively participate in the socio-economic life of the society. Though, there is a few definitions of terrorism, but there is common consensus that any act to attain illegal, socio-political, religious, ideological or personal gain through violent and destructive techniques is considered as an act of terrorism. World Terrorism Index Report (2014) defines terrorism as the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain political, economic, religious, or social goal(s) through fear, coercion, or intimidation.

Empirical studies on Africa by Miguel, Shanker & Sergenti (2004) and Blomberg, Brock and Athanasios (2004), have recorded that economic conditions as important determinants of terrorism. Furthermore, Meierrieks and Gries (2013), found terrorism as detrimental to growth for African, for the post-Cold War era. Given these evidences both of the factors; poverty and terrorism are considered as hazardous for the health of economy. Poverty is a general condition of deprivation and want that consigns its victims to the periphery of their societies. The World Bank provided a simple definition of poverty which views the phenomenon as multidimensional and a situation in which people are unable to fulfil their basic needs as well as lack of control over resources, lack of education and skills, poor health, malnutrition, lack of shelter, poor access to water and sanitation, vulnerability to shocks, violence and crime and the lack of political freedom and voice. In West African sub-region countries, though poverty is prevailing since longer time but terrorism is now fuelling it by leaving people destitute through destruction of property, shelter, markets and collapse of business activities. Most of the countries in the West African sub-region are referred to as fourth world which according to Hans Singer (1980), are poorer in the list of world poor countries. Lipset's law (1963), about poverty-terrorism nexus seems true for poor African countries, which counts for large scale terrorism not only within the African region but also, across the globe.

One of the most contentious ideas in contemporary global security studies is the notion that poverty remains the main causes of terrorism and insurgency west Africa sub-region especially in Nigeria. According to Lewis (2014), the former United State Secretary of State, John Kerry, claimed that much of the challenge terrorism comes out of poverty where young people are grabbed at an early stage, proffered a little bit of money. The International Crisis Group as further stated by Lewis (2014), noted that terrorism have been doing so well because some parts of Nigeria, in extension to other west Africa sub-region, have been doing so poorly. while Al Jazeera report, as cited by Lewis (2014), also emphasized that Boko Haram has emerged in the poorest part of Nigeria, where 71.5 percent of the population lives in absolute poverty and more than half are malnourished. Coker, Obo and Ude (2013), in his study on Analysis of the Economics of Terrorism in Nigeria: Boko Haram and Movement for Emancipation of the Niger Delta in perspective claimed that the link between terrorism and economic conditions should not be underestimated. The

emergence of terrorist activity cannot be solely explained by political and demographic factors, but partly explained by social and economic conditions. A causal link between economic conditions and the opportunity costs of terrorism can provide an explanation of violent activities of terrorist groups on their environment.

West Africa Sub-Region countries have some of the lowest economic indicators and investors shun these countries because of poor level of security. In order other to understand the linkage between terrorism and poverty in the West Africa Sub-Region countries, an investigation on the geography of development in the region indicate that the deeply impoverished place, having experienced much less social and economic development than the still-poor southern third of the countries. Scholars have therefore noted the role that poverty play as major factors contributing to the rising trend of terrorist activities. The conflict situation in West Africa Sub-Region countries provoked by terrorism and insurgency has resulted in “widespread displacement, violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, protection risks and a deepening humanitarian crisis” and the prolonged humanitarian crisis has had a “devastating impact on food security and nutrition in the region with millions of people in need of emergency food assistance.

According to an estimate on Nigeria alone from the United Nations Refugee Agency, over 2.7 million people have been displaced, including over 1.9 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in north-eastern Nigeria, over 541,000 IDPs in Cameroon, Chad and Niger and 240,000 refugees in the four countries (UNHCR, 2019). The crisis has also been exacerbated by conflict-induced food insecurity and severe malnutrition which have also risen to critical levels in all four countries cited above and despite the efforts of Governments and humanitarian aid in 2019, not less than 3.5 million people remain food insecure in the Lake Chad Basin region and will depend on assistance. Sanubi (2011), established that a relationship exists between the relative economic disparities in northern and southern Nigeria and the emergence of armed militancy. Armed militant groups may have been motivated initially by economic factors such as rising unemployment, poor infrastructure, social and physical insecurity, poor governance and corruption.

