



Regional Master's Program in Peace Studies

**MASTER'S THESIS**

Covering Boko Haram: Representations of Nigeria and its fight against the insurgents in the  
Western media 2009-2020

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Index number: 12/2018

Belgrade, March 2021.

## **Abstract**

Boko Haram, as one of the most notorious terrorist organizations, originates from Nigeria, and it was established as a response to the central social and economic problems in the country. Today, the group carries out cruel acts mostly in regional territories threatening to expand its forces. Starting from the first steps of development of this relatively newborn terrorist organization, its deeds were not as much covered by the world media; but it became a practice in the following years. The moment they had begun to commit mass bloodshed and crimes, media reports on Boko Haram multiplied. However, there is still not enough information about the organization available to the public. At the same time, many elements are missing in the media frame. Therefore, the lack of newspaper reports about African countries gives the impression that they are not important enough to be found in Western journals. On the other hand, the West seems to put effort in maintaining its image of the only right force that should be followed, meaning that the former colonial powers still find ways to expand their influence in countries around the world. . For the most famous western media, like The Guardian, CNN, or BBC, Boko Haram is unquestionably an infamous organization that needs to be defeated ideologically and operationally. Still, the picture of the situation in Nigeria that the world sees is incomplete, but the Western media recreates the profiles of Boko Haram's leaders and members, manipulating the public opinion.

**Key words:** Boko Haram, Nigeria, Western media, BBC, CNN, The Guardian, media coverage

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# 1. Introduction

The world media have the power to influence the general public by creating a subjective picture of objective and real situations. In the case of Nigeria, there are many circumstances when the media can blur the picture of specific situations; and one of those is how terrorism is presented in the world media. Boko Haram, as one of the most notorious terrorist organizations, originates from Nigeria, carries out cruel acts mostly in regional territories threatens to expand its forces. Does the question arise as to the role of the media in this dynamic and frightening situation? The world media report on the crimes committed on a daily level and thus raises awareness of the danger the organization produces. Starting from the first steps of development of this relatively newborn terrorist organization, its deeds were not as much covered by the world media; but it became a practice in the following years. The moment they had begun to commit mass bloodshed and crimes, media reports on Boko Haram multiplied.

The content of this thesis will be based on the media coverage of the Boko Haram terrorist organization with a specific focus on the Western media. Although these media, which are also the world's most influential media, consider Boko Haram to be a regional Nigerian problem, there are fears that the power of this terrorist group may be internationalized. Media reports on Boko Haram have become more prevalent due to the organization's frequency of committing acts. The aim of this thesis is to designate the media coverage of the Boka Haram organization in the 2009–2020 period of time. The author starts writing the thesis with curiosity to explore media reports on this terrorist organization, and to emphasize the core of media framing core.

In order to write a conclusion regarding the media coverage of the group, the key question that will be answered in the text must first be asked:

- How does Western media frame and contextualize Boko Haram?

In order to provide an answer to such a complex question, it will be decomposed into several more specific questions, including the following:

- What is the general representation of Nigeria in the selected Western media platforms?
- How the media covered specific Boko Haram related events?
- What is missing from the media representation of Boko Haram?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of such representations of Boko Haram in Nigeria?
- Do various relevant actors in Nigeria support or condemn the views of Boko Haram and their actions?
- How widespread is Boko Haram in Nigeria?

The purpose of the study will be achieved by choosing the appropriate research method which in this case involves content analysis. The paper will aim to analyze articles by several most influential Western media – BBC, CNN, and The Guardian, which report on Boko Haram in the period of time that refers to 2009-2020. Through several chapters, it will be explained how the process of the organization's hardening looked like. The crucial importance lays in fulfilling knowledge about the roots of the organization because that is how their main ideological directions and aspirations will be brought to light. Furthermore, attention will be focused on specific events, as well as the strategic means that enable the group to improve battle for goals that transcend the boundaries of humanity which should be based on peacefulness. The content of the thesis will mapping Nigeria as a country that develops in two directions: penetrating towards the top African economic force, and underdevelopment society of the poor caused by terrorism. All of the above will be followed through the prism of the Western media coverage. How the Western media affect the spreading or reduction of terrorist activities; and do they influence the competent organization and authorities to help Nigeria in the fight against terrorism? Bearing in mind all previously mentioned, the following text will be described what the portrayal of the Boko Haram organization looks like in the Western media and does it reflect on the socio-economic situation in Nigeria.

