

## Poverty and “Economic Deprivation Theory”: Street Children, Qur’anic Schools/*almajirai* and the Dispossessed as a Source of Recruitment for *Boko Haram* and other Religious, Political and Criminal Groups in Northern Nigeria

by William W. Hansen

(with the assistance of Kingsley Jima, Nurudeen Abbas and Basil Abia)

### Abstract

Street children, many of whom are ‘*almajirai*’, are part of a vast underclass that populates the cities of Northern Nigeria. Many of these children and young adults have no means of support other than begging for their daily food, petty crime or providing casual labor. For the most part illiterate, they have few educational skills that would allow them to function in a modern economy. This article argues that the appalling economic conditions experienced by these young people makes them prime targets for recruitment into fanatical religious groups such as *Boko Haram*, or into one or another of the political/criminal gangs – generically called the ‘*Yan Daba*’—that proliferate in northern Nigerian cities. It further argues that the underclass from which these young people emerge is the direct consequence of the failed governance of the parasitic predator class that dominates the post-colonial Nigerian state. This, in turn, makes attempts at de-radicalization and bolstering the security forces doomed to failure – unless there are far-reaching social reforms that would undermine the very class that dominates the post-colonial state.

**Keywords:** street children; *almajiri*; *Boko Haram*; economic deprivation theory; underclass; post-colonial state; Northern Nigeria

### Introduction: The *Almajirai* and the Dispossessed

Street children with large, doleful brown eyes, wielding plastic begging bowls, looking like they had just stepped out of a Dickensian novel set in tropical squalor, are omnipresent in most Nigerian cities. While most of those in the southern part of the country are from Christian backgrounds or, at least, non-Muslim, the ubiquity of child beggars in the Islamic North is much more obvious. The term *almajiri* (pl. *almajirai*) has come to carry two meanings. On the one hand it’s used as a generic term for the millions of child beggars who flood the streets of northern cities. It also has a narrower and more etymologically accurate meaning: one of an estimated ten million young boys who attend traditional Muslim schools under the tutelage of a *malam*—a teacher and Islamic scholar. Of course, not all begging street urchins in the North are *almajirai* nor are they even all males. Many ragamuffin little girls wearing filthy, tattered dresses also spend their days pleading for something in their begging bowls. However, the traditional Qur’anic students constitute a significant portion of these children.[1]

The Hausa word, *almajiri*, has its origins in the Arabic expression *almuhajir*; a person who emigrates in search of religious knowledge. While there are some exceptions, effectively *almajirai* are boys as young as four or five years, from poor rural families who are apprenticed by their parents to an Islamic teacher in an urban area. The reasons for this are mixed according to Imam Dauda Bello.[2] For some parents who send their children away to study with a *malam* the reasons are spiritual; i.e., both the parents and the child will receive credit from Allah in the afterlife. For other parents, Bello agrees, the primary motivation is poverty. The rural economy of northern Nigeria has been in a state of collapse for nearly the past half-century. In part this is a consequence of the so-called oil boom; but its brutal and deleterious effects have been exacerbated by the feckless and venal governance of the parasitic-predator class that controls the Nigerian state. These parents, finding themselves unable to provide for their progeny, send them off to study with a *malam* in the

city. In part, this seemingly calloused behavior is motivated by the understanding the Allah will provide for them in ways their semi-destitute parents cannot. A measure of the sheer economic desperation that many northern rural families face is illustrated by a report of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and Related Matters (NAPTIP), stating that seventy percent of the young women trafficked for either labor or sexual services from rural areas of Kano state, virtually entirely Muslim, was done with the consent of the parents.[3] Given these sorts of actual, lived conditions, how can anyone be dismayed that the victims of such a system turn to radical, even millenarian alternatives; whether religious or political? Arguing that such people, compelled by decisions of the state class to endure such dismal conditions, need to be “de-radicalized” and “pacified” is to exhibit such a profound misunderstanding of the extant social reality as to leave one flabbergasted.

The curriculum in an *almajiri* school is generally confined to the rote memorization of the Holy Qur’an.[4] When they are not doing their Qur’anic lessons they are sent out onto the streets to beg for their daily bread. Often, even the proceeds of their begging do not belong to them. Much of the time their *malam* simply expropriates part or all of their daily intake.[5] There have been multiple calls for reform of this system but they usually generate far more heat than light and, typical for Nigerian governance, nothing actually ever happens. In part this is because the traditional religious establishment—the *malams*—resist losing their control (and the financial largesse attached thereto) over the system. The accusation that many of these youngsters are financially exploited by their *malams* is an extremely sensitive political issue and very likely to incur the wrath and the opposition of significant sectors of the Islamic clerical class.

Some *almajiri* school pupils also attend *boko* (secular) schools but these are exceptional. The system was designed to serve the needs of a pre-modern agricultural society in which literacy, for the most part, was confined to the elite and the upper-levels of the religious establishment. Being a peasant or a slave working on a plantation required little literacy. The traditional *almajiri* school provided a feeder system that replenished the religiously learned and quasi-literate lower clerical class. Unfortunately, this system has little utility in a modern, bourgeois (even semi-capitalist like Nigeria) society in which even manual workers must have at least a basic literacy, numeracy and some scientific understanding. The social consequence of the continuation of this traditional school system is that there are thousands upon thousands of graduates annually who have none of the educational skills that would allow them to get jobs and function within a modern economy.[6] There are three times as many pupils in traditional *almajiri* schools as there are in the state-run secular school system which is, for the most part, as public school systems often go, also seriously wanting.[7] The elite (Muslim and Christian) send their children to private schools. Nearly three out of every four school-age children in the Northeast do not attend public schools.[8] This continued practice has the “blowback” effect of increasing the already massive educational/modern skills imbalance between the Muslims and Christians.[9] According to a UNESCO report, ninety percent of southern children attend modern schools. This figure is below forty percent across the North.[10] The practical effect of this is that modern education begets modern skills which beget modern jobs which, ultimately, means that wealth and income flow disproportionately to Christians. This, in turn, exacerbates Muslim resentment of relative Christian success, fuels ethno-religious-regional resentment and makes religiously-inspired, violent, millenarian movements more attractive to the desperate and dispossessed.

There are, of course, exceptions but, for the most part, the graduates of *almajiri* schools seldom return permanently to their natal village and parental homes. Why would they? There’s virtually nothing to return to as the rural economy is lifeless. Instead, they stay with their *malam* until young adulthood (mid- to late teens) at which time they become “independent” and go out on their own to survive as best they can as an impoverished, destitute, permanent urban underclass in the mushrooming metropolises of northern Nigeria, forming what Marx (and Fanon) would have referred to as a *lumpenproletariat*, looking to survive by any means necessary and nurturing deep resentment of the society that has so brutalized and immiserated them.

