How Insurgent Groups Emerge

The political process in democratic Nigeria

by

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Abstract

How did two non-state actors from significantly different regions develop into insurgent organizations in Nigeria after its return to democratic rule on 29 May 1999? Although the northeast and Niger Delta regions are poles apart in historical, material, and socio-cultural structures, they bore the rise of Boko Haram and the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force. The emergence of violent non-state actors in both areas at about the same time, despite their substantial differences, is puzzling and offers an appropriate opportunity to probe the process and mechanism of insurrectionary group emergence in Nigeria since the new democratic dispensation. Studies have emphasized certain grievances, resources, and religious ideology as causal factors in the rise of guerrilla groups. Despite the contributions of these theories they fail to capture the relatively non-rebellious inception of these groups. They also gloss over the initial cooperation these organizations had with local political elites. Other challenges with the existing approaches include the often country-wide narrative which disallows a within-state comparison and the failure to account for timing and location. To address these gaps, this thesis builds on the patron-client model and the Political Process theory to develop the Political Relevance model. This new model focuses on the way political interactions that took place between local politicians and the would-be insurgent groups facilitated the evolution of the social organizations from non-violence to violence. It espouses a four-step process that argues that rebel organizations emerge from a fissure in an initial mutually beneficial relationship between local political elites and a politically relevant group.

To my lovely parents

Reverend Jerome Omorodion Iyekekpolor

who passed on a couple of weeks before the submission of this thesis

&

Reverend Mrs Vero Iyekekpolor

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Table of Contents

Abstract i
Acknowledgement iii
1. Introduction 1
1.1 A Background of the Nigeria Political Economy 8
1.2 Methodology 13
1.3 Conclusion 17
2. Theoretical approaches to insurgency onset in Nigeria 20
2.1 Introduction 20
2.2 Grievance theory 21
2.3 Resources theory 30
2.4 Religious Ideology 33
2.5 Patronage 36
2.6 Political Process theory 41
2.7 Political Relevance model 44
2.7.1 The mutually beneficial political interaction 45
2.7.2 The fissure of political interaction 48
2.7.3 Insurgency onset 49
2.7.4 Giving the rebellion a meaning 51
2.8 Conclusion 53
3. The northern Nigeria context 54
3.1 Introduction 54
3.2 Boko Haram: An overview 55
3.3 The context of Boko Haram group emergence 57
3.3.1 The *Shariasation* of northern Nigerian politics 58
3.3.2 Understanding the impoverished backdrop of Boko Haram's emergence 63
3.3.3 Tracing the background of the hatred for Western education 67
3.3.4 The sacred purging role of jihad in northern Nigeria 72
3.4 Conclusion 75
4. The emergence of Boko Haram 76
4.1 Introduction 76
4.2 The early days of Boko Haram 76

4.3 Muhammad Yusuf's ideology 78
4.4 Boko Haram and the 2003 governorship campaign 82
4.5 Kanama group (Nigerian Taliban) 87
4.6 Yusuf reorganises the Boko Haram group 90
4.7 The funding of the Boko Haram movement 91
4.8 Mainstream Salafi opposition of Boko Haram ideology 93
4.9 Yusuf's rising followership 94
4.10 A fissure in the Boko Haram-state coexistence 95
4.11 The clash between the Boko Haram group and security agencies 98
4.12 A call to jihad 102
4.13 Conclusion 105
5. The Niger Delta region and the evolution of the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force to armed rebellion 107
5.1 Introduction 107
5.2 The state, multinationals and community protests in the Niger Delta 108
5.3 The Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) 113
5.4 An overview of the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) 115
5.5 Asari and his followers' role in Ijaw Youth Council 117
5.6 Asari's group opposes Obasanjo's re-election bid 120
5.7 The role of Tom and his Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV) 122
5.8 The insurgency in Rivers State 125
5.9 The escalation of the insurgency 128
5.10 Conclusion 131
6. The Political Relevance model and the evolution of the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force 133
6.1 Introduction 133
6.2 The mutually beneficial political interaction 134
6.3 The fissure of the political interaction 140
6.4 A call to rebellion: Local political elites versus politically relevant group 143
6.5 Framing out of context: Local political elites versus politically relevant group 147
6.6 Conclusion 153
7. Conclusion 155
7.1 Introduction 155
7.2 The north-east and Niger Delta contexts 156

7.3 The Political Relevance model explanation of the onset of insurgent groups in Nigeria 157
7.4 Summary and implications for research 159
7.5 Conclusion 161
Bibliography 163

1. Introduction

Nigeria returned to democratic rule on 29 May 1999 after 15 years of military rule had turned it into a pariah state. High-level expectations greeted the dawn of the fourth republic as it opened the public space for political participation. Social organizations emerged around the country to articulate, debate and make demands particular to the different identity groups in the country. However, some of these relatively non-violent associations soon evolved into armed rebels who pioneered some of the most devastating insurgencies that the country has ever experienced. This thesis investigates how two of these non-state actors from significantly different regions developed into armed challengers of this new democratic state.

This study selected pioneer groups that emerged from two of the most violent insurgencies in Nigeria since 1999,[1] from significantly different geo-political zones.[2] One convened as *Jamā'at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da'wah wa'l-Jihād'* (The Group of the People of Sunnah for Preaching and Struggle), popularly known as Boko Haram. It originated in Borno State and started a rebellion in the north-eastern region. The other is the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) which commenced in Rivers State. It was the premier militant group in the south-south[3] or Niger Delta part of Nigeria. Although the two regions are poles apart in historical, material, and socio-cultural structures, the militant organizations that emerged in each zone caused some of the most destructive rebellions that the nascent democratic country has ever experienced. The emergence of violent non-state actors in both areas at about the same time, despite their substantial differences, is puzzling and offers an appropriate opportunity to probe the process and mechanism of insurrectionary group emergence in Nigeria since the new representative dispensation.

The northeast and Niger Delta sections of Nigeria exhibit certain vitally fundamental peculiarities. While Islam has played an essential role in the north since the region's contact with the Muslims of northern Africa and Senegal,[4] European Christians primarily influenced

[1] Nigeria returned to democratic rule in 1999 after intermittent military rule, marking its fourth republic since independence from Britain in 1960

[2] Nigeria is administratively delineated into 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory. The States are regrouped into six geopolitical zones for consociation power sharing, comprising of northeast, northwest, north-central, southeast, southwest and south-south.

[3] The south-south geopolitical zone is often referred to as the Niger Delta region although, the political reference to the Niger Delta region in Nigeria not only includes the States of the south-south, but also one each from south-eastern and southwestern zones.

[4] I.A.B. Balogun, *The Penetration of Islam into Nigeria* (University of Khartoum, Sudan Research Unit, 1969). https://books.google.co.nz/books?id=hRMQAQAAIAAJ.

the religious beliefs in the south.[5] These connections significantly reshaped the regions' identities, economies, and educational values, even before British colonisation. In economic terms, the two constituencies are also very dissimilar. While economic life in the northeast has long revolved around agriculture; the discovery and exploration of oil have redefined that of the south-south that was based on the slave trade and agribusiness through the same period. With the global rise in the importance and price of crude oil, the Niger Delta zone became the mainstay of the Nigerian economy. Today, the area contributes about 70% to the national treasury while it comprises 90% of the country's foreign exchange.[6] Therefore, the northeast is much more impoverished compared to the Niger Delta region.[7] UNESCO also captures a large disparity in the literacy level between the States in these areas. For example, while Rivers State where the NDPVF emerged could boast a 72.8% literacy rate in 2010, the literacy rate in Borno State, where Boko Haram started was 14.5%.[8]

At first glance, it is difficult to find similarities in the process that caused the rise of Boko Haram and the NDPVF rebel organizations. According to Michael J. Watts,

> one is draped in the language of a return to a republic of virtue and ideals of dar al-salam, of "true Islam" and the restoration of the caliphate; the other is secular and self-consciously modern, invoking a renovated civic nationalism, a new federalism, community rights, and "resource control.[9]

However, these ostensibly dissimilar groups waged two of the most violent post-1999 conflicts in Nigeria. The rebellion in the northeast has resulted in the abduction and killing of tens of thousands of people. It has also put over seven million people in acute need with the number of Internally Displaced Persons set at around 2.1 million, including 800,000 children.[10] The

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[5] Alan FC Ryder, "Missionary Activity in the Kingdom of Warri to the Early Nineteenth Century," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 2, no. 1 (1960).

[6] Figures from BudgIT. https://www.yourbudgit.com/oil/report/numbers/.

[7] The oil deposit primarily in this region partly explains the difference between the northeast GDP contribution of $22,379,000 with an absolute poverty rate of 69% and the south-south GDP contribution of US$74,518,000 with absolute poverty of 55.9% as at 2010. The GDP figures for the zones were extrapolated from Canback Global Income Distribution Database Canback Global Income Distribution Database. https://www.cgidd.com/; Yemi Kale, *The Nigeria Poverty Profile 2010 Report: Press Briefing by the Statistician-General of the Federation/Chief Executive Officer, National Bureau of Statistics* (2012), 8, https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/nigeria-poverty-profile-2010-report.

[8] High level International Round Table on Literacy "Reaching the 2015 Literacy Target: Delivering on the promise" UNESCO, Paris, 6-7 September 2012 Action Plan Nigeria http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/pdf/Nigeria.pdf

[9] M. J. Watts, "Frontiers: Authority, Precarity, and Insurgency at the Edge of the State," *World Development* (2017).

[10] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2018 - Nigeria: Events of 2017* (2017), https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/world-report-2018-nigeria-events-2017; John Campbell, "Nigeria Security Tracker," (Council on Foreign Relations, 2019); UNICEF, "800,000 Children Forced to Flee Violence in Nigeria and Region," (April 13 2015). https://www.unicef.org/media/media_81518.html.

insurgency has involved the use of both crude and modern forms of mass killing, ranging from machetes to improvised electronic devices and suicide bombings.[11] The militants have abducted more than 1,000 children, some of whom are female students who were kidnapped from their schools.[12] Hence, the Global Terrorism Index rated the Boko Haram sect the most dangerous terror group in 2015.[13]

Meanwhile, in the southern part of the country, the uprising in the oil-rich Niger Delta, primarily of the south-south geopolitical zone, resulted in 1,000 abductions or killings per year as of 2009. Nigeria lost half of its oil output to a series of attacks, including the bombing of oil facilities which accounted for the loss of between 700,000 and 1.5 million barrels per day. At its peak, the counterinsurgency operations further cost Nigeria about US$19 million daily.[14] Nigeria presently budgets approximately US$200m per year as a cash pay-out to the ex-Niger Delta militants. This payment is a critical factor in maintaining a tenuous peace in the zone to enable crude oil production.[15]

In the face of the rising intrastate conflicts that occurred after the cold war, the conflict literature has adopted diverse theoretical approaches to explain how they start. Studies have emphasized certain grievances, resources, and religious ideology as causal factors in the rise of guerrilla groups. Several analyses of the rise of Boko Haram and the militant organizations in the Niger Delta have followed suit. The grievances theory argues that groups emerge out of discontent that their members have experienced over perceived deprivations and inequalities compared with other political communities. These people politicise this frustration and justify the use of violence in seeking redress.[16] On the other hand, the resources theories contest the grievances

[11] International Crisis Group, *Lake Chad Basin: Controlling the Cost of Counter-Insurgency* (27 February 2017), https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/lake-chad-basin-controlling-cost-counter-insurgency; Wisdom Oghosa Iyekekpolo, "Boko Haram: Understanding the Context," *Third World Quarterly* 37, no. 12 (2016).

[12] UNICEF, "More Than 1,000 Children in Northeastern Nigeria Abducted by Boko Haram since 2013," (April 13 2018). https://www.unicef.org/wca/press-releases/more-1000-children-northeastern-nigeria-abducted-boko-haram-2013; Jason Warner and Hilary Matfess, *Exploding Stereotypes: The Unexpected Operational and Demographic Characteristics of Boko Haram's Suicide Bombers*, Combating Terrorism Center at West Point (United States Military Academy, 2017).

[13] Global Terrorism Index, "Measuring and Understanding the Impact of Terrorism," (Sydney, New York and Mexico City: Institute for Economics and Peace, 2015).

[14] International Crisis Group, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria (Iii): Revisiting the Niger Delta*, International Crisis Group (Brussels, Belgium, 2015); SPTEC Advisory, *Nigeria - 2016 Country Review: Tomorrow E Go Betta! (Tomorrow Will Be Better!)* (2017), http://www.sptec-advisory.com/SPTEC_Advisory-Nigeria_2016_News_Review.pdf.

[15] Felix Onuah, "Nigeria Almost Triples Budget for Niger Delta Amnesty -Presidency," (Abuja: Reuters, 2017). https://af.reuters.com/article/investingNews/idAFKBN183071-OZABS.

[16] Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), 348-352.

narrative with a model that links the emergence of violent non-state actors to the opportunity for the predation of rents from natural resources.[17] It draws on the premise of rationality that individuals will not turn down an opportunity to profit. Once the availability of natural resources guarantee finance, and it is militarily feasible, rebel organizations will develop.[18] Nevertheless, with the recent spike in jihadist sects, research into the role of religious ideology has re-emerged. It argues that a perceived threat to the Muslim community cause strains which some interpret in religious terms that requires jihad to redress.[19]

These theories have no doubt considerably contributed to the study of the rise of violent non-state challengers. Studies on the root causes of rebellion in the northeast and Niger Delta regions of Nigeria have based their analysis on the assumptions of these extant models. However, there are notable gaps in the literature related to these theories that this research has found and seeks to fill. Core to this thesis is the failure of existing theories to capture the relatively non-rebellious inception of these groups. Recent research found that 95% of the insurgent organizations included in the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's (UCDP) Armed Conflict Database evolved from pre-existing ones.[20] The failure to elucidate that these rebel organizations start in similar ways as other social groups in the same environment leads to another vital gap in the literature. The existing narratives also gloss over the initial cooperation these groups had with local political elites. These models presume that these organizations emerge as armed challengers of the state and that they had no previous interaction with politicians. Hence, theorists present a clear demarcation between insurgents and politicians, painting one side as good and the other side as evil. Other challenges with the existing approaches include the often country-wide narrative which disallows a within-state comparison and the failure to account for timing and location. Previous studies rarely compare two insurgencies in different areas of the same country.

The conflict literature also highlights other specific challenges with each existing theoretical perspective. Grievances are ubiquitous and cannot account for the choice of violence in the face of alternatives. It does not sufficiently justify the reason individuals risk their lives for a

[17] Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "On Economic Causes of Civil War," *Oxford economic papers* 50, no. 4 (1998); Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," *Oxford economic papers* 56, no. 4 (2004).
[18] Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 2355," *World Bank* (2000).
[19] Magnus Ranstorp, "Terrorism in the Name of Religion," *Journal of international affairs* (1996).
[20] Jessica Maves Braithwaite and Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, "When Organizations Rebel: Introducing the Foundations of Rebel Group Emergence (Forge) Dataset," *International Studies Quarterly* 0 (2019): 1.

cause that they do not need to participate in to enjoy the benefit.[21] The resources perspective ignores the historical factors that predate the discovery of natural resources and the onset of violence. It further ignores the fact that primary resources could both create opportunities for insurgent looting and strengthen the state's coercive apparatus.[22] Adopting religious ideology as an explanation cannot determine if its role is normative or instrumental in the start of the violence. The omission of the initial cooperation between rebel organizations and politicians by these theoretical explanations prevents a proper analysis of the immediate events before these previously peaceful social groups turned to armed violence against the state.

This thesis addresses these shortfalls in the literature by advancing the patronage and patron-client model in Africa espoused by William Reno as a more appropriate explanation of the two conflicts. His studies emphasize the form of relationship that exists between that which he termed parochial rebels and the political class before violence erupts. He espouses political patronage as a better explanation for this inter-dependent interaction.[23] It is a vital collaboration often glossed over by the extant theoretical explanations in conflict studies. This thesis will merge this patronage model with the Political Process theory advocated by Doug McAdam. He captures the salience of the political context, organizational resources, and cognitive liberation to the rise of a social movement.[24] Through combining these theoretical perspectives, I develop a new idea of insurgent group emergence which I refer to as the Political Relevance model. This alternative paradigm synthesises insights from the existing theories while it addresses the pre-violence interaction of the would-be insurgents and political actors.

This comparative study of violent non-state actors in the different regions in Nigeria seeks to unravel the way Boko Haram and NDPVF groups evolved to become challengers of the state. A key contention of this study is that a complete understanding of the emergence of insurgent groups lies in examining the initial dynamic process of collaboration between the pre-violent

[21] Mohammed M Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), 17-18; Joan Neff Gurney and Kathleen J Tierney, "Relative Deprivation and Social Movements: A Critical Look at Twenty Years of Theory and Research," *The Sociological Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (1982); Indra De Soysa, "Paradise Is a Bazaar? Greed, Creed, and Governance in Civil War, 1989-99," *Journal of Peace Research* 39, no. 4 (2002).

[22] Jennifer M. Hazen and Jonas Horner, *Small Arms, Armed Violence, and Insecurity in Nigeria: The Niger Delta in Perspective*, The Small Arms Survey (Geneva, Switzerland: The Small Arms Survey, December 2007), 75; Human Rights Watch, *Rivers and Blood: Guns, Oil and Power in Nigeria's Rivers State*, A Human Rights Watch Briefing Paper (February 2005), 3, https://www.hrw.org/legacy/backgrounder/africa/nigeria0205/nigeria0205.pdf.

[23] William Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[24] Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 40-59.

manifestations of these groups and local political elites.[25] A researcher must study the interaction between the politicians and the insurgent leaders before the violence erupted, especially from the time the group formed as a social organization to the eventual break out of violence against the state. Once you understand this political process you will be able to explain the violence. I contend that these interactions shaped the factors that are emphasized by the grievances, resources, and ideology theories.

This thesis assumes that initially, these rebels started as social organizations that posed little or no threat to the government, and sometimes even engineered collaboration with political elites. These groups did not necessarily originate as challengers of the state without any previous interaction with political elites, and they also did not essentially start in secret.[26] Studies that have acknowledged the existence of pre-insurgency relationships between political elites and would-be insurgents tend to assume that the former manipulate the latter.[27] This thesis assumes there is also reverse manipulation where these social groups use the state to achieve their self-interest subject to the opportunities and constraints of a political context. An essential part of this thesis is to explain how the insurgents and political elites interpret the turn of violence.

The Political Relevance model focuses on the way political interactions that took place between local politicians and the would-be insurgent groups facilitated the evolution of the social organizations from non-violence to violence. An emphasis on the local political context where a rebel organization emerged reveals the way that politicians incorporated the potential militant group into the local political patronage network. A further investigation into this process of interaction between these actors shows the often-omitted narrative of the initial collaboration. This political relationship enabled these pre-existing groups to enhance their capacity and establish themselves as a formidable force, which inevitably diminished the initial patron-client power gap.

[25] For the sake of this study; Local Political Elites is defined narrowly as individuals who maintain or seek to hold the highest political office at the sub-national level. It would also include their close allies who directly act on their behalf. In the case of Nigeria, they are the state Governors and a handful of their associates.
[26] Janet I Lewis, *How Insurgency Begins: Rebel Group Formation in Uganda and Beyond* (Cambridge University Press, 2020); Janet I Lewis, "How Does Ethnic Rebellion Start?," *Comparative Political Studies* 50, no. 10 (2017): 1420; Robert W Scheafer, The Economics of Insurgencies: A Framework for Analyzing Contemporary Insurgency Movements with a Focus on Exposing Economic Vulnerability, 2015, Unpublished, Harvard University.
[27] Paul R. Brass, *The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2003), 14; Stanley J. Tambiah, *Leveling Crowds: Ethnonationalist Conflicts and Collective Violence in South Asia* (London: Univ of California Press, 1996), 89.

Political elites are desperate for power in nascent democracies with entrenched patronage politics. In such high-stake environments, politicians' recourse to the use of groups with diverse forms of resources necessary in their pursuit to hold public office. Core among these assets that make a group relevant to politicians is the ability to mobilize many followers to vote for a candidate or party. Another is the capacity to perpetrate electoral violence for both incumbent and non-incumbent politicians against the opposition.[28] A group that has these means are salient in the political process of these limited democracies. Hence, the political elites co-opt them into the patronage network. This relationship emboldens the group as it enjoys the political cover necessary to carry out its activities without police harassment.

However, in the collaborator's pursuit of divergent interests, they cut off their relationship. This is again, an account that is often glossed over in the narrative espoused by extant theories. The previous omission of the pre-insurgency co-operation inadvertently results in the exclusion of the fissure in the alliance. Present models that fail to explain the immediate cause of this fracture in an initially mutual beneficial coalition, misdiagnose the root of the violent rebel groups. It is the resulting struggle by the political elites to strip the groups of all benefits and privileges they previously enjoyed to which they respond violently that the existing narrative captures as grievances, greed, and normative ideological concerns.

The elites and insurgents subsequently explain the violence out of context, so it resonates with protecting the citizens' interests. The now insurgent groups explain that they engaged in violence as a struggle against injustice and oppression of the people. This narrative portrays them as justice-seekers, just like the grievances and ideology theorizes. However, the politicians describe the insurgents as criminals, and they seek to bring law and order through the might of the state. This is a narrative that is consistent with the opportunity or greed model captured in resources theory. However, the Political Relevance model focuses on the shape and trajectory of interactions between politicians and rebels under the opportunities and constraints of the various political contexts. It is also related to the way the actors' rhetoric reshapes the environment in the emergence of insurgencies.[29] This model asserts that there was a mutually

[28] Hanne Fjelde and Kristine Höglund, "Electoral Institutions and Electoral Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa," *British Journal of Political Science* 46, no. 2 (2016); Eldridge Vigil Adolfo et al., *Electoral Violence in Africa*, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet (Uppsala, Sweden.: in the Conflict Nordic Africa Institute, Security and Democratic Transformation Cluster, 2012).

[29] This thesis agrees that an insurgency is intrastate armed violence by a group against the state. However, it argues that this armed violence is about the group's political relevance in the polity. Hence, it is about a group's desire to maintain political relevance coercively. So, this thesis defines an insurgency as an intrastate

beneficial relationship between politicians and the groups, before, during, and after elections. It was only once these relationships broke down that the insurgency started.

1.1 A Background of the Nigeria Political Economy

Fig. I

Nigeria is a creation of British colonization, which resulted in the amalgamation of its Southern protectorate and Lagos colony with Northern protectorate in 1914. The 923,768 km square area was previously the site of several kingdoms and emirates, which had established governments and conducted international trades within and beyond the shores of Africa. The British conquered some of the most powerful polities in this area around 1900 and started governing the whole territory through a system of indirect rule. The colonizers merged these ethnoreligiously diverse people without their consent for the convenience of the colonial administrators. As would be seen in a later chapter, insurgent groups and political elites still

attempt by a group to coercively sustain its political relevance which the elites attempt to deprive it of because of a sour relationship.

justify their actions and mobilize followers by using these ethnic and religious cleavages. These primordial and religious sentiments also drive the north-south divide that has remained one of the banes of Nigerian politics. Armed non-state actors also challenge the legitimacy of the Nigerian state by referring to the killing of traditional leaders and indigenes in the battles for colonization, the non-consensual inclusion of independent territories to the colonial Nigerian project, and the subsequent perceived religious, political, and economic marginalization.

The Nigerian Governor-General, Benard Bourdillon had proposed the regionalization of Nigeria in 1939, along the lines of the three major ethnic groups of Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo.[30] Arthur Richard's constitution of 1946 finally made Nigeria a federal system of government divided into the Northern region (Hausa/Fulani), Western region (Yoruba), and Eastern region (Igbo). However, each region was an agglomeration of ethnicities and nationalities. Adiele E. Afigbo argues that before the 1946 constitution, these "pluralities had no significant voice in official circles and certainly not among the rising indigenous elites who were still committed to cosmopolitan nationalism."[31] It was the colonial imposition of federalism and the subsequent political value to the colonial and rising indigenous political elites that made ethnoreligious cleavage significant in Nigeria.

The colonial governance, decolonization process, and independence in 1960 were partly shaped by demands and claims based on this primordial cleavage as it had become the core basis for determining who gets what, when, and how.[32] Hence, the foundation of the neo-patrimonial political process, a system that allowed the consolidation of official and unofficial distribution of resources in a patron-client network, was laid. Although political parties formed in the struggle for independence were nationalistic, they metamorphosed into regional/ethnic parties immediately after independence was assured. The three main political parties before 1960, the Northern People's Congress (NPC), Action Group (AG), and National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons (NCNC) worked together to overcome colonial rule. However, when independence was assured, the common enemy that united them was no more. In the immediate build-up to independence up to the end of the first republic in 1966, the political parties unveiled a much deeper ethnic/regional colouration.[33] While the NPC and AG were skewed towards the

[30] Bernard Bourdillon and Richmond Palmer, "Nigerian Constitutional Proposals," *African Affairs* 44, no. 176 (1945).
[31] Adiele E Afigbo, "Background to Nigerian Federalism: Federal Features in the Colonial State," *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 21, no. 4 (1991): 15.
[32] Harold D Lasswell, *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How* (Pickle Partners Publishing, 2018).
[33] Woleola J Ekundayo, "Political Parties, Party System and Leadership Recruitment in Nigeria since Independence in 1960," *Public Policy and Administration Research* 6, no. 5 (2016).

Northern Hausa/Fulani and Western Yoruba respectively, the NCNC was now pro-Eastern Igbo. At independence, the President was Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe (NCNC/Igbo), Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (NPC/Hausa-Fulani) was the Prime Minister, while the official leader of the opposition in the federal parliament was Chief Obafemi Awolowo (AG/Yoruba). Hence, what had become regional political parties and ethnic leaders populated the top federal positions in Nigeria at independence. The resulting inter-ethnic rangling partly resulted in the political crisis of the first republic, the coup and counter-coup in 1966, and the 1967 civil war.

On January 15, 1966, the Nigerian government was overthrown in a coup predominantly led by soldiers of Igbo extraction. They killed top government functionaries who were mostly non-Igbo, including the Prime Minister and the highly respected Premier of the Northern region, Sir Ahmadu Bello. This coup brought to power an Igbo man, Major General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi who passed a decree to make Nigeria a unitary state. The fact that soldiers who executed the coup and the new Head of State were from Eastern Nigeria resulted in the assumption in Northern Nigeria that it was an Igbo conspiracy. Hence, the counter-coup led by Hausa/Fulani on July 29 of the same year, which led to the death of the Head of State and the ascension of Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu Gowon to the office.

The counter-coup and the killing of Igbo people in the Northern region resulted in agitation for secession of the Eastern region. Yakubu Gowon's splitting of the regions into twelve states and some diplomatic negotiations with the Governor of the Eastern region, Lieutenant Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu were meant to stop the secession attempt and the subsequent civil war. However, they failed as Ojukwu declared the Republic of Biafra on May 30, 1967, while Gowon declared war to bring back the now three states of the defunct Eastern region to the federation. The civil war lasted for 30 months and ended with the surrender of the Biafran forces and the declaration of "no victor, no vanquished"[34] by General Gowon. However, the political struggle between Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo at the federal level has not abated. Instead, the oil economy that emerged after the civil war further complicated it and incorporated the minorities of the Niger Delta into the political struggle.

Running pari passu with this ethnic sentiment in Nigerian politics was the religious cleavage that cut along the north-south dichotomy. Northern Nigerians are predominantly Muslims

[34] George Chimdi Mbara and Nirmala Gopal, "Peacebuilding Trajectories in Post-Conflict African States: A Re-Examination of the" 3rs" in Post Nigeria-Biafra War," *African Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies (formerly Ubuntu: Journal of Conflict and Social Transformation)* 10, no. 1 (2021); J Isawa Elaigwu, *Gowon* (Adonis & Abbey Publishers Ltd, 2009).

while there are more Christians in the South. This division is partly the result of historical trading routes which saw the traditional states in the north doing business with Muslim foreigners who came through the north of Africa while European traders came with Christianity through the coastal towns of the south. The colonial rule ensured the perpetuation of this religious divide to aid their indirect rule. The rise of the new indigenous political elite fared worse as religion was institutionalized as a political tool, especially in Northern Nigeria to protect what is now referred to as "Northern interest."[35] The clamour for sharia implementation was weaved into this mix by some core political elites of northern Nigerian extraction in the pursuit of their political aspirations. Religious groups emerged in the region to champion this call for sharia which was viewed as in the interest of the north.[36]

While the three major ethnic groups squabble for power since the colonial era, several minority ethnic groups were caught up and severely marginalized in the power struggle. There was also the emergence and rise in significance of crude oil, which was primarily located in ethnic minority areas. As a result of the British amalgamation in 1914 and the subsequent incorporation of these ethnic groups into a federation without their express approval, the development trajectory of these minority ethnic groups was significantly altered to align with those with which they had previously, independently engaged. It became a form of subjugation to the will and dictates of those with her population. The majority population in each region was accused by the minority of sociopolitical and economic exclusion and cutthroat politics. Hence, the continuous feeling of marginalization, fear of domination, and demand for the creation of autonomous regions/states for minorities. Aware of this situation, the British colonialists set up the Willink Commission in 1951 to address the fears of the minorities.[37]

The cry of marginalization by the minorities of the Eastern region became louder with the discovery of oil in commercial quantity and subsequent increase in its international price. The colonial Mineral Oil Act of 1914 gave the Governor-General absolute authority over the control of the resources. This form of resource governance that excluded the indigenes of the resource-bearing area was carried over to the post-independence era.[38] The rise of oil prices and the

[35] Roseline Morenike Oshewolo and Borok Andrew Maren, "Religion and Politics in Nigeria," *International Journal of Politics and Good Governance* 6, no. 6.3 (2015).
[36] Wisdom Oghosa Iyekekpolo, "Political Elites and the Rise of the Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria," *Terrorism political violence* 32, no. 4 (2020).
[37] RT Akinyele, "States Creation in Nigeria: The Willink Report in Retrospect," *African Studies Review* 39, no. 2 (1996); Donald S Rothchild, *Safeguarding Nigeria's Minorities* (Duquesne University Press, 1964).
[38] Cyril I Obi, "Oil Minority Rights and the Question of Democratic Stability in Nigeria," *Journal of Cultural Studies* 2, no. 1 (2000).

accruing wealth in the decade after the civil war offered Nigeria several missed opportunities. Although public expenditure drastically increased, it caused the drastic decline of the agricultural sector which was previously the mainstay of the Nigerian economy.[39] Nigeria became a monoculture economy depending solely on oil. The windfall from the sales of this export was also not effectively used to advance other sectors of the economy but instead caused the decline of the Northern groundnut pyramid, the Western cocoa export, Eastern rubber trade, and Mid-Western region trade on palm oil and plywood. However, oil prices fell in the early 1980s and created a significant economic challenge for Nigeria.[40]

The minorities in the oil-producing communities have borne the brunt of the dependency on oil export in Nigeria. When agriculture was the mainstay of the economy, derivation was the core determinant of revenue allocation. The regions get to keep a significant amount of the income from their export. It was desirable and not problematic because the main exports were from the major ethnic groups. However, with the advent of oil, minority areas were the sources of the mainstay of the economy. Hence, the federal government, which is controlled by the major ethnic groups sort to eliminate or reduce the derivation basis of revenue allocation. So, the shift from agriculture to oil did not benefit the minority areas as their domination by the majority ethnic groups continued.

The rise in national revenue accruing to the federal government also raised the stakes and aggravated the struggle for power between the hegemonic ethnicities at the national level. Politics at all levels of government now revolve around the distribution of oil wealth and the supposed institution of governance had become barely an avenue for dispensation of patronage for aligning clients.[41] These federal politicians were mostly not from the oil-bearing communities and their only stake in the communities was to share of its revenue. So, they were less concerned about the environmental degradation and the appalling effect of oil exploration on the socio-economic life of the communities.[42] Hence, the emergence of agitations by the oil-bearing communities for a better deal from the national government. The patronage politics was not limited to the oil-producing region but all other regions. The state governors congregate in Abuja monthly to distribute oil revenue not generated in their region, hence, they are hardly

[39] Brian Pinto, "Nigeria During and after the Oil Boom: A Policy Comparison with Indonesia," *The World Bank Economic Review* 1, no. 3 (1987).
[40] Maaji Umar Yakub, "The Impact of Oil on Nigeria's Economy: The Boom and the Burst Cycles," (2008).
[41] Rita Abrahamsen and Michael C Williams, "Of Oil and Diamonds," in *Security Beyond the State: Private Security in International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
[42] Obi, "Oil Minority Rights and the Question of Democratic Stability in Nigeria."

accountable to the population for how they distribute this wealth. This political-economic structure provided the context for the emergence of groups that metamorphosed into armed rebels.

1.2 Methodology

Based on the research question and my desire to holistically understand and interpret how agent-structure relationship or context-bound agent interactions shaped the emergence of insurgent groups in these regions, I approached this study from an interpretive ontological and epistemological outlook. Although I started this thesis with some prior insight being a Nigerian and growing up in the Niger Delta, this was insufficient for me to answer the research question due to the multiple and divergent nature of the rise of these groups. Hence, my utilization of a qualitative method for data collection.

In my pursuit of a parallel rigour of conventional scientific research, I have ensured the reliability and authenticity of this thesis through the principles of credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and fairness. Credibility was guaranteed through the triangulation of the sources of data collection, prolonged engagement, and persistent observation of the cases. Likewise, I confirmed transferability through an in-depth description of the data gathered on each case. Furthermore, I established dependability and confirmability by the observation of the Ethics committee-approved interview protocols and the careful recording of interviews on two devices, which were properly transcribed by me. I also audited the data through a back and forth documented confirmation process with the respondents. The research ensures fairness by capturing diverse interpretations and sometimes conflicting construction of events due to the embraced subjective value structures of respondents.[43]

This thesis utilizes a comparative case study approach. “A case study is thus a well-defined aspect of a historical event that the investigator selects for analysis, rather than a historical incident itself.”[44] The cases selected include the emergence of Boko Haram and the NDPVF insurgent groups. These cases meet the research objective and fit the independent and intervening variables that were identified in the proposition of this thesis. Both cases are

[43] Yvonna S Lincoln and Egon G Guba, "But Is It Rigorous? Trustworthiness and Authenticity in Naturalistic Evaluation," *New directions for program evaluation* 1986, no. 30 (1986); Egon G Guba and Yvonna S Lincoln, "Epistemological and Methodological Bases of Naturalistic Inquiry," *ECTJ* 30, no. 4 (1982); Prabash Edirisingha, "Interpretivism and Positivism (Ontological and Epistemological Perspectives)," *Research Paradigms and Approaches*, 2012.

[44] Andrew Bennett, "Case Study Methods: Design, Use, and Comparative Advantages," in *Models, Numbers, and Cases: Methods for Studying International Relations*, ed. Detlef F. Sprinz and Yael Wolinsky-Nahmias (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2007), 12.

situated in Nigeria, occurred at about the same time, and in significantly different regions of the country.

"There is a growing consensus that the strongest means of drawing inferences from case studies is the use of a combination of within-case analysis and cross-case comparisons within a single study."[45] Therefore, in this study, I have developed a model from the Boko Haram case and tested it against the NDPVF case as supported by best practices in the social sciences. Hence, I adopt a combination of process tracing and the method of structured, focused comparison.[46] This allowed me to conduct both inductive and deductive investigations in this thesis.

"Process-tracing is a useful method for generating and analyzing the data on causal mechanisms. It can check for spuriousness and permit causal inference on the basis of a few cases or even a single case."[47] "Its interpretive variants is a family tool used to study how causal processes unfolding over time produce particular outcomes. It is primarily in a within-case method that favours the study of feedback dynamics, path dependencies, cases of complex causality where multiple factors interact, as well as processes in which sequence in which events unfold over time is important for explaining outcomes."[48] "Process tracing is one means of attempting to get closer to the mechanism or micro foundation behind observed phenomena."[49]

The method of structured, focused comparison allows for the standardization of data collection, enables comparison, replication, and transferability or external validity.[50] We must note however that this applicability to other contexts requires an in-depth comparison of the new environment with the thick description of previous cases.[51] The application of this method rests on two salient features that represent this approach. One is "structured", which has to do with asking the second case the questions that are affirmative in the first case. This structure reflects the research objective of examining if there are similarities in the cases' causal processes. This feature allows for the standardisation of data collection, enables comparison, and replication or addition of other cases if required. Secondly, it is "focused", which has to do with its

[45] Alexander L George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England: MIT Press, 2005), 18, 90.
[46] Ibid., 67-124.
[47] Ibid., 223.
[48] Ludvig Norman, "Interpretive Process Tracing and Causal Explanations," *Qualitative Multi-Method Research* 13, no. 2 (2015).
[49] George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, 108.
[50] Ibid., 67-124.
[51] Lincoln and Guba, "But Is It Rigorous? Trustworthiness and Authenticity in Naturalistic Evaluation."; Guba and Lincoln, "Epistemological and Methodological Bases of Naturalistic Inquiry."

specification of the aspects of a historical phenomenon relevant to a theoretical framework that is appropriate for the intended research objectives. This feature is essential because it is impractical to research all dimensions of an event in one study.[52]

I follow through with the combination of these tools as follows:

1. Sequence events: I Identified the timeline in sequential order by determining how far back in time I should seek the cause and the conclusion of the timeline. Then I compiled an atheoretical detailed narrative of the Boko Haram case in chronicle order. This highly specific and well-constructed story suggested a possible causal process.
2. Juxtapose rival explanations: I identify the hypotheses that are related or theories that have been used to explain the rise of this insurgent group and then identified gaps.
3. Framework: based on the in-depth historical narrative of the Boko Haram case, I developed an analytical causal explanation couched in explicit theoretical form.
4. Hypothesis: Based on the framework, I proposed a causal path that traces the context to the start of the insurgency.
5. Evidence: It was time to accessed evidence for the primary proposition and alternative explanations.
6. In the case of NDPVF, I also followed the process of sequencing the events leading up to the start, then identified extant theoretical explanations and their gaps.
7. Hypothesis: I adopted the hypothesized causal path developed from the Boko Haram case to test for consistency in the case of NDPVF.
8. Evidence: It was also time to access evidence for the proposition and alternative explanations.[53] So, I designed the data collection measures.

My sources of data included both primary and secondary measures. The source of the primary data is through interviews in Nigeria. I conducted fieldwork for 12 weeks and interviewed participants who are sufficiently knowledgeable about the emergence of these groups. They had either lived in the cities of Maiduguri and Port Harcourt during the rebel groups' emergence or have conducted significant fieldwork in these locations, especially journalists and researchers. I carried out a total of 22 interviews out of 30 initially planned and personally transcribed them for this research. The selection of participants for the research was carried out through a combination of direct recruitment and snowballing. I engaged 15 of these

[52] George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, 67-70.
[53] Ibid., 145-147; Jacob I Ricks and Amy H Liu, "Process-Tracing Research Designs: A Practical Guide," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 51, no. 4 (2018).

respondents directly, while some of these introduced seven other participants instead of the 15 anticipated in the research. Sources for those directly recruited included authors of relevant articles in journals, NGO reports, and newspapers focusing on insurgencies and conflicts in Nigeria. The interview participants also included an On-Air-Personality, a businessperson, and a civil servant.

As much as the identity of my respondents may be important for the validity of their narratives, Their anonymity is guaranteed by the participant information sheet before the interview. However, I acknowledge and accept their value-laden responses and have captured these nuances in my analysis. It is salient to also note that insurgents were not among the respondents. I could not interview the insurgent leaders in this research not only because of the difficulty in accessing them but also because it was not allowed by the university ethics committee. However, the consequence of this on the validity of findings was significantly checked by using personally transcribed YouTube videos and published transcription of messages by insurgent leaders who are core to this research.

I gathered secondary data from reports of International Non-Government Organizations that have access to these locations and have compiled extensive primary data about these groups, for example, the Human Rights Watch, Council on Foreign Relations, and International Crisis Group. Other secondary data sources included books, journal articles, media, and relevant online databases. This selection of primary and secondary data allowed for diversity and flexibility of narratives, hence, the production of new issues and ideas.

After gathering data from my fieldwork, I transcribed each interview using both devices that I used for recording to ensure that I properly represent the responses of the participants. Where necessary, I reached out to the respondents to obtain clarification, and some other times, interpretation of local concepts used in their explanations. I thoroughly read these transcripts severally to capture the general and specific perceptions, ideas, and information passed by the interviewees. Themes were developed from the general ideas and the specific information was used to fill the gaps in the narrative developed. Further reading of the transcripts was done to highlight quotes that best capture the overall view and the specific responses to questions about my primary proposition. Notes were taken of the links between respondents' data, extant alternative theories in the literature, and my theoretical proposition. These were compiled following the detailed chronological narrative and the stages of my theorized pathway to the emergence of the insurgency. Note that it was done in a way as to capture the complexities and diversities of inter and intra-connections of agents and structural factors.

The objective of this methodological approach is to develop a framework that could explain the emergence of insurgent groups in Nigeria since 1999. This thesis allows for the necessary modification if the model derived from the first case does not predict all the intervening steps in the second case.[54] With the allowance for adjustment, the thesis sets up the opportunity to develop a nuanced model capable of explaining a broader range of rebel group emergence.

This research is significant both empirically and theoretically. It provides a more detailed narrative on the rise of insurgent organizations from relatively peaceful social groups that are often omitted in the literature. It further compares the rise of different rebel movements as they emerged from distinct regions of the same state in the same period. The conflict literature scarcely conducts this form of within-state comparison of the insurgent group emergence. There is currently no published research that has conducted a comparison of the political process that has facilitated insurgencies in Nigeria since 1999. There are no researches that have been found that have studied how the interaction between local political elites and civil society groups facilitated the emergence of insurgencies in the Borno and Rivers States of Nigeria. This study exposes the hidden similarities in the dynamic process that led to the turn of previously non-rebellious groups to armed insurgents. An exploration of the interaction between these would-be rebellious organizations and political elites shed light on how these relatively non-violent groups suddenly take up arms against the state they had previously partnered with. The findings of this thesis provide a better understanding of the chains and the mechanism of insurgency emergence. It explains what ensures the rise of rebel groups no matter the differences in historical, material, and socio-cultural contexts among the states and geo-political zones in Nigeria. This understanding provides a better basis upon which to design early warning signals and preventive tools against the rise of violent non-state actors.

1.3 Conclusion

This thesis provides a more detailed analysis of the evolution of Boko Haram and NDPVF into armed rebels than can be found in other studies. It will explore the contextual factors that prevailed in their various regions before they took up arms and the immediate causes of their turn to violent rebellion. It will further examine why and how the relatively non-violent emergence of these groups and their cooperative interaction with local politicians suddenly turned into armed engagements. This research critically reviews the assumptions of the extant

[54] George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, 207.

theories of insurgent group emergence and it provides an alternative that addresses their shortfalls.

The next chapter proceeds with the analysis of the extant theoretical perspectives in the conflict literature. It discusses the grievances, resources, and religious ideology theories with a focus on their application in the explanation of the way insurgent groups start in Nigeria. It provides a detailed critical analysis of their contributions and the significant gaps observed. To fill these gaps, I propose an alternative Political Relevance model derived from a combination of the patron-client relationship model and Political Process theory. Chapter three presents a detailed discussion of the historical northern Nigerian social, political, economic, and religious ideological environment. With evidence from this historical information, I contend that the Boko Haram group emerged from existing conditions similar to other non-violent religious groups in the region and that their views are not entirely novel. The chapter traces the group's call for sharia and jihad, and the disavowal from Western education and constitutional democracy based on the pre-existing structural factors in northern Nigeria.

Chapter four details the narrative of the Boko Haram evolution from a relatively non-violent organization to an armed rebellious group. It analyses how the group's interaction with local political elites facilitated its turn to violence. I argue that this political process made other factors, such as grievances over inequalities and religious ideology salient. Chapter five narrates the trajectory of the NDPVF with a brief discussion of the background factors within which it emerged. It argues that it started as a relatively non-rebellious group, the same as most social organizations in the region until it entered the Rivers State political process and a fissure in the relationship with its patron occurred that resulted in its turn to arms.

Chapter six tests the Political Relevance model developed in chapter two by comparing the rise of Boko Haram with the start of the NDPVF insurgent group. I argue that despite the significant difference in the structural conditions of the northeast and Niger Delta regions, the two rebel organizations that emerged in these areas essentially followed the same political process enunciated in the new alternative model. Although both organizations showed some intricate and complex differences, they still exhibited that there was an initial co-operation between both groups and local politicians before a fracture in the relationship deteriorated into violent confrontations that were interpreted to the people in a different light.

Chapter seven of this thesis summarises the research and its findings with further emphasis on its broader implications. In addition, it presents suggestions and questions regarding the applicability of the Political Relevance model to cases outside Nigeria. The chapter summarises the argument that the rise of rebel organizations in Nigeria since its democratization cannot be explained through grievances, resources, or religious ideology theories. A review of the political process of insurgent group locations, their relationship with politicians, and the fissure of this interaction provides a better understanding of the way they emerged compared with the theories currently found in the literature.

2. Theoretical approaches to insurgency onset in Nigeria

2.1 Introduction

This thesis investigates the onset of two violent rebellions in Nigeria since its return to civil rule in 1999. It explores how and why insurgent groups, such as Boko Haram and the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force emerged from two significantly different regions in the same country during this period. It specifically focuses on understanding how and why these pioneer armed non-state actors evolved from relatively peaceful to violent rebel organizations. The research further seeks to explain the role of grievances over frustrating conditions, economic and ideological interests, and the political context. It studies whether spontaneous anger over deprivation and ideological concerns or strategic economic and political interests motivated the rise of these violent organizations. This work seeks to explain why even with the difference in socio-cultural and economic structure in the northeast and the Niger Delta areas, insurgent groups emerged in these areas immediately after Nigeria's return to democracy.

This chapter discusses some of the existing theories and their application in the literature to explain the rise of rebel groups such as these. Despite their significant contributions in the understanding of the onset of the post-1999 insurgency that took place in Nigeria, they ignore the nature of the insurgent organizations before they became violent and their interactions with local politicians. They assume that insurgent groups originate as challengers of the state instead of a social association that developed into rebels. This depiction establishes an unrealistic dichotomy of belligerent rebels and innocent elites. It further disallows any analysis of the evolution from a relatively non-violent to a violent organization. Also, the country-level analysis and measurement mostly used by these theories limit their utility in comparing the rise of violent non-state actors in very different regions of the same country during the same period. As well as, how and why they emerge in a locale or time and not in another place and period.

To fill this gap, this chapter embraces the patronage and patron-client relations model in Africa as espoused by William Reno.[55] His study captures the pre-violence patronage network between likely insurgent groups and political elites. This relationship is a salient mechanism in the process of the emergence of an armed group that is often omitted in the extant theories. I combine this with the Political Process theory advocated by McAdam Doug. The theory encapsulates the significance of the political environment, organizational resources, and

[55] Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa*.

cognitive liberation to the rise of a social movement.[56] This chapter builds on these studies to develop a new model of insurgent group emergence that I refer to as the Political Relevance model. This alternative model synthesises insights from existing theories while addressing the pre-violence interaction of insurgents and political actors.

In this six-section chapter, the first section reviews how studies use the grievance theory to explain the onset of insurgencies and the gaps observed. The second section examines the application of the resource theory to the start of the Niger Delta insurgency and the gaps, while the third focuses on the application of religious ideology to explain the emergence of Boko Haram and what it glosses over. The next two sections show how the adoption of the patronage model and the Political Process theory can fill these identified gaps. Based on these studies, the last section develops an alternative Political Relevance model.

2.2 Grievance theory

Fig. II

A prominent grievance explanation of the emergence of violence is the Relative Deprivation. It builds on the Frustration-Aggression hypothesis that the aggrieved uses violence as a way to seek justice.[57] It assumes that insurgent groups rise from the frustrations over conditions that

[56] McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, 40-59.
[57] John Dollard et al., "Frustration and Aggression," (1939).

prevent the achievement of desired goals.[58] Ted Robert Gurr, who is most associated with the Relative Deprivation theory, defined it "as a perceived discrepancy between men's [*sic*] value expectations and value capabilities."[59] He explains that while value expectation refers to the material condition of life that people believe they ought to have, value capabilities refers to what is. Collective violence starts once a group perceives injustice against it or if its present condition is significantly lower than what it can attain in comparison with another group. The higher the level of a group's discontent, the more likely it will spontaneously engage in violence against the perceived source of grievances. Gurr developed the causal sequence on a three-step framework. First is discontent in a political community, then, the politicisation of that discontent, and finally the justification of political action and the emergence of violence against political objects and actors.[60]

Despite the pioneering process provided in the grievance theory, there are significant flaws in its assumptions. The emphasis on this justice narrative accepts the insurgent rhetoric as justification for the turn to violence. It assumes that the ubiquitous discontent shared by most of the community explains the reason a few of its members would commit to a life of violence. However, the theory does not explain the reason the majority of the aggrieved community members fail to take up arms. It further assumes that while these organizations start as insurgents, as would be seen in the case studies in this thesis, they evolved from social groups to armed resistance. The grievance theory also ignores the interaction that exists between the would-be insurgent leaders and government officials before the groups' evolution into rebellion. This thesis would show that this relationship explains a great deal about the political environment that facilitated the evolution and the immediate source of funding.

