Political Violence

A Comparative and Social Movement Study of Boko Haram and MEND.

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Introduction

Political violence remains a very important element in most modern militant organizations; a strategy for goal attainment (Hafez and Wiktorowicz, 2004). Because of its exceptional nature and the subsequent effects it generates on both state authorities and the public, the subject has continued to generate serious debates within and outside the academic world.

Within research, the subject has mostly been addressed in the field known as "terrorism studies", which emerged as a branch of 'security studies' within political science and international relations. Within this field, the subject has mainly been interpreted as a phenomenon used by "terrorists organizations" to either terrorise or intimidate the government, or the general population to harken to the political demands of the instigators of the violence (Crenshaw 1992; Jenkins 1994; Laqueur 2001). As part of security studies, studies here often focuses on ways with which state actors could work to counter such kinds of acts of violence (see Franks 2006:1).

In sociology, the subject has also been addressed within social movement theories. Concentrating more on establishing sociological explanations for mainly general non-violent broad-based movement organizations; many social movement scholars have analysed phenomena such as civil disobedience, riots, revolutions and violent protests, as part of movement dynamics which can evolve within opposition movements (Gamson 1968; Gurr 1970; Della Porta 1995). Following the September 11th 2001 Al-Qaeda-led terrorists attacks in the US, increasing number of scholars in this field have also broadened the subject to include the analysis of militant opposition movements with the frameworks from social movement theories (Della Porta 2008; Tilly 2003; Tarrow et. al. 2001; Wiktorowicz 2004; Gunning 2009). Rather than continue to de-exceptionalise violence within these movement organizations, these scholars analyse violence as an outcome of internal and external social dynamic processes; an aspects of militant movement dynamics and interactions with the state actors. In this sense, violence is no longer simply an ideological imperative or a mere tactical choice to intimidate or terrorise; but the result of debates within the movements, and the power struggles that are motivated and encouraged by different access to resources, competing interests and identities among members, and the reactions by the state.

It is within this understanding that this thesis aims at studying political violence within Boko Haram and MEND; two militant organizations that operate in Nigeria. My understanding of political violence is purposely broad and would attempt to be as inclusive as possible. It would accommodate the variety of contentions that frequently emerges under the

banner of militancy, such as suicide bombings, bomb attacks, gun attacks, guerrilla warfare, kidnappings, arm robberies and assassinations, as propagated by these militant organizations, as they seek to promote their different particular political agenda(s) within the Nigerian society. This study will hopefully offer new insights into these movements, as well as contribute to the understanding of political violence.

Three main topics are researched in the thesis. These deal with the emergence of the two movements, the role of ideology, and the subsequent evolution and escalation of the different forms of political violence within the groups, given their peculiar experiences within the Nigerian society. I first ask: "How did these two groups emerge?" More specifically, under what social and political structures (especially in the areas where these groups emerged) did the groups grow forth in Nigeria? How do these structures affect political opportunities in the two areas where these groups appear? Were there moments of closing-down or opening-up of political opportunities within and outside Nigeria before and during the time these groups emerged? Were there social and political changes in Nigeria before the groups grew forth? And finally, how are these different in the two areas where the groups appeared? My assumption following recent research from social movement scholars on political violence is that there is a link between changes in political opportunities and the radicalization and emergence of militancy within opposition groups (Della Porta 1995; 2009; Wiktorowicz 2005; Gunning 2007). Political opportunities are believed to be largely dependent on the social and political structures within and outside the societies. By studying these factors, the study gives more insight into the understanding of the emergence and evolution of the two groups within the Nigerian society.

The second topic concerns the role of ideology. Here the study asks: Which role does ideology play in sustaining and justifying the violent strategies that are adopted by these two groups? In other words, are there ideological elements within the groups that justify the use of violence? How are the ideologies framed by the group's leadership to justify and mobilize the kind of violent strategies that the groups adopt? How are these framings different in the two movements? My main assumption here is that ideology is not just a belief system which brings people together within the movements, but also a powerful element within the groups to justify the kind of violent strategies that are adopted. This kind of understanding of ideology casts more light on why and how the groups' leaders are able to mobilise individuals to participate in the kinds of contentions that go on within the groups.

The final topic will focus on the development and escalation of militancy within the two groups. The main task here will be to analyse the role that the Nigerian government plays

in the escalation of militancy. More precisely, the study asks: what has been the Nigerian government's response or approach towards these two groups? Are they different? How have the groups responded to this approach? How linked are the developments of different forms of militancy, such as suicide bombing, which has evolved in Boko-Haram connected to these interactions? Why is the development different when it comes to MEND? And finally, what other external factors have contributed in facilitating the escalation of militancy within the groups? Rather than continue neglecting the role of state actors in the escalation and development of political violence within militant organizations, the study in line with recent studies within the field will attempt to analyse the two group's long history of violent contestations and the interactions with the state, together with the socialization processes within the movements (Tarrow et al. 2001; Wiktorowicz 2005; Gunning 2007; 2009; Della Porta, 2009). Such factors might affect the evolution and the kinds of militancy that may evolve within militants groups. The aim is to shed more light on how and why these kinds of militant organizations move from low to high risk activities.

The idea here is not to discuss all the various socio-political and geopolitical structures within Nigerian society, or all the various political violent activities that have been carried out by these movements, or all the utterances that are accredited to members of the group. Rather, the study would try to situate and compare the emergence of these militant groups to changes in the socio-political and geo-political environments in which they emerged; study the progression of political violent events, especially at the early stages when the groups emerged; and finally analyse the different ideologies within the two groups. The study will attempt to compare the two groups and outline how they are similar or different from each other when it comes to the evolution and progression of different forms of political violence.

The data consist of mainly secondary sources from the previous studies that have been conducted separately on these movements by many well-known Nigerian and international scholars. These previous studies contain relevant and important information to analyse and compare the groups. However, these studies offer limited insight into the evolution and the escalation of violence within the two groups in Nigeria. None of the studies did a comparative analysis of the two movements. Different from these previous studies, the thesis will therefore conduct a comparative analysis of these movements. Using social movement theory approach, the study would hopefully introduce new interpretations, which perhaps were not envisaged by these scholars.

A few primary data are also used in the study as well, including the Nigerian Government's Constitution and official statements to the media regarding the groups, some of

their utterances and newspaper clippings accredited to the Nigerian government and some of the groups' leaders. All these are easily available on online. In addition, the study would also use several reports from well-known Nigerian newspapers and magazines such as; the Sun Newspaper, the Nigerian Guardian, the Nigerian Tribune, Sahara Reporters and Nigerian World. These sources were used mainly in recounting the chronological accounts of acts of political violence by these movements.

Chapter 1 and 2 are dedicated for the review some of the literatures that has been used to study political violence and the introduction of some of the most relevant social movement theories. In Chapter 3, I will proceed to present the research questions, together with the explanations of the method used to answer them. Chapter 4, 5 and 6 consist of the analyses, in accordance to the different research topics. The final chapter will summarise and discuss the results of all my findings.

1. Political violence and terrorism studies

'Political violence' as an academic theme has often been addressed in the field popularly known as "terrorism studies". It arose as a branch of 'security studies' within political science and international relations. Here, scholars within the field, seek to provide the state governments, international organizations, agencies, as well as individuals with a standard definitions and a technical know-how with which to understand and deal with terrorism and political violence. The main assumption here is that terrorism and political violence is better understood in relation to its effects on both the instigators and targeted recipients of the acts of violence (Franks 2005:17).

Following the September 11th US attacks however, the field has been met with severe criticisms from a growing number of scholars within the field (terrorism studies), especially from its over-reliance on state actors and inability to meet rigorous standard of scholarship within the social sciences; culminating to the emergence of a new perspective within the field known as critical terrorism studies (Horgan 2006; Jackson 2007; Jackson et al. 2007). Rather than continue to engage in the constant debate on what constitutes terrorism and how to counter it; scholars within this new perspective have gone on to prescribe a set of rigorous and critically oriented study approaches that challenge the accepted "wisdom" in traditional terrorism studies. In the last five years, this perspective has become very popular within terrorism studies.

In the light of these developments in the two perspectives, this chapter sets out to highlight and review some of the literatures within the "terrorism studies". The chapter will be divided into two, in accordance to the two perspectives. The aim is to show how research within the field has evolved over the years.

1.1 Traditional terrorism studies

Traditional terrorism studies (also called orthodox terrorism research) primarily aim at understanding and explaining terrorism and political violence, from both the perspective of the instigators and the recipients of the acts of terrorism. As part of security studies, scholars here focused on prescribing what constitutes terrorism and political violence, and ways with which individuals, state authorities or agencies can use to "deal" with it.

There are two main common interpretations of violence within this perspective; functional and symbolic interpretations. By using these interpretations as a guide, it is possible to expound and review some of the literature within the field.

1.1.1 Functional interpretations of terrorism

Much of traditional terrorism research is based on the assumption that the "meaning" of political violence is "to provoke a response to further the cause of something, by strategic manipulation" (Franks 2006:18). The idea here is that those who engage in terrorist violence do so, because they believe that their 'actions' or 'inactions' will force a reaction, or an overreaction, on an established power center or the population in general; in such a way that they will want to negotiate or give in to the demands of the instigators of the terrorism violence.

R. E. Rubenstein (1987), an American political scientist and one of the earliest leading scholars of traditional terrorism, calls this "heroic terrorism". For him, "the main aim of terrorism is to provoke intense indiscriminate state repression, in order to deprive the government of legitimacy and radicalize the masses" (Rubenstein 1987:161). This functional value of terrorism in his estimation is what shapes the nature and pattern involved in any terrorism violence. Rubenstein's main point here is that terrorism violence has meaning only in relation to the functions that they perform or intended to perform. Incidents, irrespective of the level or manner involve, as long as they are able to create a scenario in which governments or state authorities are deprived of legitimacy and are able to influence the radicalisation of the masses, they could be construed as "terrorism".

Martha Crenshaw (1992), another American political scientist follows the same idea. She developed the notion of "strategic choice theory". According to her, acts of terrorism are often tactical parts of a carefully-planned and calculated strategy to influence decision making and effect political change in a social system. The perpetrators of terrorist violence, rather than be seen as mad or crazed individuals; are rational actors, who have made rational choices among alternatives, as part of strategic reasoning, to achieve certain political goals (Crenshaw 1992:71). Going by this analysis, terrorism events, at least from the point of view of the perpetrators, are not just arbitrary events that are carried out without any political purpose. Instead, they are part of calculated strategy, to effect a change (mostly a political one).

The same idea is also portrayed more recently by W. Laqueur (2001) when he refers to his explanation of terrorism as "the terrorist theory of provocation". Here the American

political scientist argues that acts of terrorism violence are mainly intended "to produce repressions, draconian measures, and thus ultimately undermine the liberal façade in state authorities" (Lacquer 2001:26). What groups who engage in political violence actually do, he argues, is to try to use violence to undermine the security of the population. And by so doing, put pressure on both the government and the population to turn to alternative sources, such as the initiators of the political terrorism, to negotiate a settlement or provide alternative government (Laqueur 2001: 26).

The main arguments of Rubenstein (1987), Laqueur (2001), Crenshaw (1992) is that acts of political violence or terrorism is very much defined and motivated by their 'functional value'. Acts of terrorism violence are not some casually-free standing phenomena; but events, which have meanings in relation to the "functions", they achieve, or intend to achieve. One and the same violent act, can be terrorism or not, depending on the function, and the circumstances surrounding the violence.

1.1.2 Symbolic interpretations of terrorism

The second interpretation of the purpose and meaning of terrorism by most traditional terrorism researchers is related to its symbolic value. By 'symbolic', I mean the notion that terrorist events have meanings beyond the actual violent events that occur: that the actual act is only an act that points to something else, often bigger than the act that happens. In the estimations of many traditional scholars who would subscribe to this kind of interpretation, terrorist events rather than being valued (at least from the point of view of the perpetrators) in terms of their devastating human and economic effects, or the intentions of its instigators; are valued in relation to their ability to point to, or refer to something beyond the particular singular terrorist violent events that occur.

One of the first advocators of this kind of interpretation is the American political scientist and historian, Brian M. Jenkins (1974). The former US Army Captain famously refers to terrorism as a "theatre". In his estimation, terrorism violent events are not just violent incidents, but "acts" deliberately played out to generate and exaggerate maximum effects, on a particular targeted audience. In other words, the individuals involved in these kind of violence, merely plays out scripts (roles), as part of the group's strategic plan, to achieve certain political goals (Jenkins 1974:4). This does not in any way mean that acts of terrorism are undertaken lightly or capriciously. What Jenkins means here is that terrorism violence like every other stage theatre, are 'choreographed' (a word he employed to depict terrorism's

resemblance with drama scripts), to have an impact on the several audiences that they affect, and that they are part of a strategic plan, to facilitate certain political goals of the perpetrators. Most other thing does not matter much; what matters more is what the events are able to convey, and what impressions they make.

A similar idea is also found in Mark Juergensmeyer's analysis of religious-motivated violence in *Terror in the Mind of God; the Global Rise of Religious Terrorism* (2003). Although the American sociologist is not a classical traditional terrorism scholar, in the sense that his study falls outside the classical security studies discipline; his study of religious-motivated terrorism bears imprints of symbolic interpretations of traditional terrorism studies. In the case of the September 11th US attacks on the World Trade Center for example, he argues that although the financial costs of the attacks were staggering, there were no evidence to believe that Osama Bin Laden and other members of the Al Qaeda network who launched the attacks, did it solely to cripple the US economy. Instead, the point of the attack was to produce a graphic scenario, in which "to identify the American government, as the enemy. …And through the attack: illustrate, or refer to something, beyond the immediate target; a grander conquest for instance, or a struggle more awesome than meets the eye" (Juergensmeyer 2003: 124-125). These kinds of religious-motivated acts of terrorism in his estimation are better understood as "forms of public performance". The violent incidents, at least from the perpetrator's point of view represent "something" bigger than those singular terrorism violent attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon (Juergensmeyer 2003: xi).

The common point of these kinds of explanations of terrorist violence is the emphasis on the "symbolic value" of the terrorism violent events, especially from the point of view of the instigators of violence. They are symbolic statements, meant to represent "something" bigger than the singular individual events that occurred. It is within this interpretation that Sun Tzu, the famous Chinese military General is believed to have popularly suggested that the aim of terrorism violence is to "kill one and frighten ten thousand" (Tzu, quoted in Franks 2006:19). Without these symbolic meanings, terrorism events could easily be translated as every other street violence. In sum, these two perspectives in traditional terrorism studies attempt to understand the 'logic' of terrorism and political violence, from both the point of view of the perpetrators and recipients of the acts of violence.

Over the last decade however, there have been a number of important critiques concerning the methods and the general quality of research, in traditional terrorism studies (Wiktorowicz 2004; Jackson 2007; Jackson et al. 2007; 2009; Della Porta 2009, Gunning

2009 to mention just a few). These critics have mainly focused on the lack of the inclusion of the role of state actors in the analyses of terrorism and political violence. Because of security studies' close connection to state authorities and government agencies; political violence and terrorism within this field have often been primarily defined in terms of 'state legitimacy': as illegitimate acts that are committed against established authorities or states. Some of the traditional terrorism scholars actually went as far as identifying terrorism violence exclusively as a violence committed by non-state actors, preferring to use alternative terms like "repression" or "military actions" for similar actions by the state (Jenkins 1994; Rubenstein 1987). Even Laqueur (2001), who recognises that under an objective interpretation of the characteristics of terrorism violence, states can and do commit a great deal of terrorism, simply did not want to elaborate on such discussions of terrorism. What Lacquer and most traditional terrorism scholars were more interested in was in providing systematic definitions and explanations that see the subject as non-state violence or a security problem. Although these definitions may comprehensively explain "how" acts of terrorism and political violence works and "what" they may be intended to achieve, it does little to explain "why" it occurs. As such root debates about why it occurs could potentially result in the legitimization of the terrorist groups and may affect the legitimization of the states; most scholars within the field have simply avoided it. This largely restricts the study and affects the quality of research within the field.

1.2 New perspectives within terrorism studies (Critical Terrorism Studies)

In the last decade, there has emerged a new perspective within terrorism studies called "critical terrorism studies" (CTS). The proponents of this new approach seek to develop a critical-oriented model, with which to conduct studies within the field. Led mainly by British political scientists, and inspired by critical analyses of terrorism discourse from other social science disciplines; this approach bemoans the method and general quality of research within the traditional terrorism studies and maintains that much of the research in the field fails to meet the rigorous standard of social science scholarship.

This, however, does not mean that in the past that there were no critical studies to the traditional terrorism or political violence study. Many scholars from other different disciplines of social science have for many years adopted a sceptical view of the dominant discourse and modes of study of those deemed "terrorists" (see Jason 2005; Sluka 2009). The difference here however, is that such critical approach took place largely outside of the main scholarly

activities of the "traditional terrorism studies"; and as such, were rarely published in the main terrorism studies' journals. As a result, they rarely influenced the general focus and approach of main stream, international relations and political science-based terrorism research of traditional terrorism studies.

But following the September 11th, 2001 attacks, this kind of approach began to make its way into the security studies. By early 2006, a Critical Studies on Terrorism Working Group (CSTWG) has formally been established within the British International Studies Association (BISA). In October 2006, a conference entitled "Is it Time for a Critical Terrorism Studies?, was held in Manchester, jointly organised by CSTWG and the Study of Radicalization and Contemporary Political Violence (CSRV) of the political science department of the University of Aberystwyth, bringing together around fifty terrorism scholars, from different places around the world. This has set the pace for the development of a new field for studying terrorism and political violence, now known as "critical terrorism studies".

To capture the main theses within this perspective, I would focus my discussion on the study principles prescribed by Richard Jackson, Marie Breen and Jeroen Gunning (2007; 2009; Jackson 2008), three of the main pioneers and leading scholars in the field from the University of Aberystwyth UK. In the estimation of these pioneer scholars, adhering to these principles would help address some of the loopholes that are inherent in the traditional terrorism studies.

1.2.1 Methodological principles

Coming from the background of improving the credibility of studies within the field; Jackson, Breen and Gunning point out two important methodological principles that should be applied by new researchers within the field. First; the identification of one's selves, one's positions and one's interests, together with the use of co-researchers and inter-subjective analysis, in relation to the dynamism of the subject, as it is being researched within the field. By so doing, Jackson et al. (2007:20) estimate, "the researcher recognises the emotional forces associated with political violence and incorporates an understanding of its polarizing effects on data and researchers". Second; the adoption of what they (Jackson et al. 2007; 2009) referred to as "methodological and disciplinary pluralism". This means, a willingness to adopt post-positivist approach, or frameworks from other non-international relations fields, such as social anthropology, social movement theories, philosophy etc; as long as these frameworks include

a critical paradigm and contributes to a further development of research in the field. The aim is to improve both the quality and the credibility of the research within the field.

1.2.2 Ethical-normative principles

Due to the relationship between state actors and traditional terrorism scholars, identifying individuals and groups who may be "rightly" called terrorists was a routine practiced by traditional terrorism scholars (see Jenkins 1974; Rubenstein 1987). Jackson et al. argue that terrorism studies have provided an authoritative judgement about who may be legitimately killed, tortured or imprisoned by state authorities in the name of counter-terrorism. In this sense, it is difficult for the field to escape the ethical-political content of the subject.

To solve this problem, the scholars thus propose an adoption of certain ethical-normative principles for further research within the field: a set of guidelines, which not only value the universal societal security; but also openly prioritise universal human life over the traditional, narrowly defined conceptions of national security (Jackson et al. 2007:21). This attitude will not only help terrorism research maintain neutrality and objectivity; it would also propel terrorism scholars to naturally seek to appraise and contextualise the level of risks involved with political violence, independent of those who may have a political interest in amplifying or minimising it.

1.2.3 Emancipatory Principles

In line with traditional terrorism studies, Jackson, Breen and Gunning (2007; 2009) also believe that the use of violence is anti-ethical to human security and well-being; and as such; that "any good scholarship on the subject, would have to ultimately contribute directly or indirectly to undermining and eradicating the need of both state and non-state actors, resorting to methods that involve violence". The best way to achieve this in their estimation, is by being open to approaches and 'praxis', which not only uphold the universal human security; but also advance it (Jackson et al. 2007; 2009).

The aim of Jackson, Breen and Gunning set of study principles is to promote a more objective and critical standard, with which potential scholars in the field can further develop research. Their hope is that it can contribute in broadening and shaping further research within the field. In general the principles are more of a development of the general study principles that are used in the different general social and natural science disciplines.

1.3 Summary

This chapter has reviewed some of the literatures within "terrorism studies". I divided the chapter into two, in accordance to the two main perspectives within the field; traditional terrorism (also known as orthodox terrorism studies) and critical terrorism studies. In general, these two perspectives represent terrorism studies scholars' (within the security studies) attempt to understand the different dynamics of terrorism and political violence.

As part of security studies, Traditional Terrorism Studies (TTS) focuses on prescribing thematic explanations on what constitute terrorism and political violence, and ways with which individuals, state authorities or agencies can use to "deal" with it. Here, there are two main common interpretations of violence; the functional and the symbolic values of violence. While scholars who subscribe to the functional meaning of violence contend that the main idea of political violence is to provoke a response to further the cause of something by strategic manipulation; scholars who subscribe to the symbolic meaning of violence believe that acts of political violence have meanings beyond the actual acts of violent events that occur. The main point of the two interpretations is that acts of political violence have significance only in relation to either these symbolic or functional values. Without these meanings, terrorism events could easily be translated as every other street violence.

In the second part of the chapter, I discussed the Critical terrorism studies (CTS). I explained that this perspective arose as a critique of traditional terrorism studies. The general belief within the field is that traditional terrorism studies are beset with a lot of conceptual, epistemological, ethical and methodological challenges and weaknesses; a result of which there is a need for a critical approach within the field to correct the inadequacies and improve research within the field.

Using Richard Jackson, Maria Smyth and Jeroen Gunning's (2007) three study principles (three pioneer scholars of the new perspective), I also explained that the perspective is more of a broad, but critical approach in which future scholars within the field can unite behind a core set of methodological, ethical and emancipatory principles, to stimulate further research on the field. In the estimation of these scholars (Richard Jackson, Maria Smyth and Jeroen Gunning), these principles would help redirect future research within the field, as well as improve the credibility of studies within the field.

2. Social movement theory and political violence

Until recently, social movement theory (SMT) study has remained under-used in the study of political violence and terrorism. Although much of political violence research concerns aspects of what in sociological circles are called "social movements" (Gunning 2009:156); social movement scholars focused more on providing explanations for mainly general non-violent, broad-based movement organizations. However, within the last decade, an increasing number of social movement scholars have begun to use social movement frameworks in the analyses of political violence within militant organizations (Tilly 2003; Tilly et al. 2004; Tilly 2004; Wiktorowicz 2004; Gunning 2009; Della Porta 2009). Rather than continue to neglect militant organizations, these scholars have increasingly began to see the relationship between broad-based movement organizations and militant movement organizations. "Violence", which is the main subject matter here is analysed as one mode of "contentious politics," and as a result of intense "debates" that are influenced by different access to resources and competing interests and identities of members within militant organizations.

In light of this background, this chapter will make the case that social movement theory (SMT) will contribute to the study of political violence. Although this field consists of more broad set of theories, which attempt to understand and explore the different dynamics of social change and movement organizations, this approach may provide a conceptual framework for understanding and analysing political violence within militant organizations. Just like the non-violent broad-based militant organizations, militant organizations are profoundly shaped and affected by opportunities, internal and external constraints, as well as interactions that go on within their particular social-political environments. Starting with a brief overview of the social movement theories and its conceptual framework for studying political violence and terrorism, the chapter will also argue that employing social movement frameworks to the study of political violence can challenge some of the underlying assumptions of traditional terrorism research, as well as broaden scholarship within social movement theory and terrorism studies.

2.1. An overview of social movement theory

Social movement theories can be grouped into two main approaches, the traditional approach and the contemporary approach. Each of them locates the social movement analyses to the intellectual standpoints that resonated in different distinct socio-historical periods when the theories emerged.

2.1.1 Traditional approach

The traditional approach (often referred as collective behaviour theories) centers mostly on providing explanations to the different dynamics of movement organizations, especially as it relates to the major movement organizations that cropped-up in European societies during the early and the middle of 20th century. Because social movements during this time were mainly viewed as anomalies (Furseth 1999:36), most of the theories within this period tried to explain collective behaviour as a sort of social deviation. The two most common theories here are; structural-functionalism and relative deprivation theory.

Structural-functionalism

Set in motion by the broad perspective of "functional theory" in sociology, structural-functionalism emphasises the importance of "collective behaviour" in social change. One of the sociologists who first used this idea for social movement explanations was the American sociologist Neil Smelser (1962). The American scholar built his theory of collective behaviour on "structural strain" as the main factor that propels all forms of "collective behaviour". Because of 'disequilibrium' (a word Smelser systematically chose to denote conflict), which is inevitable in social systems, he argues, situations of structural strain are bound to arise. This in his estimation thus, forces social actors to seek for causes and solutions in the form of collective behaviour (Smelser 1962: 67).

There are two main criticisms of structural-functionalism. First; the theory analyses and explains collective action only in terms of causality. Rather than "involve elements of calculation, based upon practical reasoning", as Alan Scott (1990: 45), a British sociologists argued, the theory portrays a notion of collective action that is more of an irrational reactive phenomenon to external forces within the society. Second; the theory seems to be unable either to explain the mobilization processes that goes on within social movements, or account for the fact that collective action can in some instances as Inger Furseth puts it "play the role

of agents of social change, or even contribute to the breakdown of existing societies through revolution or civil wars" (Furseth 1999:40; see also Scott 1990). More than mere irrational reactions to social and structural strain, explanations of evolutions of social movements includes other rational factors, such as; ideology, availability of resources, charismatic characters of social movement leaders etc. These factors can affect the emergence and evolution of social movements.