As such they are readily available and easily mobilized for all sorts of political and social conflict—one of which is the *Boko Haram* insurgency.

[ Before proceeding, I want to emphasize that my research and conclusions concern only *Boko Haram* and Northern Nigeria. I am not making any general assertion with regard to drivers of terrorism as it occurs elsewhere in the world. ]

### ***Economic Deprivation Theory***

As suggested above, there are crowds of street urchins in every city in Nigeria; north or south. Not so stupid as to try and beg from people who are as poor as they are, these children wait in areas where they feel their take will be greater; outside hotels, banks, upscale shopping areas, Big Men's houses, etc. Of course, in the wealthier areas they are regularly chased away by uniformed security guards, men who are probably from the very same socio-economic stratum as the youngsters they are shoving away. The rich have long hired the desperate to do that which is distasteful for them. There is deeply embedded poverty in all parts of Nigeria. Citing World Bank figures, a 2016 report by Mercy Corps states that 61% of the overall Nigerian population lives on less than \$1.00 per day.[11] In the Northeast (Maiduguri) and Northwest (Sokoto) the scale of poverty is significantly greater. More than three-quarters of the population of these two regions lives in "absolute poverty"; i.e., at the bare minimum necessary to sustain human life.[12] However, here I am particularly concerned with determining the social category from which *Boko Haram* gleans its support and from which it recruits the bulk of its militants. An 18-year old Muslim youngster attending a "Peace Through Sports" program at the American University of Nigeria, Yola (AUN) said tellingly: "It was either you or *Boko Haram*. There's nothing else for us." [13] It is self-evidently true that very few current or former *almajirai* or street children in general from Kano, Kaduna or Sokoto, for example, join *Boko Haram*. Why? Simple: *Boko Haram*'s origins and presence are primarily in the Kanuri-speaking areas of the far northeast; i.e., Borno state of which Maiduguri is the capital and parts of neighboring Yobe, Adamawa, Bauchi and Gombe states and across the borders in Cameroun and Niger.[14] This does not mean that current and former *almajirai* in other regions of the North are not discontented with their lot but a *Boko Haram*-like manifestation of that discontent is not available. In fact, as will be discussed below, the bulk of the followers of the millenarian *Maitatsine* movement in the early and mid-1980s were former religious students. While the *Maitatsine* had followers throughout Nigeria's northeast quadrant (Muhammad Maroua, the leader, was a Fulani, originally from Maroua in Far North Cameroun), his movement was centered in Kano and was, for the most part, Hausaphone.

The argument that the bulk of *Boko Haram* sympathizers and militants come from the above-described urban and peri-urban underclass and that the insurgency is as much a class-based movement as it is religious is hardly undermined by the occasional defector from the more privileged classes—as some would claim, trying to refute "economic deprivation theory". The notorious Underwear Bomber, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, who tried to set off a bomb on a 2009 flight from Amsterdam to Detroit, was the son of one of Nigeria's wealthiest bankers and had attended exclusive private secondary schools before gaining an engineering degree from the University of London (while a Nigerian, Abdulmutallab was affiliated with Al-Qaida in the Arab Peninsula [AQAP] and had nothing to do with *Boko Haram*). Alhajji Buji Foi, a wealthy Borno farmer/landowner and former State Commissioner of Religious Affairs, was one of *Boko Haram* founder/leader Muhammad Yusuf's major supporters—politically and financially.[15] Foi was summarily executed, along with Yusuf and the latter's father-in-law who had voluntarily turned himself in, by the Nigeria Police in the aftermath of the initial 2009 conflict during which Yusuf first declared a *jihad*. Then there is the oft-cited young brother/sister team, both university students, from a wealthy Bauchi family who attempted to run away to join *Boko Haram*. [16] Likewise it is often reported—to refute the economic argument—that *Boko Haram* has occasionally recruited university graduates. One struggles to understand why a systemically

unemployed university graduate, merely because s/he has a university degree, is somehow not also part of an economic underclass. I know multiple examples of university graduates who are house help (females) and *keke* (motorized tricycles) drivers (males) and multiple unemployed ones who simply live at home with their parents or on the streets.

There are obviously problems in attempting to ascribe any sort of mono-causal theory to a social phenomenon as complicated as terrorism and insurrection. In the case of *Boko Haram* there are multiple factors that one needs to consider; some of them religious, some (especially) cultural, some ethno-linguistic, some even psychological. If there were an automatic, direct cause and effect relationship between poverty and insurrection there would be ongoing insurrections in many if not most countries in the world—with the possible exception of the social democracies of Northern Europe. There are, indeed, multiple factors involved. However, if the people of Northern Nigeria were to be able to live their lives at the same level of comfort as the people of Northern Europe's social democracies, groups like *Boko Haram* or *Yan tatsine* (of which more below) would find very little traction. In any society there might be an Anton Breivik, who I might point out, was a Christian. Breivik acted, more or less, as an individual. *Boko Haram*, no matter how one feels about it and its tactics, had its origins as a *social movement* that has in the past enjoyed not insignificant support, even if that has declined radically in the past few years.[17] BH support comes primarily from the fact that it speaks to the feelings of millions of people who feel abused by the social living conditions of Nigeria. As I have suggested elsewhere, "*Boko Haram* is the entirely logical consequence of more than five decades of the post-colonial Nigerian state ruled by a parasitic-predator class that is itself a by-product of the colonial state." [18] Asking the same predatory state class that created the problem in the first place, to correct it, as most Western governments and security studies proponents do, seems a Sisyphean task at best.

If between 65-75 % of the population of Northern Nigeria (something along the lines of ninety million people) are said to be absolutely poor—living at the bare subsistence level needed to sustain human life – we are talking about a group close to sixty million people. Obviously, the vast majority of these people have not joined an insurrectionary terrorist group, which is true of most revolutions. One could speculate that there must be multiple reasons for this. On the other hand, the mere fact that most Indians did not join Gandhi's protests in the forties, that most Algerian Muslims did not join the FLN in the fifties, that most African-Americans did not join the sit-ins and demonstrations of the sixties cannot be taken as evidence that they did not support the goals of those movements. Insofar as *shari'a* means justice and justice includes having access to life's necessities (jobs, food, clothing, health care, education, housing) then, I would suggest, the vast bulk of those sixty million economically deprived pious Muslims in Northern Nigeria are likely to support the implementation of *shari'a* precisely because they believe it to mean justice.