Grievance theorists argue that Boko Haram emerged from Relative Deprivation in the North-East region of Nigeria. They affirm that the people were discontented with their impoverishment and the lack of opportunities in the region which they traced to the corruption of politicians. Lots of the youth, especially in Borno and the northeast region of the country found help and assistance in following and

[58] Mats Berdal, "Beyond Greed and Grievance--and Not Too Soon," *Review of International Studies* 31, no. 4 (2005); I William Zartman, "Greed and Grievance: Methodological and Epistemological Underpinnings of the Debate," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 11, no. 2 (2011); Lars-Erik Cederman, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Halvard Buhaug, *Inequality, Grievances, and Civil War* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1-4; Edward Aspinall, "The Construction of Grievance," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51, no. 6 (2007); Robert H Bates, Rui JP de Figueiredo Jr, and Barry R Weingast, "The Politics of Interpretation: Rationality, Culture, and Transition," *Politics & Society* 26, no. 4 (1998): 603.
[59] Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, 13.
[60] Ibid., 348-352.

listening to Muhammad Yusuf. He was a charismatic Islamic cleric who espoused replacing the secular state with an Islamic one as the solution to their pervasive discontent. However, after a confrontation between his members and the police, the state security forces arrested and extra-judicially killed him. The grievance narrative holds that the desire of the followers to revenge their deprivation and killing of Yusuf resulted in the Boko Haram violent rebellion. They likened the condition of this insurgency to the Uthman Dan Fodio 1804-jihad and the 1980s Maitatsine uprising in northern Nigeria.[61]

Senator Farouk Bello argued that the violence was the youth's way of displaying their gross dissatisfaction with the failure of leadership to cater for their wellbeing. He explained that the joblessness and the incessant closure of schools expose youths to violent tendencies.[62] The former governor of Borno State also shares this perspective that economically deprived and alienated youth sought personal dignity and self-worth through Boko Haram.[63] Ahmed, a journalist from Borno, confirmed that a significant population in parts of Borno State and other north-eastern states that share boundaries with Cameroon live in abject poverty. He asserts that the government at all levels have so neglected them that they share the same contaminated source of water with donkeys. They attend to their educational and healthcare needs in Cameroon as these facilities are not available in their immediate communities.[64] Ernest Nnamdi Ogbozor similarly finds that state neglect of the extensive rural areas of the Lake Chad basin made it susceptible to the emergence of Boko Haram.[65]

A similar Relative Deprivation narrative exists in the explanation of how insurgent groups emerged in the Niger Delta region. These grievance theorists argue that militant groups, such as the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force emerged from deprivation in the zone.[66] True,

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[61] Daniel Agbiboa, "The Ongoing Campaign of Terror in Nigeria: Boko Haram Versus the State," *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 2, no. 3 (2013); W. W. Hansen and U. A. Musa, "Fanon, the Wretched and Boko Haram," *Journal of Asian and African studies* 48, no. 3 (2013); Abimbola Adesoji, "Between Maitatsine and Boko Haram: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Response of the Nigerian State," *Africa Today* 57, no. 4 (2011).

[62] Abdullahi Bego, "Why Yobe 'Talibans' Struck -Senator," *Daily Trust*, 7 January 2004, 3.

[63] Abdul Raufu Mustapha, "Understanding Boko Haram," in *Sects & Social Disorder: Muslim Identities & Conflict in Northern Nigeria*, ed. Abdul Raufu Mustapha (Woodbridge, Suffolk, GB; Rochester, NY, US: Boydell & Brewer, 2014), 167-169, 176-177.

[64] Ahmed, "Boko Haram Insurgency," interview by Wisdom Oghosa Iyekekpolo, *Fieldwork in Nigeria,* no. 9, 2019.

[65] Ernest Nnamdi Ogbozor, "The Impact of Violent Extremism on Rural Livelihoods in the Lake Chad Basin" (PhD George Mason University, 2018), 2.

[66] Caroline Ifeka, "Oil, Ngos & Youths: Struggles for Resource Control in the Niger Delta," *Review of African Political Economy* 28, no. 87 (2001); Michael Fleshman, "The International Community & the Crisis in Nigeria's Oil Producing Communities," ibid.|, Cited Pages|.29, no. 91 (2002); Augustine Ikelegbe, "Encounters of Insurgent Youth Associations with the State in the Oil Rich Niger Delta Region of Nigeria," *Journal of Third World Studies* 22, no. 1 (2005); Charles Ukeje, "Youths, Violence and the Collapse of Public Order in the Niger Delta of Nigeria," *Africa Development/Afrique et Développement* 26, no. 1/2 (2001); Daniel Egiegba Agbiboa,

Nigeria is Africa's biggest economy, valued at approximately $397 billion and one of the biggest oil exporters in the world with a production of two million barrels daily.[67] At 86% of total export, oil remains its highest source of foreign exchange, with most of these resources in the Niger Delta region of the country.[68] However, the level of development in the region is not commensurate with the revenue derived from it. Instead, there is growing environmental degradation through oil spillage and gas flaring. The multinational oil corporations have short-changed the indigenes in employments and deprived them of fishing and farming, which is their alternative source of livelihood. Communities and social groups in the region, sometimes in collaboration with local and international Non-Government Organizations have organised relatively peaceful protests to address this discontent. However, the state and multinational corporations have employed coercive means to quell these agitations. The grievance approach presents the discontent over these deprivations and government policies and the tendency to suppress community tensions as the explanation for why the youth formed armed groups in the region since Nigeria's democratic transition in 1999.[69]

Uwafiokun Idemudia and Uwem E. Ite criticized this form of one variable causal narrative. They advocated an integrated explanation that synchronizes multiple factors. They proffered structural deficiencies in Nigeria as the cause of the Niger Delta insurgency. However, this approach is also a single-sided one as it neglects the role of agency and how actors interact with structural factors.[70] In a study of 1,337 respondents in 18 Niger Delta communities by Aderoju Oyefusi, he found that although the discontent over deprivation is pervasive among

"Have We Heard the Last? Oil, Environmental Insecurity, and the Impact of the Amnesty Programme on the Niger Delta Resistance Movement," *Review of African Political Economy* 40, no. 137 (2013).

[67] World Economic Forum, "5 facts to know about Africa's powerhouse – Nigeria." https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/08/nigeria-africa-economy/

[68] Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries. https://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/about_us/167.htm

[69] Ifeka, "Oil, Ngos & Youths: Struggles for Resource Control in the Niger Delta."; Fleshman, "The International Community & the Crisis in Nigeria's Oil Producing Communities."; Ikelegbe, "Encounters of Insurgent Youth Associations with the State in the Oil Rich Niger Delta Region of Nigeria."; Ukeje, "Youths, Violence and the Collapse of Public Order in the Niger Delta of Nigeria."; Agbiboa, "Have We Heard the Last? Oil, Environmental Insecurity, and the Impact of the Amnesty Programme on the Niger Delta Resistance Movement."; Nsemba Edward Lenshie, "Political Economy of Ungoverned Space and Crude Oil Security Challenges in Nigeria's Niger Delta," *Central European Journal of International and Security Studies* 12, no. 1 (2018): 33-44; Kenneth Omeje, "Oil Conflict in Nigeria: Contending Issues and Perspectives of the Local Niger Delta People," *New Political Economy* 10, no. 3 (2005): 331-332; J. Shola Omotola, "Liberation Movements and Rising Violence in the Niger Delta: The New Contentious Site of Oil and Environmental Politics," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 33, no. 1 (2009): 36-45; Omolade Adunbi, *Oil Wealth and Insurgency in Nigeria* (Indiana University Press, 2015), 94, 127, 237-240; John Boye Ejobowah, "Who Owns the Oil? The Politics of Ethnicity in the Niger Delta of Nigeria," *Africa Today* (2000).

[70] Uwafiokun Idemudia and Uwem E. Ite, "Demystifying the Niger Delta Conflict: Towards an Integrated Explanation," *Review of African Political Economy* 33, no. 109 (2006).

individuals, they do not make them more likely to belong to insurgent groups.[71] Akin Iwilade also found that those deprived did not start insurgent groups in the Niger Delta.[72] Although grievances over the gap between expectations and achievement in the Niger Delta were high, it was the same in other regions.

Similarly, criticisms of the discontent narrative of Boko Haram emergence abound.[73] Abdulbasit Kassim argues that the group never canvassed poverty eradication. He explains that the vulnerable youth had alternatives, and state coercive actions could have scared them. He asserts that if grievance against deprivation was the insurgent group's motivation, corrupt elites would be the sole target.[74] However, Abdul Raufu Mustapha and Kate Meagher argue that critics based their argument on individual deprivation instead of a sense of group marginalization and economic inequality.[75] This argument is capitalising on the recent refocusing of grievance theory from Relative Deprivation to Horizontal Inequalities.[76]

Frances Stewart and her associates[77] based the source of grievance on Horizontal Inequalities by drawing on Gurr's Relative Deprivation. They also drew on Donald L. Horowitz's findings that grievances emerge from invidious comparisons between backward and advanced groups in fear of domination, expulsion, or extinction.[78] Stewart defines it as "inequalities in economic, social or political dimensions or cultural status between culturally defined groups."[79] They are present when identity cleavages combine with systemic political and socio-economic

[71] Aderoju Oyefusi, "Oil and the Probability of Rebel Participation among Youths in the Niger Delta of Nigeria," *Journal of Peace Research* 45, no. 4 (2008).
[72] Akin Iwilade, "Oil, Youth, and Networks of the "Unconnected" in Nigeria's Niger Delta," *Society & natural resources* 28, no. 11 (2015): 1203-1204, 1207 & 1213.
[7373] Muhammad Sani Umar, "The Popular Discourses of Salafi Radicalism and Salafi Counter-Radicalism in Nigeria: A Case Study of Boko Haram," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 42, no. 2 (2012): 119; Abdulbasit Kassim, "Defining and Understanding the Religious Philosophy of Jihādī-Salafism and the Ideology of Boko Haram," *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 16, no. 2-3 (2015): 191; Alexander Thurston, *Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement* (Princeton University Press, 2017), 4; Alexander Thurston, *'The Disease Is Unbelief': Boko Haram's Religious and Political Worldview*, Brookings Institution (2016), 7.
[74] Kassim, "Defining and Understanding the Religious Philosophy of Jihādī-Salafism and the Ideology of Boko Haram," 191.
[75] Abdul Raufu Mustapha and Kate Meagher, "Introduction Faith, Society & Boko Haram," in *Overcoming Boko Haram: Faith, Society and Islamic Radicalization in Northern Nigeria*, ed. Abdul Raufu Mustapha and Kate Meagher (NY, US: Boydell & Brewer, 2020).
[76] Frances Stewart, "Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict: An Introduction and Some Hypotheses," in *Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict: Understanding Group Violence in Multiethnic Societies*, ed. Frances Stewart (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).
[77] Ibid.
[78] Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 1. print. ed. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1985), 166-180; Lars-Erik Cederman, Nils B. Weidmann, and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, "Horizontal Inequalities and Ethnonationalist Civil War: A Global Comparison," *American Political Science Review* 105, no. 3 (2011).
[79] Stewart, "Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict: An Introduction and Some Hypotheses," 3.

discriminations. She hypothesises that violent conflict is more likely when a group that shares a salient identity faces severe political, economic, social or cultural inequalities.[80] Hence, Horizontal Inequalities introduces the salience of identity cleavage to the causal process earlier espoused by Relative Deprivation, that is, Discontent-Politicisation-Conflict.[81]

Although the introduction of identity sheds light on how groups define the "other" in expressing discontent, it has yet failed to account for the gaps identified earlier. Notably, it ignores the pre-insurgency interaction between these groups and state officials. The acknowledgement of an initial cordial relationship would show that these groups do not start as violent rebels and the researcher cannot group insurgent leaders among the deprived at the start of the violence. Their access to the political elites readily includes them among those they claim to oppose. Hence, there could be room for self-interest in their violent endeavour.

Conspiracy theories show perceived horizontal political marginalization as the cause of the emergence of Boko Haram. Although the regional competition for the presidency has existed since Nigeria's independence, there was a constitutional crisis in 2010.[82] Yes, some northern political elites threatened to make the country ungovernable for Goodluck Jonathan, but the insurgency had started before his presidency.[83] Although Boko Haram requested President Jonathan convert to Islam, its interest hardly exceeded that request as the group did not discriminate between pro and anti-Jonathan factions.[84]

The causal roles of educational inequalities both at vertical and horizontal levels also appear in the literature.[85] In 2010 when the insurgency started, UNICEF put the number of out-of-school

[80] Ibid., 18-19.
[81] Frances Stewart, "Horizontal Inequalities as a Cause of Conflict," *Bradford Development Lecture* (2009); Frances Stewart, "Horizontal Inequalities as a Cause of Conflict: A Review of Crise findings," (UK: Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity, 2010); Stewart, "Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict: An Introduction and Some Hypotheses."
[82] For details, see Wisdom Oghosa Iyekekpolo, "Political Elites and the Rise of the Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria," *Terrorism and political violence* (2018); Mustapha and Meagher, "Introduction Faith, Society & Boko Haram."
[83] See Victor Anya, "Making Nigeria Ungovernable for President Jonathan," http://dailyindependentnig.com/2012/06/making-nigeria-ungovernable-for-president-jonathan/ Page 6, (accessed January 26, 2016). Iyekekpolo, "Political Elites and the Rise of the Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria."
[84] Ameh Comrade Godwin, "'I Will Not Resign,' – Jonathan Reacts to Boko Haram's Condition," *Daily Post*, August 6 2012.
[85] Kate Meagher, "Beyond Terror: Addressing the Boko Haram Challenge in Nigeria," *Norwegian Peace Building Resource Center Policy Brief* (2014); Hannah Hoechner, "Experiencing Inequality at Close Range: Almajiri Students and Quranic Schools in Kano," in *Sects Social Disorder: Muslim Identities Conflict in Northern Nigeria*, ed. Abdul Raufu Mustapha (Woodbridge, Suffolk, GB; Rochester, NY, US: Boydell & Brewer, 2014).

children in Nigeria at approximately 8,615,770.[86] UNESCO puts the literacy rate of Borno State in 2010 at 14.6%, the lowest in Nigeria.[87] However, findings that Boko Haram early converts included university dropouts and graduates who shredded their certificates[88] undermine the grievance over social inequalities narrative.[89] The group's animosity towards Western education reflects in the meaning of its name.

Mustapha and Meagher argue that horizontal economic inequalities are significant to the emergence of Boko Haram. They showed figures of relative poverty in the northeast compared to other regions in Nigeria from Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative. They further explained why Boko Haram emerged in Nigeria and not the more impoverished neighbouring country of Niger. They argue that Nigeria has deep ethnoreligious and regional economic inequalities, unlike Niger with relatively even poverty spread across its regions, showing low levels of Horizontal Inequalities.[90] Mustapha asserts that relative poverty is significant to the emergence of Boko Haram because it fuels a sense of group resentment. More so in Nigeria, which was already characterised by high ethnic and regional inequalities and competition since the 1950s.[91]

Horizontal economic inequality among regions and ethnoreligious groups, without doubt, persists in Nigeria. The association between horizontal poverty and the emergence of insurgent groups may look plausible with economic figures presented this way. However, if further broken down into regional or state figures, it shows that neither the northeast nor Borno State where Boko Haram emerged is the poorest in Nigeria. The northwest and Sokoto State is the most impoverished region and state respectively.[92] Although the north has 87% of the impoverished in Nigeria, the northwest is home to almost 50% of the poor.[93] If poverty explains

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[86] Data for the Sustainable Development Goals http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/ng

[87] High level International Round Table on Literacy "Reaching the 2015 Literacy Target: Delivering on the promise" UNESCO, Paris, 6-7 September 2012 Action Plan Nigeria http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/pdf/Nigeria.pdf

[88] Ahmad Salkida, "Muhammad Yusuf: Teaching and Preaching Controversies," *Sunday Trust*, 1 March 2009, 41.

[89] James J Forest, *Confronting the Terrorism of Boko Haram in Nigeria*, JOINT SPECIAL OPERATIONS UNIV MACDILL AFB FL (2012), 15; Daniel Egiegba Agbiboa, "Why Boko Haram Exists: The Relative Deprivation Perspective," *African Conflict Peacebuilding Review* 3, no. 1 (2013).

[90] Mustapha and Meagher, "Introduction Faith, Society & Boko Haram."

[91] Mustapha, "Understanding Boko Haram," 171.

[92] Kale, *The Nigeria Poverty Profile 2010 Report: Press Briefing by the Statistician-General of the Federation/Chief Executive Officer, National Bureau of Statistics*, 8.

[93] Ihuoma Chiedozie John Alechenu, Success Nwogu and Godwin Isenyo, "87% Nigeria's Poverty Rate in North – World Bank," *Punch Newspaper*, February 11 2020; National Bureau of Statistics, "National Population Estimates," (National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria, 2016). http://nigerianstat.gov.ng/elibrary?queries[search]=population.

the rebellion, the northwest geo-political zone with the highest rate of abject poverty in the country should have been the more likely origin of the Boko Haram group. The same criticisms apply to other forms of Relative Deprivation or Horizontal Inequalities as there is no proof that the northeast is the most deprived region in Nigeria.

Researchers also emphasize Horizontal Inequalities in the emergence of insurgent groups in the Niger Delta. They argue that the region has historically suffered political and social-economic marginalization, injustice, and horizontal inequalities. They claim that the frustration at achieving fairness through constitutional and peaceful means pushed them to form armed groups to seek justice violently.[94] Edlyne E. Anugwom draws attention to the role of grievances emanating from inequalities in social infrastructural development in the emergence of rebel groups. He argues that insurgent groups emerged in the Niger Delta when youth from the region visited other parts of the country.[95] Some studies explain that the Niger Delta youth, especially environmental activists, visited Abuja for seminars in the 1990s after the relocation of the federal capital territory from Lagos to Abuja. The youth became aggrieved, seeing the high-level difference in infrastructural development of Abuja compared to their region. The exposure of the youth to other regions sensitized them to their level of deprivation, and the inequalities suffered in their region. This knowledge about other regions, coupled with their local knowledge, heightened their frustration, raised "oil consciousness" and crafted the "oil citizenship" upon which the insurgent groups emerged.[96]

However, the increase in the percentage of revenue for oil-producing states from 1% to 13% did not placate or stop insurgent group emergence in the Niger Delta. Instead, the grievance shifted to the location that the 13% represented. While the federal government limited it to on-shore production, the region clamoured for both on-shore and off-shore.[97] Even with the 13% oil revenue to the states in the region, there was no marked increase in infrastructural development or reduction in poverty. Particularly of note is, the insurgents did not take the

[94] Ukoha Ukiwo, "From "Pirates" to "Militants": A Historical Perspective on Anti-State and Anti-Oil Company Mobilization among the Ijaw of Warri, Western Niger Delta," *African Affairs* 106, no. 425 (2007): 588-609; Isidore A. Udoh, "A Qualitative Review of the Militancy, Amnesty, and Peacebuilding in Nigeria's Niger Delta," *Peace Research* (2013): 63-64; Ben Tantua and Palash Kamruzzaman, "Revisiting 'Militancy': Examining Niger Delta," *Review of African Political Economy* 1, no. 2 (2016).

[95] Edlyne E. Anugwom, "Beyond Oil: Environmental Rights, Travel, Local Knowledge, and Youth Conflict in the Oil-Rich Niger Delta of Nigeria," *Africa Today* 61, no. 2 (2014).

[96] Ibid.; Adunbi, *Oil Wealth and Insurgency in Nigeria*, 162.

[97] Kaniye SA Ebeku, "Nigerian Supreme Court and Ownership of Offshore Oil" (paper presented at the Natural resources forum, 2003).

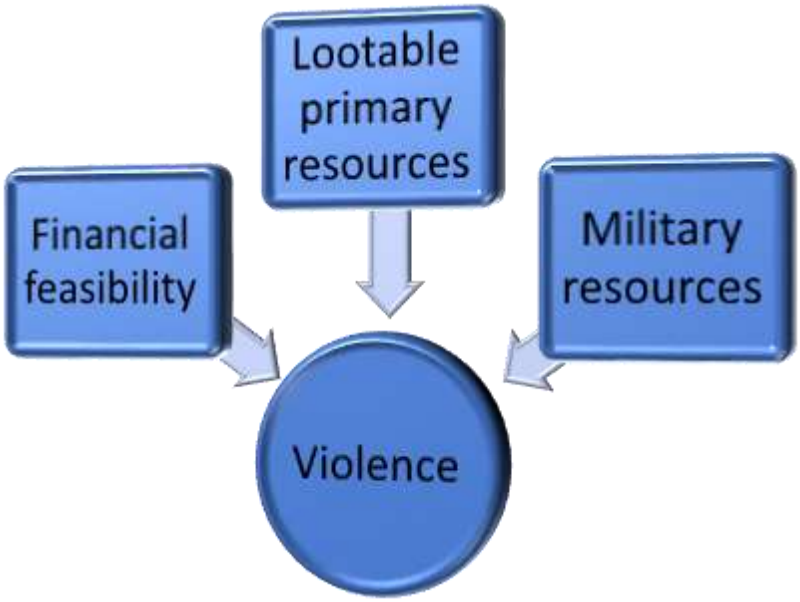
violence out on the political leaders at the state or local levels. Nwajiaku-Dahou notes that the theory emphasizes historical deprivation and neglects the immediate causes. She argues that although there may be historical continuity of agitations in the Niger Delta; it does not provide the complete narrative of the recent armed rebellion.[98] This criticism speaks to the timing of the emergence of the insurgent groups. An insurgency model should not only acknowledge a pre-existing grievance upon which a group makes its claim; it should also unravel recent interactions that suddenly made a previously non-violent group take to an insurgency at a specific time.

The grievance theory presents an argument that views frustration over Relative Deprivation and inequalities as the explanation for the start of group violence. However, it fails to investigate the pre-war interaction between the probable insurgent leaders and politicians. It ignores the timing and the sudden evolution of a relatively peaceful group into violence. Mohammed M. Hafez argues that grievances are ubiquitous and cannot account for the choice of armed rebellion.[99] It cannot explain a group's decision to take up arms in the face of alternatives and the nature of the point and timing of a group's evolution into violence.[100] The grievance lens accepts the rhetoric of insurgents without giving attention to the sudden commitment of these groups to their demand for justice. It insufficiently probes why individuals would risk participation in an armed rebellion for a public good that both participants and non-participants alike would enjoy if achieved.[101] Alternatively, resource theory emphasizes the role of material interest.

[98] Kathryn Nwajiaku-Dahou, "The Political Economy of Oil and 'Rebellion'in Nigeria's Niger Delta," *Review of African Political Economy* 39, no. 132 (2012): 307-308.
[99] The nature of grievances fails to explain "purpose (revolutionary vs. reformist), scale (local vs. national), scope (limited vs. expensive), intensity (sustained vs. sporadic), and duration (brief vs. protracted) of their militancy." See, Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World*, 17-18.
[100] Gurney and Tierney, "Relative Deprivation and Social Movements: A Critical Look at Twenty Years of Theory and Research."
[101] De Soysa, "Paradise Is a Bazaar? Greed, Creed, and Governance in Civil War, 1989-99."

2.3 Resources theory

Fig. III



The resource theory explains the emergence of insurgent groups by developing the greed model around predation. In line with the rational economic argument, it criticizes the grievance explanation of rebellion as limited by the problem of collective action.[102] If non-participants in the movement enjoy the same benefits as participants, why will people join a rebellion? Paul Collier argues that the opportunity to finance and profit from an insurgency instigates the formation of these groups. He argues that even if grievances motivate rebellion, it cannot survive without predation, which may be its sole financial means. In the place of grievance, he develops the greed model, which traces the emergence of violent non-state groups to the opportunity for predation of rents from natural resources.[103] For insurgent groups to emerge, there is the rational calculation of their financial feasibility and military survival constraint.[104]

Collier argues that "far from seeking to avenge grievances, rebel leaders need to incite grievance for their business to be profitable."[105] His greed model starts on the premise that the

[102] Collier and Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War."; Paul Collier, "Rebellion as a Quasi-Criminal Activity," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44, no. 6 (2000); For Olson's Collective action problem, see Anthony Oberschall, "Theories of Social Conflict," *Annual review of sociology* 4, no. 1 (1978).
[103] Collier and Hoeffler, "On Economic Causes of Civil War."; Collier and Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War."
[104] Collier and Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 2355."
[105] Collier, "Rebellion as a Quasi-Criminal Activity," 850.

availability of lootable natural resources instigates the formation of rebel groups. Rebels' motivation is a desire to gain from resources through the predation of rents. He asserts that the group is a distinct criminal syndicate to extort natural resources. After the formation of a viable militant group, it attacks the site of the natural resources that it wants to extort. The government forces defend the location from the rebel attack. The higher the military resources mobilized by the insurgents, the more likely the state will retaliate. The reciprocal increase in arms will generate a phase of an arms race resulting in full-blown armed violence.[106]

Collier regards the claim of grievances as lacking authenticity and a self-serving justification put forth by greedy insurgents. He argues that researchers "cannot trust the rebel discourse of concern for social justice: what else do you expect them to say?"[107] He refers to Oyefusi's study of the Niger Delta, which found that the availability of an oil well in a community increased the risk of violence. However, the more the oil wells, the lesser the likelihood of conflict.[108] Collier interprets the finding to mean that although violence increases over an oil well, looting surges with the rise of oil wells, while violence decreases. He concludes that the case of the Niger Delta militancy "looks more like a story of a protection racket than outrage provoked by environmental damage."[109] He argues that the militants in the Niger Delta used resource control and self-determination discourses to justify their motive for material gains.[110]

Surulola Eke referred to the activities of these militants as that over stomach infrastructure, that is the pursuit of individual interest instead of a collective good. Jean-Francois Bayart's conceptualization of the politics of the belly encapsulates the ideas of stomach infrastructure.[111] Eke argues that insurgent groups' acceptance of the amnesty program introduced in 2009 by the federal government dealt a blow to the justice narrative of the violence. The amnesty grossly failed to deal with the injustice and marginalization for which the rebels professed to fight. He

[106] Collier and Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 2355."
[107] Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It* (USA: Oxford University Press, 2007), 22.
[108] Oyefusi, "Oil and the Probability of Rebel Participation among Youths in the Niger Delta of Nigeria," 551-553.
[109] Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It*, 31.
[110] Ibid., 30-31.
[111] The politics of the belly "applies to the idea of accumulation, opening up possibilities of social mobility and enabling the holder of power to 'set himself up'. It refers also to nepotism which is still very much a social reality with considerable political consequences. The expression 'politics of the belly' must be understood in the totality of its meaning. It refers not just to the 'belly' but also to 'politics'. This 'African way of politics' furthermore suggests an ethic which is more complicated than that of lucre. A man of power who is able to amass and redistribute wealth becomes a 'man of honour'." See Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London and New York: Longman, 1993), XVIII & 242.

argues that as though there was not enough proof that the militants were pursuing their self-interest; they now freely fraternize with political elites for lucrative oil contracts.[112] Adunbi also faults accepting an amnesty program that pays cash for peace much as oil companies have done in the past. He argues that it shows "how NGOs and the insurgency movement have turned the Niger Delta people's genuine struggle for justice into self-promotion."[113]

This thesis agrees with Annegret Mahla's study that the greed hypothesis cannot sufficiently explain the emergence of insurgent groups since the fourth republic without considering non-resource factors.[114] The greed theory ignores the relevant history that predates the discovery of oil and its failure to recognize that natural resources could also strengthen a state. It also fails to account for the decades between oil discovery in Nigeria and militancy onset in the region.[115] If the availability of natural resources in south-south Nigeria explains the insurgency there, can it also account for the rebellion in the northeast? Hence, Karen Ballentine and Heiko Nitzschke caution "against reducing the causes of armed conflict to economic calculations alone."[116]

Pierre Englebert and James Ron argue that the dependency on and the greed over natural resources are unlikely to cause violent group emergence unless the political context is already unstable.[117] Also, just like the grievance approach, greed fails to incorporate the pre-armament interaction between political elites and these groups. The theory should explain the role of government and multinational corporations' financing of groups that later became insurgents.[118] Michael Watts observed that the dichotomy assumed between the government and insurgents by the greed theory is a mirage. Political elites initially supported these groups with funds and military weapons, then deployed them as political thugs.[119] They also organise

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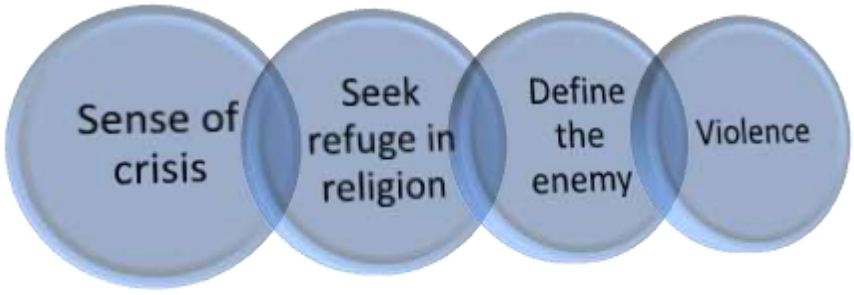
[112] Surulola James Eke, "Running to Fight Another Day: Commodification of Peace and the Resurgence of Violence in Post-Amnesty Niger Delta," *African Security* 9, no. 2 (2016): 136-137, 153-154.
[113] Adunbi, *Oil Wealth and Insurgency in Nigeria*, 245.
[114] Annegret Mähler, "Nigeria: A Prime Example of the Resource Curse? Revisiting the Oil-Violence Link in the Niger Delta," *GIGA Working Papers series*, no. 120 (2010).
[115] Hazen and Horner, *Small Arms, Armed Violence, and Insecurity in Nigeria: The Niger Delta in Perspective*, 75; Human Rights Watch, *Rivers and Blood: Guns, Oil and Power in Nigeria's Rivers State*, 3.
[116] Karen Ballentine and Heiko Nitzschke, "Beyond Greed and Grievance: Policy Lessons from Studies in the Political Economy of Armed Conflict," *Security and Development: Investing in Peace and Prosperity* (2013).
[117] Pierre Englebert and James Ron, "Primary Commodities and War: Congo-Brazzaville's Ambivalent Resource Curse," *Comparative Politics* 37, no. 1 (2004).
[118] Elias Edise Courson, "Spaces of Insurgency: Petro-Violence and the Geography of Conflict in Nigeria's Niger Delta" (UC Berkeley, 2016), 14 (Dissertation/Thesis); Nwajiaku-Dahou, "The Political Economy of Oil and 'Rebellion'in Nigeria's Niger Delta," 307-308; Michael Watts, "Resource Curse? Governmentality, Oil and Power in the Niger Delta, Nigeria," *Geopolitics* 9, no. 1 (2004); Cyril Obi, "Oil and Conflict in Nigeria's Niger Delta Region: Between the Barrel and the Trigger," *The Extractive Industries and Society* 1, no. 2 (2014): 148-151.
[119] Michael Watts, "Petro-Insurgency or Criminal Syndicate? Conflict & Violence in the Niger Delta," *Review of African Political Economy* 34, no. 114 (2007): 650.

bunkering[120] activities for financing their groups through a vast state-centred syndicate linking the groups, local political elites, and security agencies. This already existing peaceful cooperation between the would-be insurgent group and state officials in the looting of natural resources raises a significant question. Why would the group opt for violent looting of crude oil if it can and has been obtaining it without a rebellion? Indra De Soysa argues that without incorporating governance, the resource theory may only account for the severity of intrastate violence, not its emergence.[121]

2.4 Religious Ideology

Fig. IV



Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín and Elisabeth Jean Wood argue that insurgent groups emerge from sets of ideas that unite them in a struggle. Insurgents could either truly imbibe these ideas or use them as a tool for mobilization.[122] The Salafi movement in Islam espouses the idea that Islamic practices must reflect those of the first three generations of Muslims. This common

[120] "Oil bunkering is the illegal tapping directly into oil pipelines, often at manifolds or well-heads, and the extraction of crude oil which is piped into river barges that are hidden in small tributaries. The crude is then transported to ships offshore for sale, often to other countries in West Africa but also to other farther destinations." Human Rights Watch, *Rivers and Blood: Guns, Oil and Power in Nigeria's Rivers State*, 4. For a more in-depth understanding of bunkering, its types and how it is conducted, see Ifunanya Cynthia Nwokedi, "Weapons of the Weak and African Politics: Protests and Resistance in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria" (Howard University, 2015).
[121] De Soysa, "Paradise Is a Bazaar? Greed, Creed, and Governance in Civil War, 1989-99."
[122] Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín and Elisabeth Jean Wood, "Ideology in Civil War: Instrumental Adoption and Beyond," ibid.|, Cited Pages|.51, no. 2 (2014).

creed unites Salafi. However, the conflict literature broadly divides them into three, the apolitical purists, the activists, and the militant Jihadists.[123] Jason Burke argues that the aim of the Salafi-Jihadists is first to beat back the perceived Western continuation of the Crusades and the colonial humiliation of Islam. Then, to establish an Islamic state corresponding with the Islamic empire of the late first century and early second century.[124] Mark Juergensmeyer argues that loss of faith in secular nationalism motivates jihadists, especially in developing countries. Salafi sees a pious Islamic state reflecting the Islamic practice in its first to third generations as the alternative to the perceived failure of the Western secular system.[125] Insurgent groups, such as al-Qaeda emerged, tying their specific grievances to these broad ones shared by all Islamist movements.[126]

Magnus Ranstorp explains that jihadist violence starts with a sense of crisis that Muslims perceive as a threat to *Umma*, that is the community of Muslims. This crisis mentality addresses the social, political, economic, cultural, psychological, and spiritual spheres. Muslims develop grievances around these realms of threats and inequalities as they compare their communities with those of non-Muslims. They then seek refuge in religion by defining the perceived disenfranchisement, oppression, and alienation in dialectic and spiritual terms. The last stage before the emergence of violence is to define the enemy of *true* Islam.[127] The Salafist-Jihadi ideology is vital for this framing of the enemy. Bernard Haykel categorises the enemies into two groups. One is the West, perceived to pursue a secular ideological onslaught against the Islamic community. The other group of enemies are apostates or nominal Muslims perceived to have been opposed to true Islam as defined by the Salafist-Jihadists. Leaders in Muslim countries who adopt secularism and democracy fall into this category.[128] Militant Salafi declares jihad against these pro-West/secular enemies in their pursuit of a just Islamic state.

[123] Quintan Wiktorowicz, "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29, no. 3 (2006); Bernard Haykel, "On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action," in *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, ed. Roel Meijer (London: Hurst, 2009).
[124] Jason Burke, "Al Qaeda," *Foreign Policy* (2004).
[125] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Global Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular State, from Christian Militias to Al Qaeda*, vol. 16 (Univ of California Press, 2008).
[126] Daniel L Byman, "Al-Qaeda as an Adversary Do We Understand Our Enemy?," *World Politics* 56, no. 1 (2003).
[127] Ranstorp, "Terrorism in the Name of Religion."
[128] Bernard Haykel, "Isis and Al-Qaeda—What Are They Thinking? Understanding the Adversary," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 668, no. 1 (2016).

Jacob Zenn argues that Boko Haram emerged from the ideological motivation of al Qaeda through the individual agency of jihadists, who sought to start a jihad in Nigeria.[129] Similarly, Sean Gourley argues that the group's trajectory is similar to those of al Qaeda in Iraq, Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb, and Al-Shabaab. Hence, he treats it like other al Qaeda affiliates ideologically motivated by hatred for the West.[130] Zenn and Gourley believe that the global jihadi-Salafi grievance against the West and perceived oppression of the global Islamic identity motivated the group. However, Adam Higazi et al., argue that there are significant structural factors like local politics, state repression, and other domestic factors that shaped the jihadi ideology.[131] Also, the group lacked commitment to attacking Western targets and abducting foreigners.[132] Benjamin Eveslage also observed that the group's messages are intrinsically domestic-focused, although expressed in global jihadi ideology.[133]

Abdulbasit Kassim locates the emergence of Boko Haram in the domestic opportunities created by intra-Islamic rancour and ideological factionalisation. He locates its rise in the domestic clash of theological text explanation. He argues that this jihadi-Salafi group has further framed its call to violence in the Islamic tradition and legacy of the Uthman Dan Fodio's 1804-jihad in northern Nigeria.[134] He presents jihadi-Salafi and quietist-Salafi as conflicting factions in the Salafi movement in Nigeria. While mainstream Salafi groups, such as Izala and *Ahlus Sunnah* are of the latter camp, Boko Haram is of the violent jihadi-Salafi. He believes that the mainstream Salafi in Nigeria parted ways with the group because the founder became extremely radicalized. He argues that this is the first group in Nigeria to combine the ideologies of the global jihadi-Salafism with the jihadi legacy of Uthman Dan Fodio in Nigeria.[135]

However, Muhammad Umar argues that Boko Haram's emergence was less about jihadi ideology or grievances and more about mundane interests. He argues that in recent years, Nigerian religious leaders have immensely benefited materially through donations from mass

[129] Jacob Zenn, "Demystifying Al-Qaida in Nigeria: Cases from Boko Haram's Founding, Launch of Jihad and Suicide Bombings," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 11, no. 6 (2017).
[130] Sean M. Gourley, "Linkages between Boko Haram and Al Qaeda: A Potential Deadly Synergy," *Global Security Studies* 3, no. 3 (2012).
[131] Adam Higazi et al., "A Response to Jacob Zenn on Boko Haram and Al-Qa 'Ida," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12, no. 2 (2018): 203-205.
[132] Thurston, *'The Disease Is Unbelief': Boko Haram's Religious and Political Worldview*, 5-8; Thurston, *Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement*, 118.
[133] Benjamin S. Eveslage, "Clarifying Boko Haram's Transnational Intentions, Using Content Analysis of Public Statements in 2012," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 7, no. 5 (2013).
[134] Kassim, "Defining and Understanding the Religious Philosophy of Jihādī-Salafism and the Ideology of Boko Haram."
[135] Ibid., 199.

followers. Also, the more the followers of a religious leader, the more influential in the political sphere, and the higher the material reward. He argues that Yusuf's clinging to the exclusivist jihadi interpretation of Salafi theology of establishing an Islamic state was not only ideological. It also served his mundane interest, which inadvertently radicalised his followers to the point of armed rebellion against the government.[136]

The rhetoric of the Boko Haram group leadership clearly shows religious ideology because it was primarily a Salafi movement. There are also pieces of evidence that show the jihadi idea was significant in the recruitment process. However, it will be an incomplete narrative if its interaction with local politicians before it started the rebellion is not analysed. A careful analysis of this relationship would reveal the direct events at that time, which turned the group leader against the local political actors.

2.5 Patronage

The sections above identify three theories that are central to the study of the insurgent group emergence in Nigeria, these are grievance, resources, and ideology. As discussed, these explanations build on existing theories in civil war literature. Although different approaches emphasize specific factors, they tend to include each other because they mutually play roles in the emergence of insurgent groups. However, their failure to capture the role of the immediate political structure and the complementing actors before these groups evolved into violence is a significant gap. A discussion of the political networks that interwove the would-be insurgent groups and the local politicians will show the trajectory of the relationship that ignited the violence.

The civil war literature shows the salience of the political structure and finds that intermediate regimes, especially nascent democracies, are more prone to insurgent group emergence.[137] It shows that these forms of regimes are more susceptible to rebellion when they are neo-

[136] Umar, "The Popular Discourses of Salafi Radicalism and Salafi Counter-Radicalism in Nigeria: A Case Study of Boko Haram," 139-141.

[137] Edward N Muller and Erich Weede, "Cross-National Variation in Political Violence: A Rational Action Approach," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 34, no. 4 (1990); Håvard Hegre, "Toward a Democratic Civil Peace? Democracy, Political Change, and Civil War, 1816–1992," *American Political Science Review* 95, no. 1 (2001); Jay Ulfelder et al., "It's All About State Structure – New Findings on Revolutionary Origins from Global Data," *Homo Oeconomicus* 21 (2004); Jack L. Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict* (New York and London: Norton New York, 2000); Håvard Hegre, "Democracy and Armed Conflict," *Journal of Peace Research* 51, no. 2 (2014); Hegre, "Toward a Democratic Civil Peace? Democracy, Political Change, and Civil War, 1816–1992."; Robert H Bates, *When Things Fell Apart* (Cambridge University Press, 2015); Mehmet Gurses and T David Mason, "Weak States, Regime Types, and Civil War," *Civil Wars* 12, no. 1-2 (2010); Hegre, "Toward a Democratic Civil Peace? Democracy, Political Change, and Civil War, 1816–1992."

patrimonial.[138] Michael Bratton and Nicholas Van de Walle argue that "the distinctive hallmark of African regimes is neopatrimonialism."[139] These regimes allow a political process that permits the co-existence of patrimonial and legal-rational bureaucratic elements.[140] Although this political system recognises the formal office of the Chief executive, it maintains the position through the informal system of patronage. "Relationships of loyalty and dependence pervade a formal political and administrative system."[141] This political structure allows the exchange of resources for political support between the political elites (patron) and an informal group (client).[142]

Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt and Louis Roniger explain that in the full expression of a patronage-based political system, it is "a distinct mode of regulating crucial aspects of institutional order: the structuring of the flow of resources, exchange and power relations and their legitimation in society."[143] They highlight certain core analytical characteristics, including the simultaneous exchange of different types of resources between a patron and client. The relationship is non-contractual and voluntarily built on a vital element of solidarity between these unequal partners.[144] Although this patron-client relationship exists in every society, scholars had anticipated that as regimes democratise, this practice would recede. However, the reverse has been the case. The need to gain support, significantly during elections in democratising states exacerbates the patron-client relationship.[145]

Reno explains that the African democratisation process in the 1990s catalysed the rise of a unique form of insurgent groups as politicians became more dependent on armed groups to establish their authoritarian electoral regimes. In his study of insurgent groups in Africa, he conceptualised rebel groups that emerge from this democratising patronage system as parochial rebels.[146] His primary argument is that "the nature of politics in the states in which they fight

[138] Gurses and Mason, "Weak States, Regime Types, and Civil War."
[139] Michael Bratton and Nicolas Van de Walle, "Neopatrimonial Regimes and Political Transitions in Africa," *World Politics* 46, no. 4 (1994): 458.
[140] Gero Erdmann and Ulf Engel, "Neopatrimonialism Revisited: Beyond a Catch-All Concept," in *GIGA Working Papers series*, ed. GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies . (Hamburg: GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies, 2006), 17; Daniel C Bach, "Patrimonialism and Neopatrimonialism: Comparative Trajectories and Readings," *Commonwealth Comparative Politics* 49, no. 3 (2011): 277.
[141] Bratton and Van de Walle, "Neopatrimonial Regimes and Political Transitions in Africa," 458.
[142] Erdmann and Engel, "Neopatrimonialism Revisited: Beyond a Catch-All Concept," 20-21; Nicolas Van de Walle, "The Democratization of Political Clientelism in Sub-Saharan Africa" (paper presented at the American Political Science Association annual meeting, Toronto, 2009).
[143] Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt and Louis Roniger, "Patron—Client Relations as a Model of Structuring Social Exchange," *Comparative studies in Society History* 22, no. 1 (1980): 49.
[144] Ibid., 49-50.
[145] Van de Walle, "The Democratization of Political Clientelism in Sub-Saharan Africa."
[146] Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa*.

plays a key role in shaping the organization and behaviour of rebels."[147] He explains that the patronage-based nascent democracies in Africa exhibit weak bureaucracies that combine formal and informal elements. Based on the international pressure to democratise and conduct free and fair elections, the political elites co-opt the youth wing of their political parties to become personal militias. "Although these groups often organised in response to community grievances against the state, their actions often served the interests of a politician or clique."[148] By associating with the group, the political elites can portray themselves as champions of local grievances while holding the official position whereby they disburse resources to these militant groups to pursue the patron's interest.[149] Unlike ideologues, these insurgents do not fight to change the political system, but to better position themselves in the patronage hierarchy. "The youth militias and gangs disrupt and occupy the fields of leverage in which the ideologues that were prominent in anti-colonial and other rebellions would normally organise and acquire resources."[150] Hence, they crowd out ideologues.

The politicians know that in a clientelist system, voters tend to support the candidates who offer them the highest money. To minimize their expenses, they mobilize these youth groups to harass those voters and disrupt elections in the polling booths of the opposition's strongholds. The politicians would prefer to use these groups instead of state security to absolve themselves of international blame for political/electoral violence.[151] The patronage system enables them to exploit the divide between people's passion for the long-term good of the community and the desire to meet short-term interests. So even broad-based rebel groups that attempt to rise in a patronage system are crowded out of the fields of leverage as political elites shrink their recruitment space by buying off potential recruits. These impoverished recruits have the option of either meeting their immediate short-term interest or pursue an uncertain long-term collective good.[152] Reno explains that even if the groups have misgivings about patronage politics, the resources they anticipate, entice them to become clients in the network.[153]

Understanding the nature of the political context in Nigeria is salient to theorizing the emergence of insurgent groups in the country. Nigeria transitioned from a military regime to a

[147] Ibid., 161.
[148] Ibid., 207.
[149] Ibid., 207-208.
[150] The fields of leverage is the social space and resources usually available to broad-based rebels that emerged in reaction to grievances. Ibid., 32.
[151] Ibid., 222.
[152] Ibid., 207-209.
[153] Ibid., 209-212.

democracy in 1999. It is a nascent democracy with a carryover of a dominant patronage politics from the dictatorship era but now shaped by core elements of democracy. The patron-client relationship model gives us a better understanding of the pre-rebellion interactions between groups and political elites. Reno provides a comprehensive understanding of the post democratisation political environment under which rebel groups emerged in Africa. Also, he convincingly shows that this political context shaped the formation and organization of these rebel groups. His exposition fills the gap observed in the grievance and resources theories which excludes the pre-violence interactions between insurgent leaders and political elites. These groups did not start as armed challengers of the state. Initially, they were social groups that evolved into armed organizations in the interest of their patrons.

Despite his contributions to understanding the political context that shaped the pre-insurgency relationship between these actors, Reno did not show how or why these groups turned against the state. It is not enough to show the relationship between potential armed militants and politicians without capturing the rationale and process of the subsequent fissure in cooperation. Reno also argues that parochial insurgents crowd out ideological rebels from Africa. In his words:

> The politics leading to the emergence of warlord and parochial rebels overwhelms and undermines the efforts of ideologues to translate their broad ideas into the processes of recruitment and fighter discipline that they need to pursue their vision of armed rebellion. Ultimately, this development is a consequence of the strategies of control on the part of a distinctive type of authoritarian regime in sub-Saharan Africa over the past several decades.[154]

However, he categorises rebels, such as Asari Dokubo and his NDPVF group who successfully started an insurgency as ideologues. Among those he also grouped as ideologues are rebels who share "a vision of global militant jihad to liberate Muslims from the oppression of corrupt secular states and to roll back the negative global influences on their cultures."[155] This categorisation would include a group such as Boko Haram which successfully started an insurgency in northeast Nigeria. The successful emergence of these groups shows that either the rise of parochial rebels in patronage systems have not eclipsed the emergence of ideologue insurgents or there is a mismatch in Reno's categorisation. Based on these gaps, there is the need not only to identify the political environment as a significant factor in the emergence of militant groups, but it is also necessary to understand how the political process facilitates their

[154] Ibid., 15.
[155] Ibid., 14.

evolution to armed rebellion. Hence the adoption of the mechanisms provided by the Political Process theory to understand how this patronage-based political system creates the opportunity for armed groups to challenge the state that initially co-opted them. Also significant is how the group mobilizes resources and the frames that mediate these opportunities.

