

Boko Haram and the Islamic State: A Tale of Two Terrors

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Abstract. *This research analyzes the similarities and differences between The Islamic State (IS) and Boko Haram in order to enrich the growing debate on the threat they pose to international security. Using the relative deprivation theory, the research argues that both groups are similar in their use of radical Islamic ideology to mobilize political, economic and socially aggrieved communities towards violence via hybrid warfare against status quo forces deemed unjust. However, they differ in their strategic goal, organizational structure, membership, financing and capabilities. These differences stem from the different strategic outlook of the two groups, with Boko Haram more focused on change in Nigeria and its immediate environs while IS has an ambitious global agenda of an Islamic Caliphate. Understanding these similarities and differences are necessary to effectively combat the security threats they both pose.*

Keywords: *Boko Haram, Islamic State, Terrorism, Hybrid Warfare, Relative Deprivation.*

Introduction

Ever since the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center in New York by Al-Qaeda, multiple Islamic terrorist organizations have emerged in different theatres of the world, all motivated by radical Islamic ideology that seek to challenge the Westphalia state model and replace it with an Islamic theocracy based on Sharia Law. Although the phenomenon

of Islamic terrorism is not new, the sheer intensity and scope of their activities and reach continue to confound international and domestic policy makers. For example, a 2014 report by the Institute for Economics and Peace, ranked Boko Haram the “most deadly terrorist group in the world” based on the number of people killed, followed by IS. There is a raging debate among scholars and analysts as to whether Boko Haram can be classified as an international terrorist

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organization and a global threat as the Islamic State (IS). These competing views are represented by Karmon (2014) who cites Boko Haram's 2011 car bombing of the UN headquarters in Nigeria and kidnapping of Western hostages as proof of Boko Haram's international threat. On the other hand, Oftedal (2013) dismisses Boko Haram's international threat by arguing that the group only poses a threat to Nigeria and its neighbors based on the geography of the attacks and its emphasis on domestic grievances. However, a third perspective represented by Pham (2016) has emerged. He argues that unlike IS, Boko Haram is an evolving international threat that demands international attention nevertheless. Pham points out that although IS has proclaimed Boko Haram as the "Islamic State West Africa Province" (ISWAP), the relationship has not moved beyond the rhetoric and cyber declaration of mutual moral support to operational support. Although this research concurs with the latter perspective based on the differences between the two as defined by the local focus of Boko Haram vis-a-vis IS's global Caliphate project, it is necessary to understand the similarities and differences among the two terrorist groups in order to effectively deal with the threats that they pose, whether local or international. Herein lies the contribution of this research.

In policy terms, Boko Haram has not attracted the same intense great power interest as IS. This is mainly because the western great powers, led by the United States, view Boko Haram more as a Nigerian/West African problem in view of the fact that Boko Haram does not have a broad international reach in terms of its targets, recruitment and the capabilities for international terrorism. According to a Stratfor 2014 report, "The West has offered no real response to Boko Haram, preferring instead to support its African allies indirectly through intelligence sharing and logistical assistance. The United States and Europe consider Boko Haram a local Nigerian issue that does not threaten U.S. or European national security, and so they will continue to be somewhat ambivalent" (Stratfor, 2014). This research seeks to enrich the aforementioned debate and generate more insights about the two terrorist groups for deeper theoretical understandings of Islamic terrorism and for better policy guidance in dealing with the phenomenon of terrorism. Thus, using the comparative method, this research seeks to answer the following question: What are the differences and similarities between IS and Boko Haram as terrorist organizations? The research argues that although both share similar domestic grievances that drive the aggrieved towards them and employ similar terror tactics, they differ in many ways such as their strategic goal, organizational, membership, financing and capabilities. These differences stem from the different strategic outlook of the two groups with Boko Haram more focused on change in Nigeria and its immediate environment while IS has a greater global agenda of an Islamic Caliphate. The paper is organized as follows: theoretical framework, literature review, similarities, differences and conclusion.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

There is no international consensus on the definition of terrorism among scholars, states, international organizations and even among the terrorist themselves (Tuman, 2003). This is because issues of terrorism are emotionally charged and highly political owing to the fact that one man's hero can be another's terrorist. However, because ISIS and Boko Haram use terrorism for political gains, as in seeking to establish Islamic rule in place of the status quo, this research defines terrorism as "the use or the threatened use of force designed to bring about a political change" (Tuman, 2003). There are different types of terrorism but for the sake of this research, which focuses on two terror groups that claim *their raison d'être* on a religious ideology, it is anchored in the definition of religious terrorism as follows:

"A type of political violence motivated by an absolute belief that an otherworldly power has sanctioned and commanded terrorist violence for the greater glory of the faith. Acts committed in the name of the faith will be forgiven by the otherworldly power and perhaps rewarded in an afterlife. In essence, one's religious faith legitimizes violence as long as such violence is an expression of the will of one's deity" (Martin, 2015, p. 130).