Relative-deprivation theory

Most sociologists within the early 1960s and 1970s, who did not subscribe to structural-functionalism, found solace in the relative deprivation. Relative-deprivation theory stresses psychological characteristics as the main reason why social movements emerge. Its claim is that people experience "relative deprivation" through meeting obstacles in life, such as economic and social, and that as a result of this, they often search for alternative goals in compensation, such as collective action.

However, this does not mean that all discontent leads to social movements, or collective actions. Proponents of this theory were fast to point out that for social discontent to translate into social movements, the people involved must feel that they deserve, or have a right to more social welfare; be it resources, power or status, than they already had. And often, they must also conclude that they would not attain their satisfactions via individual conventional methods. Therefore the only viable option left would be "collective action", which movement organizations offer (see Glock and Stack 1965). Because of the increasing presence and popularity of religious movements, which were increasingly cropping-up in the developing countries during the 1960s, this perspective almost achieved a position of monopoly, especially within sociology of religion (Furseth, 1999:41). More than most other theories, it seemed like the most suitable viable sociological explanation.

However, since the late 1970s this theory has also been met with a lot of criticisms, especially on its main claim. Furseth and Repstad for example, note that the idea that social or economic deprivations leads to religious or social movement participation is not empirically correct. Instead, it is often the middle class that constitutes the majority membership of established religious and social movement organizations (Furseth and Repstad, 2006: 113). It is only fair to say that some form of discontent may be behind all rebellions; but there is no empirical evidence that this can lead individuals to religious or collective actions as estimated by relative deprivation theorists. Any more precise generalization would only be too

assumptive. At its best, this theory can account for a number of initial facilitating necessary conditions, within which the motivation to act in a particular way may be stimulated. There is no logical evidence or automatic link between the conditions of the participants within social movements. In most of such cases, motivation for joining the social movements need not exist prior to contact with the movements. It is often the internal logic and process of the social group which sustains and provides the potential joiners with a new vocabulary and motives for participation in social movements.

2.1.2 Contemporary approaches

Three main perspectives dominate recent studies on social movement theory; resource mobilization theory, political process theory and framing theory. Instead of projecting just socio-psychological explanations of social movement dynamics; these theories connect explanations of social movement dynamics to resources, structures and political opportunities, and the historical and cultural processes, within movement organizations.

Resource mobilization

The main contention of resource mobilization theory is that both structural strain and psychological characteristics are not able to explain why movements emerged in certain contexts and not in others. Grievances, according to the proponents of this model may be necessary, but they are not sufficient to explain how motivations can become organized into sustained sophisticated movements (see Scott 1990; Obershall 1970; 1993). Rather than continue to assume a relationship between change in the traditional social structure or social deprivation with regards to the emergence and growth of social movements, these social movement scholars argue that social movements are better explained as a function of the existence of dense social networks and access to resources, which is purely motivated by self-interests, within innovative mobilisation and movement tactics. For sustained collective action to take place social movements often require resources, strong base support and social networks.

However in the 1990s, there were some reviews regarding the importance of this theory for understanding the sustenance and continuous mobilization that exists within social movements. Attacking the foundation of the theory, especially as was constructed by its early proponents, Scott (1990), for example raised two questions; first; does resource mobilization

theory have a sufficient broad account for the motivation of social actors to explain their continuous involvement in collective actions? Second; should social actors view social movements in exclusively instrumental terms? According to Scott, the theory has a "narrow or more critically impoverished interpretation of human motivation that reduces it to instrumental rationality" (Scott 1990:118). It does not seem to sufficiently explain the motivation involved in individuals' role in collective action. Most people do involve in collective actions, without maximising either their own or their own family's interests (Scott 1990:118). There are examples were people risk their lives, freedom and property for an outcome which is neither certain, nor always clearly motivated by self-interests.

Perhaps, it is in recognition of some of this shortcoming that made Oberschall (1993) to later modify his original view of social movement, to include ideologies, interests and identities. But even with this, he still tends to view actor's motivation for collective action, primarily from the perspective of self-interest. And this "reduces social action, to instrumental rationality and makes collective action appear as a phenomenon which ordinarily would be a rare occurrence than it actually is" (Scott 1990:118). People from time to time, can actually do group around specific ideas, which cannot be reduced to individual or class interests.

In the same vain, resource mobilization also seems to over-emphasis the internal mobilization of resources. The theory says little about the socio-political context of collective action. It is often more concerned with the dynamics of collective action; so much so that it neglects the context and structures which helps to breed collective actions (see Furseth 1999; Furseth and Repstad, 2006). If we are to understand certain dynamic elements in social movements, an approach is required which also situates social movements' in their sociological, as well as their political contexts.

Political process theory

The concept of "political process" was originally coined by American sociologist, Peter Eisinger, to address some of the shortcomings that were raised in the resource mobilization model (Beck 2008:6). The model seeks to place social movements in the wider socio-political environments in which they operate. It concurs with resource mobilization in emphasizing the existence of resources as the main factor, which drives mobilizations, in movement organizations. But taking it a bit further; proponents of this theory argue that mobilizations do not take place as isolated units. Instead, they emerge within specific political structures, which both facilitate and shape the dynamics within them (see McAdam 1982; Mc Adam et al. 1996;

Tarrow 1994; Tilly et al. 2001). In this sense, to treat social movements as questions of internal variables of mobilization due to resources alone is to miss much of the vital elements of social movements' dynamics. The political structures, as well as the political opportunities, in social movements' environment are very significant elements, for explaining mobilizations in social movements.

Recently, this model has also been broadened to include what scholars like Sydney Tarrow, Charles Tilly and Doug McAdam refer to as "contentious politics agenda" (Sydney et al. 2001; Tilly 2003; 2004); the purpose of which is to bridge the gap between the analyses of social movements with other contentious forms of politics. Under this spectrum, the gap between political contentions within broad-based social movements such as lobbying and political advocacy, and the dynamics like revolutions, civil wars, terrorism and political violence have been narrowed. Within this perspective, these dynamics, rather than being construed as formal discrete categories; they are arrayed along a sequence of related phenomena, as forms and modes of contentious politics.

This approach is very important for social movement studies. It provides a solid platform to include phenomena like terrorism and political violence as part of social movement study. Such activities can be analysed as both relational and constructed types of phenomena that go on within these kinds of movements, given their different specific social and political contexts.

Framing theory

Alongside resource mobilization and political process, framing theory helps social movement theorists to understand the character and the different dynamics in social movements. The theory agrees with resource mobilization and political process in emphasizing the importance of mobilization in movement dynamics; but unlike them, it shifts its concentration on how opportunities, identities and action repertoires are framed within social movements. Movement entrepreneurs often "re-interpret, bridge, amplify and extend existing ideologies, cultural master frames, life experiences and peculiar historic events and conditions, in a way that it mobilise activists and sustain participations in social movements" (Gunning 2009:159).

In the last two decades, some social movement theorists have broadened this theory to include the notion of "frame alignment". In a nutshell, their argument is that mobilization is a product of the identifications with the social narrative and belief system, which resonates

within the social/cultural environment in which the social movements are situated. This construction of meaning forms the basic motivation for mobilizing and sustaining activities, within the social movements (Snow and Benford 1992; Tarrow 1992; Klandermans 1992).

Judging from the amount of time and energy in which most modern social movements (or even militant organizations such as, Al-Qaeda for example) devote in justifying and promoting their ideologies and calls for actions, particularly identifying and connecting it with its member's life experiences, environmental situations and potential supporters; it is difficult to deny the importance of ideology and the value of framing in understanding mobilization in movement organizations. Collective beliefs and the way they are constructed and transformed are often the "life wire" of social movements. Activisms within the groups are often constructed and reconstructed to meet up with the social needs of the members within the social movements.

2.2 The relevance of social movement theories to the study of political violence within militant organizations

So far, I have discussed the theories that dominated social movement study. In general, these models have been developed to concentrate mainly on broad-based, non-violent movement organizations. This part will be devoted to discussions on how employing those to the study of political violence within militant organizations could benefit the study of political violence and terrorism. My initial assumption is that there are similarities between the dynamics within the broad-based non-violent organizations and the militant organizations. Just like their larger legitimate counterparts; militant organizations are dependent on resources, micro-recruitments and compelling ideological justifications within and outside their socio-political environment. As a result, they can also be profoundly shaped by similar political opportunities, social constraints and wider ideological trends.

2.2.1 Contextualization of violence

One major contribution social movement theory can bring to study of political violence research is to re-locate "violence" back to its social context. Within the social movement framework, especially within political process theory, violence can be analysed as one aspect of movement dynamics, which can depend on the socio-political structures within the environments that the particular social movement operates. A typical example is Sydney

Tarrow, Charles Tilly and Doug McAdam's (2001) analyses of violence and militancy within social movements. Studying how violence can develop within these movements, these American sociologists portray a notion of violence that is a product of intense debates between militant movements and their unique socio-political structures, which is fuelled by several access to resources and competing interactions of members' interests and identities within their environment. Referring to this as "contentious politics agenda", they argue that often acts of violence within militant movements are affected by both the state practices, and the process of reciprocated adaptation, that exist within the social movements. As they see it, acts of violence do not appear out of nowhere; rather they are usually conceived and sustained by interactions with changing ideological, religious, and cultural attitudes towards the state and other types of protests which is identified with the movements (Tarrow et al. 2001).

In a similar study of left-wing violent groups in Italy and Germany, between 1970s and 1980s by Donatella Della Porta (1995), the Italian professor of sociology and political science, makes a similar analysis of violence. According to her, part of the reason why violence escalated within the groups she studied was because of both the government agents approach, as well as other factors that resulted from the groups' interactions with the Italian security agents. In the Italian case specifically, the type of policing of protests, and the interaction between the police and the radical right-wing groups were extremely violent. Often, the violence was a reciprocation of the kind of violence that was obtainable in the streets. So as a bid to protect themselves against what she calls the violent "fascist interventions" by the security forces, the groups had to resort to certain violent means. And as the interactions went on, the violence went up from just the use of fists and arms, to the use of guns, in the sort of youth gang-like conflicts (see also Della Porta 2009).

There are a lot of implications we can draw from these studies. First; violence can be seen as a part of a wider, evolving spectrum of movement's tactics, which may or may not arise in movement organizations. To a large extent, the evolvement and the kind of violence that arises in militant organizations may depend on the movements' interactions with the political structures and powers at play within their environment. Second; violence is placed within a wider social context, thereby encouraging investigations into the interactions between the militant organizations, the society and political systems of which they form part of. Third; this approach can also enable the researcher to see the choice to adopt violence as a dynamic process, rather than simply as a static, individual disposition prior to movement participation. This is an assumption, as Gunning (2009:161) rightly pointed out which

underpins the notion of 'profiling' that is so popular among scholars within the traditional terrorism studies.

2.2.2 Bringing back temporality into the study of terrorism

Another important possible contribution of social movement theory could be found in its understanding of the relationship between the emergence of social movements and political opportunities. Again, looking at the choice of repertoires of actions by different social movement actors; political process theory projects mobilization as a mechanism that is hugely dependent upon and affected by political and social structures. A lot of empirical social movement studies have confirmed that movements arise, interact, and tend to be sensitive to the kinds of political opportunities, which exist within their environments (Della Porta 1995; 2009; Wiktorowicz 2004).

Employing this model in the study of the left-wing militant groups in Italy, Della Porta again argued that there was a connection between closing political opportunities and the emergence of the movements, as well as the radicalization and militancy that was later adopted by the group. According to her, in an unpublished academic paper delivered to the *Center for Studies in Islamism and Radicalisation, Aarhus University, Denmark*, the closing down of political opportunities was the precondition, especially after the disillusion of moments of apparent opening-up of opportunities, for the opposition activism and the violent contentions that arose in the Italian and German left wing groups (Della Porta 2009:10). In a similar study, Wiktorowicz (2005), an American sociologist and professor of international studies have also confirmed that "closing of opportunities" was indeed a relevant concept for understanding the emergence of recent forms of terrorism and political violence in Middle East. In a study of radical Islamic groups in the area (the Middle East), the social movement scholar indicated that the radicalization and evolvement of political violence within the groups were linked to moments of opening up and closing down political opportunity structures within and outside the governments and the societies in which the groups emerged. As he saw it, the opportunities and the political will for the emergences and the evolvements of militancies were linked to the development of political opportunities within other neighbouring countries, in which the groups identify.

Although Wiktorowicz (2005) differs slightly from earlier political process theorists, in the sense that he went beyond the political structures, within a single national political system; the idea is the same. From resource mobilization theory, we understand that networks

have a significant role in recruitments, and mobilizations of social movements. Network-ties among different social movement groups (whether through ideology, friendship or ethnicity) can increase solidarity and intensity of commitment, even across national boundaries. Political opportunities, especially within cosmopolitan groups like Hamas, and similar militant groups, tend to be multi-level, as violence in one country, may not be the results of events in that country alone; but a result of events in other parts of the world.

This kind of understanding broadens our study of political violence and terrorism, and helps put "time" back into the emergence of violence within militant organizations.

2.2.3 Understanding violence as a "resource" for mobilization

Within resource mobilization theory, all forms of motivation including violence itself can be seen as a sort of resource for mobilization. We know that rather than assume that an adequately articulated critique of existing social relations will suffice to secure mobilization, resource mobilization theory embarks on an analysis of the importance of "resources". This is what Della Porta re-emphasised in her comparative study of political violence in militant groups in Italy, Germany and the United States (Della Porta 2009). In what she regards as "competitive violence" that exists within militant groups in these countries, she argued that violence did not only emerge in interactions between social movements and the state, or between the police and social actors; but also very often it developed as a result of conflicts inside the social movement sectors between organizations that belong to the same areas. Often, violence arose as a consequence of the bid to gain support from potential sympathetic groups that existed outside the movement organizations. In her view, opting for violence within these groups became a sort of imperative to the groups' participation (Della Porta 2009:13). In the Italian case particularly, mobilization for violence and military skills to defend themselves from police crack down, or from the Neo-fascist groups became one of the group's strongest assets. As such violence became a sort of logo, an asset and a reasonable resource for motivation. Specific organizational structures developed very often from those militants who had most skills in the use of violence (Della Porta 2009:14).

This understanding of violence can shed light on some of the activities within militant activities. Seeing violence as a resource or as part of the mobilization process can enable scholars to explore how the choice to adopt violence is affected by the competitions among the militant groups, rather than be seen simply as a prior disposition, before joining the groups.

2.2.4 Connecting the macro, meso and micro explanations of activities within militant movements

Another asset that social movement theory can bring to the study of terrorism and political violence is to help integrate the "macro, meso and micro levels" of explanations, something traditional terrorism researchers have often been criticised for systematically ignoring (see Wiktorowicz 2004; Jackson et al. 2007; 2009; Porta 2009; Gunning 2009). Social movement scholars have always believed that political violence just like every social activity can be diffused through three stages; the environmental conditions for the development of political violence, the organizational characteristics of the militant group that adopts it, and then the personal justifications that go on within the individual for engaging or participating in such radical behaviours. Social movement theory analysis does not stop at these explanations; it can also help analyse the link and impact these three stages have on each other.

Gunning (2009) offers a very good example. According to him, the real transformation for individuals to participate in this kind of activity often begins with participation with militant organizations through a process he called 'political socialization'. Here the individuals can be groomed, and over the course of time, can develop strong affinities with one another and to the course; so much so that they conceive themselves as inseparable from the group. Della Porta (2009) also observed in the Italian case in 1995 that radicalization and dispositions to participate in certain political violence among most of activists she interviewed developed as a strong bond, which emanated from socializations within the group. According to her, people didn't just get motivated to participate just because of the groups' ideology or because they were members of the group. Rather, participation grew out of a processual dynamics, which may or may not take place when individuals get involved in groups (Porta, 2009:17). Often through actions of opposition and other forms of activism, individuals have investments in terms of their own identities and emotions that tend to create strong links with individuals within the groups. Often this bond is so strong that it motivates and continues to mobilize participants to adopt any means possible, as long as it protects their members' interests

We can draw from these studies that often actions within movement organizations are not just an action of an individual; it involves relational processes. This is something which is usually not taken into account in studies of political violence or terrorism within security studies. Without this additional empirically-grounded analysis of macro, meso and micro

factors, it is impossible to explain phenomena like suicide bombing, which is an effective form of political violence, but not always justified by all militant movements. Without this link, it will also be difficult to make sense of its justification, at least in the eyes of the participants.

2.3 Summary

This chapter has provided a theoretical outline of social movement theory, and discussed how the theories can help broaden research on terrorism and political violence. I divided the social movement study into two approaches; the traditional approach, comprising of functional-structuralism and relative deprivation theory, and the contemporary approach comprising of the resource mobilization, political opportunity structures and framing theory.

Structural-functionalism centers more on providing structural explanations to the emergence and causes of social movements; but it fails to explain mobilization. Relative-deprivation theory, on the other hand embraced a psychological approach. Instead of proposing structural factors, the model identified psychological characteristics as the precipitating conditions from which collective behaviour can emerge. The problem here however is that even though these conditions prima facie may be necessary conditions for collective behaviour; they are far from being sufficient explanations for the dynamics of social movements, especially for mobilization. It does not automatically follow that in situations where there are economic or social deprivations, that movement organizations or collective action will actually take place.

The contemporary approach, especially resource mobilization arose at the back-drop of these criticisms. Here, there was a significant shift in the conceptualization and study of social movements. Resource mobilization sees "resource" as the key to mobilization to social movements. Social movements were no longer seen just as irrational responses to deprivation, injustices or divisions; but as rational phenomena, that can methodically develop and cope with the dynamics of social processes. The same line of thought was also followed in the political opportunity process. This theory concurs with resource mobilization theory in emphasizing "resources". Differing a bit however, proponents of this theory criticises resource mobilization theory for mainly addressing only the internal aspects of social movements' organizations. Social movements do not act as isolated units; but emerge within specific "political environments" depending on the available political opportunities. Such political opportunities influence the form of mobilization and the subsequent activities, which

may arise. Framing theory grew as a response to the cultural criticisms that arose within the resource mobilization theory and the political process theory. Instead of focussing on mobilization, this theory shifts the concentration on how historical and cultural identities and action repertoires are framed, to mobilize and sustain social movements.

The second part of the chapter discusses the relationship between these theories and militant organizations. These organizations, which adopt political violence, are also dependent on resources, mobilization processes and compelling ideological justifications just like their broad-based non-violent social movements counter parts. They are also affected by the prevailing political system, state practices, social-economic changes, and wider ideological trends within their respective organizations. My main contention here is that employing social movement theory framework to the study of political violence within militant movements, will benefit the understanding and analyses of the subject in several areas.

3. Research questions and methodology

The main aim of this thesis is to compare political violence in Boko Haram and MEND; analysing them in the light of social movement theories. This chapter will discuss the research questions involved in the study. It is made up of two parts; the research questions and the methods. While the research questions part would outline the main topics with their corresponding rationales; the method part, will articulate the exact steps with which the thesis will use in answering the questions raised in the study.

3.1 Research questions

Three main questions will be posed in the study. These questions will center on both the external and internal factors that enabled the emergence of these militant movements, the role of ideology and the subsequent escalation of the different forms of political violence that arose within the groups given their experiences in the Nigerian society. The main assumption here is that militant movements like their non-violent counterparts are influenced and constrained by similar factors both within and outside the movements, which exits in broad-based non-violent organizations.

3.1.1. Political opportunities and the emergence of Boko-Haram and MEND.

Recent social movement inspired research on militant groups has indicated that the radicalization and evolvement of militant groups are linked to moments of closing-down and opening-up of political opportunities within and outside the societies in which militant organizations operate (Della Porta 1995; 2009; Wiktorowicz 2005; Gunning 2007). In the Italian and German cases for example, Della Porta (1995; 2009) made a case of closing down of political opportunities, as a pre-condition with which radicalization and violent oppositions emerged, especially after apparent opening-up of political opportunities by the Italian and German governments. Similarly, in countries in the Middle East, Wiktorowicz (2005) and Gunning (2007) also believe that forms of radicalization and emergence of Islamic groups were linked to moments of closure of political opportunities at both national and international levels. The assumption here is that political opportunities to a large extent are dependent on the socio-political structures and geo-political realities within and outside the societies, with which the oppositions identify. And that these factors do influence the emergence and evolvement of militant activism within such opposition groups.

To understand the emergence of MEND and Boko-Haram therefore, it is significant to study the social and political structures of Nigeria (especially in the areas where these groups emerged), before and during the periods in which the movements emerged. The main question will be: "How did the groups emerge in Nigeria?" More precisely, the thesis will ask:

1. Under what social and political structures did Boko-Haram and MEND emerged in the northern and the Niger-Delta areas of Nigeria respectively?

2. Were there moments of closing-down or opening-up of political opportunities within and outside these environments (in which these groups identify) before and during the time the groups emerged?

3. Were there important social and political changes in Nigeria before the groups emerged?

4. How did these affect political opportunities within the two areas where the groups emerged?

5. Finally, how similar and different were these in the two areas?

3.1.2. The escalation of violence within Boko-Haram and MEND

One of the main criticisms of most traditional terrorism studies has been its neglect of the contribution of states in the militant movements' adoption of political violence and terrorism. As I pointed out earlier in chapter 1; a good number of traditional terrorism scholars went as far as adopting the states' and international organizations' definition of terrorism as violence exclusively committed by non-state actors, preferring to use alternative terms like 'repression' or 'curtailing' for similar actions by states (see Laqueur 1977; Jenkins 1974). Alternatively, recent social movement inspired terrorism research has tried to correct this; bringing to light the importance of state practices, in the escalation of violence that go on within militant movements (see Della Porta 1995; 2009; Gunning 2009; Tarrow et al. 2001). In their findings, political violence does not appear out of nowhere; usually, there is a long history of violent contestations, group formation, and increased hostile interactions with the state or other forces before violence becomes a more viable option. These history and interactions with the state, affect the evolution and the kinds of militancy in which militants within a particular environment adopts.

To understand "how" and "why" certain kinds of militancy emerged and escalated within Boko-Haram and MEND, the thesis therefore studies the groups' history of the contention with the Nigerian state, and the succession and kind of violent contentions that go

on within the groups. It also looks at the interaction between the Nigerian government and the groups over the years, as well as the role it has played in the escalation of violence and the kind of militancy that evolved within the two groups. More precisely the study will ask:

1. What is the Nigerian government's response or approach towards the groups?
2. How have the groups responded to this approach?
3. How have these approaches and responses from the groups facilitated the kind of militancy that evolves within the groups over the years?
4. How have the interactions between the groups and other similar militant organizations affected the escalation of political violence?
5. How linked is the development of different sophisticated forms of militancy such as suicide bombing, (which has evolved in Boko-Haram) connected to these interactions?
6. Why is the development different, when it comes to MEND

3.1.3. The role of ideology in Boko-Haram and MEND

So far, the questions seem to have focussed on the external factors that influence the emergence and escalation of violence within the movements. The next question would concentrate on the internal factors (ideology): how it is framed by the group's leadership to mobilise and justify the kind of violent contentions that go on within Boko-Haram and MEND.

Within social movement studies, ideology is often understood as a resource that social movement leaders bring with them to mobilize people within the movement (see Furseth 1999: 121). Often, they are framed by the group leaders to resonate with cost benefit calculations, as well as connect with the social life experiences and environmental situations of the area where the movement organizations operate. Following this kind of understanding, a number of social movement inspired studies on militant groups have shown ideology and other internal dynamics within militant organization, as an important factor for understanding the kind of contentions that exists within militant movements; going as far as linking it with violent strategies that exist within militant movements (Snow and Byrd 2007; Gunning 2009; Della Porta 2009; Wiktorowicz 2004). In other words, ideology is not just interpreted as a motivating factor, but also as a tool with which groups especially the group leaders justify the kind of violent strategies that they employ in order to attain their goals within the environments in which they operate.

In this regard, the question then is: "How much role does ideology play in sustaining and justifying kind of violence strategy that go on within MEND and Boko-Haram? More precisely,

1. What ideologies do the groups' leadership within the two groups present?

2. Are there elements within the ideologies that justify the use of violence?

3. How are these ideologies within the groups framed to resonate with the social situations and life experiences of members within the groups?

4. How are these different and similar within the two groups?

By combining the external and internal factors, this study provides a framework with which to integrate the macro, meso and micro levels of explanations that exists within militant groups; something traditional terrorism research has been critiqued for systematically ignoring (see Della Porta 2009; Jackson 2007; 2009; Wiktorowicz 2004).

3.2 The methods and the collection of data for the research

The choice of Nigeria, and the two movements, Boko Haram and MEND are particularly influenced by three main reasons. Firstly, I come from Nigeria, and I happen to grow up in the midst of these contentions in Nigeria. As a result, I find it very fascinating to seek for sociological explanations to the activities of the two most violent militant groups that I have been much conversant with within the Nigerian society. Secondly, the two groups offer a very unique platform for an analysis of political violence within two militant movements that can be located in two different geographical and ideological settings. Finally, Boko Haram and MEND are two militant groups that operates mainly in a Nigerian context; an area in which social movement theory building has often neglected. By choosing these groups, this study will hopefully offer new insights and open-up new avenues for research on political violence on the movement organizations outside the western societies and the Middle East, where such studies have mainly focused.