The term "economic deprivation theory", used in the context of studying religiously inspired anti-systemic insurgencies in northern Nigeria, often appears in terrorism studies preceded by something along the lines of "so-called", "alleged" or "simplistic" and would appear to be used to refer to, or, more accurately, to dismiss and denigrate what might elsewhere be referred to as a materialist approach to the study of political, historical and social phenomena in Northern Nigeria.[19] The origins of the term are not my concern here but they go back at least as far as Mervyn Hiskett's 1987 commentary in the *Journal of Religion in Africa* regarding a debate on what are referred to as the *Maitatsine* Riots (1980-1985), an earlier manifestation of a millenarian Islamic uprising against what was seen as a corrupt, abusive, and un-Islamic state.[20] Both the *Maitatsine* (Muhammad Maroua) himself and his movement were based in Kano; but uprisings after his death also occurred elsewhere in the northeast quadrant (an area roughly bounded by the cities of Kano, Kaduna, Yola and Maiduguri) of Nigeria. It was crushed by the military with the attendant loss of thousands of lives, primarily at the hands of the Nigerian military. It is seen as an influential forerunner of, and influence upon, *Boko Haram*. In this case Hiskett, a prominent British specialist in the history, culture and literature of Islamic northern Nigeria/West Africa, was skewering the separate analyses of I.L Bashir and Paul Lubeck of the insurrection; analyses he labeled "Marxist orthodoxy". Ascribing something as Marxist orthodoxy, of

course, has long been meant to divest said argument of any scholarly or intellectual validity. Hiskett, whose political views were decidedly on the right, did not completely discredit what he called socio-economic factors—he felt they may exacerbate the condition—in the radicalization process but the basic causes of the *Maitatsine* insurgency were, in his view, tribal, ethnic, cultural and religious factors.[21]

Economic deprivation theory, at least to its detractors, would appear to mean that its adherents mindlessly attribute social phenomena such as *Maitatsine* and *Boko Haram* to economic factors such as a generalized poverty. For these detractors, it would appear there are other far more intellectually exacting explanations to be preferred. As mentioned above, Hiskett attributed the *Maitatsine* phenomenon to cultural, ethno-tribal and religious factors. Hannah Hoechner claims that all empirical evidence refutes “simplistic economic deprivation theory”. In her case she was referring to *Boko Haram*. [22] Although she acknowledges that some *almajirai* may very well become *Boko Haram* recruits, it is, according to her, inaccurate to suggest that they (Qur’anic students), as a group, are *particularly* vulnerable. At the risk of appearing to defend a “simplistic” theory, I would suggest that Hoechner is quite mistaken. Much of the research, both empirical and anecdotal, shows the exact opposite of what she claims.[23] Based on focus group discussions among *almajirai* conducted by my research assistants, Kingsley Jima, Nurudeen Abbas and Basil Abia, in both Maiduguri and Kano as to the vulnerability of these youngsters to the blandishments of *Boko Haram*, evidence indicates that most of the Maiduguri youngsters participating knew many who had joined the group; one knew more than thirty. Two others knew more than twenty and multiples knew more than ten.[24] Similar discussions conducted in Kano revealed the exact opposite; i.e., none of the participants had any such personal knowledge. This, of course, can be easily explained by the fact that, as is noted elsewhere in this article, *BH* has little to no grass roots presence in Kano.

“Anonymous” attributes *Boko Haram* to something the author refers to as the “will to power”. [25] A perceived generalized system of injustice (poverty, destitution, hopelessness) we are to assume, has nothing to do with why this particular group wants power. Using this argument, any opposition group, whether an insurgency or a standard political party, seeking to achieve political power in order to implement a program is motivated by a “will to power”. “Anonymous” would seem to have missed completely that which needs to be explained; i.e., *why* a group seeks power, not the mere fact that it does.

Another critic of anything even tainted with a materialist analysis is Abimbola Adesoji. The reasons for *Boko Haram*, claims Adesoji, are rather clear and simple: the Nigerian government (then under Goodluck Jonathan) was unwilling to address the question of Islamic fundamentalism.[26] Adesoji’s argument is, unfortunately, typical of an entire genre of *Boko Haram* scholarship produced by Nigerian intellectuals of southern/Christian origin. For them the problem is not poverty, not ethnicity, not a predatory state, not corruption and the panoply of other ills facing Nigerian society. The problem is pure and simple: Islam itself or, at least, its Salafist-jihadi variant! If only northern Muslims could be more like their southern Christian co-nationals (implicitly be subordinate to, and learning from them) then the problems with conflict would magically be solved. Adesoji would appear to have only a limited knowledge of the North, of Islam in general and of the history of the region. He even repeats that old and oft-demolished shibboleth that *boko* is the Hausa word for “book”. [27] This, of course, folds seamlessly into what I call the “academic security studies industry” of which Adesoji is certainly a part. [28] In this view, a phenomenon like *Boko Haram* is a security problem that can only be solved through the judicious use of force. Even if there are social factors (poverty, abuse, corruption, unemployment) that exacerbate the problem, the issue is still one of the state and security. In this view, state survival and state interests are paramount. Order, as distinguished from justice, can only be achieved by clamping down on, and eliminating, the bad guys.

### *The Social Base of Boko Haram*

In general, the beneficiaries of any social system tend to support it and resist change. This does not mean there are not people who act against what might be perceived their own class interests. History is littered with them. Several have been mentioned above with regard to the current insurgency in Nigeria. The origins of neither Marx nor Lenin were in the working class; the class from which they received political support. Although Fanon was black and came from a lower middle class background, he went to Algeria as a French colonial medical officer, not as a “native”.[29] On the other hand, those who suffer abuse by the same system are at least susceptible to calls for its overthrow. This “call to revolution”, based on an assumed “class solidarity” that transcends all other divisions or cleavages—religious, ethnic, national, cultural—that might divide people, has certainly not been as direct and automatic as Marx and most Marxists had assumed. In fact, religious, ethnic, national and cultural loyalties have often proven far more powerful than class as a rallying point for mobilization. From the viewpoint of historical materialism, Gramsci has tried to explain this seemingly anomalous phenomenon through the concept of *hegemony*; i.e., the ways in which the dominant classes have used ideology, control over intellectual production and the definition of what is considered “common sense” to maintain their control.[30] Having said all that, however, does not mean that “class” does not exist as an analytical category and when class and other important identities coincide, solidarity has not been at all unusual.