Several untested explanations abound on the causes of terrorism but this research is grounded in Gurr's (1970) relative deprivation theory to explain the circumstances that leads to the emergence of groups such as IS and Boko Haram because of its emphasis on group violence. Gurr used relative deprivation to explain the political violence that arises when people feel that they have been denied a benefit or right that they deserve or are entitled to. This feeling of denial is further compounded when they compare their circumstances with others around them and realize that others are better-off than them. According to Gurr (1970), "the potential for collective violence varies strongly with the intensity and scope of relative deprivation among members of a collectivity" (p. 24) as "men are quick to aspire beyond their social means and quick to anger when those means prove inadequate, but slow to accept their limitations" (p. 58).

Methodology

This research utilizes the comparative case method to examine two of the most prominent Islamic terrorist organizations in contemporary times, in an attempt to discover patterns, similarities and contrasts in their aims, organizational, operational structure and *modus operandi*. Such a task can only be achieved via a qualitative method which enables the collection and analysis of information from a small pool of cases (Burnham, Lutz, Grant, & Layton-Henry 2008). Collier (1993) posits that "this focus on a small number of cases is adopted because there are relatively few instances of the phenomenon under consideration that exhibit the attributes of interest to the analysis" (p. 105). As a result of the obvious difficulties in gaining access to the leadership and

members of the two terrorist organizations and time constraints, the study relies on primary information in the public domain, gained from government agencies and media pronouncements by the terrorists, archival sources and existing secondary sources in an attempt to discover new insights about the brand of Islamic terrorism espoused by these two terror cases. Lijphart (1971) has observed that “given inevitable scarcity of time, energy and financial resources, the intensive analysis of a few cases may be more promising than the superficial statistical analysis of many cases” (p. 685).

Literature Review: Origin of Boko Haram and IS

Although the world has come to know Boko Haram as the dreaded terrorist organization, the group prefers to be called by its Arabic name *Jama'atu Ahlissunnah lidda'awati wal Jihad*, which means ‘People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet’s Teachings and Jihad’ (Onuoha, 2012) and finds their labeling as “Boko Haram” which loosely translates in Hausa as “Western Education is a sin” to be pejorative (Boyle, 2009). The goal of the group is the overthrow of the Nigerian state and the implementation of Sharia across the entire country in order to cleanse Nigeria from what they consider to be its affliction with western education and social vices. The ideological philosophy of the Boko Haram is rooted in the practice of strict Islamic orthodoxy which, in their interpretation, prohibits Western education and working in the civil service (Boyle, 2009). The group draws its ideological baring from their interpretation of a Quranic verse which says that “Anyone who is not governed by what Allah has revealed is among the transgressors” (BBC, 2016).

Islamic State (IS)

The Islamic State, as the group prefers to be called, has undergone several name changes since its formation in April 2013 as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). It is sometimes referred in the media as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) but, nevertheless, the group refers to itself as the Islamic State (IS) in the aftermath of the Caliphate declaration in June 2014. Thus, the name “Islamic State” (IS) is used in this research for the sake of consistency. According to a BBC report, the group was originally formed in April 2013 and emerged out of Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) (BBC, 2014). The Al Qaeda-IS link is further corroborated by a November 2014 video released by IS which “acknowledged Abu Musa’b al Zarqawi, the brutal head of al Qaeda in Iraq from roughly 2003 until his killing in 2006, as a more immediate progenitor, followed sequentially by two other guerrilla leaders before Baghdadi, the caliph” (Wood, 2015). Ideologically, it is a militant Salafist jihadist group that follows a very fundamentalist Wahhabi doctrine of Islam (Al-Ibrahim, 2014). In June 2014, the group started referring to itself as the Islamic State (IS) after declaring all territory under its control as a Caliphate for all Muslims worldwide. The group’s leader, Abu Bakr Baghdadi, declared himself the Caliph (Roggio, 2014). In pursuance of its Caliphatehood, The Islamic State

(IS) has adopted a territorial expansionist goal where the group seizes territory, consolidates it and expands. This is epitomized by the group's motto which is "Remaining and Expanding" (Joscelyn, 2015).

Islamic State (IS) and Boko Haram Link?

Pham (2016) has observed an increasing scenario of Boko Haram and ISIS collaboration, not only symbolism and ideology, but in insurgency doctrine as well. This conclusion is informed by a number of collaborative declarations and actions. First, is the 2015 pledge of alliance of Boko Haram to IS and subsequent rebranding as the 'Islamic State of West Province' (ISWAP). This has been followed up by an increased pace in virtual exchanges from Boko Haram's leader Abubakar Shekau as well as the group incorporating IS's black jihadist banner and *de facto* anthem, "My Umma, Dawn has Arrived" in its video releases. In a mutual nod to each other, the two groups have credited each other for certain actions they have undertaken. For example, IS's publication, Dabiq, cited Boko Haram's kidnap of the Chibok school girls as a precedent for its enslavement and sexual abuse of Yazidi women. In addition, Boko Haram has also taken a cue from IS sectarian strife playbook by also attacking Nigeria's small Shia minority group. Furthermore, both groups have now abandoned their hit and run guerrilla tactics by now seizing and holding onto land (Pham, 2016).