Being that the thesis would aim to study the succession of political violent contentions and the interactions with a state government; the social and geo-political situations and the different ideologies within two militant groups, which still operates as underground organizations; conducting a direct study is much more difficult. Therefore the best approach to get the information I need for the research is to use secondary data on the two groups. Previous studies on these movements contain enough information to analyse these elements in

these groups. By using this research method, the study offers the possibility of introducing new interpretations, which perhaps were not envisaged by the original researchers.

Some of the primary studies conducted previously on the groups used in this study include; Elias Courson (2009), a philosophy lecturer from the University of Niger-Delta in Nigeria, Toyin Falola(1998; 2009), a history professor from the University of Texas, Austin; Cyril Obi (2010), a political science professor at the Nordic African Institute, Uppsala Sweden; Aloa Abiodun (2009), a senior research fellow in Conflict, Security and Development Group, King's College, London and Andrew Walker (2012), an American journalist for the Nigerian Daily Trust newspaper and the BBC, who lived in Nigeria for four years and had covered Boko-Haram since 2006. Except Walker, all these researchers are well-known Nigeria scholars from the different main geographical and ethnic groups in Nigeria. By using these multiple sources from scholars from these different ethnic and geographical locations in Nigerian, the study is provided with not only the necessary qualitative data that are needed for the research; but also the needed opportunity for me as the researcher to distance myself from the topic. This is very important for the quality of my analysis in the study. As I happen to come from the Igbo ethnic group, and from Imo state, one of the areas where one of the militant groups (MEND) operates; without maintaining such a professional distance from the data, my analysis could easily be swayed by my preconceived ideas about the groups.

For further detailed and chronological accounts of acts of political violence by these movements, I use reports from several well-known Nigerian and international newspapers and magazines such as; Daily Sun, Nigerian Vanguard, Nigerian Guardian, Nigerian Tribune, Sahara Reporters, Nigerian World, Reuters, Punch, Nigerian Village Square, Front page and All Africa. The chronological accounts of these events are very important sources of data, because of their ability in situating the emergence, the escalation and the kind of violence that exists within the groups. These newspapers contain significant information and political analyses of political violent events that are carried out by these militant groups. However, as I am quite aware that these newspapers and magazines are separately owned by individuals from the different ethnic and geographical locations both within and outside the country, as a result of which their affiliations to the groups could affect the content of their reports; I constantly compared the different accounts with reports from other news papers, especially with the ones from other geographical locations in the country. This is done to ensure the general credibility of the study, as well as the reliability and validity of the accounts of the events I am analysing in the study.

For the analysis, the thesis employs the general "grounded theory" approach that is quite common in much of qualitative social science research. Grounded theory in the recent incarnation is mainly based on the analytic approach as developed by Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss in the book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. The main features here is that the data collection, the analysis and the eventual theory stand in close relationship with one another, and that the approach is iterative (as it is some times called). This means, the data collection and the analysis often will proceed in tandem, repeatedly referring back to each other (see Bryman 2008; Corbin and Strauss 2008). With this approach, it will be easier for me to control, manage and comparatively analyse the different data, about these two militant groups that are involved in the study, as they emerge.

4. Emergence of MEND and Boko-Haram in Nigeria; the periodization of groups in the Niger-Delta and Northern Nigerian socio-political terrains

One good feature of many SMT inspired research is that it locates social movement's emergence to political opportunities within the group's socio-political environment. Militant groups do not just pump out of nowhere, often they interact with political systems, and tend to be sensitive towards the evolution of political opportunities within and outside the societies, in which they identify (Della Porta 1995; 2009; Wiktorowicz 2005; Gunning 2007).

In the light of this understanding, this chapter investigates the evolution of Boko-Haram and MEND. Through an extensive analysis of the country's political history of violent contentions in both the Niger-Delta area and Northern Nigeria (the two areas where the two movements emerged), the chapter will try to situate the emergence of these militant groups to changes in the political systems and political opportunities within the areas, where the groups emerged.

4.1 A historical overview of Nigeria's socio-political and geographical structure.

The present day Nigeria was home to a number of sophisticated and independent societies that lived side by side, before the arrival of the British in Africa. Communities such as the kingdom of Kanem-Borno, the Hausa city-state of Katsina, Kano, Zaria and Gombe in the North; the Yoruba city-states of Ife, Oyo, and Ijebu in the West, the great Benin kingdom in the South-west; and the Aro communities and the Nri communities in the South-Eastern parts of Nigeria were among the most significant ones. At the dawn of colonialism, these communities were merged together as one single colony and protectorate of Britain (1914). Colonialism by the way was achieved either by the use of war or by surrender that comes from a threat of war. The loss of war or a concession to the British powers translated into one major outcome: loss of independence and incorporation, by force, into an expanding British empire (Falola 2009: 1). For about five decades, the communities existed as an extended part of the British state. The country only gained independence in 1960, after several internal resistance and persistent international pressures.

Being "an artificial conglomeration of diverse communities and loosely united ethnic groups that was built by conquest and subjugation" (Falola 1998: 52), the Nigeria state never

really acquired any enduring legitimacy or trust from the various indigenous communities at the end of colonial rule. As a result; ethnic, religious, cultural and regional contentions for more independence ensued; cumulating to two military coups that later led to a civil war in1967, between the communities in the South-East (mostly the Igbos) and the rest of the country. In 1999 after many years of military dictatorial rule: Aguiyi Ironsi (1967), Yakubu Gowon (1967-1975), Murtala Mohammed (1975), Olusegun Obasanjo (1975-1979), Muhammadu Buhari (1983-1985), Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1993), Sani Abacha (1994-1998) and Abdusalami Abubakar (1998-1999) and brief interrupted civilian rules; Shehu Shagari (1983-1985), Earnest Shonekon (1993-1994); the country finally transited to a democratic rule, patterned like the American political system, under a 36 state structure.

The country covers an area of about 923,768 sq.km (almost the same size as Norway), on the shores of the Gulf of Guinea, in West Africa. It shares border with the Republic of Benin on the West, Niger and Chad on the North, and Cameroun on the South. Its population is estimated at about 158 million. Which means, it is not only the most populous country in Africa; it is also the most populated country, in which the majority is of black-African ethnic heritage. The country's three biggest ethnic groups are the Hausas (living mostly in the north), the Igbos (living mostly in the south: the south-east), and the Yorubas (also living mostly in the south: south-west). These three ethnic groups comprise of 75% of the entire population; with the remaining 25% made up over 250 other different ethnic groups, some of them not numbering fewer than 20,000 people (see Basedau et al. 2011).

In terms of religion, the country is also divided along ethnic and geographical lines. While there are different views on the religious affinities of the population, most analyses put the demography around 49/45 percent between the Muslims in the north and Christians in the south respectively; with the remaining 6 percent being reserved for the adherents of other African traditional religions (Alao 2009:10; see also Basedau et al. 2011). This does not mean that there are no Muslim populations in the South, or vice versa, in both the northern and southern parts of the Country. On the contrary, there are specific sections of the north that are largely Christian. The same thing is also the case with the southern part. In all, the adherents of the two main religions are scattered in all the different regions of the country.

4.2 MEND: Resistance in the Niger-Delta.

It is appropriate to preface the discussion of the emergence of the group with a little description of the area. This is because the whole politics of resistance within the group is framed around it.

The area now known in Nigeria as the Niger Delta refers to mainly nine states (Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross-River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers) that reside mainly in some parts of the old southern part of country. It is home to about 31 million people, spread across about 5,000 communities and 185 local government areas. Altogether, there are about 40 different ethnic groups, speaking about 250 different dialects; with the Izons, (Ijaws), Ogonis, Itsekiris and the Igbos, having the largest communities (Ugwuoha 2010:12). The region covers an area of about 112,110 square kilometres; making up 7.5 % of Nigeria's land mass. It has 13329 settlements, out of which only 98 can truly be regarded as urban centers, more by reason of their population sizes and availability of basic infrastructural developments (Ugwuoha 2010:12). It is considered one of the largest wetlands in the world; in the same category as Mississippi in North America or the Amazon Basin in South America. It is also home to Nigeria's enormous oil and gas wealth, as well as large deposit of other natural resources like bitumen (specifically in Ondo state). Its wetland is particularly pleasant for the production of cash crops such as; oil palm, rubber, cocoa, coconut and a wide range of other aquatic resources.

Like many part of Nigeria, resistance against the Nigerian state within the Niger-Delta started during the colonial days. What for the British were wars of conquest, were for the Nigerian communities a fight for resistance and rights for political participation. The imposition of colonial rule meant that the original political structures within the local communities before the British arrival were all diffused. All political opportunities to participate in the government were all stiffened. All the political decisions regarding the communities; trades, agriculture, for example, were all made without any consultations of the people. With time, frustrations and resentment against the colonial state ensued; culminating to several resistances that were embarked upon along the various ethnic and community lines, because of the rural and ethnically organized-based settings of the communities.

One of the most studied resistances that rose up in the region was the 'Ekumeku'. A reference to Ekumeku is very important here, because of its significance to later resistances that arose within the region. Unlike other community resistances, Ekumeku arose as a militant movement across several communities within the region, especially the Igbo, Kwale and Ijaw communities. It began in 1890s, soon after the British has intensified their wars of conquest

on the Southern communities. The movement's main goal was simple; "to rid their communities of the British external domination" (Falola 2009:35). More than what was expected of such resistance in the Niger-Delta communities; the Ekumeku resistant group organized guerrilla warfare and attacked any body or town who collaborated or worked with the British. The group was so effective within the region, that it came to be regarded by both the people of the region and British as the "the uncontrollable", "the whirlwind" and "the devastating" force (terms that all suggest the efficacy of the group) (Falola 2009:35). It is often believed within the region that the emergence of Ekumeku in Niger-Delta during the colonial days, made the wars of resistance within the region to stretch longer than any other part of Nigeria. The resistance only died down, when region was annexed with the Northern region in 1914 by the British commander Lord Lugard.

Resistance did not start within the region in the post-colonial state until 1966; ten years after oil was discovered in the region. By this time the country had gotten its independence, and has been patterned in semi-autonomous tripartite regional structure, which emphasised mainly the three biggest tribes in the country; the Hausa in the north, Igbo in the east and Yoruba in the west. While in the federal government, the government has a "ceremonial" president and substantive prime minister, who runs the government; in the three regional governments, different indigenous premiers conduct the affairs of the regions. In a way, the regions were semi-autonomous from the federal government. Interestingly, both these regional and federal governments were also dominated by three political parties that were defined along these same three biggest ethnic groups in the country. In the West, Chief Obafemi Awolowo and the Action Group (AG) was more of a liberal party, with much of Yoruba world view and the traditional creation myths. In the North, the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) was built around the fusion of political Islam and the supremacy of the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group. The party was controlled by the Hausa-Fulani Aristocracy. In the Eastern region, which includes most of the communities in the Niger-Delta and the other Igbo communities; the Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe led National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) dominated the scene, as an Igbo-oriented party. The party ran and dominated the regions political scene. The parties' executives, who are mostly the Igbos, determine who gets nominated or holds certain political offices within both the regional and federal government.

For the minorities in the Niger-Delta, this meant little or no political opportunities in both the regional and federal government. Soon, animosities towards the regional and federal governments grew, especially against the ethnic groups running the state. By this time oil had already been discovered within the region, and it has soon become the country's main source

of economic power. Most people within the region despaired the fact that while oil accounts for the countries major economic earnings, the people living at the areas where it is extracted, lacked the possibility of determining how the regions resources were distributed. The general feeling was that the political system being the way they are, it would be practically impossible for politicians within the majority ethnic groups within the Niger-Delta region to assume any major political office within both the federal and regional governments. By 1966, this has degenerated to several calls for arm resistance and independent from the Nigerian state.

One of the biggest resistance groups that arose this time was the Niger-Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF). NDVF was super-headed by an Ijaw man known as Jasper Isaac Adaka. On the morning of February 23, 1966, this former teacher, activist and police officer and his 59 men group declared the region as a "Niger-Delta Republic, distinct and separate from Nigeria", with a right of dominion over the Niger Delta areas (Courson 2009:12). As Adaka and his group saw it, the best way to change this unfair arrangement was to revive the Ekumeku resistance through arm resistance. Only through this kind of resistance could the region attain "self determination and control of its oil resources" (Obi 2010:223). However, the arm resistance was quickly crushed by the Nigerian government after 12 days, by the federal government troops sent from Lagos. At the end, Adaka and his group were arrested. He was tried and found guilty of treason, and sentenced to death. His death sentence was later commuted to 'life-sentence' by Yakubu Gowon, the new military head of state that emerged after the 1966 counter-coup. Following some negotiations with the Nigerian federal government in the months that preceded this new development, Adaka and his men were later released. Upon his release, he joined the Nigerian Army and later fought in the Nigerian government side during the Nigerian-Biafran war. He was however killed towards the end of the war, in a controversial circumstance by the Gowon-led administration; making some of his admirers in the region up till this to believe that that he was intentionally targeted by the federal government, to prevent further environmental agitations within the region (Courson, 2009:12).

Before now, the coalition government between the northern NPC and eastern NCNC had been toppled by a group of young Igbo (Kaduna Nzogwu, Tim Onwuatuegwu, Emmanual Ifeajuna, Nwobosi and Oguchi). Rejecting what they perceived as high level of corruption in the regional and federal government and lack of political equality among the major tribes within the region, these young military officers plotted and executed a bloody coup d'etat that killed both the Nigerian Prime Minister Abubakar Tavawa Belewa and the Premiers of the Northern and Western regions Ahmedu Bello and Ladoke Akintola respectively. Dr Azikiwe,

the NPCN leader and the Nigerian ceremonial President and the Dr Michael Okpara, the Premier of the Eastern region both escaped the coup plot. After the coup, Nwafor Orizu an Igbo politician, the then Senate President was pressured to take over as the interim president just to fill up the power vacuum. He later handed over power to the military supreme council which was chaired by major-general Aguiyi Ironsi (another Igbo military man, from the eastern region). Even though the coup was seen by many in the Nigerian public as motivated by patriotic reasons, Ironsi's failure to prosecute the coup plotters, and the fact that the both Azikiwe and Dr Okpara, the two Igbo politicians occupying key political offices at the first republic did not meet the same fate as their Northern and Western counterparts, would make people from the Northern region to construe the coup as a systematic plot by the Igbo military officers to destabilise other ethnic groups from office and establish Igbo leadership supremacy on the entire country. In the preceding months, officers from the northern region carried out a counter coup; killing Ironsi and some of the officers who had conducted the first coup. Lt. Colonel Yakubu Gowon, a northern military officer from the minority tribe in the region (the Kanuri), who even though was a junior in military hierarchy to many military officers of the western and eastern region, was installed as the country's Head of State; clearly ignoring the military's principle of seniority, in order to prevent any other region's officer other than the north from becoming the Head of State. Within the next three months, more animosity and hatred between the Igbos and the northerners flayed; culminating finally in a thirty months Nigerian/Biafran civil war between the Igbos in the east in one side, and the rest of Nigeria in another side. The war ended in January 1970 when the Biafran troops surrendered and was re-united back to the Nigerian State. To diffuse the ethnic politics and tensions that contributed to the civil war; Gowon disbanded the regional system that had existed since the end of colonial reign, and vowed to establish a new system.

Within the next few months, Gowon divided the nation into a twelve state structure, six each from the old southern and northern regions. Under this new political structure, the minority groups in the Niger-Delta region had better political opportunities than in the pre- and post-colonial civilian governments. Many of the ethnic minorities became majorities in some of the newly created states. The Ijaws in the Niger-Delta for instance, who had been a minority in the eastern region, and as a result had been at the fore-front of resistance within the Niger-Delta region, became one of the majorities in one of the states (Rivers state). At least in the states, they no longer had to contend with the Igbos for slots for political offices. In addition, the President also introduced a lot of political reforms that granted the minority ethnic groups quicker access to the corridors of power. He introduced the policy of

distributing political and civil service positions among states and ethnic groups. In the Army particularly, which was the quickest access to political power; he made it that nothing now stands in their (the ethnic minorities) way for enlistment and commissioning. This helped in quelling down the resistance within the region. In the next two decades that followed, resistance in the region slowly died down.

Resistance would resurrect again in the Niger-Delta in 1990, this time in the form of non-violence resistance. The key activist for this non-violence resistance was Ken Saro-wiwa; a well-known international writer and activist from the Ogoni ethnic group (another minority ethnic group in the Niger-Delta region). But before this, a lot of things had changed within the Nigerian political terrain. Gowon would go on to rule Nigeria until 1975, when he was deposed by Murtala Muhammed, a Hausa-Fulani from the north. The country also later witnessed a brief return to democracy (1979-1983) and violent successions of several military dictators running the state; Murtala Muhamed (1975), Olusegun Obasanjo (1975-1979), Muhammed Buhari (1983-1985), Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1993) and Sani Abacha (1994-1998). Babangida and Sani Abacha, the last two dictators were very powerful and particularly unapologetic representatives of the Hausa-Fulani interests. These two Generals almost destroyed all the structures kept in place by Gowon. As soon as they assumed power, they turned the federal government into a political machine for furthering the Hausa-Fulani political interest. At different stages in their respective regimes, the federal government ministries were also completely dominated by politicians from the northern regions, especially those from their Hausa-Fulani (see Komolafe 2012); completely sidelining the political interests of both the minorities and other regional majorities. This is when Ken Saro-wiwa's resistance emerged.

Being aware of the implications (from the Ekumeku and Adaka movements) of violent-styled agitations, the western educated activist opted for non-violent approach for his resistance. By the middle of 1990, Ken Saro-wiwa had founded a grass-root movement for his Ogoni people called "Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People" (MOSOP). Framing their agitation around the region's socio-economic situations, Saro-wiwa's movement rose up against the Nigerian government. The group's main contention as a grass root organization according to him was mainly to "demand for the local autonomy for the Ogoni people, in their Ogoni-Land" (Saro-wiwa, quoted by Courson 2009:13). This according to the group, will enable them protect the environment, seek social, economic and physical development for the region, as well as equitably distribute the wealth generated from the oil wealth in the region (Saro-wiwa 1992:10). As with the Adaka led resistance, the basic assumption that flowed

within the movement was that oil extraction from the region is synonymous with neglect, marginalization, and injustice; as a result of which the people of the region (especially his Ogoni people) have perpetually been deprived of their basic rights as citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The height of the resistance came five years later during Abacha's regime, when the group organized a well coordinated major peaceful protest around the two biggest states in the region; the Rivers and Delta states. The group, on realizing that the military government was not willing to attend to the contents of the "Ogoni Bill of Rights", which the group had submitted to the military government earlier soon after the group emerged, decided to act. They occupied the major streets and cities were the Nigerian NNPC and the multi-national oil companies operated within the regions. For few weeks, these companies could not operate freely within the region. This affected the production of oil within the area. By the second month, the Nigerian government was forced to act. For fear of the imminent economic implications, the federal government sent military troops to the area. Within a period of one week, the security forces have violently repressed the Ogoni campaign; forcing almost the entire MOSOP leaders to flee to exile, or go underground for fear of their lives. Saro-wiwa, who refused to be intimidated or suppressed, was later arrested. He was tortured, and tried in a widely condemned execution by hanging, along with eight other leaders of MOSOP on November 10, 1995, on the orders of a special tribunal by the Sani Abacha ruling council.

After this, more other ethnic resistance groups also arose within the region. Among them; Movement for the Survival of the Ijaw Ethnic Nationality in the Niger Delta (MOSIEND), Movement for Reparation of Ogbia (MORETO), the Chikoko Movement (CM), the Oron National Forum (ONF), Egil Peoples Coalition (EPC), Ikwere Youth Convention, and the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC). As the exploitations continued, several of these groups also organised peaceful protests. In the beginning of 1999 for example, many of the groups in what was termed "Operation Climate Change" launched a campaign to shut down oil flow stations and gas flares in the region; targeting the five major oil companies (Shell, Chevron-Texaco, Mobil, Elf and Agip), operating within the region. They occupied all the compounds and the streets leading to the major oil facilities of the oil companies. But, again the government sent military troops to crush the resistance. After serious clashes with the protesters, the Federal government declared a State of Emergency in the areas. By the end of the month, the soldiers brutally suppressed the uprising; establishing permanent strong bases in Warri and Portharcourt to check and deter such activity from occurring again. Some of the

groups' leaders were also bought over by the oil companies and the Nigerian government. The resistance momentarily died down within the region.

Things would change again by the middle of the year. By this time, the country had reversed to civilian rule after many years of military dictatorship. The election saw Obasanjo, a Yoruba and former Nigerian President (1975-1979) during the military regime, became the civilian President. This opened up new opportunities for contentions within the region. At least in the expectations of many people within the region, this new system was supposed to encourage more political participation in the government. There was also the hope and presumption that the new civilian President would limit the Nigerian government policy of militarization in the region. Soon, many more resistant groups emerged; agitating for more political participation and changes in the relationship between the region and multi-national oil companies. But, rather than seek a political solution to the problems in the areas, or reduce the militarization of the region as people had hoped; the newly elected former Army General decided to increase the militarization of the areas. On his order, the government security forces indiscriminately attacked some of the communities sympathetic and loyal to the new resistant groups (see Courson 2009:15). Within his first year in office, he had targeted and crushed communities and the leaders of the right groups, and deployed more troops to many troubled spots in the region. This led to more tensions in the area. Soon, resistance within the region would change from non-violence to arm resistance.

4.3 The emergence of MEND and other arm resistance within the Niger-Delta

All the resistances that followed in the region immediately after Saro-wiwa's were mostly non-violent. Arm resistance started when the Nigerian government intensified its approach in the violent crackdowns of the non-violent resistance at the dawn of democracy. As the governments' militarization of the region for the protection of the oil companies persisted, it dietetically led the region into violent resistances. In some cases, government forces allegedly abused and killed members of the communities or youths with no apparent links to the group involved to the resistance movements. The government forces have also in some cases been accused of other human right abuses like extra-judicial killings, rape and house burning during security raids of communities where the resistances are more persistent. Soon, these communities had to resort to ways to protect themselves. Many of the non-violent groups like MOSIEND and IYC who had been non-violent gradually turned to militancy.

In addition to this, there was also the fact that previous peaceful protests have achieved no substantial results. Apart from the MOSOP protests and "Operation Climate Change", which crippled the activities of the oil companies for some days, most of the previous non-violent agitations had ended in government brutal suppressions. Soon this reinforced the belief that the only viable option therefore left to make the federal government listen to the demands of the people or respect their rights in the region's estimation was arms resistance. Being that the democratic system presents an impression of less military suppression, more militant groups emerged. By the middle of 1999, many more militant groups have emerged within the region conversing for a renegotiation of participation in the oil benefits within the region. Among them the Egbesu Boys of Africa (EBA), Supreme Egbesu Assemby (SEA), The Atangbala Boys (TAB), Niger Delta Vigilante (NDF), Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF), Niger Delta Freedom Fighters (NDFF), to name just a few. These groups started threatening and responding fiercely to the Nigerian military forces attacks within the region. They also started conducting raids, oil thefts, as well as kidnappings of government and oil workers in the region, leading to complete lack of order and lawlessness in the region.

Under these tense conditions, Obasanjo became very desperate to calm the situation within the region. An opportunity came at Odi (an oil producing community in Bayelsa state that was known for its resilient resistance within the Niger Delta), in November 1999. Here, the civilian President did what nobody within the Nigeria civil society had expected from a civilian President. On hearing that some criminal militant elements within the community had killed 12 Police men, whom they suspected to have abused some villagers while on duty on the oil companies; Obasanjo deployed the military to the community to crush "the insurgency". The Nigeria military razed down the entire community and slaughtered about 3,000 residents, among who were mostly Children (Courson 2009:15 and Obi 2010:229). As if this was not enough; Obasanjo openly justified his soldiers' actions. In his Presidential address following the crackdown, he blamed the militants and people of Odi for the soldiers actions; arguing that they got what they deserved (Courson, 2009; 15). Few days later, Femi Kayode, one of Obasanjo's aides revealed to the public that the action was taken to protect oil installations in the territory, and that such system works. In his words:

> When we needed to be hard, we have been very hard. We were very tough
> when it came to Odi town where our policemen and our people were killed
> by these ethnic militants. And the federal government went in and literally
> levelled the whole place. And the proof of the pudding is in the eating. It has

never happened again since that time. So I think that policy works (see Courson, 2009:16).

The whole region was enraged. In the months that followed, many more militant groups emerged in defence of their different communities that has been long suppressed by the Oil companies and the federal government.

Meanwhile the region remained one of the most under-developed regions in the country. The poverty rate of the region was higher than in most part of the country. Access to electricity and portable water was almost non-existent. Availability of infrastructures like transportations became more difficult. 80% of existing roads were always in poor state. Rail transportations, as in many parts of the country were completely absent. Consequently, the young and more active members of the communities who could not fit into this life were forced out of the rural communities to the few "urban centres" in search of white collar-jobs, which do not exist. There was also the issue of continuous pollution of the environment by the oil companies. In a 2008 study of the region between the years 1970-2000, Committee of Nobel laureates on "Peace, Equity and Development" estimated that about 7000 oil spills occurred in the Niger Delta (Watts and Kashi 2008: 218-210). These spills had devastating consequences for the environment and local livelihoods of the people living in the Niger Delta areas. These environmental and social phenomena legitimized some of the militants cause and made them very popular among the indigenous people of the Niger-Delta areas, the moments they emerged.