As a major destructive activity that destroys property, and causes human casualties and fatalities, the act of terrorism has obvious level of economic impacts and consequences for West Africa Sub-Region countries with measurable impact that include loss of the productivity for those permanently injured and killed, the loss of productive capacity and for destroyed physical capita, reduction in GDP and the loss of growth-inducing foreign direct investment (Ogundipe, 2017). The role that poverty plays in

advancing terrorism has been critically reviewed by researchers. One of such researcher includes Awojobi who opined that:

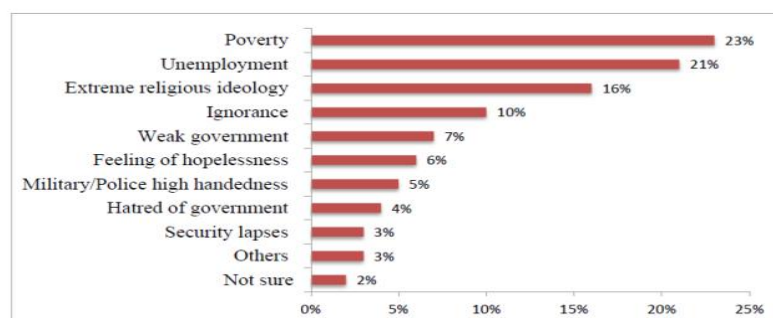
The high-rate of poverty in Nigeria has made the youths enlisted in the ranks of Boko Haram foot soldiers which has elongate the conflict since 2009. Most of the activities of the sect are concentrated in the North-East of Nigeria. The activities of Boko Haram sect have led to economic, social and psychological implications in the North-East Nigeria where the sect has a strong presence’ (Awojobi, 2014).

Awojobi (2014) further cited an empirical study conducted by Onuoha on the reasons why youth join terrorism. The findings of the study indicated that “poverty played a major role in luring the youth in joining terrorist groups. Terrorism certainly goes with a cost and while the indirect costs of terrorism potentially affect the economy both in the medium term by undermining consumer and investor confidence, it also has some direct economic costs like destruction of life and properties, responses to emergency, restoration of systems and the infrastructure affected, and provision of temporary living assistance which are most obvious in the immediate aftermath of the attacks and hence matter more in the short run. Another scholarly work by Adelaja, Labo and Penar classified the root causes of terrorism as: economic, social, religious, ethnic and political and noted that the level of poverty and unemployment remains the driving forces behind the insurgency in Nigeria with claims that the high rate of youth unemployment has resulted in poverty and insecurity problems in the country (Adelaja, Labo, & Penar, 2019).

The study further emphasized that certain socioeconomic indices like poverty, unemployment, inequality, economic underdevelopment, low education and others also contributed to the emergence and persistence of terrorist activities (Adelaja, Labo, & Penar, 2019). These assertions therefore lay credence to the fact that pervasive poverty and unemployment level in West Africa Sub Region are enabling conditions that makes it possible for young people to be manipulated and recruited by Terrorist even though some studies found no link between poverty and terrorism (Adelaja, Labo, & Penar, 2019).

The Figure1 below illustrated the conditions that best explain why some people engage in terrorism. The vicious cycle of poverty and unemployment were noted to have made it possible for people to become prey for terrorist recruitment and similarly recent public opinion study on Boko Haram revealed that some of the respondents interviewed perceive that people are motivated to join Boko Haram because of their unemployed status (Adelaja, Labo, & Penar, 2019).

Figure 1: Opinion that best explain why some people engage in Terrorism



Source: (Adelaja, Labo, & Penar (2019).