There are several other criticisms about the application of neo-patrimonialism in Africa, they range from conceptualization to limited analytical value, essentializing of African politics, generalization without meaningful subtypes in its application to Africa, apriori assumption of neo-patrimonial influence in Africa, and the assumption that disorder is a key condition of why Africa works for its elites.[156] Core to this research is the logic of neopatrimonialism which emphasizes elite agency at the expense of the political agency of non-elite groups.[157] Although this study accepts the seemingly rational pursuit of self-interest by a "big man" and his cronies[158] or better put in the Nigerian context as "god-father" and his boys, this thesis provides a partial solution by acknowledging a reverse side to what it describes as manipulation. I argue that while the political elite seeks to manipulate the politically relevant group in the pursuit of its interest, the group also seeks to enter the corridors of power and become a significant state influencer. This reverse manipulation which addresses the flaw in neo-patrimonial framing of African politics is evident in the two cases of this study.

Hence, the apparent rationalist tendencies of the political elites and the affective predisposition of the groups as assumed in the logic of neopatrimonialism are not solely the case. The groups also show evidence of strategy and rationality in the pursuit of interests salient to them while the interests of the elites are shaped by the context. To accommodate and emphasize the salience of structure in the behaviour of the political elites, I combined the patron-client model in Africa as espoused by William Reno[159] with the Political Process theory which captures the salience of the political context, organizational resources, and cognitive liberation in the rise of social movements as proposed by Doug McAdam.[160]

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[156] Thandika Mkandawire, "Neopatrimonialism and the Political Economy of Economic Performance in Africa: Critical Reflections," *World Pol.* 67 (2015); Lotje De Vries and Andreas Mehler, "The Limits of Instrumentalizing Disorder: Reassessing the Neopatrimonial Perspective in the Central African Republic," *African Affairs* 118, no. 471 (2019); Aaron DeGrassi, "" Neopatrimonialism" and Agricultural Development in Africa: Contributions and Limitations of a Contested Concept," *African Studies Review* (2008).
[157] Mkandawire, "Neopatrimonialism and the Political Economy of Economic Performance in Africa: Critical Reflections," 569.
[158] Ibid., 568.
[159] Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa*.
[160] McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970,* 40-59.

2.6 Political Process theory

The Political Process theory argues that social movements develop in response to an ongoing interface between the movement and the political context.[161] It presents the emergence of an insurgency as part of a non-stop "process of interaction involving at least one set of state actors and one challenger."[162] McAdam highlights three factors necessary for the rise of rebellious organizations. These include an appropriate political environment, organizational resources, and cognitive liberation.[163] He argues that a shift in the political environment creates the appropriate context for movements to emerge. He explains that any event or broad social process that alters the existing political establishment causes a shift in political opportunities. Such a shift causes increased political activism of groups, closes the gap between the political elites and these organizations, and strengthens the political position necessary for the movement. At this point, the cost of repressing such a group increase. However, this opportunity does not ensure the rise of armed groups. There is a need for resources; it is the resources available to the group that enables it to exploit the political opportunities. These resources, among others, pertain to the group's network. The group's network shapes its membership and recruitment, its established structure of solidarity incentives, communication infrastructure, and leadership. Despite the salience of the political environment and resource organization, the people and the meaning they ascribe to situations would have to mediate these factors.[164]

In summary, the Political Process theory synthesises three mechanisms necessary for insurgent groups to emerge. First is the political environment that Reno's patronage model has thoroughly studied in sub-Saharan Africa. Second is the resource mobilization that the resources theory argues would make insurgent group emergence feasible. The third is cognitive liberation which explains the salience of framing that puts ideological rhetoric and the grievance theory in perspective. For a model to sufficiently explain the rise of NDPVF and Boko Haram from significantly different regions of Nigeria, it should show a process that

[161] Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, "Dynamics of Contention," *Social Movement Studies* 2, no. 1 (2003): 99-102; Charles Tilly, Douglas McAdam, and Sidney Tarrow, "Dynamics of Contention," *Cambridge, CUP* (2001): 4; Doug McAdam et al., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1-20; McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, 40-59.

[162] McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, xv-xvii. Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency https://www.scribd.com/book/398762319/Political-Process-and-the-Development-of-Black-Insurgency-1930-1970

[163] Ibid., 40-59.

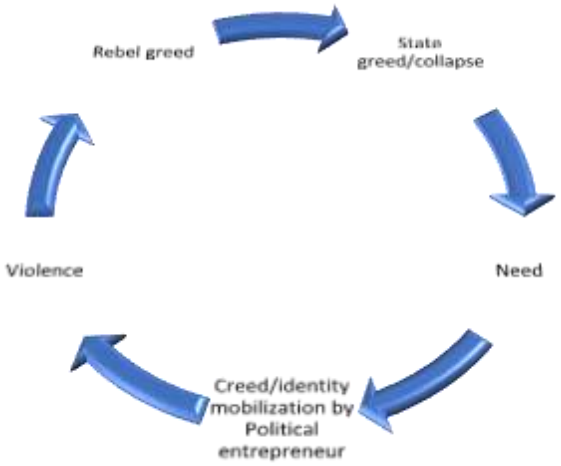
[164] Ibid.

synthesises these mechanisms. The Political Relevance model introduced in the next section does just that.

One of the core criticisms of the Political Process theory is that it is rooted in the structuralist model. Structuralists fail to sketch a model of individual motivation and action. Hence, the Political process theory omits how actors' interactions within the political opportunity shape the structure.[165] To partially address this criticism, the Political Relevance model shows the more complex realities by incorporating the interactions of actors and theorizing how it is not only shaped by the structure but also shapes the structure.

Similar to the Political Relevance model, the Need, Creed, and Greed framework is interested in how these different factors relate to each other in causing and sustaining conflict. Also, both approaches grew out of historical studies and are idealized process-oriented models used in evaluating events that often exhibit more complexities.

Fig. V



In a synopsis, Zartman's framework posits that state greed leads to a weakened or collapsed state which causes agitations by the populace over need. The resulting protests are repressed by the state. However, the needs and the resultant unrest create an opportunity for political entrepreneurs to emerge. These political entrepreneurs seize on identity factors to mobilize support within the opportunity offered by the felt need. Hence, the identity which is shaped by

[165] Ibid., x.

the society turns need to creed. This identity could be in the form of ethnicity, religion, and ideology. In the course of a protracted conflict that has left normal course towards victory or stalemate, rebel greed emerges, which in turn promotes state greed. Hence, creating a vicious circle of need-feeding creed, and creed feeding greed.[166] Studies by Uwaifiokun Idemudia have adopted Zartman's model in explaining the Niger Delta vicious circle of state greed to need, creed, rebel greed, and back to state greed encompassing state weakness.[167]

The need, creed, and greed framework in a similar way as the political process theory captures the essence of the political structure in its analysis of the state weakness and state greed, and how it generates shared needs within the population. Also, it portrays mobilization structure in creed or identity mobilization. It somewhat discusses framing within the creed and rebel greed just like the Political Process theory discusses rebel greed within the mobilization structure. However, it must be stated that although the need, creed, and greed framework is compatible with my Political Relevance model, it is not synonymous with it.

What I have done is to also recognize the shaping effect of the structure or the role of a change in the political economy on the actors' motivation and action, which is the link between state weakness and need. Social groups are formed in response to the structural changes in the context. However, the significant difference between the Political Relevance model and other approaches is its focus on the mutually beneficial relationship that emerges between local political elites and the insurgent leaders ever before the group mobilizes fighters and arms against the state. Based on this previous cordial relationship, the group can initially mobilize resources, not necessarily to challenge the state. Hence, the group did not need violence to partake in the resources that the greed hypothesis postulated is the motivation for the rebellion.

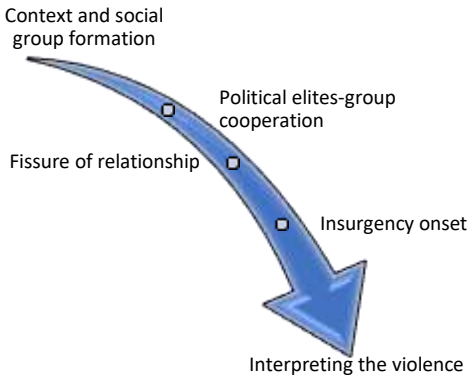
I theorize how this initial cooperation becomes antagonistic and set in motion subsequent violent engagement. I further capture the framing process that sees both parties to the conflict ascribing meanings that resonate with the masses in interpreting their violent involvement. As explained by Zartman, the group (political entrepreneur) converts need into creed or identity mobilization, which McAdam captures as the mediating role of framing. However, the Political Relevance model further emphasized the framing of the insurgents' activities out of context by

[166] I William Zartman, "Need, Creed and Greed in Intrastate Conflict," in *I William Zartman: A Pioneer in Conflict Management and Area Studies* (Springer, 2019).
[167] Uwafiokun Idemudia, "The Changing Phases of the Niger Delta Conflict: Implications for Conflict Escalation and the Return of Peace: Analysis," *Conflict, Security & Development* 9, no. 3 (2009); Uwafiokun Idemudia, "Rethinking the Role of Corporate Social Responsibility in the Nigerian Oil Conflict: The Limits of Csr," *Journal of International Development* 22, no. 7 (2010).

the political elites. They are framed as outlaws who are motivated by ideology or greed. I would argue that the Political Relevance model captures the essence of need, creed, and greed in the overarching political process that leads to insurgent group emergence.

2.7 Political Relevance model

Fig. VI



This section argues that a model which builds on the patron-client relationship and Political Process theory will capture the pre-insurgency interaction between politicians and would-be rebels which has been previously ignored by existing theory. It would also show how the political context synthesises mechanisms, such as resource mobilization and framing in the process-driven evolution of militant groups. The model stands on the same premise as the Political Process theory that insurgent group emergence is political. To understand the rise of these groups, we must first understand the shift in the political environment; this is the strength of the patronage model. Both models also theorize how the group mobilizes resources. A combination of both models shows that group resource mobilization is both within and outside the government. The Political Process theory highlights the salience of framing events, actions, and texts to achieve set targets. A combination of both models presents a framework that synthesises the extant theories. Based on this framework, the section develops an alternative paradigm to analyse how politicians and groups interact within the constraints and opportunities of a political environment that causes the group to embrace violence.

The Political Relevance model presents a four-stage process necessary for understanding the evolution of a relatively non-violent group to a violent one.[168] It argues that insurgent

[168] Wisdom Oghosa Iyekekpolo, "The Political Process of Boko Haram Insurgency Onset: A Political Relevance Model," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 12, no. 4 (2019).

organizations emerge from a fissure in an initial mutually beneficial relationship between local political elites and a politically relevant group.[169] Despite the sour alliance, the group still desires the benefits that it previously enjoyed. However, the elites would block its access by using coercive means; the group responds violently to this exclusion. While the state actors interpret its actions in terms of maintaining law and order, the group ascribes a repressive meaning requiring a violent response. Both actors explain the ensuing reciprocal violence as in the interest of the population. The four steps of the model are analysed below.

2.7.1 The mutually beneficial political interaction

As captured above, Van de Walle asserts that patronage politics exists in all states, albeit its manifestation varies enormously.[170] Reno argues that parochial violent groups have their root in the pre-rebellion pervasive patronage politics in weak states.[171] Political Process theory highlights the salience of a shift in the political environment.[172] The democratisation process causes such a shift in social relations, creating the political opportunity for militant groups to emerge in a country. Hence, although patronage politics exist in a dictatorship, democratisation reshapes the content and form of this patron-client relationship. Political elites lose part of their social autonomy as they need to associate more with the community to gain their support. This desire to secure individual or group endorsement exacerbates patronage politics.[173] The literature captures elites' attempt to fix groups' actions in their self-interest as elite manipulation.[174]

The support needed by political elites and provided by groups depends on the opportunities and constraints in a political context. If the resources of a group correspond with the needs of the political elites, the group becomes politically relevant. In democracies, politicians mobilize voters through groups that have high membership, established structure of solidarity,

[169] Politically Relevant Groups is defined here by a combination of two qualities. One is that political elites are interested in the group because of the benefit they hope to get by having the support of the group and two, the group is also seeking to become an important player in the governance process. When a group meets these conditions, it is regarded as a politically relevant group. A similar conceptualization, 'Politically Relevant Ethnic Group,' has previously been used. See Julian Wucherpfennig et al., "Politically Relevant Ethnic Groups across Space and Time: Introducing the Geoepr Dataset," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 28, no. 5 (2011).
[170] Van de Walle, "The Democratization of Political Clientelism in Sub-Saharan Africa."
[171] William Reno, "Patronage Politics and the Behavior of Armed Groups," *Civil Wars* 9, no. 4 (2007): 326.
[172] McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*.
[173] Van de Walle, "The Democratization of Political Clientelism in Sub-Saharan Africa."
[174] Brass, *The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India*, 14; Tambiah, *Leveling Crowds: Ethnonationalist Conflicts and Collective Violence in South Asia*, 89; Steven I Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India* (Cambridge University Press, 2006).

communication network, and charismatic leadership capable of delivering bloc-vote is politically relevant in a democratic context. Note that these are the same resources McAdam highlighted as vital to insurgent group emergence.[175]

New democracies have relatively weak democratic institutions and underdeveloped democratic norms and culture. Some are also neo-patrimonial with the co-existence of formal and informal institutions. In such states, politicians perceive elections as a zero-sum game, and the stakes are high. Hence, they resort to groups that can commit electoral violence.[176] In such a political environment, the capacity to perpetrate political violence becomes one of the resources that makes a group politically relevant to both incumbent and non-incumbent elites. Politicians use them to interfere with the voter registration process and for ballot-box snatching. They also threaten, assault, intimidate or assassinate supporters of opposing candidates. The state officials facilitate their protection from police and military actions; they also provide guns, logistics, and training for them.[177] Hence, scholars find democratising regimes and nascent democracies to be prone to insurgent group emergence.[178]

However, the political instrumentalisation of a group is not a one-way street; there is also a reverse side. The patronage model acknowledges that the patron-client relationship is a mutually beneficial collaboration of unequal parties. "The interaction is characterised by the simultaneous exchange of different types of resources."[179] A group with the right resources relevant to politicians tends to aspire to higher relevance in the political process through a pact with candidates seeking public office. In a study to understand armed group participation in elections, Aila M Matanock and Paul Staniland explain that

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[175] McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, 43-48.
[176] Fjelde and Höglund, "Electoral Institutions and Electoral Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa."; Adolfo et al., *Electoral Violence in Africa*.
[177] Paul Collier and Pedro C. Vicente, "Violence, Bribery, and Fraud: The Political Economy Of elections in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Public Choice* 153, no. 1-2 (2012); Kristine Höglund, "Electoral Violence in Conflict-Ridden Societies: Concepts, Causes, and Consequences," *Terrorism and political violence* 21, no. 3 (2009); Ashish Chaturvedi, "Rigging Elections with Violence," *Public Choice* 125, no. 1-2 (2005); Paul Staniland, "Militias, Ideology, and the State," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59, no. 5 (2015): 774-775.
[178] Clionadh Raleigh, "Pragmatic and Promiscuous: Explaining the Rise of Competitive Political Militias across Africa," ibid.|, Cited Pages|.60, no. 2 (2016); Clionadh Raleigh and Roudabeh Kishi, "Hired Guns: Using Pro-Government Militias for Political Competition," *Terrorism political violence* 32, no. 3 (2020); Muller and Weede, "Cross-National Variation in Political Violence: A Rational Action Approach."; Hegre, "Toward a Democratic Civil Peace? Democracy, Political Change, and Civil War, 1816–1992."; Ulfelder et al., "It's All About State Structure – New Findings on Revolutionary Origins from Global Data."; Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict*; Hegre, "Democracy and Armed Conflict."; Hegre, "Toward a Democratic Civil Peace? Democracy, Political Change, and Civil War, 1816–1992."; Bates, *When Things Fell Apart*; Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict*.
[179] Eisenstadt and Roniger, "Patron—Client Relations as a Model of Structuring Social Exchange," 49.

> Groups that expect to do relatively well in elections and see opportunities to shift policy in their direction by doing so pursue direct participation. Groups that do not expect to do well in elections, by contrast, tend to pursue indirect methods of involvement, by backing or targeting specific parties, politicians, and even voters that they do not control. They hope to change electoral outcomes to favour existing political actors, based on the closeness of their policy preferences to these actors in mainstream politics.[180]

As organizations expand, they seek to influence not only the lives of the immediate members they also seek to shape power relations. Since influencing governance in their immediate environment is a sure way to start, groups seek higher political relevance at the sub-state level. Election periods provide an appropriate opportunity to partner with political elites, especially in democratising states with a dominant patronage-based political system. This patron-client relationship shows that groups and elites' desire to take advantage of any such opportunity whenever feasible. However, the desire is primarily for political power and not only for economic power as advanced by the resource theory.[181]

The successful collaboration brings such groups entree to corridors of power where it can influence government decisions. As captured in the patronage model, this interaction with the political elites enhances the group's access to government funding or state-supported external capital.[182] In Nigeria's partial democracy, a group that collaborates with a set of political elites, especially state officials, wield so much influence and power in the society. Its members could go unpunished even if they flagrantly contravene the laws and orders of the state. It parades itself as above the law because of its ties with the powers that be, and the resources it can access. It can also secure appointments into political offices that enjoy much access to state resources, hence, receive funds to support mobilization. This access to capital enables the group to protect its interests depending on its level in the patronage network.[183] The extant theories mostly gloss over this pre-violence interaction between politicians and possible rebel organizations.[184] The theorization of insurgent group emergence requires tracing its pre-violence mutually beneficial relationship with political elites. However, the next stage shows

[180] Aila M Matanock and Paul Staniland, "How and Why Armed Groups Participate in Elections," *Perspectives on Politics* 16, no. 3 (2018): 771.
[181] James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 1 (2003). Collier and Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War."
[182] Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa*, 207.
[183] Akin Iwilade, "Networks of Violence and Becoming: Youth and the Politics of Patronage in Nigeria's Oil-Rich Delta," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 52, no. 4 (2014): 573.
[184] Staniland, "Militias, Ideology, and the State," 771.

that this interaction can hollow out state power and create the opportunity for the group to become unmanageably powerful.[185]

2.7.2 The fissure of political interaction

Although these groups collaborate with the more powerful political elites as captured in the patron-client model,[186] they are not intrinsically subservient to them.[187] The interaction with political elites provides additional resources and makes the group more formidable, which narrows the power gap.[188] The political process model acknowledges the power gap between patrons and clients or elites and non-elites, but this disparity is not rigid. The ability of a group to disrupt this power relation is a threat to the existing political order, which the politicians will resist.[189] It determines if the politically relevant group could become autonomous and even resist. Once it perceives it can alter the power relations, the group explodes out of political elites' control, resists their manipulation, and even becomes enemies of the state.[190]

One of the critical resources that the group acquires through its association with the political elites in a partial democracy has to do with funding and weapons. The feasibility hypothesis emphasizes funding and military factors as conditions that make civil war feasible.[191] Based on the patronage relationship of the would-be rebel groups with the political elites, they secure direct funding. Sometimes, state officials facilitate external sources of financial aid for them. The first access of the group to significant money for weapons comes from their association with politicians. These groups secure some of these weapons through state institutions and officials. They buy some others through illicit trade with the cover of state personnel. Groups and individuals that are involved in political violence secure some of these weapons before elections. However, politicians are unable to disarm them after the elections. The state even ignores their further arming and the acquisition of weapons by other groups that were not used for electoral violence, especially if the elites do not consider it is against their interests.

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[185] Ibid., 775.
[186] Eisenstadt and Roniger, "Patron—Client Relations as a Model of Structuring Social Exchange," 50.
[187] Staniland, "Militias, Ideology, and the State," 771; Paul Staniland, "Armed Groups and Militarized Elections," *International Studies Quarterly* 59, no. 4 (2015): 695-696.
[188] Staniland, "Armed Groups and Militarized Elections."
[189] McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, 37-38.
[190] Staniland, "Armed Groups and Militarized Elections," 695-696; Staniland, "Militias, Ideology, and the State," 773.
[191] Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler, and Dominic Rohner, "Beyond Greed and Grievance: Feasibility and Civil War," *Oxford economic papers* 61, no. 1 (2009).

Interest is vital in the consummation of a relationship between political elites and the group. However, the wishes of the patron usually supersede that of the client, and the parties are not in any contractual agreement to ensure they do not break pacts.[192] Hence, patrons can dishonour agreements and exit the relationship. Likewise, the more formidable the group and the narrower the power gap, the more likely it would pursue more self-interest. If the quest of the group contradicts that of the political elites, there is a fissure in the relationship. A fracture in the rapport is evident if a previous political appointee from the group is suddenly sacked or resigns. A new executive action blocking the previous sources of income for the group provides more evidence. There is also the start of unusual verbal assault on the state/political elite and criticisms of its activities. Even though these forms of state actions faulted by the group are not new, this level of condemnation is novel. The immediate reason that accounts for the crack in the relationship is grievance over failure to abide by the expected exchange of resources. Although the grievance theory espouses discontent as the cause of insurgent group emergence,[193] this model argues that this discontent starts with the breach of the unofficial pact reached before collaboration; it is not motivated by inequality.

2.7.3 Insurgency onset

As the relationship between a group and political elites is severed, politicians attempt to strip the group of its political relevance and all the resources it enjoys from the collaboration.[194] It becomes evident if state officials withdraw the political cover allowing security agencies to deprive the group of the preferential status initially bestowed. A similar situation is evident in Punjab, India as a set of political elites developed a relationship with a Sikh religious leader, Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. The collaboration of the Indira Gandhi's Congress party and Bhindranwale's militant group was significant in the 1978/79 election. Gandhi's Congress won the general election in January 1980. However, with the political relevance Bhindranwale's group enjoyed, it developed stronger and carried out more violence. As the group flourished, the power gap between the group and the political elites diminished.[195] "Congress soon found that the genie it had unleashed was refusing to go back in its bottle."[196] Once the Congress party could no longer manage Bhindranwale and his group, the relationship turned sour. This

[192] Eisenstadt and Roniger, "Patron—Client Relations as a Model of Structuring Social Exchange," 50.
[193] Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*.
[194] Staniland, "Militias, Ideology, and the State," 774-775.
[195] Tambiah, *Leveling Crowds: Ethnonationalist Conflicts and Collective Violence in South Asia*, 105-108; Rajshree Jetly, "The Khalistan Movement in India: The Interplay of Politics and State Power," *International Review of Modern Sociology* (2008).
[196] Jetly, "The Khalistan Movement in India: The Interplay of Politics and State Power," 64.

fissure did not stop the group from acting as though it still had the political cover.[197] The government's attempt to eliminate the group led to the military crackdown from 3rd to 6th June 1984, codenamed Operation Blue Star, caused between 500 and 5,000 deaths.[198] Retaliations by the group's supporters are evident in Indira Gandhi and Beant Singh's assassinations.[199] This evidence is consistent with the Political Process theory that the shrinking of the power gap between movements and the state strengthens the political position of the rebel organization. At this point, the cost of state repression increases.[200] Some state-centred explanations pitch their causal argument on this repression.[201] Although it is salient to rebel group emergence, Chris Wilson and Shahzad Akhtar found in their comparative study of North-West Pakistan, Thailand, and Indonesia that displacement from a state's political patronage network influences the escalation of repression into violent rebellion.[202]

To prove that it can resist government suppression, the emerging insurgent group violently retaliate against the state security action as seen in the Punjab insurgency.[203] The aggressive reaction of the group meets with the state's full coercive measures, hence the group retreated to a safe haven in its locality to reinforce an irregular war. Withdrawal of the group to favourable terrain aligns with theories that emphasize the significance of rough terrain as a temporary refuge for an insurgent group.[204] From the safety of this terrain, the insurgent group launches more retaliatory attacks against the security forces. Robert W. McColl's comparative study of China, Greece, the Philippines, Malaya, Indonesia, and Cuba highlights the essence of establishing a territorial base for the group. He explains that the terrain of the base must

[197] Tambiah, *Leveling Crowds: Ethnonationalist Conflicts and Collective Violence in South Asia*, 107.
[198] Jetly, "The Khalistan Movement in India: The Interplay of Politics and State Power."
[199] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 131-132.
[200] McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*, *1930-1970*.
[201] S. Gray and I. Adeakin, "The Evolution of Boko Haram: From Missionary Activism to Transnational Jihad and the Failure of the Nigerian Security Intelligence Agencies," *African Security* 8, no. 3 (2015): 185; Rafael Serrano and Zacharias Pieri, "By the Numbers: The Nigerian State's Efforts to Counter Boko Haram," in *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, ed. Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos (Leiden: African Studies Centre, 2014); Agbiboa, "The Ongoing Campaign of Terror in Nigeria: Boko Haram Versus the State," 10; Iro Aghedo and Oarhe Osumah, "Insurgency in Nigeria: A Comparative Study of Niger Delta and Boko Haram Uprisings," *Journal of Asian and African studies* 50, no. 2 (2015): 214; Freedom C. Onuoha, "Boko Haram and the Evolving Salafi Jihadist Threat in Nigeria," in *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, ed. Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos (Leiden: African Studies Centre, 2014), 182; Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World*.
[202] Chris Wilson and Shahzad Akhtar, "Repression, Co-Optation and Insurgency: Pakistan's Fata, Southern Thailand and Papua, Indonesia," *Third World Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (2019).
[203] Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 131-132.
[204] Fearon and Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." Collier et al., "Beyond Greed and Grievance: Feasibility and Civil War."

provide the opportunity to hide while maintaining a striking distance of security forces. Appropriate terrains include mountains, intricate waterways, swamps, and dense vegetation like jungles.[205] In the realist tradition, the security of the state is paramount. To reassert its monopoly of violence, the state will react to the strategic territorial relocation of the group by reinforcement and attack on the insurgent base. The group will also reinforce and start guerrilla warfare creating a reciprocal violence escalation as theorized in the greed theory[206] and security dilemma.[207] The new insurgent group then embark on the justification of its resort to violence and mobilize by making further calls to arms.

2.7.4 Giving the rebellion a meaning

As adopted from the Political Process theory, framing is also a critical mechanism in insurgent group evolution. "Framing is not simply an expression of pre-existing group claims, but an active, creative, constitutive process."[208] It involves "conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimates and motivates collective action."[209] Marie-Eve Desrosiers argues that framing is not only an explanatory tool, it is also an integrative tool for other theories on insurgent group emergence. She argues that framing enables the framer to align personal goals with the public in a way that justifies taking up arms. It is framing that makes an event matter.[210] For an insurgent group to emerge, there should be a frame that "taps into existing group discourses, appeal[s] to group values and identities, and convincingly refer[s] to empirically observable events."[211]

As the insurgent group emerges, there are concerted efforts by both parties in the conflict to give it a meaning that resonates with the people. The group either interprets the uprising in the light of pre-existing grievances measured in terms of deprivation and inequalities, or ideological concern needing human action on behalf of the divine. It does so with the strategic

[205] Robert W. McColl, "The Insurgent State: Territorial Bases of Revolution," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 59, no. 4 (1969): 614-621.
[206] Collier and Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 2355."
[207] Barry R. Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," *Survival* 35, no. 1 (1993).
[208] Tilly et al., "Dynamics of Contention," 99-102; McAdam et al., "Dynamics of Contention," 15-16.
[209] Doug McAdam, John D McCarthy, and Mayer N Zald, "Introduction: Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Framing Processes – toward a Synthetic, Comparative Perspective on Social Movements," in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, ed. Doug McAdam et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 6.
[210] Marie-Eve Desrosiers, "Tackling Puzzles of Identity-Based Conflict: The Promise of Framing Theory," *Civil Wars* 17, no. 2 (2015).
[211] Tanja Granzow, Andreas Hasenclever, and Jan Sändig, "Introduction: Framing Political Violence–a Micro-Approach to Civil War Studies," *Civil Wars* 17, no. 2 (2015): 114.

intent of securing a support base and safe haven.[212] Edward Aspinall observed that interpretations by ethnic political entrepreneurs in Aceh, Indonesia, was vital to violent group emergence there. He argues that there was a deliberate framing of grievances by regional elites in their attempt to counter and violently confront the elites at the centre. He submits that material structures "will trigger conflict only if an appropriate collective action frame exists in the cultural toolkit of the group in question."[213]

The Political Relevance model argues further that the insurgents are not the first group to identify and articulate these themes upon which the insurgents frame their demands. They are socially constructed historical topics that initially shaped the formation of such groups. Since the group hardly has another option, it keys into this existing social structure that both constrains and provides the opportunities for it to survive in such an environment. The groups that strategically capitalise on institutionally legitimated factors in their context to mobilize, gain an advantage over those that do not reflect the template.[214] The group frames its call to arms as the appropriate response to an already existing injustice grievance. In essence, there is a pre-existing debate on the appropriate way to seek redress over discontents against the state. The debate is broadly between negotiation-seekers and violence-seekers. The insurgents who are not the creators of the debate, buy into the violence-seeking alternative as they make their call to arms.

The local political elites also ascribe meaning to the evolving violence. While the group frames it to align with old contextual discontents, the state interprets security agencies actions in the realm of law and order. They frame the group as criminal elements; they reassure the populace of the state's capacity to maintain their security and to bring the lawless group to book. An assertion also in agreement with earlier studies that show the different extent parties to a conflict could frame it out of context and allow the principal perpetrators to go scot-free.[215] However, if the conflict spins beyond the limited control of local authorities, the central government is forced to respond with military might. Understanding the coercive response of

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[212] Jan Sändig, "Framing Protest and Insurgency: Boko Haram and Massob in Nigeria," ibid.|, Cited Pages|. 147-156; Temitope B. Oriola and Olabanji Akinola, "Ideational Dimensions of the Boko Haram Phenomenon," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 41, no. 8 (2018). For further research on social movements' framing process. See, David A. Snow et al., "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation," *American Sociological Review* (1986): 464; Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment," *Annual review of sociology* 26, no. 1 (2000): 615-618.

[213] Aspinall, "The Construction of Grievance," 951.

[214] Ibid., 952.

[215] Brass, *The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India*, 15-16.

the state is also traceable to the past repressive structure of the state security architecture, as in colonial history.[216] The state response would require a higher level of resources, both financial and military; this opens the opportunity for profiteering.[217] The introduction of the full weight of the state's coercive force, instead of dousing the tension, increases it. The security agents' high-handedness escalates the conflict. As Hafez has shown in Muslim countries[218] and supported by the Political Process theory,[219] repression, which could be by way of a brutal military crackdown, could quickly become counterproductive.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed how the relevant existing theories explain the emergence of insurgent groups in Nigeria since 1999. It sheds light on their key focus and how they fall short of explaining the emergence of Boko Haram and NDPVF. Critical to this gap is the lack of attention to pre-violence interaction between would-be insurgent groups and politicians and the fissure of this relationship. This chapter addresses this gap by developing the Political Relevance model. The new model builds on the patron-client relationship and the Political Process theory to provide a four-step process that has ensured the emergence of insurgent groups in Nigeria since 1999. It argues that these armed groups started as relatively non-violent organizations shaped by their immediate environmental condition. They subsequently entered mutually beneficial relationships with local politicians. Their evolution into becoming challengers of the state is the result of the breakdown of that cooperation. However, these actors frame their underlying self-political concerns in rhetoric that resonates with the people. The next chapter provides evidence from northern Nigeria to show that Boko Haram emerged initially as a religious group known as Yusufiyya, meaning the followers of Yusuf. It was a relatively non-violent group that exhibited traits not unique to the context.

[216] Philip Terdoo Ahire, *Imperial Policing: The Emergence and Role of the Police in Colonial Nigeria, 1860-1960* (Open University Press Milton Keynes, 1991); Etannibi EO Alemika, "Colonialism, State and Policing in Nigeria," *Crime, law social change* 20, no. 3 (1993).
[217] Mats R Berdal and David Malone, *Greed & Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000).
[218] Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World*.
[219] McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, 40-59.

3. The northern Nigeria context

3.1 Introduction

The three geo-political zones of the north-west, north-central, and north-east of Nigeria capture the areas this thesis refers to as northern Nigeria. They comprise 19 of the 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, Nigeria. The three regions were the pre-colonial locations of the Hausa States, Nupe Kingdom, and the Kanem-Bornu Empire. They operated monarchical polities which subsequently incorporated the Islamic religion. These kingdoms had developed administrative structures, armies, markets, foreign trade routes and built walls around some of their major cities before the advent of colonialism. Records of the Kanem-Bornu Empire, which encompasses the northeast region, date back to the 9th century, and its sphere of influence included central Sudan. The king of the predominantly Kanuri people accepted Islam in the late 11th century, and the empire was regarded as a centre of Islamic learning as early as the 18th century. This empire existed until the British colonization in the early 19th century. The Boko Haram insurgent group emerged from this region.

This chapter argues that Boko Haram,[220] as well as other religious groups in the area, emerged as relatively non-violent organizations from factors in the northern Nigeria environment. The assertion is a reaction to the existing theoretical assumption discussed in the previous chapter that insurgent groups start as violent challengers of the state. To support this claim, it discusses the historical, social, political, economic, and ideological conditions in northern Nigeria where the Boko Haram group originated. It shows how the opportunities and constraints of these environmental structures shaped the start of the group and its rise to become politically relevant. It further discusses how the group developed its core principles based more on historical factors in northern Nigeria than on external events. It traces the relevant existing factors in the region to include the central role of sharia in political contention, the endemic poverty, the animosity towards Western education, and the role of jihad in the purification of politics. It concludes that Boko Haram, similar to most of the other organizations in the locale, started as a relatively non-violent group that was shaped by pre-existing structural factors. Explaining its evolution into violent rebellion would be better achieved by investigating its interactions with politicians after it became politically relevant. The next section provides an

[220] Boko Haram was religious group initially referred to as Yusufiyya, meaning the "followers of Yusuf" before they evolved into an insurgent group

overview of Boko Haram before linking the pre-existing factors in the region with the core views of the group.

3.2 Boko Haram: An overview

The name *Boko Haram* is a compound name comprising both Hausa and Arabic languages. *Boko* in the Hausa language means "Western education" while *Haram* in the Arabic language means "sinful or forbidden." Haram is attached to Boko to signify that "Western education is sinful."[221] It is an alias given by non-members of a religious insurgent group that primarily originated from Borno State in the northeast geo-political zone of Nigeria in 2002. *Yusufiyya* or/and *Nigerian Taliban*, include some of its previous nomenclatures. However, it is identified as *Jamā'at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da'wah wa'l-Jihād'* (The Group of the People of Sunnah for Preaching and Struggle). The group changed its name to *Wilāyat Gharb Ifrīqīyyah* (The Islamic State's West Africa Province-ISWAP)[222] after it disassociated its relationship with al Qaeda and pledged allegiance to the so-called Islamic State (IS) in March 2015. However, it withdrew from an alliance although a faction remained with IS.[223] Apart from the splinter resulting from IS involvement, earlier splits include the *Kanama group* or *Nigerian Taliban* in 2003 and the *Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina Fi Biladis Sudan* or *Ansaru*, in 2011/12.[224] The counterinsurgency Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) report has since identified several other divisions.[225] However, this case study focuses on the emergence and evolution of the core group nurtured by Muhammad Yusuf until his death.

Boko Haram started as a relatively low-profile religious group that parted company with the mainstream Nigerian Salafi movement around 2002 in Borno State, Nigeria. It evolved into a violent rebellion in June 2009 under the leadership of Yusuf.[226] In July 2009, the police killed

[221] Ahmad Murtada, "Boko Haram in Nigeria: Its Beginnings, Principles and Activities in Nigeria," (Nigeria: Salafi Manhaj, 2013). http://download.salafimanhaj.com/pdf/SalafiManhaj_BokoHaram.pdf.
[222] Yan St-Pierre, "Re-Enforcing Radicalisation with Bad Pr? The Nigerian Army's Handling of Boko Haram," *Journal for Deradicalization*, no. 4 (2015).
[223] Sarah Almukhtar, "How Boko Haram Courted and Joined the Islamic State," *New York Times*, June 11, 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/06/11/world/africa/boko-haram-isis-propaganda-video-nigeria.html.
[224] Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Jacob Zenn, "Boko Haram's Buyer's Remorse'," *Foreign Policy*, June 20, 2016, https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/06/20/boko-harams-buyers-remorse/; Alexander Thurston, "Boko Haram/Islamic State West Africa's New History of Itself, Part 2," (2018). https://sahelblog.wordpress.com/2018/07/24/boko-haram-islamic-state-west-africas-new-history-of-itself-part-2/.
[225] Timothy Antigha, "Counter-Insurgency: The Broader Implications of Recent Execution of Boko Haram Commanders," Facebook, 2018, https://www.facebook.com/958495544209762/posts/1953903044669002/.
[226] Iyekekpolo, "Political Elites and the Rise of the Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria."; Iyekekpolo, "Boko Haram: Understanding the Context."

Yusuf while in detention; his deputy, Abubakar Shekau announced himself as the successor in 2010.[227] Under Shekau's leadership, the insurgency escalated, and the group became extremely violent. It evolved from the use of crude weapons to improvised explosive devices (IED) and suicide bombers. It has recently used female children as suicide bombers.[228]

The insurgent group has become a threat to Nigeria and countries in the Lake Chad Basin and sub-Saharan Africa. It also became of global concern especially after a series of events that include, the bombing of the United Nations building in Abuja on 26 August 2011, the abduction of 276 schoolgirls in Chibok on 14 April 2014, and the pledge of allegiance to terror groups, such as, al Qaeda and the Islamic State.[229] The US designated it a terror group in 2013. Boko Haram captured and declared a Caliphate on a territory of approximately 50,000 square kilometres in 2014, and was rated by the Global Terrorism Index as the most dangerous terrorist group in the world in 2015.[230] However, recent efforts by the Nigerian and other multi-national taskforce armies have resulted in the recapture of territories that the group initially seized.[231] At this point, it is crucial to describe the background that fostered the emergence of the Boko Haram group.

As mentioned earlier, the Boko Haram group started from Borno State and spread to several states of northern Nigeria. However, it is predominantly active in Borno, Yola, Bauchi, and Adamawa states of the northeast region. This zone is in the heart of the Lake Chad basin with a predominantly Sunni Muslim population of over 26 million people.[232] Approximately seven million people in the region are from the Kanuri ethnic group,[233] the tribe of most of its leaders.

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[227] Jacob Zenn, "Leadership Analysis of Boko Haram and Ansaru in Nigeria," *CTC Sentinel* 7, no. 2 (2014): 23-29; France 24, "The Boko Haram Terror Chief Who Came Back from the Dead," *France 24*, January 11, 2012, https://www.france24.com/en/20120111-terror-chief-boko-haram-imam-shekau-youtube-nigeria-goodluck-jonathan-al-qaeda-oil.

[228] Charlotte Alfred, "How Boko Haram Uses Female Suicide Bombers to Terrorize Nigeria," *The Huffington Post*, February 28, 2015, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/boko-haram-female-suicide-bombers_n_6763386.

[229] Thomas Joscelyn, "Boko Haram Leader Pledges Allegiance to the Islamic State," *Long War Journal, March* 8 (2015).

[230] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, *Global Terrorism Index: Measuring and Understanding the Impact of Terrorism* (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2015), http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2015.pdf.

[231] BBC News, "Boko Haram Crisis: Nigeria Begins Sambisa Ground Offensive," *British Broadcasting Corporation*, April 22, 2015, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-32416155.

[232] National Bureau of Statistics, "National Population Estimates."

[233] The World Factbook, "Africa: Nigeria," (2018). https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/geos/print_ni.html.

The people of northeast Nigeria are primarily farmers and had a GDP contribution of $22,379,000 with an absolute poverty rate of 69%[234] and 14.6% literacy rate[235] as of 2010.

3.3 The context of Boko Haram group emergence

This section describes some northeast Nigerian historic background factors that have shaped the formation of groups in the region, including Boko Haram. Although these social and material structures can explain the emergence of a group with radical religious ideas, it does not account for its evolution to armed rebellion. Boko Haram originated and shaped its canons on these pre-existing opportunities and constraints. The views it advocated about the running of the society, predates its rise and are not unfamiliar to the region. These structural factors not only shaped this group they also shaped the emergence of other groups in northern Nigeria. These conditions are not unique to the north-east where the group emerged; it is similar in the north-west and north-central zones, where the subsequent insurgency could not take up residence or put down roots. The core argument of this section is that the structural factors predating Boko Haram shaped its formation similar to most other religious groups in the region. Hence, the start of Boko Haram was not significantly different from other organizations in northern Nigeria which have not violently engaged the state.

In describing the northern Nigerian milieu, this section traces the historical development of Sharia and its role in politics, the sacred purging role of jihad, the effect of endemic poverty, and the evolution of hatred for Western education in northern Nigeria. The description of these factors cut across the pre-colonial, through the colonial, and post-colonial eras of Nigeria. Very salient to the ideology that Boko Haram professes is the argument that any form of government outside the rule of God and employment under such government is a sin. It contends that if political leaders fail to adopt the sharia legal system, it is right to declare jihad to cleanse the society of these *taghut* and earthly tyrannical governments. Also, any form of education, such as, Western education that does not conform to the teachings of Islam or the Quran is sinful.[236] Another factor the group has shown to be of importance is the eradication of widespread poverty in the region. It traces this endemic poverty to polytheism.

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[234] GDP figures for the zones were extrapolated from Canback Global Income Distribution Database, https://www.cgidd.com/; Kale, *The Nigeria Poverty Profile 2010 Report: Press Briefing by the Statistician-General of the Federation/Chief Executive Officer, National Bureau of Statistics*, 8.

[235] High level International Round Table on Literacy "Reaching the 2015 Literacy Target: Delivering on the promise" UNESCO, Paris, 6-7 September 2012 Action Plan Nigeria http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/pdf/Nigeria.pdf

[236] Kyari Mohammed, "The Message and the Methods of Boko Haram," in *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, ed. Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos (Leiden: African Studies Centre, 2014), 16.

3.3.1 The *Shariasation* of northern Nigerian politics

Contention over the role and implementation of sharia as the official law of northern Nigeria is not new. Individuals and Groups in the region have historically pursued the course of sharia in society. The Pew Research centre found in 2013 that 71% of Muslims in Nigeria support sharia as the law of the country.[237] However, the majority of Muslims in Nigeria are non-violent; in fact, 80% of Muslims in Nigeria have an unfavourable opinion of Boko Haram.[238] Sharia in northern Nigeria dates back at least to the rule of Uthman Dan Fodio of the Sokoto Caliphate in the early 19th century. However, since colonial rule in the early 20th century, sharia has lost its societal key role in northern Nigerian politics. Several attempts to re-establish its dominance over the English legal system has not yielded the desired fruit. The rise of Boko Haram, similar to some other groups, anchored its values on the implementation of sharia. The Boko Haram leader was able to build his group around the high support for sharia implementation in the region. He developed the group on the premise of returning the region to the rule of Allah as introduced in the Sokoto Caliphate under Fodio in contrast to current unrighteous constitutional secular rule. This connection he was able to establish with existing normative ideologies ensured that he was able to mobilize enough human and material resources to create a politically relevant group. The significant level of membership of this group made for a bloc vote, hence, its political relevance to the elites.

Islam was introduced in northern Nigeria from two fronts, the east by the empires of Kanem and Bornu and the west by Askia, ruler of the Songhai Empire.[239] The Kanem-Bornu Empire, which included northeast Nigeria and Chad, was a well-known caliphate in the Islamic world. It has been taking part in the annual hajj since the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. They are predominantly of the Kanuri ethnic group, the ethnicity of most Boko Haram leaders.[240] The other parts of northern Nigeria became predominantly Islamic since the Uthman Dan Fodio jihad of 1804-1812 that heralded the Sokoto caliphate.[241] With the success of the jihad, north-west Nigeria effectively became a caliphate with sharia as its legal system. The Sokoto caliphate spread with a different degree of success to the other parts of northern Nigeria.

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[237] Luis Lugo et al., *The World's Muslims: Religion, Politics and Society*, The Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life (2013), 46.
[238] Richard Wike and Jacob Poushter, *Concerns About Islamic Extremism on the Rise in the Middle East: Negative Opinions of Al Qaeda, Hamas and Hezbollah Widespread*, Washington, DC: Pew Research Center (2014), 5.
[239] Andrew Walker, *'Eat the Heart of the Infidel': The Harrowing of Nigeria and the Rise of Boko Haram* (Hurst, 2016), 10.
[240] Z. P. Pieri and J. Zenn, "The Boko Haram Paradox: Ethnicity, Religion, and Historical Memory in Pursuit of a Caliphate," *African Security* 9, no. 1 (2016): 78.
[241] Murray Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate* (London: Longmans, 1967), IXVIII-24.

Before the Jihad, Fodio had laid charges against the government of the then Hausa States of northern Nigeria that they were non-Islamic. He accused them of practices that negate Islam even though the government officials were primarily Muslims. The Gobir government prohibited and limited Fodio's preaching. There were also fears of an imminent attack on Degel; the city where Fodio lived. Owing to these challenges, Fodio migrated with many of his followers from Degel to Gudu. Alarmed by the number of people migrating with Fodio, the Gobir government attempted to stop it by attacking Gudu. Murray Last captures these as the trigger of the 1804-jihad in northern Nigeria.[242] Fodio enforced Islamic rule and sharia law in about 30 emirates of northern Nigeria. Fodio's descendants still hold most of the highest traditional and religious titles in northern Nigeria. Yusuf shared the idea that sharia should be implemented in northern Nigeria the same as it was in Fodio's era. He further claimed that he held in high esteem and shared the same belief with "legitimate" Muslim leaders like Fodio.[243]

The British colonization of Nigeria in 1900 altered the Islamic rule in northern Nigeria approximately a century after it began. Yusuf drew on grievances over this historic colonial event in his sermon as he urged his followers thus:

> Do not forget O believers, that when the British, French and the Japanese [sic] colonialists reached the Hausa State [the State of ibn Fudi] and the Borno empire under the rule of [Frederick] Lugard (may Allah's curse be upon him and those who follow him). They killed the Muslims, destroyed their houses and mosques, burnt the flag of 'There is no god except Allah'. They urinated on the Qur'an and ended the state that was established by Shaykh' Uthman Ibn Fudi.
> All these actions were carried out under the command of Britain. They attacked Muslims in Sokoto State and the nearby area until they forced its caliph Muhammad Tahir I to immigrate. He immigrated with some Muslims fleeing with their religion to Burmi. Those Jews followed him, destroyed the area and the mosque there. They killed Prince Muhammad Tahir I as well as those who were with him.[244]

Although British rule altered the Islamic rule in the region, some trappings of the caliphate era were maintained to facilitate the colonial organization of indirect rule. The trado-religious institutions along with the political institutions and the sharia legal system were still sustained,

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[242] Ibid.

[243] Bilkisu Labaran, "Bbc Hausa Service Interview with Muhammad Yusuf [Trans.: Abdulbasit Kassim]," in *The Boko Haram Reader: From Nigerian Preachers to the Islamic State*, ed. Kassim Abdulbasit and Nwankpa Michael (London: Oxford University Press, 2018), 73; Muhammad Yusuf, "Film by Muhammad Yusuf [Trans.: Abdulbasit Kassim]," ibid.|, Cited Pages|. 81.

[244] Muhammad Yusuf, "Grouping of Sermons [Trans.: Abdulbasit Kassim]," ibid.|, Cited Pages|. 174.

although they were at the mercy and disposition of the colonisers.[245] The traditional/religious rule and its sharia adjudication were now subject to the dictates of the English legal system and the British government. The British effectively allowed two legal arrangements in northern Nigeria, the English colonial and the pre-colonial trado-Islamic systems. The sharia courts independently attended to over 90% of cases if its adjudication was not opposed to English law. However, Sharia authority was limited further in 1933 through the institution of the right of appeal from the sharia court to the English court.

The northern Nigerian elites made unsuccessful attempts to reverse the relegation of the sharia legal system until the regions were empowered to control their courts in 1954. The Northern Region set up a Muslim court of appeal, which had jurisdiction over all cases. It was to checkmate the appeal from the sharia court to the English court and guarantee the independence of the sharia legal organization. These struggles to revert to the pre-colonial Sharia status signifies the belief that any rule outside the rule of Allah is sinful. Sharia has since remained a sensitive political debate in Nigeria. It was to become the ideological anchor of the Boko Haram group and a driving force in its rebellion against the Nigerian state.