By 2003, militancy within the region has become almost legalised within the region. Despite the presence of the Nigerian joint police and military forces in the region, the region had become excessively contentious. The militants have become very powerful; some times more respected than the state security forces. Kidnappings of foreign oil workers and destruction of oil installations within the region became almost a daily occurrence. As the elections approached, local corrupt politicians also began to use them for political interests. In the run-up to winning second term elections in their respective states' and local governments' some of them, together with the oil companies aligned with the militants. At times, they recruited them as political thugs, using them to illegally detain, torture, maim or fight-off perceived political enemies (see Courson 2010:16 and Obi 2010: 229-230). And as these politicians returned to power for different political offices within the region, the militants became more powerful and very attractive within the region. Soon, some of the militants expanded their bases in the region, acquired more sophisticated weapons, formed alliances

with university confraternities and recruited more zealous intelligent and young fighters; making themselves more powerful and "untouchables" within the regions.

In 2004 violence within the region, heightened when Alhaji Dokubo-Asari's led Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), a strong Ijaw backed popular militant group, who had worked closely with some of the governors within the region during the elections reportedly, fell out with some of their erstwhile patrons because of what they perceived as unfair treatment to the Ijaws (Courson 2009:17; see also Obi 2010:230). Soon, their conflict degenerated into a bloody conflict between his Niger Delta Volunteer Force and the state security agents on one hand; and other militants especially Tom Atete's Niger-Delta Vigilante, believed to be still loyal to their political godfathers, on the other hand. Severe violence broke out in many corners of the region. The attacks and counter attacks by these groups left civilians and properties worth millions of dollars destroyed. At a stage some of the oil companies formally loyal to Asari and his group, aligned with the state government and turned their back on Asari-Dokubo. Asari and his group then changed tactics. From attacking just the security forces and the other militants, they started to unleash their attacks on the oil installations in the creeks of the Niger-Delta; a well-calculated strategy to re-nationalise what was a local conflict between his group and their political godfathers (Courson 2009:17). To avoid further adverse effects on the oil production, the federal government was forced to intervene in the conflict. With the help of some elders within the region, the federal government arranged for the militant leaders, especially Asari and Atete to open dialogue. In the negotiations in the federal capital city Abuja; both men agreed to lay down their arms, and be granted amnesty without prosecution. Violence would subside in the region for some time.

In 2005, when many in the rest of the Nigerian society thought that the resistance had died down in the region, MEND, The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger-Delta emerged; defining itself as a conglomeration of all militant groups in the region, especially those from the Ijaw ethnic group, for the emancipation of the indigenous people living in the region. In the run-up to this, Ebitimi Banigo, an Ijaw business man was arrested in a controversial circumstance; his bank, technically shut down by federal state authorities. At the same time, D.S.P. Alamieyeseigha; the then governor of Bayelsa state (the only state in the Niger-Delta with 95% of Ijaw population) was also arrested in London on money laundering charges. He mysteriously escaped; only to be re-arrested again in Nigeria on arrival, on corruption charges. Asari Dokubo, the leader of NDPVF was also arrested in the government house in Portharcourt on the September 20th and taken to Abuja, where he was charged with treason, in relation to his old campaign for resource control and militancy of which he had

initially been granted amnesty. These arrests and detentions created more tensions and restiveness in the region, especially on the Ijaws, who began to interpret the events as the Nigerian Federal government's plot to systematically and unfairly target its people (Ijaws). Knowing from the region's old experience with the federal government that non-violent path to the struggle of political emancipation and resource control had gotten them no where; they figured that the best approach therefore was to take their destiny in their own hands through systematic attacks on the federal government and the oil installations on the region. Sooner than the federal government had expected the group emerged; demanding the release of the former governor and unleashing severe violent attacks on the multi-national oil companies that operate within the area.

4.4 Boko Haram: Islam and the northern Nigeria

It is difficult to understand the emergence of Boko-Haram without prefacing the discussion with a brief contextualization of the origin of Islam in northern Nigeria; as this laid the foundation with which Boko-Haram militancy arose here.

Islamic religion came to the region in two phases. The first was around the 12th Century, when North African trade merchants made in-roads through the trade routes of Sahara desert. And because of the popularity of these merchants, Islam was easily embraced by the political elites who were in contact with these merchants. By the 16th Century, political elites in many other parts of the region has also embraced the religion, and has begun forging diplomatic alliances with other parts of the African continent and the present day Middle East (Alao 2011:6). The second and perhaps more relevant phase came in the 19th Century, through the Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio. In 1804, this member of the Hausa-Fulani political elite and a religious reformer led a great Jihad across the entire region. He propagated what he called the "purity of Islam" and a universal dominance of Islam, which justifies the use of violence in converting unbelievers (infidels) to Islam. Within 50 years, he had violently swept all Hausa local rulers, off their thrones and established a sort of theocracy, known as the "Sokoto Caliphate".

Like in most West African countries, the Islamic tradition that is most prevalent here is the Sunni Maliki tradition. Within the Sunni tradition in the region, the two main most prominent orders (for lack of more appropriate word) are the Qadriyya and the Tijaniyya. The Qadriyya was the first to get into West Africa and Northern Nigeria, after having been found by Abd al Quadir (1077-1166 AD) in Baghdad. The order is often linked firmly to the Hausa-

Fulani leadership in Sokoto. It has a majority fellowship than Tijaniyya. Usman Dan Fodio, the Hausa-Fulani reli-political leader, who carried out the major militant reformist agenda, belonged to this sect. By the time, the Tijaniyya order arrived in Nigeria through Kano, in the 1920s after having been found by Ahmad al-Tijani (1737-1815) in Fez Morocco; the order (Qadriyya) already had strong influence within the region. Having not much chance against the Qadriyya, the main carriers of this denomination perched their tent in Kano, another large city within the region.

Although there are some doctrinal difference between the two orders, both orders however generally believe in the Sunni traditional belief that a saviour (Mahdi) would come at the end of time to ensure the triumph of Islam over other religions (Abiodun 2009:8). For them, Prophet Mohammed represents God's unique last mouthpiece, with which He had revealed himself. (They also believe that God has in the past revealed Himself to other prophets like Moses, David, and Jesus). The Quaranic revelations in their estimations are not words of the Prophet, or any other man; but that of God, revealed through His holy Prophet Mohammed. The revelations there-in were to be the last from God, as Mohammed is His last Prophets. The second important doctrinal issue within the Northern Nigerian Muslim society is the conception of al-Shari'a (the establishment of Shari'a law as a society's binding penal code). For both orders, Shari'a law, flowing after the early umma is the inspired and only penal code with which to regulate the society in accordance to Allah's will (Falola 1998:73). The letters of the Quran, as promulgated within it (the Shari'a law) comes not from any human being, or even the Prophet Mohammed, but from God Himself.

From this, it is easy to understand that the region had always had a long history of Islamic religious violent activism and a unique theological interpretation of the religion, which is very powerful within this area. By the time of British Colonization and the region's subsequent annexation into the British Empire, Islamic religion had become very dominant in the region, and had as well percolated to some southern parts of the Country. Many resistant movements that arose against the colonial state emerged at the backdrop of this religious activism in rejection of the imposition of the British colonial secular "Pax Britannica" that were conceived as incompatible with the Shari'a law's penal code of the Sokoto Caliphate that was established by Dan Fodio. The British were simply perceived to be "infidels"; agents of the devil, which had to be resisted with all the violent means possible.

Even though the already existing centralised administrative structure set in place by Usman Dan-Fodio's Caliphate was retained by the colonial state, the people never really embraced the British colonial system. In their estimation it represented a continuation of the

British colonial state; a *Kufur* state, where immorality and godlessness thrived. This is why when the NPC ideology that enthroned Islam at the political center at the dawn of colonialism; it resonated and quickly assumed legitimacy within the region.

For Ahmadu Bello, the leader of the party and a self-claimed grandson of Usman Dan Fodio, Islam was a tool not only to win political influence and consolidates its hold on power in the north; but also a resource to foster an unbroken continuity and establish Islamic identity in the entire northern Nigeria (Komolafe 2012). In line with the popular ideology within the region, he and his party believed that Nigeria ought to be an Islamic state, with a prominent position in the Muslim world. Anything less, would be departing from this regions' very important duty. At the national stage, he tried to establish a moral and political control, through region's conception of Al-sharia. He tried to connect Nigeria to an external Islamic organization (Organization of Islamic conference; OIC), which can offer crucial support to the country in time of need and consciously pushed for an understanding of Al-sharia and Islam, as a superior value system that can help the country attain the ideal Islamic state (*umma*) as desired by the Prophet Mohammed, the founder of Islam; a continuation of the state created by the prophet from the early days of Islam. This is not to be confused as a mass conversion of all Nigerians to Islam. Rather, this is a situation where by the political and moral emancipation of the country would be drawn from the Islamic value system, and never from the Western secular values.

The problem however, was that NPC could not stay in power enough to carry out this religious/political agenda. Both Ahmadu Bello (who became the premier of the Northern region) and his NPC second in command, Abubakar Tafawa Belewa (who became the Nigerian Prime minister after the independence), were both killed in the first 1966 military coup. Most of the Northern military men and politicians, who dominated the political scene after the counter military coup, were not necessarily members of the NPC. Instead they were "politicians" who were guided more by secular policies, than the religious ideology of the NPC. For them, religion and ethnicity was only a tool to mobilize and consolidate their hold on power. With time it became clear to the people of the region that the government did not have the will to pursue such similar parochial religious agenda as was propagated by Ahmadu Bello. Soon, frustrations grew. By late 1970s, the frustration has degenerated to severe criticisms and violent contentions between the Nigerian secular state and the Northern huge Islamic religious adherents.

Sensing this opportunity, Marwa, a self-proclaimed cleric and a voracious Islamic preacher; awoke the religious militant spirit within the region. The religious/social activist's

real name was Mohammadu Mai Tabsiri; but because he often ended his public preaching with the words "*Wanda bata yarda ba Allah maitatsine*"; which in Hausa language means "*may God curse who ever does not agree with me*", many people also referred to him as Maitatsine. The root of his birth is not very clear; however, many Nigerian scholars believe that he was born in Marwa, a town in the northern part of Cameroon (See Falola 1998; Alao 2009). This is also where he got the name, Marwa, the name he was known in the Nigerian social and political terrain. His religious practice was based on a mixture of radical interpretations of Islam and sorcery. With this, he was able to create a kind of anti-materialistic cultic militancy, which resonated among the poor and the marginalised urban classes within the Kano society. His popularity grew further in many parts of northern Nigeria in 1979, after he performed a holy pilgrimage to Mecca; claiming that he had divine revelations that superseded those of Prophet Mohammed.

Marwa's main contention was that even though Gowon (the military President after the second coup, from 1966-1975) is a Muslim, his Nigeria federal-led government were not steadfast in the pursuance of a pure Islamic agenda in the Nigerian state; a result of which he Marwa had been instructed by Allah to rise up against the Nigerian government. Being that the region had been groomed with a similar NPC's Islamic ideology, his teachings attracted a lot of followers. Soon, he and his followers established their own mosques, from which they attacked other established Muslim orders and government institutions. By 1979, their attacks had spread to other parts of northern Nigeria; prompting the Nigerian government to declare war on the group. In 1980, he was killed alongside some of his followers in a brutal security raid that was conducted by a joint police and Nigerian military forces. More than a thousand people from both the Nigerian security forces and his followers lost their lives (Alao 2007:15).

Islamic religious militancy arose again a few years after, at the dawn of Iran's successful revolution against the circular Shed-led government. The emergence of a theocratic state under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini and the subsequent humiliation it meted on the American government provided inspiration to Muslims all over the world (Alao 2009:16). In northern Nigeria in particular, it created the tendencies to see "political Islam" as a viable alternative to the Western capitalistic model that dominated the Nigerian society. Soon, many Muslim leaders began to introduce and agitate for radical movements, which can depose the existing system, in preference for the desired Islamic system that could be modelled like that of the Iran. One of the most radical groups that emerged in the political sphere was a Nigerian version of the Muslim Brotherhood, the popular Egyptian based Islamic movement with

radical views on how to establish a Quaranic state and prepare an idle society. The person who brought and led this Movement in Nigeria was Sheik Ibraheem El Zakzaky; a Hausa-Fulani economics graduate, who studied from the *Ahmadu Bello University (ABU),* Zaria (one of the biggest Nigerian Universities in Northern Nigeria). The radical cleric was known for his active membership in different Muslim groups during his undergraduate days. Within a few months, El Zakzaky had bequeathed to the movement a distinct quality of revolutionary idealism. He localised the movement's ideology to the political aspirations of the people in northern Nigeria and threatened to bring down the Nigerian state. As he and his group of followers see it, the structures of Nigerian society had remained essentially Christian, despite the fact that the Nigerian had seen the succession of several northern leaders. The best way to change this in the group's estimation is for the country to pursue an Islamic state that is modelled in the form of Iran, and a *Jahiliya*; a term used in reference to the same pre-Islamic Arab-society-the Umma (Alao 2011:18). By the end of 1984, the movement had gained popularity in northern Nigeria; as such that it had branches in most of the states in the region.

It can be argued that it was El Zakzaky's radical teachings in the region that facilitated the enthronement of Babangida, the Nigerian military president who is known to have pursued the most radical Islamic agenda in the country. Through a bloodless military coup, the young military general from the Hausa-Fulani ceased power and became the Nigerian President in 1985. Although he never openly admitted to being a member of the El- Zakzaky-led Nigerian Muslim brotherhood, but all his actions pointed to the contrary. As soon as he assumed power, he quickly banned all political party activities and unapologetically pushed Nigerian status in the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), from an observer status to full membership. As if this was not enough, in his 1989 government cabinet reshuffle, he deliberately excluded Christians with important ministerial appointments (see Komolafe 2012). He rejuvenated Islam and people of the Northern Nigeria, as the only viable political force in the Nigeria federal government. His actions would soon quell the raging Islamic militancy within the region.

4.5 The emergence of Boko Haram

Boko Haram emerged in 2002, at the dawn of the campaigns of the presidential election in 2003. For the last four decades, the region had dominated the Nigerian political terrain. Apart from Aguiyi Ironsi (1966, for just three months), Earnest Shonekan (another three months interim government, 1993-1994) and Obasanjo (1975-1979), all the Nigerian civilian and

military presidents have come from the region. President Olusegun Obasanjo was only allowed again into the presidency because; firstly; he was trusted by the Northerners: without any grudge and suspicion, he successfully handed the presidency back to a Hausa-Fulani civilian Shehu Shagari after his military presidency, which he assumed at the death of Murtala Mohammed. Secondly; with his military background and coming from the southern part of the country, the northern political elites felt that he had the capacity to subdue the rising militancy that was speedily emerging from the Niger-Delta areas in the south. So his victory at the polls was a convenient attempt to placate the South and to project an image within the federal government that the Southern region would also have its turn at the Nigerian political terrain. Many Nigerian political analysts like Wole Soyinka, a Nigerian Noble laureate and professor in literary studies, believes that Obasanjo was even made by the Northern political elites, who rigged him into the Presidency to sign a binding document that he will hand over power to the North at the end of his first tenure in office (see Soyinka 2011). But instead of handing over to the North after his first term, Obasanjo defied the Northern political elites and decided to contest for the second term. The first time they (the Northern political elites who installed Obasanjo) felt that they must have made a mistake was when Obasanjo dismissed all high ranking military officers, who had held political offices, few months after his inauguration. Of course, those most highly affected were the Northerners. As if this was not enough, Obasanjo against the wish of his Northern godfathers, began to campaign for second term in office. These created tensions and the conditions for radical tendencies within the region, as these were interpreted as political injustice within the region.

Meanwhile, the region was also engulfed in severe social and economic turmoil. More than other parts of the country, poverty and economic hardship were more prevalent in the region. In a study in 2007, Chukwuma Soludo, a Nigerian Professor of Economics and the Nigerian former governor of Central Bank explained that poverty and economic hardship is more prevalent in the northern states than in other parts of the country. In comparism to its southern counter parts, the country's "very high level of poverty is essentially a northern phenomenon" (Soludo, quoted by Jijji 2007). In a similar study by Daniel Williams and Eric Guttschuss Eric (2012:27), two Human Rights Watch researchers who conducted extensive field research on Boko-Haram and the Northern region; about 70 percent of the population in the North lives on less than a dollar a day, compared to about 50 percent in the South. The region also has the lowest literacy rate in the whole of Nigeria. Less than 23 percent of women and 54 percent of men in the north-east can read, compared to more than 79 percent of women and 90 percent of men in the South. Instead of the expected dividends of democracy at

the dawn of civilian rule in 1999, the generality of the citizens within the region continuously remained more impoverished. About 70 % of the population in the North, especially in the North-East where the group has its strongest stronghold live on less than a dollar a day, compared to about 50 % in the South. The region also has the lowest literacy rate in the whole of Nigeria. Less than 23 percent of women and 54 percent of men in the Northeast can read, compared to more than 79% of women and 90% of men in the South. Despite the vast endowment in human resources, the region remained characterised by corruption and deplorable social and economic under-development; lack of basic infrastructures, poor education systems, youth unemployment etc. Government public offices were not only platforms to acquire easy wealth; they were also avenues for other lucrative criminal enterprises. These inter-related conditions further weakened the public trust in the government and created a ripe condition for radicalizations and political violent contentions, for change of government. Soon, more radical calls for change of government and negative tendencies against the Nigerian state grew within the region.

With the dawn of the Al-Qaeda-led US September 11th terrorist attacks, the situation intensified. The success of the attacks rekindled the tendencies to see Islam as an emerging supreme viable alternative to the Western capitalistic model that dominated the Nigerian society. Capitalising on this opportunity, many politicians soon started espousing the old NPC kind of political rhetoric which fusses Islamic religion at the center of the region's political contentions. By the end of 2001, Ahmed Yerima, the then governor of Zamfara state (one of the central states in the North) adopted the use of Shari'a law as a binding penal code for his state. Within the next few months, twelve states in the region did the same in their respective states. This by the way, was not un-constitutional; Nigeria had by this time enshrined in a section of its Constitution a possibility for any of its 36 states to adopt a Shari'a code of conduct and Court of Appeal (subject, however to the Federal Supreme Court), thanks to Ibrahim Babanginda administration's amendment of the constitution in 1986 (see Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria). Several violent protests broke out in many parts of the northern Nigeria between Christians and Muslims. In the middle of 2002, at the height of this crisis, Mamadu Aliyu Shinkafi the deputy governor of the same Zamfara state pronounced a fatwa against a columnist with the Nigerian daily (Thisday Newspaper), who had written a controversial article, concerning Prophet Mohammed. Despite a two front page apology by the writer and the Newspaper, the Northern Muslim youths took to the streets. And with the pronouncement of a fatwa by such a prominent political leader, all the streets in the major

urban cities in the north became a death-zone for Christians. As many as 3000 people lost their lives during the violence.

It is difficult to ascertain the level of involvement of northern political elites in the region in the emergence of the group, due to the underground nature of the group. However, what is known is that most of the political elites within the region had this time tuned up the political rhetoric against the Obasanjo-led federal government. Some of them also admitted to have physically activated a secret army, sending them abroad for training with other Islamic militant groups in countries like Somalia, Pakistan Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Egypt (Soyinka, 2011). Again, this kind of practice is not entirely a new practice in the region. It had been a tradition used by the Northern political elites to undermine Southern Christian influence in the national politics. In 1986, when 36 Jihadists went on a killing rampage attacking Christian students of the University of Sokoto, it was alleged that the Jihadists were sponsored by the Ibrahim Babangida-led federal government. Some of the jihadists claimed to have received military training in a countries like Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Sudan (see Busch 2012). Whether it was this secret army that later became Boko Haram is not clear. What is known is that it was this time (towards the end of 2002) that Boko Haram emerged; agitating for a Muslim president and threatening to impose Shari'a in the entire Nigeria. This political sponsorship or seeming apparent political sponsorship offered the final needed manure for the emergence of the group within the region. By the middle of 2002, Boko Haram has emerged in the region, calling for a systemic change within the Nigerian federal government.

However, despite the group's campaigns, Obasanjo won the presidency again in 2003. Then the campaign intensified. But after a failed bid to secure the third tenure to the presidency, Obasanjo finally conceded to the wishes of the northern political elites, and rigged Umaru Yaradua (a scion of one of the most powerful northern families) into the Presidency. Unfortunately, Yar'adua was more ill than anyone knew. He died during his first term after a protracted stay in a Saudi Arabian hospital. His vice president, Goodluck Jonathan, a Christian from the South, became the accidental president; much as he had become the accidental Governor of Bayelsa when his mentor, Diepreye Alamieyeseigha, the Governor was forced out of office due to corruption charges, in 2005. So, the insurgency continued again. Things became worse, when Jonathan decided that in his own constitutional right that he had to contest the 2011 presidential election, which he eventually did and won. Since then, Boko-Haram has become a very dreadful force within the Nigeria socio-political terrain; attacking every aspect of the Nigerian state parastetals, as well as schools and churches in northern Nigeria.

4.6 Conclusions

In concluding this chapter, it can be argued that the emergence of Boko-Haram and MEND in Nigeria presents two very unique scenarios. While in the Niger-Delta, MEND emerged at the background of mainly brutal repressive military and civilian political regimes, the deplorable economic situations, and the availability of resources, in terms of political sponsorships and the earlier militant groups that exists within the region; in the northern Nigeria, a mixture of the emergence of Obasanjo as the Nigerian civilian President in 1999, the region's unique reli-political history, the desperate social and economic situations, and the global re-emergence of political Islam at the dawn of the September 11th US attacks by Al-Qaeda and the political sponsorships facilitated the emergence of Boko Haram within the region.

More than just closing-down of political opportunities (Della Porta 1995; 2009) and opening-up of political opportunities (Wiktorowicz 2005; Gunning 2007), the two cases are interestingly better interpreted as cases of "perceptions of lack of political opportunities". Being that country's national politics, dating back to its colonial history, was defined by ethnic cleavages and regional rivalries; contemporary political interests and struggles for power are pursued in ethnic terms. The absence of one ethnic group or groups' at the federal government level (which is the main threshold of power), were often interpreted and perceived as lack of political opportunities. Facilitated by these different factors in the two regions, this set the contexts for radicalizations, and opened up political opportunities for these groups to emerge within their different social and political environments.

5. The role of ideology in Boko-Haram and MEND

A number of recent social movement-inspired research on political violence have shown ideology as an important factor for understanding the mobilization and the kind of contentions that go on within militant movements (Wiktorowicz 2004; Snow and Byrd 2007; Gunning 2007; 2009; Jackson et al. 2009). Here, ideology is often seen as an important resource brought in by movements' leaders, to not only mobilizes people within the group; but also to justify the kind of strategies that the movement adopts, in order to achieve the group's goals.

My approach in this chapter therefore is to present the main ideologies within the two groups. Relying mostly on Courson (2009), Alao (2011) and Walker (2012), three scholars who have conducted primary research on the two groups, as well as some official publications and utterances that are accredited to the groups' leadership in the Nigerian newspapers and magazines (mostly Sahara Reporters, Nigerian Tribune, Nigerian World, Punch and Daily Sun) here, the chapter will study how these ideologies are used by the group's leadership to form and mobilise the kind of violent contentions that go on within the movements. In other words, how these ideologies are framed to resonate and fit with the social life experiences of individual members within the groups, to mobilize the kind of violent strategies that the groups adopt. Using a comparative approach, the chapter will also highlight the differences and the similarities between the two groups, as well as study whether there are elements within the two ideologies that justify the use of violence.

5.1 Boko Haram's Ideology

Boko Haram's epiphany in the Nigerian happened in 2002, at the dawn of President Obasanjo's campaign for second term. The group began as an off-shoot of an Islamic religious study group that worshiped at one Alhaji Muhammadu Ndimi's Mosque, in Maiduguri (the capital of Bauchi, one of the biggest states in northern Nigeria). Its official name is "Jama'atu Ahlis Sunn Lidda'awati wal-jihad", meaning the people committed to the propagation of the prophet's teachings and jihad. The group became more known in the Nigerian social and political terrain, when Mohammed Yusuf, a Hausa-Fulani self-proclaimed Islamic religious cleric assumed its leadership.

Not much is known about the background of Yusuf except that he was born in 1970 in a small village known as Girgir in Yobe state. The Boko Haram's first leader is also presumed to have had a university graduate education (see Loimeier 2012). The self-proclaimed Islamic

scholar understood that the extent in which his activism would appeal to the Nigerian Northern region depends on the groundswell of his ability to connect it to the political, social and economic situation of the people within the region. Consequently, at the early stage of the group's formation, he began a systematic critique of the country's democratic system and some of the politicians within the Northern region; especially those loyal to the despised Obasanjo-led federal government. "Why bother with Western kind of society and system when there are no jobs even for University graduates?" Yusuf would rhetorically ask in his sermons…Hadn't Western influences given them Ali Modu Sherif (the then state governor of Borno state(1999-2007), who was generally perceived to be excessively corrupt and loyal to Obasanjo even though he belonged to the country's opposition party, the ANPP), who spent little on his people, but built himself a palace of marble pillars and golden gates in Maiduguri?...As long as the Country continues with this western system, it will only succeed in promoting a *kufur system* that is run by these kind of hypocrites and non believers like Ali Modu Sherif" (James 2011: 49).

Yusuf likened these politicians to "yan boko", literarily translated as "child of the book". In the region, this expression is used to refer to the corrupt political elite or the rich classes, which was created by the "indirect rule" policy, during colonial era, to control the region. Some of these people had studied in the West and occupied political positions. The general belief is that such people live ostentatious lifestyles and care less about the region's traditional religious ways of life. So, to be yan boko, one has to be spiritually and morally bereft; lacking in religious piety and guilty of criminally enriching oneself, rather than dedication to the religious life (see Walker 2012). For Yusuf, these people are the product of the Western education and its values. This civilization in his estimation contains liberal values, which encourage all kinds of social vices. It is the main basis of religious weaknesses and moral decadence within the Nigerian society (Yusuf, quoted by Onuoha 2012).