Similarities: Grievances Galore

Based on the theory of relative deprivation, it is no coincidence that political violence has emerged among highly indignant northerners in Nigeria who are the most impoverished in the country and Sunni's in Iraq who feel marginalized by the Shiite led government. In the two communities, the most organized groups tend to be the radical Islamic ideologues who tap into the groundswell of disenfranchisement by offering them a radical solution. As Forest (2012) has observed, "the likelihood of ideological resonance is greater when members of a community are desperate for justice, social agency, human dignity, a sense of belonging, or positive identity when surrounded by a variety of depressingly negative environmental conditions" (p. 10).

Political Grievances

The unequal distribution of power at the local, national or international levels breeds resentment and fuels a perception of "us versus them" among the disenfranchised community which can be capitalized upon by terrorist groups who thrive on such grievances (Forest, 2012). Nigeria and Iraq, the birth place of Boko Haram and IS, are archetypal cases of political grievances being exploited by violent groups. In the case of the predominantly Muslim northern Nigeria, they have experienced the erosion of their political clout with the fall of the Sokoto Caliphate which used to be dominant in West Africa and

their subsequent domination by colonialism, military regimes and the current secular democratic dispensation (Forest, 2012). It is, therefore, not surprising that the Boko Haram insurgency peaked during the presidency of a Christian president, Goodluck Jonathan, who was roundly rejected by the entire northern Nigeria during his 2011 re-election (Forest, 2012).

This situation is compounded by a high rate of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment which has diminished the capabilities of the people of the north relative to their southern counterparts, a sentiment that Boko Haram has tapped into. Gurr (1970) describes such a situation whereby value expectations remain the same in the midst of declining capabilities as “decremental deprivation”. The same situation has happened in Iraq whereby the Sunni Iraqis, who once dominated political and economic power in Iraq during the reign of Saddam Hussein, suddenly find themselves on the margins of power with the Shiites using their numerical advantage to win elections in a zero sum game of politics. However, the Iraqi case falls under Gurr’s classification of “progressive deprivation” because Iraqi Sunni did not anticipate such a precipitous fall from political power as their capabilities to hold on was greatly diminished in the aftermath of the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. This feeling of political dispossession among Iraqi Sunnis explains the appeal of IS among a segment of the latter.

Economic Grievances

In both Nigeria and Iraq, while oil remains the largest foreign exchange earner and contributor to the GDP, decades of wanton corruption, economic mismanagement and misplaced priorities has denied millions the economic benefits of the oil revenues leading to a sea of discontent and hopelessness. The World Bank (2013) has warned that “Despite its abundant oil resources, Iraq lacks the capacities to use the revenues from oil for the maximum benefit of its population”. Indeed, Iraq has a checkered history in terms of the management of its oil revenues with Saddam dabbling in two costly wars with Iran, invading Kuwait and embarking on a clandestine Weapons of Mass Destruction program with its attendant costly international consequences. Currently, Cordesman (2014) laments the economic discrimination against Sunnis by the ruling Shiite elites which fuels the instability in Iraq.

Having elites from the same community in power does not translate into fair distribution of wealth and the placation of the communities that produces these elites. Citing the case of Nigeria, Onuoha (2012) argues that although political leadership has been dominated by Nigeria’s northern elites since independence, they failed to address the disproportionately high levels of poverty in northern Nigeria. Isaacs (2003) believes such high levels of poverty has alienated many young Northerners who have become skeptical about a system that has brought them little benefit but rather served the interests of the ruling elites.

Social Grievances

Societies where people feel discriminated against in the allocation of public goods such as social services or jobs are bound to have many aggrieved people especially if the discrimination is viewed as targeted. Thus, communities that feel targeted are more likely to be enticed by extremist groups such as IS and Boko Haram who promise justice and restoration of rights. For example, there is an overwhelming perception among northerners in Nigeria that “the wealthy elite throughout the country tend to be Christian, while the most impoverished communities in the country are found among the Hausa, Fulani, Kanuri, and other northern groups—all of them primarily Muslim” (Forest, 2012, p. 56). Such disparities fuel into Boko Haram narrative for the need to seek justice via violent jihad.