To further buttress the impact of poverty on terrorism in the West Africa Sub-Region, in particular Nigeria, Azad and Emily, (2018) study on Conflict and Violence in Nigeria: Results from the North East, North Central, and South-South zones, revealed that one in four conflict-affected households in North East Nigeria experienced displacement and lost economic opportunity. Each conflict-affected household was asked to report the most important consequence of the most recent conflict event they experienced (if more than one conflict event was experienced in the same year, they were asked to report the most important consequence of the most severe event).

The most common and most important consequences of conflict events in North East Nigeria were displacement, experienced by 26% of conflict-affected households, and lost economic opportunity, experienced by 28% of conflict-affected households. 16% of households affected by conflict had to send their children away or remove them from school, 12% faced additional costs for expenses such as medical treatment or replacement of stolen or damaged items. 77% of households did not report the conflict event they experienced to any authorities. The 23% that did report mostly contacted community leaders (71%), religious leaders (15%), or the military (12%). Only 8% of household's report having received any assistance after the conflict event. Nearly all of this assistance was received either from relatives outside the household or from an NGO (Azad & Emily, 2018). The exertion above clearly explains the link that exists between poverty and terrorism in West Africa sub region.

Religious Extremism and Terrorism in West Africa

Some political science and security studies scholars have traced the causes of terrorism to religious extremism, this fact cannot be relegated as the act of terrorism have been investigated, and scholars have realized that most of these activities are been championed by radical Islamic groups e.g. the hammers, the Taliban, the Al-Qaida and the Boko Haram in the West Africa Sub Region that claimed to be fighting against western education and wants to spread Islam and establish Islamic state in the Region. This is a conviction that the causes of terrorism in the region have to do with religion, even though the workability and possibility of their intention are impossible, as it is an idea that will become a fleeting mirage. However, the causes are being championed by an Islamic extremist. The Guardian News (2014) reported that Religious extremism has become the main driver of terrorism in recent years, according to 2014 Global terrorism index; their report recorded 18,000 deaths in 2013, a rise of 60% on the previous year.

The majority (66%) of these were attributable to just four groups: Islamic state (ISIS) in Iraq and Syria, Boko Haram in Nigeria, the Taliban in Afghanistan and al-Qaida. This has really signified Religion as one of the root causes of terrorism in Nigeria. Adesoji (2016), posit that it is a common belief that religious tension and religious fundamentalism cause terrorism, there is empirical evidence to support this argument with respect to Boko Haram, religion plays a vital role in their discourse. The group holds extreme religious ideology, which they use as the basis to commit their heinous crimes (Adesoji, 2016).

Most of the Muslim in the Arab nation is Sunnih Muslim that believes in the supremacy of their doctrine, and sees other doctrine and religion as a peagan (Kafiri) that needs to be abolished; the same cause is now being championed into West Africa Sub Region by members of these Sunnih Muslim in the

region. Religion plays a serious role in fostering terrorist tendencies because of its penchant for labelling one group as superior and others as inferior based on their monopoly of access and ownership of a supposed supreme universal being (Abolurin, 2012). Religion is no doubt one of the root causes of terrorism in the West Africa Sub Region.

Political Greed and Instability and Terrorism in Western Africa

Some act of terrorism in West Africa Sub Region is being mobilized by politics and politicians. For example, in Nigeria, some politicians have become sponsors to a terrorist organization such as the Boko Haram. Politicians hide under religion, submit themselves to the terrorist group as an Islamist and claiming to be fighting the same course with that of the terrorist group. They end up sponsoring activities of terrorism in Nigeria and they do this in order to the destabilized government of the opposition. Politicians use political thugs during elections, they buy them arms to be used in disrupting election processes. This arms most of the time are not retrieved from these thugs as they end up using them as an instrument of terror on the society.