In addition to tapping into this moral argument and condemnation of western civilization, Yusuf also consistently refers to the regions economic situation, which in comparism to other regions was deplorable. In Yusuf's opinion, instead of the so-called "dividends of democracy", the generality of the citizens within the region have continuously remained more impoverished than other parts of the country. All these, Yusuf often concludes, are direct consequences of the country's adoption of Western education and its value system. And unless the situation is changed, the situation would only become worse.

As a solution Yusuf thus presents a strict *Al-Shari'a system*, a theocratic system that would be modelled like the ideal Islamic *Umma*. Drawing a little bit from the region's old

NPC ideology, he argued that this is the only system that would restore the country to the right religious, social and moral path, and change the region's political and economic quagmire (Walker 2012: 5). Shari'a Law for him is not just a penal code that opposes the modern Western democracy or way of life; rather, it is more of an inclusive Muslim response that is expected to bring the extensive social change to the social malaise that plagues the Nigerian civil society; in accordance to the desired umma that was created by Prophet Mohammed during the early days of Islam. It is a religious injunction laced around the strings of love, tolerance and respect for human dignity, which "transcends the traditional extremist victimization of Christians in pursuit of grander anarchic ambitions that had been persistent within the Nigerian society;" (Komalafe, 2012). In his estimation, this would correct the pervasive moral lapses; promote justice, discipline, good morals, love and care, peace and progress within the Nigerian society. Above all, it would also return the region to a life under "true" Islamic law.

At the beginning of the group's emergence, Yusuf never officially or openly supported violent strategy. Violence arose within the group as a strategy to continue to remain politically relevant within the region despite the persistent government suppressions. Even when there was an altercation between some elements of the group and the Nigerian Police in 2003; a situation which reportedly saw the group overpower the police and took their weapons (Walker 2012: 4), Yusuf openly condemned the use of violence. He acknowledged that although the people involved with the conflict "had studied under him", and that "he shared their goal"; but he never urged them to resort to violence. For him "Islamic system of government should be established in Nigeria, and if possible all over the world, but through dialogue and not violence" (Williams and Guttschuss 2012: 32). It was not until 2009, that Yusuf began to subscribe to violence as a strategy for goal attainment.

Considering Yusuf's identification of the group's ideology with Islam within the region; Yusuf's would not have to go far away to find justifications to this strategy. In the first place, there is the notion of jihad, which provides an appropriate worldview for the justification of such strategy. Here, religious activism can be construed as a form of social and religious duty. Also, there is the region's unique historic narrative. I explained in chapter 4 how Sheik Usman Dan Fodio through a violent jihad, redefined the region's political structure by establishing a homeland for Islam within the region. He propagated what he called the "purity of Islam" and a universal dominance of Islam, which justifies the use of violence in converting unbelievers (infidels) to Islam. Within a period of about fifty years, the Hausa-Fulani powerful Sheik had swept all the northern local rulers, off their thrones and established

a sort of theocracy, known as the "Sokoto Caliphate". As a result of this, the religion within the region, just like its main tradition, does not make a distinction between political and religious power. The religion does not develop an image of faith, isolated from the secular political powers. This obviously makes it very susceptible to be used to justify political militancy.

Finally, there is also the issue of the doctrinal implications of the religion in the region. Just like in its general tradition, law is centralised. Here, the revelations of the prophets as assembled in the Quran and in the collections of the sacred stories about him combined both faith and morals. They are both doctrine and law. Unlike some monotheistic religious traditions like Judaism and Christianity (especially Catholicism), the religion does not have clergies. Similar with more radical branches of protestant Christian "Churches", no sacramental status separates the ministers who lead in religious rituals, from the laity. Imams may be expected to be more learned and more competent than most of their audience, but at least in theory, they are not set apart by having a clearly different spiritual status. These affect the way religious doctrines (how and what it obliges) are interpreted. Being that the religion is readily available for any self-proclaimed religious leader within the region, it makes it very susceptible for different interpretations.

Within this unique fusion of religious and socio-political duty and understanding of Islamic religious doctrines, Yusuf and other leaders of the group were able to frame the group's ideology to justify the political violence that the group adopted to achieve its goals.

5.2 MEND's ideology; a movement for emancipation, survival and resistance within the region

MEND emerged in 2005, as a coalition of mainly Ijaw resistant groups within the Niger-Delta. As a movement, the group has no clear known leadership figure. Although people such as Asari Dokubo, the believed leader of the militant Ijaw Youths Council (IYC) and Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVC), Victor Ben Ebikabowei popularly known as General Boyloaf, Chief Government Ekpemukpolo also known as Tompolo and Henry Okah are often assumed in the Nigeria media as occupying leadership positions, because of their involvements in the past militancies within the region; the groups only official leader has been its "face covering" self-proclaimed spokesperson(s), known as Gbomo Jomo, who gives press statements or interviews to the media after MEND's attacks. This strategy to have an amorphous command structure is believed to be a systematic plot by the group's leadership to

make the group more elusive to the Nigerian security forces (see Courson, 2009:19). Earlier Movements within the region with a visible leadership structure, such as MOSOP, NDPVP and EBA were either easily targeted or compromised by the Nigerian government and the oil companies.

MEND's leadership consistently anchors its political violent activities ("resistance" as they often refer to it) on the region's environmental and economic situations. The group was first introduced in the Nigerian public in December 2005, when it attacked two Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) pipelines located in Okirika and Adoni. In the e-mail sent to many Nigerian Media after the attacks the group's Gbomo Jomo claimed that the group's struggle is "for survival, equity, dignity and justice for the people of the Niger-Delta". The group's aims according to him is to expose the exploitation, the oppression and the devastation of the natural environment, caused by both public and private partnerships between the Nigerian Federal Government and the oil corporations, involved in the extraction of oil in the Nigerian oil-rich Niger-Delta areas, and as a result seek reparations for them from the Nigerian government and oil companies. As he sees it, it is environmentally and socially imperative on the people living within the region, to "resist" these exploitative and oppressive exclusions in the region by all means possible (Courson 2009:12).

MEND's solution to these problems was to win the right of the local oil producing communities within the region to participate in the Nigeria's oil industry (Courson 2009:8). This in their view was the best way to change the region's economic plight. This is consistent with realities within the region. The corrupt successive Nigerian military and civilian governments had often connived with the oil companies in excluding the region from participating in the benefits of the oil production in their communities. There have been cases, when the oil companies went as far as forcefully taking over specific community lands or rivers for their industrial wastes without any adequate compensation to the host landlords, or the communities. In such situations, the Nigerian governments rather than mediate in the crisis have responded by sending security personnels from Abuja, to prevent the villagers from attacking the oil companies (see Courson 2009; Obi 2010). Thus, tapping into these unaddressed grievances and frustrations, MEND's leadership projects the group as the reliable alternative, to engage with the Nigerian government and rescue the region from its deplorable economic and political situation.

However, MEND's leadership was not naïve to assume that the group could achieve these aims through local resistance; through violence or non-violence means, as some of the previous resistant groups that arose in the region in the past did. Here, the main idea is to

globalise the local resistance (Courson 2009:18). Violence strategy in the group's leadership estimation was a way to give the local resistance, a more global audience. In addition, it was also a way of surviving the region's dangerous terrain, which was militarised by the Nigerian Federal government. So, right from the beginning, violence arose within the group as a strategy to achieve these goals.

There is one important implications of this for the group. This means from the onset the group's target were strategic areas and the Nigerian economy. The group would only attack the Nigerian institutions or security forces in situations where they stood on their way of trying to attack oil facilities or institutions, which in the group's estimation could cripple the Nigerian economy. The hope is that this strategy would help put more pressure on the Federal government and the multi-national oil companies to come to the negotiating table with the group. As long as these kinds of attacks serve this purpose within the region, in the group's estimation it is very justified.

The gains brought in by this strategy to the group were enormous. First, it became a big recruiting tool for youths and unemployed graduates within the region. As the group emerged during the time the militarization of the region by the Nigerian Federal government, had dialectically fed into violent resistance within the region; violent contentions was a source of empowerment for the youths, who had to navigate the complex terrain of survival within the region. Second and perhaps the most important gain, it helped legitimised the group within the region. As this meant bold violent attacks on the despised oil companies and the Nigerian security forces, the group was easily seen as the panacea for the region's deplorable situation; a feeling which had all along been absent within the region. Finally, the strategy also facilitated the sky-rocketing of the price of oil in the global market. This brought in more global attention on the situation of the oil producing communities, particularly the plight and the demands of the people.

5.2.1 MEND and Egbesu (further justification for violent strategy)

One yet-to-be mentioned important aspect of MEND's ideology is its identification with Egbesu. Egbesu is an Ijaw traditional god or deity of war, whose real significance lay deep in Ijaw cosmology, as a symbol of spiritual protection, for the Ijaws when fighting "just wars". Here, the group's leadership uses it to further justify the violent strategy that the group adopts. Initiation rites into Egbesu by Ijaw traditional priests were often used by the group's leadership to embolden the Ijaw youths intent on joining the group's militant activities. The

popular belief is that she can even confer invincibility from bullets or other forms of harm, when the people are fighting just wars (Obi 2010:229).

The appropriation of the Egbesu in the justification of its violent strategy reflects MEND's leadership subtle calculation. They (MEND's leadership) understood that although Christianity is very prominent in the Ijaw communities, the traditional ancestral beliefs still have strong sway on the people. Like many African communities, the ideology within the Ijaw cosmology, is that there is an existence of local ancestral deities. These gods inhabits in the invincible, but inseparable world. They are connected to the material world through the human spirit that is believed to be inherent in every person. Each special human occasion has a special deity responsible for them. Hence, just as it follows that people try to maintain good relations with different individuals within their own territorial environments, for their own benefits; individuals and communities invest in their relationships with the deities, especially on the occasions in which the deities are responsible for, so as to enhance their material interests and welfares in those occasions. Rituals like initiation rites or covenant with particular deities for example, are often seen as some of the ways in which individuals and communities maintain good active relationship with the deities. In this sense, these deities can protect or enhance the individual's material benefits (see Haar and Ellis 2006).

This was also a very important factor during the region's long resistant wars. Dating back to the eighteenth and nineteenth century invasion of the Europeans, resistance wars within the region were fought along community and ethnic lines. The region is known to have fought-off the earliest set of European traders in the region, who wanted to gain unrestricted access to the region's interiors, where the goods traded on the Atlantic coast were sourced. The famous Ekumeku warriors that arose within the region were also known for its numerous successes in the resistance wars against the colonial government, despite their low-quality ammunitions, against the British colonial soldiers of the nineteenth century. The region only surrendered to the colonial government by the end of nineteenth and the beginning of twentieth century, many years after many communities in the northern Nigeria had long surrendered. The popular belief is that these successes were largely influenced by the involvement of Egbesu. So, by appropriating Egbesu, the group's leadership identifies the group's cause with the region's resistance history and gives the violent strategy adopted by the group, a very unique justification.

5.3 The differences and the similarities between Boko-Haram and MEND's ideology

So far, I have discussed the different ideologies within the groups; how they are framed by the movement leadership to mobilise and sustain the kinds of strategies that go on with the two militant groups. Now this last part of the chapter would now progress to a comparatively analysis of these two ideologies. Such analyses would help the study investigate further the differences and similarities between the two ideologies, as well as how they are differently framed within the two groups.

5.3.1 What the groups view the problems to be

Different from many several erroneous interpretations, Boko-Haram taps into the northern region's rich Islamic political history, widespread poverty, endemic corruption, lack of youth employments, in-effective social system, lack of basic infrastructures, dysfunctional government and moral decay in the country to anchor their activism. More than mere hatred of Western education or books, as the group's appropriated name "Boko-Haram" literarily depicts; the group's activism is anchored in the belief in the supremacy of the region's Islamic civilization and culture, and its feature of projecting political and economic emancipation. This is the area where many people often misunderstand the group's ideology. The name "Boko-Haram" was a sort of dismissal tag by some Maiduguri residents, who despised the group's hatred for Western civilization. It was another way of saying "those people who go on and on about Western education being a sin" (Walker 2012: 8). These neither depict the group's main core beliefs, nor mean that the group utterly rejects Western education and its fruits. On the contrary; the group is known to make use of fruits of Western technology such as; mobile phones, video cameras, DVDs, internet, cars, chemical and automatic weapons when it suits them. The Group's leader, Yusuf, is also known to have had a graduate education and drove a Mercedes-Benz car (Loimeier 2012).

What the group rejects however, is the "yan boko"; the morally bereft and corrupt politicians that dominated the Nigerian and northern region's political terrain. For Yusuf and the Boko-Haram's leadership, these crops of people are the only logical products that could come out of Western civilization, which in the group's estimation is the main problem withholding the Nigerian society and its people from reaching its God's ordained destination. As it is, these people and the western civilization, brings along with them liberal moral and social values, which easily promote social vices including government corruption and moral

decays that withholds the Nigerian society from reaching its right economic and social destination. As they see it, the country's continuous reliance on these people and the Western values, would only make the country's situation worse.

Different from Boko Haram, MEND does neither identify the Niger-Delta region's problem to any religious civilization, nor claim any subscription to any particular departure and attitude towards any particular religious tradition. (Its subscription to Egbesu is mainly as a tool to justify the group's violent strategy). For them, the problem lies in the exclusion of the oil producing communities from participating and benefiting from the oil extraction from their region, and the relationship between these communities and the Nigerian government and the multinational oil companies; a situation which has resulted to; lack of basic social amenities, underdevelopment, widespread poverty, youth unemployment, political repressions and environment abuses on the region's eco-system.

However, both groups' leadership similarly used the local and environmental situations within their respective regions to anchor their activisms. They connected the problems with their regions to these situations. This made it easier for both group's activism to gain legitimacy and appeal to the people within the regions.

5.3.2 The solutions and the strategy to achieve the goals

Having identified the problems in their respective regions, it was a logical progression for both group's leadership to proffer solutions to the problems. While for MEND, the ideal solution that the region desperately needed was the inclusion of the oil producing communities to benefit in the oil production in their communities and an attitudinal change in the relationships between the oil producing communities and Nigerian government and oil companies; For Boko Haram, the solutions lie in the dethronement of the Nigerian existing government (system), in preference for an Islamic theocratic Shari'a system. More than mere rescuing of the regions from their economic and political quagmires, Boko Haram believes that this preferred theocratic Shari'a system would also "correct the pervasive moral lapses and promote justice, discipline, good morals, love and care, peace and progress" (Komolafe, 2012), within both the Northern region and the entire Nigerian society.

These ideological aspects have implications on the strategies that would be adopted by the groups. In Boko Haram, political violence was never part of the group's strategy. The strategy evolved as the group desperately wanted to remain politically relevant, as well as to maintain itself despite severe governmental oppositions and suppressions within the region.

However, when the strategy arose, the group's leadership drew essentially on the region's Islamic religious and political history to justify it. Much like in the region's history, it is framed as a sort of political and religious duty. And being that Islam has some features which make it easily susceptible to be interpreted or framed to justify violent contentions, especially against one perceived to be enemy of the religion; the ideology easily resonated within the region, and became the group's biggest source of mobilization.

In MEND, political violence was also as a strategy employed by the group to attain its goals: a tool to globalise the group's resistance and advocate for attitudinal and political change in the relationship between the oil producing communities and the Nigerian Government and the oil companies. Different from Boko Haram, the strategy arose at the beginning of the group's emergence. Here, it is projected as part of the region's social and environmental duty. Just as it is humanly imperative for the people within the region to protect themselves; it is also environmentally obligatory for the people within the region to "resist" the Nigerian government and oil companies' exploitative approach within the region. Different from Boko Haram, the group unapologetically saw violence right from the beginning as the best strategy to achieve these goals. The group's experience from previous militant groups meant that the group knew that targeted attacks on the heart of Nigerian economy would bring the region's plight to more global audience, and as a result put pressure on the Nigerian government to negotiate with the group. Political violence here was not meant to be indiscriminate, but rather more target oriented. More than this, the strategy also arose dynamically as both a practically strategy, both to resist and survive the Nigerian government militarization strategies within the region. As a result, this strategy would become a source of empowerment for navigating and surviving the region's complex militarised terrain within the region. This contributed in legitimising the group, especially among the youths who felt that they needed such strategies to survive within the region.

Finally, MEND also subscribes to the traditional belief in Egbesu. Different from Boko Haram, this subscription is only used to further justify the group's violent strategy. Egbesu's role in the Ijaw cosmology plays a very big part in the mobilization of members of the group and in sustaining the violent contentions that go on within the group when they engage with the Nigerian security forces. It brings into the group a unique sense of protection and identification with the region's resistance history; a factor which was absent from other militant groups which had existed within the region.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the role of ideology in Boko-Haram and MEND. The analysis showed that ideology played an important role in the mobilization and sustenance of violence within the two militant movements.

In MEND, the activism was anchored as part of the environmental and social duty. Tapping onto the region's persistent political repressions, environmental degradations and lack of the possibility of the oil producing communities to tap directly into the oil industry benefits; a situation which has resulted to lack of basic infrastructural developments, gainful employments and compensations, the group projects its activism as part of the group's strategy to protect the people and the region's fragile eco-system. Aided by abundant resources, in terms of experiences brought in by previous militant groups; political violence arose dynamically and strategically as a tool to help the people within the region and group to achieve these goals. To further justify this strategy, the group's leadership uses Egbesu, the traditional deity for justice and retribution. In Boko Haram, the group's political activism is framed as part of an Islamic religio-political duty to protect the region and the nation from a perceived impending doom that was being necessitated by the continuous existence of the nation's Western-modelled secular government. Drawing essentially from the region's rich Islamic religious culture frames and economic situations, the group's leadership projects collective activism and later militancy as the best possible means with which to terrorise the public and put pressure on the government to effect the needed necessary political changes at the region and at the center of the country's political terrain. These two framings appealed to raw emotions and legitimated the groups' agitations within their respective regions.

By identifying MEND and Boko Haram's activisms with the two significant religious traditions (Egbesu and Islam, respectively) within their respective regions, the group's leaderships were able to mobilise and further justify the kind of violent strategies that the groups adopt. These religious traditions especially Islamic traditional religion contain elements within them, which make them easily susceptible to be used to fan violent activism against individuals or people perceived to be enemies.

6. The escalation of political violence

In the last chapter, the study has outlined the importance of ideology in the two groups: how they are framed to resonate with the environmental situations of the regions and used as a major motivating factor for sustaining the violent strategy that the two groups adopt. Now, this last part of the study would focus on how this strategy developed and escalated within the groups, given the group's peculiar situations and respective aims.

My initial assumption from previous studies on similar groups within the field is that the developments and escalation of violence within such groups are largely affected on the interactions between the groups and state actors and the mobilization process that go on within the groups and the interactions between the groups and other similar organizations in which the groups identify with. Usually, after such groups have been formed, and they try to use political violence as a calculated strategy to reach their goals; the government normally responds with violence, then the group retaliates and more conflict escalates (Della Porta 1995; Tarrow et al. 2001; Hafez and Wiktorowicz 2004; Gunning, 2009).

With this in mind, the chapter will therefore study these factors within the groups. Using a detailed analyses of the succession of activities within the groups (especially at the early stages of the group's emergence), the groups interactions with other similar organizations within and outside the country and the interactions between the groups and the Nigerian government; the style of policing of the Nigerian security forces and the groups response on these styles; the study would try to understand "how" and "why" these interactions influenced the escalation and development of violence within the groups. More particularly, the study would also see whether sophisticated forms of political violence such as suicide bombing, which developed within one of the groups (Boko Haram), is connected to these interactions.

6.1 Political violence within Boko Haram

To preface the discussion of the progression and development of political violence within the Boko-Haram; it is appropriate to give an outline of the early phases of political violence within the group. This would help contextualise the emergence of the different forms of violence; why and how these kinds of violence escalated within the group.

6.1.1 The Beginning of Militant contentions against the Nigerian government

Although Boko Haram is believed to have emerged in the Nigerian society in 2002, the group did not officially adopt violent strategy until 2009. Before Yusuf took over the leadership, it is believed that some members of the group numbering up to 200, withdraw from the city (in the form of hijra; Prophets Mohammad's withdrawal from Mecca to Medina). These group of students declared the city of Maiduguri and the rest of Nigerian society as "intolerably corrupt and irredeemable" (Walker 2012:3). Relocating to a small village known as Kanama in Yobo State, they re-named it Afghanistan. This village is near the Nigerian Boarder with Niger. It was during the time the group operated in Kanama, that the first altercation between them and police occurred (see chapter 5).

Meanwhile, the altercation happened at the background of a community dispute between the group and some villagers regarding fishing rights. As the police tried to mediate in the conflict, there was a misunderstanding and soon violence ensued. The group reportedly overpowered the police and seized their weapons (Walker 2012:4). In retaliation, the local police descended on the group with full force. As many as seventy members of the group were killed, including Mohammad Ali, one of the prominent deputies of Yusuf. Yusuf, as the leader of the group, was declared wanted. To avoid prosecution, Yusuf fled to Saudi Arabia. Yusuf only returned to Nigeria through the assistance of Adamu Dibal, the former deputy governor of Borno state (Williams and Guttschuss 2012: 30). On his return, he admitted that although the people involved with the violence had studied under him, but he never encouraged them to carry out violence against the state or the police.

When Yusuf returned from Saudi Arabia, he relocated the group's base back to Maiduguri. There, he set-up a new mosque in the center of the city, which he named Ibn Taimiyyah Masjid, in a land owned by his father in-law, Baba Fugu Mohammed. In line with the group's aim of systematically establishing a true Islamic order and put the region back into the right economic and political path, he began to espousing radical jihadic teachings against the Nigerian state. For several times, Yusuf was arrested by the Nigerian security forces and released. As a way of reaching out to more audience within the region, Yusuf's often release video cassettes and DVDs sermons, where he consistently campaigned for a change and a removal of the Nigerian Christian president. He also established a welfare system of offering material hand-outs, food and shelter to impoverished people, within the region. Gradually, the group's influence grew, and spread to other parts of Northern Nigeria such as Kano, Bauchi, Yobe, Adamawa, Kaduna, Niger, etc.

It is difficult to ascertain the group's level of political sponsorship, or when the political elite within the region became involved with the group, due to the underground nature of the group. However, what is certain is that the group enjoys some level of financial and political support from some of the political elite within the region. Many sources have identified people like Ali Ndume (former governor of Bauchi state (1999-2007) and a serving Nigerian senator representing Bauchi South; Alhaji Shettimma Pindar, Nigerian pioneer and former Ambassador to Sao Tome and Principe, from Borno state (Ukpong, 2011); Ali Modu Sheriff, the former governor of Borno state (Tsa, 2011); Arewa Consultative Forum, a formidable Northern political pressure group that is made up of prominent politician from the Northern Nigeria (Offoaro, 2012); Buji Foi, former Bauchi state commissioner for religious affairs (see Walker, 2012). The Nigerian President himself, Goodluck Jonathan has also in 2012, amidst persistent attacks on churches and government institutions, openly admitted that the group has political sponsorship even within his government. In his words:

> Some of them (Boko Haram members) are in the executive arm of
> government, some of them are in the parliamentary/legislative arm
> of government, while some of them are even in the judiciary. Some
> are also in the arm forces, the police and other security agencies…
> (Adetayo, 2012; see also Williams and Guttschuss, 2012: 37).

Adamu Dibal, the former deputy governor of Borno state, had also by his own admission claimed that it was him, who facilitated Yusuf's return to the country after he fled to Saudi Arabia at the dawn of the Police crackdown (Williams and Guttschuss, 2012: 31). It is probably because of this sponsorship, and the financial support that it entailed that made it possible for Yusuf to maintain the group's humanitarian welfare activities like offering of food, shelter, money and other material needs; and as a result was able to attract many of the region's impoverished and jobless youths into the group. By the time Obasanjo won the second election, the group has expanded into many of the states within region, such as Niger states, Kano, Kaduna, Gombe and Jos. Soon, the group would tune up its radical messages and attacks on the Nigerian government.

In 2007, amidst the group's persistent campaigns and radical teachings on how the country should enthrone Islamic order, and following unsuccessful bid for the third tenure, Obasanjo finally succumbed to the Northern region's political demand. He hand-picked Umar Yaradua, a well known Hausa-Fulani political elite and the immediate former governor of Katsina states (1999-2007), one of the states in the North which had adopted the Shari'a law

during his first term. Yaradua came from an Aristocratic Hausa Fulani family. His father was a former Minster for Lagos during the first republic. He also held the royal title of *Mutawalli*(Custodian of the treasury) of the Katsina emirate, a title which Yaradua later inherited. Yaradua's elder brother Shehu Musa Yaradua was also Obasanjo's vice President when Obasanjo served as a military President (1976-1979). Obasanjo's choice of him must have been to both appease the group, and some of the elements within the region, who continued to agitate for power to return to the region. And as expected, amidst allegations of rigging, Yaradua won the election.

But Obasanjo was wrong; the group never accepted Yaradua's candidacy or his Presidency. He was not in the category of politicians the group would hope will take the country to the group's desired Al-Shari'a system. His (Yaradua) introduction of Shari'a, together with some of the 12 governors in the Northern region in 2000 at the start of Obasanjo's first tenure, was only in part a political tool to maintain the region's relevance of "history, heritage and hegemony" (Komolafe 2012). The political imperative of having such an Islamic political identity at the center of the state's governments was precisely because it consolidated their (the governors') position as political custodians and protectors of the region's culture and way of life. It was only a political tool to win elections. Boko-Haram knew this, and as a result quickly rejected Yaradua; refereeing to him as "yan-boko". So, even with him as a Northern Muslim President, the group still regarded the Nigerian state as "a kurfur system" that is run by hypocrites and non-believers.