On the eve of Nigerian independence, northern Nigerian political leaders agreed to a Northern Nigeria Penal Code and Criminal Procedure that reformed the sharia legal system at the instance of the minorities in the north of Nigeria, Christians, animists, other regions, the UN trusteeship council, and the British government. The penal code abolished the Muslim court of appeal, limited the jurisdiction of sharia courts to private matters, and integrated it with the English court. This agreement may have been to make way for the declaration of independence in 1960. The six decades of British rule no-doubt limited the political influence of the Islamic leaders in the region. However, there were concerted efforts on the part of the northern Nigerian elites to entrench an ethnoreligious identity, based on the dominant Hausa-Fulani ethnic group and the Islamic religion in the region at independence.[246]

Several post-colonial attempts to revert to the sharia legal system through various constitution-making processes were unsuccessful. The northern Muslims viewed this as a win for Christians over Muslims, or the Western system over Islam, or worse still, a reign of a non-Islamic system

[245] Aminu Alhaji Bala, "The Impact of Colonialism in Uprooting Islamic Polity and Introducing Secularism in Northern Nigeria" (paper presented at the E-Proceeding of the 2nd International Conference on Arabic Studies and Islamic Civilization, iCASiC2015, 2015), 159-161.
[246] Iyekekpolo, "Political Elites and the Rise of the Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria."

over the way of Allah. Yusuf spoke against this British judicial system bequeathed to Nigeria, thereby leveraging on this historic grievance in the northern region to form his group. He said:

> We understood that [loyalty to] the constitution by which they judge the people in this land [Nigeria] is clear unbelief. The judge who rules with constitution cannot be categorized under *kufr duna kufr;* he is a clear unbeliever. The ruler who rules by means of a constitution is an unbeliever.[247]

Despite the dissatisfaction expressed by northern Nigerian elites, the status quo was maintained until 1999 at the time Nigeria transitioned from military rule to democracy. Alexander Thurston emphasizes the significance of the 1999 democratization process in Boko Haram's rise. He explains that the nascent democracy provided a favourable public space for political debates and one of the passionate debates was about the compatibility of Islam and democracy, which Yusuf capitalized on.[248] Politicians used various tools in the democratizing state to ensure they secure power in the new political arrangement. A contestant for the governorship of the northern Nigerian state of Zamfara, Ahmed Sani Yerima, campaigned based on sharia implementation in the state. As deliberated at the beginning of this section, the Pew figures show the passion the majority of Muslims in Nigeria share for the implementation of the sharia legal dominance. However, whether it was a passionate issue for Yerima or not, it was instrumental to the achievement of his governorship ambition in Zamfara State.

Once Yerima became governor, he enacted the sharia legal system in January 2000, effectively reclaiming the Islamic criminal law repealed by the Northern Nigeria Penal Code and Criminal Procedure. The Zamfara State House of Assembly passed laws that aligned with the newfound Islamic procedure. Sharia courts in the state regained importance in the polity and passed judgments perceived by the English system as arbitrary. However, Yerima became a popular figure in sharia advocacy and an example of the right conduct of governance in northern Nigeria to a certain extent. The likes of Yusuf soon became forerunners in the advocacy for the implementation of sharia in Borno State and other parts of northern Nigeria. He argued that

> those who formulate evil laws in their parliaments have made themselves partners to Allah, whether or not they feel it, whether or not they agree to this or disagree, whether or not they meant it. Those who follow the legislative [sic] system and agree to take their cases to these courts are in agreement with *taghut* and are idolaters. Parliamentarians and members of assemblies have combined between [sic] them making themselves gods and ascribing partners to Allah. This is because their mace is their object of worship in various ways

[247] Yusuf, "History of the Muslims (Trans.: Abdulbasit Kassim)," 96.
[248] Thurston, *'The Disease Is Unbelief': Boko Haram's Religious and Political Worldview*, 5-8; Thurston, *Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement*, 118.

> such as bowing to it, subjecting themselves to it, loving it and using it as a symbol of shirk (apostasy), as they do not pass any bill or make decisions without it. [Without the mace] such decisions are unacceptable and have [sic] no legal backing. Our call refuses employment under the government which does not rule by what Allah has revealed such as the French law, the American law, the British law or any other constitution or system that goes against the teachings of Islam and negates the Qur'an and Sunnah.[249]

With the emotion the sharia implementation had revived and also in pursuit of elites' interest to hold on to power, eleven other states in northern Nigeria, including Borno, also adopted sharia. At least, theoretically restoring the application of Islamic law to Muslims in a way that the region has not had for about a century.[250] Although the adoption of this sharia legal system was not consistent among the states, it marked an epoch in the struggle to return northern Nigeria to the perceived sharia glory days of the Fodio era. Johannes Harnischfeger argues that the politicization of sharia adoption and its consequent failure to improve the lives of the people led to the rise of Boko Haram.[251]

Apart from the fact that northern Nigeria is predominantly Islam, it is of note that Yusuf's involvement with some other organizations that championed sharia also shaped his implementation advocacy. He had previously been an activist within a protest movement called Jama' at Tajdid al-Islam (JTI), and he was its Borno State Amir in 1994. Also, the Borno State government appointed him into its sharia implementation committee in 2001. In 2002 he became the state representative on the Sheikh Ibrahim Datti Ahmed's Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria.[252] These roles had made him well known in both the public and religious spheres in Borno State. However, in Yusuf's view, the enactment significantly fell short of the full implementation of the sharia he canvassed. Boko Haram rejected the process, method, and depth of its application. It fell short of the expectations of not only Yusuf and his Boko Haram group, but also, others who clamoured for it. They ridiculed it and requested a better

[249] Mohammed, "The Message and the Methods of Boko Haram," 16.

[250] Iyekekpolo, "Political Elites and the Rise of the Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria."; Philip Ostien and Albert Dekker, "Sharia and National Law in Nigeria," in *Sharia Incorporated: A Comparative Overview of the Legal Systems of Twelve Muslim Countries in Past and Present*, ed. Jan Michael Otto (The Netherlands: Leiden University Press, 2010).

[251] Johannes Harnischfeger, "Boko Haram and Its Muslim Critics: Observations from Yobe State," in *Boko Haram: Islamism, Politics, Security and the State in Nigeria*, ed. Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos (Leiden: African Studies Centre., 2014), 33-37.

[252] Andrea Brigaglia, "The Volatility of Salafi Political Theology, the War on Terror and the Genesis of Boko Haram," *Diritto & Questioni Pubbliche* 15, no. 2 (2015): 180; Thurston, *Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement*, 118; Jacob Zenn, "Nigerian Al-Qaedaism," *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* 16 (2014): 99-101.

application.[253] Yusuf argued, "that the judges in the sharia courts do not rule according to the sharia rather they rule on the basis of the penal code."[254]

Andrea Brigaglia notes two points of rejection. One, the Islamist utopia that sharia implementation would create a perfect, united, secure, and corruption-free Islamic society. Two, the Salafi utopia that sharia reform would empower the Salafi movement to enforce its creed. Even in its implementation in these states, the government side-lined the Salafi movement for the Sufi order.[255] The message of Islamic rule and the attendant sharia legal system linked with the Uthman Dan Fodio-Jihad was a connecting factor between Yusuf and a large segment of the northern Nigerian population. They regarded the endemic poverty to be the consequence of deviation from the precepts as contained in the Holy Quran and the Hadith. Hence, the need to return to sharia law as was the case in the Sokoto Caliphate. Yusuf became a core proponent of these values, especially for those who viewed the application of sharia as a path out of the current precarious condition.

This sharia message gained Boko Haram a substantial following. A large membership is a salient resource to politicians for election; hence, the group became politically relevant. Note that the rhetoric of Islamic rule and sharia implementation is neither a new phenomenon nor introduced by the Boko Haram group. Northern Nigeria had a pre-existing Islamic structure that had shaped the ideas and ascribed meanings upon which the initially non-violent Boko Haram emerged. Other non-rebellious religious groups also emerged in this societal exigency to reassert the previous Islamic society constrained by colonial and post-colonial governments. Apart from the political role of sharia, another factor that shaped the formation of Boko Haram and other groups is the historic endemic poverty in northern Nigeria.

3.3.2 Understanding the impoverished backdrop of Boko Haram's emergence

There is a high rate of poverty in northern Nigeria. The available figures and history show us that it is not new. The World Bank reports that it has an 87% poverty rate.[256] Although the level of impoverishment in the north is an old phenomenon, the percentage has consistently increased for

[253] Mohammed, "The Message and the Methods of Boko Haram," 22.
[254] Isa Ali Ibrahim Pantami and Muhammad Yusuf, "Debate on the Status of Western Education and Working for the Nigerian Government between Mallam Isa Ali Ibrahim Pantami and Mallam Muhammad Yusuf Maiduguri. (Trans.: Abdulbasit Kassim)," in *The Boko Haram Reader: From Nigerian Preachers to the Islamic State*, ed. Abdulbasit Kassim and Michael Nwankpa (London: Oxford University Press, 2018), 23.
[255] Brigaglia, "The Volatility of Salafi Political Theology, the War on Terror and the Genesis of Boko Haram," 182-183.
[256] John Alechenu, "87% Nigeria's Poverty Rate in North – World Bank."

decades.[257] Some groups emerge in the region with an underlying goal of alleviating the poverty of their members or community. Although religious organizations may be highly spiritually inclined, lots of them embrace this goal at diverse levels. Boko Haram, the same as many others, sought to attend to the spiritual and material needs of its followers. Yusuf's social welfare program attracted lots of these people who joined the group and formed the core of his membership. This section argues that the long history of poverty in the region partly shaped the formation of organizations similar to Boko Haram. It initially emerged as a relatively peaceful group, the same as most of the others, in reaction to challenges in its context. The need to meet basic needs attracted lots of people to the group. As discussed earlier, bloc-vote and endorsement by a religious leader with a significant following is very important to politicians. A brief background tracing the socio-economic condition in Nigeria's north through the pre-colonial religious and economic system that was altered by colonial rule and mismanaged in the post-colonial era would suffice.

The pre-colonial northern Nigeria economy was predominantly agrarian, developed around household production and with inbuilt poverty safety-nets. Michael Watt shows that due to the instability in the climatic environment in the area, the pre-colonial society designed a network of horizontal and social relationships to mitigate economic shocks.[258] These social relations of production at least guaranteed a minimal subsistence, what has been called a subsistence ethic.[259] Three categories of subsistence ethic suffice. First was the household risk aversion principle, where each household adapted farming, marketing, and consumption strategies that would guarantee the maximum utility of their seedlings and produce. Communities developed farming practices and consumption habits to manage the perennial economic shocks at the household level. It acted as the first buffer against any failed cropping season, occasioned by adverse weather conditions. If the economic challenges exceeded the management level of the household, it calls to duty the second safety level. This safety net was the norm of reciprocity that ensured the obligation to redistribute the accumulated produce. As much as this was an economic management technique, it was also a religious practice that encouraged giving as part of service to God and humanity. The third safety net was an institution at the village level that guaranteed a moral economy of redistributing accumulated grains hitherto stored through taxation.[260] Islamic injunctions

[257] Kale, *The Nigeria Poverty Profile 2010 Report: Press Briefing by the Statistician-General of the Federation/Chief Executive Officer, National Bureau of Statistics*, 8. For 2020 figures showing the consistent poverty rise in northern Nigeria, see https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/elibrary?queries[search]=poverty

[258] Michael Watts, "Hazards and Crises: A Political Economy of Drought and Famine in Northern Nigeria," (Praxis (e) Press, 2008), 27-28.

[259] James C. Scott, "The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Subsistence and Rebellion in Southeast Asia," *Yale UP (New Haven)* (1976).

[260] Watts, "Hazards and Crises: A Political Economy of Drought and Famine in Northern Nigeria," 28-29.

served as the basis upon which the people sustained the tax of excess produce for subsequent redistribution if the need arose.

The advent of colonial rule scuttled this trado-religious zakat economy. It unceremoniously integrated it into the global capitalist system of production that strived through fixed taxation aimed at diverting surplus, which had hitherto been redistributed, to the imperial coffers.[261] Unlike the zakat system, the fixed taxation of the colonialists did not acknowledge the failed cropping season or the low yields. Also, the purpose of its tax was not for redistribution to the needy in the advent of economic shock. The colonial erosion of the traditional safety-nets increased the vulnerability of the northern Nigerian population to poverty, especially the rural dwellers. The loss of the usual safety-nets has partly increased the rural-urban migration in the north of Nigeria. The social economy of the traditional Islamic boarding students called *almajiri* took a hard hit from the loss of these safety nets. Paul M. Lubeck reports that the almajiri system had become an avenue for the substantial seasonal migration from the rural to urban settlements.[262] These migrations which ordinarily were to seek Quranic education soon became a form of seasonal economic migration in times of drought or dry season. With the erosion of the pre-colonial traditional economic buffers, a change in climatic conditions causes an increase in the movement for economic survival.

The people in northern Nigeria became even more vulnerable with the 1970s post-colonial petroleum boom. The economic sustenance in the almajiri migration that had become the new buffer began to disappear with the oil boom. The oil boom caused the marginalization of the agricultural sector and a shift in the patterns of consumption in the cities that resulted in less need for almajiri labour.[263] With the boom, "new capital-intensive innovations such as modern cement rather than labour-intensive mud-construction undermined the almajiri's traditional income activities."[264] It resulted in the loss and decline of [the] income of these migrating students.[265] The plundering of the oil resources,[266] the downward trend in Nigeria's economic fortunes from the 1980s, and the structural adjustment

[261] Ibid., 30-31.
[262] Paul M. Lubeck, "Islamic Protest under Semi-Industrial Capitalism:'Yan Tatsine Explained," *Africa* 55, no. 4 (1985).
[263] Iyekekpolo, "Boko Haram: Understanding the Context."
[264] Hannah Hoechner, "Search for Knowledge and Recognition: Traditional Qur'anic Students in Kano, Nigeria" (MPhil University of Oxford, 2013), 8 & 35, https://ifra-nigeria.org/publications/ifra-books-collection/african-dynamics/47-searching-for-knowledge-and-recognition-traditional-qur-anic-students-almajirai-in-kano-by-hannah-hoechner.
[265] Ibid.
[266] Aghedo and Osumah, "Insurgency in Nigeria: A Comparative Study of Niger Delta and Boko Haram Uprisings," 210.

programme intensified the poverty in northern Nigeria.[267] These partly explain the urban destitution in northern Nigeria that is exemplified by the almajiri phenomenon.[268] These children who are not attending the Western-styled schools numbered approximately 9.5 million at about the time the insurgency emerged.[269] The next section will discuss another vital factor, which is the animosity towards Western education, that explains the rise in the almajiri. The enormous number of migrating traditional Islamic school children created a pool of deprived and vulnerable youth.

The start of Boko Haram attracted many of the impoverished people in the region. They perceived that the formation of the group was to address their primary need. This perception was not far-fetched as Yusuf instituted a microfinance programme for his members to start small businesses. He also organised taxis for members to make a living while also making returns to the group. Andrew Walker observed that the group grew "to the point where it had many 'state-like functions. It provided welfare handouts, job training, jobs in mini-industries, resources for the rest of the community" and much more.[270] Yusuf was also able to connect with the people easily because he re-enacted the communal living of the pre-colonial era. The community was looking out for the economic well-being of its members guided by the tenets of the Islamic religion. Financial hardship drove some who might otherwise have remained destitute to the group. As the popularity of the group soared, so did the loyalty of the followers to Yusuf. The significant rise in Boko Haram membership was essential to politicians who sought a support base, as a result, it became a politically relevant group.

This section argued that alleviating the poverty of its members or at least being seen to do that more likely shaped Boko Haram formation than the violent intent of the group. Unlike extant theories may assume about insurgent groups, this one did not start as a violent group. The need to respond to the socio-economic condition of the environment shaped its formation similar to several other non-violent groups. The discussion of the economic environment captures the way colonial rule destroyed the pre-existing socio-economic safety-nets that were instituted partly through the religious practices in northern Nigeria. The volatile traditional economy was abruptly integrated into the global economy, exposing the local population to economic hardship. The immediate post-colonial era did not fare any better. It plundered away the

[267] Harnischfeger, "Boko Haram and Its Muslim Critics: Observations from Yobe State," 36.
[268] Mohammed, "The Message and the Methods of Boko Haram," 30-31.
[269] Onuoha, "Boko Haram and the Evolving Salafi Jihadist Threat in Nigeria," 162.
[270] Andrew Walker, *What Is Boko Haram?*, vol. 17 (US Institute of Peace, 2012), 9.

unprecedented economic boom even as the shifts in consumption devalued the skills of rural-urban migrants. Hence, the rising level of destitution and out-of-Western styled school children/youths who are often classified as almajiri and comprised a significant initial membership of the group. The crash of the traditional economic structure no doubt shaped the formation of this organization as it initially sought to ameliorate the poverty of its members. The level of poverty in the environment created the opportunity for Boko Haram and other groups to rise and for its membership to soar, making it politically relevant for a bloc-vote. Apart from the poverty many suffered from, the hatred for Western education played a role in shaping the formation and membership of the group.

3.3.3 Tracing the background of the hatred for Western education

One of Boko Haram's core arguments is that any form of Western education that does not conform to the Quran is sinful. This section traces the root of this hatred towards this education. Non-members nicknamed the group "Boko Haram" (Western education is sinful), to reflect this core belief. However, this belief is neither new to northern Nigeria nor introduced by Boko Haram. The core argument of this section is that the historic hatred for Western education is part of the social structure in the northern Nigerian context that created the opportunities and constraints in the formation of Boko Haram. With Yusuf's association with the idea that European education was sinful, he mobilized many members who could relate to this idea and it became relevant to politicians. How come they could easily relate to this idea? This section briefly probes the educational background of the north of Nigeria to understand the root of this animosity towards this form of study. It argues that the hatred for Western education was a shared value that predates the formation of the group. Maintaining the idea created the opportunity for the group formation, and it was further constrained to the idea because the majority of the membership share this value.

The pre-colonial traditional Islamic education system had primary and post-primary levels. The primary level is Makarantar allo (Quranic school), which focuses on Arabic literacy and Quran memorisation. The post-primary is Makarantar ilimi (Knowledge school), which focuses on higher Islamic studies and law. The roles of the ulama and almajiri are vital to understanding the development of the anti-Western education ideology in northern Nigeria. Roman Loimeier observed that the Uthman Dan Fodio jihad established the ulama; these are Islamic scholars or teachers who are often called *mallams*. These scholars must be sound in Islamic law and theology. They legitimised their elite position through theological arguments which became an entry point and a symbol of the political class in pre-colonial

northern Nigeria.[271] Their education made them suitable as teachers, Imams, the prime-minister, legal advisers, sharia court judges, and other elite jobs.[272] The ulama class was very prestigious in those days owing to their scarcity and due to the monopoly of literacy. The demand for Islamic education was so high in this era that students had to migrate from home to live and study with renowned teachers. Note that this traditional Islamic 'boarding' schooling system still exists to this day in northern Nigeria. As earlier mentioned, this is termed almajiri.[273]

In the same way colonial rule altered the existing socio-economic system in the north of Nigeria, it devalued the traditional Islamic educational system. The British initially employed the ulama for administrative purposes including the Arabic interpretation. However, the introduction of Western education between 1910 and 1920 and the adoption of English and Hausa as the official writing language, devalued the skills and prestige of ulama and almajiri.[274] The animosity toward the new educational system that deprived the traditionally educated people developed. The British feared that the introduction of Western education would spark Islamic opposition.[275] So, they collaborated with the hereditary Muslim establishment and the traditional system of Islamic education to establish the Shahuci Judicial School in 1928 and the Northern Province Law School (NPLS) in the early 1930s. These schools modelled the Western school system.

The NPLS, subsequently renamed the School for Arabic Studies (SAS) and it was reorganized into two streams. One stream used Arabic as the means of instruction leading to the award of the Higher Islamic Studies Certificate. The other stream used English as the means of education, leading to the award of Teachers' Grade II. Graduates of the SAS were among the first northern Nigerian Muslim University graduates in the 1950s. They were the first set of elites from northern Nigerians that rose to political positions at independence. Hence, they became the new class of elites displacing the ulama class and relegating the almajiri.[276] Hereafter, the hatred towards Western education extended to the post-colonial era. A 1960s song that almajiri children used in mocking those who sought a European styled education captured the hostility towards a Western-style education. The Hausa song went thus: "Yan makarantan Boko-ko, Ba karatu, ba sallah Sai yawan zagin mallam. Translated from Hausa, it means Children of

[271] R. Loimeier, "Boko Haram: The Development of a Militant Religious Movement in Nigeria," *Africa Spectrum* 47, no. 2-3 (2012): 139.
[272] Muhammad S. Umar, "Education and Islamic Trends in Northern Nigeria: 1970s-1990s," *Africa Today* (2001): 127-129.
[273] Hoechner, "Search for Knowledge and Recognition: Traditional Qur'anic Students in Kano, Nigeria," 33-34.
[274] Ibid., 130.
[275] Umar, "Education and Islamic Trends in Northern Nigeria: 1970s-1990s," 139.
[276] Ibid., 135; Alexander Thurston, "Islamic Modernism and Colonial Education in Northern Nigeria: Na'ibi Sulaiman Wali (1927–2013)," *Religion & Education* 44, no. 1 (2017): 109.

Western education schools (Makarantan Boko), no learning, no worship, but always insulting the teacher."[277] The song questioned the educational, spiritual, and moral value of Western education in a society with a rich history of respect to Islamic education. Yusuf's rhetoric significantly aligned with this animosity toward this form of study. He supported his message of rejection with the argument that this form of education incorporated learning that was not Islamic. He so stressed this point that non-members of the group called it Boko Haram, meaning Western education is sinful. In his words:

> Western education is the body of knowledge that came to us through European colonialists and includes medicine, technology, geography, physics, and so on. And of course, the English language. They can all be used if they do not clash with the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). We can teach these subjects to our children in our schools, so long as they do not contradict Islamic teachings. If they do, then we should discard them.
>
> I have a book that discusses the knowledge of geography, geology, and sociology. These branches of knowledge are not knowledge but full of unbelief. Even those studying it are aware if they are fair to Allah, except if they have not studied Islam. If you have read geography, you will know that in geography there is a danger. If you have studied Islam, you will know, whoever you are, that in sociology there is a danger.
>
> We are ready to debate anyone on this creed. Western education is destructive. We did not say knowledge is bad but that the unbelief inside it is more than its usefulness. I have English books in my possession, which I read regularly. I did not say English amounts to unbelief, but the unbelief contained therein and the polytheism inside. In the process of becoming educated, you become a Mushrik [idolater]. This is our only fear.
>
> Destruction is destruction, whomever it comes from. Because it is the white man that brought it, does it amount to civilisation? Yes, our own is traditional, as you call it, but yours is 'Shirkasiation' (idolatry or polytheism).[278]

The indifference towards Western-style education continued from colonial times to the post-colonial period. The period further demeaned the relevance of the traditional northern Nigeria Islamic education, especially with the rise of the Salafists. The 1950/60s witnessed the rise of Islamic reformers, such as Ahmadu Bello, the Premier of the former Northern Nigeria Region, and Aminu Kano, an influential opposition politician. In 1977, another reformer, Abubakar Gumi, inspired the formation of the Jama'at Izalat al-Bid' a Wa Iqamat as Sunna (Society of Removal of Innovation and Reestablishment of the Sunna). The organization is also called JIBWIS or Izala for short.[279] This group further

[277] Walker, *'Eat the Heart of the Infidel': The Harrowing of Nigeria and the Rise of Boko Haram*, 67.
[278] Mohammed, "The Message and the Methods of Boko Haram," 17-18.
[279] Loimeier, "Boko Haram: The Development of a Militant Religious Movement in Nigeria," 139.

challenged the predominance of the traditional Islamic Sufi orders of Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya in northern Nigeria. Although these reforms advocacies were not identified as Salafism, they exhibited all the trappings of the Salafi ideology. The reformers developed programmes that sought to Islamize the Western system of education in northern Nigeria.

Izala soon became the most influential of the reformers who were against the Sufi order. The group sponsored students to study abroad at the Islamic University of Medina in Saudi Arabia and the University of Khartoum in Sudan. It quickly spread partly because of the returnee Medina/Khartoum graduates and through the rapid building of the Izala schools (Islamiyya schools) modelled after SAS around northern Nigeria. It was "a full-fledged educational model that both borrows from and competes" with the traditional Islamic model of education in the north of Nigeria.[280] These developments further devalued the traditional Islamic schools, as the ulama further lost its elite status to the returnee graduates. It also pushed the almajiri who had suffered to a greater degree by the economic maladministration and were pushed to the edge of the northern Nigerian society.

However, the bitterness towards Western education soon expanded beyond the followers of traditional Islamic education. As students from the Western-styled Izala schools began to graduate, they soon faced a new reality. They found that their modern Islamic education did not guarantee they could get jobs as it did not provide enough career options. This unemployment was also the case for the returnee graduates as even the Izala organization could not provide jobs for them since the older members were still actively working. Some returnees had to design new career paths by starting their mosques, schools, and Islamic NGOs.[281] Just as the almajiri had animosity towards Western education, some Izala members also began to have reservations about their educational system that was partly Western-styled.

Izala soon split into factions, while one side regarded Sufis as non-Muslims, those on the other side regarded them as Muslims. Although the returnee Medina graduates had decided to remain neutral as contained in their "letter of advice" to the two sides, key returnees mostly sided with the moderate faction.[282] Sheikh Ja'afar Mahmud Adam, one of these Medina alumni, became a

[280] Alexander Thurston, *Salafism in Nigeria: Islam, Preaching, and Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 119-123.
[281] Loimeier, "Boko Haram: The Development of a Militant Religious Movement in Nigeria," 145.
[282] Thurston, *Salafism in Nigeria: Islam, Preaching, and Politics*, 106-109.

prominent sheikh with many followers.[283] One of those he mentored was Yusuf, who although not a Medina alumnus, became an Islamic cleric who commanded lots of followers. His followers were predominantly almajiri, an educational system of which Yusuf was also a product of and remained his primary constituency.[284] Despite his close ties with the Izala, he most likely still shared in the animosity towards Western education that had infiltrated the traditional Islamic educational system and stunted the progress of those without it. A disposition that was now shared also by some Izala followers and resonated with a high percentage of those who became Boko Haram; it was a critical mobilising factor. Yusuf was constrained to maintain his anti-Western education posture as deriding it would demobilize his group. That partly explains why he "usually agreed with Sheikh Ja'afar on the shortcomings and baselessness of his position in private disputations but reverted to his original position as soon as he conferred with his followers."[285]

This section has briefly captured the background conditions that shaped northern Nigeria animosity for Western education; a social structure that partly explains the formation of Boko Haram. Even though it became a cardinal ideological position of the Boko Haram group, it was not exclusive to them. Boko Haram emerged from this anti-Western structure as a relatively peaceful group like many other groups. The group did not engage in the destruction of educational facilities or they did not adopt and kill schoolchildren until much later. The perception of Western education as evil dates to the colonial alteration of the existing Islamic education in northern Nigeria. The problematic colonial Westernisation of the traditional Islamic education in the region further compounded the animosity. The post-colonial backlash against this style of education under the auspices of the Izala movement also caused more detestation. These issues devalued Islamic education and cast its traditional students as out-of-school, uneducated, and relegated to destitution. Yusuf's followers were primarily of this stock, and his ideology resonated with those who have been devalued by the introduction of the new formal education. The rhetoric casting it as sin had a uniting and mobilizing effect for the group. Hence, his endorsement or criticism of a politician was significant as he enjoyed a considerable loyal following that could influence the result of an election. Another core hold

[283] Alexander Thurston, "Abubakar Gumi's Al-Aqīda Al-Ṣaḥīḥa Bi-Muwāfaqat Al-Sharī'A: Global Salafi Sm and Locally Oriented Polemics in a Northern Nigerian Text," *Islamic Africa* 2, no. 2 (2011); Andrea Brigaglia, "A Contribution to the History of the Wahhabi Da'wa in West Africa: The Career and the Murder of Shaykh Ja'far Mahmoud Adam (Daura, Ca. 1961/1962–Kano 2007) 1," ibid.|, Cited Pages|.3, no. 1 (2012); Loimeier, "Boko Haram: The Development of a Militant Religious Movement in Nigeria," 147.
[284] Andrea Brigaglia, ""Slicing Off the Tumour": The History of Global Jihad in Nigeria, as Narrated by the Islamic State," *The CCI Occasional Papers*, no. 1 (2018): 4.
[285] Mohammed, "The Message and the Methods of Boko Haram," 14.

that Yusuf had on his followers had to do with his messages on jihad, which he sufficiently aligned with the Quran, and this made his organization similar to the people's perception of Fodio's movement.

3.3.4 The sacred purging role of jihad in northern Nigeria

Another principle closely related to Sharia that shaped the formation of the Boko Haram group is jihad. Although it became more significant in the evolution of the group into an insurgent one, Yusuf was able to harness it as a useful tool to legitimize the group's existence. He drew from the Quran and Hadith to justify the essence of jihad, which is to cleanse the political leadership of infidels. He admonished his followers on the core, reward, and the need to respond to a call to jihad affirmatively. Yusuf's jihad rhetoric resonated and mobilized followers for his group because jihad is not new to northern Nigeria. His ability to interpret the essence of jihad to his group in a way that links the holy book, historic jihads and the present instability of the polity endeared him to his followers. Politicians are interested in followers to shore up their political base, hence, the political relevance of the group. The primary argument in this section is that Yusuf's reference to jihad, which the people could connect with Islam and their history, shaped the formation of his group. He only built on the existing contextual religious structure to form his group. This section traces the historical background of jihad in northern Nigeria. It is a region that has a long history of Islamic revivalism that can be traced to the Uthman Dan Fodio jihad.[286]

In 1804, Fodio mobilized his followers to overthrow the existing governments of the Hausa States to create a "pure" Islamic state. After negotiating for the religious rights of Muslims and the autonomy of Degel from the Gobir kings, a clash between his men and those of King Yunfa broke the fragile peace between Fodio and the king. Fodio embarked on Hijrah (migration) from Degel to Gudu. It was an exodus that culminated in Fodio's declaration of jihad to counter the political leadership in northern Nigeria. He rebelled against the authorities and ordered their overthrow, arguing that they were not true Muslims and that they have not accepted that there is no God but Allah.[287] His bid to do the same in the Bornu Empire, which is an ancient Islamic state and the origin of Boko Haram was not successful.[288] Fodio's failure to expand the jihad to the northeast left northern Nigeria with predominantly two vast empires since the colonisation of the region started a century later. Even though this Fodio jihad is one

[286] Abdulbasit Kassim and Michael Nwankpa, *The Boko Haram Reader: From Nigerian Preachers to the Islamic State* (London: Oxford University Press, 2018).
[287] Walker, *'Eat the Heart of the Infidel': The Harrowing of Nigeria and the Rise of Boko Haram*, 13-21.
[288] Pieri and Zenn, "The Boko Haram Paradox: Ethnicity, Religion, and Historical Memory in Pursuit of a Caliphate," 83; Walker, *'Eat the Heart of the Infidel': The Harrowing of Nigeria and the Rise of Boko Haram*, 22-25.

strong legitimising factor for a group that claims to be revolutionary in northern Nigeria, there were other conflicts that we also tagged jihad in the region.

In the 1820s, the Sheikh Muhammad al-Amin al-Kanemi led an expedition from the independent Bornu Empire in northeast Nigeria to reconquer parts of the Sokoto Caliphate. Murray Last refers to this as a second jihad that is different from that of Fodio.[289] The charges brought against Fodio and his fighter were like those that initially legitimised Fodio's jihad. However, al-Kanemi's soldiers retreated without achieving their goals. Several other rebel groups emerged in pre-colonial and colonial northern Nigeria. They either claimed jihad against the failure of leaders to live up to expectations or against colonial non-Islamic rule.[290] One similarity with all these insurgents in pre-colonial and colonial northern Nigeria was that they often interpreted their revolt as jihad in line with Islamic practices. Hence, the people of the region can connect with the rhetoric legitimising violent jihad. These rationales for rebellion, which are approximately two centuries old, are like those Yusuf elucidated. In his words:

> What we are facing now is a new catastrophe, like the one Allah told us. Now they come up with a new system in the Borno, Maiduguri area. The ruler of that area, who is an infidel, unjust and a renegade person, did not rule according to what Allah has sent. He brought massive amounts of infidels who do not love Islam, the Muslims, the Islamic outfits or any of the Islamic symbols such as the turban, the miswak (tooth stick) and pocket-sized Islamic guides. Those, O Muslims, are our real enemies. If Muslims stop doing jihad, they will become weak, and accept those infidel laws. It would be fitna (chaos) in this earth and huge corruption like what is happening now. These infidels, on the other hand, would continue to occupy the land of the Muslims. Because of that, Allah ordered us to be prepared. (The preparation) Also includes the material preparation such as learning shooting, buying rifles, bombs as well as training the Islamic soldiers to fight the infidels.[291]

Post-colonial northern Nigeria has also not been free of insurgency or dissident groups. One which predates Boko Haram is the Maitatsine group led by Mohammed Marwa. He was a Kano State-based controversial Muslim preacher who hailed from Cameroon. His abusive criticisms of political and religious elites first led to his imprisonment and exile to his home country in 1962/63. However, he returned and by 1972 he had gathered a considerable following especially of the Quranic students of the traditional Islamic education system in northern Nigeria known as almajiri. Marwa's persistent

[289] Murray Last, "From Dissent to Dissidence: The Genesis and Development of Reformist Islamic Groups in Northern Nigeria," in *Sects and Social Disorder: Muslim Identities and Conflict in Northern Nigeria*, ed. Abdul Raufu Mustapha (Woodbridge, Suffolk, GB; Rochester, NY, US: Boydell & Brewer, James Currey, 2014), 31.
[290] Ibid., 32-33; Paul E. Lovejoy and Jan S. Hogendorn, "Revolutionary Mahdism and Resistance to Colonial Rule in the Sokoto Caliphate, 1905–6," *The Journal of African History* 31, no. 2 (1990): 220-226; R. A. Adeleye, "Mahdist Triumph and British Revenge in Northern Nigeria: Satiru 1906," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* (1972): 194-206.
[291] Walker, *'Eat the Heart of the Infidel': The Harrowing of Nigeria and the Rise of Boko Haram*, 141.

condemnation of the corrupt leadership, consumption of Western goods, and modifications of Islamic practices, increasingly incited his followers against non-members of the group. In 1980, police intervention on the sect's site culminated in its declaration of armed violence against the state and non-members. This armed struggle resulted in thousands of deaths, including that of Marwa, the group's leader. Maitatsine replicated the violence in Kaduna, and Bulum-Ketu near Maiduguri in 1982, Jimeta near Yola in 1984, and Gombe in 1985.[292]

The history of violent groups that justify their insurgent activities against the state with the concept of jihad has institutionalized its adoption. Yusuf did not have to look far for mobilization tools as many in the population always yield to the call of jihad. David Cook explains that Yusuf, through his messages, tried to associate the history of northern Nigerian Muslims with jihad. He stressed that the state would subjugate them if they abandoned this form of violent rebellion.[293] Yusuf admonished his followers thus:

> When Allah orders us to fight the jihad; we must do it. If you hesitate, Allah will see it, and you will be done for. Allah asked men to fight the jihad. When someone gives an order to a soldier; when someone tells him to walk into the line of fire, he is killed, isn't he? But he goes! And you, given Allah's order, do you dare hesitate? When Allah said to fight the jihad, people said yes, that is the way. They obeyed.[294] When you see that men die while fighting the jihad, you should not think of them as being dead. They are not dead. Allah said that they are not dead. They are there, in Allah's hands. They eat and drink well.[295]

Looking more closely into the history of rebellion against authority and the rhetoric of jihad since the 19th century, it is evident the professed aim to purge society of corrupt and infidel authorities by insurgent groups is not new in northern Nigeria. Yusuf was able to shape his group through this violent rhetoric which he linked with the Quran and the history of jihad in the region. Hence, the existing narrative of jihad provided the structure that shaped the opportunities and constraints of Boko Haram's formation.

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[292] Lubeck, "Islamic Protest under Semi-Industrial Capitalism:'Yan Tatsine Explained," 369-370; Niels Kastfelt, "Rumours of Maitatsine: A Note on Political Culture in Northern Nigeria," *African Affairs* 88, no. 350 (1989): 83-84; Mervyn Hiskett, "The Maitatsine Riots in Kano, 1980: An Assessment," *Journal of Religion in Africa* (1987); Elizabeth Isichei, "The Maitatsine Risings in Nigeria 1980-85: A Revolt of the Disinherited," ibid.|, Cited Pages|. 194-200; Raymond Hickey, "The 1982 Maitatsine Uprisings in Nigeria: A Note," *African Affairs* 83, no. 331 (1984): 251-256.

[293] David Cook, "Reaching a Verdict (2008-2009)," in *The Boko Haram Reader: From Nigerian Preachers to the Islamic State*, ed. Kassim Abdulbasit and Nwankpa Michael (London: Oxford University Press, 2018), 84.

[294] Élodie Apard, "The Words of Boko Haram," *Afrique contemporaine*, no. 3 (2015): 48-49.

[295] Ibid., 51.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that just the same as other groups in the region, the historical context of northern Nigeria shaped the formation of the relatively non-violent Boko Haram. It further shows that the fundamental canons of the group that are still evident in its current violent Boko Haram are not new. They are social factors that have been developed over the years upon which several other groups have emerged in the region. Hence, the theoretical perspectives that present Boko Haram as though it started as a violent organization will result in wrong conclusions. The group emerged from the opportunities and constraints of the context the same as most of the other groups in the region. These same factors were necessary for it to become a politically relevant group. Hence, to understand the evolution of Boko Haram into armed rebels, researchers must investigate beyond these regular historic factors that are ubiquitous in northern Nigeria. Studies should look closer to the immediate factors that are particular to Borno State, where it emerged. The next chapter avoids the erroneous assumption that this group emerged as a violent enemy of the state and the political elites. It looks more closely at the group's interactions during its emerging years and reveals a relationship with local politicians and the political process that scuttled this cooperation.

4. The emergence of Boko Haram

4.1 Introduction

This chapter traces the emergence of the Boko Haram insurgency to the sect's interaction with a set of Borno State political elites. A review of the clientelist exchange of resources between the group and the politicians from its inception as Yusufiyya (followers of Yusuf) is salient to explain its evolution into armed rebellion. It will resolve critical questions about the role of local political elites in the rise, the resource mobilization, and the timing of its call to violence. I argue that the group's insurgency emerged from a political process that was facilitated by politicians in Borno State. Its members became armed rebels after the initial reciprocally beneficial co-operation with the local political elites turned sour. There was a subsequent attempt by the state officials to withdraw the advantage that the Boko Haram group had previously enjoyed to which it violently responded. This political process explains the relevance of other factors including resource mobilization, poverty, and ideology as stressed in the extant literature. The chapter proceeds by explaining the early days of the religious organization, including its leader's ideology, its role in the Borno State 2003 elections, the first splinter, and how the splinter reunited with the main body. Other aspects discussed include its funding, the opposition of the mainstream Salafi movement, clash with politicians, state security, and the call to jihad.

4.2 The early days of Boko Haram

The 1999 return to democratic rule in Nigeria started with a distressed economy, poor educational infrastructure, inter/intra-religious tension, and a deficit democratic culture. At about the same time, al Qaeda was on the rise, and its ideology was radicalising thousands of Muslims around the world. The people of northern Nigeria could connect easily with the rhetoric of a failed system that necessitated urgent rejuvenation. With a perceived Islamic ascendancy of northern Nigeria in the pre-colonial era and the recent Islamic revival; a call for a return to "pure Islam" was tantamount to advocating an alternative political system hedged on Islam. A high percentage of the Muslim-dominated northern Nigerian population viewed this as a panacea to the myriad of challenges in the country.[296]

As illustrated in the previous chapter, some of the newly elected governors in northern Nigeria introduced the sharia legal system. However, the implementation failed to meet the political and socioeconomic yearnings of some of the core proponents of Islamic rule. One of these

[296] Lugo et al., *The World's Muslims: Religion, Politics and Society*.

Sharia advocates, Muhammad Yusuf and his followers were known then as Yusufiyya. His mentor in his early days, Sheikh Ja'afar Mahmud Adam, a prominent returnee-Medina graduate, was a famous preacher at Alhaji Muhammadu "Indimi mosque" in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State. It is important to note that the Indimi mosque attracted many young people in Maiduguri mainly because of its location on Damboa Road, a prime location in Maiduguri. The mosque offered free meals to attendees during Ramadan (Muslim month of fasting). In addition, significant to the attraction of the centre, the Saudi Arabian government awarded scholarships to successful candidates for study at the University of Medina.[297]

Yusuf became a famous Islamic scholar in the mosque and around north-eastern Nigeria owing to his oratory and often preached before the brilliant Sheikh Jaafar Adam. He rose to become the leader of the youth wing of Shababul Islam (Islamic Youth Vanguard) of Ahl-Sunnah, a Salafi group. At various times, he held positions both in the religious and public spheres bordering on the implementation of the sharia legal system in Borno State and other parts of northern Nigeria.[298] Some followers viewed him as the heir to Adam's supporters on account of his brilliance and closeness to the sheikh.[299] He also represented Adam whenever he was unavailable to preach. Adam had once presented him as a guide to his followers in Borno State. He said, "if today there is no more scholars in Borno, this man (Yusuf) is sufficient for you as an Islamic guide."[300] His ethnicity was another factor that explains his popularity. He was a Kanuri, the dominant ethnic group in the region, and he could translate Quranic Arabic into Kanuri while preaching. At the Indimi mosque, this primordial attribute gave him an edge over Adam who was Hausa.

The Indimi mosque was the first base of Boko Haram, where its members started preaching an ideology that was not consistent with the official ideology most scholars at the mosque upheld. Although its supporters were less than five per cent of the membership of the mosque, its dogged desire to eradicate anything related to Western culture was evident. The scholars at the mosque stopped the group's members from preaching because their doctrine contradicted its

[297] Khalifa Aliyu Ahmed Abulfathi, "The Metamorphosis of Boko Haram: A Local's Perspective," 2016, http://www.sheikhahmadabulfathi.org/content/metamorphosis-boko-haram-0.
[298] International Crisis Group, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria (Ii): The Boko Haram Insurgency*, International Crisis Group (Belgium, 3 April 2014), 7.
[299] Abdul Raufu Mustapha and Mukhtar U. Bunza, "Contemporary Islamic Sects & Groups in Northern Nigeria," in *Sects and Social Disorder: Muslim Identities and Conflict in Northern Nigeria*, ed. Abdul Raufu Mustapha, Muslim Identities & Conflict in Northern Nigeria (Woodbridge, Suffolk, GB; Rochester, NY, US: Boydell and Brewer, 2014), 81.
[300] Thurston, *Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement*, 85-86.

official position. Note that as described in the previous chapter, Boko Haram's ideological stance was not entirely new to the community. However, the leadership of the mosque ejected the group after efforts to convince it against professing such a belief failed. The group then moved to Gashash mosque, where criticisms of its ideology also surfaced. Finally, between 2002 and 2003, it moved to a location secured through Baba Fugu. Fugu was Yusuf's father-in-law, he was a gunrunner involved with a fee-based non-official bail service to gain release from police detention.[301] Even though the ejection of the group gradually defined it as exclusivist, the ideas it espoused are consistent with the age-long social structure of northern Nigeria and they resonated with many people.

The Boko Haram group built its headquarters on the permanent site Fugu had secured for it; it was called the Markaz (centre). The funding of the Markaz split the interview respondents for this research into two. While some insist that its funding was derived through membership donations, others alleged that the speed of building it indicated elite involvement. Taking a cue from the funding of some other religious edifices in the country, it was likely a combination of both funding sources. The Markaz was a beehive of activity for those who came to hear Yusuf preach. A respondent said that the visit of people in cars with tinted glasses to the Markaz shows the leader's connection with wealthy patrons.[302] It was from here Yusuf launched demonising attacks on the then Borno State governor Mala Kachalla.[303] Yusuf had become a rallying point for many young people because they could easily relate to the ideas he professed and his desire to alleviate their poverty. These ideas bordered on the age-long theological, educational, economic and political factors highlighted in the preceding chapter. The poverty alleviation was evident in the financial, business and employment assistance that was provided at the Markaz. Yusuf's ultimate view on how to resolve the challenges in northern Nigeria was to return to the unadulterated practice of Islam as it was exemplified in the early days of the Muslim community.

4.3 Muhammad Yusuf's ideology

Yusuf exploited the historical phenomena in northern Nigeria and the Middle East to frame the perceived Muslim deprivation. The grievance theory captures the salience of the perceived

[301] Human Rights Watch, *Spiraling Violence: Boko Haram Attacks and Security Force Abuses in Nigeria* Human Rights Watch (October 11 2012), https://www.hrw.org/report/2012/10/11/spiraling-violence/boko-haram-attacks-and-security-force-abuses-nigeria.
[302] Driving a car with tinited glasses, especially at that time, was a symbol of affluence
[303] Adamu, "Boko Haram Insurgency," interview by Wisdom Oghosa Iyekekpolo, *Fieldwork in Nigeria,* no. 1, 2019; Mahmood, ibid.|, Cited Pages|.no. 4; Ahmed, interview.

deprivation over objective reality.[304] Studies that emphasize the role of grievances driven on ideological lines have stressed the potency of the secular West versus the Islamic religious rule divide.[305] Yusuf advanced the narrative of a deliberate attempt by the West/Christians to deprive the Muslim identity of Islamic education, culture, and loyalty to the rule of Allah. He further pointed out northern Nigerian history to show how their forefathers fought and died to avert the Westernisation of their environment. He espoused this in such a way as to create a shared grievance that would help his mobilization for members. Yusuf advocated an ideology that linked his contextual example with conforming fatwas given by Islamic scholars in the Middle East. His ideas evoked both the northern Nigerian and Muslim identities. Hence, the people, whether his members or not, could relate to his rhetoric.

Yusuf named his mosque and modelled his doctrine after Sheikh ibn Taymiyyah, a thirteenth-century Islamic scholar, who advocated violent jihad. He had developed his teaching into a book titled Hadhilee Aqidatuna Wa Manhaji Da'Awatina (This is our creed and the basis of our preaching). Abdul Raufu Mustapha and Mukhtar U. Bunza draw attention to five stances that defined Yusuf's belief and by extension, the Boko Haram group's ideology. He rejects democracy, Western education, and the Nigerian state institutions. He declared them to be non-Islamic and said it was sinful for any Muslim to be involved with them. He primarily based his rejection of these three on his belief that the Islamic concept of *Darura* (Necessity) does not apply to Nigeria.[306] This term allows the Muslim community in a non-Islamic state to make compromises that would protect the interest of Islam in the country. By implication, it enables Muslims in the secular Nigerian state to accept serving and to abide by the authority of the country if the state protects the interest of the *Umma* (Muslim community).

Yusuf's stance signified that Muslims in Nigeria could not participate in democratic processes, attend Western-styled schools, and obey or gain employment in Nigerian state institutions. The other two stances included the rejection of Shia and Sufi as Muslims. He based these on the former's stand against the companion of the Prophet, and the latter's non-Islamic creed. Even though he traced these stances to al-Salaf, the Nigeria Salafi movement denounced him.[307]

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[304] Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*; Stewart, "Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict: An Introduction and Some Hypotheses."
[305] Juergensmeyer, *Global Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular State, from Christian Militias to Al Qaeda*, 16; Burke, "Al Qaeda."; Byman, "Al-Qaeda as an Adversary Do We Understand Our Enemy?."; Daniel Byman, "Fighting Salafi-Jihadist Insurgencies: How Much Does Religion Really Matter?," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 36, no. 5 (2013), http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2013.775417.
[306] Mustapha and Bunza, "Contemporary Islamic Sects & Groups in Northern Nigeria," 81-83.
[307] Ibid.