## **2. The roots and growth of Boko Haram**

The questions regarding corruption and injustice in Nigeria seem inevitable when talking about the country's ambitions to move toward sustainable development, especially in terms of fighting poverty. Bribery has been declared as one of the main issues in this country in West Africa, and although several anti-corruption incentives had been presented over the last decade, it is questionable whether they resulted in any significant improvement.

As a response to the central social and economic problems, the group now known as Boko Haram was founded. The following chapter will cover the historical development of this organization, as well as its structure, and attention the group receives on the national level.

### **2.1. History**

The challenges Nigeria is facing today have been accumulating for decades. To fully understand the problem regarding Boko Haram, it is necessary to know what has been happening in Nigeria at the time when this group was formed, and what the main reasons were for such a situation to occur, which requires a deeper understanding of the underlying historical aspects.

It is important to stress that this country has had military governments for more than three decades – from 1966, shortly after it gained independence from the British crown, to 1999 – meaning that there has been a conspicuous connection between military and civilian governance, especially regarding the separation of the government from the people it rules (Campbell 2014). There was a short period of civilian rule, however, of four years – from 1979 to 1983.

Although the the country gained sovereignty, the Western influence is strong and the country is another example of neocollonialism. As a result of this, educated people, especially in the Northern of Nigeria, are continuously expressing their resistance against the education that harms

original Islam principles and tradition. Military dictatorships, along with ethnic militancy, caused a civil war and many conflicts, creating poverty and dissatisfaction among the citizens. The abovementioned civil war, known as the Biafran War, took place between 1967 and 1970, and is remembered as one of the deadliest and most brutal wars on the African continent. The war was fought between the government of Nigeria and the secessionist state of Biafra – a state formed as a response to the various tensions between the different groups of people in Nigeria (Anthony 2010).

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Nigeria became a multi-ethnic and a multi-religious state. Over the years, this demographic complexity imposed a lot of pressure on political formation, economic behavior, social and religious inclinations (Awortu 2015). In such an environment, political and economically motivated crises become a norm, and therefore, peace seems to be an almost unattainable goal.

It is clear that the constant conflict between predominantly Muslim north and predominantly Christian south meant that the country is divided. This conflict on a religious basis is at the same time both a cause and a consequence of every other struggle in Nigeria since the two churches have opposite visions for the state. It is important to stress that it is not the church as an institution that holds power, even though the religious beliefs of Nigerian people surpass their national identity. It is the ruling elite that uses religion as a tool to keep control over people. Howbeit, there have been tendencies to change this.

The rise of radical Islam occurred in Nigeria after the independence was gained. However, it was only in the 11th century that Islam was introduced in Nigeria, although it was not until two centuries ago that it developed into a real political force - at least in the Northern part. A prominent figure in Muslim history in Nigeria is Uthman dan Fodio, a reformer who started a jihad movement in 1804 promoting the idea of a Muslim country ruled by a Muslim governor with Sharia - Islam law or the law of Allah - as the foundation for governance. With the creation of an Islamic state in the 19th century, Islam shifted from the social to the political domain, and this pattern remains in Nigeria even nowadays (Laremont and Gregorian 2006).



Even during the 1950s the idea about Sharia as the ultimate governance code appeared, and it was spread by the Northern People's Congress – one of the most influential political parties of post-colonial era. Even though the party established some Sharia practice in the legislative, that was not enough for the Muslim militants devoted to the complete recovery of Sharia in the northern part of Nigeria.

Today, Nigeria is now the most populated African country and the largest oil producer on the continent. However, these superlatives do not mean any significant advantages for Nigeria compared to other countries. This is mainly due to inefficient use of resources and, consequently, the underdeveloped economy. In addition to that, the government is operating with an insufficient amount of funds, as well as adequate personnel. The current situation is just a the end result of an inadequate practice that remained for too long.