Soon, Yusuf and his group tuned up their negative rhetoric against the Nigerian state, threatening that his group would depose the government. On the 11th of July 2009 in Maiduguri, the group clashed with a joint military and police squad. Travelling as a group to the funeral of the group's member, the group was halted by police traffic officers, who were enforcing a tightened restriction on motorcycle helmets. When some of the group's members refused to cooperate with the police, the security forces reportedly opened fire on the procession, injuring about seventeen of the group's members (Williams and Guttschuss 2012: 33). In the coming days, Yusuf persistently demanded for justice, but the Nigerian government neither investigated the incidents surrounding the shootings nor apologised for them. As tensions raged within the region, one of the group's members accidentally blew himself up while practicing on a local bomb. Yusuf called him a martyr (Williams and Guttschuss 2012:33). All these incidences, together with the fact that group's appeal within the region were starting to decrease, contributed to more radical tendencies within the group. Soon the group would start violent attacks on the Nigerian state.

Yusuf's biggest opportunity to introduce the group to a wider audience came when he gave a controversial interview few days later to BBC. In the interview he reiterated that his group would soon start to intensify their violent strategies against the Nigerian Government. He also specifically made claims that his group intends to bring down the Yaradua government, in preference for the desired Islamic theocratic state. The global attention attracted by the BBC interview to the group was not longer something the Nigerian Federal Government could avoid. Even though Yaradua and some members of his administration could possibly have been part of the political sponsorship behind the group, he had to do something to "save the administration's face" from the international community, as well reassure the rest of the Nigerian public, who have started to become worried of the group's continuous threats and militancy. In the next one week the Nigerian federal government launched a major "political crackdown" against the group; led by a newly formed joint military forces, state security service personnels and members of the police force known as the Joint Task Force (JTF). The group's main task was to help the local Police Force in Maiduguri, where the group has its strongest base, to arrest several top members of the group.

But what the administration had hoped would be a ceremonial exercise, turned highly violent. Most of the group's members started resisting the arrests, and as a result were shot by the JTF. Some, who complied with the police were rounded up and locked up in the Zango (within the Maiduguri metropolitan) local police station. Within a period of one week, the JTF was able to arrest more than seven hundred members of the group within the Maiduguri. On July 26, when the JTF thought that they had crippled the group, about 70 members of the group descended on the Zango Police station on a reprisal attack; armed with locally made guns, bows and arrows. Even though the group was not able to rescue some of its members believed to have been kept in custody there, the group lost again about 36 of its members from the gun battle with the Nigerian JTF. The group only managed to kill two police men and one soldier. Their lack of experience and their locally made weapons was no match to the automatic guns and grenades of the Nigerian security forces. Sensing that they didn't have much chance against the newly equipped security forces, the group soon changed tactics. Most of them began roaming the Maiduguri streets in the night; fighting and indiscriminately killing the police and people suspected to be members of the JTF. Within a few days, there was a total chaos in the entire Bauchi state.

The federal government responded with more military response. More troops were sent from Abuja to support the local police and the JTF. Soon, the JTF eventually regained control of the city. This time, the administration must have decided that the group's

continuous existence was no longer politically advantageous to the administration. Its continuous existence meant at least in the eyes of the international community and most people outside the northern Nigeria, gross inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the Nigerian Federal government. So, with a backing from the Yaradua-led government, the JTF embarked on a bloody purge of every suspected member of the group and its core sympathizers. Dozens of people, presumed to be high profile members of the group, including Yusuf's father in-law were rounded up and killed. Some who were presumed to be low key members and sympathizers were simply locked up and taken to undisclosed police stations. The security forces also launched more attacks in the suburbs of Bauchi and Maiduguri, where Yusuf and other key members of the group were believed to have sought refuge. As they went deeper, Boko-Haram also fought back. For two days, the Nigerian security forces were locked-up in violent deadlock with the group. On the third day, on the 28th of July the security joint forces surrounded Yusuf's hideout in Maiduguri, killing about 25 of its followers in the process. They took him to Maiduguri police station, and shot him multiple times at the chest and at back of the head, without trial (see Walker, 2012:8; Williams and Guttschuss, 2012:34), apparently, to prevent him from implicating high profile political elites, believed to be involved with the group. In the raid that was conducted at both Yusuf's house and the group's mosque; pump action guns, air riffles, revolvers, several AK-47s, as well as materials for manufacturing explosives were discovered. Soon, the surviving members group went underground, putting an end to the political violence within the group for some time. Not much was heard of Boko Haram, until December 2009 when it re-emerged; this time with more determination to fight the Nigerian state, as well as avenge the death of its leader.

6.1.2 Suicide bombing and the evolution of more sophisticated forms of political violence within Boko Haram

Boko Haram's re-emergence at the end of 2009 and the beginning of 2010 couldn't have been more necessitated by reasons other than the apparent northern region's power vacuum that occurred at the Nigerian Federal government at the time. Yar'adua, the Nigerian President, who had kept the group on check and on whose order the group was initially dismantled was seriously sick in a hospital in Saudi Arabia. He was hardly seen in the public. He eventually died after many months in the Saudi hospital. Following his death, his Vice President would according to the Nigerian constitution see out the remaining years of his tenure. This means, the North would again have to endure another serious power shift to the south and have to

wait until 2011 to have a chance of another shot at the presidency. This must have been a very difficult blow for the northern political elite behind the group, to swallow. Within this time Boko-Haram re-emerged again and tuned up its militancy against the Nigerian state.

Many reports have indicated that during the time the group fled the Maiduguri crackdown and went underground; they escaped to many training camps in Islamic countries where similar ideological militant groups operated. Andrew Walker (2012) for example, reports that during this time many of the group's members went to both Tuareg rebel camps in Mali and the insurgent training camps in Algeria. Also, according to him, Imam Abubakar Shekau, a high profile cleric and a close confidant of Yusuf and who will later become the group's leader relocated to a hideout in the northern Cameroon. In a similar report for *The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)*; Jennifer G. Cooke (2011), an American director of the institutes Africa Program, also claims that the group was also linked with collaborations and trainings with Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in Mauritania during this time. Although, it is again difficult to ascertain the authenticity of these reports; but the fact that these groups share ideological similarities with Boko-Haram, makes it reasonable to surmise that they would align with them during this critical time. Moreover, Yusuf Muhammad, the eventual first official leader of Boko Haram as well as other pioneer members of the group, by their own admission have participated and gained from training scholarships abroad with some of the leaders of these external militant groups (Busch 2011). By the time they (Yusuf and many of the pioneer members of the group) took over the group's leadership, they had corporations with these radical Islamic groups outside the country (see also Walker 2012). So, it is only natural for the surviving members of the group to align with these groups, where they would be easily mingle and be accepted within the group; waiting only for the right time, to return and continue their activism against the Nigerian state.

Under a new leader Imam Abubakar Shekau, a high profile cleric and self-proclaimed close confidant of Yusuf (see Onuoha 2012 and Walker 2012: 6); the group threatened renewed attacks to avenge the deaths of its founder and other members, at the hands of the Nigerian Police. First, they started with high level hit-and-run assassinations of selected individuals and high ranking JTF personnels stationed in the areas; using unsuspecting motorcycles (*okada,* as it is called in Nigeria) and the region's traditional poisoned arrows. On February 2010, they targeted the main commander of the joint task Forces that were conducting the operations in the boarder between Nigeria and Chad. They also targeted local police Chiefs and several military personnels stationed in many parts of the region. To further

demonstrate continuity with the original dismantled 2009 set, the group also attacked local leaders, who had cooperated with the police and implicated the Boko-Haram members in the 2009 raid. They re-took houses belonging to members of group, who either died or escaped the first raid. The people who had taken over these houses were either killed or forced to vacate them (Walker 2012:5). These attacks again re-introduced the group in the region; creating a sense of invincibility of the group within the region.

Despite the group's persistent attacks, Jonathan was later installed as the substantial President to see off the tenure of the former President. In his (the Nigerian President) estimation, Boko-Haram remained a "group of evil-minded people" and political opportunists that needed to be crushed with every amount of military might available (Onuoha and Cocks 2011). This resonated in the President's address after Boko-Haram's initial attacks. From the administrations standpoint, it was clear that maximum military action was what was required to stamp out the group's militancy and terrorism rather than political solution, even though this could result in loss of innocent lives. Since it worked with Yaradua, there was no reason to believe that it would not work again this time. Within a few days, the New Nigerian President had re-activated the JTF. In consistent with the old approach, thousands of troops were deployed to the area.

As unfortunate as it is, the Nigerian government security forces' (including the JTF) style of policing has always been one of the biggest factors that fuel the radicalization within the groups. Its approach had been crude and counter-productive. On suspicion of being a member or sympathetic to the group, any individual could be shot on sight, without trial. On arrival at major areas of attack, many hours after the Boko Haram attackers had fled; the JTF and the local police had often rounded up people and detained them. Instead of questioning them, the police had often intimidated and extorted money from such people before they are released, even where there was no evidence that such people are connected to the group or the attacks. On intelligence information about the group, the police also had used the crude tactics of descending on such suspects' hideout, with guns blazing. And in a situation whereby the suspects had fled or escaped, the Police would go as far as holding members of the suspect's family until such individual re-appears (see Walker 2012:13; Williams and Guttschuss 2012: 58-74). These abuses increased tension in the already heated environments and attracted more sympathizers and militants within the region, into the group. Within six months of the President's renewed crackdown on the group, the group had attracted more membership and sympathizers within the region, than it had when it first emerged.

Things became worse, when few months into Jonathan's Presidency, the President began to campaign for the 2011 Presidential election. This of course was within his constitutional right. For the group, this would mean that they would have to wait for more five years, if it were to realise its dreaming of changing the country's secular system. In consonance with the group's mission, Shekau and the group leadership knew that they had to heat up the attacks to prevent the President from achieving this goal. But there is a big problem; now the social terrain within the region had changed. Not only is there visible presence of the Nigerian government security forces (the JTF) in every corner of the region, especially in Bauchi state, the group's former base; the federal government has also through its brutal crackdowns succeeded in creating some level of apprehension within the people of the region that any such sympathy or association with the militant group within the region will be met with "iron fist". So, to be able to still engage with the Nigerian government, Shekau knew that they had to device more sophisticated means in carrying out their political violence. Soon, the use of sophisticated bombs as improvised explosive devices (IEDs) emerged. The IEDs are constructed using powerful explosive substance such as Trinitrotoluene (TNT) Pentaerythritol (PETN) and Ammonia fertilizers (Onuoha 2012). With these means, the group can effectively carry out major attacks on government institutions and the public places, which can create fear and terrorise both the government and the public; without much involvement of the group's members. In March, 2010, the group carried out its first bomb attack on Borno state; killing at least 4 people and injuring as many as 50 people. Using the same method in the same period, they detonated a major car bomb in front of Maiduguri main prison that was harbouring 700 of its members and sympathisers, who were rounded-up in the second crack-down by the JTF in the region. Within a few hours of the bomb detonation, all the prison guards and the police guarding the prison were forced to leave their posts. Then the group went in. By the time more federal government military troops sent from Abuja arrived at the scene, no single inmate was left at the prison yard. In January 2011, the group again detonated the largest car bomb ever in the Nigerian history in the metropolis of Jos. More than 800 people were killed; properties worth millions of dollars were also destroyed (Ifeka 2010: 38-39).

By the middle of the year the group had extended its attacks, on the politicians and high profile community and religious leaders within the region. People like Abbas Annas bin Umar, the brother of the Shehu of Borno (May 30th 2011); Bashir Kashara, a prominent cleric (October, 9th 2010); Ibrahim Ahmad Abdulahi Bolori, a non-violent Islamic preacher (March 13th 2011); Ibrahim Birkuti, a well-known popular cleric (June 7th 2011); Mallam Dalu,

another well-known cleric in Maiduguri and Babakura Fugu, a brother-in-law to Muhammad Yusuf, who had attended peace talks with former president Obasanjo; were all targeted and successfully killed in a hit-man style attacks by the group. All these were People who had in one way or the other co-operated with the government or openly criticised the group. Targeting them was a way of creating fear among the people and the general population, so as to deter them from cooperating with the Nigerian government in working against the group. In the same category, the group also assassinated the Borno state's gubernatorial leading candidate, Alhaji Modu Fannami Guio, together with his brother and 5 police officers. According to the group's spokesman in a statement released to the press after the attack; the popular politician had been a vocal critic of the group, since its re-emergence. He had also been an ally of the incumbent State governor Ali Modu Sherif, who the group believed refused to return the group's mosque that was seized in the 2009 Federal Government raid (Williams and Guttschuss 2012: 54).

Of course the government responses to these attacks have been by beefing-up the region with more military presence. By the beginning of 2011; the Nigerian government had also deployed more JTF and military troops into the region. By the middle of the year, the situation has become very critical, as such that things like the use of motorcycles (the primary means of locomotion for majority of the people in Nigeria) were prohibited in some of the major cities in the region, because they have been the group's easiest means for attack and escape, after their attacks. Police vans paraded in every corner of the major cities. There are constant stop and search operations by the Police and the JTF, even in the remotest villages in the region. But rather than reduce the violence, this approach facilitated more radical approach within the group. By the middle of the year the group has adopted the use of suicide bombing, which was never in the past been part of the group's form of violent attacks against the Nigerian government.

The first suicide bombing within the group occurred in June 2009 when the group attacked the Nigerian Police Chief at the Police headquarters in Abuja. The attack happened few days after the Police Chief had boasted to the nation after his inspection tour to the North-Eastern part of Bauchi that within few days, that his troops will wipe out the group. Incensed by the Police chief's statement and necessitated by the need to make a very strong political statement to counter the police chief's statement, the group decided that they would take their war to the main base of the Police chief himself in Abuja, the capital of the country, and the center of its security power. In the group's estimation, suicide bombing was the best viable and efficient option that can be used without being stopped. Carefully planned; in the morning

of July 16th 2011, a 37 years old member of the group, Mohammed Manga, followed the Nigeria's police chief's convoy into the police Headquarters, and detonated his big explosives as they entered the garage gate. Both the suicide bomber and other six police men standing nearby were killed at the spot. It was by sheer stroke of luck that the police Chief escaped the attack unharmed. But the attack was large enough to destroy 40 other vehicles in the packinglot.

What Boko Haram missed in Police headquarters attack, they perfected at the UN building. On August 26th 2011, Mohammad Abul Barra (27) another Boko Haram militant allegedly drove his Honda Accord car into the UN building, ramming it into the two entrance gates, and then unto the lobby of the main building, before detonating his car bomb. The wave from the blast, according to an FBI forensic team, invited by the Nigerian Security forces to help evaluate the attack, was big enough to flatten a water tower; 100meters away from the main building (James 2011: 49). According to them (the FBI forensic team), "the bomb was very colossal and clever". It contained about 150 kg of plastic explosives designed inside a metal cone, with a round-shaped charge to focus its force. Only few pieces of the driver were found, some hours after the attack. These two attacks would mark the evolution of Boko Haram's use of suicide bombing in carrying out political violence in Nigeria.

Within the individual members of the group, the decision to embrace and personally justify participation in a suicide bombing flew from the socialization process that went on within the group. More than just a mere ideological disposition, or the group's tactical strategy for survival and political relevance, individuals' transition from partaking in the use of just guns and bombs to the self-sacrifice of suicide bombing occurred as a result of personal interpretations and internalizations of the activism that exists within the group. Real transformations for individuals within the group to adopt this kind of political violence began with the individuals' participation in the group's activities. Through their participation in the activities within the group (both violent and non-violent), they have investments in the group, in terms of their identity and emotions that tend to create strong linkages with individuals within the group. Over the course of time, they consider themselves as inseparable from the group. As such that events or attacks against the group or individuals within the group are easily internalised as personal. In this situation where the Nigerian government's police and JTF consistent crackdown on the group continuously killed and abused members of the group, rather than die doing nothing, it was socially appealing within the group to die trying to protect one's interest (the group's interests); especially as the group's cause would at the long run mean political and spiritual liberation of the region. In the 25 minutes pre-mortem video

clip to BBC after the UN suicide attack, the perpetrator of the attack pictured, holding an AK-47 riffle with two other people standing against a wall, asked his family to understand his decision. His decision according to him was justified, since it protected the group's interest.

Another important factor that facilitated the adoption of suicide bombing within the group was the interactions between the group and other similar militant organizations outside the country. Even before the group went underground, there are a lot of evidences that indicated that there were co-operations and interactions between Boko-Haram and these groups. In 2004 for example, the Nigerian Government charged Mohammed Ashafa; a Nigerian national whom many believed was a member of Boko Haram, for operating an Al-Qaeda Cell (Ohia, 2011). In 2008, the Nigerian former Inspector General of Police, Mike Okiro claimed that the police had recovered evidence revealing Bin Laden's plot to bomb and recruit suicide bombers within Nigeria. The people involved here were also suspected Boko Haram members. In June 14th, 2010, after the group had re-emerged in the Nigerian political terrain, AQIM's leader Abu Musab Abd al –Wadoud also known as Abdelmalik Droukdel, openly admitted on Al-Jazeera TV that his group works together with Boko-Haram and that they would not hesitate to provide Boko Haram with weapons, support and trainings, if they would ever ask (Meehan, 2011). Also, in a You-tube video in 2011, two Westerners that were kidnapped in the Northern part of Nigeria were seen posing with members of AQIM. By their own admission, Boko Haram had also claimed links to Al-Shabbab and Al-Qaeda. In 2011, before the first suicide attack, the group through its spokesman Abul Qaqa, had also claimed that the group had consistently sent their members to other Muslim militant groups outside the country. According to him, the group has ties with other militants such as Al-Qaeda, AQIM and Al-shabaab, and that the group would soon be welcoming militants from Somalia. In his words; "We want to make it known that our jihadists have arrived in Nigeria from Somalia, where they receive real training on warfare from our brethren who made that country ungovernable…"(King, 2011:14). In November 2011 few months after the second suicide attack, Boko-Haram's spokesman is also credited to have boasted that "it is true that we (Boko-Haram) have links with Al-Qaeda, and other Muslim brothers. They assist us and we assist them" (Meehan, 2011). Mohammad Abul Barra, the UN suicide bomber and Mamman Nur, a Hausa-Fulani cleric, believed by the Nigerian Security Forces to be the mastermind behind the two suicide attacks, are all alleged, to have recently returned from Somalia and Algeria before the UN attack (Butch 2012). With such connections from these militant groups, it was only natural that these corporations would translate to the importation of both the experience and the technical know-how that is needed to carry out such sophisticated

operations. And being that this kind of political violence was a method that has long been used by these external organizations; it flew natural for the group to adopt it when they needed to continue with their strategic attacks on the Nigerian government, despite the increasing presence of the Nigerian security operatives. There were hardly better viable and efficient ways to attack the Nigerian Police Chief, at the heart of Nigerian security power house without being stopped, other than the use of suicide bombing. Other means could easily be thwarted by the Nigerian security operatives before such targets are reached. With this method, the group was able in their estimation to carry out such a sophisticated operation at their "enemy's" main base; terrorising and instigating fear, both in their enemy (the Nigerian government) and rest of the Nigerian masses.

In response to the increasing activities of the group within the region, the Nigerian government have in two occasions declared "State of Emergency' in fifteen local government areas in parts of Borno, Yobe, Plateau and Niger states (December, 2012) and in the entire states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (May, 2013) within the region (Williams and Guttschuss, 2012: 83); in which case more severe military action has been devised to curtail the group's militancy. The emergency regulations also permit searches and seizure of property within the emergency area without warrant. An authorised state authority could "declare curfew or ban any public procession, demonstration, or public meeting in the emergency area, where it was likely to cause serious disorder" (Williams and Guttschuss 2012: 83). But rather than decrease the escalation of militancy within the region, these approach have continuously mounted pressure on the group to devise more sophisticated means. Today (2013), suicide bombing and other sophisticated attacks have continued to remain a regular tactics devised by the group in attacking the Nigerian government. The increase in the militarization of the region meant that the group's militant activities, including the group's suicide missions have also increased, both in terms of intensity and sophistication. Since the first 2009 suicide bombing, the group has successfully conducted up to thirty major bomb and suicide attacks. They have attacked churches, schools, and media houses, beer parlours (bars) and several state institutions. In a recent Al-Qaeda style video on You-tube, the group's purported leader Abubakar Shekau, flanked by four masked men, have further threatened that they the Nigerian President Jonathan can not stop them, that that they would instead continue to unleash more attacks and destabilise his government.

6.2 Violent escalations in MEND; interactions with the Nigerian state

So far the study have discussed the development and escalation of political violence within Boko-Haram; how the interactions between the group and the Nigerian Government, the relationships between the group and other similar organizations, and the socialization process within the group have facilitated the different sophisticated violent escalations within the group. As a result, the group has today become the most powerful militant organization that operates within the region. I would now shift my attention to MEND. The study would look at the developments and escalations of sophisticated forms of political violence within the group. Like I did with the Boko-Haram, the discussion will start with the beginning of the group's violent contentions, and then progress to how these activities escalated to other sophisticated forms of political violence within the group.

6.2.1 The beginning of MEND's resistance

In line with its strategy of targeting oil facilities and locations, which would affect the Nigerian government's economy, MEND's first official known attacks came on December 2005, when the group detonated two minor explosives at the creeks of Rivers State; destroying two Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) pipelines located in Okirika and Adoni (Courson 2009:18). The smell of this attack had barely evaporated into the atmosphere before on January 11, 2006, the group attacked another SPDC oil field located about 20 km off-shore of Portharcourt (one of the biggest Urban cities in the region), abducting four foreign oil workers (Patrick Arnold (USA), Nichev Miliko (Bulgaria), Nigel Watson (UK) and Harry Ebanks (Honduras), after a fierce gun duel with the military forces guarding the oil field. Four days later, MEND attacked Shell again in Benisede (another small commercial center in the region); this time, they destroyed one petrol feeling station and the two military house-boats. In an e-mail sent to different Nigerian news media, Jomo Gbomo; MEND's official spokesman on behalf of the group, reiterated that the group's objective with these attacks was "to totally destroy the capacity of the Nigerian government to export oil". In exchange for the four hostages, the group made two demands: One; the immediate withdrawal of Shell oil company (who they perceived as conniving with the government in the impoverishment of the people) from the Niger-Delta region. Two; the immediate and unconditional release of Dokubo Asari and D.S.P. Alamieyeseigha, a former governor Bayelsa state who was been detained by the Nigerian government after mysteriously escaping from UK (Courson 2009:18).

MEND never specifically explained why the release of the Ijaw former governor was so important to the group at the beginning of the group's resistance; however, other incidents that prelude the movements emergence cast some light into why the group would make the demand. I explained in chapter four how few months leading to the group's emergence, some of the region's politicians were targeted and arrested by the Nigerian government. First was Ebitimi Banigo, the Ijaw popular business man and the region's environmental activist. Second, Asari Dokubo, who was arrested in the State government house in Port Harcourt and taken to Abuja, even though he had initially been granted amnesty for his previous militant activities. And then D.S.P. Alamieyeseigha, on his arrival from London on corruption charges, after he mysteriously escaped arrest in London. The Ijaw former governor had often been a vocal critic of the federal government and the oil companies regarding their oil activities within the region and had often identified with some of the resistant movements within the region. These arrests were interpreted within the Ijaws as part of the Nigerian Federal government's continuous strategy of repressing the tribe within the Nigerian political terrain.

Also, the fact that people like the former governor, D.S.P. Alamieyeseigha, as well as Peter Odili (former governor of Rivers State, another major state within the Niger-Delta), James Ibori (former governor of Delta state, now serving sentence in UK for corruption and money laundering charges) and other politicians within the region are reportedly assumed to be the major political and financial sponsors behind the various militant groups that made up the group (see Courson 2009; Obi 2010; Busch 2012), makes the group's request for his release very reasonable within the group. Also, Tom Atete's Niger Delta Vigilante (NDF) for example, is believed to have been founded and financed by the Peter Odili's (1999-2007)-led Rivers state government, to launch military campaigns and checkmate the excesses of Asari Dokubo, when the later group fell out with the governor. Dokubo's group itself is also known (from the government's own admission) to have worked and patronized by the government before and after the 2003 elections (Courson 2009:17). These and the several other militant groups that made up MEND are believed to be off-shoots of the militant groups (thugs) formed and used by the local corrupt politicians in the run-up of winning the 2003 elections in their respective states. As MEND arose in 2005, most of these groups aligned with them, and beefed up the resistance within the region. By asking for the former governor's release, the group was simply trying to show a sense of identification and solidarity, to one of its founding fathers.

From the beginning MEND saw political violence as one of the important tools to achieve its goals within the region. The group knew from their prior experiences (as a coalition of previous militant groups that had operated within the region) that these first attacks would mean more militarization of the region from the Nigerian government. Successive Nigerian government have always responded to similar resistance in the past with more militarization of the region; leading often to a complete crackdown of the groups and the communities sympathetic to the groups. So, in preparation for what might lay ahead, they (MEND) withdrew into the creeks of the Niger-Delta. In the creeks, it is almost impossible for the Nigerian security forces to catch them. There, they could easily move from one location to the next, or to the neighbouring Cameroon, through the sea without being intercepted by the Nigerian security forces. By the time the set of Nigerian JTF, inaugurated by the Obasanjo-led federal government arrived in the region, MEND was not easily reachable, to be crushed like previous groups. The later interactions between the group and the JTF, would define the pattern of development and escalation of violence contentions that emerged within the group in the next three years.