One of the worse policies that had dire consequences on the security of Iraq was the U.S. backed “De-Baathification policy” which sought to purge mostly Sunnis deemed to be loyal to Saddam Hussein from the army and public sector/civil service. Many of these people felt targeted and could not accept the preferential treatment that their Shiite counterparts were receiving and thus ended up as IS recruits out of grief. Furthermore, in Iraq many Sunnis from within which IS recruits “are locked out of key jobs at universities and in government, their leaders barred from cabinet meetings or even marked as fugitives” (Associated Press, 2012).

The absence of basic social amenities and the unequal distribution and access to basic social services generates grievances in affected communities that could be exploited by terrorist groups such as Boko Haram and IS. Agbiboa (2013) has observed that although the primary goal of Boko Haram is the takeover of the Nigerian state and the imposition of Sharia law, the high levels of poverty and youthful unemployment cannot be disregarded (Isa, 2010).

Tactical Similarities: Hybrid Warriors

The Islamic State (IS) and Boko Haram are both engaged in an asymmetric warfare defined as “the use of random/unpredictable violence by a weak group (i.e., one with a smaller force) against a stronger power (i.e., military, government, or even society in general) to gain advantage. Asymmetrical warfare is fought between grossly unequal sides. The less powerful force does not attack the more powerful force under the conventional rules of war because it cannot win by following these tactics” (Matusitz, 2013, p. 5). Under this type of warfare, the weaker sides such as IS and Boko Haram, employ “hybrid” tactics that includes both conventional and unconventional tactics against a much formidable enemy such as the U.S led international coalition and the Nigeria government respectively. These tactics are erringly similar and are discussed below.

Attack on Security Installations

A major part of the *modus operandi* of IS and Boko Haram is attacking military installations such as military barracks, police stations, recruitment centers and check points, prisons, etc. Such attacks are usually carried out stealthily and in spectacular fashion to inflict the most damage and casualty in order to garner as much as public attention as possible. Security installations are high value targets for terrorist organizations because of their centrality in legitimizing state authority. Thus, a blow against them not only demoralizes security agents of the state, it sends a message to the general public that if government cannot protect its forces, it surely cannot protect defenseless citizens. Furthermore, terrorist groups such as IS and Boko Haram attack security installations in order to seize weapons and also to free their members that may be held there. According to Look and Haruna (2015), Boko Haram not only successfully attacked the border town of Baga in north eastern Nigeria, which happened to be the headquarters of the four-country anti-terrorism joint task force, they hoisted their black flag over the town in a symbolic blow to the government. Similarly, after a 2014 seizure of the third largest military base in Western Iraq, the IS seized the contents of the base and the training camp, including tanks, heavy weapons, munitions and stores, as well as spare parts and different military supplies (Mamoun, 2014).

Territorial Conquest and Control

Both IS and Boko Haram share the tactics of capturing and holding on to territories with the latter evolving towards this strategy after drawing inspiration from the former's territorial conquest strategy. Buttressing this point, Pham (2016) has observed that both groups shed their previous hit-and-run guerilla tactics in favor of seizing and holding increasingly large chunks of territory. According to Byman (2014), at the height of ISIS's prowess in 2014, it controlled territory larger than Israel which included oil fields, electricity generating infrastructure, small manufacturing zones and weapons depots, some of which contained arms supplied by the U.S. Such territorial control provided a base for IS to train, recruit and served as an operational launching pad (Byman, 2014). Similarly, Pham (2016) has observed that by also capturing and holding onto territory, Boko Haram was able to set up a number of bases in the territory where hundreds of its recruits received ideological instruction, weapons and other training. This cadre subsequently raised the tactical sophistication and operational tempo of Boko Haram's attacks in Nigeria, elevating the group to the level of full-fledged insurgency (Pham, 2016).

Suicide Terrorism

Suicide terrorism is deemed the most horrifying and violent terrorist tactic used in today's world. Although suicide bombing account for a minority of all terrorist operations, it accounts for the majority of terrorism-related casualties and the rate of these

attacks is increasing rapidly worldwide (Atran, 2006). Both IS and Boko Haram employ the tactic of suicide bombing as part of their terror repertoire because of what Pape (cited in Friedman, 2016) has dubbed the “strategic logic of suicide terrorism”. Pape has established a link between fierce territorial battles and suicide terrorism by arguing that suicide terrorism is a reactive strategy by terrorist groups in a territorial fight against a competing entity in an attempt to establish a monopoly of force and political authority over a prized territory.

Furthermore, Pape argues that suicide terrorism is particularly effective in achieving two goals. First is to “to coerce the target government to pull back its military forces and suicide attacks kill more people – it’s the lung cancer of terrorism – than non-suicide attacks by a factor of ten” (cited in Friedman, 2016, p. 5). Second, in the regions within which the terrorists operate, “suicide attacks are excellent against security targets to hold territory...Suicide attacks are a way to level that tactical advantage” (cited in Friedman, 2016, p. 6). Buttressing this point further, Pape posits that this explains why during a May 2015 battle for the Iraqi city of Ramada, IS employed an array of strategies that involved complex suicide bombings in tandem with other non-suicide attacks all in attempt to seize and hold territory against competing forces (Friedman, 2016).