## **2.2 What is Boko Haram?**

The history of Boko Haram starts with the story of a relatively small group of radical Islamist youth founded in 2002 by Mohammed Yusuf in a village outside the city of Maiduguri in Nigeria, near the Chadian border (Hashim, Patte and Cohen 2012). The group was often called “Yusufiyya”, especially in Nigerian media (Loimeier 2012) and “the Nigerian Taliban“ by the local people (Walker 2012). Mohammed Yusuf was a renowned preacher and proselytizer of the Izala faction of Islam in this city in north-eastern Nigeria, who had radicalized his ideas to reject all earthly aspects of Nigerian society, meaning that the main reason for the emergence of Boko Haram was the “secular and “godless” nature of Nigerian society” (Hashim, Patte, and Cohen 2012) that was obvious at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

It can be said that the people of Nigeria were not only immensely sorrowful but also impoverished and agitated, and such an atmosphere encouraged many to choose a different path toward universal legitimacy. The hunger for social justice was especially present among the

Nigerian youth. Violence is almost inevitable in such an ambiance where the scarcity is a description even for the essential goods.

Its name is usually understood as a criticism of the Western influence, since word “boko” carries meaning “fake” in Hausa, the language spoken by many people in Northern Nigeria<sup>1</sup> - which is the epithet regularly used to refer to Westernization – and “haram” means “forbidden” in Arabic (Weeraratne 2015). Therefore, “Boko Haram” could be translated as “Westernization is Sacrilege” (Britannica 2020) or “(Western) Book is forbidden”, which is a literal translation of the groups name (Hashim, Patte and Cohen 2012). Actually, the full name of this organization is *Jamā'atu Ahli is-Sunnah lid-Da'wati wal-Jihād*, or in English: *Sunni Community for the Propagation of the Prophet's Teaching and Jihad* (Campbell 2014). However, it was not until 2015 that they were given another name: *Islamic State in West Africa* (ISWA) or *Islamic State's West African Province* (ISWAP) (Britannica 2020).

The true ideology could be interpreted from the name of the group – it is founded with the idea that Westernization has a negative impact on Islamic values, meaning that Boko Haram was formed based on the principles of the Salafi movement, which promotes uncompromising adherence to Islamic law Sharia. Problems, they believe, such as corruption that led to great social and economic inequality, have their roots in Western influence, and they are devoted to fighting it.

The early beginnings of the organization were mostly nonviolent and were orientated toward purifying Islam on a local level. The first Boko haram's attack happened on December 24<sup>th</sup> in 2003, when the group members attacked and invaded police stations in Geiam and Kanamma in Yobe State, raising the flag of the Afghanistan Taliban (Stanford University 2018), but the group was not actively attacking at the time.

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<sup>1</sup> Hausa people inhabit the areas of Niger and Northern Nigeria, as well as Chad, Ghana, Sudan, and Cameroon, creating the most numerous native ethnic group in Africa (Salamone 2010).

Although there were not many violent acts at the beginning and the organization's main aim was to separate itself from the secular aspects of society, this changed seven years after the group had been established. In 2009, Boko haram evolved into a Jihadist organization becoming more politically orientated. Precisely, the organization was given extensive publication in July 2009 when an incident occurred. Namely, the members of the Boko haram organization were supposedly subjected to extreme brutality by the police because they had refused to comply with a law that requires motorcyclists to wear helmets (Stanford University 2018). In addition to that, the group could not get an authoritative investigation of the conflict, which triggered the feeling of inequality and an urge to implement new methods.

As an answer to the injustice they have experienced, the organization began attacks on police and other government institutions in the city of Bauchi, from where it quickly spread to Borno, Yobe, and Kano, killing countless police officers (Sergie and Johnson 2014). The government decided to respond in the same manner, so a retaliation followed in which the military forces killed approximately 700 people associated with Boko haram. Furthermore, Mohammed Yusuf was captured and later killed by the security forces, who claimed that he had attempted an escape (Stanford University 2018).

The assassination of the leader of Boko Haram resulted in the breaking of the initial unity through the creation of many different factions. This, however, did not weaken the organization in the sense that it would suspend its operations. On the contrary, the group has continued to grow till the present day. Without a doubt, it is challenging to track the size of Boko Haram. Because of that, while U.S. intelligence officials have assessed that there are between four and six thousand hard-core militants, some other critics have said that the group could be three times more numerous than that (Felter 2018).