While some scholars argue that they denounced him because he became too radical for the Salafi movement, Andrea Brigaglia argues that he shared the same creed with the mainstream Salafi. Thus, it was the mainstream Nigerian Salafi that pulled back from the strict commitment to the creed.[308]

As early as the 25th of June 2006, Yusuf's core ideology was already in the public domain. In his debate with Mallam Isa Ali Ibrahim Pantami, he explained his position on Western education thus:

> Western education is contemporary knowledge that came to us through European colonialism. Once it does not contradict the Sunnah of the Prophet, in its capacity as knowledge, there is no blame (in learning it). If it contradicts the Sunnah of the Prophet or the Quran, it would be rejected.[309]

Yusuf believed that the building of Western-styled schools in the land of Muslims is systematic warfare, which stands to undermine Islam. Regarding the issue of employment, he argued that it is not permissible if it is a government job.[310] In an interview with Sunday Trust, Yusuf claimed that the system of schooling and working with the government in Nigeria "could make a person to commit haram or shirk (ascribing partners to Allah)."[311] Abubakar Shekau, who was then his second in command, drove home this point with an analogy in 2006. He said,

> Western education is like a pot of honey and, when everyone tasted it, a tray of faeces was added to it and many Muslims decided to lick the filth with the hope that, eventually, they may live to taste the bottom and benefit from the honey.[312]

Yusuf also explained his views on democracy and employment in his book. He stated that

> We do not believe in democracy, which has appeared on the face of the earth at the hands of Allah's enemies, the Jews and the Christians. In the name of freedom, and popular rule, they claim to be Allah, but we know absolutely, that justice resides in that which Allah has revealed, not in that which humans have made as a system. Our preaching forbids working under the government that rules by some (source) other than what Allah has revealed, according to French, American or British law or any constitution, or system that is contrary to Islam and contradicts the Book and the Sunnah.[313]

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[308] Brigaglia, "The Volatility of Salafi Political Theology, the War on Terror and the Genesis of Boko Haram."
[309] Pantami and Yusuf, "Debate on the Status of Western Education and Working for the Nigerian Government between Mallam Isa Ali Ibrahim Pantami and Mallam Muhammad Yusuf Maiduguri. (Trans.: Abdulbasit Kassim)," 12.
[310] Ibid., 19-25.
[311] Salkida, "Muhammad Yusuf: Teaching and Preaching Controversies," 41.
[312] Ibid.
[313] Muhammad Yusuf, "Hadhihi 'Aqidatuna Wa-Minhaj Da'watina (This Is Our Creed and Method of Proclamation) (Trans.: David Cook)," in *The Boko Haram Reader: From Nigerian Preachers to Islamic State*, ed. Abdulbasit Kassim and Michael Nwankpa (London: Oxford University Press, 2018), 33.

Although several scholars locate the source of Yusuf's ideology from outside his immediate context,[314] he often linked his creed with historical and pervasive challenges in northern Nigeria. For example, he drew from history to defend his animosity towards Western education and the need for jihad. He stated in one of his messages that past northern Nigerian Muslims

> [h]ad honour, pedigree and power. When they heard they [the British] had brought Western education, they said: "By Allah, we will not accept it!" They waged jihad against this. They waged jihad against this Western education yet today you are forcibly enrolling your son into Western education? And seeing it as the epitome of civilisation? And saying that your heart is in good condition, so you attend Western education? Our forefathers waged Jihad against Western education against the Europeans. It is because of democracy that they killed them. It is because of democracy that they [Europeans] killed [Muhammad] Attahiru I and all of them were fought and killed.[315]

He also drew from past and current affairs in the Middle East and Nigeria to defend the essence of jihad.

> You said you cannot put tawhid into practice. You cannot fight jihad. Is it until you allow them to replicate what they did to the Palestinians? For sixty years, they are slaughtering their children. Their situation will gradually be replicated here. Look at what happened at Kafanchan in 1987. They killed the Muslims-mostly men who were capable of fighting. In Zango Kataf, they killed both men and women. They gathered the women, and they instructed them to say "Jesus." After they obeyed, they forced them to drink alcohol, poured petrol on them and set them on fire. This is what they did in Zango Kataf here in Nigeria. They carried out the same action in Yelwa Shandam. They gathered the women and fled with them. There are those who are yet to be found, and others who returned, but came back with two children or a child. They forced them to drink alcohol and fornicated with them.[316]

This rhetoric resonated with the local population, especially the majority of almajiri who are at the edge of society. Yusuf drove his points home by referring to messages by Islamic scholars from the Middle East.[317] Even though his ideology was a significant part of the group's mobilization, his points were neither new nor external to northern Nigeria. However, his ability to articulate past and present phenomenon as deliberate attacks on Islam attracted followers.

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[314] Brigaglia, "The Volatility of Salafi Political Theology, the War on Terror and the Genesis of Boko Haram."; Kassim, "Defining and Understanding the Religious Philosophy of Jihādī-Salafism and the Ideology of Boko Haram."; Jacob Zenn, Atta Barkindo, and Nicholas A. Heras, "The Ideological Evolution of Boko Haram in Nigeria: Merging Local Salafism and International Jihadism," *The RUSI Journal* 158, no. 4 (2013).

[315] Muhammad Mamman Nur and Muhammad Yusuf, "Returning to the Quran and Sunna (Trans.: Abdulbasit Kassim)," in *The Boko Haram Reader: From Nigerian Preachers to the Islamic State*, ed. Abdulbasit Kassim and Michael Nwankpa (London: Oxford University Press, 2018), 153.

[316] Yusuf, "Exegesis of Surat Al-Baqara (Qur'an 2:284-286) (Trans.: Abdulbasit Kassim)," 115.

[317] Umar, "The Popular Discourses of Salafi Radicalism and Salafi Counter-Radicalism in Nigeria: A Case Study of Boko Haram."; Brigaglia, "The Volatility of Salafi Political Theology, the War on Terror and the Genesis of Boko Haram."

The newfound status of Yusuf did not only strive in the religious circle it also made him and his group relevant to politicians because of his significant followership.

4.4 Boko Haram and the 2003 governorship campaign

Nigeria had barely transited from the shackles of dictatorship to civil rule at the same time the Boko Haram group emerged. The political process and disturbance theories emphasize the salience of this form of a shift in the political context to the formation of new groups.[318] Snyder discusses how political elites seek to manipulate groups in nascent democracies in the pursuit of their ambition.[319] Politicians in northern Nigeria were not different in their quest based on self-interest. As democratic governance took shape, Boko Haram emerged and garnered many supporters, which drew the interest of local political elites. However, evidence exists that Yusuf also sought to pursue his group's interest by courting politicians. Patronage politics captures this form of simultaneous exchange of different types of resources between a patron and client.[320]

By 2003 the Boko Haram had become a popular group and it had significantly grown in terms of its membership. Aisha Wakil, also known as "Mama Boko Haram", talked about the popularity of the group. Wakil had known some of its leaders and members for a long time, and they referred to her as a mother. She explained that parents allowed children to join the group in its early days to study the Quran.[321] This assertion points out its initial non-violent posture. The International Crisis Group (ICG) observed that the membership and rising profile had made the group a broad youth movement. It became a significant territorial electoral bloc and of other uses to the political elites in 2003.[322] Its membership in 2003 is not definite, but a member of the group's Shura council estimated its 2009 Maiduguri supporters alone at approximately 300,000 while those outside the city was double this size.[323] The 2003 members must have been far below this figure as Mike Smith records that there were approximately 4,000 active members of the group.[324]

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[318] David S Meyer and Douglas R Imig, "Political Opportunity and the Rise and Decline of Interest Group Sectors," *The Social Science Journal* 30, no. 3 (1993).
[319] Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict*.
[320] Eisenstadt and Roniger, "Patron—Client Relations as a Model of Structuring Social Exchange," 49-50.
[321] Iheanacho Nwosu and Walter Ukaegbu, "Betrayal Drove Boko Haram to Arms –Aisha Wakili," *The Sun*, 22 August 2016, http://sunnewsonline.com/betrayal-drove-boko-haram-to-arms-aisha-wakili/; ibid.
[322] International Crisis Group, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria (Ii): The Boko Haram Insurgency*, 11; Abulfathi The Metamorphosis of Boko Haram: A Local's Perspective.
[323] Salkida, "Muhammad Yusuf: Teaching and Preaching Controversies," 46.
[324] Mike Smith, *Boko Haram: Inside Nigeria's Unholy War* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015).

Nonetheless, Zaynab and Ahmed explained that block vote has been significant to Nigerian politicians since the fourth republic. Politicians consider any religious cleric with a couple of hundred followers as relevant to their aspirations.[325] This assertion was evident just as Senator Ali Modu Sheriff challenged the incumbent Governor Mala Kachallah in the 2003 governorship election in Borno State. The governor was of the same All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP) with Sheriff. The challenge forced the governor to decamp in January 2003 to the Alliance for Democracy (AD), a party that was not popular in northern Nigeria. This change of party was necessary because it was apparent to Kachallah that he would lose the primaries in his party to Senator Sheriff who had taken over the machinery of the party in the state and had gathered so much influence from the party's national leadership.[326] The People's Democratic Party's (PDP) governorship candidate, Alhaji Kashim Ibrahim Imam, was another principal challenger owing to his party's hold on power at the federal level.

In the face of a daunting challenge against the incumbent governor and the candidate of the ruling party at the centre, Senator Sheriff needed to pull all the strings necessary to gather enough votes. One such move was to seek the support of Yusuf and his group.[327] David Cook considers that the evidence that Yusuf supported Sheriff's governorship is not conclusive.[328] Also, Ali Modu Sheriff has denied any involvement with Boko Haram.[329] Providing conclusive evidence for this form of relationship as Cook would want is a challenge because as captured in the patron-client relation model, the co-operation is non-contractual.[330] However, pieces of evidence speak to the interaction. Alexander Thurston argues that the centrality of Maiduguri to Sheriff's eventual success explains his desire to connect with the group.[331] Musa, an ardent follower of the Boko Haram trajectory, and a researcher who studies the intellectual history of Islam in Africa explained that

[325] Zaynab, "Boko Haram Insurgency," interview by Wisdom Oghosa Iyekekpolo, *Fieldwork in Nigeria,* no. 6, 2019; Ahmed, interview.
[326] Tony Icheku, "Nigeria: Borno Governor, Kachallah, Quits Anpp," *This Day*, 24 December 2002, https://allafrica.com/stories/200212240102.html.
[327] Hamza Idris and Ismail Adebayo, "Boko Haram: Now, Senators Sheriff, Zanna Clash on the Truth," *Daily Trust*, 28 October 2012, https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/boko-haram-now-senators-sheriff-zanna-clash-on-the-truth.html.
[328] David Cook, "Introduction," in *The Boko Haram Reader: From Nigerian Preachers to the Islamic State*, ed. Abdulbasit Kassim and Michael Nwankpa (London: Oxford University Press, 2018), 10.
[329] Ali Modu Sheriff, "Full Text of World Press Conference by Senator Ali Modu Sheriff on Reports Linking Him with Boko Haram Sect," *Daily Post*, 3 September 2014, http://dailypost.ng/2014/09/03/full-text-world-press-conference-senator-ali-modu-sheriff-reports-linking-boko-haram-sect/.
[330] Eisenstadt and Roniger, "Patron—Client Relations as a Model of Structuring Social Exchange," 49-50.
[331] Thurston, *Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement*, 122-123.

> because Muhammad Yusuf had massive followership, there is what I call an unholy alliance between businesspeople, politicians, and religious clerics. The more followers that a cleric has, the more patronage that the cleric would have from the politicians. When politicians know that a cleric has huge followership, they know that patronage of the cleric would give them more legitimacy, and they can win more votes. This cuts across the religious divide. Like in southeast Nigeria, the Christian leaders play a huge role in politics. So, politicians saw that he (Yusuf) had large followership which they could leverage on, but that is not the way he was thinking about the situation. That may be the way the politicians are thinking about it.[332]

The ICG confirms that "many politicians and observers say Yusuf gave massive support to Sheriff's campaign, reportedly including fiery attacks that portrayed Kachalla (incumbent governor) as a bad Muslim uninterested in sharia."[333] Musa, quoted above, explained that Yusuf advocated total disavowal from the democratic process and could not have supported Sheriff in his governorship bid.[334] Then, why would Yusuf who has established himself as anti-democratic, support the same process? The ICG explained that there was a deal by Sheriff to reciprocate Yusuf's support by fully implementing sharia in the state when he becomes the governor.[335] In a November 2011 interview with Daily Trust, the then Borno State chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party confirmed Boko Haram's role in the election. He asserted that "Boko Haram came to prominence in Borno State when it helped to bring Governor Ali Modu Sheriff to power in 2003 and that the current troubles began when it fell out with him."[336] Also, the Governor later apologised to the group for the wrong he has done to them.[337] What was he apologising for if he had no initial dealings or intentionally targeted them?

Airing their views on Boko Haram's support for Senator Sheriff in the 2003 election, interview respondents were of three different views. Some responded that the group was anti-democracy, so could not have supported or voted for Sheriff.[338] Another explained that the organization helped in demonising Kachalla by arguing that he was not a true Muslim leader. It also supported, canvassed and voted for Sheriff whom they portrayed as a true Muslim, but this did

[332] Musa, "Boko Haram Insurgency," interview by Wisdom Oghosa Iyekekpolo, *Fieldwork in Nigeria,* no. 3, 2019.
[333] International Crisis Group, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria (Ii): The Boko Haram Insurgency*, 11.
[334] Musa, interview.
[335] International Crisis Group, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria (Ii): The Boko Haram Insurgency*, 12.
[336] Idris and Adebayo, "Boko Haram: Now, Senators Sheriff, Zanna Clash on the Truth."
[337] Abdulkadir Badsha Mukhtar, "Nigeria: Sheriff Apologizes to Boko Haram," ibid.|, Cited Pages|. 6 July 2011, https://allafrica.com/stories/201107070969.html.
[338] Babagana, "Boko Haram Insurgency," interview by Wisdom Oghosa Iyekekpolo, *Fieldwork in Nigeria,* no. 12, 2019; Ibrahim, ibid.|, Cited Pages|.no. 7; Musa, interview; Mahmood, interview.

not significantly affect the election result.[339] The third group of respondents argue that the sect's support significantly swung the election in favour of Ali Modu Sheriff.[340] An analysis of the interview respondents shows that most believe that Boko Haram supported Sheriff whether it significantly affected the election or not.

An important observation by most respondents is the effect of Senator Sheriff's militia called ECOMOG. Although it shares the same acronym with the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group, it is not the same. All of the respondents attested to its use for political thuggery and its cruelty in executing political violence in the interest of its principal. In their responses to interview questions, Tukur and Idrissa, a research associate and businessman in Maiduguri respectively, asserted that although ECOMOG did not merge with Boko Haram, a significant number of these youths were either members or inclined to the doctrine of Yusuf. This predisposition became obvious after Sheriff won the election and not only abandoned them, he also hounded them. They found a safe sanctuary in the Boko Haram group. A report has it that a significant number of ECOMOG members resided in the Gidan Yashi area of Abbaganaram, approximately 2km from Yusuf's mosque.[341]

For its part, the Boko Haram group was not a greenhorn in politics. Yusuf served as the Borno State representative on the Supreme Council of Sharia in Nigeria and a member of the Borno State Sharia Implementation Committee. However, he concluded that the sharia implementation was inadequate.[342] Musa confirmed that Yusuf had served in several Islamic organizations, both public and private. There was also a patronage relationship between his group and the local political elites; the form of patron-client interaction that became prevalent in various states around Nigeria since the fourth republic. While answering questions on why Yusuf would partner with the same politicians he later criticized, Musa explains that although the local politicians may have sought to capitalise on the massive following of Yusuf, his concern was not physical benefits.[343] Adamu, a journalist who interviewed Yusuf in 2005, explained that Yusuf's interest was the implementation of sharia.[344]

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[339] Tukur, ibid.|, Cited Pages|.no. 8; Ahmed, interview.
[340] Aliyu, ibid.|, Cited Pages|.no. 2; Zaynab, interview; Ahmadu, ibid.|, Cited Pages|.no. 5; Idrissa, ibid.|, Cited Pages|.no. 10.
[341] Abulfathi The Metamorphosis of Boko Haram: A Local's Perspective.
[342] Thurston, *Salafism in Nigeria: Islam, Preaching, and Politics*, 200; Ali Modu Sheriff, "My Boko Haram Story," *Vanguard*, 3 September 2014, https://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/09/boko-haram-story-ali-modu-sherrif-ex-borno-gov/.
[343] Musa, interview.
[344] Adamu, interview.

Even so, Tukur brought the role of money in the relationship to the fore. He explained that there were foreign funds by Islamic donor organizations that Yusuf needed to access. He needed to nurture a relationship with the political elites to access these funds as the disbursement was through the government.[345] Aliyu, a local writer and journalist, explained in an interview that Yusuf and Sheriff were interested in creating an alliance similar to that obtainable in Saudi Arabia. This co-operation would provide for religious authority and political power in the form of the Saudi's al-Saud and al-Sheikh alliance.[346]

It is important to note that Boko Haram also had a career politician in the person of Alhaji Buji Foi as one of its leaders. Foi served as an elected chairman of the Kaga local government council of Borno State and later became the caretaker chairman of the same area council between 1999 and 2003.[347] He later became the Commissioner of the ministry of land and survey, and subsequently the pioneer religious affairs commissioner in the state executive council of Sheriff's administration. This appointment has been the most persuasive evidence that there was an alliance between Governor Sheriff and Yusuf. Musa pointed out that this form of collaboration between religious clerics and vote seekers is not exclusive to Borno State or the northern Nigerian states. It is also the case in southern Nigeria where politicians who sought bloc votes courted Christian leaders for blessings and endorsements. Religious leaders who relish close ties with politicians seize these forms of opportunities to pursue their self or group interests.[348] If this was only one of the many patronage politics in Nigeria, why did this one turn out differently? Also, was Yusuf the most famous religious leader in Borno, if not, why was Sheriff interested in him?

Respondents explain that it is common knowledge that Yusuf was not the most popular or respected cleric in the state. Sheikh Muhammad Abba Aji was alive then and very popular, but he was more of a moderate preacher. Sheikh Adam Jaafar was also a famous preacher in Maiduguri who came from Kano, especially during Ramadan to hold his Quran exegesis. He was a prominent Salafi and politically influential, but he was a moderate. He was not a proponent of the kind of jihadi model advocated by the Boko Haram group. Even though Yusuf's oratory and his style of preaching appeal to the young people it also exposed him to

[345] Tukur, interview.
[346] Aliyu, interview.
[347] Isa Umar Gusau, "Ex-Borno Commissioner Killed as 'Boko Haram' Member: We Handed Yusuf over to Police Alive – Military," *Daily Trust*, 1 August 2009, https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/ex-borno-commissioner-killed-as-boko-haram-member-we-handed-yusuf-over-to-police-alive-military.html.
[348] Musa, interview.

this alliance with politicians. However, some of Yusuf's most radical followers were dissatisfied with his approach to managing the group's interests. They especially queried his interaction with politicians whom they wanted to overthrow, so they decided to part ways with him.

4.5 Kanama group (Nigerian Taliban)

It is important to briefly discuss the emergence of this splinter organization, its clash with the state and its subsequent reintegration with the core group. It would help to avoid conflating it with the focal movement in Borno. In 2003, some of Boko Haram members broke away from the Markaz in Maiduguri, Borno State. They sought to establish a community in faraway Kanama village in Yobe State.[349] Researchers put the number of members that joined the splinter at between seventy and two thousand.[350] The Kanama group which was also known as the "Nigerian Taliban" was dissatisfied with the soft or gradual approach that Yusuf adopted in correcting the ills observed in northern Nigeria.[351] Abdulbasit Kassim argues that the primary issue with Yusuf was his refusal to accept, based on his followers' evidence, that it was time to declared jihad in Nigeria. As a result of Yusuf's refusal to call for arms against the state, the rebellious members declared takfir (apostate) on him.[352]

This position leads to a pertinent question; if Yusuf initially formed his group to take the state down violently, why was he reluctant in the face of the commitment shown by his most ardent followers, as will be seen later? If he thought they were not ready, what was his measure of the group's readiness? Did his ideological pursuit succumb to more rational concerns? Does it point to Yusuf's initial disinterest in violence? Yusuf explained that members of the Kanama group had studied the Quran with him and some others in Maiduguri. They fellowshipped together before deciding "to leave the town, which they thought impure, and head for the bush, believing that Muslims who do not share their ideology are infidels."[353] Although he agreed

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[349] Jacob Zenn, "Boko Haram's Conquest for the Caliphate: How Al Qaeda Helped Islamic State Acquire Territory," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (2018): 6.
[350] Brigaglia, "The Volatility of Salafi Political Theology, the War on Terror and the Genesis of Boko Haram," 194; Walker, *What Is Boko Haram?*, 17, 3; International Crisis Group, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria (Ii): The Boko Haram Insurgency*, 9; Thurston, *Salafism in Nigeria: Islam, Preaching, and Politics*, 201.
[351] International Crisis Group, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria (Ii): The Boko Haram Insurgency*, 9.
[352] Abdulbasit Kassim, "Boko Haram's Internal Civil War: Stealth Takfir and Jihad as Recipes for Schism," in *Boko Haram Beyond the Headlines: Analyses of Africa's Enduring Insurgency, Us Military Academy, Combating Terrorism Center*, ed. Jacob Zenn (West Point, United States Military Academy: Combating Terrorism Center, 2018), 11.
[353] Emmanuel Goujon and Aminu Abubakar, "Nigeria's 'Taliban' Plot Comeback from Hide-Outs," *Mail & Guardian*, January 11, 2006, https://mg.co.za/article/2006-01-11-nigerias-taliban-plot-comeback-from-hideouts.

that he supports the establishment of an Islamic government in Nigeria and other parts of the world, he would prefer to do it through dialogue.[354]

However, under the leadership of Abubakar Shekau and Aminu Tashen-Ilimi, the splinter group approached the then governor of Yobe State, Bukar Abba Ibrahim, to request land. Although the governor initially granted them land in Dapchi, conflict with their neighbours caused them to move to Kanama. There, they hoped to establish their community away from the perceived impurity of the larger society.[355] The governor confirmed that this group consisting of young people between 10 and 21, mostly made up of secondary school students and almajiri, arrived in August 2003.[356] Some of the members were children of politicians and wealthy families. Some dropped out of universities to advocate their newfound version of Islam. Based on the governor's information, Senator Farouk Bello confirmed that these young people had "come from different parts of the country – from Kano, Katsina and even from faraway Lagos."[357] This information corroborates data gathered from the field that some members of the movement came from southwest Nigeria, but had returned home when there was a crackdown on the group.

This relocation from Borno to Yobe appeared to be in line with Hijrah, the migration of Prophet Muhammad with his followers from Mecca to Medina in 622.[358] It was an act deemed to have been replicated by Uthman Dan Fodio and his followers as they relocated from Degel to Gudu in the early 19th century. It was an exodus that culminated in jihad and the founding of the Sokoto caliphate.[359] In line with their desire to promote the tenets of the Taliban, the splinter had named their community "Afghanistan". They named one of their leaders after Mullah Omar, the Afghan Taliban leader. However, evidence of their link to the Taleban remains controversial. Just as the faction had issues in Dapchi, they also had trouble with the Kanama community. The police tried to maintain peace until it clashed with them.

In an alternative account, Jacob Zenn asserts that the founding leader of the group was Muhammad Ali. He argues that the Kanama camp funding came from three million euros that Osama bin Laden promised Muhammad Ali. They met in Sudan before Ali became an al Qaeda

[354] Ibid.
[355] International Crisis Group, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria (Ii): The Boko Haram Insurgency*, 9.
[356] Isa Sanusi, "Idleness among Youths, a Time Bomb - Senator Farouk," *Daily Trust*, February 9 2004, 20.
[357] Ibid.
[358] Gray and Adeakin, "The Evolution of Boko Haram: From Missionary Activism to Transnational Jihad and the Failure of the Nigerian Security Intelligence Agencies," 189.
[359] Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate*, 23-24.

fighter in Afghanistan. Evidence shows that the funds were released, although they may not have all reached the group.[360] David Cook argues that "Yusuf took over Ali's followership after his death and led the movement until 2009."[361] Andrea Brigiglia believes that the Kanama camp was an outpost of the mainstream Salafi movement in Nigeria and that it was a predesigned terrorist training camp. He argues that the mainstream Salafi movement and the Nigerian government's dissatisfaction with the evolution of the group resulted in the security forces' clash with it.[362]

On the 21st of December 2003, the Yobe State government requested the Nigerian Taleban to leave the state. The governor subsequently called for military intervention when the group reacted to the order by attacking a police station. The uprising led to the death of sixteen members of the group and two law enforcement officers.[363] Seven more fleeing fighters met their end after they killed a hunter in Sandia village of Konduga local government area of Borno State.[364] Subsequent pockets of violence resulted in more death among both the security agents and the group. Yusuf was declared wanted in connection with the violence. However, he had left the country for Saudi Arabia either for hajj, to study, or to evade arrest. Yusuf convinced some Nigeria Salafi clerics and the top government delegation in Saudi Arabia that he was not involved in the Kanama group's clash with the security forces.[365] It is important to reiterate that Yusuf met with top Nigerian government officials in the hajj. With his level of access to the political elites and his previous political appointments, it is not easy to define him as deprived at this point. He was already part of the political patronage network; he was able to tap into it to return to the country without arrest. However, I must reiterate that this splinter group in Yobe is not the primary focus of this thesis, but it clarifies the link with the main group in Borno. Furthermore, it shows why the security forces declared Yusuf wanted and how he pulled his connection with the political elites to wiggle his way out of the Yobe incident.

[360] Jacob Zenn, "A Primer on Boko Haram Sources and Three Heuristics on Al-Qaida and Boko Haram in Response to Adam Higazi, Brandon Kendhammer, Kyari Mohammed, Marc-Antoine Pérouse De Montclos, and Alex Thurston," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12, no. 3 (2018): 79-83.
[361] Cook, "Introduction," 10.
[362] Brigaglia, "The Volatility of Salafi Political Theology, the War on Terror and the Genesis of Boko Haram," 194-195.
[363] Sanusi, "Idleness among Youths, a Time Bomb - Senator Farouk," 20.
[364] Abdullahim Bego, "Villagers, 'Taliban' Members Clash," ibid.|, Cited Pages|. 9 January, 44.
[365] International Crisis Group, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria (Ii): The Boko Haram Insurgency*, 10; Umar, "The Popular Discourses of Salafi Radicalism and Salafi Counter-Radicalism in Nigeria: A Case Study of Boko Haram," 138.

4.6 Yusuf reorganises the Boko Haram group

The Political Process theory emphasizes the role of resource mobilization in a social movement. Network and membership are vital parts of this resource mobilization.[366] As discussed previously, the relevance of Boko Haram to local politicians was its vast membership and support. Yusuf ensured that he did not lose this resource. While he was in Mina, Saudi Arabia, he met with some Salafi clerics including Muhammad Sani Rijiyar Lemo, Ibrahim Jalo, and his mentor, Ja'afar Adam. Although they believed his avowed non-involvement in the Kanama violence, they accused him of splintering the people of the Sunnah in Nigeria. They urged him to desist from it and report his level of involvement to the Nigerian security agencies. Baba Ahmed Jidda and Alhaji Adamu Dibal, the then secretary and deputy governor of Borno State respectively, were involved in the negotiation.[367] Alhaji Dibal claimed that Yusuf approached and convinced him that he was non-violent and requested his assistance to return to Nigeria. Speaking about Yusuf, Alhaji Dibal argued that "[i]t is true he was brilliant. He had this kind of monopoly in convincing the youth about the Holy Qur'an and Islam."[368] After the negotiation, he returned to the country in 2004 and reunited his followers in Maiduguri.

Upon Yusuf's return to the Markaz, he called for a truce between the surviving members of the Kanama group and other followers. He knew that this splinter group was comprised of some of his most committed followers, so he met some of their demands and welcomed them back into the fold.[369] Dibal provided valuable information that "he had met Yusuf several times since then."[370] The details of subsequent meetings are not in the public domain. However, Alhaji Buji Foi who a respondent, Zaynab, referred to as Yusuf's henchman[371] was appointed to serve on the Borno State executive council. He became the Commissioner for the ministry of land and survey after which he became the pioneer commissioner of the ministry of religious affairs in 2005. Yusuf's continual conferring with the deputy governor and the appointment of his follower as a commissioner does not show his commitment to a total disavowal of the state. Combining these with the reorganization of his group in the Markaz, it is vital to question his

[366] McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*.
[367] Brigaglia, "The Volatility of Salafi Political Theology, the War on Terror and the Genesis of Boko Haram," 195.
[368] Smith, *Boko Haram: Inside Nigeria's Unholy War*, 79; Nick Tattersall, "Sect Planned Bomb Attack During Ramadan," *Independent Online*, August 4, 2009, https://www.iol.co.za/news/africa/sect-planned-bomb-attack-during-ramadan-453906.
[369] Adamu, interview.
[370] Tattersall Sect Planned Bomb Attack During Ramadan.
[371] Zaynab, interview.

ideological commitment. Was Yusuf manipulating the elites while he rebuilt his organization? Was he keeping his organization to maintain his political relevance to the elites? His relationship with the politicians also raises questions about his funding, especially the building and running of the Markaz.

4.7 The funding of the Boko Haram movement

One form of resource mobilization is finance. The resources theory emphasizes the role of money and the effect it had on the rise of the insurgent group.[372] The financing of Boko Haram remains one of the most controversial factors associated with the group. Within a short time, the group's headquarters evolved into a community which Andrew Walker described thus:

> By the end of 2008, the group was operating like "a state within a state"; they had their institutions like a Shura Council (Consultative Council) that made decisions and religious police who enforced discipline. They had a rudimentary welfare system, offered jobs working the land they had acquired in Bauchi, and they even gave microfinance loans to members to start entrepreneurial endeavours. Many used the money to buy motorcycles and worked as Achaba (motorcycle taxi). The group also arranged marriages between members, which many of the poorest could not afford in normal life.[373]

Ahmadu, a journalist who was schooled in Maiduguri and often attended the Indimi mosque while Yusuf was a preacher there agrees with Walker's description. He explained in an interview that beyond just taking care of his mosque and school, Yusuf had a plan for youth to earn a livelihood. For instance, he had many taxicabs, motorcycles, wheelbarrows, and a large farm. Yusuf also gave out these taxicabs, bikes, and wheelbarrows on hire purchase far cheaper than entrepreneurs would typically do. He also supported the youths to marry because marriage in Kanuri and Shuwa Arab culture is costly. The condition was that they should always attend his preaching held between the Islamic sunset prayer and the last prayer of the day.[374]

The funds expended on these projects over a short period resulted in accusations that non-Muslims and foreigners were funding the group. Responding to these accusations, Yusuf swore

> By Allah, before I embarked on my travels before these incidents happened, my funds declined, notwithstanding my house and other possessions. We were limited to farming. You would be surprised that we were engaging in such activity. Up till now, we have not abandoned farming. My brother oversees farming and trading. I also have funds with other brothers with whom we

[372] Collier and Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 2355."
[373] Walker, *'Eat the Heart of the Infidel': The Harrowing of Nigeria and the Rise of Boko Haram*, 152.
[374] Ahmadu, interview.

> engage in business transactions. Just because you do not know the source of a person's funds is not sufficient evidence to claim that he is being sponsored from abroad.[375]

True to this assertion, observations show that members were industrious, they were involved in commercial endeavours anywhere they are, and transfer business skills among themselves.[376] Those that had money freely gave to the group; some gave all while others gave part of their earnings. Members sold houses, cars, bikes and shops, and gave the proceeds to the group. Mahmood, who is a humanitarian actor based in Maiduguri, interpreted Alhaji Buji Foi's donations to the group in this light, except that he was a high earner, hence a high contributor.[377] Despite these observations and Yusuf's denial, studies show that the group's initial funds were not only daily contributions and donations from especially wealthy members like Foi.[378] Ahmed highlights the state funding of the group by the Sheriff administration, the official disbursement of funds to the group through the ministry of religious affairs, and the access to foreign assistance through the state and influential individuals. One of such is the information that vouchers of payments made to the group by the state were available.[379] Yusuf had also used his initial connection to Sheikh Ja'afar Adam to access foreign donor bodies. These funds were directed through the state and disbursed via the ministry of religious affairs headed by Foi.[380] The recent conviction of six Nigerians in UAE who were complicit in the funding of the group further confirm foreign funding of the group. Some other two individuals in Nigeria of which one is a government official have also been indicted.[381] However, the source of these funds and for how long these transfers have been going on remains hazy. Were these funding coming from Nigerians in diaspora, from state sponsors or transnational terror groups? How long has this funding been going on? Which faction are these funds meant for? Was this transaction only a one-off? There are more questions than answers regarding Boko Haram foreign source of funding.

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[375] Muhammad Yusuf, "Clearing the Doubts of the Scholars (Trans.: Abdulbasit Kassim)," in *The Boko Haram Readers: From Nigerian Preachers to the Islamic State*, ed. Abdulbasit Kassim and Michael Nwankpa (London: Oxford University Press, 2018), 39.

[376] Ahmadu, interview.

[377] Mahmood, interview.

[378] Freedom C. Onuoha, *Why Do Youth Join Boko Haram?* (US Institute of Peace, 2014), 3; Brendon Cannon and Wisdom Iyekekpolo, "Explaining Transborder Terrorist Attacks: The Cases of Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab," *African Security* 11, no. 4 (2019): 378.

[379] Ahmed, interview.

[380] Aliyu, interview.

[381] Fidelis Mac-Leva Mohammad Q. Sidq Isa, Abdullateef Salau, Habibu Umar Aminu and Zahraddeen Yakubu, "6 Nigerians Convicted in Uae over 'B/Haram Funding'," *Daily Trust*, November 9 2020, https://dailytrust.com/6-nigerians-convicted-in-uae-over-b-haram-funding.

4.8 Mainstream Salafi opposition of Boko Haram ideology

A lot of transnational and intrastate insurgencies have sided with the grievance narrative of religious struggle between the Salafi-Jihadist and the West.[382] However, there are also conflicts shaped by intrareligious divisions, such as the antagonistic groups within the Salafi.[383] The grievances theory acknowledges the role of the strains from these divisions in the emergence of conflict.[384] There were discontents in the Salafi movement in Nigeria leading to factions, such as Boko Haram. Although Yusuf had negotiated his return from Saudi Arabia with top political elites and the mainstream Salafi, he did not show signs of waning in his ideological stands on his return to Nigeria. Yusuf had tailored his rhetoric to cater to both the returning-Kanama group and the other followers, especially after the truce. This stand is evident in his debate on the status of Western education and working for the government with Mallam Isa Ali Ibrahim Pantami. One of such was on the 25th of June 2006, at Darul Islam Centre for the Propagation of the Religion of Islam, Bauchi State. He further defended his ideological difference with the Nigerian mainstream Salafi through his publication. - "This is our Creed and Method of Proclamation" (Hadhihi' Aqidatuna Wa-Minhaj Da'Watina).

The group continued to proselytise even as Yusuf engaged Salafi clerics in debates about the core of his idea vis-a-vis the mainstream Salafi ideology. A prominent Salafi cleric in Nigeria, Sheikh Muhammed Awwal claimed that he was one of those who cautioned Yusuf about his doctrine. Awwal said that the essence of the debate with Yusuf was not to convince him that Islam does not accept his belief. Instead, it was to make him align with the Sunnah teachings and principles which he claimed to follow. The gap between Yusuf's ideological stand and that of his mentor, Adam also continued to widen. Thurston believes that this widening gap was the result of the hardening of Yusuf's ideology. However, Brigaglia argues that instead, it was Adam and the mainstream Salafi movement in Nigeria that softened their stand.[385]

The core of the debate between the mainstream Salafis and Yusuf bordered on the place of Western education and democratic governance in a dominant Muslim community in the secular

[382] Stewart, "Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict: An Introduction and Some Hypotheses."; Frances Stewart, "A Global View of Horizontal Inequalities: Inequalities Experienced by Muslims Worldwide," *MICROCON Research Working Paper 13* (17 June 2009), Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=1433779 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1433779.
[383] Wiktorowicz, "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement."; Haykel, "On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action."
[384] Stewart, "Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict: An Introduction and Some Hypotheses."; Stewart, "A Global View of Horizontal Inequalities: Inequalities Experienced by Muslims Worldwide."
[385] Brigaglia, "The Volatility of Salafi Political Theology, the War on Terror and the Genesis of Boko Haram," 195.

Nigerian state. He contradicted Salafi clerics, such as Adam on the acceptance of Western education and government employment. He explained that such knowledge and governments were forbidden.[386] Adam vehemently opposed this ideology, especially that which had to do with education and government employment until his assassination in 2007.[387] Adam's opposition had risen to the height of attacking the knowledge base, personal integrity, and the sincerity of Yusuf's Islamic practices. He was killed in controversial circumstances by gunmen who attacked his residential mosque, Dorayi central mosque where he led the morning prayers on the 13th of April 2007. Initial insinuation pinned the assassination on the then Governor Shekarau of Kano State.[388] Aliyu is of the view that later exposition of the modus operandi of Boko Haram links the killing to the group. Despite the opposition to Yusuf's ideological position by the mainstream Salafi movement in Nigeria, his popularity and followers soared.

4.9 Yusuf's rising followership

Although the range of ideological differences between the religious factions persisted, the group's membership increased. The grievance theory explains the role of deprivation in movement recruitment.[389] Virginia Comolli writes that as Yusuf preached around Borno, he soon amassed a significant number of followers through his seductive rhetoric and provision of social incentives to the *Talakawa* (commoners).[390] Yusuf's charisma further exposed hopeless youths to his indoctrination. These subsequently accounted for the quick rise of Yusuf's profile and increase in followers.[391] Most respondents interviewed agreed with Comolli that Boko Haram enjoyed unparalleled freedom to propagate the group's belief. The government never checked the dissemination of his ideas to gullible young people in Borno State. There was never a time the state came down hard on them even if the group was showing tendencies of becoming violent. A report has it that more than 50 Muslim clerics had constantly called on the police to check on the activities of the group members.[392] The police overlooked actions that could have ordinarily attracted security attention. Aliyu emphatically said that Boko Haram members "were blatant in disregarding the law. The police were more or less powerless to do anything about it because they realised that the government favoured these

[386] Mohammed, "The Message and the Methods of Boko Haram," 16.
[387] Thurston, *'The Disease Is Unbelief': Boko Haram's Religious and Political Worldview*, 13.
[388] Mike Oboh, "Nigerian Muslim Cleric Shot Dead in Mosque," *Reuter*, April 14, 2007, https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSL13204726.
[389] Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*.
[390] Virginia Comolli, *Boko Haram: Nigeria's Islamist Insurgency* (Oxford University Press, 2015), 52.
[391] Smith, *Boko Haram: Inside Nigeria's Unholy War*, 82-86.
[392] Associated Press, "Nigeria Accused of Ignoring Sect Warnings before Wave of Killings," *The Guardian*, 2 August 2009, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/aug/02/nigeria-boko-haram-islamist-sect.

people."[393] The assertion is mostly consistent with Chris Wilson's findings in North Maluku that the action or inaction of the police is mostly dependent on the interest of the politicians.[394] The freedom the group enjoyed from police harassment attracted a considerable number of young people.

Other factors that explain the increase of his group includes several political thugs who had joined the ranks after Sheriff used and abandoned them after the election. As discussed earlier, Sheriff in his governorship race had used a group that co-opted the name ECOMOG as political thugs and deserted them after the election. After that some of them soon joined Yusuf's group, having lost access to their political patron for survival. Another factor highlighted by Mike Smith is the rising number of almajiri in Maiduguri metropolis;[395] a phenomenon reviewed in the previous chapter. The emergence of the group and the establishment of the group's compound assisted these young men at the edge of society.

Khalifa Abulfathi, whose mosque (Madinah) was within 5km from Yusuf's mosque confirmed that since at this point, the group was "still peaceful and had no signs pointing towards violence."[396] However, Idrissa insisted that there were undisclosed harsh punishments meted out to members who erred in the Markaz.[397] The group was said not to be violent to non-members. Nevertheless, the members had this aura of superiority and lived secluded lives because they saw non-members as infidels. There were male youths among them who wore jackets and carried sticks with nails on them. They had militant attitudes, sometimes they blocked the road, and acted as guards for female members during processions. The police or state security services never stopped them or interfered in any of their activities at this point.[398]

4.10 A fissure in the Boko Haram-state coexistence

Both the Political Process theory and patronage clientelism acknowledges that although the patron-client relationship is a partnership of unequals where the patron expects unalloyed loyalty from the client, there could be a fissure in the relationship.[399] Indications that there was

[393] Aliyu, interview.
[394] Chris Wilson, *Ethno-Religious Violence in Indonesia: From Soil to God* (Routledge, 2008), 188.
[395] Smith, *Boko Haram: Inside Nigeria's Unholy War*, 82-86.
[396] Abulfathi The Metamorphosis of Boko Haram: A Local's Perspective.
[397] Idrissa, interview.
[398] Babagana, interview; Aliyu, interview; Mahmood, interview; Ahmadu, interview; Ahmed, interview; Idrissa, interview.
[399] Staniland, "Armed Groups and Militarized Elections," 695-696; Staniland, "Militias, Ideology, and the State," 773; Eisenstadt and Roniger, "Patron—Client Relations as a Model of Structuring Social Exchange," 50; McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, 37-38.

a problem between the Boko Haram group and the Borno State government became evident with the resignation of Alhaji Buji Foi, the Boko Haram member co-opted into government, in December 2007.[400] What caused this crack in the rapport? Blame for the soured co-operation is often placed on Sheriff's failure to fully implement sharia as agreed in a deal between him and Yusuf before the 2003 election.[401] Alhaji Foi had tabled points bordering on the ideology of the Boko Haram that Governor Sheriff had not assimilated and integrated into Borno State.[402]

However, apart from the resignation of Foi, there are other fundamental issues worth mentioning. Yusuf had intense debates with prominent Islamic scholars who aimed at realigning him with the mainstream Salafi creed. Could it be that these debates may have instead, helped to properly shape his ideological stand on total disavowal from the secular state? Foi was okay working with the government until the call for complete disavowal that also witnessed the resignation of other Yusuf's followers from government jobs.[403] Approximately 100 northern Nigerian university students also dropped out of school because Yusuf's teachings circulated in cassettes around Nigeria and beyond. These students accepted the message that the Nigerian educational curriculum negated the Islamic faith because it deprives a Muslim of the necessary commitment to the service of Allah, that the design of the schools that permit co-education, which exposes Muslim male students to females mostly clad in indecent clothing. It was on these beliefs that they withdrew from their studies and retired to complete the service of Allah, and they maintained contentment in menial jobs.[404]

Another event before Foi's exit from the government was the election that returned Governor Sheriff for a second term in May 2007. Respondents agree that Sharia implementation was not a significant 2007 campaign issue. The governor had appointed Alhaji Foi and created the ministry of religious affairs as proof of his commitment to Sharia implementation. However, a few months after the 2007 election, Foi resigned. Could it have become evident to Boko Haram that the governor was not on the same page with them because Foi was privy to all the machinations of the government? There was also the issue of an increasing bureaucratic

[400] Jesse Sampson, "The Global Intelligence Files," *Wikileaks*, August 4, 2009, https://wikileaks.org/gifiles/docs/50/5013218_buji-foi-.html.
[401] International Crisis Group, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria (Ii): The Boko Haram Insurgency*, 12; Harnischfeger, "Boko Haram and Its Muslim Critics: Observations from Yobe State," 33-37.
[402] Ibrahim, interview; Idrissa, interview.
[403] Musa, interview; Babagana, interview.
[404] Salkida, "Muhammad Yusuf: Teaching and Preaching Controversies," 41.

bottleneck in accessing the funds they usually got in the name of religion through the state government. The diversion of these funds by politicians eroded the group's benefit for supporting the government.[405] The grievance that caused the sour relationship is most likely a synthesis of these issues. The Sharia execution was not as expected, and the access to funds through the state dried up. These were significant breaches in terms of the patronage relationship. Then the debates with Islamic scholars further excluded him, and he intensified his ideological commitment to total disengagement, which his followers obeyed.

From 2007, the pattern of messages by Boko Haram changed, and the tone of the leaders became confrontational. Yusuf became very critical of the government and intensified his admonition on the essence of jihad. He talked mostly about the ills in Sheriff's administration. He became the lone voice, and the only opposition to the Ali Modu Sheriff administration after the 2007 governorship election sealed the faith of the major opposition political parties in the state.[406] In a February 2008 message, Yusuf started with Quran 9:8, "How (can that be)? If they overcome you, they will observe neither kinships nor pacts with you. They only give you satisfaction with their mouths, while their hearts refuse; and most of them are sinners." He explained that non-Muslims, even if they are blood relatives, will never keep to an agreement.[407] He admonished that members should hold their "weapons firmly and go out in small groups or as a whole."[408] However, he advised against engaging the enemy unprepared.

> At the time when there is no arrangement and opportunity to engage them, do not engage them. Although they will harass you, scare you, confuse you, arrest you, beat you, or even kill you, throw firecrackers or teargas at you, do not allow their actions make you leave your religion.[409]
>
> What will stop them from insulting the Prophet or killing the Muslims is jihad. But how are we going to carry out the jihad? With whom are we going to carry out the jihad? Allah made me understand that first and foremost, we must embark upon the preaching towards Islamic reform. Then, we will have to be patient until we acquire power. This is the foundation of this preaching towards Islamic reform. It was founded for the sake of jihad, and we did not hide this objective from anyone.[410]

Yusuf stated that "by Allah, we want to wage jihad even if we do not reach that stage; if we see those who have reached the stage, we will join them in the jihad."[411]

[405] Ahmadu, interview; Aliyu, interview; Idrissa, interview; Adamu, interview.
[406] Zaynab, interview.
[407] Yusuf, "Exegesis of Surat Al-Tawba (Quran 9:9-16) (Trans: Abdulbasit Kassim)," 49.
[408] Ibid., 50.
[409] Ibid., 51.
[410] Yusuf, "History of the Muslims (Trans.: Abdulbasit Kassim)," 94.
[411] Ibid.

Yusuf seems to have indicated the root of his increased criticism of the government when he directed attacks towards the governor of Borno State stating that

> We are aware that this is a war that they have planned to execute on us from time to time under the leadership of this Governor, Ali [Modu] Sheriff….[412]

> I dare say that in this land *Sharia* must be implemented! And I challenge you, anyone who feels he is a man, be you a governor, senator or Commissioner of police or inspector general, to say the contrary.[413]

The soured relationship between the group and the state officials was the sure line that caused the group's mobilization from non-violence to violence. Aisha Wakil who was close to Yusuf asked him for a just cause to explain why the group must proceed with the insurgency. On a visit to her, he only talked about government betrayal without further explanation of its form.[414] Thurston indicates that Sheriff may have abandoned the group as they were not significant in his 2007 second-term re-election. Instead, his second term return was dependent on his ability to control the political machinery of the state and his connection to the federal capital territory, Abuja.[415] This fissure between the governor and Yusuf shows there were grievances. However, it is not that which results from inequalities or deprivation. It is a consequence of failed mutual commitment between these collaborating actors. Breaching the terms of collaboration between the state actors and Boko Haram set the stage for a confrontation between them.