In Nigeria, Boko Haram has undertaken a new trend in terror, which is the feminization of terrorism, in which the group has used young girls as vanguards of terror. Females are being used for such operation due to the lack of suspicion they arouse in populous areas, such as local markets or schools which they can easily blend in. Moreover, Boko Haram has exploited the conservative characteristic of the Muslim society in the north to their advantage, because the Islamic religion prohibits men from frisking women. Thus, the group occasionally uses women in hijab to convey and hide explosives for suicide missions (Onuoha, 2012).

Kidnappings, Beheadings and Ransom Demand

Weak actors such as IS and Boko Haram, aware of their severe military disadvantages against powerful state armies and international military coalitions, are increasingly resorting to unconventional tactics such as hostage taking and kidnapping as a way of revenge. In addition, kidnapping and hostage taking is becoming one of the most common money-making and attention pulling weapons in the modern terrorist arsenal (Yun, 2007).

Furthermore, by displaying the graphic murder of their victims via the Internet and online videos, the terrorists are able to mount an international media spectacle for strategic effect. The killing of noncombatants can strike fear into the general public and weaken the resolve of the supporters of war on terrorism. Terrorist beheadings are deliberately painful and heinous to achieve dramatic results. When hostages are taken, the nationality of the victims dictates their fate, whereby hostages are divided

into two categories: those worth demanding ransoms for and entering into negotiations for and those who will be executed or videotaped for terrorizing effect (Jones, 2005). Pham (2016) has observed that Boko Haram does not limit its kidnapping for ransom to only “higher profile foreign nationals, but hundreds, if not thousands, of Nigerians whose families have had to offer modest payments, with most on the order of \$10,000-\$20,000”.

Similarly, IS has been able to command millions of dollars in ransom by relying on its fearsome reputation of barbarity. For example, in February 2016, ISIS released 230 Assyrian Christians kidnapped in Syria it had held for over a year after Assyrian businessmen and the Assyrian Church paid \$25-30 million in ransom money (Associated Press, 2016).

Sexual Violence Against Women

Both IS and Boko Haram use sexual violence against women and anti-women’s rules as part of their *modus operandi*. The World Health Organization defines sexual violence as “any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work” (Jewkes, Sen, & Garcia-Moreno, 2002). These terrorist organizations have gone to the extent of using Islamic theology to justify their violence against women. IS has particularly gained notoriety for its institutionalization of sexual violence against Yazidi women whom they claim as non-believers, fall under the spoils of war under Sharia law classifications (Newsweek, 2014).

Boko Haram has adopted an ultra-Salafi ideology that view women as subordinate to men and perceive Christian women, in particular as infidels. In 2012, Boko Haram distributed videos and booklets and delivered sermons in northern Nigeria, calling for the denial of girls from modern education and threatened to kidnap infidel girls as slaves. As a result, the group undertook several kidnapping operations on girl schools in which the hostage’s toll ranged from as little as two girls to as many as 200 girls in each attack. These kidnapped women in Boko Haram camps are being subjected to sexual violence, forced into marriages, killing, maimed, converting to Islam or even recruiting into the group (Maingwa & Agbiboa, 2014).

Attack on Western/Secular Symbols

IS and Boko Haram share an ideological antipathy towards westernization and western culture, which they view as having a corrupting impact on Muslim societies because of its attendant moral decadence. This ideological motivation has led to a systematic campaign against symbols and targets they perceive to be representing western culture or civilization. For example, in 2015, IS ordered school closures in three provinces pend-

ing a review of the school curriculum to conform with Islamic teachings, a move which affected about 670,000 Syrian school children (Huffington Post, 2015). Boko Haram fares worst in this regard by deliberately targeting schools and burning them down. According to a Human Rights Watch Report (2016) titled *They Set the Classrooms on Fire*, “between 2009 and 2015, attacks in northeastern Nigeria destroyed more than 910 schools and forced at least 1,500 to close. By early 2016, an estimated 952,029 school-age children had fled the violence”. In addition, motivated by a fundamentalist Islamic interpretation of combating “Shirk”, which loosely translates as idolatry, both IS and Boko Haram have attacked symbols such as tombs, shrines, churches, monuments, etc. The most egregious example of such attacks is IS’s destruction of the UNESCO Heritage site of Palmyra Temple in Syria.