6.2.2 MEND and more violent interactions with the Nigerian government

MEND did not attack again until February, 2006 when it attacked the Forcados (a small town in Burutu Local government area of Delta State) oil export terminal, destroying almost the entire oil facility and taking nine workers hostage. But before this, Nigerian government had responded to the group's first attacks as MEND envisaged, by sending more JTF troops into the region. Like in the previous groups which arose within the region, the Nigerian government response to militancy within the region had often been more militarization of the areas whenever there is any sign of the militancy or protests from the oil producing communities. Previous successive military and civilian governments have always believed that the resolution of crisis lies in the maximum military expenditure, rather than dialogue. This is why they have always responded with more militarization of regions whenever they perceive any form of militant uprising. In this case it didn't take them time for Obasanjo led-federal government to beef up the area with the more military presence to curtain MEND's activities. And as the JTF arrived at the area, they were quick to label MEND and other militants within the region as "criminals and miscreants, who have over the years been involved in illegal oil theft and other illegal activities and must be removed for free flow of oil" (Courson 2009:19).

This was revealed in a leaked military report "*Brief for Chief of Defence Staff on strategies to Stem out Militant Activities within the Joint Task force Operation Restore Hope Area of Responsibility*" by Brigadier Gen. L.P. Ngubane, the then commander of the then JTF in the Niger Delta (2006-2008). The report was reportedly intercepted by MEND and released to the media. The report inter alia, labelled militant groups such as MOSOP, INC, IYC, NDPVF, FNDIC together with MEND as militant groups that had to crushed. The report also highlights Ijaw communities in Delta state such as Oporoza, Kurutie, Kunukunuma, Okerenkoko and other communities in the Rivers and Bayelsa, believed to be incubators of militant activities as areas to be included in the campaign against the region's militancy. From this, it was obvious that maximum and intensive military force rather than political negotiation was the preferred strategy by the federal government to deal with the MEND's uprising. There were also reports that the Nigerian JTF in preparation for crackdown against MEND received two gun boats from the US government. Some big European Governments such as France and Britain were reported to have also promised to support the government and the oil companies militarily if they would ever ask of it (Courson 2009: 20).

However, by the time the JTF arrived at the region, MEND had relocated to the creeks. And being that it was very difficult to engage with MEND in the creeks; the JTF concentrated its attention on the communities mapped out in the report as sympathetic to the groups. On February 2006 the assault started. On the 15th military helicopters were seen hovering within some of the Okerenkoko areas. As they hovered, they shot and emitted explosives, indiscriminately into the communities. The action was also replayed on the 17th and 18th of February. The three days aerial bombardments reportedly led to the death of twenty people in the three villages, Perezuoweikorigbene, Ukpogbene and Seitorububor (Courson 2009:21). MEND was enraged. To make the government stop the JTF from further attacks on the three communities, or other similar communities, MEND knew that they had to respond with more targeted attacks on the oil installations. Within a few days, in a well trained guerrilla military-styled attack, they stormed into the Forcados oil export terminal; shooting down the major oil hub and taking nine expatriate workers as hostage. MEND, this time is not just "lifeless" militant organization, like the previous militant organizations that operated within the region. Now they have a lot of resources; in terms of political sponsorship and the militant experiences from the previous militant groups who had come together to form the group. Because of these, the group now had both financial and technical know-how to arrange and carry out this kind of sophisticated attacks. In the ensuing statements from Gbomo MEND's spokesman, the group reiterated that their actions were motivated by the

Nigerian Government's attacks on the three communities, as well as their main aim of bringing the Nigerian government to the negotiating table. This is in consistent with the group's strategy of reaching out to more global audience, and justifying its actions to the public

Few weeks later, on the 20th of April, MEND attacked again; this time extending their onslaughts to the two of the main largest urban Niger-Delta cities, where the JTF has its main base within the region. They detonated two bombs; one in Port Harcourt (Bori military camp), and another at a patrol tanker garage in Warri. In the subsequent statement; they warned and reminded the oil company workers and the Military that "the federal government was incapable of protecting itself, let alone protecting the oil industry" (Courson 2009: 21). This progression is very interesting. It is probably reasonable to infer that MEND's attack here is more symbolic than strategic. Rather than continue to attack oil communities located in the rural areas, MEND decided to take its onslaught to Port Harcourt and Warri, two major cities where the Nigerian JTF had its main base within the region. By attacking these locations, the group demonstrates to both the government and the public that nowhere is safe from the group's attacks. In the MEND's statement after the attacks, the group warned the oil companies that no place is safe for them within the region, and that even the Nigerian government would not be able to protect them from MEND's attacks. More than instigating fear into the oil companies, these attacks discredited the government efforts and put more pressure on them to negotiate with the group. Within the next few days the President, Olusegun Obasanjo who had hitherto been talking tough, decided to call for dialogue. He created a new body; the Council on Social and Economic Development of Coastal States (COSEEDECS); to look into MEND's cause and offer some palliatives to the citizens of the Niger-Delta. In the days preceding the establishment of COSEEDECS, MEND decided to call for momentary ceasefire, to (a) give COSEEDECS, chance to succeed, and (b) give the President opportunity to meet their initial demands.

However, this ceasefire could only last for few months. Things would change again by the middle of the year, when MEND infiltrated the COSEEDECS leadership. Through one of its spy agent MEND discovered that the Obasanjo-led federal government were not only unwilling to meet MEND's demands, but also that the government while running the COSEEDECS agenda still believed as before that MEND were just criminals and political opportunists who needed to be crushed. Setting-up the COSEEDECS in reality was only a calculated ploy to buy more time, before they will unleash more attacks on MEND and other militants operating in the Niger Delta (Courson 2009:12). All of group's genuine efforts to

anchor their resistance on the region's environmental and political situation, as well as dissociate themselves from the activities of the criminal gangs operating in the area were not bought, and as such easily discarded by the Nigerian government as not genuine. To compound MEND's disappointment on the Federal government; on August 20, 2006, 15 MEND members were ambushed and killed by the Nigerian Military JTF. The paradox here was that these MEND members had just actually facilitated the release of a Shell SDPC worker (Ujeye Nelson) held hostage by a criminal gang operating in Letugbene (an area in Niger-Delta). While they were returning from the operation, these MEND members were allegedly attacked and killed by the Nigerian JTF. MEND could no longer continue to keep quite. The leadership still needed to show that the group would not let the Nigerian Government or its JTF, to get away with any attacks on the group. So, in a reprisal attack on October 2, 2006, the group ambushed and killed 10 Nigerian soldiers, off the shore of Niger Delta region in their patrol boat. After some days, they again ambushed a joint NNPC/Royal Dutch Shell convoy in Port Harcourt; again killing 10 people (Courson 2009:22).

More signs that the Nigerian government were preparing for a full time attack on MEND emerged on January 30th 2007. The then Nigerian Vice President, Atiku Abubakar, who had fallen out with the President while commissioning his own Presidential campaign headquarters in Abuja, revealed to the Public that the "administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo had just approved 2 billion dollars to purchase weapons to fight the militants in the Niger-Delta" (Courson 2009: 22). Although the Presidency denied the claim by the vice Presidency, within a few days MEND responded that they are prepared for War. The group didn't have to wait for the Federal government to attack first this time. On May 1st 2007, they attacked Chevron's base in Oloibiri (a big urban city off the coast of Southern Bayelsa); destroying their storage and offloading Vessels. After one hour of fighting with the security forces, MEND seized 6 foreign workers: 4 Italians, 1 American and 1 Croat; taking them to a tour and witness the deplorable conditions of the region's environments. Two days later; MEND attacked again; seizing another eight foreign hostages from another offshore, this time, they released them after 24 hours. According to their official released statement, "they only wanted to destroy the vessel and did not want more hostages". On May 8, MEND attacked again. They blew up three major oil pipelines (one in Brass and two in the Akasa area); shutting down oil production and the electric power facility, run by the Italian company (AGIP).

In the weeks that followed, the federal government again decided to negotiate with MEND. It is believed that as part of the deal to end the attacks, that MEND was offered more

political opportunity in the Federal government in the upcoming elections (supposedly in 2007). As a result MEND declared a ceasefire until "further notice" upon anticipation of the Presidential election. Leading to the presidential election, the Obasanjo's ruling party, People's Democratic Party (PDP) handpicked Peter Odili, the then Rivers state governor believed to be one of the major sponsors of MEND, as a running mate to the Hausa-Fulani Presidential candidate, Umaru Yaradua. But few months before the election, Obasanjo opted for Goodluck Ebele Jonathan (the then governor of Bayelsa state) instead. This must have been because of the fact that, although Peter Odili is believed to be one of the major sponsors of MEND, ethnically he is not from Ijaw. Instead, he is from Ikwere, a small minority tribe within the region. His candidacy may not have been very much welcomed by the majority of all the stakeholders within MEND.

As expected Yaradua and Jonathan won the election. Even though the electoral process was marred by fraud and irregularities, and as a result received local and international condemnations; MEND welcomed the result, since it meant that an Ijaw man from the Niger Delta, for the first time in the Nigerian history, would become the Nigerian number two citizen. This would most likely be very good step towards the emancipation of the people living in the Niger Delta. And unsurprisingly, the newly elected Nigerian government led by Umaru Musa Yar'adua and Goodluck Jonathan met one of MEND's initial demands in early 2006. Both Dokubo-Asari and D.S.P. Alamieyeseigha were released from prison. While Asari was granted bail on health grounds; Alamieyeseigha pleaded guilty to charges of corruption and was freed after having served few months in prison. Henry Okah; who was often seen as part of MEND's leadership hierarchy agreed to participate in the dialogue process with the federal government. After a meeting with Goodluck Jonathan, an agreement was made to form a Niger Delta Peace and Conflict Resolution (NDPCRC), in which MEND through Henry Okah would be allowed to nominate its chairman and the Secretary General (Courson 2009:22).

However, this peace deal would not last, because few months after forming the NDPCRC, Henry Okah was arrested again in far away Angola on the Nigerian government's order; for gun-running, and thus extradited to Nigeria. On return, he was charged with treason among other things and kept in a secret prison. This must have jeopardised the peace process in the region as the group would soon begin more deadly arm campaigns in the region, and calling for his immediate and unconditional release. When it seemed that the federal government was not willing to respond positively to MEND's request, MEND inaugurated Operation Huricane Barbarossa and Hurricane Obama; an onslaught that is aimed at

launching systematic string of militant attacks on the main oil hubs, and oil platforms in the region, especially in River State (considered by MEND as the main stronghold of Nigerian government ruling political party, the PDP). On June 2008, the group attacked the SPDC operated Bonga oil platform (the largest off-shore oil platform in the Niger Delta) located 120 km offshore the Port Harcourt main city, using highly sophisticated military explosives. Within a short time, MEND also extended their systematic attacks on the oil pipelines across the entire region. Among other things, the group demanded for the unconditional release of Henry Okah.

In the beginning of 2009, MEND's leadership was reportedly to be polarised and infiltrated by the Nigerian federal government. Many major stakeholders within the group had now become loyal to the new Ijaw vice President and as a result opted to join the political process. Through recommendations from the Vice President, the Federal government created a new ministry within the federal government, Ministry of the Niger-Delta; with the purpose of …This must have been interpreted by the Federal government to signify that the group has been weakened. Consequently, rather than meet with MEND's demands; the federal government renewed their old strategy of securitization of the region. By the first half of the 2009, the JTF and the Nigerian military personnels have been doubled into the major streets of the Niger Delta; making MEND to retreat further into the creeks. By May 2009, the military had already deployed about four jet fighters, twenty four gun boats and three battalions of the Nigerian army into the areas. Major MEND suspected strongholds were attacked by the military with the use of jet fighters, bombs, ground troops, as well as naval support (Courson 2009:23). Few days later, the attacks were also extended to Oporoza (a famous Ijaw cultural community), where a cultural festival that is highly respected and attended by indigenes and visitors was on-going. In the attack, many symbolic places were targeted, including the community's guest house and the local king's palace; leaving as many as about 200 civilians killed and more wounded. Other communities such as Kurutie, Benikurukuru, Okerenkoko, Goba, Abiteye etc were also attacked. According to Courson; the death toll from these second attacks also ranges between 500 and 2000 (Courson 2009: 23).

In order to make the government security forces to stop its renewed attacks on the Niger-Delta communities, MEND decided to launch more attacks. By May, 2009, MEND had declared what they tagged "Hurricane Piper Alpha". Later they upgraded it to "Hurricane Moses"; which is specifically meant to renew targets and total destruction of oil facilities, far beyond the normal blowing of pipelines and flow stations. MEND's activities in the past have always targeted and attacked strategic areas of the oil production with the intention of

affecting the Nigerian economy, but never have the group aimed for a complete and total destruction and crumbling of the entire Nigerian economy. This time the attacks were more persistent and more brutal. In Port Harcourt and Warri, they attacked oil facilities. They kidnapped journalists, taking them to the interior villages of the Niger-Delta, to witness firsthand the living conditions of the people living in the areas. In many oil producing communities, they sabotaged and destroyed major oil facilities through sophisticated armed attacks, bomb blasts and with effective use of information technology. Within the next one month of renewed constant attacks, MEND succeeded in reducing the Nigerian oil output from 2.6 million barrels per day, to 1.8 million barrels per day. More than any time in the history of political violence in the region, the entire Niger-Delta region was inflamed with violence. Under pressure from the international communities, and mindful of the effects of these attacks on the national economy, the federal government decided to enter into dialogue with various stakeholders and groups in the region, to explore ways of ending the violence and restoring order in the region. In June 2009, they announced a general amnesty to all the militants willing to lay down their arms and are ready to be re-integrated into the Nigerian society through a federal government rehabilitation scheme. Charges against Henry Okah were also dropped, and he was consequently released. MEND agreed to announce 60 days ceasefire. These, coinciding also with the assumption of Goodluck Jonathan, to the Nigerian Presidency after the death of Umaru Musa Yar'adua; peace finally returned to the region.

Within the last three years MEND's aims have been relatively achieved within the Nigerian government. Not only did Jonathan become the acting president, and later the substantive president, after serious political tussle with political elites from the Northern part of the country; he also contested the 2011 presidential election and won (the first Ijaw man to ever assume the highest office since the history of the country). The new Federal Ministry that has been created for the region, the Ministry of the Niger-Delta had since its creation coordinates effort to tackle the challenges of infrastructural development, environmental protection and youth empowerment in the region. Since its inception, the ministry has trained more than 1000 youths from the various states of the Niger-Delta state for various employments within and outside Nigeria. Also, both the Nigerian Finance Ministry and Ministry of Petroleum, the two most important and "juicy" ministries within the Nigerian federal government are all being headed by two Niger-Delta indigenes (Ngozi Okonji-Iweala and Deziani Allison-Madueke repectively). Understanding the ethnic ramifications of political interests in MEND, these are significant developments for the region. Within the last six years, Nigerian government has also created series of policies and cited institutions that

facilitated the oil communities' benefits in the oil production in the Niger-Delta area. Compared to the situation in 2005 when the group emerged, the economic situation of the region has also improved tremendously. Many oil companies have been forced to pay compensation for some of the degradations and complicity in the human rights abuses meted on the people by the Nigerian security forces in the area. In 2008, for example, Dutch Court ruled that Shell was responsible for many cases of oil pollution in the region and thus ordered it to pay compensation for the damages. In 2009, Shell also agreed to pay 15.5 million dollars as compensation to the families of Ken Saro-wiwa and the eight others executed seventeen years ago by the Nigerian government, for their complicity in their deaths. Most of these events have helped in quelling resistance and political violence within the region.

MEND's political violence has redefined resistance within the region. By resorting to arm resistance, the group has tapped into the local-global quest for survival, justice, equity and right for resource control within the area. Like Boko-Haram in the North, the group has today become the most powerful militant organization that operates within the Niger-Delta region; in terms of efficiency and use of sophisticated attacks. Its attacks had in several occasions crippled the Nigerian government economy, by shortening down the production of oil and other petroleum products; forcing the Nigerian government to react with heavy military response on the region. But rather than tune down violence within the group, this approach has dialectically led to escalation of violence and more sophisticated forms of violence within the group. As a result, the group has transformed from a minor regional resistant movement to militant organization which uses different kinds of sophisticated means in attacking the Nigerian government and its allies.

6.3 Comparing Boko Haram and MEND: Similarities and differences

Having discussed the evolutions of political violence, and the rationales for more sophisticated violent escalations within the two groups, this last part of the chapter would systematically compare the two groups with each other; the similarities and differences between the two groups' interactions and cycles of violence with the Nigerian government. By doing this comparison, this study sheds more light into "how" and "why" different forms of sophisticated political violence developed different within the two groups.

6.3.1 The evolution of political violence

In Boko Haram, political violence did not arise as a strategy for goal attainment until 2009. In consistent with its strategy of facilitating the enthronement of an Islamic order within the country's political terrain; the group in the first few years of its emergence existed as a local radical group that consistently espoused radical and Jihadic teachings on how to dethrone the Obasanjo led-Nigerian secular government. The persistent arrests from the state's security forces, the constant attacks on the group and the dwindling appeal of the group within the region as a result of Yaradua's presidency, meant that the group's strategy yielded not much substantial result. As a result, frustrations set in and more radical tendencies within the group grew. With time this reinforced the need to for political violence as a strategy to continue to remain relevant within the region, as well as a way to maintain the group amidst the severe government suppressions. Here, the attacks were meant to not only survive the Nigerian federal government attacks, it was also meant to terrorise and instigate fear on the federal government and the public; to put more pressure on the Nigerian government.

More serious political violence evolved in 2009, after the group's leader controversial interview to BBC. In response, the Nigerian government unleashed a military crackdown on the group. Drawing upon Islamic religion and the region's political/religious narrative's, Yusuf was able to mobilise its members to resist and launch brave attacks on the Nigerian state's security forces. For few days, the group attacked the local police stations and other state institutions. But at last, the government forces were able to crush the group; killing many of the group's members including its founder, and then forcing the surviving members to go underground in many less-hostile countries.

In MEND on the other hand, political violence arose dynamically as a strategic choice employed by the group for goal attainment within the region. Right from the beginning, violence was part of the group's strategy. It was both a resource for empowerment within the region, as well as a tool with which the group believe they could use to bring the Nigerian Government to the negotiating table. More than a tool to intimidate or create fear, the attacks here targeted major oil facilities and pipelines within the region, with the intension of affecting the country's economy. This in the group's estimation would affect the economy, globalise the group's resistance and subsequently put more pressure on the Nigerian government and the multinational oil companies.

Looking at the way the group's ideology is framed and the history of resistance within the region before the emergence of MEND, it is perhaps not unreasonable that the group would adopt this unorthodox strategy. From the experience of previous militancy within the

region, the group's leadership must have understood that the Nigerian government's militarization policy of the region had always been motivated by her huge economic interests within the region. Because of her desperate need to protect its economic interests in the region; the Nigerian Government interactions with resistant groups within the region had in past, been that of militant crack-down on both communities sympathetic to resistant groups and the groups themselves. To bring the government to the negotiation table, it was smart to attack this very economic power houses. Such attacks in several occasions shut down the production of oil and affected the price of oil in the international market. This put more pressure on the Federal Government and forced them to the negotiating table.

6.3.2 Violent escalations within the groups

In both groups several sophisticated forms of violence developed. In Boko-Haram, violence escalations were facilitated by three important factors; the relationships between the group and other militant organisations outside the country, the violent interactions with the Nigerian government, and the internal socialization processes that went on within the movements. The group's extensive contacts with similar organizations outside the country meant that at the dawn of the Nigerian government's all military crackdown at the middle of 2009, many of the surviving members of the group were forced to escape into the neighbouring countries and aligned with these groups. On their return after Yaradua's death (the Hausa-Fulani President, who succeeded Obasanjo in 2007) the group was poised for more violent attacks on the Nigerian government, in consistent with their mission of replacing the existing Nigerian government, with a preferred theocratic Shari'a system. Soon, they started attacking significant security personnel, government institutions and individuals who have helped the government in one way or another in the government's initial crackdown on the group. Within a few months, the group had extended its attacks on significant political figures and religious leaders who criticises the group. And as usual, the government responded with more attacks on the group and more militarization of the region, then the group retaliates and more conflict escalated.

Also, the extensive interactions and the corporations with the external militant organizations meant that the group had the training, the experience and the technical know-how on sophisticated form of political violence such as suicide bombings. Necessitated by the group's need to continue to remain relevant amidst more severe suppressions from the government, and incensed on the individual level by the brutal crackdowns and the human

right abuses that were meted on the individuals and communities within the region by the Nigerian security forces; this form of political violence gradually evolved within the group as a viable choice to carry out difficult, but necessary operations within the group. Since its emergence, Boko Haram has consistently used this radical and sophisticated form of strategy in carrying out the most difficult and significant attacks on the Nigerian government and its allies.

In MEND, the escalations of militancy have gone through a similar pattern; from a minor resistant group, to a highly sophisticated group capable of conducting serious attacks on both Nigerian government and the multinational oil companies, within and outside the region. However, unlike Boko Haram, there are no interactions between the group and similar militant groups outside the country; a result of which radical forms of political violence such as suicide bombing have not arisen. The group's access to huge resources in terms of; previous militant experienced recruits, finance, political sponsorship and environmental appeal of the cause, meant that the group had always been efficient in its attacks on both the Nigerian government's security forces, and the oil facilities within the region. Through the effective use of information technology and the military-styled spy system, the group has also sabotaged the Nigerian government agents and destroyed major oil facilities within the region; particularly cutting oil production and pushing up the price of oil in the tight and nervous global market, and putting more pressure in the Nigerian government to negotiate with the group.

Unlike Boko-Haram, which has extensive contacts with external Islamic militant organization; with MEND there is no strong evidence of associations with these external militant organizations. Associations with external organizations were only on the level of human right advocacy, and as opportunity to globalise the groups struggle. Much of the groups known to have worked with MEND at some points are Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Rainforests Action Group, Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth. Much of these groups favoured non-violent approach to human right struggle (Courson 2009). It is difficult to argue that associations with these groups as such, did contribute to the escalation of political violence within the group. The Nigerian government all-militant approach towards the group and the internal factors within the group did more in facilitating the progress and escalation of political violence within the group.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the evolution and development of political violence within Boko-Haram and MEND; how the two movements separately transformed from minor regional militant groups, to large internationally recognised groups with the capacity to conduct highly sophisticated political violence. Such transformations did not happen overnight; they involved a lot of factors; a history of violent contestations with the Nigerian government, interactions with similar militant organizations, a process of radicalization and socialization processes, which overlaps with the ideologies and personal justifications within the groups.

In MEND, the escalations of militancy were largely influenced by the Nigerian government's militarization approach towards the group, as well as the socialization process that existed within the group. The heavy militarization of the regions and its social effects on the people dialectically reinforced the group's resolve to adopt violent approaches from the beginning as resource to defend the region, and also as a strategy for the group to attain its goals within the region. In consistency with its goals, the group attacked the multi-national oil companies and the Nigerian government security forces. As the Nigerian government responded with more sophisticated violence and militarization of the region, the group retaliates, and more sophisticated violence such as guerrilla warfare, sophisticated bomb attacks, etc, developed.

In Boko-Haram the evolvement and development of militancy went through a similar pattern. Although, here violence did not arise within the group from the beginning; the group transformed from a minor militant group, which attacked the security forces with locally made knives and arrows, to an internationally recognised organizations capable of conducting high sophisticated attacks on both the Nigerian government and its allies with sophisticated forms of violence, such as high assassination attacks, kidnappings, bomb attacks and suicide bombings. In consistent with its goals, the group continuously used these means to attack government security forces, government institutions, churches, political personnel, as well as religious and community leaders within and outside the region. As the government beefed up the securitization of the regions; and as the groups has contacts with other similar organizations outside the country such as Al-Qaeda, AQIM or Al-Shabaab, several other forms of sophisticated violence arose within the group, in order for it to continue to politically remain relevant within the Nigerian political terrain.

Much like other sophisticated forms of political violence, suicide bombing also arose within the group as part of the group's strategy to continue to remain politically relevant amidst the Nigerian government severe suppressions. This group's extensive contacts and

unique interactions with the external militant organization meant that the group had both the learning and experience needed to adopt this kind of radical strategy at a time when the group needed to make significant attacks. Coupled with the socialization process that went on within the group; this strategy soon resonated within the individual members, as viable choice to achieve the group's cause within the region.

7. Summary and Conclusions

This thesis has analysed political violence in two militant organizations, Boko Haram and MEND that operates within the Nigerian society by using social movement theory. My hope was that employing this framework for the analysis of these movements, the study would broaden and deepen the understanding of political violence within militant organizations.

In the literature review, I discussed the state and progression of the subject in both "terrorism studies" and "social movement studies". I further made the case that although social movement theories focus primarily on general non-violent broad-based movement organizations, the approach can also be fruitful to understand political violence as used by movements and militant organizations. Rather than being exceptionalised as a non-social phenomenon; acts of political violence can be arrayed along a spectrum of activities within militant movements, which flow as a result of the interactions with other similar organizations and other evolving repertoires of social movement dynamics. Militant organizations which employ this strategy, just like other broader social movements, are profoundly shaped and affected by opportunities, constraints and interactions that exist within the social political environments in which they identify.

Three main topics were researched in the thesis. These include the emergence of the two militant movements, the role of ideology, and the subsequent evolution and escalation of the different forms of political violence within the groups, given the groups' peculiar experiences within the Nigerian society. The idea here was not to discuss all the various social and political structures within the Nigerian society, or all the various political violent activities that have been carried out by these movements, or all the utterances that are accredited to members of the group. Rather, the study attempted to situate the emergence of these militant groups in changes in the socio-political and geo-political environments within the regions in which the groups appeared, analyse the different ideologies within the two groups and finally discussed the succession and progression of political violent events, especially during the early stages and developments of political violence within the groups (2005-2009 in MEND; 2002 and 2009-2011 in Boko Haram). The study also compared the two groups; outlining how these elements and developments are similar, and differed from each, especially when it came to the groups' leader's framing of their ideologies, as well as the evolution and progression of different forms of political violence.