4.11 The clash between the Boko Haram group and security agencies

Again, the influence of political elites on the security forces as respectively captured by Steven I. Wilkinson[416] and Wilson[417] provides a basis for understanding. Despite the capacity of state security forces to act against a group, their actions tend to mirror the interest of the political elites. It is on record that Yusuf was arrested a few times by the police and the Department of State Security. By March 2009, he had already been arrested six times and released on the excuse that there was no compelling evidence to put him away.[418] A report has it that the Maiduguri State Security Service (SSS) forwarded eleven reports on him and his group, but none could keep him away for long.[419] Marilyn Ogar and Col. Mohammed Yerima, Assistant Director Public Relations of the SSS and Director of Defence Intelligence respectively,

[412] Yusuf, "Open Letter to the Nigerian Government or Declaration of War (Trans.: Abdulbasit Kassim)," 184.
[413] Ibid., 185.
[414] Nwosu and Ukaegbu, "Betrayal Drove Boko Haram to Arms –Aisha Wakili."
[415] Thurston, *Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement*, 128.
[416] Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India*.
[417] Wilson, *Ethno-Religious Violence in Indonesia: From Soil to God*, 74.
[418] Salkida, "Muhammad Yusuf: Teaching and Preaching Controversies," 41.
[419] International Crisis Group, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria (Ii): The Boko Haram Insurgency*, 13.

confirmed that they had earlier arrested Yusuf and some other group leaders. They were arrested on the 13th of November, 2008, and handed over to the police for prosecution on the 17th of the same month after gathering substantial evidence, but an Abuja High Court released them on the 20th of January, 2009.[420]

The first arrest of some Boko Haram leaders marked the end of the group's unchecked privileges to proselytise, criticize and breach state laws at will. However, observations show that Yusuf's arrests were often the result of his criticism of top political elites and not necessarily on ideological concerns. Also worthy of note is that politicians stood as surety for him to get bail.[421] Yusuf was always released afterwards to a rousing welcome by a large convoy of supporters and followers in Maiduguri. The young people perceived him as an "invisible" anti-government figure, causing a further increase in his popularity and the membership of his group. Salkida explained that

> for thousands of adherents, the continuous arrest of their Amir (leader) and harassment of members of the group are reminiscent of the sufferings of prophets. They believe this confirms to them that they are among those promised direct entry into paradise if they persevere in their belief.[422]

Commenting on his arrest sometime in February 2009, Yusuf stated that "they (Security agents) had received money to do it. I told them I knew about their tricks. I even told them the name of the man who paid them."[423] He accused the political elites of harassing him and his group using security agencies and admonished his followers not to trust them. "You may hear one of them saying that he is a security or police officer, and his main duty is to protect lives and to ensure peace and stability... It is a lie; you came here to kill us."[424]

On the 12th of November 2008, Governor Sheriff formed a joint armed forces security squad called Operation flush.[425] He also introduced a law prohibiting riding on a bike without a helmet. At about the same time, the Shura (Consultative) Council of the group declared that they were maintaining "a position and principle of non-violent and non-cooperation towards the government."[426] In an interview with Babagana, a security analyst based in Maiduguri

[420] Juliana Olugbode Taiwo, Michael, "Nigeria: Boko Haram Leader Killed," *This Day*, 31 July 2009, https://wikileaks.org/gifiles/attach/11/11495_-4.docx.
[421] Zaynab, interview; Bukar, ibid.|, Cited Pages|.no. 11; Mahmood, interview.
[422] Salkida, "Muhammad Yusuf: Teaching and Preaching Controversies," 41.
[423] Apard, "The Words of Boko Haram," 49.
[424] Yusuf, "Exegesis of Surat Al-Tawba (Quran 9:9-16) (Trans: Abdulbasit Kassim)," 52.
[425] Dauda Mbaya, "Nigeria: Borno Cp Refutes Allegations by Nba," *Leadership*, 27 December 2008, http://allafrica.com/stories/200812290747.html.
[426] Salkida, "Muhammad Yusuf: Teaching and Preaching Controversies," 41.

explained that he viewed the helmet law or security squad as nothing peculiar to Borno State. He described the recklessness of commercial bike riders and the resultant high rate of deaths from accidents. He explained that just the same as in other states that faced a similar challenge, the governor decided to introduce the compulsory wearing of helmets on motorbikes, which Operation flush helped to enforce.[427] Likewise, banditry was very high not just in Borno State, but also in other states in the northeast of Nigeria.[428] In response to this criminality, the governor introduced Operation flush just the same as some other states that had also introduced special security squads. Accusation abounds that Sheriff purposely targeted the group, using the newly introduced crash helmet law and anti-robbery squad, which reported directly to him.[429] The ex-commissioner of information in Governor Sheriff's administration stated that the governor set up Operation flush to control the menace of Boko Haram.[430] Kyari Mohammed argues that the security squad

> tried to draw Boko Haram out for a fight by harassing members going to or returning from dawah, as they called their preaching activities. Restriction of movement of motorcycles at night and the attempt to enforce the use of crash helmets were all aimed at achieving this. The mandatory use of crash helmets by motorcycle riders, although a national policy, was not enforced in other places with the same zeal. In fact, the enforcement policy stopped once the movement was crushed in July 2009.[431]

Most respondents explained that the apparent source of the police-Boko Haram row was the compulsory wearing of crash helmets on bikes. It is vital to note that there has been no love lost between the police and commercial bike riders in the state. The riders had protested the police harassment in Maiduguri metropolis as early as December 2003.[432] In the case of the Boko Haram group, they often used headwear called *Rawani* (Turban), so they refused to wear the helmet. Apart from flouting the compulsory wearing of the helmet, they were known to flagrantly disobey traffic laws including accommodating more than one passenger with the rider on a motorbike. If the police accosted them, they become aggressive, believing that the police had no right to stop them. Some police deliberately ignored them because of their

[427] Babagana, interview.
[428] Shehu El-Hafiz, "Shut North-Eat Boarder to Curb Armed Banditry, Fg Urged," *Daily Trust*, 1 January 2004, 4; Isa Sanusi, "Senator Laments Neglect of North East," ibid.|, Cited Pages|. December 25 2003, 19.
[429] Kaka Shehu Lawan, "How Ali Modu Sheriff Aided and Abetted Boko Haram: 40 Unknown Facts," *Premium Times*, 28 August 2016, https://opinion.premiumtimesng.com/2016/08/28/40-unknown-facts-ex-gov-ali-modu-sheriff-aided-abetted-boko-haram-violence-borno-attorney-genera/.
[430] Lekan Bilesanmi, "Gov, Godfather in Battle for Borno," *Vanguard*, 24 August 2014, https://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/08/gov-godfather-battle-borno/.
[431] Mohammed, "The Message and the Methods of Boko Haram," 23-24.
[432] Abdullahi Bego, "Borno Cyclists Protest Police Harassment," *Daily Trust*, 8 December 2003, 32.

aggressiveness and to avert religious tension. However, some others seized their bikes until they paid the infringement tickets issued to them.[433]

The perceived harassment by the security agencies reached its boil-over point on the 11th of June 2009, while members of the Boko Haram group were on a burial procession in a motorcycle convoy. Some members had died in a motor accident, and the group was on its way to the burial. As usual, the sect members were not wearing the compulsory crash helmets and had carried more than one passenger on their bikes. So, an Operation flush unit confronted them near a place called *Customs roundabout*. On their way to the burial, the members were travelling together as a group. Three reasons explain the crowded burial procession: one is the belief that the more the people at a funeral, the more the prayers, and the more likelihood of Allah's forgiveness *Salat al-Janazah*. Another is the reward accruing from Allah for those who attend a funeral prayer. Lastly, is the spirit of comradeship as advised earlier by their leader, having chosen to seclude themselves from the broader society.

The few security officers that accosted the traffic offenders in the procession were soon overwhelmed by the number of people. The Boko Haram group believed that the police had no right to stop them, and should overlook it if they were breaking the law because they were mourning the dead. However, the security agents insisted on arresting the offenders, and a clash ensued. The police had suspected an attempt on their arms, so they opened fire, leaving 17 Boko Haram members with several degrees of injuries.[434] The injured admitted at the hospital were visited by Yusuf the next day. As the group's fearless leader, he had to respond on behalf of his followers; hence, he wrote an open letter to the Nigerian state. In his next message at the Markaz, he berated the government and declared jihad. Reporting the incidence to other members at the Markaz, he argued that

> [t]hey did not do anything wrong. They did not insult anyone. They did not commit any fault. This injustice was meted out to them *simply* because it has always been the mission of the Borno State government to use "Operation Flush" to *suppress* our brothers, our preaching, and to humiliate the *people* of this town (Maiduguri). This is their intention, and they have continued to implement it. We have previously mentioned that this task force was created because of our group. Now, this has been confirmed.[435]

[433] Mahmood, interview.
[434] Shehu Sani, "Boko Haram: History, Ideas and Revolt (4)," *Vanguard*, 5 July 2011, https://www.vanguardngr.com/2011/07/boko-haram-history-ideas-and-revolt-4/.
[435] Yusuf, "Open Letter to the Nigerian Government or Declaration of War (Trans.: Abdulbasit Kassim)," 180.

4.12 A call to jihad

The Political Process theory emphasizes framing as a significant part of insurgent mobilization.[436] Both greed and grievance theories see it as a conscious attempt to fashion a shared understanding of grievances.[437] Framing discontent in line with Islam in readiness for confrontation became very important for Yusuf after the fissure and police incident. In his call to jihad on the 12th of June 2009.[438] He stated that,

> since we entered into an agreement, I have not received any complaint that our brothers disobeyed their orders, and nothing happened [as a result]. They just started preparing for war by shooting our brothers with the intention of killing them.[439]
>
> By Allah, we will not condone it anymore, and I know that Allah will test me with the speech I have made. I am the person that says we will not accept them taking advantage of our brothers and keep quiet; and the belief that this is the test of Allah. [The period of patience is over.][440]
>
> We will not forgive the shooting of our twenty brothers. We will not allow them (soldiers) to go scot-free, nor will we withdraw. We *will* not leave, nor will we listen to anybody. This is the original chaos that you have been talking about, and you were the ones who initiated it. You did it! You brought insane *people*, gave them guns with bullets, and the permission to shoot us.[441]

Yusuf berated what he interpreted as the injustice of the Nigerian state to the practice of Islam; he related the incidence in Maiduguri to some others in northern Nigeria's recent past. He insinuated that these crises were the creation of the state and security agencies. He argued that since the creation of the group, they have been accused, incarcerated, and sent to court without cause. If the group continued to remain quiet and allow it, the group would soon be the target of a humiliating attack. Yusuf insisted that the group would not welcome any form of humiliation without retaliation. He claimed that the requirement for a jihad to be declared on unbelievers is that they must hear the message; he argued that the group had achieved this condition. It was time to engage the security forces with arms as this would bring them to the negotiation table. In clearing doubts about their readiness for jihad, he said that the fearlessness his followers showed in the face of the shooting by the security agents convinced him of their

[436] McAdam et al., "Introduction: Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Framing Processes – toward a Synthetic, Comparative Perspective on Social Movements," 6.
[437] Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It*; Stewart, "Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict: An Introduction and Some Hypotheses."
[438] Muhammad Yusuf, "Open Letter to the Federal Government of Nigeria on 12 June 2009," (Muhammad Bakur, 2009). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f89PvcpWSRg.
[439] Yusuf, "Open Letter to the Nigerian Government or Declaration of War (Trans.: Abdulbasit Kassim)," 186.
[440] Ibid., 188.
[441] Ibid., 194.

readiness. He admonished them to be steadfast in this struggle and not to be dissuaded by doubters. They should follow the movement and obey the command of the leaders. Hence, Boko Haram was determined to show the Borno State political elites that it could sustain the privileges bestowed on it by its initial co-optation into the patronage network. Observation shows that this form of rhetoric escalated after the souring of the relationship with the local political elites which became particularly evident with the resignation of Alhaji Buji Foi from the Borno State executive council in 2007.

Affirmative responses to the call became evident with the arrest of nine sect members, led by Inusa Ibrahim Sabo, with bomb-making materials on the 21st of July 2009. They confessed to preparing for jihad in response to Yusuf's instructions. Another was the 24th of July, 2009 explosion that killed Badami, who was preparing explosive devices for the sect.[442] Two days later, members of the group in Bauchi attacked a police station, and on the 27th of July 2009 witnessed the attack of police facilities in Maiduguri accounting for approximately 300 deaths.[443] "Their weapons of offence include Improvised Explosives Devices (IED), AK-47 rifles, Dane guns, pistols, daggers, machetes, catapults and clubs."[444] The deployment of the Nigeria Army on the 28th of July, 2009, resulted in hundreds of more deaths.[445] The July 2009 violence climaxed with the arrest of Yusuf by soldiers. Lawan reports that Governor Sheriff met him at the Giwa Barracks before the soldiers transferred him to the police.[446]

The police arrested Alhaji Foi and extrajudicially killed him in front of the police station.[447] Baba Fugu reported at the police station and offered to help restore order but he was also allegedly killed.[448] The security agency also arrested Abubakar Shekau, yet it is unclear how he regained his freedom. Mahmood and Adamu in different interviews explained that after Yusuf's hand-over to the police, the police leadership could not hold off the anger of the rank

[442] How Ali Modu Sheriff Aided and Abetted Boko Haram: 40 Unknown Facts. Available online: https://opinion.premiumtimesng.com/2016/08/28/40-unknown-facts-ex-gov-ali-modu-sheriff-aided-abetted-boko-haram-violence-borno-attorney-genera/
[443] The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), "Global Terrorism Database," (A Center of Excellence of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, University of Maryland, 2017). https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/.
[444] Taiwo, "Nigeria: Boko Haram Leader Killed."
[445] Thurston, *Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement*.
[446] Lawan, "How Ali Modu Sheriff Aided and Abetted Boko Haram: 40 Unknown Facts."
[447] Muhammad A. Kumo, "Buji Foi Brutal Killed by the Nigerian Police," July 17, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N_m4PBSzU7Y.
[448] Mike Hanna, "The Video Shows Nigeria "Executions" Footage Obtained by Al Jazeera Appears to Show Civilians Being Shot in Wake of Boko Haram Clashes," (2010). https://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2010/02/2010298114949112.html.

and file who became rowdy and opened fire on him from all directions until his death.[449] Several studies highlight the highhanded response of the state security to the group's revolt, especially the extrajudicial killing of its leaders and members.[450] Adamu explained that Yusuf's killing might have been the hatched plan of Governor Sheriff who met him earlier. The governor's agents may have instigated the rank and file of the police force into anger to ensure the bidding of Ali Modu Sheriff. Iro Aghedo and Oarhe Osumah describe the complex dysfunctionality of the Nigerian security architecture and how its repressive tendencies lead to the radicalisation of non-state actors.[451] The political elites had thought that the death of Yusuf had quelled the uprising. Adamu explained that the much he heard from Sheriff's aide was that

> he went into the house and heard Sheriff talking to one of his aides, Commissioner, that we got the rat. That Sheriff was quite elated that we got the rat. He went to see him, and it is believed that he secretly gave the order that this guy should be executed. That the chaos must have been caused by some officers who were contracted to kill him. Like engineered and get others involved because of the anger they had over the death of their colleagues.[452]

In a television broadcast, Governor Sheriff thanked the president and the security forces for restoring peace. He promised to introduce a bill to regulate religious sermons in the state. He referred to Boko Haram as miscreants.

> Let me seize this opportunity to express our most profound gratitude on behalf of the government and people of Borno State to the President, Commander-in-Chief, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua. For his quick intervention through the deployment of capable military personnel that have liquidated the miscreants.[453]

Also, the commander of the Operation flush explained that the rebel group was a threat to life and property in the state, which required a violent response from the security agencies. In the same manner, the Nigerian president's statement in response to the security crackdown bordered on securing the northern states from extremism.

> These people have been organised and are penetrating our society and procuring arms and gathering information on how to make explosions and bombs to force their view on the rest of Nigerians. We are going to continue

[449] Adamu, interview; Mahmood, interview.
[450] Gray and Adeakin, "The Evolution of Boko Haram: From Missionary Activism to Transnational Jihad and the Failure of the Nigerian Security Intelligence Agencies," 185; Serrano and Pieri, "By the Numbers: The Nigerian State's Efforts to Counter Boko Haram."; Agbiboa, "The Ongoing Campaign of Terror in Nigeria: Boko Haram Versus the State," 10; Aghedo and Osumah, "Insurgency in Nigeria: A Comparative Study of Niger Delta and Boko Haram Uprisings," 214; Onuoha, "Boko Haram and the Evolving Salafi Jihadist Threat in Nigeria," 182.
[451] Aghedo and Osumah, "Insurgency in Nigeria: A Comparative Study of Niger Delta and Boko Haram Uprisings," 208.
[452] Adamu, interview.
[453] Taiwo, "Nigeria: Boko Haram Leader Killed."

> with security surveillance all over the northern states and fish out any remnant of this group and deal with them promptly.[454]

However, this criminalisation of the group, the use of military coercion, the government reassurance to the population could only keep the group away for about a year. In 2010, the group had resurfaced in a strategic targeting of local political elites, security operatives, and police informants. The insurgency has now lasted for over a decade with millions of displaced persons and tens of thousands killed.

4.13 Conclusion

The usual narrative of Boko Haram which deemphasizes its emergence as the relatively non-violent Boko Haram builds on the incorrect premise that the group started as armed rebels. It further glosses over the interaction of the group with politicians. This chapter resolved these gaps by exploring the political process in Borno State, which witnessed the emergence of a patron-client relationship between Boko Haram and local political elites. It provided evidence of the exchange of resources between Boko Haram and the politicians. The group and its leaders supported Sheriff to win the 2003 governorship election, and there was further proof of the interaction between Yusuf and the deputy governor, Alhaji Dibal. The appointment of Alhaji Foi remains the most obvious link between the group and the government. The funds that the group got through this patronage made the development and running of the Martaz feasible. Evidence of the severed relationship surfaced with the resignation of Foi and the sudden rise in criticisms of Sheriff by Yusuf. Hence, although grievances existed, it was discontent over interest in power.

The clampdown of the group by the security agencies for a condition they usually had political cover for is a further point to the soured partnership between the elites and the group. After the fissure in the relationship, the sect continued to parade themselves in the usual ‘above the law’ manner, which the state was no longer willing to uphold. The clash over the use of helmets on motorbikes was the boiling point between the state and the group. Critical to this and further actions by the government and the movement were rhetoric and interpretations were ascribed to the events. While the government assumed the law and order position, Boko Haram interpreted the actions of the security agencies as repressive. The group framed the situation in ideological terms as an attack against the Muslim identity, which the Quran sanctions as a

[454] David Smith, "Army Lays Siege to Nigerian 'Taliban' in Bid to Crush Rebels," *The Guardian*, 29 July 2009, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jul/29/nigeria-boko-haram-islam.

violent response. The interesting observation is that both parties explained their position in pursuit of the interest of the citizens. The sect explained that the security forces were around to suppress the will of the people while the government asserted that it was to check the activities of the miscreants disturbing the peace of the citizens. Both interpretations significantly shift the emphasis from the soured relationship to a frame that resonates with the people as the armed rebellion emerges.

This chapter has shown that Boko Haram emerged in a pattern that is synonymous with the process theorized in the Political Relevance model. The next chapter considers the rise of the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force from the Niger Delta, a region significantly different from the northeast from where Boko Haram originated. Its core aim is to ascertain if the NDPVF followed the same process despite the substantial variance in socio-cultural and economic structure.

5. The Niger Delta region and the evolution of the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force to armed rebellion.

5.1 Introduction

The Niger Delta region refers to the oil-rich basin of some 70,000 square kilometres primarily of the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria. It encompasses the nine states of Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and Rivers.[455] It is "estimated to have seventeen major languages and some 300 of lesser importance."[456] The region is the pre-colonial homeland of the Ijaw, Benin, Itsekiri, Urhobo, Ogoni, Efik, Ibibio, and several other ethnicities; many of which had developed monarchical political systems. The zone encountered Europeans in the mid-15th century while the Portuguese visited the Kingdom of Benin now in Edo State. Kingdoms in the region had established trading routes with the Europeans during the slave and palm oil trade.

In 1939, the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) started exploration for crude oil in the area.[457] However, it found oil in commercial quantity in 1956 at Oloibiri now in Bayelsa State. Since then, the zone has grown in significance to Nigeria and also internationally.[458] Despite this oil remaining as the mainstay of the Nigerian economy, there is little human and material development in the Niger Delta to show for it.[459] In the 1980s, as oil-bearing communities in the area started protesting this deprivation, an insurgency soon emerged with the formation of several militant groups comprised of approximately 60,000 young people mostly from the Ijaw ethnic group.[460] The fighters were equipped with a range of weapons and operated with speedboats in the coastal areas of the region where they had successfully engaged

[455] Watts, "Petro-Insurgency or Criminal Syndicate? Conflict & Violence in the Niger Delta," 639.
[456] Omotola, "Liberation Movements and Rising Violence in the Niger Delta: The New Contentious Site of Oil and Environmental Politics," 40-41.
[457] Eke, "Running to Fight Another Day: Commodification of Peace and the Resurgence of Violence in Post-Amnesty Niger Delta," 140.
[458] Hazen and Horner, *Small Arms, Armed Violence, and Insecurity in Nigeria: The Niger Delta in Perspective*, 75; Human Rights Watch, *Rivers and Blood: Guns, Oil and Power in Nigeria's Rivers State*, 3.
[459] Elias Edise Courson, *Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (Mend): Political Marginalization, Repression and Petro-Insurgency in the Niger Delta* (Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2009), 8-9; Ed Kashi and Michael Watts, *Curse of the Black Gold: 50 Years of Oil in the Niger Delta* (Powerhouse Books Brooklyn, NY, 2008), 208-210; Udoh, "A Qualitative Review of the Militancy, Amnesty, and Peacebuilding in Nigeria's Niger Delta," 64.
[460] Augustine Ikelegbe, "The Economy of Conflict in the Oil Rich Niger Delta Region of Nigeria," *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 14, no. 2 (2005); Judith Burdin Asuni, *Understanding the Armed Groups of the Niger Delta*, Council on Foreign Relations (New York, September 2009), 3, https://www.cfr.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2009/09/CFR_WorkingPaper_2_NigerDelta.pdf.

the Nigerian military.[461] One of the premier armed rebel organizations was the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), which emerged in Rivers State.

This chapter discusses the trajectory of the NDPVF by seeking to address the following questions. Did it emerge as an insurgent group? How did it evolve into armed militancy? Was it motivated by discontent over oil-wealth distribution and the degradation of the environment or the self-desire to loot the resources? What were the roles of the political environment and the elites? How was it able to mobilize membership and funds? Were ideas and interpretation significant to its call to arms? I argue that the group emerged as a relatively non-violent organization like most other social groups in the Niger Delta. I further contend that an analysis of the interactions of the group with politicians from the time it started as a social association is salient to explaining its evolution into armed rebellion. This patronage relationship focuses on the vital questions about the role of local political elites in its rise, resource mobilization, and the timing of its call to violence.

The rebellious posture of the NDPVF started from the political process which saw the fissure of its initial mutually beneficial interaction with Rivers State government officials. The crack in the relationship deprived the organization of access to power and economic benefits it had previously enjoyed. While the group was not willing to let go of these benefits, the politicians were intent on blocking its access. Even though these stances turned out to be violent they were interpreted differently by the actors. The chapter proceeds by discussing some community riots over deprivation in the Niger Delta region. It follows with the formation of the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), a socio-cultural youth organization. It explains how IYC's intra-group conflict led to the consolidation of the NDPVF as a group and the rise of a challenger, the Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV). Then it addresses the start of violence and its subsequent trajectory.

5.2 The state, multinationals and community protests in the Niger Delta

Elias Edise Courson analyses how the issues of "chieftaincy, resources, and control of markets, territory and trade"[462] had engendered conflicts in the Niger Delta in the pre-colonial era. The subsequent trade with the British and the indigenous resistance against their business domineering and monopolising tendencies later exacerbated these clannish tensions. These background factors have shaped the relationship among the clans and between communities

[461] Eghosa Osaghae et al., "Youth Militias, Self Determination and Resource Control Struggle in the Niger-Delta Region of Nigeria," *Unpublished Mimeograph* (2007): 2.
[462] Courson, "Spaces of Insurgency: Petro-Violence and the Geography of Conflict in Nigeria's Niger Delta," 67.

and transnational businesses, including the contemporary multinationals whose stock of trade is crude oil.[463]

There was discontent in the region associated with the exploration of oil, as oil-bearing communities started losing their means of livelihood, farming and fishing, to oil spillage and gas flaring. The indigenes of these communities scarcely enjoyed equitable employment or other forms of compensation. Most studies on the Niger Delta present the grievances over this frustrating condition as the cause of the emergence of militant groups.[464] The companies and the state failed to provide significant succour to ameliorate their suffering. The rise of community protests pitched the multinational oil companies against their host communities. These non-violent protests aimed at stalling and pressuring multinational oil companies to become socially responsible to their host communities. Ikelegbe asserts that "seizure, occupation, and stoppage of oil facilities and operations" remains "a common tool of communities, youths and women since the 1980s in the struggle."[465] These were the means they hoped would check the oil spillage, and gas flaring which has affected the region's ecosystem.

This section agrees with the grievance theory that this level of strain and discontent are salient to mobilization for violence.[466] It also aligns with the argument that the interpretation that a state ascribes to the demands to address these injustices influences its response to community mobilization.[467] True, the exploitation by multinationals and the failure of the state to protect its citizens from their activities caused protests. Also, the mostly Nigerian military dictatorship of this era interpreted these riots as a threat to national security and responded with maximum coercion, especially with the deployment of the military to repress and suppress the protesters.[468] This section argues that the military regime was able to check these protests from evolving into armed rebellion through the use of excessive force. Some of the community protests in the region suppressed by the state include those of the Umuechem, Ogoni, and Choba communities. Another case discussed below is that of the Odi community. Even though

[463] Ibid., 26-47, 65-107.
[464] See the chapter on theoretical approaches: 'Grievance explanation of Niger Delta militancy'
[465] Ikelegbe, "The Economy of Conflict in the Oil Rich Niger Delta Region of Nigeria," 217.
[466] Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*.
[467] Nigerian government interpret these protests as a call to war. Osaghae et al., "Youth Militias, Self Determination and Resource Control Struggle in the Niger-Delta Region of Nigeria," 9; Ralph H Turner, "The Public Perception of Protest," *American Sociological Review* (1969); Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World*.
[468] Aghedo and Osumah, "Insurgency in Nigeria: A Comparative Study of Niger Delta and Boko Haram Uprisings," 214.

a riot did not occur in Odi, it illustrates the state's use of excessive force and the political origin of the insurgent groups.

On the 30th and 31st of October 1990, the Umuechem community of Rivers State had taken to the street in frustration over the activities of the SPDC (Shell Petroleum Development Company). The indigenes had gathered in protest at the entrance gate of the company, thereby obstructing its daily operations. Their demands focused on employment for their indigenes because SPDC's oil exploration has destroyed the environment and likewise their means of earning a livelihood. At the request of the company, the Nigerian government authorised a security crackdown leading to the death of about eighty demonstrators and the destruction of approximately 495 houses effectively ending that protest. Subsequent responses of the state and the company hardly addressed the core rationale of this riot.[469] Although grievances led to riots against the multinational, the political environment was not conducive for it to achieve its demands.

Similarly, the Ogoni community of Bayelsa State organised itself under the auspices of MOSOP (Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People) to protest the activities of SPDC in 1992. A famous writer and environmental activist, Ken Saro-Wiwa, was the spokesman for the group. MOSOP demanded that the multinationals become socially responsible and check the environmental degradation being caused by their oil exploration in a declaration they called the "Ogoni Bill of Rights." As was the case of the Umuechem riot, the Nigerian state ordered a military crackdown on the protest and prohibited the Ogoni Bill of Rights. It declared as criminal all forms of protests embarked on against oil exploration and declared it a treasonable offence attracting capital punishment.[470] Saro-Wiwa was subsequently executed along with eight others on 10th November 1995, by the then military junta for the alleged murder of some indigenes during one of the protests organised by MOSOP. The international community

[469] Bronwen Manby, *The Price of Oil: Corporate Responsibility and Human Rights Violations in Nigeria's Oil Producing Communities*, Human Rights Watch (New York: Human Rights Watch, January 1999), 14 & 112, https://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1999/nigeria/nigeria0199.pdf; Olukunle Ojeleye, "The Application of Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration (Ddr) at the Sub-National Level in the Niger Delta," *Civil Wars* 13, no. 2 (2011): 146.

[470] Manby, *The Price of Oil: Corporate Responsibility and Human Rights Violations in Nigeria's Oil Producing Communities*, 14 & 112; Ojeleye, "The Application of Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration (Ddr) at the Sub-National Level in the Niger Delta," 146; Omotola, "Liberation Movements and Rising Violence in the Niger Delta: The New Contentious Site of Oil and Environmental Politics," 44.

adjudged the process leading to these executions as unfair and negated international standards of due process.[471]

Again, although the discontent with the activities of the multinational caused protests, the government was then occupied by dictators who were not accountable and suppressed the grievance using excessive force. This government use of extreme coercion to enforce peace is consistent with the findings that trace armed rebellion to the executive selection process.[472] Hegre discusses how totalitarian regimes maintain quietness, characterised as the "peace of a zoo", through undue intimidation. However, democratic states avert violence because of the availability of alternative conflict resolution mechanisms and strong institutions.[473]

Up until 29th May 1999, Nigeria had a military government. At that time Olusegun Obasanjo became the Nigerian President as the country transitioned to a civilian regime. Although the Niger Delta region remained the primary source of national revenue, it was still mostly underdeveloped and impoverished without better deals from multinational companies. Hence the riots continued as is seen in the Choba community of Rivers State.[474] On 28th October, five months into civilian rule, the community protested at the gate of Willbros Nigeria Limited, a multinational oil servicing company operating in the community. Just as in similar riots across the region, they accused Willbros of lacking social responsibility for failing to recruit indigenes of the host community as expected. The Nigerian military was deployed as usual to suppress the protest and ensure a return to the company's daily business activities. The military action left at least, twenty-one arrested, four dead, and sixty-seven reported cases of rape. The government failed to investigate the alleged sexual violation by the Nigerian soldiers. Instead, President Obasanjo declared the pictorial evidence published by a national daily as fictitious.[475]

Although there had been a significant change in how political leaders ascend to public office, there was hardly any change in the meaning the state ascribed to social movements and how they end them. The state similarly deployed its security agencies as it was in the military rule

[471] Bronwen Manby, *Nigeria: Crackdown in the Niger Delta*, Human Rights Watch (Human Rights Watch, May 1999), 48-49, https://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/nigeria2/; Lenshie, "Political Economy of Ungoverned Space and Crude Oil Security Challenges in Nigeria's Niger Delta," 45; Adunbi, *Oil Wealth and Insurgency in Nigeria*, 63.
[472] Sabine C Carey, "Rebellion in Africa: Disaggregating the Effect of Political Regimes," *Journal of Peace Research* 44, no. 1 (2007).
[473] Hegre, "Toward a Democratic Civil Peace? Democracy, Political Change, and Civil War, 1816–1992," 44.
[474] Adunbi, *Oil Wealth and Insurgency in Nigeria*, 55.
[475] Human Rights Watch, *The Destruction of Odi and Rape in Choba*, Human Rights Watch (Human Rights Watch, 1999), https://www.hrw.org/legacy/press/1999/dec/nibg1299.htm.

to suppress the protest. Studies show that political repression in these new or semi-democratic regimes is still a powerful tool for the elites.[476] Several factors could have accounted for this in Nigeria at this time. There was the hangover effect of the military era on security institutions and the behaviour of President Obasanjo who was once a military Head of State. Hence, there was a low level of democratic culture.[477] The perceived threat posed by the protesters to oil production, which is the mainstay of the Nigerian economy could also explain the repressive nature of the state.[478] However, while these community protests continued and the attendant government repression, an armed insurgency was brewing. Although the existing grievances emanated out of the subjective and objective deprivation, and the inequalities in the region shaped several group formations, the evolution of the NDPVF into rebellion exceeded these discontents.

Another case worth a brief discussion is that of the Odi community which although was not a riot like others but shows the state's use of coercion against its citizens and the new trend in the emergence of violence from democratic processes. This fresh drift exhibited clientelism and accompanied the new political dispensation; it will become more evident in the section on the NDPVF below. Some young people led by Ken Niweigha worked as political thugs for the People's Democratic Party in the 1999 Bayelsa governorship election.[479] Niweigha's group returned from Yenogoa, the Bayelsa State capital to Odi, the leader's hometown. The return was after it clashed with security forces in Yenogoa, which resulted in the death of a soldier. A rumour of their possible mobilization to commit violence outside the state necessitated the deployment of seven police officers to Odi on 4th November 1999. The group reportedly killed them.

Similar to the case of Choba, President Obasanjo deployed the Nigerian military to Odi on 20th November 1999. The Human Rights Watch (HRW) reports that the military arrived at the community of approximately 15,000 people in over twenty vehicles and with several Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs) mounted with Machine guns. The army quickly subdued an ambush by the suspected group on their way into Odi. By 1st December 1999, the community had been

[476] Helen Fein, "More Murder in the Middle: Life-Integrity Violations and Democracy in the World, 1987," *Human Rights Quarterly* 17, no. 1 (1995); Patrick M Regan and Errol A Henderson, "Democracy, Threats and Political Repression in Developing Countries: Are Democracies Internally Less Violent?," *Third World Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (2002).
[477] Christian Davenport and David A Armstrong, "Democracy and the Violation of Human Rights: A Statistical Analysis from 1976 to 1996," *American Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 3 (2004).
[478] Scott Sigmund Gartner and Patrick M Regan, "Threat and Repression: The Non-Linear Relationship between Government and Opposition Violence," *Journal of Peace Research* 33, no. 3 (1996).
[479] Karl Maier, *This House Has Fallen: Nigeria in Crisis* (US: Westview Press, 2002), Chapter 5.

destroyed by the military leaving only a Health centre, a Bank, and an Anglican Church building untouched. The HRW reports that "the soldiers must certainly have killed tens of unarmed civilians and that figures of several hundred dead are entirely possible."[480] Ken Niweigha was arrested about ten years after, on 26th May 2009, and extra-judicially killed the next day.[481] However, the police insist they killed him when he attempted to escape on the way to where he hides his weapons.[482] What happened in Odi is unlike the community riots discussed earlier. Even though it had much to do with politics and the unwarranted killing of law enforcement agents, it shows that the Nigerian state had maintained its strategy of using excessive coercion against communities in quelling conflicts.

5.3 The Ijaw Youth Council (IYC)

The seemingly unfazed response of the transnational corporations in the face of continuous protests and state suppression prompted the young people of Ijaw ethnicity to organise an expanded meeting of the Ijaw youth in Kaiama on 11th December 1998.[483] The conference resulted in the establishment of the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), and the further adoption of a declaration that was popularly referred to as the "Kaiama declaration."[484] It is vital to note that there was an apparent improvement in freedom of expression and association after the death of the maximum dictator, General Sani Abacha. The new democratic dispensation encouraged activists in the region to assemble and make demands on the country.[485] The formation of the IYC marked a watershed moment in the Niger Delta demand for a better deal from the multinationals and the Nigerian state. It was a coordinated approach by the youth to making demands regarding the grievances stirring the disquiet in the region as expressed in the Kaiama declaration.[486] It aggregated the individual community grievances into one document which made demands on the state. It further organised these community riots into one organised by the group.

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[480] Human Rights Watch, *The Destruction of Odi and Rape in Choba*.
[481] Amnesty International, *Killing at Will: Extrajudicial Executions and Other Unlawful Killings by the Police in Nigeria*, Amnesty International (December 9 2009), https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AFR44/038/2009/en/.
[482] "Nigerian Militant Leader Killed," updated May 28, 2009, accessed October 5, 2017, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8071543.stm.
[483] Adunbi, *Oil Wealth and Insurgency in Nigeria*, 187; Felix Tuodolo and Timi Kaiser-Wilhelm Ogoriba, "The Kaiama Declaration," *Ijaw Youth Council*, 1998, http://www.unitedijaw.com/kaiama.htm.
[484] The Kaiama declaration echoed much of the 1990s Ogoni Bill of Rights taken by MOSOP to pursue environmental and economic justice.
[485] Manby, *Nigeria: Crackdown in the Niger Delta*.
[486] Watts, "Petro-Insurgency or Criminal Syndicate? Conflict & Violence in the Niger Delta," 652; Human Rights Watch, *Rivers and Blood: Guns, Oil and Power in Nigeria's Rivers State*, 6; Hazen and Horner, *Small Arms, Armed Violence, and Insecurity in Nigeria: The Niger Delta in Perspective*, 76.

The Kaiama declaration is one document that clearly articulates the claims of the Niger Delta people. However, this communique was specific to the Ijaw ethnic group. In articulating its political exclusion, the group first faulted the British formation of the Nigerian federation without the consent of the ethnic components. It argues that if not, the component units could have evolved differently. It expressed what it considered a deliberate Balkanisation of the Ijaw people into minority groups in other units. The Ijaw natives highlighted their economic marginalization despite their oil-bearing communities accounting for over 80% of the national income. Also, despite the severe damage to their environment, the plight of the Ijaw communities is neglected, and they continue to wallow in abject poverty. The group also stressed deliberate state repression through the sponsoring of violence in the region.[487]

The IYC rose to prominence after the protest of 30th December 1998, which, unlike previous ones, included several Ijaw communities.[488] It is salient to note that again, the state security forces violently quelled this relatively non-violent protest in some locations in the region. However, the IYC group effectively became the mouthpiece of the Ijaw youth across the country. Despite the level of articulation of grievances by the IYC against the Nigerian state; it had maintained a relatively non-violent posture and was not regarded as a militant group.[489] As will be noticed in the next section, political elites in the region sought to become the patron of this new Ijaw common front. The struggle for the soul of the group between the politicians and the resultant intra-group squabbles soon incorporated it into the emerging new form of patronage politics that accompanied the democratic dispensation. The first IYC election brought in Felix Tuodolo as President and Mujahid Dokubo Asari, who was absent at the inaugural meeting, was vice-president.[490] Asari later became the President of the group; a position that exposed the incorporation of the organization into Nigerian patronage politics.

Although many studies, as shown in chapter two, trace the cause of militancy in the Niger Delta to grievances emanating from deprivation in the face of so much wealth, and the subsequent repression of non-violent protests, Nwajiaku-Dahou argues that taking cognisance of history should not blind us to the critical break from 1999 that dramatically altered the trajectory of the initial community unrest. She explains that the turn of the fourth republic significantly

[487] Tuodolo and Ogoriba The Kaiama Declaration.
[488] Manby, *Nigeria: Crackdown in the Niger Delta*.
[489] Adunbi, *Oil Wealth and Insurgency in Nigeria*, 191-192.
[490] Carl Collins Ogunshola Oshodi, "Asari Dokubo in Person," *iNigeria*, 2010, https://www.inigerian.com/asari-dokubo-in-person/.

bridged the divide between would-be insurgent leaders and local political elites; it changed the form and content of previous situations involved with unrest. She notes that the governors of states in the Niger Delta region who enjoyed the new 13% oil revenue allocation, bankrolled a political patronage system that substantially altered the pre-1999 riots against activities of oil multinationals.[491] The next section focuses on the evolution of Asari and his NDPVF group from activists to insurgents.

5.4 An overview of the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF)

The NDPVF was arguably the most significant of the armed groups terrorising Rivers State in the eastern delta between 2003 and 2004.[492] The date of formation is uncertain, but its name came to light in late 2003. The leader of the group, Mujahid Dokubo Asari, admits that the date of the founding of the organization cannot be precise.[493] An assertion understood considering the group's composition of followers who started following him before 2003. Some have joined him since his adventure into the public space as far back as in the 1990s. However, Asari named and reorganised the group in 2003 after his resignation as IYC president.

Asari modelled the NDPVF after Isaac Boro's Niger Delta Volunteer Force that fought for the secession of the Niger Delta from Nigeria in the 1966 12-day rebellion.[494] He often claims that Boro is his mentor and that he has decided to walk his path.[495] He once told journalists that it

[491] Nwajiaku-Dahou, "The Political Economy of Oil and 'Rebellion'in Nigeria's Niger Delta," 295-300.
[492] TRAC, "Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (Ndpvf)," (Terrorism Research & Analysis Consortium, 2004). https://www.trackingterrorism.org/group/niger-delta-peoples-volunteer-force-ndpvf.
[493] Erich Marquardt, "Mujahid Dokubo-Asari: The Niger Delta's Ijaw Leader," *Terrorism Monitor* 5, no. 15 (2007), https://jamestown.org/program/mujahid-dokubo-asari-the-niger-deltas-ijaw-leader-2/.
[494] On January 15, 1966, there was a coup led by military officers from the Igbos of the Eastern Region. With the coup, the Niger Delta lost hope that the creation of Rivers State that they had clamoured from the Igbo dominant Eastern region would ever materialise peacefully. There was the perception that the Igbos who were now at the helms of affairs at the centre would be less willing to reduce the size of its region by creating the oil-rich Rivers State from its Eastern region. In response reaction, on February 23, 1966, there was a declaration of what has been variously referred to as the "Ijaw Republic" or "Niger Delta Republic" or "Delta Peoples Republic" in Oloibiri. Isaac Adaka Boro, Sam Owonaro, and Nottingham Dick led a 12-day secession bid which was overpowered by the Nigerian military. See Elias Courson, "Mend: Political Marginalization, Repression, and Petro-Insurgency in the Niger Delta," *African Security* 4, no. 1 (2011): 21; Chuks Iloegbunam, "July 29, 1966 Counter-Coup: Africa's Bloodiest Coup D'état," *Vanguard Newspaper*, July 29, 2016, https://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/07/july-291966-counter-coup-africas-bloodiest-coup-detat/; Tekena N. Tamuno, "Separatist Agitations in Nigeria since 1914," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 8, no. 4 (1970): 577; Hazen and Horner, *Small Arms, Armed Violence, and Insecurity in Nigeria: The Niger Delta in Perspective*, 76; Omotola, "Liberation Movements and Rising Violence in the Niger Delta: The New Contentious Site of Oil and Environmental Politics," 43; Watts, "Petro-Insurgency or Criminal Syndicate? Conflict & Violence in the Niger Delta," 652-654; Mark Davidheiser and Kialee Nyiayaana, "Demobilization or Remobilization? The Amnesty Program and the Search for Peace in the Niger Delta," *African Security* 4, no. 1 (2011): 48; Surulola James Eke, "No Pay, No Peace: Political Settlement and Post-Amnesty Violence in the Niger Delta, Nigeria," *Journal of Asian and African studies* 50, no. 6 (2015): 754.
[495] Marquardt, "Mujahid Dokubo-Asari: The Niger Delta's Ijaw Leader."

is honourable "to share the fate of the late Ijaw rebel leader Isaac Boro and the executed Ogoni activist Ken Saro-Wiwa."[496] Asari portrayed the formation of the NDPVF as a genuine effort to achieve the goals of the Kaiama declaration however through violent armed rebellion.[497] It means that the group seeks the betterment of the Niger Delta area, especially the Ijaw ethnic group through its fight for resource control and the self-determination of the region.[498] A struggle ascribed meaning by the perceived historical injustice and inequality meted out to the people of the area in the face of the enormous wealth derived from its environment. The group advocates armed revolt as the sure way to get the state's attention and seek redress.[499]

The resources theory espouses the importance of natural resources to the emergence of insurgent groups. It argues that the availability of lootable natural resources motivates rebels to take up arms. The opportunity to extort resources creates access to finance and weapons which make insurgency feasible.[500] One of the ways that the NDPVF funded its activities was through oil theft, known locally as bunkering. Even though Asari has never denied the group's involvement in bunkering, he has refused to acknowledge that it was stealing. He offers a different interpretation to the oil extortion; a frame that legitimises his actions. As captured by Nwokedi, this idea and the assumption that bunkering positively affects the people is prevalent in the Niger Delta.[501] Asari argues that it is absurd to accuse the Niger Delta population of stealing what belongs to them.

> The people who own the oil have a right to take the oil which has been stolen from them by a small clique in Abuja for the advancement and betterment of that clique that siphons this money to foreign bank accounts in Europe and the United States and the Caribbean. The oil belongs to us; we are not stealing it. It is the Nigerian state stealing our oil from us. So as far as I am concerned oil bunkering has nothing to do with our people. The oil belongs to them, and they have the right to take the oil.[502]

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[496] Oshodi Asari Dokubo in Person.
[497] Marquardt, "Mujahid Dokubo-Asari: The Niger Delta's Ijaw Leader."
[498] "Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force," *Global security*, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/ijaw.htm.
[499] Laz Etemike, "The Struggle against Exploitation and Marginalization: A Historical Survey of and Implications of the Uprisings and Protests in Nigeria's Niger Delta," *Contending Issues in the Niger Delta Crisis of Nigeria* (2009): 159.
[500] Collier, "Rebellion as a Quasi-Criminal Activity."; Collier and Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War." See the chapter on theoretical approaches: 'Greed theory.'
[501] Nwokedi, "Weapons of the Weak and African Politics: Protests and Resistance in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria," 103-104.
[502] Marquardt, "Mujahid Dokubo-Asari: The Niger Delta's Ijaw Leader."; Dokubo Asari, "Nigeria: Biafra War Echoes in Claims for Resource Control, Independence," interview by Theophane Patinvoh, July 29, 2005, https://allafrica.com/stories/200507290721.html.

Reports have it that funds realised from bunkering were vital to the group's ability to get weapons in prosecuting its insurgent activities. Members of the group were known to brandish Kalashnikovs and rocket-propelled grenades while cruising the rivers and creeks in an armada of speedboats.[503] At the peak of the NDPVF militancy in 2004, Asari claimed that the group had 168,000 members.[504] However, Yelena Biberman and Megan Turnbull estimated that the group had approximately 5,000 members, and it was most visible in River State.[505] Its membership included disaffected youth from different cult groups.[506] "The 'cult' term refers in the Nigerian context not to specific religious practices, but to criminal gangs that originally appeared as fraternity organizations among students at university campuses."[507] This peak period of NDPVF militancy witnessed the theft of an estimated 70,000 to 300,000 barrels of oil per day. "It was estimated that the proceeds from one day of oil bunkering would be enough to purchase weapons and pay 1,500 militia members for two months."[508]

5.5 Asari and his followers' role in Ijaw Youth Council

Asari became more coveted after he rose to the IYC presidency, a role that gave him political leverage. The political gladiators in the Niger Delta region sought to control the most influential Ijaw youth group and having the President as an ally will enhance the patron-client opportunity. I will now briefly discuss Asari's ascendancy to the IYC presidency. Carl Oshodi explains that despite being the son of a High Court Judge, Asari was unable to complete his tertiary education. His defiant disposition placed him at odds with school authorities, hence his withdrawal from tertiary education.[509] His university travails point to his political activism in tertiary school.[510] The military era in Nigeria witnessed a significant level of student activism to counter the political system. It also provided the opportunity for university authorities to rusticate or truncate the studies of some of these student political activists.[511] Hence, the case

[503] Marquardt, "Mujahid Dokubo-Asari: The Niger Delta's Ijaw Leader."
[504] Nicolas Florquin and Eric G Berman, *Armed and Aimless: Armed Groups, Guns and Human Security in the Ecowas Region* (Small arms survey, 2005), 19.
[505] Yelena Biberman and Megan Turnbull, "When Militias Provide Welfare: Lessons from Pakistan and Nigeria," *Political Science Quarterly* 133, no. 4 (2018): 719.
[506] Marquardt, "Mujahid Dokubo-Asari: The Niger Delta's Ijaw Leader."
[507] Morten Boas, "'Mend Me': The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta and the Empowerment of Violence," in *Oil Insurgency in the Niger Delta: Managing the Complex Politics of Petro-Violence*, ed. Cyril Obi and Siri Aas Rustad (London/New York: Zed Books, 2011), 120.
[508] Biberman and Turnbull, "When Militias Provide Welfare: Lessons from Pakistan and Nigeria," 719.
[509] Oshodi Asari Dokubo in Person.
[510] See Ebimo Amungo, "Profile: Nigeria's Oil Militant," *BBC News*, 2004, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3713664.stm.
[511] Oyaziwo Aluede et al., "Student Unrest in Nigerian Universities: Looking Back and Forward," 10, no. 1 (2005).

of Asari was not unique in this regard, it provides a background for understanding his person and context.

After Asari dropped out twice from different tertiary institutions in River State, he ventured into active politics. He had twice contested for and lost political positions, showing that he was not a greenhorn in political engagement. He campaigned in 1992 for the Rivers State House of Assembly and again in 1998 for the Asari-Toru local government chairmanship position before becoming the IYC vice-president.[512] He explains in a statement that

> In 1999, I was a candidate for local government chairmanship of NSM. From NSM, National Solidarity Movement, I went over to the AD, Alliance for Democracy, I was never a member of PDP, I never supported PDP. I was even a counting agent for Chief Eric Aso of the AD.[513]

The above clearly shows Asari's interest in a political position. However, it may have become evident to him that ascending public office in the Nigerian political environment requires the support of the right patron, often referred to in Nigeria as "god-father." After his failed bid to hold political office, he joined the IYC and eventually emerged as its President in 2001. He initially became the pioneer vice-president of the group in December 1999 after Dr Peter Odili became the Executive Governor of Rivers State. Oshodi traces Asari's emergence as the vice-president to the influence of Governor Odili. No wonder Akin Iwilade argues that people connected to local political elites, and later opposed them, pioneered insurgent group formation.[514] Asari was already part of the very privileged patronage network before his armed insurrection. He has consistently refuted this claim, arguing that Odili was too politically weak to have influenced his emergence at that time. Without discounting the patronage politics, which has mostly facilitated who holds what and when; Asari's activism and ability to mobilize may have endeared him to the Ijaw youths at the Kaiama conference. Hence, they supported his elevation to the position of vice-president of IYC.

However, his rise to the IYC presidency in 2001 was very controversial and showed the influence of Odili and his cronies. His opponent and the incumbent President, Felix Otuodolo contested the voter's list and the result of the election. Both parties' claims to the IYC presidency subsequently turned violent until the intervention of other Ijaw leaders.[515] Elia

[512] Amungo Profile: Nigeria's Oil Militant; Biberman and Turnbull, "When Militias Provide Welfare: Lessons from Pakistan and Nigeria," 720.
[513] Mujahid Dokubo Asari, "Peter Odili Donated N10 Million to Dokubo Asari in Detention," in *Rivers State Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (2008). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0gSYbwi-pi4.
[514] Iwilade, "Oil, Youth, and Networks of the "Unconnected" in Nigeria's Niger Delta," 1203-1204, 1207 & 1213.
[515] Oshodi Asari Dokubo in Person.