Since the organization lost its founder, it has conducted assassinations and large-scale acts of brutality in Nigeria. From there, the group's actions have expanded and converted to a worrisome dimension. Abubakar Shekau was proclaimed the new leader. The organization has conducted many attacks afterwards, among which are the 2011 bombing of the U.N. headquarters in Abuja,

and the 2014 Chibok schoolgirl kidnapping, which are some of the incidents that received vast media coverage due to the consequences they had (Stanford University 2018). Even though its main base of operation is in northeastern Nigeria, after 2009, it has carried out several actions in Chad, Cameroon and Niger (Bureau of Counterterrorism 2013). Therefore, not only the whole country was caught in the jaws of a tumultuous Islamic insurgency, but also the region was exposed to the operations of Boko haram.

An important event for Boko haram occurred in March 2015, when the organization became an affiliate of the Islamic State (IS). However, in August 2016, there were some control issues within the group, which resulted in the organization division. Consequently, the Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP) was set against Jama'atu Ahl al-Sunnah Lil-Dawa Wal-Jihad (JAS). Shortly after that, Muhammadu Buhari, the president of Nigeria, declared that the organization was "technically defeated" (BBC 2015) but the statement was questioned since the group's attacks intensified afterward.

Today Boko haram is still one of the deadliest organizations in the world, meaning that it represents a threat to world peace. The nature of the attacks that the group continues to carry out makes many questions arise, but it remains somewhat unclear what the actual level of truthfulness is present in the information available to the broader public regarding Boko haram.

## **2.3 Official positions**

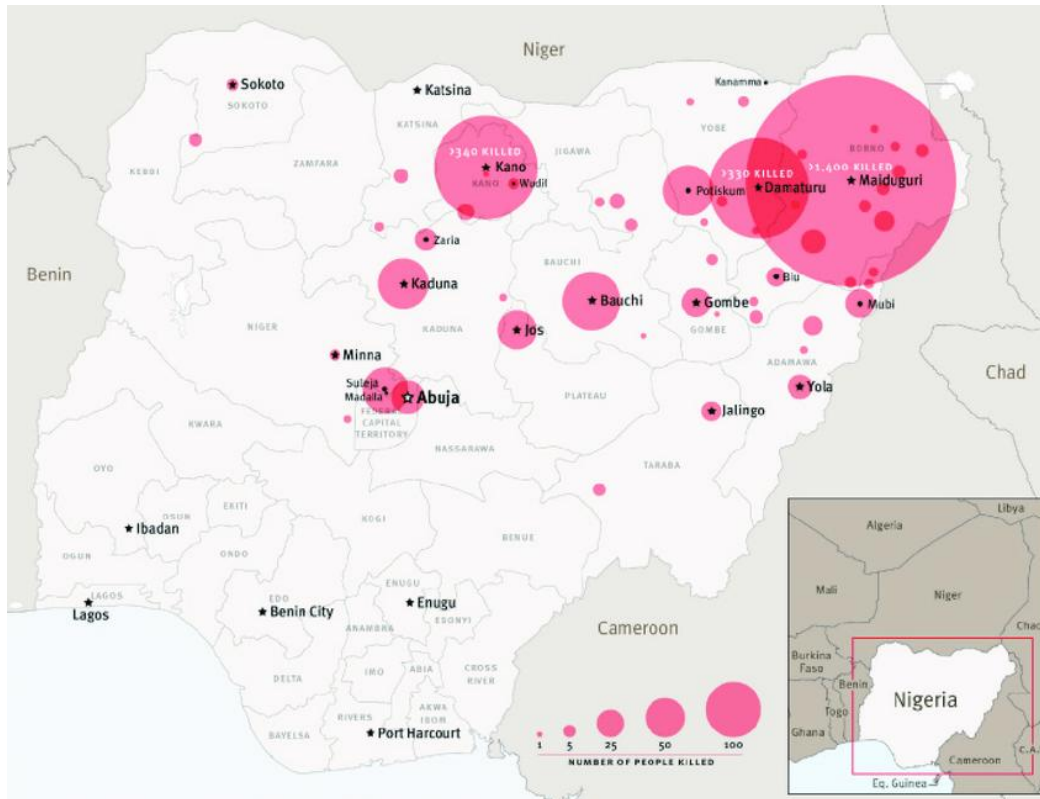
Earlier in the paper, it was emphasized that the headquarters of the organization Boko Haram is in Nigeria, more precisely, that it was founded in the vicinity of the city of Maiduguri. It is clear, however, that terrorist activities often do not recognize the political borders between countries, or at least this is always the case when the expansion of operations to other territories can contribute to the realization of the organization's vision.