Extra Judicial Enforcements and Killings

After territorial capture comes governance and both IS and Boko Haram administer territories under their control via extreme brutality. They enforce their extreme interpretation of Sharia via extra judicial killings for the most mundane “offenses”. Pham (2016) points out that just as it’s IS counterpart, wherever it seizes control, Boko Haram raises its black jihadist flag on public buildings and brutalizes anyone who fails to conform to their strict interpretation of Sharia Law. For example, in Yobe State, people caught smoking cigarettes were summarily executed. In Borno State, the spokesman for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Maiduguri told journalists that the insurgents were beheading men who refused to convert to Islam and forcing their widows to covert and marry militants (Pham, 2016).

Stoking of Sectarian Conflict

IS has perfected the strategy of stoking sectarian conflict in Iraq and Syria by positioning itself as the guardians of oppressed Sunnis living under Iranian-back Shiite dominated countries such as Iraq and Syria. Indeed, ISIS sees the struggles in both countries as parts of a larger grand struggle against apostate-dominated regimes (Shiite in Iraq, Alawite in Syria) backed by Iran and the Lebanese Hezbollah (Byman, 2014). IS stokes sectarian conflict by attacking Shiite religious sites and places of worship, populated Shiite public spaces such as markets, schools and military camps. The intention behind such acts is to provoke unpopular retaliatory actions from the opposite side and thereby offer IS the opportunity to rally the Sunni faithful into a preexisting narrative of fighting the murderous “apostates and infidels”.

Boko Haram draws inspiration from IS by stoking sectarian conflict in Nigeria by targeting the country’s small Shiite minority (Pham, 2016). Unlike Iraq, where the fault lines of religious strife lies between Shiites and Sunnis, in Nigeria, it lies between the predominately Muslim North and Christian South of the country. Hence, for Boko Haram,

Christians living in their midst are their source of sectarian ire and they have gone after them with vengeance with a series of targeted bombings of their places of worship. Available data indicates that in August 2014 alone, Boko Haram destroyed more than 178 churches (Open Doors, 2014). In a statement lamenting the vicious attacks on Nigerian Christians, the General Secretary of the Christian Association of Nigeria, Reverend Musa Asaka, posited that the statistics released by international agencies shows that more Christians were killed in Nigeria in 2012 alone for their faith, than the rest of the world combined” (Fatunmole & Ajayi, 2013).

Elimination of Moderates

There is no tolerance for moderates in IS and Boko Haram’s world view, even within their Sunni community. The two groups reserves some of the harshest retribution against people perceived as moderates or people who question their ideology and *modus operandi*. According to Byman (2014), IS also targets Sunni Muslims, if the group believes that they are insufficiently zealous or have collaborated with the United States or its allies, including the current Iraqi government. In addition, to serve as a deterrent for moderates, IS sometimes crucifies fellow Muslims and publicly hangs their bodies as a warning. Such barbarity even shocked the conscience of Al Qaeda’s leader, Ayman Zawahiri, who one time issued a formal condemnation (Byman, 2014). A report by the United States Commission for International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has also documented similar intra-faith reprisals by Boko Haram by pointing out that “Clerics or senior Islamic figures critical of Boko Haram were attacked in 23 separate incidents, killing at least 60 people” (Christian Today, 2013).

Multi-Media Strategy

The Islam State has become a global phenomenon in the realm of terrorist media production and propaganda. Although the structure and competitiveness of the media industry have influenced media attention to the Islamic State, the organization has been successful in attributing equal emphasis on media projection along with military efforts. IS have utilized several social media sites, such as YouTube, Instagram and Facebook. However, Twitter is considered to be the largest source of propaganda input by the organization. The main appeal of Twitter is the difficulty for governmental authorities to permanently eliminate their messages and accounts. Hence, Twitter is widely used by many terrorist groups as the official media outlet of their organization (Green, 2015).

Another media tool is the Dabq, which is a standardized magazine, published by the organization, that contains current events, informative articles and photo reports about matters related to IS. In addition, the group uses pamphlets, which are hard-copy propaganda that have been handed to Muslims in London to encourage them to move to areas under the control of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. Another important and big part

of the IS's propaganda campaign is the use of propaganda videos that spread through social media sites such as YouTube and Twitter. These videos range from an hour long documentaries to short videos showing the execution of captives (Greene, 2015).

Although Boko Haram does not have the media sophistication of IS, recently, there is evidence that the group is following in the footsteps of IS and even receiving technical assistance to reboot its media operations. A BBC (2015) report cited the launching of Boko Haram's twitter feed and the level of its sophistication as evidence of IS collaboration. The report also indicated that "the increased sophistication and organization of the propaganda that followed the launch of the Twitter account bore signs of the influence of IS, which has honed its social media exploitation over the past year ...and the use of multiple languages and well-presented subtitles – using English, Arabic, French and Hausa – suggested the group may have had outside help from IS media operatives" (BBC, 2015).