Courson observed that it was a struggle by proxy for the control of IYC between Governor Odili of Rivers State and his counterpart in Bayelsa State, where Asari represented the interest of Odili.[516] The key to understanding why the local political elites were interested in the IYC presidency is that it had become a significant voice in the clamour against injustice in the Niger Delta since after its protest on 30th December 1998.[517]

In patronage politics, we see how political elites seek to maintain a patronage network by manipulating individuals and groups to achieve self-interest. This form of elite manipulation is very much evident in democratising states during elections.[518] Human Rights Watch (HRW) finds that Governor Odili and the Secretary to the Rivers State government, Abiye Sekibo influenced Asari's ascension over Tuodolo in the contest to the IYC presidency. It was part of a deliberate infiltration of powerful groups by local politicians.[519] Courson observed that as early as 2000, Governor Odili with his aides like Magnus Abe and Timi Alaibe had courted Asari in the interest of maintaining the governor's political dominance in Kalabari, the home place of Asari, ahead of the 2003 elections. He noted that Odili even awarded a contract of keeping Kalabari waterways free of pirates to Asari and also provided the venue, funds, and security for the IYC election.[520] Asari was to mobilize the youth in his 'sphere of influence' for Odili's re-election in 2003. Note that this relationship was before the naming of the NDPVF group, which is of interest to this chapter. However, as discussed earlier, it is also of note that Asari already had his followers before the group was named. His strong followership partly explains his immediate ascension to an executive role in the IYC even when he was absent at that epic assembly of Ijaw youth.

HRW observed that with the knowledge of Odili; Sekibo "used Asari to limit the growing influence of the Ijaw Youth Council."[521] However, in Asari's reaction to the findings, he said

> They never interviewed me; I was alive; they are liars—the colonialist who want the Niger Delta to be perpetually backward, to malign us. Human Rights Watch, all of them are working for the multinationals, the colonialists. These neo-colonialists elements who are out here to continually and perpetually put

[516] Courson, "Spaces of Insurgency: Petro-Violence and the Geography of Conflict in Nigeria's Niger Delta," 130.
[517] Human Rights Watch, *Rivers and Blood: Guns, Oil and Power in Nigeria's Rivers State*, 5-6; Hazen and Horner, *Small Arms, Armed Violence, and Insecurity in Nigeria: The Niger Delta in Perspective*, 77; Nwajiaku-Dahou, "The Political Economy of Oil and 'Rebellion'in Nigeria's Niger Delta," 303.
[518] See the chapter on theoretical approaches: 'Political clientelism and the Political process theory.'
[519] Human Rights Watch, *Rivers and Blood: Guns, Oil and Power in Nigeria's Rivers State*, 5-6; Hazen and Horner, *Small Arms, Armed Violence, and Insecurity in Nigeria: The Niger Delta in Perspective*, 77; Nwajiaku-Dahou, "The Political Economy of Oil and 'Rebellion'in Nigeria's Niger Delta," 303.
[520] Courson, "Spaces of Insurgency: Petro-Violence and the Geography of Conflict in Nigeria's Niger Delta," 132.
[521] Human Rights Watch, *Rivers and Blood: Guns, Oil and Power in Nigeria's Rivers State*, 5.

> our people down and to give (President Umaru Musa) Yar'Adua the power to exploit and to dispossess us of our wealth and our land. These are what they are doing. Who formed these so-called human rights organizations? They are big donor organizations that formed them and any progressive they see; they nickname him a terrorist, a gang leader, like what they are doing in Palestine, where they declare the progressive and mass party that is fighting against the evil Zionist regime. And everywhere they declared Mandela and the ANC was declared a terrorist organization. We reject it in its totality. I am not a terrorist, I am an Ijaw nationalist, and I am fighting for the cause of the Ijaw people.[522]

Asari explained that his closeness to Governor Odili had to do with his IYC presidency and the capacity of the organization to disrupt oil flow, which the government intended to stop. He said

> He (Odili) gave me unimpeded access because as the President of the Ijaw Youth Council. He does not want our trouble. Ijaw Youth Council specialises in making sure that oil production is disrupted. So, he does not want our (problem), so he befriended us.[523]

5.6 Asari's group opposes Obasanjo's re-election bid

> I am anti-Obasanjo. I am today and will continue to be until that butcher and tyrant, is brought to book, for the crime he committed against humanity, like all other people who had committed crimes against humanity, like Hitler, Mussolini, and every other person is brought to face justice, and one day he will certainly face this justice.[524]

A government based on a patronage network maintains a patron-client relationship in which the political elites expect group loyalty. The Rivers State governor expected unalloyed loyalty from Asari and his group. However, the patronage model does not guarantee continued cordial patron-client cooperation.[525] As the President of IYC and an ally of Governor Odili, the ruling elites had expected Asari and his group's support all through the 2003 elections. However, he was in opposition to the 2003 re-election bid of the then President Olusegun Obasanjo. This anti-Obasanjo posture may not be unconnected with his use of the Nigerian military against Ijaw communities that protested the activities of oil multinationals and the military assault in Odi.[526] As the then IYC president, Asari had deliberately gone all out to ensure that the voters failed to re-elect Obasanjo for a second term. However, he assured Odili of his support if he did not manipulate the votes in favour of President Obasanjo. He explained thus:

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[522] Asari, "Peter Odili Donated N10 Million to Dokubo Asari in Detention."
[523] Mujahid Dokubo Asari, "Bushboys Drive Ateke Tom out of Okrika," in *Rivers State Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (2008). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xuKoInJfTZ4.
[524] Mujahid Dokubo Asari, "Dokubo Asari - How Tom Ateke's Icelanders Became a Cult Group," in *Rivers State Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (2008). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YdjWR638COo.
[525] Eisenstadt and Roniger, "Patron—Client Relations as a Model of Structuring Social Exchange," 50; Staniland, "Militias, Ideology, and the State."
[526] The details of the destruction of Odi community by the military on the approval of President Olusegun Obasanjo is captured in details by Human Rights Watch, *The Destruction of Odi and Rape in Choba*.

> before the elections, we printed stickers, "Operation kick Obasanjo out." Some houses still have those banners and stickers. We printed it in this town, and I told Obasanjo himself in Aso Rock that he will never win the election. I told Peter Odili that I will support him as an individual and not as PDP. But, if he is rigging for Obasanjo, -I granted an interview, it was in National dailies and local dailies, that Obasanjo will not win.[527]

Asari and his group pulled their weight during the state governorship re-election bid for Peter Odili. However, they failed to do the same in the case of the presidential re-election bid of Obasanjo. Despite Asari's campaign against Obasanjo, the President was not only re-elected for a second term but also won majority votes in Rivers State. Against pleas, Asari released a press statement on behalf of the IYC that there was no election in the state. His stance resulted in the souring of the relationship between him and the governor. In his words,

> Odili thought that we were joking. Three days after the so-called presidential writing of results (the 2003 presidential election), the IYC made a release. We were the first organization in this country to make a release that there was no election. I was called by several persons, on the authority of Odili. They asked me if I was the person who signed the release with my Secretary, Charles Omusugu, I said, yes. In fact, when we were about to sign the press release, my legal adviser, my former President Felix Tuodolo, in my sitting room, begged me not to sign because of the relationship, the good relationship between Odili and myself that if that happened, I will strain the relationship. I told them that I will resign as IYC President if I am not allowed to sign. The people are alive, and they can testify, and that was the beginning of the ploy to kill me.[528]

Odili was unhappy with Asari's anti-Obasanjo's re-election position and the press statement which discredited the election process that returned the President to power.[529] Asari alleged that there were several attempts on his life by the government-supported Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV) led by Ateke Tom. The next section explains the role of Tom and his group in the emerging conflict. Asari explained that he had to restructure his group because he could not fight NDV on the platform of the IYC since Tom was also a member, and this would divide the council.[530] He subsequently resigned his position as the President of IYC, reorganised his group and named it the Niger Delta People Volunteer Force (NDPVF), reminiscence of the 1966 Oloibiri group led by Adaka Boro in the 12-day rebellion.[531] After this, Asari temporarily

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[527] Asari, "Dokubo Asari - How Tom Ateke's Icelanders Became a Cult Group."

[528] Mujahid Dokubo Asari, "Hijra of Asari Dokubo to Warri & How Obasanjo, Odili Rigged 2003 Election in River State," in *Rivers State Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (2008). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0welrmn-p34&t=32s.

[529] Human Rights Watch, *Rivers and Blood: Guns, Oil and Power in Nigeria's Rivers State*, 8.

[530] Asari, "Hijra of Asari Dokubo to Warri & How Obasanjo, Odili Rigged 2003 Election in River State."

[531] Hazen and Horner, *Small Arms, Armed Violence, and Insecurity in Nigeria: The Niger Delta in Perspective*, 77; Chris Albin-Lackey, *Politics as War: The Human Rights Impact and Causes of Post-Election Violence in Rivers*

relocated to Warri for the reinforcement of his group. In an elaborate article, he explained how he sourced weapons through Henry Okah and a few others to execute the battle.[532]

5.7 The role of Tom and his Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV)

It is also important for this thesis to discuss another group, led by Ateke Tombari, popularly known as Ateke Tom from the Okrika community. The political elites used NDV as a proxy to check the influence of Asari and the NDPVF. Rivers State officials had a similar interaction with both Asari and with Tom's groups. An understanding of the role of the NDVprovides the background to the 2003/04 violence in the state. In 1999, the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) lost the election in the Okrika community; so, the party needed all the necessary help to win it in 2003. Hence, Governor Odili's courted Ateke Tombari, who led a vigilante group there.[533] In 2000, Tom became the leader of "Icelanders," the street wing of a University cult called "Supreme Vikings Confraternity" (SVC) or "Vikings." However, the cult later changed its name to the Niger Delta Vigilante. The change of name was a bid to launder its image that had been badly damaged by its violent activities.[534]

Information gathered by HRW from former gang members and activists alleges that the Icelanders was the brainchild of Dr Abiye Sekibo, the same SSG involved with the Asari-led group. They further claimed that Tom received funds and weapons from politicians of the PDP in Rivers State to mobilize his constituency for the 2003 elections, which he was able to deliver for the political party.[535] In an interview with Vanguard newspaper in June 2006, Tom confirmed that he supported the PDP in the 2003 elections. While responding to the question if the PDP used him, he said,

> of course, everyone knows that I worked for the PDP in the first and second coming of the party. In Rivers State. There is no one who does not know that I was used to get votes for the party.[536]

State, Nigeria (Human Rights Watch, March 2008), 55, https://www.hrw.org/reports/2008/nigeria0308/nigeria0308webwcover.pdf.

[532] Mujahid Dokubo Asari, "Asari Dokubo: Me, Henry Okah "Jomo Gbomo", Judith Asuni and the Niger Delta Insurgency," *Sahara Reporters*, December 31, 2008, http://saharareporters.com/2008/12/31/asari-dokubo-me-henry-okahjomo-gbomo-judith-asuni-and-niger-delta-insurgency.

[533] Courson, "Spaces of Insurgency: Petro-Violence and the Geography of Conflict in Nigeria's Niger Delta," 133.

[534] Hazen and Horner, *Small Arms, Armed Violence, and Insecurity in Nigeria: The Niger Delta in Perspective*, 77.

[535] Albin-Lackey, *Politics as War: The Human Rights Impact and Causes of Post-Election Violence in Rivers State, Nigeria*, 3 & 54.

[536] Ateke Tom, "The Story of Ateke Tom and His 'Five-Point Agenda for Peace'," interview by George Onah, 2009, https://www.vanguardngr.com/2009/06/the-story-of-ateke-tomand-his-five-point-agenda-for-peace/.

Asari provided further confirmation at the Rivers State Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2008, when he explained that Tom's rise at the state level started with a crisis in Okrika town in the state. Another cult called the "Bush Boys" had chased Tom and his cult group, which later turned to a vigilante group, out of Okrika. In a bid to return to the town, Tom and some other sympathisers had called on Asari to help seek weapons from Sekibo, the Secretary to the Rivers State government. Asari claimed that he attempted to seek help for Tom, but Sekibo refused to arm Tom and his group. He argued that some other influential members of the Dr Peter Odili government might have assisted the Icelanders to secure weapons. They used these weapons in their battle to regain control of Okrika. Asari explained that with the victory of the Icelanders, Tom became the de facto Amayanabo (King) of Okrika.[537] Why would Governor Odili need this NDV group that much?

Benatu, who was a youth mobilizer at that time in Port Harcourt, but now a public servant explained in an interview that pivotal to the emergence of Odili as governor in 1999 were two prominent politicians who were of the Rivers State PDP, Marshall Harry and AK Dikibo.[538] Another interviewee, Doubra who is a businessman in Port Harcourt concurs with Benatu that without the support of Marshall Harry, winning the 1999 election would have been an uphill task for Odili.[539] Harry and Dikibo had hoped that Odili would be governor for only one term, but he insisted on running for another. They explain that the governor's insistence was the beginning of the crisis in the state. Harry and Dikibo decamped from PDP to the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) which was a significant loss to Governor Odili's support base. This loss put pressure on the governor to seek more support to realise his second term ambition. It was vital for him to win Okrika, the hometown of Ada George, a former Rivers State governor and a chieftain of the opposition party, ANPP. For Odili to win the town, he had to subdue the Bush Boys group in the town that was sympathetic to the ANPP. Hence, the need to support Tom and his group.

Although Asari argued that Abiye Sekibo did not arm Tom and the NDV, however, Tom is an indigene of Okrika, and he is sympathetic to the PDP but had been run out of town by the ANPP-sympathetic Bush Boys. Also, Sekibo, the SSG of Odili is from Okrika. He needed to deliver his hometown for his principal to remain governor. It is logical at that point that he needed to support Tom's group with the necessary resources to subdue the Bush Boys in

[537] Asari, "Peter Odili Donated N10 Million to Dokubo Asari in Detention."
[538] Benatu, "Niger Delta Insurgency," interview by Wisdom Iyekekpolo, *Fieldwork in Nigeria,* no. 14, 2019.
[539] Doubra, ibid.|, Cited Pages|.no. 15.

Okrika.[540] Hence, Tom's group became relevant to Sekibo and the governor before the 2003 election. In an interview, a prince and politician in Okrika explained that since 1999, when there is a need to use guns, snatch ballot boxes and result sheets; the politicians look for those people who can do it. The politicians equip these groups with the resources needed, including money, weapons, and government vehicles. Such was the case in Okrika where youth gangs mired the 2003 campaigns of contestants like Dumo Lulu Briggs and Chief Sergeant Awuse.[541] Tolumu, an academic corroborated the previous respondents' narrative that

> In 2003, many of those who helped Odili to come to power in 1999 split with him. There was a show of strength to take power from him, so they got more prepared using the groups. It was not like the groups were not in existence, but they have not been sucked into the web of politics the way they became by 2003. The contestation for power was more intense in 2003 than in 1999. The groups did not help to vote; they helped in manipulating the process. In many communities, they drove the voter away and superintended over the thumb-printing and writing of results, intimidation of the opposition and even going to the villages to tell them whom they should vote. It was a mobilization of violence, intimidation, manipulation of electoral processes, not a campaign. That is why people mobilize armed groups, to use arms to scare away political opposition.[542]

Hence, Tarila Marclint Ebiede links the emergence of armed groups in the region to local politics at the community level. He argues that the insurgent groups emerge from the political competitions in resource-rich communities because of the patronage linked to these positions.[543] Mark Davidheiser and Kialee Nyiayaana, and Jennifer Hazen trace the rise of these groups to the new democratic dispensation in 1999. They argue that political leaders purchased weapons for young people to use for political violence during elections. This practice pervaded the Niger Delta region in the elections that were held in 1999, 2003, and 2007. They argue that these patrons often abandoned these unemployed youth that they promised they would employ after the elections. With no viable means of livelihood except the weapons, these youths reorganised into militant groups in the region.[544] However, this does not tell the whole story, as such groups who could not initially mobilize resources are overrun by the state forces, as discussed earlier in the case of the Odi community.

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[540] Benatu, interview.
[541] Ibigibo, ibid.|, Cited Pages|.no. 16.
[542] Tolumu, ibid.|, Cited Pages|.no. 17.
[543] Tarila Marclint Ebiede, "Community Conflicts and Armed Militancy in Nigeria's Niger Delta: Change and Continuity?," *Society & natural resources* 30, no. 10 (2017): 1198-1199.
[544] Davidheiser and Nyiayaana, "Demobilization or Remobilization? The Amnesty Program and the Search for Peace in the Niger Delta," 49; Jennifer M. Hazen, "From Social Movement to Armed Group: A Case Study from Nigeria," *Contemporary security policy* 30, no. 2 (2009).

The soured relationship between the governor and the NDPVF, and Asari's self-exile to Warri provided an opportunity for the Tom-led NDV. It reinforced its position and became the primary youth group with a strong collaboration with the local politicians. The NDV soon became a significant player "in oil bunkering and providing security to oil bunkering operations run by local politicians."[545] However, the NDPVF was not willing to relinquish its position in the patronage network and was prepared to show the Rivers State political elites that it could violently sustain its privileged place. Hence, it was not long before Asari returned with a reinforced NDPVF.

5.8 The insurgency in Rivers State

Asari asserted at the Rivers State Truth and Reconciliation Commission that his group allied with other groups to fight against the government-supported NDV. In his words:

> So, there was an alliance of all the groups in River State against the government. We saw physically that some people were playing God. The government of Odili hand was in this because people will not continue to cause mayhem and destruction, and the government will look on the other side.[546]

Asari returned to Rivers State to lead his NDPVF to battle NDV. It was a battle of superiority between the groups. Smaller groups/cults affiliated themselves with any of these two groups in the two-side armed struggle to aid their access to better resources.[547] The smaller groups also battled for supremacy in their local terrains. Shooting individuals at restaurants and bars in the evenings locally termed as "White chair shooting" became rampant. Cult groups battled to control drinking bars in their vicinity. They attacked and killed members of rival cults in bars in a show of superiority to ensure the bar is exclusive to their members.[548] By the Rivers State government's account, apart from the NDV and NDPVF, there were more than 100 smaller armed cult groups. "Although the smaller groups retained their names and leadership structures, Asari and Tom assumed command and control responsibilities over the militant actions".[549]

The ensuing battle was also over material access. HRW observed that the fighting between the groups centred around villages located on tributaries with oil wealth. This trajectory of violence

[545] Albin-Lackey, *Politics as War: The Human Rights Impact and Causes of Post-Election Violence in Rivers State, Nigeria*, 54.
[546] Asari, "Hijra of Asari Dokubo to Warri & How Obasanjo, Odili Rigged 2003 Election in River State."
[547] Hazen and Horner, *Small Arms, Armed Violence, and Insecurity in Nigeria: The Niger Delta in Perspective*, 77-79.
[548] Ibigibo, interview.
[549] Human Rights Watch, *Rivers and Blood: Guns, Oil and Power in Nigeria's Rivers State*, 4.

showed that it was primarily a struggle between the NDPVF and NDV groups over control of access to bunkering routes. However, the state government favoured the NDV. Hence, the NDPVF employed the rhetoric of resource control and self-determination as has long been articulated by local activist groups as a panacea to unrest in the region.[550] Lots of the smaller groups were also involved in bunkering. Since access to bunkering business is at different levels, some could act as security for those directly involved in this illicit trade. Others who have the where-with-all could be involved directly in the stealing and trading of these natural resources.

Groups that lacked territories and capacity to deal big in the bunkering business could operate at the level known in Rivers State as "Kpom-fire," -illegal refining of crude oil.[551] Nwokedi differentiates this level of bunkering from the large-scale by terming it Artisanal or local refining. She also confirms the involvement of the state at both levels of the informal economy.[552] In line with Nwokedi's argument, Watt shows that this bunkering business "is organised through a vast state-centred syndicate linking high ranking military, politicians, the security apparatuses, and the Niger Delta special military task forces, and the coast guard."[553] Similarly, Augustine Ikelegbe writes that the direct trade of these illegal commodities was initially the exclusives of top political elites, security officers, and other senior public servants.[554] Resources theorists focus on only this looting of oil and conclude that it is the desire to steal resources that motivates Niger Delta militant groups into the insurgency, and then liken them to a criminal syndicate.[555] However, it ignores the role of politicians and how their interaction with the group predates the stealing of oil.

Ibigibo affirms not only that the local elites facilitated bunkering, but the military men sent to secure oil production were involved.[556] In the height of the armed struggle, security agencies did little to hinder the access of these groups to this illegal trade. Ebimini, who is an academic from Rivers State, confirmed that members of these groups were often armed. He affirmed that the police were aware, but hardly made any deliberate attempt to disarm or prosecute them

[550] Ibid., 10-12.
[551] Ibigibo, interview.
[552] Nwokedi, "Weapons of the Weak and African Politics: Protests and Resistance in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria," 87-88.
[553] Watts, "Petro-Insurgency or Criminal Syndicate? Conflict & Violence in the Niger Delta," 650.
[554] Ikelegbe, "The Economy of Conflict in the Oil Rich Niger Delta Region of Nigeria," 223-226.
[555] Collier, "Rebellion as a Quasi-Criminal Activity."; Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It*.
[556] Ibigibo, interview.

until the militants willingly returned weapons in an amnesty program.[557] Studies of this nature have shown that unless the violence is no longer in the interests of the political elites, there is no commitment to engage state security forces in countering them.[558] The Rivers State government had denied any involvement in this violence between NDV and NDPVF.[559] However, the state facilitated the negotiations that deescalated it.[560]

As the armed conflict between Tom's NDV and Asari's NDPVF lingered on, tens of thousands were displaced, and dozens died.[561] The federal government deployed the military to Rivers State at the instance of Governor Odili[562] as it was having a distressing effect on the Nigerian economy, which is dependent on oil from the region. Asari accused the Nigerian security forces deployed of collaborating with the NDV against his group. He argued that it was his obligation to liberate his people from those who oppress them, in this case, the Nigerian security agencies and the NDV.

> The decision to take up arms was imposed on me, like in most places where there are armed struggles. It is the oppressor that imposes resistance on the people. When you push the people to a point where they can no longer move backwards, they will come back, and when they are coming back, they will fight for their lives, to survive. I have always believed in armed struggle, but the armed struggle at that time was premature. We were not ready for it. After the 2003 madness, what they called elections because there was no election, they wrote figures and Olusegun Obasanjo, the regular maxima became President. The Ijaw Youth Council that I was leading, which was founded by the generality of Ijaw people at Kaiama in 1998, met and passed a resolution.[563]

Asari claimed that his group launched attacks to liberate the people from the state-backed NDV. The codename for the first attack was "Operation Isaac Boro," then the second was called "Operation Dennis Fiberesinma." He claimed that they liberated several towns and took Port Harcourt for eight hours. The Ijaw elders of the Ijaw National Congress, as well as the British,

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[557] Amnesty was granted by the federal government in 2009 to the groups that handed in their weapons. In exchange for monthly stipends, employment, scholarship for training and studies at home and abroad. Ebimini, ibid.|, Cited Pages|.no. 13.
[558] Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India*; Wilson, *Ethno-Religious Violence in Indonesia: From Soil to God*, 74.
[559] International Crisis Group, *Fuelling the Niger Delta Crisis*, Africa Report No 118 (Dakar/Brussels, 28 September 2006), 3-4, https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/118-fuelling-the-niger-delta-crisis.pdf.
[560] Mujahid Dokubo Asari, "Root Causes of Niger Delta Crisis and the Way Out," in *Rivers State Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (2008). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CH22ZVwg_e8.
[561] Human Rights Watch, *Rivers and Blood: Guns, Oil and Power in Nigeria's Rivers State*, 2.
[562] Ibid., 19.
[563] Sabella Ogbobode Abidde, *Nigeria's Niger Delta: Militancy, Amnesty, and the Postamnesty Environment* (Lexington Books, 2017), 86.

Canadian, and US diplomatic missions, sent people to his camp, to request a cessation of fire. President Obasanjo also sent Nuhu Ribadu to appeal to him, and on 3rd September 2004, the President called him to make peace. However, on 15th September the same year, after the suspension of hostilities, Obasanjo ordered the bombing of eleven of NDPVF's camps.[564] In the wake of a massive military assault on the Asari's camp without an attack on the base of the NDV, Asari declared total war against the government on 27th September 2004. He threatened to launch an "all-out war against the country unless Niger Delta was granted higher oil resource control."[565]

> We have decided to declare Operation Locust Feast, which will cover the whole Niger Delta. It is going to be an all-out war against the Nigerian state. Now the whole Ijaw nation will be fighting against the Nigerian state.[566]

All oil companies operating in the delta were requested to exit the region. Also, the group asked embassies to withdraw their citizens by 1st October 2004, until the government negotiates self-determination for the Ijaw people.[567] Although the government initially downplayed the threats by Asari as that of a gangster and criminal, Governor Odili had made futile attempts to mediate between the two groups. President Obasanjo invited the parties to the conflict in a bid to resolve the impasse. On 29th September 2004, Asari was in the federal capital city, Abuja to negotiate with the President.[568] On 1st October 2004, President Obasanjo announced a ceasefire and an agreement with Asari to disarm and disband the NDPVF.[569] The President's intervention resulted in an immediate and drastic drop in hostilities. A report has it that the ceasefire negotiation "included the award of $US1800 for every weapon handed in."[570]

5.9 The escalation of the insurgency

However, on 28th August 2005, Asari and some other Ijaw youth leaders held a meeting under the name Pan Niger Delta Action Conference (PANDAC). He co-signed a communique released to the press on 31st August 2005. In the press statement, they accused local and state

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[564] Mujahid Dokubo Asari, "Revealed! Killers of Marshall Harry, 10 Years Ago!," in *Rivers State Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (2008). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fpdQZ6LB_s.
[565] Human Rights Watch, *Rivers and Blood: Guns, Oil and Power in Nigeria's Rivers State*, 2.
[566] Mujahid Dokubo Asari, "Militancy--Not War--in Nigeria," news release, 27th September, 2004, https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/militancy-not-war-nigeria; "Threat to Nigerian Oil Facilities," *Al Jazeera*, September 27, 2004.
[567] "Nigerian Rebel Group Declares War," *Al Jazeera*, September 28, 2004, https://www.aljazeera.com/archive/2004/09/200849142226564231.html.
[568] "Nigerian Rebel Leader Arrives in Abuja for Peace Talks," *China Daily*, September 29, 2004, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-09/29/content_378828.htm.
[569] "Nigeria Delta Rebels Agree Truce," *China Daily*, October 2, 2004, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-10/02/content_379521.htm.
[570] Nwajiaku-Dahou, "The Political Economy of Oil and 'Rebellion'in Nigeria's Niger Delta," 304.

officials in the Niger Delta of conniving with the federal government to loot oil revenue accruing to the region. The conference called on Nigerians to overthrow what they saw as the dictatorial regime of President Obasanjo. The communique urged Nigerians to replace the administration with a provisional government of National Unity, which would organise a national conference to restructure Nigeria.[571] On 10th September 2005, Asari granted an interview to the Independent Newspaper; he asserted that

> Nigeria is an evil entity. It has nothing to stand on, and I will continue to fight and try to see that Nigeria dissolves and disintegrates and I am ready to hold on to the struggle to see to this till the day I will die. I do not see any reason why I should continue to live with people that have no relationship with me whatsoever.[572]

On 15th September 2005, the London Metropolitan Police arrested Diepreye Alamieyeseigha on money laundering charges. He was the then Governor-general of Ijaw Nation and governor of Bayelsa State, a state primarily made up of the Ijaw ethnic group in Nigeria. He had supported Atiku Abubakar's presidential aspiration against Obasanjo in 2003. On his return to Nigeria, the Bayelsa State House of Assembly impeached him as governor. President Obasanjo could have plotted the travails of Alamieyeseigha as revenge for his role in the 2003 Ijaw opposition. The arrest had angered the then President of IYC, Jonjon Oyinfie who threatened that

> We know that the British are not operating in our interests; we will not accept it. We are mobilising to take any necessary action against the British and the Federal Government. If they push us, then they should expect the worst.[573]

Asari did not issue any public statement on the travails of the governor. However, he was arrested by the State Security Service on 20th September 2005, after the statement by the IYC President. Several Ijaw youth leaders condemned the arrest but dissociated themselves from the announcement of Oyinfie.[574] However, the federal government charged Asari to court on five-count charges bordering on treasonable offences. The government accused him of forming an organization that wants Nigeria to disintegrate and inciting rebellion against a democratic

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[571] Adekunle, "National Interest Supercedes Individual Rights – S-Court," *Vanguard Newspaper*, August 31, 2018, https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/08/national-interest-supercedes-individual-rights-s-court/.
[572] "Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari V Federal Republic of Nigeria," *The Supreme Court of Nigeria*, S.C. 208/2006, 2007, http://www.nigeria-law.org/Alhaji%20Mujahid%20Dokubo-Asari%20v%20Federal%20Republic%20of%20Nigeria.htm.
[573] Ikechukwu Eze and John Ighodaro, "Alamieyeseigha Lands in Brixton Prisons: To Remain in Prison Till Oct 6," *Vanguard Newspaper*, September 29, 2005, https://www.laits.utexas.edu/africa/ads/1197b.html.
[574] "Asari Dokubo Arrested," *Vanguard Newspaper*, September 21, 2005, http://nigeriavillagesquare.com/2/xf/threads/asari-dokubo-arrested.1540/.

government.[575] His statement to the police was evidence tendered in court to incarcerate him. It read in parts:

> Because General Olusegun Obasanjo manipulated himself to power through massive rigging of the 2003 election, the people must seize power through the process of democratic, progressive mass action that will lead to the formation of a provisional government of National Unity. We can achieve peace without fighting by going our separate ways like the Czechoslovakia experience. If there is no peace, the process leading to armed struggle cannot be ascertained as I am not God. The Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), which I led, has totally disarmed. Hence, the armed struggle will predicate on the actions and activities of the regime of the Nigerian state. I will pursue the course of the disintegration of Nigeria through the process of the Peoples National Conference. When Nigeria eventually disintegrates, the Ijaws will form a country of their own. If the struggle outlives me, I will be grateful to God for others better than myself, Isaac Adaka Boro; Ken Saro-Wiwa had gone before me.[576]

Several threats, ultimatums, protests, and the closure of oil platforms by different groups in demand for the release of Asari did not yield much.[577] In the clamour over the travails of both Governor Alamieyeseigha and Asari, various militant groups from across the region decided to merge to make demands on the country with one voice under the name, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). The leader of Camp 5 in the west of the delta, Government Ekpemupolo, who is popularly known as Tompolo, championed this merger. Asari narrated thus:

> Tom Polo called me to send in my people to Okerenkoko for a meeting of all the groups so that a direction will be fashioned out to press for the release of myself and Alams (Governor Alamieyeseigha). I sent two of our most trusted female Commanders, Cynthia Whyte and another alongside some of my personal bodyguards known as the Immortals led by my cousin Dakuro Princewill. It was at this meeting that a decision was taken by the groups to have a name and a platform for the struggle. Hence, MEND was created not as an organization but as a name for the purpose of issuing unified statements.[578]

The rise of MEND signified an attempt at collaboration among the different armed groups in the Niger Delta. However, there were signs of cooperation between groups in the region, especially since Asari had initially taken refuge in Camp 5 in the heat of the rivalry between

[575] Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari V Federal Republic of Nigeria.
[576] Adekunle National Interest Supercedes Individual Rights – S-Court.
[577] Abdullahi M. Gulloma, "Nigeria: Asari Dokubo Arrested," *Daily Trust Newspaper*, September 21, 2005, https://allafrica.com/stories/200509210417.html; "Police Arrest Boma Dokubo, Sister to Mujahid Dokubo-Asari," *Online Nigeria*, October 6, 2005, https://onlinenigeria.com/nm/templates/?a=5472; Asari Dokubo Arrested.
[578] Asari Asari Dokubo: Me, Henry Okah "Jomo Gbomo", Judith Asuni and the Niger Delta Insurgency.

NDPVF and NDV.[579] The immediate and unconditional release of Asari and Governor Alamieyeseigha topped the list of MEND's key demands.[580] Interestingly, while giving testimony at the River State Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Asari confessed that Odili sent him NGN3,000,000 when the federal government imprisoned him. Odili sent him this money "even though he was privy to why I was in prison."[581]

The emergence of MEND marked a "spectacular escalation in violent attacks on oil installations and abduction of oil workers."[582] Oil production in Nigeria plummeted by about 50% between 2005 and 2009. At the peak of the insurgency, estimates show that Nigeria lost about $17billion, $18billion, and $20billion in 2006, 2007, and 2008 respectively.[583] "At the height of the NDPVF's strength, an estimated 70,000 to 300,000 barrels per day were lost to oil theft, generating handsome profits for the militia in the range of millions of dollars per year."[584]

5.10 Conclusion

The existing theoretical explanation of insurgency assumes that militant organizations emerged as armed challengers of the state. This assumption glosses over the relatively peaceful start of social groups which later evolved into rebel organizations in the Niger Delta. It further ignores the patronage relationship that initially existed between groups, such as, the NDPVF and Rivers State political elites before they took weapons against the state. The analysis in this chapter highlighted some of the most relevant contextual factors that initially fuelled conflict in the region. However, the discovery of oil in a commercial quantity placed resources at the centre of the conflicts. The significance of oil revenue to the country was not evident in the standard of living in the Niger Delta. Instead, the multinational exploration of oil eroded the existing sources of livelihood. Frustration over the worsening conditions, the deficient corporate social responsibility of the transnational oil companies, and the failure of the state to address it

[579] Asuni, *Understanding the Armed Groups of the Niger Delta*, 17-18.
[580] Ukiwo, "From "Pirates" to "Militants": A Historical Perspective on Anti-State and Anti-Oil Company Mobilization among the Ijaw of Warri, Western Niger Delta," 605-606; Hazen and Horner, *Small Arms, Armed Violence, and Insecurity in Nigeria: The Niger Delta in Perspective*, 79-81; Albin-Lackey, *Politics as War: The Human Rights Impact and Causes of Post-Election Violence in Rivers State, Nigeria*, 55-56; Watts, "Petro-Insurgency or Criminal Syndicate? Conflict & Violence in the Niger Delta," 646.
[581] Asari, "Bushboys Drive Ateke Tom out of Okrika."
[582] Watts, "Petro-Insurgency or Criminal Syndicate? Conflict & Violence in the Niger Delta," 637; Omotola, "Liberation Movements and Rising Violence in the Niger Delta: The New Contentious Site of Oil and Environmental Politics," 46.
[583] Michael J. Watts and Ibaba Samuel Ibaba, "Turbulent Oil: Conflict and Insecurity in the Niger Delta," *African Security* 4, no. 1 (2011): 5.
[584] Biberman and Turnbull, "When Militias Provide Welfare: Lessons from Pakistan and Nigeria," 719.

resulted in riots in the community against multinationals in their location. However, the government employed excessive force to subdue these protesters. Although discontent in the region led to riots as grievance theory postulates, the state was able to use its coercive power to quell these rather peaceful community mobilizations.

Social groups had emerged in this context of agitations against the state over the deficient oil wealth benefit to the Niger Delta. However, with the transition from military to democratic rule, some of these groups were co-opted into the emerging new form of a patronage network. Politicians in the democratising state sought support from different groups in exchange for political cover and economic benefits. One of such groups was NDPVF whose leader was the president of IYC, the foremost youth socio-cultural organization of the Ijaw ethnic group. The attempt by political elites to co-opt IYC factionalized the group, Asari resigned as the President to organise the NDPVF. The chapter shows that NDPVF developed a mutually beneficial relationship with Governor Odili until the anti-Obasanjo position of the group divided it. The group was high in the patronage network and had the political cover to collaborate in the looting of oil resources, but NDV sought to replace it after the fissure in the relationship. Although the looting of oil was significant to the militant group as captured in resources theory, a narrative that starts from that position only analyses a part of how the insurgency started. The NDPVF had to reinforce to maintain its privileges against the political elites' newly favoured NDV. However, these groups interpreted their change of strategy to arms as a struggle for justice for the region, while the state framed it as criminal activities requiring a violent response. The next chapter compares this case against the Boko Haram case and tests the applicability of the Political Relevance model in both cases.

6. The Political Relevance model and the evolution of the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force

6.1 Introduction

How did insurgent groups emerge in Nigeria following its return to civilian rule in 1999? Have the grievances over frustrating socioeconomic conditions or the pursuit of material benefit been the core motivation of rebel organizations? What roles did ideas and interpretation play in these groups' call to arms? How can researchers better synchronise the roles of structural opportunity and individual agency? The comparative analysis of two violent non-state actors which started after 1999 in Nigeria from significantly different regions provided a unique opportunity to answer these core questions. This chapter will test the applicability of the Political Relevance model derived from the political process that led to the emergence of Boko Haram by using the case of NDPVF. The analysis tests if the four stages theorized by the model are also evident in this instance. It does this by seeking to answer questions that are consistent with the case of Boko Haram and by extension, the Political Relevance model. In the process of answering these questions, the analysis compares and shows the intricate differences in the cases.

The Political Relevance model hypothesises that these rebel movements started with a threat to their position in the Nigerian political patronage network. It argues that in this patron-client model, a client with the requisite resources will violently challenge a patron's attempt to block its privileges. Therefore, insurgent groups in Nigeria were initially social associations formed like others within the confines and opportunities provided by local socio-cultural, economic, political structures and individual agencies. Some of these organizations exhibited tendencies towards violence, a type of resource important to the electoral process in Nigeria's nascent democracy; this made them politically relevant groups. Political elites co-opted these organizations into the burgeoning patronage network. However, as the groups acquired extra resources, the gap in the power relations between them and the elites lessened. They soon began to pursue interests divergent from those of their patrons. The attempt by the politicians to displace the client from the patronage network resulted in violent reprisal. This political struggle resulted in a reciprocal violent engagement which both parties explained out of context.

Hence, this chapter tests if there was mutually beneficial interaction between local political elites in Rivers State and the NDPVF group before it became a challenger of the state. It further seeks to know if there was a rift in the relationship and if this fissure led to the call to rebellion. Finally, it tests for

evidence of an attempt to interpret the emergence of this insurgent group out of context. This comparative method is consistent with the structured, focused comparison discussed in chapter one.[585]

The findings in this chapter show significant differences in the historical contexts between the northeast and the delta regions of Nigeria. However, the rise of the Boko Haram and NDPVF rebel groups significantly followed the same political process discussed in the Political Relevance model. Asari's group rose and became a client in the Rivers State patronage network before he reorganised and designated the organization as NDPVF. Also, just like the case of Boko Haram, there is enough ground to argue that the evolution of the social group into an insurgent organization relates to the fissure of its relationship with political elites. Both parties also interpreted the emerging conflict in ways that resonate with the constituency. Hence, a study of the patronage-based political process in Rivers State immediately after Nigeria's return to democratic rule will enhance our understanding of the evolution of NDPVF to rebellion. This case is similar to how the patron-client political environment in Borno State provided a better explanation of the progression of Boko Haram from a relatively non-violent religious sect to an insurgent group.

6.2 The mutually beneficial political interaction

The Political Relevance model asserts that there is an initial mutually beneficial interaction between a set of local political elites and a politically relevant group. Pertinent to this first step in the model is that there is at first a relatively non-violent social organization that later evolved into rebels. So, this chapter starts its inquiry by asking if the NDPVF initially existed as a relatively non-violent group. The evidence in chapter five shows that Asari, the leader of the NDPVF, had a significant following before he named his group. However, it was not as apparent as Boko Haram, which was a religious group and consequently, had regular meetings that the public was aware of. Although Asari reorganised and named the NDPVF in 2003, he explained that he could not ascertain the date the group started.[586] This claim was understood considering the group's composition of members who became his followers before 2003. Some joined him since his adventure into the public space as far back as in the 1990s. Also, he stated that he had to reorganise his group and named it NDPVF. This is an assertion that further proves that there was a group that was not initially known for violence.[587]

[585] George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*.
[586] Marquardt, "Mujahid Dokubo-Asari: The Niger Delta's Ijaw Leader."
[587] Hazen and Horner, *Small Arms, Armed Violence, and Insecurity in Nigeria: The Niger Delta in Perspective*, 77; Albin-Lackey, *Politics as War: The Human Rights Impact and Causes of Post-Election Violence in Rivers State, Nigeria*, 55.

If the NDPVF was already in existence in the 1990s, how come it became so conspicuous in 2003? In response, Tolumu explains that it was not like the groups were not present in 1999, but they had not been drawn into the web of politics the way they became in 2003. He explained that the group became relevant as contestation for power was more intense in the later year than the previous.[588] This revelation that NDPVF existed as a social group before its evolution into a rebel group challenges the grievance and resource-based theoretical exclusion of the non-violent emergence of rebel organizations. Its start was not significantly different from other social groups in the Niger Delta. The difference between the start of NDPVF and Boko Haram is that while the Niger Delta group started as an advocacy group, that of the northeast was religious. However, both did not start as armed challengers of the state.

Oshodi explains that NDPVF was perceived as an activist group because of Asari's politicking while in university and his prominence in IYC.[589] As enunciated by Adunbi, groups like the NDPVF are partly products of the economic structure reshaped by the relatively recent exploration of oil on the one hand, and the identity socio-cultural structure created by the meaning ascribed to this oil production by the indigenes of the Niger Delta.[590] Hence, this study considers NDPVF's emergence as similar to other groups which started in the struggle against the perceived injustice perpetrated by the federal government and the transnational oil companies in the region.

This section acknowledges the pre-2003 presence of NDPVF before its naming. It considers the group's initial existence through the evolving challenges against the economic structure reshaped by the rising importance of oil production and the grievances over the distribution of its benefit in Nigeria. The discontent and frustration over environmental degradation from oil and inadequate compensation of Niger Delta indigenes shaped the formation of the NDPVF like many others. However, some other factors came into play that caused the evolution of this pre-existing group into a militant non-state actor and not some others. The difference between this and the case of Boko Haram is the variance in identity marker – a religious doctrine in the case of Boko Haram while oil citizenship in the case of NDPVF. Hence, the difference in ideas, the legacy social institutions adopted for legitimisation, and the rhetoric used in framing the cause of violence. Having concluded that NDPVF existed as a relatively non-violent social

[588] Tolumu, interview.
[589] Oshodi Asari Dokubo in Person.
[590] Adunbi, *Oil Wealth and Insurgency in Nigeria*.

organization before evolving into violence, another core line of inquiry related to the Political Relevance model is ascertaining the group's incorporation into the patronage network.

Was there an interaction between the group and a set of local political elites before it became militant? Evidence available traces the rise of Asari in IYC to his connection with Governor Odili and his aides.[591] Odili's interaction with the IYC was also evident in his funding of the IYC election in 2001.[592] At the level of analysis, this sponsorship represents the opportunity to ensure that his preferred group took control of the IYC. Asari has also confirmed his close interaction with the governor and his aides.[593] He was explicit on this in his presentation at the Rivers State Truth and Reconciliation Commission.[594] Unlike the case of Muhammad Yusuf where his interaction with the Borno State politicians was significantly under wraps; the relationship between Asari and Rivers State politicians was in the public domain. The reason for this difference is not far-fetched as Boko Haram presented itself as apolitical, but Asari's group took sides during elections. However, what this research considers of essence is proof of interactions between these groups and local politicians, whether in secret or open.

The evidence of a relationship between the Asari-led organization and Rivers State political elites fills the significant gap in extant theoretical perspectives that ignore pre-insurgent cooperation between rebels and politicians. Similarly, the evidence of interaction between members of Boko Haram and Borno State political elites emphasize the need to capture the political interaction between possible militant organizations and local political elites in insurgency explanatory models. Therefore, unlike other models that proceed to study the rationale behind the insurgent group's violent challenge of the state, the Political Relevance model advances with an inquiry into the relationship between the would-be insurgent group and the political elites. This model asserts that this interaction is from the desire for mutual benefits between both parties. That raises the question of whether the interaction between the Rivers State politicians and the NDPVF was mutually beneficial or just a one-sided manipulation?

[591] Courson, "Spaces of Insurgency: Petro-Violence and the Geography of Conflict in Nigeria's Niger Delta," 130; Watts, "Petro-Insurgency or Criminal Syndicate? Conflict & Violence in the Niger Delta," 654.
[592] Courson, "Spaces of Insurgency: Petro-Violence and the Geography of Conflict in Nigeria's Niger Delta," 132.
[593] Asari, "Peter Odili Donated N10 Million to Dokubo Asari in Detention."
[594] Asari, "Bushboys Drive Ateke Tom out of Okrika."

The political relevance of the NDPVF prompted the local politicians to court the group. Watts explains that there was a need for Governor Odili to take control of the influential IYC.[595] Courson further elucidates that it was a battle for the control of IYC between Governor Odili and his Bayelsa State counterpart.[596] Asari has similarly associated his interaction with Odili with his IYC presidency.[597] There was a need for the state officials to take control of the highly potent organization which would give them significant leverage over the endemic youth unrest. Also, Asari's antecedents as a radical with the capacity to perpetrate violence had made him relevant to a set of Rivers State politicians at that time.[598] Note that the Political Relevance model asserts that the support needed by political elites depends on the political context. In Nigeria's nascent democracy, the ability to commit political violence against opposing parties, interfere with electoral registration and voting, threaten, assault, intimidate or assassinate supporters of opposing candidates are all relevant resources during elections.

Benatu and Doubra in separate interviews explained how the governor lost influential political allies before the 2003 governorship election; hence, the need for the support of groups like NDPVF.[599] Courson describes how as early as 2000, Governor Odili and his aides like Magnus Abe, who decamped to the PDP in 2003, had courted Asari. They nurtured this relationship in the interest of maintaining the governor and PDP's political dominance in the Kalabari clan, the home place of Asari.[600] In the case of Boko Haram, the resource that attracted the local political elites to the group was its potential for bloc-vote. ECOMOG was the group charged with electoral violence by the collaborating political elites in Borno State. However, the resource that made Asari's group politically relevant was its capacity to mobilize youths capable of committing electoral violence.[601] Tolumu asserted of such Niger Delta groups that

> they did not help to vote; they helped in manipulating the process. In many communities, they drove the voter away and superintended over the thumb-printing and writing of results. Intimidation of opposition and even going to the villages to tell them whom they should vote. It was a mobilization of violence, intimidation, manipulation of electoral processes, not a campaign.[602]

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[595] Watts, "Petro-Insurgency or Criminal Syndicate? Conflict & Violence in the Niger Delta," 654.
[596] Courson, "Spaces of Insurgency: Petro-Violence and the Geography of Conflict in Nigeria's Niger Delta," 130.
[597] Asari, "Bushboys Drive Ateke Tom out of Okrika."
[598] Human Rights Watch, *Rivers and Blood: Guns, Oil and Power in Nigeria's Rivers State*, 5-6; Hazen and Horner, *Small Arms, Armed Violence, and Insecurity in Nigeria: The Niger Delta in Perspective*, 77; Nwajiaku-Dahou, "The Political Economy of Oil and 'Rebellion'in Nigeria's Niger Delta," 303.
[599] Benatu, interview; Doubra, interview.
[600] Courson, "Spaces of Insurgency: Petro-Violence and the Geography of Conflict in Nigeria's Niger Delta," 132.
[601] Davidheiser and Nyiayaana, "Demobilization or Remobilization? The Amnesty Program and the Search for Peace in the Niger Delta," 49.
[602] Tolumu, interview.

The Political Relevance model further theorizes based on the patronage model that this form of interaction is mutually beneficial to both parties. Watt asserts that "the rise of various militias funded as political thugs during the 2003 elections is a very complex story."[603] Rivers State politicians sought to advance their political interest through the relationship with Asari's group. However, the interaction was not just about the elites seeking to manipulate the group for its benefit; Asari's group also sought the benefits of political relevance. The group met some of its interests and accrued some benefits by possessing resources that politicians needed. Remember that Asari initially desired a political position,[604] which he satisfied with the IYC presidency that provided him with political leverage. The office gave him and his immediate group better access and higher positioning in the River State patronage network. For example, Courson noted that Odili awarded the contract of keeping Kalabari waterways free of pirates to Asari.[605] HRW further confirmed the disbursement of public funds to Asari's type of group before the 2003 elections. In their interview

> One cult member described a meeting in Government House in Port Harcourt just prior to the April 14 polls during which he saw government officials hand out between N5 million and N10 million ($38,000 to $77,000) to several different cult groups in return for their assisting or simply accepting the PDP's plans to rig the polls.

Moreover, while giving testimony at the River State Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Asari confessed that he received one million Naira and three million Naira at different times from Governor Odili. In his words, "Odili was a very good "Donatus" to me."[606] Donatus is a corruption of donator or donor. It is a demeaning and ridiculing term in Nigerian pidgin English for an individual who seemingly gives freely without strings attached; perceived as a foolish giver. Asari has also admitted benefiting from bunkering although he has never agreed that it is illegal. The government did not stop his black-market oil dealing at least till the NDV tried to upstage his NDPVF.[607] This extortion of natural resources differentiates the NDPVF from Boko Haram.[608] Boko Haram did not have access to natural resources, but it still enjoyed state funds through the appointment of one of its members into the Borno State executive council. It also benefited by way of political cover as the group was untouchable before its fissure with the local political elites.