Boko Haram was established in Maiduguri, the capital of the northeastern state of Borno in Nigeria. Until the 2015 Nigerian government invasion, the group has been directed its strikes on the northern states of Yobe, Jono, Bauchi, Borno, and Kaduna. It also out carried several actions in Cameroon and Niger. Before or starting in 2012, U.S. officials believed that Boko Haram regularly trained in northern Mali with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (Doyle 2012).

During 2015, the African Union and Nigerian government coalition has fought against Boko Haram and, as a result, it pursued the group into a final stronghold in the 23,000 square miles Sambisa Forest in northeastern Nigeria, close to the border with Cameroon (Carsten 2018). Then, in 2017, Boko Haram was active in Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon and Chad, but its primary center remained the Sambisa forest (BBC 2016).

The picture below represents a map of Nigeria indicating the concentration of Boko Haram attacks. It can be seen that the largest number of victims was recorded in the territory where the organization was established, which proves at the same time what the outcome of the conflicts between the government and Boko Haram was, and it also speaks about the organization's efforts to establish power at home.

Also, it is noticeable that the attacks of the organization are concentrated in the northeastern part of the country, where there is a Muslim dominance. The deadliest operations were conducted in Kano where there were more than 340 people killed; Damaturu where the number of victims is slightly lower; and then Bauchi and Kaduna where there were more than 100 died directly because of Boko haram's operations. It is important to emphasize that the number of people whose lives are indirectly affected by the operations of the organization, along with the number of victims that occurred as an indirect consequence of these activities can not be accurately determined easily. This would mean that the number of total victims is certainly higher than the number of corpses after a Boko haram's operation. However, this should not lead to the conclusion that Boko Haram is responsible for all these human victims, but it should be borne in mind that two conflicting parties are involved in every conflict and that both contribute to the growth of the number of victims.



*Figure 1: Map of Nigeria indicating the concentration of Boko Haram attacks (Olukoya 2016)*

As pointed out earlier, Boko Haram, even though it is an organization founded in Nigeria, also operates in other West African countries. Specifically, it is active in Chad, Cameroon and Niger. The forthcoming paragraphs will outline the reasons for the presence of this organization in the mentioned countries.

Boko Haram's presence in Chad has is concentrated near Lake Chad, which is an area with a strong presence of valuable natural resources that attract migrants from all over the Sahel, resulting in tensions regarding the control over them. The organization has recognized the advantage of the geographic characteristics of the lake, and found an opportunity to shelter on its numerous islands. Except for two bombings in the capital of Chad, N'Djamena, in 2015, the organization mostly targeted the Lake Chad area. The attacks had escalated since that year. The

response of the Chadian authorities has been originally military, in the Lake Chad area, and in bordering countries (International Crisis Group 2017).

The Nigeria-origin radical Islamist organization increased armed attacks in northern Cameroon during 2014 but was fought off heavily by collective Cameroonian, Chadian, and Nigerian armed forces in the following year. Since then, it has pursued operations of bombings, targeting primarily civilians in city areas (Rackley 2017). The organization relies on the fact that there is inadequate infrastructure, which does not allow Nigerian authorities to patrol the border with Cameroon effectively. The given surrounding allows Boko haram to establish bases and training camps in the deserts or forests in the northern Nigerian-Cameroon border region. They have used Cameroon as a rear base for realizing attacks in Nigeria. The severity of the conflict between the police and army, on one side and Boko Haram on the other in Cameroon's Far North has decreased, but the organization remains a threat not only on a domestic ground, but on an international level (International Crisis Group 2018).

Niger, Nigeria's neighbor, is another country that has not remained protected from Boko Haram attacks. The destruction created by Boko Haram and the military forces opposing them has plunged the people in Niger into a food crisis and has cut their incomes to a tenth of what they were previously (Oxfam 2017).