So, from where does *Boko Haram* draw the bulk of its support and from which social strata are its militants recruited? Despite those who want to deny or minimize socio-economic factors in understanding and analyzing radical politicized religion in Nigeria, it becomes abundantly clear that the vast bulk of its adherents come from the destitute, the dispossessed, indeed, the *wretched of the earth*. [31] One hesitates here to use terms relating to social class that have their origins in Europe’s industrial revolution; working class, proletariat, petty bourgeoisie, middle class, bourgeoisie. That is why Fanon, very presciently and controversially, noted that in the colonies “Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched.” [32] In that instance he was discussing the coincidence of race and class (whites are rich/the rich are white) in the colonies; but his admonition applies as well to the post-colonial condition in which race, as classically understood, is irrelevant. If the primary contradiction in 19th century Europe was between the owners of industrial capital and the wage earning proletariat, in the 20th century colonial world between the colonizer and the colonized, in 21st century post-colonial Nigeria it is between the predatory state class and the vast and highly differentiated underclass some of whom are in meager regular wage employment, others in irregular day work while a large number are without any visible means of support aside from begging, borrowing, criminality and vagabondage.[33] The accumulation of wealth in post-colonial Nigeria is tied, not to the ownership of industrial capital as it was in Europe 150 years ago, but to control over the state apparatus or intimate access to those who do and the primary source of that wealth comes from looting the state treasury which in turn depends mainly on the revenues derived from exporting oil.[34]

In the foregoing I have suggested that *Boko Haram* and other similar radical, religiously motivated movements in Northern Nigeria draw the vast bulk of their militant supporters from the disinherited, semi-urban underclass. These sorts of commonplace observations are repeated constantly by those closest to the actual situation. Imam Bello, in referring to young men who are former *almajirai*, noted: “They have no job opportunities after graduating from *almajiri* school. You are unemployed, you are poor and you have no means of survival. This makes them easy targets of *Boko Haram*.” [35] Imam Bello made this point as well with regard to other homeless, jobless young men, sometimes products of an *alamajiri* school, sometimes not – often collectively known as ‘*Yan daba*; street thugs, petty criminals, muscle for hire, in classical Marxist terminology, a *lumpenproletariat* – saying, “When they (*Boko Haram*) came to Mubi they (the ‘*Yan Daba*) would be given money; 5,000, 10,000 naira. The moment they see money they get interested. They join.” [36]

The argument made here is that *Boko Haram*, its antecedents like *Maitatsine* and similar movements are, essentially, class-based phenomena. This, of course, does not mean that other factors such as religion are

not involved as well. Islam, in the minds of the mass of believers, has been perverted by the venal Islamic political class and its compliant clerical allies. The religious patina taken on by these radicals is not a false cover. *Their* religion in *their* understanding of it represents a call to justice. Is that so radically different from the promise of 19th century European socialism? Their radicalization is, as it were, “the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, the soul of a soulless condition,” to use words from Karl Marx. A return to an *imagined* pristine past, a past that has been perverted and diverted by the decadent upper classes and its foreign allies, an appeal to the poor, the abused, the dispossessed to return to a previous glorious condition—a perfection characterized by the early *salafist* Islam of Medinah—becomes the siren call to which the masses respond. The dynamics of this process are not all that different from the arguments used by nationalists in 19th century Europe in their drive for national self-determination.[37] The imposition of *shari’a* law, the *Salafist* ideal, consequently, means imposing a system of justice.[38] That the victims of an oppressive system find solace in religion and turn to it, millenarian and fantastic though it may be, for an understanding and theoretical justification of their revolutionary desire does not preclude the importance of the concept of class to understand the mobilisation.

A report for the British Council-funded Nigeria Stabilization and Reconciliation Project (NSRP) by Umar and Erhardt titled “Life Histories of JAS Members” (*Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna is Boko Haram’s* self-name) is illuminating and goes a long way toward providing empirical data with regard to composition of group membership.[39] Information was gained from interviewing family members of militants. Although not all, most militants are Kanuri-speaking males between the ages of 16-32. This linguistic marker itself explains why *Boko Haram’s* influence and catchment area is going to be limited to parts of the northeast. While 76% of the informants said their relatives in *BH* were very poor only a few gave poverty as the explicit reason for their joining. On the other hand, every single interviewee said that the desire for income were among the major inducements for joining *BH*. Some even said the group recruited its members with cash payments, an observation confirmed by Imam Bello.[40] The authors, citing Crenshaw and Bjørgo, refer to “pre-conditions” and “structural causes” that lead to the radicalization process; factors such as a destitute economic condition may not be realized by the participants themselves as affecting their choices.[41] More than two-thirds of the family members interviewed acknowledged that their *BH* relative had formerly been an *almajiri*. As suggested above, this fact alone almost certainly means these young men were grounded in a conservative and traditionalist theology, were bereft of a modern education and without the skills needed to find gainful employment in the modern economy and, therefore, unemployable or fit only for the most menial types of physical labor. To be sure, as Higazi points out, *Salafism* as such was not introduced into Northern Nigeria via the traditional Qur’anic educational system, but primarily via *Izala*, a virulently anti-Sufist group based in Kaduna and Jos that emerged from the post-colonial religious politics of the seventies.[42]

The attitudes of the NSRP informants were largely confirmed by interviews with various Maidugari clerics as well as the focus group discussions with *almajirai* themselves.[43] The interviewees also confirmed the speculated but not widely disseminated notion that *Boko Haram* underwent a significant metamorphosis after the extrajudicial execution of its charismatic founder, Muhammad Yusuf, in 2009.[44] Those joining *BH* after it re-emerged in September 2010 from a fourteen month long underground reorganization were, the family members say, less ideological and more opportunistic. Those coming in before the 2009 murder of Yusuf and the simultaneous military razing of the *BH* compound with nearly 1,000 deaths of family members, were more driven by religious beliefs and principles.[45] Post-2009 *BH* became factionalized, they claim, under Abubakar Shekau’s leadership which has been characterized by a sort of indiscriminate hyper-violence. A smaller group wanted to maintain Yusuf’s policy of directing attacks only toward the state’s security force enemies.[46]

A second NSRP study by Hashim and Walker dealing with the radicalization and de-radicalization of one-time *almajirai* makes a similar point with regard to the class status of the bulk of the youth who join radical groups; poor, uneducated and unemployed.[47] Of course, the question remains as to why these various

“social engineers” think de-radicalization can work when the conditions that caused the process remain locked in place. Their research determined that former *almajirai* are less likely than members of other male youth networks that proliferate across the North to get involved with radical, religious outfits which are either engaged in, or are advocating insurrection.[48] While some of these groups have emerged from traditional Hausa occupations such as hunting and magic-making, many of them have de-generated into criminal gangs involved in “normal criminality”. Some do double duty as vigilantes, running protection rackets and political thuggery paid for by one or another of Nigeria’s multiple patronage networks of political godfathers who regularly use unemployed young men to intimidate and even murder their opponents. Politics in Nigeria is a blood sport. Interestingly, especially with regard to the question of class, 50% of Hashim and Walker’s *almajirai* informants, asked what the first thing they would do were they ever to be in a position of political power, answered by saying they would work to end poverty.[49]