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[603] Watts, "Petro-Insurgency or Criminal Syndicate? Conflict & Violence in the Niger Delta," 654.
[604] Amungo Profile: Nigeria's Oil Militant; Biberman and Turnbull, "When Militias Provide Welfare: Lessons from Pakistan and Nigeria," 720; Asari, "Bushboys Drive Ateke Tom out of Okrika."
[605] Courson, "Spaces of Insurgency: Petro-Violence and the Geography of Conflict in Nigeria's Niger Delta," 132.
[606] Asari, "Bushboys Drive Ateke Tom out of Okrika."
[607] Human Rights Watch, *Rivers and Blood: Guns, Oil and Power in Nigeria's Rivers State*, 8.
[608] Marquardt, "Mujahid Dokubo-Asari: The Niger Delta's Ijaw Leader."; Asari, interview.

The evidence provided in this section shows that there was a mutually beneficial interaction between Asari's group and the state officials. While the political elites sought to secure political power from this relationship, the group also desired to become a member of the political patronage network and enjoy the paraphernalia of closeness to power. Hence, this case meets the first condition of an initial mutually beneficial collaboration espoused by the Political Relevance model despite that the Asari's group was yet to be named the NDPVF at this point. There is yet another similar group that also met this condition and whose role in defining the trajectory of NDPVF and the start of the violence in Rivers State is significant. This group is NDV led by Ateke Tom; the analysis of its role is in the call-to-rebellion section of this chapter.

The implication of the initial patron-client relationship between the local political elites and the would-be insurgents is significant in explaining the political process of rebel group formation. It points out that violent challengers of the state do not necessarily start that way. If there was a previous mutually beneficial interaction, explaining that the sudden turn to violence is motivated by pre-existing grievance becomes insufficient. The discontents over Relative Deprivation or Horizontal Inequalities in north-east or south-south Nigeria pre-date the rebel movements. These grievances already existed before the cordial relationship these groups maintained with the political elites. It is problematic to raise structural issues that existed before and during the friendly relations as the cause of the sudden evolution of these groups into violent challengers of the state. The Political Relevance model refocuses analysis to the happenings between the co-optation of these insurgent organizations and the collapse of the relationship. This model does not discount the role of grievances, but analyses beyond the ubiquitous discontent. It looks to the actual rebel organization whose discontent is core to the violence and seeks to explain their sudden grievance against the state after a time of cooperation.

This new model also challenges the resources and ideological explanation that points to greed over material benefit and normative religious commitment as the core motivation for rebel group formation. The discovery and exploration of oil in the Niger Delta had started long before the emergence of the NDPVF; so, a resources narrative should account for the later timing of such groups and their subsequent turn to violent rebellion. It should further explain why Boko Haram also started at about the same period in Borno State, which lacked such resources. Also, it is problematic to argue that religious beliefs commonly shared for centuries[609] motivated the

[609] See chapter on northern Nigerian background

recent insurgent group onset. These explanations become challenging when they omit the cordial interactions between both state and would-be insurgent actors just before they turn to violence. The Political Relevance model does not discount the effect of these material and emotional desires but argues that the core pursuit is political power. Firstly, Boko Haram and NDPVF's access to the patronage network provided them with political cover. This power subsequently enabled them to engage in activities that encompassed other material and symbolic values. Theorists will provide a better causal explanation if their narrative includes friendly relations before the rebellion.

There are important differences in the two cases worth mentioning, albeit they do not warrant narratives that exclude the pre-insurgency cooperation between the political elites and would-be rebel groups. The NDPVF case shows that local political elites do not only seek collaboration with groups because of the potential for bloc-vote, as was the case of Boko Haram. In the case of NDPVF, it also had much to do with its capacity to perpetrate electoral violence. The NDPVF also shows that the benefit which accrues to a politically relevant group could include the extortion of natural resources. The set of local political elites could also manipulate the group for electoral violence. However, the salient point is that there was a mutually rewarding collaboration between the political elites and the politically relevant group before the groups evolved into armed non-state actors. This fact stands, no matter the reason for the interaction or the form of benefit derived by these actors.

6.3 The fissure of the political interaction

The second stage of the Political Relevance model theorizes a fissure in the relationship between the politically relevant group and a set of local political elites due to the divergence of interests. This section finds evidence of fracture in the relationship between Asari's group and Rivers State officials. The questions asked are, was there a severed relationship? If there was, what explains this schism in collaboration? The confessions of Asari at the Rivers State Truth and Reconciliation Commission is a strong pointer to a soured relationship. His insistence on giving a press statement that was injurious to the position of Governor Odili shows bitterness.[610] The most likely explanation for this is Asari's opposition to the 2003 re-election bid of President Olusegun Obasanjo[611] - a situation that angered Governor Odili.[612]

[610] Asari, "Hijra of Asari Dokubo to Warri & How Obasanjo, Odili Rigged 2003 Election in River State."
[611] Asari, "Dokubo Asari - How Tom Ateke's Icelanders Became a Cult Group."
[612] Asari, "Hijra of Asari Dokubo to Warri & How Obasanjo, Odili Rigged 2003 Election in River State."

This anti-Obasanjo's re-election stance and the press statement which discredited the election process that returned him to power resulted in the severed relationship between Odili and Asari. The fissure affected Asari's access to the patronage network in Rivers State and the political cover he had hitherto enjoyed, which among others protected the bunkering activities by his group.[613] Asari explained that there were several attempts on his life by the government-supported NDV group which is led by Ateke Tom. According to him, this constrained him to organise his group outside of the IYC.[614] However, it is vital to remember the assertions that he became the president of IYC because of the influence of Governor Odili. It is such a coincidence that Asari resigned from the IYC presidency immediately after his severed relationship with Odili. If the interests of Asari and Tom aligned with the grievances articulated by the Kanama declaration, IYC leaders could have resolved their difference in the interest of the struggle against injustice in the Niger Delta. It is the analysis of this section that Asari's role at the IYC was no more tenable after the loss of his patron. For him to weather the storm that the fissure was going to cause him, he had to refocus on his NDPVF, a group that was more loyal to him than IYC.

The grievances that necessitated the souring of the patron-client relationship in the NDPVF case differs from that of Boko Haram. While the discontent of the Niger Delta group concerns the 2003 presidential elections and its subsequent replacement in the patronage network by the Ateke Tom-led NDV, Boko Haram became frustrated with Governor Ali Modu Sheriff's breach of his promise of full sharia implementation in Borno State and also the restriction of its funding. There was also the subsequent state security action to regulate its initially unhindered activities and proselytisation. These strains caused one of the leaders of Boko Haram, Buji Foi to resigned from the Borno State executive council and also, Asari, the NDPVF's leader step down as the president of the Ijaw Youth Council, a position facilitated by Governor Odili of Rivers State. Hence, just as Buju Foi left his subordinate position to the patron, Asari also quitted his post that the governor enabled him to attain. Both groups then intensified criticisms of their former patrons immediately after these fissures in relationships.

The conflict in Rivers State indeed occurred in the context of oil exploration grievances. However, the process which led to it shows that the conflict started with a severed relationship between NDPVF and the governor of the state over the extent of Asari's political support. The

[613] Human Rights Watch, *Rivers and Blood: Guns, Oil and Power in Nigeria's Rivers State*, 8.
[614] Asari, "Hijra of Asari Dokubo to Warri & How Obasanjo, Odili Rigged 2003 Election in River State."

grievance was not attributed to the oil-wealth distribution or unresolved environmental challenges emanating from oil exploration in the region. Tolumu explained that on 20 November 1999, after President Obasanjo ordered a military assault on Odi, an Ijaw town in Bayelsa State, as discussed in the previous chapter, it would be ironic to see any proclaimed Ijaw nationalist working for the second term return of the president. He argued that this explains the animosity that the Asari-led group had towards Obasanjo. The respondent explained that Diepreye Alamieyeseigha, the governor of the predominantly Ijaw state of Bayelsa, also shared this bitterness. Hence, his support for Vice-President Atiku Abubakar to unseat Obasanjo in the prelude to the 2003 presidential election.

Odili as the patron of the IYC, especially Asari and his group, wanted his beneficiary to work for all PDP candidates at all levels, including the presidency. Asari, who was then the organization's president, insisted that he would not support Obasanjo's second term bid. When a man Odili considered his hatchet-man was now deciding and giving condition as to the candidate he would support; it was tantamount to the "tail wagging the dog." Asari even went ahead to discredit the process of the election after Obasanjo had won. "That caused a political rift in a political society where loyalty is most valuable. There was a crisis in the patronage network."[615] The fissure in the collaboration in the Boko Haram case primarily centred on the failed implementation of a pre-election agreement by the political elites. However, that of the NDPVF reflected a disagreement on the extent of electioneering support. The cases fulfil the model's second level stage of the soured relationship between the local politicians and the would-be insurgent groups.

Note that the clientelist nature of patronage politics required the NDPVF to exchange resources with the Rivers State politicians. The patron provided political cover for Asari's group while it reciprocated with support through political violence that disrupted opposition camps. The political elites facilitated such groups with weapons which they still possessed if the relationship broke down. In addition, as shown in the previous chapter, the group accessed funds through state officials and looting of oil, which no doubt as captured in the resource theory, made its violence feasible. However, the group was already in the illegal oil business in collaboration with state officials without violence. The violence emerged because it lost its place in the patronage network, which deprived it of the political cover that had facilitated all its actions.

[615] Tolumu, interview.

This section implies that grievances and resources matter in the rise of violent non-state actors. Moreover, how they become significant is often missed if the narrative obscures the political process necessary for their relevance. The grievance that forced the NDPVF into violence is not the deprivation and inequalities that pervade the Niger Delta, it can be attributed to the anger over the loss of the privileged position in the patronage system. Hence, the deprived are not the brains behind the insurgent group formation, those already co-opted into a privileged class who fell out with their patrons started this militant movement. The Political Relevance model, which takes cognisance of the pre-rebellion interaction captures the NDPVF relatively peaceful access to material resources. The fact that the group took to violence despite its initial privilege; investigations should then centre on what explains the group's transition from cooperation to rebellion. This section concludes that to understand the evolution of Boko Haram and the NDPVF from social organizations to armed militancy, the researcher should focus its analysis on the political process of their contexts.

6.4 A call to rebellion: Local political elites versus politically relevant group

The third stage of the Political Relevance model asserts that after the fissure, the political elites would use the state security apparatus to ensure it strips the group of benefits. These are benefits like the political cover, political position, access to public funds and access to other economic resources which the group had previously enjoyed while it was in a collaborative relationship. On the other hand, the group would attempt to sustain these privileges to the extent they were willing to employ violence, primarily if it interprets the state security activities as deliberate repression of the group. This proposition raises two critical questions. One, how did the Rivers State politicians attempt to strip the NDPVF of the benefits of their political relevance? Two, how did the group seek to maintain its relevance through violence? The analysis in this section shows that the first attempt to strip the group of the benefits of political relevance was not directly from the state, but the NDV group that acted as a proxy for the state. Subsequently, the government became fully involved in the armed struggle against NDPVF. Also, the initial struggle of NDPVF was not aimed directly against the political elites, but against NDV before evolving into an insurgency against the state.[616]

The local political elites did not initially use the state security agencies to suppress the political relevance or withdraw whatever benefits the NDPVF enjoyed. A critical difference between the case of Boko Haram and that of the NDPVF is the emergence of an alternative group for

[616] Human Rights Watch, *Rivers and Blood: Guns, Oil and Power in Nigeria's Rivers State*, 8.

the Rivers State politicians. The rift between Boko Haram and Borno State politicians led to the deployment of the state security apparatus to checkmate the group. However, in the case of the NDPVF, a new group rose to take its place. Unlike the case in Borno State, where the government directly used the security forces to displace Boko Haram, Rivers State initially used NDV as a proxy to check the threats of NDPVF and replace it in the patronage network. Observation shows that the new group received significant cover from the state officials. Hence, the new model captures the possibility of direct or indirect government involvement in the displacement, replacement or expropriation of the privileges of previously co-opted groups from the patronage structure. The neo-patrimonial political system in Nigeria allows the co-existence of patrimonial and legal-rational bureaucratic elements.[617] This kind of political regime eases the state's ability to operate both at informal and formal levels. The Political Relevance model captures this duality that allowed the state officials to either deal with the insubordinate client through formal channels similar to the Borno patron who used the police, or informally as in the case of Rivers where informal channels were adopted.

However, evidence in the previous chapter shows that the NDPVF accumulated and organised enough material and human resources that made it difficult for the NDV group to upstage it without the direct involvement of the security agencies. The political cover they initially enjoyed enabled them to make money through oil bunkering and direct funding from Rivers State officials. It also protected them while they acquired weapons that the government did not perceive as detrimental to its interest. A similar situation played out in the Boko Haram case, where the Borno State government facilitated the funding of the group and ignored their increasing radicalisation. The result was direct Boko Haram violent engagement with the government because the police were its immediate enemy, while the NDPVF fought against the usurping fighters of the pro-state NDV. Again, the importance of resources in starting an insurgency comes to bear not as the cause for insurgent group formation but as a necessity in the process of taking up arms.

HRW observed that the primary location of the battle between the NDPVF and NDV groups were villages along tributaries of oil sources signifying that bunkering was a significant factor in the war.[618] Hence, the significance of the natural resources in this Rivers State violence was not the grievance of oil-wealth distribution or environmental degradation, it was the benefit of

[617] Erdmann and Engel, "Neopatrimonialism Revisited: Beyond a Catch-All Concept," 17; Bach, "Patrimonialism and Neopatrimonialism: Comparative Trajectories and Readings," 277.
[618] Human Rights Watch, *Rivers and Blood: Guns, Oil and Power in Nigeria's Rivers State*, 10-12.

extortion enjoyed by political relevant groups in collaboration with other actors. The resource context and grievance over wealth distribution was also expedient for justifying the rise of violence as would be shown in the framing section below. While the pursuit of natural resources was absent in the Boko Haram case, the extortion of funds from private businesses and the struggle to control the fishing business in Borno later became significant in sustaining the rebellion.[619]

A vital difference between the case of Boko Haram and the NDPVF is the role of smaller groups in Rivers State. The Boko Haram case only shows that some members of the ECOMOG group, which the political elites manipulated for electoral violence either became members or were sympathisers of the Boko Haram group. Whereas, in the case of Rivers State, smaller groups actively merged their operational capacity with either the NDV or NDPVF. These smaller groups, in their hundreds, joined one or the other side without necessarily abandoning their names; they joined wholly as groups, not individual members. These smaller groups also carved out their sphere of influence and sought to benefit according to their capacity.[620] The Political Relevance model captures this vital evolution at the start of the violence, especially if there is a threat to the group's privileges, and it must struggle against a usurping group for its sustenance. This observation creates an opportunity to explain the possible rise of a new politically relevant group that may have been on the flanks.

The Political Relevance model points out how political elites deploy state security agents to suppress the group which has fallen out of favour with them. Similar to Borno State, where the central government deployed the military once it was apparent that the state security forces on the ground were overwhelmed. Indeed, the local political elites also reached out to the centre to deploy the military in an additional effort to its existing bid to check the activities of the NDPVF in River State.[621] The state agents attempted to hamper and take out NDPVF from the bunkering equation as it has lost its prime position with the local politicians to the NDV. Hence the NDPVF group declared an insurgency.[622]

Without a thorough review of the immediate process leading to the conflict in River State, it is easy to ascribe its cause solely to the resource curse or grievances. No doubt, the availability

[619] Njadvara Musa, "'Boko Haram Runs Fishing, Hides/Skin Business to Fuel Insurgency'," *The Guardian*, August 25 2019.
[620] Ibigibo, interview.
[621] Human Rights Watch, *Rivers and Blood: Guns, Oil and Power in Nigeria's Rivers State*, 19.
[622] Asari, "Revealed! Killers of Marshall Harry, 10 Years Ago!."

of crude oil and the subsequent distributional issues shaped the Niger Delta contexts. However, evidence shows that the groups that pioneered the violence in Rivers State were fighting for relevance in the political sphere. A relevance that granted them enormous benefits, including the extortion of natural resources guaranteed by the political cover. Note that the NDPVF call-to-arms was initially against the NDV before extending it to the state and the federal government. Evidence shows that it all started with the bid to maintain significance in local politics and guarantee the benefits therein. It became necessary after the group lost its superior political relevance to its anti-Obasanjo posture.

Similar to the Rivers State context, the evidence in Borno State shows that Boko Haram was fighting against the undermining of the status it had achieved in the political process. Theirs was a standing that ensured it could embark on its activities without fear of security checks. The severed relationship prepared the space for the police to exert its authority on the group while the political elites looked away. While other state-centred explanations pitch their causal argument on these seemingly repressive actions of the police,[623] the Political Relevance model claims that the security agencies align with the provision of political cover. If the group remains relevant to the politicians, they are free of police harassment, if they lose this political cover, whether instructed by the elites or not, the security agencies take the necessary action to check the excesses of these groups. However, the meaning ascribed to the actions of the state played a significant role. While the government interpreted it as maintaining law and order, the militants construed it as repressive and suppressive.

Unlike the case of the Boko Haram that called for immediate armed retaliation against the police and state officials, the NDPVF's violent attacks were directed towards the NDV. As discussed earlier, the River State political patrons initially used the NDV as a proxy to displace the NDPVF. Instead of a direct call to take up arms against the state ostensibly represented by the police as in Borno State, the violence in Rivers State was between two non-state actors who shored up their fighters with the co-option of smaller groups. The NDPVF, just like Boko Haram, was determined to show the political patrons that it could violently sustain its place of political relevance. The group retreated to camps in the creeks while the leader sought a safe

[623] Gray and Adeakin, "The Evolution of Boko Haram: From Missionary Activism to Transnational Jihad and the Failure of the Nigerian Security Intelligence Agencies," 185; Serrano and Pieri, "By the Numbers: The Nigerian State's Efforts to Counter Boko Haram."; Agbiboa, "The Ongoing Campaign of Terror in Nigeria: Boko Haram Versus the State," 10; Aghedo and Osumah, "Insurgency in Nigeria: A Comparative Study of Niger Delta and Boko Haram Uprisings," 214; Onuoha, "Boko Haram and the Evolving Salafi Jihadist Threat in Nigeria," 182; Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World*.

haven in another city until he secured more weapons for his group. With the reinforcement, it launched retaliatory attacks against the NDV and the state security forces which joined in the attempt to displace the group. Unlike NDPVF, the Boko Haram leader who also attempted to escape was arrested and killed; however, the group also retreated to a safe haven. It reinforced while in the Sambisa forest where the group launched retaliatory attacks against the security forces and the local elite whom it suspected were informants for the state. This difference in the target needs further unravelling as the NDPVF focused on the NDV fighters and the security agencies, they significantly avoided the local political elites while Boko Haram initially targeted the local elites and the security forces. However, as these insurgencies emerged and escalated, the actors in the violence had different interpretations.

6.5 Framing out of context: Local political elites versus politically relevant group

The last stage of the Political Relevance model asserts that the group and political elites attempt to frame the emerging violence out of context. The extant theories are often one-sided when they appropriate interpretation for the start of violent action. They either side with the explanation of the state or that of the rebels. The parties to the violent conflict frame the rebellion, which started from a soured relationship between the actors, in a way that resonates with the people. They either explain it as motivated by emotions or by rational and strategic intent for self-interest. The Political Relevance model captures both explanations as significant to the process of group evolution into violence.

This section encapsulates the way the leaders of the rebel group and local political elites ascribe meaning to the emergence of the insurgent group. It further investigates which events these attributed interpretations resonated with. It is of note that Asari started framing the NDPVF insurgency in the light of the Niger Delta struggle especially with his declaration on September 27, 2004. His presidency of the IYC could have shaped his rhetoric and his association with activism in the pursuit of justice for the Niger Delta region. He argued that the rebellion of his group was to counter the Nigerian state to liberate the Ijaw people from the injustice meted out by the transnational corporations and the government.

In Omolade Adunbi's analysis, he explains that activists in the Niger Delta are socially conscious about the relationship between oil, humankind, and the environment. However, the militants suggest the use of weapons against the oil companies and government. He argues that these actors in the Niger Delta struggle could shift between activism and militancy. This shift is possible because the militants had earlier leant the rhetoric of rights advocacy in their

engagement with the multinationals and the state. Their membership of civil society organizations that have links with INGOs provided them with training in the language of human and environmental rights and governance; they deploy this knowledge in mobilising for militancy.[624] This analysis explains Asari's ability to employ the rhetoric of horizontal grievances in connection with historical and persisting structural issues in framing his call to armed struggle.

However, Ibigibo explained that lots of militants did not have the opportunity to interact and learn the rhetoric of social and environmental activism from INGOs. He argued that at the start of the crisis in Rivers State, Tom was not literate enough to express demands imbued in oil citizenship or resource control. He asserts that in a bid to douse the violence between the competing groups, local politicians advised militants against fighting themselves. Local political elites encouraged them to channel their struggle towards the multinationals and the federal government as it would be more rewarding. He asserts that the insurgents learnt the concepts of resource control and marginalization from the Niger Delta politicians.[625] The implication of this is that the local political elites strategically changed the trajectory of the struggle from a struggle against them to a grievance struggle which enhances their desire for increased revenue allocation from the centre.

These views imply that while there was discontent in the region over injustice, marginalization and deprivation, there were at the same time some individuals and groups who sought to use it in the pursuit of their greedy interest. No wonder Hilda Dokubo, an actress and social activist, argued that criminality has taken over the genuine fight against injustice in the region. She asserts that these criminals are not in the battle to better the people of the Niger Delta. They engage in violence for the selfish accumulation of wealth and the mobilization of young people as followers under the falsehood that they will also amass wealth without working for it.[626]

Asari has continued to tell all who cared to hear that he was "duty-bound to fight and stand on the side of the dispossessed people of Rivers State. [That he] stood on the side of the people of Rivers State, and [he] fought."[627] This statement presents the battle as that meant to seek justice and fairness for the region. He continues to draw on the argument that the Niger Delta did not

[624] Adunbi, *Oil Wealth and Insurgency in Nigeria*, 172.
[625] Ibigibo, interview.
[626] Adunbi, *Oil Wealth and Insurgency in Nigeria*, 206-208.
[627] Asari, "Revealed! Killers of Marshall Harry, 10 Years Ago!."

join the Nigerian state of its volition. That the region had signed various protection treaties with the British, and none authorised a transfer or merger of the area to the Nigerian state. He views the relationship between the region and the rest of Nigeria as that of annexation or colonisation.

> Nigeria is an occupation force. Nigeria is a colonial government occupying the territories of the Ijaws, the Ikwerres, the Ishes, the Itsekiris, the Urhobos, as Zionists are occupying Palestine, as India is occupying Kashmir, as Sudan is occupying Dafur. We have the right. It is our right, inalienable right to fight for our self-determination and sovereignty which was stolen from us by the British. In 1914, Nigeria was created by one sick man called Lord Lugard.[628]

In this light, Asari dislikes a reference to him as a gang leader or terrorist. He would rather see himself in the light of renowned freedom fighters who struggled for the liberation of his people from oppressive regimes.[629] Similarly, Tom has framed his battles as that of the emancipation of the Niger Delta. In his words,

> we, as a people, prefer to die fighting for the liberation of our people than to watch this oppression extend to our children yet unborn. The NDV will not relent in this renewed quest to fight injustice until the demands of our people are met.[630]

In the case of Boko Haram, Muhammad Yusuf also fashioned his rhetoric to connect with the perceived historical and persisting structure bequeathed to northern Nigeria by the British colonisers. Yusuf's rhetoric draws from the perceived subjugation of the Islamic faith by Western colonial rulers. However, Asari's rhetoric connects with perceived marginalization in terms of the oil-wealth context. Hence, while Boko Haram flays the perceived Westernised educational structure and culture, NDPVF lashes out at the seeming structure of exploitation by transnational corporations. Boko Haram advocates a governance structure that incorporates the sharia legal system, but the NDPVF clamour for resource-control –"the right to control or manage the revenue accruing from oil and other natural resources in line with the tenets of true federalism."[631] While Boko Haram challenges the legitimacy of the Nigerian state based on its secular rule, the NDPVF challenges the British incorporation of the Niger Delta region into Nigeria without indigenous consent. The rhetoric of Boko Haram also connects with the history

[628] Mujahid Dokubo Asari, "Dokubo Asari Detained in Underground Cell for 2 Years," (2008), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i8qg6k9jKIg&t=3s.
[629] Asari, "Peter Odili Donated N10 Million to Dokubo Asari in Detention."
[630] Omotola, "Liberation Movements and Rising Violence in the Niger Delta: The New Contentious Site of Oil and Environmental Politics," 48.
[631] "Resource Control in the Niger Delta: Conceptual Issues and Legal Realities," E-International Relations, 2012, https://www.e-ir.info/2012/05/25/resource-control-in-the-niger-delta-conceptual-issues-and-legal-realities/.

of jihad in northern Nigeria. However, NDPVF hinges its rhetoric on past struggles against colonial business monopoly and the relatively recent activism in oil-bearing communities in the Niger Delta. In Asari's words,

> The problem of the Niger Delta started when Britain fraudulently incorporated our people, after we signed several treaties of protection with them, into this evil enterprise called Nigeria. And we have been resisting that we are not Nigeria. From the time of King Koko Boy Okpia of Nembe (King Fredrick William Koko). When they defeated the British at Akassa, which the British shamelessly described as the Akassa raid. And King Jaja of Opobo, King Ibanichuka of Okrika, and Isaac Boro who in 1966 declared the Niger Delta People's Republic, which still stands today.[632]

This study observed that the Niger Delta insurgent leaders often use this justice and liberation rhetoric. However, their groups have hardly sought to transfer the wealth that they acquire through the process of the insurgency back to the people of the region they claimed to fight on behalf of. "At the height of the NDPVF's strength, an estimated 70,000 to 300,000 barrels per day were lost to oil theft, generating handsome profits for the militia in the range of millions of dollars per year."[633] Evidence of welfare packages provided by these groups is hard to come by except for the care and provision of weapons for fighters. The failure to transfer this wealth to the suffering people of the region explains Adunbi's stand. He argues that the capacity to use human and environmental rights rhetoric by all Niger Delta militants blurs the ability to differentiate them from genuine activists.[634] Adunbi further highlights

> the co-optation of the leadership of the insurgency movement and the establishment of an amnesty program that pays cash for loyalty—much as corporations have done in the communities for many years—show clearly how NGOs and the insurgency movement have turned the Niger Delta people's genuine struggle for justice into self-promotion."[635]

Luke Amadi et al., highlight the acquisition of a private jet, the establishment of schools and the building of mansions in other parts of the country and foreign countries by the insurgent leaders as contrasting the essence of the Niger Delta struggle. The wealth and flamboyance of these ex-militant leaders contrast with the unaddressed environmental degradation and poverty

[632] Mujahid Dokubo Asari, "Nigeria Is an Occupational Force in the Niger Delta Dokubo Asari," in *Rivers State Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (2008). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_aHRPlVoNPk.
[633] Biberman and Turnbull, "When Militias Provide Welfare: Lessons from Pakistan and Nigeria," 719.
[634] Adunbi, *Oil Wealth and Insurgency in Nigeria*, 184.
[635] Ibid., 245.

of the people that they claim to represent.[636] Hence, the Political Relevance model emphasizes the importance of grievance rhetoric to the insurgent group emergence process.

State agents in the insurgency have also sought to frame the emergence of the rebel groups out of context by categorising them as criminals and miscreants engaged in illegal oil theft. They present these groups as a threat to the people and the environment. The state has emphasized bringing them to order by applying state coercion.[637] However, the government negotiated with these so-called criminals and paid them large sums of money to lay down their arms in an amnesty program in 2009. Tom has become a government recognised king while Asari has several investments, including educational institutions. Doubra confirmed that at present, he has a fleet of gunboats working for the joint venture between NNPC and Belema oil. They have become power brokers, and some other cult leaders have made their way to public office.[638]

The duplicity of Asari's frame became evident when the clamour of the NDPVF became silent after President Obasanjo called Asari to Abuja. The battle subsided after the government reassured the NDPVF leader of its usual access to political privileges and patronage. The grievances expressed in Asari's rhetoric persist in the Niger Delta, and even with an increase in allocation to the states of the region, the level of poverty and unemployment remains unabated. However, Asari's activism remained dormant for about two years after the government had appeased him with benefits. Some youths had even protested to his house, accusing him of abandoning the struggle. He lost significant credibility on the streets of Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

He launched a return to activism which resulted in his arrest and imprisonment by the federal government. These actions again raised his profile as a leader in the Niger Delta struggle. However, Asari's re-emergence in the struggle could be a rational move to save face in the region shaped by the adverse effects of natural resource availability. The critical point worthy of note is the framing of the call to rebellion out of the context of the Rivers State political process. Although discontent over issues of oil exploration and its wealth distribution shaped the emergence of several groups in the state, the immediate cause of the evolution of some of

[636] Luke Amadi, Imoh Imoh-Itah, and Edmund F Obomanu, "Oil: Niger Delta and the Making of Militia Capitalists: A Theoretical Assessment," *International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research* 4, no. 1 (2016).
[637] Courson, "Spaces of Insurgency: Petro-Violence and the Geography of Conflict in Nigeria's Niger Delta," 207-208.
[638] Doubra, interview.

the groups into armed non-state actors is evident in the political process that witnessed a clash between local political elites and NDPVF. Immediately the privileges of the politically relevant group were guaranteed, there was a return to relative peace, although it has remained tenuous. Up until today, ex-militants[639] check any withdrawal of their privileges by threatening a return to rebellion against the state.

The case of Boko Haram shows some differences as distrust has characterised the attempts at negotiation with the state. Just like the case of the Niger Delta militants, the government proposed an amnesty program for Boko Haram. However, the present leader of the premier faction of the group, Abubakar Shekau, responded thus: "Surprisingly, the Nigerian government is talking about granting us amnesty. What wrong have we done? On the contrary, it is we that should grant you [a] pardon."[640] However, with the negotiated release of some abducted girls from Boko Haram's camp,[641] there was an opening on which the political elites failed to capitalise. Instead, a steady increase in the budgetary allocation for security and counterinsurgency in northeast Nigeria has opened the opportunity for racketeering with no proof of end in sight.

The Political Relevance model shows how parties to rebel violence frame their rhetoric to resonate with the people. They struggle to interpret the turn of violence to the indigenous community in a way that justifies their actions. State officials obscure the real cause of violence by reasserting their constitutional role of maintaining law and order. Their rhetoric frames the rebels as criminals that the state coerciveness would bring to order. This interpretation reconnects with their core role of keeping the peace that enables all citizens to conduct their respective activities. The violent non-state actors, on the other hand, offer rhetoric that reconnects with the structural context from where they originated. They re-emphasize old events which had initially caused discontent. They further tactically linked current events to the previous events in a way that shows a consistent pattern of injustice, discrimination and marginalization. The militants then advocate violence and cast their armed insurrection as the only sure alternative that could cause the state to address the discontent.

[639] Insurgents in the Niger Delta who accepted the amnesty of the federal government of Nigeria
[640] BBC News, "Nigeria's Boko Haram Rejects Jonathan's Amnesty Idea," (2013).
[641] BBC News, "The Man Who Brokered the Deal to Release the Chibok Girls," (2017).

6.6 Conclusion

Comparing the causal process and mechanism of the NDPVF with that of Boko Haram provides the opportunity to test the Political Relevance model presented in the theoretical chapter of this thesis. This chapter has embarked on this journey by asking the Niger Delta militant case similar questions that are consistent with the Boko Haram emergence. The grievance and resources-based narrative of the NDPVF tends to leave out the core part that it started as a relatively non-rebellious group. The challenge with excluding this crucial part of the group's emergence is that it further glosses over its initial cooperation and incorporation into the Rivers State political patronage network. Hence, this chapter started by investigating if the Asari group started as a usual social organization with its contextual issues at its core. It then tests for evidence that there was a patron-client relationship between the local political elites and the group. It further elucidates on the fissure in the relationship, its turn to violence, and how these parties interpreted the reason for the armed rebellion.

The chapter found that unlike north-eastern Nigeria, where religion is core to social group formation, the issues of oil exploration mostly shaped the Niger Delta region identity. Hence, as groups emerge in the northeast, they exude religious colouration, but oil consciousness is core to Niger Delta social organization at least since the 1980s. So as Boko Haram emerged drawing on religious-ideological concerns, the NDPVF started with oil consciousness. Despite the difference in these contextual factors, the needs for the political class in the new democratic dispensation were similar. The politicians sought organizations with some form of resources that made them relevant to the election cycle. While they found the Boko Haram useful as a bloc vote, they found the NDPVF necessary in the realm of political violence. The Political Relevance model argues that this patron-client relationship shrinks the power gap between both parties, which leads to the client becoming more assertive than usual.

Just as Boko Haram fell out with the patron in its attempt to reassert its interest, Asari also confronted Governor Odili in his pursuit of interest at variance with that of the patron. Despite the subsequent fissure in the relationship, the NDPVF sought to continue its usual daily activity as though it still enjoyed political cover and its place in the patronage network. The patron quickly replaced the group with the NDV, which automatically became the NDPVF's archenemy. This situation is somewhat different from that of Boko Haram whom the patrons sought to displace from its privileged position by using the police, not another group. Violent confrontations started with Governor Odili's desire to displace the group from the patronage

network and NDPVF's interest to sustain its political relevance. The patron initially supported the NDV and later used the state security forces in his bid. However, both parties framed the ensuing violence in the interest of the people. The chapter shows that despite the difference in structural contexts, the emergence of insurgent groups in the northeast and Niger Delta regions of Nigeria conforms with the steps articulated in the Political Relevance model.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

After experiencing some of the most corrupt and brutal military regimes ever, Nigerians were still basking in the euphoria of civilian rule and adjusting to the dictates of democratic norms when two devastating insurgencies emerged. The Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) is one of the pioneers of the armed militant insurrection in the Niger Delta region while Boko Haram led the ruthless rebellion in the northeast. The rise of these groups not only crippled the Nigerian economy but also led to the displacement, abduction, and death of tens of thousands of people. The start of these armed non-state actors from essentially different zones of the country at about the same time created the conundrum that this thesis sought to unravel.

Studies on the rationale behind the emergence of insurgent groups have propounded several theories with each found insufficient in explaining the emergence of Boko Haram and the NDPVF. This thesis categorised these theories into grievance, resource-based and religious ideology theories. Although these structural factors provide significant insights into the rise of militant organizations, a review of the literature shows various deficiencies in their emphasis. One critical deficiency found by this thesis is that they mostly overlook the significance of the historical non-violent inception of these organizations. Hence, they gloss over the initial cooperative interactions between these social groups and local political elites before they take up arms. The implication of not acknowledging the relative peaceful rise of these violent non-state actors is the inadvertent exclusion of the way their activities and interactions with the political elites facilitate their evolution.

The upsurge in intrastate violence since the Cold War has no doubt put the desire to understand how violent groups emerge at the forefront of research in conflict studies. This thesis has contributed to this through a comparative study of these two insurgent organizations from significantly different historical, social, religious and material structural backgrounds in the same country. The study of these cases has addressed the practical concerns relating to the way these rebel organizations emerged in Nigeria's fourth republic. It also speaks to the theoretical deficiencies in extant explanations describing the way militant associations emerge. This thesis mainly answers the puzzle by explaining how two rebellious non-state groups could emerge at the same time from significantly different background conditions in the same country. While Boko Haram has religious inclination from the northeast state of Borno, the Niger Delta

People's Volunteer Force has a resource-based colouration from Rivers State in south-south Nigeria. Although both rebel groups started in Nigeria at about the same time, their location of origin in the country is structurally dissimilar.

The next section of this chapter summarises the background of the two militant organizations. It is followed by a recapitulation of the Political Relevance model which is the alternative theory introduced in this thesis for explaining the onset of insurgent groups in Nigeria's fourth republic. The chapter will end with a summary of the findings.

7.2 The north-east and Niger Delta contexts

The analysis of the northern and Niger Delta contexts where Boko Haram and the NDPVF started shows that they significantly differ in socio-cultural, religious, and economic development. Their ethnicities and forms of social relations show remarkable variances from pre-colonial times to this present era. Their pre-colonial foreign interactions also pointed them in dissimilar religious directions. While the dominance of the Islamic religion extending from north Africa moulded socio-cultural, education, and economic relations in the northeast, the interaction with European Christians and corporations shaped and reshaped social, education, and economic development in the Niger Delta. These conditions have fashioned both violent and non-violent groups in these zones. Hence, the religious inclination and other local structures that moulded the disposition of the Boko Haram group also influenced other organizations which did not evolve into violent non-state actors.

Similarly, the contestation against the activities of foreign multinationals that influenced the start of militant groups in the Niger Delta also motivated non-militant organizations. While factors such as sharia implementation, perception of jihad, poverty and animosity towards Western education inspired violent and non-violent actors in the north-east, the multinational oil exploration and its attendant environmental degradation and lack of corporate social responsibility to the indigenes stimulated the formation of armed and unarmed organizations in the Niger Delta.

Therefore, these factors which formed the core scholarly explanation of the emergence of Boko Haram and NDPVF were also significant in the formation of lots of other groups in the same localities that did not turn to armed challengers of the state. Hence, although these issues were salient, they do not sufficiently explain the evolution of these groups from non-rebellious to violent non-state actors. This background raises two questions, why did the violent groups

emerge at about the same time in these different locales? Also, how did these militant organizations start? Some new factors that acted on these pervasive historical concerns require proper analysis to understand how the armed non-state group started. This thesis argued that the pre-existing social, economic, religious, and educational structure shaped the formation of these groups. However, they were not enough to cause their evolution from social groups to insurgent organizations. The argument in no way devalues the importance of these structural factors as they were essential to the initial rise of these groups before they evolved into violent rebel movements.

7.3 The Political Relevance model explanation of the onset of insurgent groups in Nigeria

Existing theories assume that rebel groups start as challengers of the state contrary to recent findings which show that 95% of violent non-state groups have pre-existing organizations.[642] These prevailing analyses in the literature either draw on widespread discontent in the society which aligns with rebel leaders' justification or stresses the greed over material self-interest as the cause of the start of rebel organizations. These perspectives ignore the relational process between political elites and would-be insurgents in the emergence of armed non-state groups. In the desire to know how non-violent groups evolve into armed non-state actors, this thesis finds significance in the pre-existing group's interaction with the local political elites.

In response to the observed gap in the extant theories, this thesis develops an alternative model from a combination of the patron-client relationship model and the Political Process theory. The model aligns with the emergence of the Boko Haram insurgents by using the process-tracing method. A description of the group revealed four critical junctures in the rise of the insurgent group. These four stages resulted in the prototype that this thesis conceptualises as the Political Relevance model. The paradigm advances a more structure-agent interactive pattern to fill in the existing gaps in the literature. The thesis tested the template derived from another militant group, the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force. The essence of testing with another case is so as not to develop a model that solely explains the rise of Boko Haram. It should be a nuanced theory that could at the minimum, explain the emergence of insurgent groups across Nigeria's fourth republic that started in 1999. It also presents researchers with a

[642] Braithwaite and Cunningham, "When Organizations Rebel: Introducing the Foundations of Rebel Group Emergence (Forge) Dataset," 1.

framework to test the emergence of other rebel groups and better enrich our understanding of the development of guerrilla forces.

This thesis argues that militant organizations start after an initial jointly rewarding interaction between a politically relevant group and a set of local political elites turns sour. This argument implies that unlike most analyses of the rise of rebel groups, there are possibilities of a previous collaboration between political elites and insurgent movements before they evolve into rebellion. It captures this basic contention in the four-staged Political Relevance model.

The first stage argues a social group enters a mutually benefiting collaboration with a set of local political elites. This relationship is both shaped by the structure of the political environment and driven by the self-interests of actors. Hence, this model acknowledges the relevance of the structural context and individual concerns in shaping the interaction between political elites and probable insurgents. At the second stage, these relationships turn sour as a result of irreconcilable divergences of interests between these actors. The strain that caused this fissure in interaction is far from the grievance usually captured by insurgency theories. They are discontented about their perceived failure to accumulate the reward of the collaboration between them. The third stage argues that the resulting fissure in the relationship causes an attempt by local political elites to deprive the organization of all privileges previously enjoyed. The groups interpret this as state repression that they must resist violently. Hence, an armed rebellion against the state sparks long after their initial emergence as a relatively non-violent social organization. The final stage argues that there is an attempt by both actors to ascribe meanings that are out of context to the resulting violence. The insurgents interpret it as a struggle against the injustice meted out to the populace. In contrast, the political elites frame it as an attempt to bring criminals and miscreants to law and order in the interest of the citizens.

Boko Haram did not emerge as an armed rebel group but a religious sect similar to others shaped by the opportunities and constraints of northern Nigeria. They advanced arguments that were not entirely new and could be traced to the historical development of the region. However, it entered a political patronage relationship with Senator Ali Modu Sheriff in his governorship bid. Evidence that the Boko Haram group had become weary of the Ali Modu Sheriff's administration became apparent in 2007 when Buju Foi, the member of the organization in the Borno State executive council resigned. He cited the failure of the governor to fully implement sharia in the state as the core reason. There were also signs that the group has outlived its relevance to the governor. Hence, the fracture in the relationship between the group and the

governor was because of both ideological and material concerns. The security forces soon intensified the scrutiny of the activities of Boko Haram after losing its place in the patronage network. This eventually resulted in a clash that Mohammad Yusuf framed as state repression. He proclaimed that it was time to take up arms against the state if the group was to avert similar state suppression of Muslims as he claimed was happening in Nigeria and around the world. However, the Borno State governor, the police and even President Yaradua explain what was happening in terms of law and order. They expressed the state's desire to bring those they framed as deviants to book by using the Nigerian security forces and introducing new laws against such groups.

Similarly, in south-south Nigeria was the NDPVF which emerged as an activist group advocating a better deal between the Niger Delta region on the one hand, and the federal government and corporations on the other hand. Governor Peter Odili's desire to return to power for a second term instigated his facilitation of the leader of NDPVF, Asari Dokubo, to the presidency of the influential Ijaw ethnic socio-cultural organization, Ijaw Youth Council. Therefore, these groups were not armed challengers of the state from the start, they had interacted, cooperated, and were co-opted by politicians into the local political patronage network in Rivers States. However, the group also broke ranks with its patron when Asari openly opposed President Olusegun Obasanjo's second term bid. This affected the groups usual unofficial lifting of oil in collaboration with state and security officials. It lost its place in the patronage system and the patron sought to replace it with the Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV) led by Ateke Tom. The NDPVF violently engaged the NDV for its place in the political patronage network but framed it as a fight for justice and against the suppression of the wishes of the people. However, the political elites framed the group as criminal elements whom it had to deploy its most coercive instrument to put under check and return the state to law and order.

7.4 Summary and implications for research

The argument above establishes that both the Boko Haram insurgents and the NDPVF militants emerged from the immediate political process after Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999. The separate emphasis on grievances over inequalities, greedy interest over natural resources and normative commitment of religious ideology insufficiently explains the start, timing and location of these insurgent groups. This is not to say that they are not significant but to show that to understand their roles, the local political process that co-opted these groups before they turned to violent rebellion must be studied. It was the interaction between local political elites

and the leaders of the would-be insurgent groups, which was shaped by diverse structural background factors that ensured the rise of these armed rebellious groups.

In the study of how insurgent groups rise, the researcher must not assume that these non-state actors rise as violent challengers of the state. Such an assumption tends to exclude salient narratives of the groups before they violently engaged the state. Establishing their likely non-violent rise shifts the core research question from what caused the insurgent group to how a relatively peaceful non-state actor evolved into a violent organization. With this shift in focus, attention is no more concentrated solely on the structural background but also on the activities and interactions of insurgent actors who despite are products of the structure, also acts to reshape the structure. This study showed that the cases under review neither started in secret nor as violent rebel groups but emerged similar to most other groups which were influenced by the structural background in their vicinity. The fact that most other groups similar to them did not turn to violence should goad researchers to investigate further factors necessary for a previous social group to resort to arms.

The refocus of this study on insurgent actors reveal that there was a mutually beneficial relationship between local political elites and the leaders of would-be rebel groups before the start of insurrections. Again, this speaks to the often-neglected pre-rebellion activities of insurgent actors and the erroneous demarcation of rebel leaders and local political elites. This suggests the need to properly analyse the rise of militant groups from the local level. Chris Wilson argues that micro-level observation and analysis is important "because of its volatility and the misleading nature of most rhetoric that accompanies it."[643] The Boko Haram and NDPVF cases show that although grievances over inequalities are salient in the formation of the group before it became violently rebellious, the grievance that caused its turn to arms has to do with the fissure in its initial mutually beneficial interaction. This again raises the need for researchers to study the interaction between a group and the elites and why it fell apart.

The study of the political process under which these groups turned to violent rebellion also reveals the importance of resources. However, resources here is not restricted to natural or primary commodities and funding, but also, human resources which mostly determine which of the numerous social groups becomes relevant to the political elites. In the cases here, the resources of the group determined which was co-opted into the local political patronage

[643] Wilson, *Ethno-Religious Violence in Indonesia: From Soil to God*, 194.

network. The subsequent exclusion of these groups from the network exposed them to state coercive actions from which they initially had political cover. The resources they have and had acquired is also important to their successful launch of armed insurrection against the state. Finally, researchers must be wary of the rhetoric of both the political elites and the insurgent leaders. As has been shown in this study and lots more cited here, they are mostly framed in the interest of the interpreter.

7.5 Conclusion

This thesis has contended that although Boko Haram and NDPVF emerged from different backgrounds in Nigeria, they show significant similarities in the process of their emergence. Firstly, the thesis presents evidence that the two rebel groups did not suddenly launch as contenders of the state. They evolved from social groups that were relatively non-belligerent or at least, not violent towards the government. Even though Boko Haram was an exclusivist group, it originated as a religious sect that non-violently proselytised its doctrines which were not entirely new to its locale. On the other hand, NDPVF emanated from the followers of Asari as a civil pressure group. Secondly, evidence shows that these social organizations were in cordial interaction with local political elites who later incorporated them into the local political patronage network. These relationships that were not one-sided manipulation represented a mutually rewarding collaboration as captured in the patron-client relationship model. Thirdly, evidence also shows fissures in these interactions, which were caused by the exclusive pursuit of their interests. Fourthly, the violence between the groups and the state started after the fracture in their relationship. Finally, these agents in the emerging insurgency sought to explain the violence in ways that acknowledged them as though they pursued the interest of their defined constituencies. These answers show that these militant organizations emerged from a political process that witnessed a fissure in the interaction between the local political elites and the politically relevant groups. While historic and pervasive grievances over economic, social, cultural, or political inequalities and other social and material structures offered the opportunities for the armed non-state actors to rise, they do not sufficiently explain their emergence.

The significant implication of this finding is that although several of the factors highlighted by insurgency theories are relevant in the emergence of potentially violent groups, some other issues are more salient to their evolution into armed insurgents. Hence, the need to re-visit these factors and rightly establish the extent and type of role they play. The evidence shows that political processes facilitated the emergence of insurgent groups in Nigeria since 1999. The material and social structure of the locality from the place they started shaped the opportunity

and the constraints. A soured interaction between politically relevant groups and a set of local political elites facilitated the evolution of the organizations into violence. As shown previously, the actors frame the emergence of this violence in existing community grievances and according to the demand of the people.

Further studies of the rise of militant groups could focus on comparative studies of the onset of guerrilla organizations from diverse locales of the same country. The Political Relevance model that I have developed in this study requires further empirical testing across the diverse regime types and continents. For example, in Liberia, Charles Taylor who was an activist and led the National Patriotic Front of Liberia was co-opted by the president into the patronage network in 1980 and became the head of the government's overseas procurement office. His fissure with the political elites saw him reorganize his group in arms against the state which both sides interpret differently.[644] Also, in India, Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale was a religious leader who was co-opted to assist Indira Gandhi's Congress Party in the 1978/79 Punjab election. A fissure in the relationship saw the evolution of his religious group into an armed one. Just like in Liberia, the ensuing violence was interpreted differently by the actors.[645] I hope that my study of this often-neglected form of comparison and my investigation into the political interaction between the social groups before they turn to violent challengers of the state will help to advance, encourage and spur further studies.

[644] Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa*.
[645] Tambiah, *Leveling Crowds: Ethnonationalist Conflicts and Collective Violence in South Asia*, 105-108; Jetly, "The Khalistan Movement in India: The Interplay of Politics and State Power."

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