Differences Between IS and Boko Haram

Strategic Difference

While both IS and Boko Haram share the strategic goal of introducing Islamic rule in their various spheres of influence, they differ in scope and ambition. For Boko Haram, their strategic goal is the introduction of Islamic governance in the whole of Nigeria in place of the current secular and democratic system. IS has a much more expansive goal of establishing a global Caliphate for all Muslims beyond the boundaries of their home base of Iraq. This Caliphate will be akin to the 6th century during the time of Prophet Muhammad and his immediate successors. IS envisions Iraq as the nerve center of this Caliphate where the leader, in the form of a Khalifa, will preside over the "Ummah". McFate (2015) believes that "IS is framing its strategy across three geographic rings: the Interior Ring in the Levant, the Near Abroad in the wider Middle East and North Africa, and the Far Abroad in Europe, Asia, and the United States. IS's strategic framework corresponds to a campaign with three overarching goals: to defend inside Iraq and Syria; to expand operations regionally, and to disrupt and recruit on a global scale" (p. 3). The strategic differences between the two groups have shaped their organizational, membership and financial drive as well as their capabilities which are further discussed below.

Organizational Structure

According to Matusitz (2013), terrorist organizations have varied organizational structures that may include an identifiable high command, a horizontal structure with unidentifiable leadership with vague roles or a cell structure with loosely affiliated members encouraged to be lone rangers. The same applies to IS and Boko Haram. Indeed, evidence abounds that IS, with its global ambitions, has taken a cue from Al Qaeda's hierarchical organizational structure which is aimed at ensuring more discipline in a

multinational terrorist organization. A Rand Corporation study argues that IS has taken a cue from Al Qaeda organizational structure which is vertically integrated with a hierarchical management structure and functional bureau. This structure is replicated at the local levels with substantial level of autonomy in the execution of the group's strategic goals. However, each local jurisdiction is required to send periodic reports about its operational, financial, logistical and personnel status to the group's overall hierarchy (Johnston, Shapiro, Shatz, Bahney, Jung, Ryan, & Wallace, 2016).

In contrast, Boko Haram, with its narrow focus on change in Nigeria and primordial membership, has a more decentralized and layered organizational structure. Thus, it draws membership primarily from sympathetic Islamists from northeastern Nigeria, northern state institutions and government and military establishments. At the apex of this decentralized organization is Abubakar Shekau who wields final decision making powers with the support of the groups highest decision making body known as the Shura Council. The council is made up of 30 members and oversees the various decentralized cells. There are also specialized operationalized departments below the Shura Council responsible for carry out various tactical operations that ranges from suicide bombings, kidnappings, intelligence gathering, recruitment and bomb making. Boko Haram also has departments that focus on medical needs of its members and their families, as well a public affairs department responsible for propaganda. The organizational fluidity of Boko Haram ensures a high level of operational security outside the Shura Council. Typically, different cells are unaware of the activities of the other (Stratfor, 2014).

Membership: Recruitment: International Recruitment versus Local Recruitment

While Boko Haram is predominantly a pan-ethnic regional organization in terms of membership, IS is an international terrorist organization with membership from different nationalities. Boko Haram's membership is primarily drawn from the Kanuri and Hausa Fulani ethnic groups which constitute four and 29 percent of Nigeria's population respectively and spills into neighboring states such as Niger, Chad and Cameroon (Forest, 2012). On the other hand, IS has a far more diverse international membership base. According to Barrett (2014), IS has identified 25 countries whose citizens or residents have joined the group. Citizens or a resident from as much as 57 countries are reported to have joined IS per estimates. Furthermore, in Syria and Iraq, IS's success in recruiting can be traced back to its effective virtual propaganda machinery. The declaration of Caliphate and the early military victories made the organization seem more legitimate and stronger and this has boosted recruitment and made it more effective. IS has a significant global presence in the social media arena that is sustained by their manpower in which the organization's well educated and trained foreign fighters with the requisite technical and linguistic skills have made their success clearly evident (Gates & Podder, 2015). Unlike IS, Boko Haram's membership is made up of poorly

educated and unskilled foot soldiers who lack the linguistic and technical dexterity of IS's membership.

Financing: Transnational Financing versus local/regional financing

Comparatively, IS has more financial resources than Boko Haram that enables it to finance its transnational terror activities. This is largely because IS has better sources of funding than Boko Haram because of the relatively better socio-economic circumstances of its "Ummah" in Iraq, the MENA region and internationally. The relative richer environment within which IS operates from enables it to raise money from a much more diverse source. In addition, the environment within which IS emerged provides a better source of financial extraction and fundraising than Boko Haram's wretched circumstances.

Levitt (2014) has observed that IS's finances depend on oil smuggling, criminal enterprise, deep pockets of major donors and kidnap-for-ransom payments and many more. IS is considered as the world's best-funded terrorist organization, in which at the height of its ascendancy, the organization had a daily income of around \$3millions from oil smuggling. By this standard, IS's income was more than many small nations, including Marshall Islands and Tonga. This income was vital for the existence of the group, since it helped the group maintain and supply equipment, expand their propaganda campaign, pay salaries for fighters and manage civilian infrastructure and administration. Prior to the international coalition against IS, the group controlled about 350 oil wells in Iraq and 60% of the Syrian oil fields (Levitt, 2014).