Most of these thugs with those arms end up submitting themselves to the terrorist organization as an instrument to championed the act of terror in North-eastern Nigeria. Another factor is that Nigerian politicians when they get to the position of power, fail to give the citizens the basic needs of lives that will enhance livelihood and guarantee a high standard of living. When citizens are jobless, idle, they have no options than to submit themselves cheaply and fall easy prey to the demands of the terror group to act as a fighter for the group. Wisdom (2018) submitted that" Nigerian politics as the cause of insurgency have largely analyzed how corrupt politicians have caused economic poverty and inequality which have resulted in grievances in Northern Nigeria.

Politicians are also seen to be too far from the citizens as they are not always seen on the ground to address the issues and challenges faced by the citizens. Citizens tend to solve their issues themselves as some citizens end up taking laws into their hands by engaging themselves in a series of a criminal act to survive". Falae (2018) submits that a" huge gap between the country's government and its people is another cause of terrorism in Nigeria. Quite often, people do not seem to be heard by government officials. While some manage to deal with this in a civilized manner, others take to arms and use fear as their instrument of getting what they want from the country".

Foreign Influence and Terrorism in West Africa

Foreign influence is another cause of terrorism in West Africa Sub Region. For instance, In Nigeria, Boko Haram is an Islamic terrorist group operating in the North-Eastern, Nigeria, and the group's aim is to establish a Sharia state in Nigeria, destabilize Nigerian government and remove Western influence from Nigeria. The group has its allies in other countries one in which they are loyal. UKGOV (2018) submitted that the group was formerly linked to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) on 12th March 2015, Daesh (formerly referred to as ISIL) accepted a pledge of allegiance by Boko Haram.

In August 2016, the group split into 2 factions: Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA) and Boko Haram. Boko Haram is not just operating on their personal discretion, they have a similar vision to be accomplished with their allies in another country, they

receive orders from their headquarters in another country, Boko Haram is an ISIS-aligned jihadist group based in the North-eastern, Nigeria (counter Extremism project 2017). The mission of Islamization is to be accomplished in most of the countries, especially in Asia and African countries by this Islamic jihadist operating in this named continent, Nigeria is one of the targeted countries where the mission is expected to be fulfilled, this is why assistance in form of materials, money, weapons are given to Boko Haram.

These weapons are illegally moved in through the unmanned illegal routes found in the bushes. Ehovai (2018), posits that alongside the clearly criminal activities of abducting for money, bank robbing, there are also open activities in which an enormous sum of money changes hands among funding bodies and terror organizations. No terrorist organization operates successfully without finance and the needed materials, terrorism is an act that required a huge amount of money to keep the terrorist organization going in the actualization of their aims and objectives in any country where the group is set up.

Conclusion and Recommendations

There is no doubt that the menace of bad governance has partly been responsible for triggering terrorism in West Africa sub region. The nations of the region are still characterized by varying levels of stability and socioeconomic concerns among which is the ravaging terrorism in the region. The prolonged humanitarian crisis has had a "devastating impact on food security and nutrition in the region, with millions of people in need of emergency food assistance," as well as "widespread displacement, violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, protection risks, and a deepening humanitarian crisis." These conflicts in the West Africa sub-region countries were sparked by terrorism.

Due to its propensity to caste one group as superior and another as inferior based on access to and possession of a purported ultimate global entity, religion plays a significant role in promoting terrorist impulses. By adopting a three-pronged strategy of prevention, pursuit, and reconstruction, the ECOWAS Political Declaration and Common Position against Terrorism sought to address these issues posed by terrorism. The 3 pillars of counter-terrorism strategy recognize that mutual legal assistance in the area of intelligence, investigation, prosecution and counter-terrorism operation is an absolute necessity to meet the shortfall and disparities in capabilities of member states. Member states are entrusted with the primary responsibility for the full and effective implementation of this strategy.

Consequent upon the above, in order to address the underlying factors that contribute to the development of terrorism, the fight against this expanding threat calls for a wide variety of policy measures. Hence, the governments in the sub-region should focus on improving the quality of governance and leadership so as to improve on the socio-economic and political stability of citizens in the sub-region. The study affirmed that the competition amongst the elites have contributed to terrorism, armed violence and conflict in the sub region.

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