In addition to the cases described, Boko Haram has carried out - and is carrying out - various activities in other countries as well. The organization not only carries out attacks but also exercises and training in other countries. There is no doubt that these attacks have impacted the lives of people in the affected countries, the societies, and the economies of these countries. Although the governments oppose the attacks, the uninterrupted cycle of violence results in more and more human casualties.

## **2.4 Perception of Boko Haram in Nigeria**

The perception of Boko Haram in Nigeria varies depending on the aspects from which the organization is viewed. Namely, the government will represent the group through the number of victims it has injured or killed, as will the media under the influence of the government, while those who oppose the regime will support Boko Haram and put the organization in the context of corruption and injustice that comes from the top.

The fact is that the flow of information in Nigeria itself is slow and inefficient, which is considered a consequence of incompetent governance. Thus, information about Boko Haram activities does not always reach people in Nigeria quickly. In Nigeria, it is clear that the government and security forces do not exchange information adequately. Boko Haram, on the other hand, releases information gradually to chosen media only, and it intentionally creates an impression of a mysterious organization.

There is no denying that the state opposes radical Islam through violence, which further intensifies the tensions that already exist in society. The question is whether, there is an objective point of view of an organization such as Boko Haram, since it is constantly presented in the light of terrorism. The people of Nigeria are under a somewhat weaker influence of the foreign media, given that they can directly see the conflicts taking place around them. However, it is debatable whether such a situation provides the right picture.

A research showed that the primary reasons why individuals join Boko Haram are the following (Botha and Abdile 2020):

- the revenge,
- the need to be respected and feared,
- need to belong and
- poverty or lack of money.



More than one half, or precisely 57% of former Boko Haram members named the desire for revenge as the main reason to join the group. Boko haram members want their revenge on military, which is often described as "brutal, merciless, and pitiless" by the current and potential members of the organization (Botha and Abdile 2020). Along with this desire, people of Nigeria who are religious to an extreme, believe that they can gain justice through Boko haram, which means that the organization brings hope to its fighters.

The same research shows that young people usually join Boko Haram with the support of friends and family, so that the recruiters are people they already know. As many as 60% of members joined the organization through someone close to them. On the other side, only 27% of fighters are introduced to the organization at mosques or madrassas, and this percentage has been declining since the incident on 9/11 known as September 11 attacks, that took place in 2001 (Botha and Abdile 2020).

Based on the above, it can be concluded that people who practice Islam in Nigeria often perceive the Boko Haram organization as a source of hope and a movement that can change the future for the better. However, the same cannot be said for Christians in Nigeria, especially not those in power. They are more concerned and fearful, as they see this group as a threat. Furthermore, they show determination to stand in the way of Boko Haram activities. In this regard, it should be emphasized that the President of Nigeria, a Muslim supported by Christian leaders, emphasizes that the activities of Boko Haram should not be treated as acts of religious war but as individual terrorist attacks, so that the nation must not be divided but rather act united in the fight against violence.

It is clear that the views on Boko Haram differ between the north and the south of the country, that is, between Christians and Muslims. There is an ethnically and religiously divided society in Nigeria, resulting in constant conflicts and an inability to establish peace. What makes Nigeria unique among numerous cases of religious conflicts around the world is that society is almost evenly divided in terms of religion, and neither Christianity nor Islam are the religions of a

minority in society – which is often a case in other countries where there is a religious conflict going on – but the religions that are followed by almost half of the total population.

Deadly attacks carried out by the organization for one part of the population represent hope for a better future and justice, while for others they represent a nightmare and fear they face every day and a threat they should prevent. It remains an open question to what extent the government and the media manage to shape the narrative of the Boko Haram organization and to manage public opinion.

### **3. Portrayal of Nigeria in the Western media**

It is an indisputable fact that the media transmit their influence to broad social strata regardless of the country in which they live; therein lies their main power. Because of that, the perception of observation of some countries can be changed depending on how it is presented in the media. That is the main reason why governments of countries are struggling to achieve hegemony and rule over the media. Media management is considered to be a constructive way of governing the state, so it is no coincidence that almost every country tries to take control over media influence. The forthcoming thesis will be focused on the portrayal of Nigeria in the Western media by relying on some media platforms which have the biggest reach of the population – BBC, CNN, and The Guardian.