However, an emerging financial profile of Boko Haram indicates that, unlike its counterpart, which has successfully raised millions to finance its terror campaigns by appropriating valuable oil assets in both Iraq and Syria, Boko Haram has been forced to depend on less lavish sources, such as wealthy sympathizers from its insular community, bank robbery and dividends from their partnership with some Al Qaeda affiliates. This is because although Nigeria is an oil producing country as Iraq, the country, unlike Iraq, is too big and its oil resources are located far away from Boko Haram strongholds to be easily appropriated. Thus, Boko Haram has resorted to raising money from powerful and wealthy individuals some of which even held political power – such as a former Kano State Governor Ibrahim Shekarau and Isa Yuguda, a former Bauchi State Governor who was alleged to be paying Boko Haram members monthly stipends (Agbibo, 2013).

Differences in Capabilities

As a result of the vast financial disparity between IS and Boko Haram, there are bound to be military/terror capabilities disparities between the two, with the more financially endowed IS having a superior capability than its West African counterpart. For example, initially, IS as a guerrilla army, proved itself as a skilled battlefield scavenger. Prior to 2012, the group had zero to little heavy weaponry. However, after continuous battles

and areas captured, IS emerged successful in amassing an arsenal that its rivals in Iraqi Shia and Kurdish forces have failed to match, until receiving extensive aid from Iranian, European and US stockpiles. Tactically, the summer of 2014 represents a major turning point for IS as the group was able to capture significant weaponry from several Iraqi divisions, along with spoils from the Syrian military base at Al-Tabqa. The capture contained significant amount of American and Russian made heavy weaponry, such as man-portable anti-aircraft missiles and guided anti-tank, Humvees, artillery and Russian T-55s and T-72s tanks and several American Abrams M1A1s tanks (Fromson & Simon, 2015).

These IS's gains have led the Kurdish forces and Shia Iraqi to be outgunned, in a time where IS was distributing these spoils along the spacious territories it controls. IS has organized parades in the street of its territories in Iraq to show off the weapons they have took from the Iraqi army and such tactics may sow fears among the group's rivals along with driving recruits to the group. IS has achieved its local superiority through its hybrid style in warfare, in which the sophisticated weapons that the group claimed, played a significant role in the evolution of the group's offensive operations, mobility and the element of surprise (Fromson & Simon, 2015).

On the other hand, Boko Haram's repertoire ranges from traditional bombs, such as hand grenades and small arms, to Vehicle-Born Improvised Explosive Devices, Molotov cocktails and simple Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). The security situation in Nigeria is worsened by the overflow of bombings that claim lives and destroy properties. As Boko Haram's arsenal gets more sophisticated, and it's attack capabilities evolves rapidly, stopping the group gets even harder and harder. The group's competent internal bomb making suggests that it is either stealing explosives from mining companies or has somehow been able to buy these explosive using front companies. At the very least, however, the group's limited arsenal suggest that the threat Boko Haram poses is only regional in nature, in which recent attacks indicate that development in deploying its IEDs and suicide operatives need to be done in order for the groups to evolve in its operations. More so, Boko Haram has yet to demonstrate an ability to work outside its traditional operational areas. Until Boko Haram master those skills and jumps into more unconventional and untraditional weaponry, the group will remain regional, albeit deadly threat (Okpaga, Chijioke, & Eme, 2012).

Conclusions

This research concludes, that although Boko Haram and IS share similar ideological foundations which enables them to exploit their respective environmental grievances towards violence and employ similar hybrid warfare tactics, they are significantly different in many ways. These differences are fomented by the provisional focus of Boko Haram versus IS's global Caliphate agenda. The differences are as follows: First, strategically, IS has a more ambitious pan-Islamic agenda of establishing a global Islamic

Caliphate while Boko Haram has the singular goal of establishing Islamic rule in Nigeria. Second, IS's hierarchical organizational structure is aimed at instilling discipline in a multinational force pursuing a transnational objective while Boko Haram's decentralized organizational structure is aimed at achieving a localized objective. Third, in terms of membership, while IS has a multinational membership base, Boko Haram has a limited pan-ethnic membership base. Fourth, IS has an extensive and diverse source of fundraising within and beyond the Middle East whereas Boko Haram is limited to its pan-ethnic circuit with occasional support from AQIM. Fifth, Boko has relatively modest military capabilities which has significantly limited its areas of operation whereas IS has the military capabilities of a state that enables it to project power globally. Thus, in order to confront the security challenges these groups present, governments and the international community must be wary of these similarities and difference in order to avoid monolithic policies that are bound to fail.

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