A third study of youth radicalization in the North, funded by the US government and carried out by Lagos’ CLEEN Foundation, is less satisfactory from the point of view of logic, academic rigor and intellectual content Yet it still underscores the overall point; i.e., socio-economic factors are the primary determinants leading to youth radicalization.[50] The CLEEN study was conducted in six northern states—Borno, Yobe, Gombe, Kaduna, Kano and Sokoto—with the stated purpose of determining why young Nigerians join *Boko Haram*. [51] One wonders why two of these states—Kaduna and Sokoto—were chosen since *BH* has almost no presence there. Why would one want to study the reasons for Sokoto youth joining *Boko Haram* when they seldom do? Even in Kano, the “capital” of the Muslim north, *BH* has only a very limited on the ground network. *BH* has certainly conducted “actions” in such places but recruiting alienated young men requires a social-cultural presence at the grass roots level and *BH*’s catchment area is almost completely confined to the Kanuri-speaking areas of Borno, Yobe, Gombe and parts of Bauchi and Adamawa states. The study concludes by listing what it calls “Key Findings”. The first four are identified as *key drivers* behind youth radicalization. The fifth, the study emphasizes, is *not* a factor. Why a non-factor in youth radicalization is included as a key finding is something I shall return to in a moment. The five key findings are:

1. Ignorance of *true* religious teachings (most important);
2. Unemployment and poverty (very important);
3. Poor parental upbringing (important);
4. High levels of illiteracy (important);
5. The *alleged* excesses of the security forces are NOT important in contributing to youth radicalization.

All of the above deserve some comment and, in part, are reasons why I suggested earlier that the CLEEN study was less than rigorous in terms of academic and intellectual rigor. With regard to #1 above, there is no operational definition offered as to what are the “true teachings” of Islam and how such a truth is determined. All religious and political movements have had deviations from the dominant thinking. The majority labels the minority heretics. The losers perceive themselves as persecuted. Both Jesus and Muhammad were scathing in their criticism of the dominant religious discourses of their time. Accusing, say, Muhammad Yusuf and Abubakar Shekau or, even, Osama bin Laden and Abubakar al-Baghdadi of “misunderstanding” the true teachings of Islam seems the height of futility. In fact, that is the crux of their argument; the dominant discourse is itself incorrect. Pope Leo X excommunicated Martin Luther in 1520 because the latter failed to understand and teach “true” Christianity. In a non-religious context Lenin was brutal in his treatment of the Mensheviks and of Kautsky for failing to advocate “true” Marxism, defined from Lenin’s point of view as absolute ideological agreement with himself.

True to historical precedent, CLEEN’s recommendations, written by the study’s lead researcher, Dr. Freedom Onuoha, start with advocating close regulation (implicitly: ban) and monitoring of what dissident, minority,

peripatetic Islamic teachers are allowed to teach; very much within the tradition of Leo X and Lenin.[52] Who would be doing this monitoring? Onuoha proposes a new *state agency* which would include the State Security Service (SSS) and would determine that which is orthodox and permissible theology.[53] Who's the Leninist here? Proposing a state agency that would be in charge of determining that which is theologically sound seems a dangerous option. Furthermore, arguing that a radical preacher offering a radical solution to a destitute, mundane existential condition is somehow the cause of the problem rather than its consequence, and that this condition is somehow disconnected from the overall socio-economic environment of his congregants, defies logic.

It would seem Onuoha's advice is being followed by the Borno state governor, Kashim Shettima, who announced the formation of the Borno State Islamic Preaching Board whose job will be to "monitor and spy" on the preaching of all Islamic clerics...especially in the remote areas. It would also "be alert in spotting unusual and suspicious preaching." [54] It's easily seen how such an agency's remit could be expanded to oversee all Christian preaching as well and, in fact, all political speech which the state wants prohibited.

Findings # 2, 3 and 4 in the CLEEN study are all different aspects of the same phenomenon; socio-economic deprivation. Poverty and unemployment tend to produce children whose parents are unable to bring them up properly. It is exactly these parents who send their children off to be raised, taught and cared for by a *malam* in the city. Even if they were interested, and evidence would suggest that most are not, these clerics would never be able to provide "proper parental care" to their dozens and sometimes hundreds of wards. Of course poverty and unemployment lead to high rates of illiteracy which, in turn, lead to high rates of poverty and unemployment.

Finding #5 – that "*alleged* [BH emphasis] excesses" by the state security forces are not a factor in radicalization—deserves also some comment. First of all, the mere use of the word "alleged" tells us a great deal about the mindset of the study's authors. Human rights abuses by the Nigerian state security forces are far more than merely "alleged". According to Higazi, "The brutality of the military in Maiduguri from 2011-2013 is plausibly reported to have pushed many youths in Boko Haram." [55] Their volume and barbarity have been documented time and again by various international organizations. Amnesty International has recommended that leading officers of the Nigerian military be investigated for crimes against humanity. [56] One is obliged to point out in this regard that Freedom Onuoha, who directed the study and wrote the introduction and conclusion and, oddly enough, also thinks *boko* is the Hausa word for "book", is himself a key member of the Nigerian security establishment; professor and head of the Centre for Strategic Research and Studies, Nigeria Defense College. As such he is typical of the "academic security studies industry" to which I referred above; his numerous writings reflect that outlook. Of course, the automatic response of the Nigerian security establishment is to issue blanket denials of any wrongdoing. The findings themselves that the documented brutality of the Joint Task Force (JTF – Army, Police Force, State Security Service) did not serve to radicalize people and push them into joining *BH* are belied by multiple sources, including the international human rights organizations mentioned above. One very recent report, based on interviews with former *Boko Haram* members, states "...a heavy-handed security response began to breed active resentment." [57]

In an interview a Maiduguri *malam* gave three reasons for why young former *almajirai* join *Boko Haram*: (1) They are very poor; (2) In their opinion *shari'a* = justice and justice = jobs; (3) They feel abused by the Muslim upper classes in Borno. [58]