The analysis is based mainly on secondary data found in previous research on the groups and a few primary sources. In addition, the study used several reports from well

known Nigerian and international news papers and magazines such as; Daily Sun, Nigerian Vanguard, Nigerian Guardian, Nigerian Tribune, Sahara Reporters, Nigerian World, Reuters, Punch, Nigerian Village Square, Front page and All Africa. These sources were mainly in recounting the chronological accounts of acts of political violence by these movements.

7.1 The emergence of MEND and Boko Haram

The main concern here was to study the emergence of both groups within their respective social and political environments.

The first question is: under what social and political structures did Boko Haram and MEND emerge in the Niger-Delta and the Nigerian northern regions respectively? Here, the study identifies several different and regionally unique social and political structures under which the two groups emerged. While in MEND there are; the brutal security and political repressions (that were facilitated by successive military and civilian government regimes), the deplorable economic situations, the political sponsorships and the presence of earlier militant groups that exists within the region; in Boko Haram, there are mixture of: the emergence of Obasanjo's presidency, the region's unique reli-political history, the political sponsorships, the region's desperate social and economic situations, and the global re-emergence of political Islam at the dawn of the September 11th US attacks by Al-Qaeda.

Now, the second questions: How did these structures respectively affect the political opportunities within the two regions where the groups emerged? Were there moments of closing-down or opening-up of political opportunities within and outside these environments (with which these groups identify) before and during the time the groups emerged? Here, the study concludes that in both cases, these elements respectively set the contexts for radicalizations and opened up political opportunities for these groups to emerge within their two different regions. The different moments of opening-up and repressions of political opportunities that arose in both cases created restiveness and fertile grounds for both groups to emerge within their respective social and political environments.

MEND appeared at the end of 2005, as a coalition of mainly Ijaw armed militias and resistant groups within the Niger-Delta region. Despite the fact that the region is home to the country's huge petroleum and gas reserves, the region was one of the most under-developed region in the country. The poverty rate of the region was higher than in most part of the country. Access to electricity, portable water and transportations were almost non existent. Access to jobs for the youths was hugely minimal. There was also the issue of continuous

pollution of the region's eco-system and fragile environment by the oil companies. These affected the local livelihoods of the people, and made it extremely difficult to survive within the local communities.

Because of the oppressive military approach of the successive military and civilian regimes, it was difficult to change the situations through civil means. Several efforts made by the host communities in the form of non-violent protests and collective civil contentions were either met with severe military presence or total military crackdown by the Nigerian Federal government. In some cases, the Nigerian government forces abused and killed members of the communities or youths with no apparent links to the group involved to the resistance movements. With time, these repressions dialectically fed into arm resistance and rise of many armed groups within the region; as a way of navigating the region's dangerous terrain, and as the only viable way for the communities to protect themselves from the repressive Nigerian security forces.

The situation became worse in 2005 at the dawn of the Nigerian government's arrests and detention of several Ijaw political juggernauts and businessmen. First was Ebitimi Banigo, an Ijaw businessman. He was arrested in a controversial circumstance and his bank technically shut down by the Nigerian Federal government authorities; presumably because of his criticisms of the Nigerian Government's repressive approach in the region. At the same time, there was also D.S.P. Alamieyeseigha; the then governor of Bayelsa state; the only state in the Niger-Delta with 95% of Ijaw population. The former governor was arrested on money laundering ad corruption charges. He was first arrested in the UK. But mysteriously, he escaped to Nigeria, only to be arrested again on his arrival in Nigeria. Finally, Asari Dokubo, the leader of NDPVF, one of the main militant groups within the region. The Ijaw militia leader was also a famous critique of both the local state government and the Nigerian Federal Government. He was arrested in the government house in Port Harcourt and was taken to Abuja, where he was charged with treason, in relation to his old campaign for resource control and militancy; charges which he had initially been granted amnesty. These arrests and detentions set the contexts for more tensions and the conditions for the emergence of some radical tendencies within the Ijaw communities in the region. Being that non-violent resistance within the region had failed to make the Federal government and the oil companies to change their attitude towards the communities in the region, and financially supported by some of the political elite within the region, MEND emerged as a coalition of mainly the Ijaw previous militant groups; agitating for attitudinal change and waging violence against the Nigerian state and the international oil companies that operate within the region.

Boko Haram on the other hand emerged at the backdrop of a mixture of the five main afore-mentioned different, but related factors. Dating back to the colonial days, the region was dominated by a long history of religio-political militancy against established authorities and the state. In the early nineteenth Century, Usman Dan Fodio, a member of the Hausa-Fulani political elite and a religious reformer led a great Jihad across the entire region. He propagated what he called the "purity of Islam" and a universal dominance of Islam, which justifies the use of violence in converting unbelievers and in establishing a genuine political system. Within 50 years, he had violently swept all the "socially corrupt" Hausa local rulers off their thrones and established a sort of theocracy, known as the "Sokoto Caliphate", based on Shari'a law. Dan Fodio's Caliphate only collapsed at the dawn of colonial rule, when the British annexed the region with the Southern region as one single Nigerian British colony. As the British Western modelled system of government and the subsequent secular state, which also arose later after the country's independence were incompatible with the Shari'a law's penal code of the Sokoto Caliphate; many serious violent contentions against the state arose within the region, to contend for a reversal to the Usman Dan Fodio's theocratic system. Up until the dawn of civilian rule in 1999, the region was constantly confronted by Islamic uprisings against the state.

Meanwhile, the region's social and economic situation was nothing to write home about. One important defining element of legitimacy of a viable state is the performance of certain minimal duties for the security and social well-being of the average citizens. In the Northern region this was completely absent. Similar to what was obtainable in the Niger-Delta area, the Northern region was also engulfed in deplorable social and economic situations. More than other parts of the country, poverty and economic hardship were more prevalent in the region. Instead of the expected dividends of democracy at the dawn of civilian rule in 1999, the generality of the citizens within the region continuously remained more impoverished. About 70 % of the population in the North, especially in the North-East where the group has its strongest stronghold live on less than a dollar a day, compared to about 50 % in the South. The region also has the lowest literacy rate in the whole of Nigeria. Less than 23 percent of women and 54 percent of men in the Northeast can read, compared to more than 79% of women and 90% of men in the South. The political system within the region was also characterised by corruption and under-development; lack of basic infrastructures, poor education systems, youth unemployment etc. Government public offices were not only platforms to acquire easy wealth; they were also avenues for other lucrative criminal enterprises. These inter-related conditions weakened the public trust in the

government and created a ripe condition for radicalizations and violent political contentions, for collective activism for a change.

The situation was compounded by the country's return to civilian rule in 1999 and the emergence of Obasanjo (a Christian southerner), as the new Nigerian president. More than the obvious offering of new opportunities for civil political contentions and hope for good governance in the region; this new development did create a political vacuum at the Nigerian Federal Government for the North and a displacement of Islamic religious superiority. Before then the Nigerian political terrain had been controlled and dominated by the northern region. Apart from Aguiyi Ironsi (1966, for just 3 months), Earnest Shenekon (another three months interim government, 1993-1994) and Obasanjo (1975-1979) as a military man, all the Nigerian civilian and military Presidents, have all come from the Northern region. Soon, more several bolder agitations for Shari'a and enthronement of Islamic supremacy at the center of the Nigerian government ensued. By the end of Obasanjo's first year in office, twelve states from the Northern region had adopted Shari'a law as their state's penal code. This would lead to several violent protests from many Christians communities; resulting to the death of many people in the region.

The situation became worse in 2002, when Obasanjo, in his constitutional right decided to dismiss all the high ranking military officers, who had held political offices. Those most highly affected were the Northerners. As if this was not enough; the President also in defiance to an alleged agreement he had with some Northern political elites about ceding power after his first tenure, started campaigning for a second term. The general belief before then within the region was that the President would hold forth the Presidency until 2003 after his first tenure, when he would be expected to hand over to a Muslim Northerner. The assumption was that his emergence as the Nigerian President had been orchestrated by some Northern political elite, "to placate the South and project an image of national cohesion and forward momentum" (Komolafe 2012). After two years in power, Obasanjo change his mind and began campaigning for a second term, against the wish of his Northern political god-fathers. These created a lot of tensions and hyphened the appeal for violent contentions against the Nigerian state within the region, to prevent Obasanjo from achieving his political goals. Being that this was at the dawn of the Al-Qaeda-led US September 11th terrorist attacks; a phenomenon which had re-emphasised the role of militant strategies for political goal attainments (at least in the region's interpretation); this further set the context for more restiveness and conditions for radicalizations against the Obasanjo led Government. Soon,

Boko-Haram emerged, identifying with the region's Religio/political history, and seeking to return the region back to its past glorious political and economic prosperity.

More than just closing-down of political opportunities (Della Porta 1995; 2009) and opening-up of political opportunities (Wiktorowicz 2005; Gunning 2007) the two cases interestingly is better seen as cases of "perceptions of lack of political opportunities". Being that country's national politics, dating back to its colonial history, was defined by ethnic cleavages and regional rivalries; contemporary political interests and struggles for power are pursued in ethnic terms. The absence of one ethnic group or groups' at the federal government level (which is the main threshold of power), were often interpreted and perceived as lack of political opportunities. The different political and social structures in the two different regions helped to strengthen this perception within the regions. These structures respectively set the contexts for radicalizations, and opened up political opportunities for these groups to emerge within their different social and political environments.

7.2 The role of ideology in MEND and Boko Haram

The main concern here was to study the role of ideology within the two groups. In line with previous research in the field, my assumption is that ideology is an important factor for understanding the development and sustenance of violence within militant organizations (Wiktorowicz 2004; Snow and Byrd 2007; Gunning 2007). Often, it can be a significant resource brought in by the movement leaders within social movement groups, to both mobilize and sustain the kind of violent strategies that the group adopts for their goal attainments.

The first questions are: What kind of role did the movements' ideology play in sustaining and justifying the kind of violence strategy that the movements adopt? How are they framed to mobilise and sustain the kind of violence that exists within the two movements? In MEND, the study saw that "resistance" (as the group prefers to refer to its acts of political violence and activism) was anchored on the region's environmental exploitations and the political repressions by the Nigerian government and the oil companies. Tapping into the traditional worldview and the age long history of resistance within the region, the group's leadership addressed this context and projected the region's exclusion and inability to tap directly into the oil industry benefits as a direct consequence of the Nigerian government and the oil companies' exploitative relationships with the communities within the region. As they see it, "resisting" these exploitative approaches is environmentally and socially imperative on

the people within the region. This in their estimation would help the people within the region to protect themselves and the region's fragile eco-system.

To further justify the group's adoption of political violence, the leadership also appealed to Egbesu (an Ijaw traditional deity for justice and retribution). The significance of this Egbesu lay deep in Ijaw cosmology, as a symbol of spiritual protection, for the group, when they are fighting "resistance" wars. Although Christianity is very prominent in the Ijaw communities, the traditional ancestral beliefs still have strong sway on the people. Like in many African communities, there is the belief in the existence of local ancestral deities, and that the relationship with these deities can enhance one's material benefits. Rituals like initiation rites or covenant with particular deities for example, are often seen as some of the ways in which individuals or communities maintain good and active relationships with these deities, so as to protect or enhance their material benefits. In the case of Egbesu, the general believe is that it can even confer invincibility from bullets or other forms of harm to her devotees, during the resistance activities. Initiation rites into it by the Ijaw traditional priests were often used by the group's leadership to embolden the Ijaw youths intent on joining the group's militant activities. In this same way, this movement's foot soldiers are provided with a unique spiritual resource to bravely and fearlessly challenge and engage with the Nigerian joint-task force and the oil companies, believed to be degrading their land and their environment.

This was also a very important factor during the region's long resistant wars. Dating back to the eighteenth and nineteenth Century invasion of the Europeans, resistance wars within the region were fought along community and ethnic lines. The region is known to have fought-off the earliest set of European traders in the region, who wanted to gain unrestricted access to the region's interiors, where the goods traded on the Atlantic coast were sourced. The famous Ekumeku warriors that arose within the region were also known for its numerous successes in the resistance wars against the colonial government, despite their low-quality ammunitions, against the British colonial soldiers of the nineteenth Century. The region only surrendered to the Colonial government by the end of nineteenth and the beginning of twentieth Century, many years after many communities in the Northern Nigeria had long surrendered. The popular belief is that these successes were largely influenced by the involvement of Egbesu. So, by referring and appropriating Egbesu, the group's leadership identifies with the region's history and justifies its violent "resistance" against the Nigerian Government.

Right from the beginning, violence was part of the group's strategy. As a coalition of previous militant groups that operated within the region, the group knew from their experience within the region that non-violent strategies have not yielded much substantial results. Many non-violent groups that arose where targeted and systematically repressed by both successive military and civilian governments. Therefore, for MEND to be able to withstand the government, and bring them to the negotiating table, they were convinced that this strategy was the best viable choice for the group.

Boko Harm on the other hand presents a different ideology. Here, the study saw that the group's political activism is framed as part of an Islamic religio-political duty to protect the region and the nation from a perceived impending doom that was being necessitated by the continuous existence of the nation's Western-modelled secular government. Drawing essentially from the Northern region's rich Islamic religious culture frames and the socio-economic malaise as at the time, the group believes that the country's democracy and its value system is the main bases of religious weaknesses and moral decadence within the Nigerian society. As they see it; the religious minimalism this secular system entails has been destructive to the Nigerian society, just like the political ideologies in which it is modelled. By excluding religion from the political and social system, especially the criminal jurisdiction of Shari'a, the country has become a common arena for atrocities, iniquities, corruption, extortions, and other forms of vices. A foundational reversal to the theocratic al-Shari'a system as existed in the Muhammad's early Umma and in the Usman Dan Fodio's Caliphate, the group's leadership concludes, would correct these moral lapses and bring the country closer to its desired great religious, social and political destination.

Unlike MEND, violence within the group did not start at the beginning of the group's emergence. In fact Yusuf, the group's first leader is known to have been against the use of violence. In his words "Islamic system of government should be established in Nigeria, and if possible all over the world, but through dialogue, and not violence" (Williams and Guttschuss 2012: 32). Violence arose within the group as a result of more radicalizations within the groups, as well as the group's initial interactions with Nigerian government, in 2009. The persistent arrests from the state's security forces, the constant attacks on the group and the dwindling appeal of the group within the region as a result of Yaradua's presidency, brought in a lot of frustrations and more radical tendencies within the group. With time this reinforced the need to for political violence as a strategy for the group to continue to remain relevant within the region, as well as a way to maintain the group amidst sever government suppressions.

Drawing essentially from the Islamic religion's notions of Jihad and religious duty, and the region's unique violent religio-political narrative, Yusuf and the rest of the group's leadership soon projected militancy as the best possible means with which to terrorise the public and put pressure on the government to effect the needed necessary political changes at the region, and at the center of the countries political terrain. Within this perspective, the group's activism is conceived as a sort of Jihad; a religious war that is hoped to enthrone God's purpose. Thus, members of the group, rather than being mere activists; they are holy warriors (in the cases of death, martyrs); people committed to Allah's cause.

The last question is: Are there elements within the two ideologies that justify the use of violence? One simple answer to this question is yes. Both group's ideologies although differently, involves an inclusion of religions traditions which justify the use of violence strategy. These religious traditions contain elements and appropriate worldview which easily legitimises militant activism, especially against individuals or people perceived to be enemies. Islam particularly, lacking a clear difference between spiritual and political power, and having a theological tradition that can easily be used to encourage violent activism, gives Boko-Haram's leadership a huge resource to fan the kind of violent activism it adopted, in order to achieve the group's religious and political aims.

By identifying and framing MEND and Boko-Haram's activism on the region's environmental issues and on the two significant religious traditions (Egbesu and Islam, respectively) within their respective regions, the group's leaderships were similarly able to mobilise and further justify the kind of violent strategies that the groups adopt for the attainment of their respective goal.

7.3 The development and escalations of more sophisticated forms of political violence within Boko-Haram and MEND

The last topic in the thesis is concerned with understanding the combination of external and internal factors in the development and escalation of militancy within the two groups. Rather than continue to neglect the role of state actors in the escalation and development of political violence within militant organizations; the present study in line with recent studies within the field attempts to analysis the two group's long history of contestations and the interactions with the state actors (Tarrow et al. 2001; Wiktorowicz 2005; Gunning 2007; Della Porta 2009; Gunning 2009).

More precisely the study first asks: How and why did the militancy escalate within the two groups? Which role does the Nigerian government play in the escalation of militancy within the two groups? More than what is common in the field, the study also extends this question to other militant organizations (in which the groups identify with): Which role do the movements' interactions with other similar movements play in the escalation of political violence within the two groups?

In MEND, the study concludes that the development and escalation of different forms of political violence was facilitated by mainly the Nigerian government militarization approach and the socialization processes (the internal logic) that went on within the group. The heavy militarization of the region and its social effects on the region before the group emerged meant that at its inception the group had already resolved to adopt violent approach. More than just a strategy to achieve its goals; violence was also a resource for empowerment for the people within the group. Before the group emerged, the Nigerian Government had vigorously pursued its securitization policy within the region. At the event of any slightest uprising or protests, the government often responded with severe military presence and crack-down. Soon, these communities had to resort to ways to protect themselves. Many of the non-violent groups within the region, who had been non-violent, gradually turned to militancy, to both navigate and survive the region's complex militarised terrain.

In consistent with its goal, the group also occasionally mounted guerrilla attacks on strategic oil hubs and facilities within the region; they engaged in the abduction of journalists and expatriate and local oil workers, often taking them to the Niger Delta communities to witness the conditions of the living conditions of people within the region. They also mounted sophisticated bomb attacks in the major cities and in the main heart of the Nigerian security forces operating within the region, as a way of demonstrating the level of the group's fearlessness and invincibility. Within the first three years of its emergence, the group had transformed from a mere resistant group, to a powerful militant organization that was capable of conducting sophisticated political violent operations within the region and beyond.

In the name of curtailing the group's threats, the Nigerian Government had responded with more sophisticated violence and militarization of the region; often attacking and destroying communities believed to be sympathetic to the group's cause. In return, the group had retaliated with more violent attacks against state's security agents and its institutions in order to stop the attacks; often in more sophisticated forms than it had done in the past. As these attacks helped in legitimizing the group and gave more global attention to the group's cause; more violence escalated.

In Boko-Haram on the other hand, the evolvement and escalation of violence were predicted on different factors. Rather than just the militarization approach and the internal logic within the group, the study concludes that the extensive contacts and the unique interactions with other similar militant organizations, like Al-Qaeda, AQIM or Al-Shabaab outside the country was a very important factor that facilitated the development and escalation of sophisticated violent strategies. These extensive contacts and interactions overlapped with the socialization process and the violent interactions with the Nigerian state to affect the escalation of violence within the group.

As I acknowledged earlier, the group's leadership, at the beginning did not embrace violence strategy until confrontations and interactions with the Nigerian government. The interactions and the internal socialization processes within group set the contexts for radicalization and emergence of violence strategy within the group. For seven years, the group existed as a local radical religious group that espoused radical and jihadic teachings on how to Islamise and enthrone theocratic government in Nigeria. However, following the emergence of Yaradua, a Muslim from an Aristocratic family in the North, the political and environmental appeal of the group's mission dwindled. Coupled with the persistent government harassments and attacks on the group, more radical tendencies arose within the group. Soon, these culminated to a full time attacks on the Nigerian governments security forces and institutions within the regions. Now, the government was forced to act; resulting to a full blown military crackdown. Yusuf, the group's leader, as well as some of the prominent members of the group were killed. As a result, the rest of the surviving members of the group were forced to go underground, presumably to militant camps in Mali, Algeria and Mauritania, where they aligned with similar militant Islamic groups until towards the end of 2009 when they re-emerged again.

At the dawn of a new northern political vacuum, the group emerged again. Yar'adua, the Nigerian President, who had kept the group on check and on whose order the group was initially dismantled was seriously sick in a hospital in Saudi Arabia. He was hardly seen in the public. He eventually died after many months. Under a new leader Imam Abubakar Shekau, the group threatened renewed attacks to avenge the deaths of its founder and other members, at the hands of the Nigerian Police, and also in consistent with its strategy of achieving their goals. They stepped -up their attacks on the Nigerian government and its security forces; killing high ranking security personnels of the JTF operating within the areas. The situation became worse, at the end of 2010, when few months into the presidency, Goodluck Jonathan, the Nigerian President began to campaign for the 2011 presidential election. In consistent

with the group's mission of campaign and preference for a theocratic, the group decided to heat up the attacks on the Nigerian government. They attacked local police stations, churches, schools and state institutions. But as things continuously changed after each attacks (the Nigerian government continuously beefed up the areas with more military presence, as such that it became extremely difficult for the group to carry out serious attacks within the region), more radical sophisticated forms of violence such as suicide bombings developed within the group. With this strategy, the group could still be able to carry out significant attacks amidst the severe security presence.

Finally, the study also asks: Why these developments are different in the two groups, especially in the case of suicide bombing, which evolved in Boko Haram? The answer to this question is related to the interactions with other militant organizations in which Boko Haram identifies with. This strategy was something that had already evolved in all the other militant organizations that the group had close corporations with. The corporations existing between these groups and Boko Haram, especially after the group aligned with them when they went underground, meant that the group could learn or import both the experience and the technical know-how that is needed to use such sophisticated means of attacks. So this kind of political violence within Boko Haram is not just a result of interactions with the Nigerian police, it also involves the interactions between the group and the similar militant organizations outside the country. And being that such strategy could further identify with the group's aim of terrorising and instigating fear into the Nigerian government, and that it was the best viable strategy to carry out serious attacks in the region amidst the security situations of the region, it easily resonated within the group.

In MEND, although similar sophisticated forms of violence like bomb attacks, military-style gun attacks, etc; the use of suicide bombing did not arise. Unlike Boko Haram, the group did not have these kinds of corporations with external militant organizations. Corporations with external organizations were only on the level of human right advocacy, and as opportunity to globalise the groups struggle. In addition, the group's access to huge resources in terms of; immediate previous militant experienced recruits, political sponsorship and environmental appeal of the group's cause, meant that the group had always been more efficient in its attacks on both the Nigerian government's security forces, and the oil facilities within the region. The security situations of the region have never seriously displaced the group's systematic attacks in the region. Through the effective use of information technology and the military-styled spy system, the group has also sabotaged the Nigerian government agents and destroyed major oil facilities within the region; particularly cutting oil production

and pushing up the price of oil in the tight and nervous global market, and putting more pressure in the Nigerian government to negotiate with the group. Under these conditions, the need to adopt or develop such radical "self-sacrificial" sophisticated form of political violence such as suicide bombing would not arise within the group.

Different from the erroneous views about such strategies within militant organizations, this strategy does not arise simply as a static, individual disposition prior to participation in movement organization. Dispositions to participate here started with participation in the groups. By participating in the group's activism, and by being exposed to the group's ideologies, the individuals within the groups internalise and personalises the groups' goals and interests; as such that "necessary" radical strategies such as this, which ordinarily would not appeal to the individual, becomes personally meaningful as long as it is meaningful within the group's internal logic.

Also, the popular view that such militant groups are simply radicals, who just engages in irrational, deviant and unpredicted violence, lacks merit. Often violent contention is the result of tactical considerations predicted by both internal and external realities in which the groups identify. Violence did not just escalate overnight; these groups engaged in rational calculus regarding the tactical efficacy, and chose violence modes of contentions as the best viable option to facilitate their objectives and protect their political interests, given their peculiar situations within the regions.

7.4 Final thoughts

Despite the contributions I hope this thesis will add to the study of political violence, it is not without its limitations. In the first place, the incidents and attacks from both the Nigerian government and the two groups analysed in the study are far from being exhaustive. The study only analyzed some of the most important events, especially in the beginning of the group's activism until 2009. Given the limited space and time frame of the study, the thesis was not able to document numerous other incidents of suspected attacks by the two groups.

Another possible limitation of the study is its use of secondary data. Some social scientists consider the use of secondary sources inferior to primary data. In fact, traditional terrorism scholars have been criticised for their over reliance on secondary sources; a situation which has often been linked to their fear of moral contamination to engage directly with the people labelled as "terrorists" (see Jackson 2007; 2008). However, the security concern, the time frame of my study, and the financial resources involve in conducting primary research

hindered the collection of primary data for this thesis. Moreover, previous studies on these movements contain quality data to reanalyze them in light of social movement theory.

The strength of this thesis lies in its comparative analysis of both movements. None of the previous studies engaged in a comparative approach in this manner. By using this approach, the present study has not only introduced new interpretations about political violence within militant groups; it has also highlighted the similarities and differences between two such groups. The two groups have different ideologies and missions, and as such are situated in two different ideological settings within their respective socio-political environments within the Nigerian society.

However, the groups also share a lot of similarities in terms of the opportunities and contexts for their emergence within their respective environments. They also share the similarity of using violence as one mode of contention for goal attainment. In this sense, rather than being defined as mere "terrorists groups" as it popularly done both within the traditional terrorism studies and outside the academic world; these groups can be better understood as movements which employs violence as a strategy, amidst other repertoires of movement strategies for the achievement of their goals within the Nigerian society. Just looking at these movements as "terrorist groups" exceptionalises terror and violence by downplaying the other strategies and interactions that go on within such movement activities.

Altogether, I am hopeful that the thesis would offer some contributions to research within the field. It is my belief that these kinds of understanding and analyses of political violence employed within this thesis would spur further research on political violence and social movement theories, especially in the areas of interactions and corporations between similar movements across national boundaries.

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