## Conclusion

The foregoing has shown rather conclusively what most close observers of Northern Nigeria had already understood intuitively, through direct experience or anecdotally; *Boko Haram*, other radical religion-based

movements, “for hire” gangs of political thugs and common criminal networks draw their support and recruits largely from poverty-stricken, destitute young males desperate for an alternative to the life fate and history have condemned them. In a society that can only be described as obsessed with religiosity—Christian and Muslim—fantastical millenarian religious promises offer a solution, illusory though it may be, to this lived nightmare. Secular democracy based on Western liberalism or socialism has failed miserably to deliver the goods. The economic circumstances of the mass of the northern underclass have deteriorated significantly over the past four to five decades with the disintegration of a once-thriving cotton textile industry thanks to the WTO, cheap Chinese textiles, neo-liberal free trade advocates of the Washington Consensus, an IMF loan with “conditionalities” and a parasitic-predator political class that cares for little more than its own hyper-consumption. This, combined with the collapse of rural agriculture due to a combination of climate change, destructive agricultural practices and a corrupt government with no policy options and concerned only with looting the oil rent income, has led to a massive increase in the urban and peri-urban underclass in swollen northern cities. These youngsters are extraordinarily vulnerable to what Aghedo and Eke call “conflict entrepreneurs, desperate politicians who will stop at nothing in the quest for power and resources [and] those who pay street urchins peanuts to execute criminal acts.”[59]

Shehu Sani, an attorney, human rights advocate and now an APC Senator from Kaduna state, had a personal relationship with *BH*'s late leader, Muhammad Yusuf, and was even involved several years ago in negotiations with an eye toward finding a settlement. Referring to *almajirai*, Sani says, “These are...vulnerable children. They have in many cases turned to extremism and crime because they were sent away by their parents at a very tender age and they grow up under the care of teachers who use them.”[60] Echoing Sani was the then Governor of Kano state, Rabi'u Kwankwaso: “There’s a very strong correlation between poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and the issue of insurgency and insecurity. A very poor man who is looking for something to eat can easily be recruited by the insurgents and so can the unemployed and illiterate, and that’s exactly what is happening.”[61]

In trying to explain late 18th century food riots in England, the late E.P. Thompson referred to a lost “moral economy” based on the notion that peasants had, at least, the right to eat and to have food available at a “fair” price, not a price driven by an impersonal “market” that had no respect for human beings as such; only the profit-driven sales.[62] Paul Lubeck drew a comparison between the followers of the *Maitatsine* in the mid-1980s to these English vagabonds of 200-plus years ago who were protesting against the increasing ravages of the new market economy and the destruction of the old moral order.[63] Another late British historian, Eric Hobsbawm, advanced the concept of “social banditry” to explain a virtually universal phenomenon occurring in peasant societies—in this case primarily the Mediterranean world of southern Europe between 1850 and 1950—undergoing the wrenching transition from a dependable, if hierarchical, pre-modern society to an impersonal world of the free market in which mere human beings are easily dispensed with.[64] In this author’s view *Boko Haram* not only can be, but MUST be understood in terms of class as was suggested by Lubeck more than thirty years ago with regard to the *Maitatsine*. Dismissing them as mere fanatics misses the point entirely.[65] Lubeck went on to write:

*Should the uprooted, deprived and repressed urban masses ever unite around a charismatic leader with a coherent ideology and an organization capable of mobilizing the excluded, then the anti-institutional energy expressed by the `Yan Tatsine may generate a radically different outcome than self-destructive, millenarian protest.[66]*

Muhammad Yusuf was definitely a charismatic leader. His ideology, unfortunately, was less than coherent and his organization more a series of daily spontaneous reactions which, as Fanon has pointed out, has both positive and (mainly) negative consequences.[67] The result, unfortunately, for the abused and disinherited of Nigeria’s Northeast has been yet another example of “self-destructive, millenarian protest”. Larry Diamond, explicitly not a Marxist, made something of the same point with regard to a charismatic leader mobilizing the masses. Diamond had been in Nigeria during the *Maitatsine* insurrection but was writing in 2015 about *Boko*

*Haram* saying that unless radical reforms are implemented and a modicum of justice instituted, a radical Islam will continue to mobilize the people.[68] If *Boko Haram* as it exists in mid-2016 is destroyed, as looks increasingly likely, another, similar movement will arise to take its place unless the manifest injustices of the current dispensation are addressed. Unfortunately, the parasitic-predator class that dominates Nigerian society shows no signs of ever willingly giving up its privileges. Consequently, it will continue to prey upon its citizens and depend upon its foreign friends (the West) to prop up its continued venality—all in the name of security and a never ending “war on terror”.

**About the Author: Bill Hansen (William W. Hansen)**, an American, is the founding chair (2005) of the Department of International and Comparative Politics at the American University of Nigeria (AUN), Yola, where he teaches. He was educated at the University of Maryland, at SOAS in London and at Boston University. His research interests have to do with identities (race, national, ethnic, religious), anti-systemic insurrectionary movements (*Boko Haram*), the political philosophy of Frantz Fanon, Leninism and Socialism. He has previously published articles on *Boko Haram* in the ‘*Journal of Asian and African Studies*’. He currently lives in Yola, Nigeria, with his four adopted Nigerian children aged 15, 10, 7 and 4.

The writing of this article was done by Hansen and the arguments and conclusions are his responsibility alone. However, he was helped enormously by his three Research Assistants who carried out field work and interviews in multiple trips to Maiduguri, Kano, Mubi and Yola. He also benefitted from Kingsley Jima’s Senior Honors Thesis at AUN.

\***Kingsley Jima** is a 2016 Politics honors graduate of AUN where he wrote his thesis on the *almajirai* as a possible catchment area for *Boko Haram* recruiting.

**Nurudeen Abbas** is a fourth year student studying Management at the Modibbo Adama University of Technology (MAUTECH) in Yola.

**Basil Abia** is also a 2016 Politics honors graduate of AUN.

All three are Yola natives and Hausaphones. Abbas is a Muslim; Jima and Abia are Christians.

## Notes

[1] There is no generally agreed-upon number of Nigerian street children, as there is no agreed-upon definition as to the category itself. Adekunle, *et al.*, “The Growing Population of Street Children and the Accompanying Social Distress in Nigeria”, *African Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences*, 2 (1-2) 2010, (p. 42), suggests that in 2009 there were a total of 15 million so-designated children in all of Nigeria. The category “street children” sometimes includes (1) children, under 18 who live and work on the streets with no permanent residence who never attend schools of any kind; (2) children who live and work on the streets but return to some sort of parental home at night; (3) children who live and work on the streets, return home at night and sometimes attend formal school; (4) children who live and work on the streets only certain times of year – “dry season”, for example; (5) *almajirai* school children who spend part of their time living and working on the streets, part of their time in a traditional Qur’anic school, but return to the “collective care” of their *malams* “learning center” at night. See also Gbenga Salau, “ALMAJIRI: The Story of Nigeria’s Street Children up North”, *The Guardian (Ng) Sunday Magazine*, 13 August 2016.

[2] Interview with Dauda Bello, 14 November 2015. Imam Bello, at the time of the interview, was the Imam of a mosque in Mubi, a city in northern Adamawa state, northeast Nigeria that had been briefly occupied by *Boko Haram*. Imam Bello now has a mosque in Yola, the state capital. He is also the Imam of the mosque at the American University of Nigeria where he teaches Arabic as well.

[3] Ahmed Muhammad, “Over 70 per cent of Nigeria girl trafficking backed by victims’ parents”, *Premium Times*, 23 June 2016.

[4] Some traditional Islamic schools have more complicated and variegated curricula but they would appear to be relatively rare. This information was given to me by Umma Aliyu Musa via e-mail communications the first week of July 2016. Aliyu Musa, who teaches Hausa at the University of Hamburg, is a specialist in Hausaphone philology, culture and literature. See also Adam Higazi, “Mobilization into and against *Boko Haram* in North-East Nigeria”, in Kadya Tall, Marie-Emmanuelle Pommerolle, Michael Cahen (Eds.), *Collective Mobilizations in Africa*. Leiden: Brill, 2015, pp. 335-337. Higazi here discusses the various types of traditional Islamic education in the Northeast.

[5] Interview on 28 May 2016 with two Maiduguri-based Muslim clerics who wish to remain anonymous: “Most *almajirai* are exploited by their *malams* in the sense that they take part of their earnings from begging.” See also Yahaya Hashim and Judith-Ann Walker, “Radicalization, Counter-radicalization and De-Radicalization and the out-of-school *Almajiri* of Northern Nigeria”, *Nigerian Stability and Reconciliation Project (NSRP)* 14 September 2014, p 19; A Sokoto *malam* stated: “Malams go to villages, collect children and make income out of them.”; Iro Aghedo and Surulola James Eke, “From Alms to Arms: The *Almajiri* Phenomenon and Internal Security in Northern Nigeria”, *Korean Journal of Policy Studies*, 28/3, 2013, p. 105; Human Rights Watch, “*Off the Backs of the Children*”: *Forced Begging and Other Abuses against Talibes in Senegal*, New York, 2010. This HRW report is actually based on an investigation regarding what are called *Talibes* (students/Taliban) in the Senegambia. However, the *Talibes* in the Senegambia are the same as the *almajirai* in Nigeria and the conditions under which they are forced to live are roughly the same.

[6] Dauda Bello interview, op. cit.

[7] Aghedo and Eke, op. cit., p. 104.

[8] Ibid., p. 110.

[9] All statistical indices show higher educational/income levels among southern/Christians than among their northern/Muslim counterparts. Colonialism first entered Nigeria in the South and moved gradually north. Pre-colonial southern societies were, for the most part, animist/pagan. In the face of the colonial juggernaut, accompanied by convert-hunting missionaries, these societies collapsed and were relatively quickly converted to Christianity. Western education was soon perceived as a mechanism for upward social mobility as well as a way to outflank the traditional ruling classes. A cohort of Western educated, English proficient collaborators soon developed as a necessary complement to the colonial administrators. The opposite happened in the North when confronting a deeply embedded Islamic "high culture". The Fulani aristocracy correctly anticipated that Western education had the potential to undermine their position. As part of the agreement to accept British suzerainty after 1903, the aristocracy insisted upon severe restrictions on (in their view false) Western education. This is how it came to be called *boko*. The British, interested primarily in administration on the cheap, complied in order to secure aristocratic Fulani cooperation. Western missionary education in the North was curtailed. The effects of these historical factors are plainly evident today.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Mercy Corps, *Motivations and Empty Promises: Voices of Former Boko Haram Combatants and Nigerian Youth*, p. 7, April 2016.

[12] The World Bank. 2014. *Nigeria Economic Report*. Number 2 (July, 2014). Washington, DC: The World Bank, p. 17, Table 8. See also Mercy Corps, *ibid*.

[13] Margee M. Ensign, "Local Action to Protect Communities in Nigeria", *Forced Migration Review*, p. 1; forthcoming, 2016. Ensign is President of the American University of Nigeria, Yola (AUN) which, in partnership with the Adamawa Peace Initiative (API), an independent community group of which Ensign is the Chair, runs multiple community outreach programs. The comment was made to Ensign personally at an event and was concurred in by other youth present at the time. Ensign notes that she's heard similar sentiments many times. (Disclosure: The author is a faculty member at AUN and, therefore, Ensign's subordinate).

[14] According to Sambo Dasuki, the former Nigerian National Security Advisor, 70-80% of Boko Haram militants are Kanuri-speakers. See Higazi, op. cit., p.330.

[15] Muhammad Yusuf (1970-2009) came from peasant origins in Yobe state. As a youngster he received a traditional almajiri education and later went to Saudi for advanced Islamic education. Breaking with the Salafist, *Izala* group, Yusuf advocated total opposition to the secular ("infidel") Nigerian state. In the early 2000s he began gathering followers who were known collectively as the *Yusuffiyah* (followers of Yusuf). They called themselves *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna* (People of the Tradition). Yusuf was extra-judicially executed by the Nigerian police in 2009 after armed clashes with the police and military led to his capture. It was only after his death that the succeeding group came to be known popularly as *Boko Haram*.

[16] Prince Charles Dickson, "Kids of Rich Nigerians who Finance Boko Haram", *International Center for Investigative Reporting*, 2 July 2015. This instance was widely reported in Nigeria to support the fact that economic immiseration had nothing to do with *Boko Haram*.

[17] See Pew Center Global Attitudes Survey, "Boko Haram Reviled in Nigeria", Washington, DC: Pew, July 2014. Reviled? Where? The survey would indicate that upwards of 20 million Nigerians support *Boko Haram*. Far fewer, of course, actually join.

[18] William Hansen, "Boko Haram: Religious Radicalism and Insurrection in Northern Nigeria", *Journal of Asian and African Studies*; URL: DOI:10.1177/0021909615615594, December 2015, p. 1.

[19] I will try to avoid using the term "Marxist" in this context because that term is not only often misunderstood and incorrectly used, but any discussion as to its method is so obscured by the politics of the Cold War, Leninism, the Soviet Union, Communism as to have very little useful meaning. Instead, I will generally use the concept of "historical materialism" referring to an *analytical method* advocated by Marx and others and distinguished from anyone's political agenda.

[20] Mervyn Hiskett, "The Maitatsine Riots in Kano, 1980: An Assessment", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, XVII, 3, 1987, pp. 211, 215.

[21] Ibid., pp 215, 222. Furthermore, anyone even slightly familiar with the world of Marxology would, in all likelihood, find the term "Marxist orthodoxy" an oxymoron.

[22] Hannah Hoehner, "Traditional Quranic Students (*ALMAJIRAI*) in Nigeria: Fair Game for Unfair Accusations" in Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos (Ed.) *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, Leiden: African Studies Centre, 2014, p. 64.

[23] Numerous Islamic clerics, including Dauda Bello, Bashir Suleyman and Ibrahim Jibril (not the real names of the latter two; both *malams*) have emphasized in interviews that it is poverty, unemployment, lack of proper upbringing and the perceived abuse by the upper classes that drove youngsters into the arms of *Boko Haram*.

[24] Kinsley Jima, *The Vulnerability of Almajirai to be Recruited as Boko Haram Members: A Case Study of Kano and Borno States, Nigeria*, Senior Honors Thesis, American University of Nigeria, Yola, submitted and defended May 2016.

[25] Anonymous, "The Popular Discourses of Salafi Radicalism and Salafi Counter-radicalism: A Case Study of Boko Haram", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 42 (2012), *passim*.

[26] Abimbola Adesoji, "Between Maitatsine and Boko Haram: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Response of the Nigerian State", *Africa Today*, 57/4, Summer 2011, pp. 100 and 102.

[27] Ibid., p 6. The Hausa word for book is *littafi*. In current Hausa the word *boko* refers to secular (i.e. Western) education as well as the Latin alphabet. In etymological terms, *boko* has the original meaning of fraud, false, duplicitous, a lie. See Paul Newman, *The Etymology of the Hausa boko*, Mega-Chad Research Network; URL: <http://lah.soas.ac.uk/projects>.

[28] With regard to people who write extensively on *Boko Haram*, I am referring here to scholars such as Freedom Onuoha (Nigerian Defense College), Jacob Zenn (Jamestown Foundation, US), James J.F. Forest (Joint Special Operations University, US Defense Department), J. Peter Pham (Atlantic Council, US).

[29] Frantz Fanon (1925-1961) was a West-Indian born, Afro-French psychiatrist, existentialist philosopher and revolutionary activist in the Algerian revolution. His theories regarding race, colonialism and violence were captured in four books, the most famous of which was *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 2004.

[30] Antonio Gramsci, *The Prison Notebooks and Other Writings*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1971.

[31] William W. Hansen and Umma Aliyu Musa, "Fanon, the Wretched and *Boko Haram*", *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 48(3) 2013.

[32] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, op. cit., p. 5.

[33] A young woman personal acquaintance with a teaching diploma from a federal college of education teaches in a small, private Christian school. Her monthly pay is N10,000, roughly US \$ 23.00 at the current exchange rate.

- [34] Crawford Young, *The Post-Colonial State in Africa: Fifty Years of Independence, 1960 – 2010*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 2012. See especially chapter 9, “The African Postcolonial State: Concluding Reflections”, *passim*. See also William D. Graf, *The Nigerian State*. London: James Curry, Ltd., 1988, esp. chapter 11, “The Nigerian State and the State of Nigeria”.
- [35] Interview with Dauda Bello, 14 Nov. 2015, op. cit..
- [36] Ibid.
- [37] See, for example, Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell UP, 1983; Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990; Eric Hobsbawm with Terence Ranger (Eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983.
- [38] Interview with Maiduguri-based Malam Bashir Suleyman (not his real name) on 28 May 2016. With regard to the understanding of the content shari’a law in Northern Nigeria, see Brandon Kendhammer, “The Sharia controversy in northern Nigeria and the politics of Islamic law in new and uncertain democracies”, *Journal of Comparative Politics*, 45(3), April 2013, *passim*.
- [39] Umar Sani and David Ehrhardt. 2014. “Pathways to radicalization: life histories of JAS members.” Paper presented at the meeting on Radicalization, Counter-radicalization and De-radicalization in Nigeria, Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme, Abuja, September 14th-16th, 2014.
- [40] Ibid., p. 8. See also note 28 above.
- [41] Ibid., p. 3.
- [42] Higazi, op. cit., p. 338.
- [43] See notes 1 and 3 above regarding the interviews with *malams*. For the focus group discussions conducted by Jima and Abbas, see note 17.
- [44] Kyari Muhammad, “The Methods and Message of Boko Haram” in Perouse (Ed.), *ibid*. Also, Hansen, “Boko Haram”, op. cit.
- [45] Umar and Ehrhardt, op. cit., p. 17.
- [46] Ibid., p. 13.
- [47] Yahaya Hashim and Judith-Ann Walker, *Radicalization, Counter-Radicalization & De-Radicalization and the out-of-school Almsajiri of Northern Nigeria*, NSRP, Abuja, 14 September 2014, p. 2.
- [48] Ibid., p. 24.
- [49] Ibid., p. 21.
- [50] CLEEN Foundation, *Youths, Radicalisation and Affiliation with Insurgent Groups*, Lagos, 2014. This project was funded by the United States Institute for Peace and directed by Dr. Freedom C. Onuoha of the Nigerian National Defense College in Abuja.
- [51] Ibid., p. viii.
- [52] Leo ordered the head of the Augustinian Order to tell all his monks to shut up. Clearly that tactic did not work.
- [53] Ibid., pp. 102, 103.
- [54] Abdulkareem Haruna, “Wary of Boko Haram re-birth, Borno moves to regulate Islamic preaching”, *Premium Times*, 11 August 2016.
- [55] Higazi, op. cit., p. 341.
- [56] Amnesty International, *Stars on their Shoulders. Blood on their Hands*, June 2015.
- [57] Mercy Corps report, op. cit., p. 14.
- [58] Malam Suleyman Bashir, interview 28 May 2016.
- [59] Aghedo and Eke, op. cit., p. 105.
- [60] Robyn Dixon, “In Nigeria child beggars are easy recruits for Boko Haram”, *Los Angeles Times*, 17 August 2014.
- [61] Ibid.
- [62] E. P. Thompson, “The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century”, *Past and Present*, #50 (Feb. 1971).
- [63] Paul Lubeck, “Islamic protest under semi-industrial capitalism: `Yan Tatsine explained”, *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 54(4), 1985.
- [64] Eric Hobsbawm, *Bandits*. New York: New Press, 2000.
- [65] Lubeck, op. cit., p. 387.
- [66] Ibid.
- [67] Franz Fanon, “Spontaneity: It’s Strengths and Weaknesses, op. cit.
- [68] Larry Diamond, “Nigeria: Anatomy of a Feckless States”, *Premium Times*, 30 June 2014. Even John Campbell, a former US ambassador to Nigeria, in assessing the depth of embedded discontent, warned that a charismatic leader along the lines of Fidel Castro could very likely mobilize the Nigerian people. John Campbell, *Nigeria: Dancing on the Brink*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011.