#### **3.1 Nigeria in the Media**

It is certain that the study of western media is not a rare case, so researchers were often interested in what kind of image of a phenomenon is created in that type of media. For the most part, it can be said that it is interesting how some countries of the African continent are presented. In this case, the light will be shed on the Nigerian characterization of the country in western-based media.

It can be pointed out that African countries have been neglected in the Western media (Weaver and Evans 1984) which means that a distorted picture of objective reality was often presented. Some main reasons for the situation may be inequality in information distribution, technology development, or economic inequality. That led to the international project named “New World Information and Communication Order” which was established by some developing countries in order to distribute information among countries that have a different level of development. Forasmuch that Third World countries were portrayed as victims of imperialism, a special image of them was shown in Western media (Bharthur 2018). Those countries have been dissatisfied with that situation for decades, and that was the main reason for the formation of the mentioned project which will eliminate inequality in information sharing (Adegbola, Skarda-Mitchell and Gearhart 2018). Third world countries had sought to reduce inequalities in the dissemination of information. Countries from the African continent associated with UNESCO listed the key problems they expect to be solved in perspective (Oluwakemi 2017):

- Inequality in sharing information between the Western and the African countries;
- The shown image of African countries is full of stereotypes and negative attitudes about African citizen;
- Building cultural imperialism by presenting a glorified perspective of the Western, cultural values, rulers, and countries;
- Inequality in financial and technological distribution;
- A set of information is being controlled by top media agencies in the world; most of them are from Western countries.
- Most of the attention is on the negative news coming from African countries.

It is evident why Third world countries have reasons to complain about the way they are represented in the Western media. It is not just the fact that journalists create a negative image of these countries, but such an image is also being created among the broad social strata in the West. There are many things which are avoided when writing about Africa: "ordinary domestic scenes, love between Africans (unless a death is involved), references to African writers or intellectuals, mention of school-going children who are not suffering from yaws or Ebola fever

or female genital mutilation’’ (Binyavanga 2005, 93). The characterization of African citizens is notably interesting which makes an impact on generalizing people from Africa. They are seen as terrorists, or with no basic means of subsistence, children are considered as future delinquents, etc. This is just another piece of evidence that almost every journalist who is writing for Western media proclaim information about African people as marginalized ones. However, even with intensive efforts to reduce inequalities in information sharing; there has still been an disparity in spreading information between African countries and the West (Wasserman 2015). The African continent prospects in a pessimistic way because it is considered to be ineffectual to overcome difficulties in terms of poverty, disease, and underdevelopment (Nothias 2012), this concept is well-known as an Afro-pessimism.

Some researches show that there is an extremely negative attitude towards media reporting about African countries. One of the researches refers to the television coverage of Nigeria, as a country with the most numerous population and the largest economy (Adegbola, Skarda-Mitchell and Gearhart 2018). Exploration was conducted on 643 respondents in two typical periods: 2005-2009; and 2010-2014. Respondents had been interrogated about personal opinions and attitudes about African countries. The results of a study revealed that the media created a negative point of view about the African population. Based on the created pessimistic perspective of the African continent, the image of other countries is generalized and now no distinction is made between countries.

Lack of newspaper reports about African countries gives the impression that those are not important enough to find themselves in Western journals (Golan 2008). Even current narratives about African countries that are presented in the newspapers are also negative. They give the impression that countries are prone to constant warfare, disease, famine, underdevelopment, and unwillingness to step into another developed world (Oluwakemi 2017). The small amount of information places in the Western media leads readers to gain a stereotypical opinion about African citizens and countries. Whether or not they have intentions, Western journalists tend to focus only on the negative aspect of reporting on Africa. By following and reading the content that can be found in journals and on television, readers have no choice but to believe in what can

be found in the given content. This violates many articles of the Declaration on Mass Media (1978), starting from its title. If the highest aim of the Declaration is to reduce any possibility of spreading information through the media that incites racism, hatred, or war (Declaration on Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International Understanding 1987); then there must be competent authorities that will regulate compliance with the declaration.

There is a study that testifies that the inhabitants of Nigeria are people who belong to terrorism (Asogwa, Iyere and Attah 2012). The specific situation describes an incidence when a 23-year-old man from Nigeria assayed to bomb an American airplane. That was just one more reason for the satanization of Nigerian citizens in the Western media. The western people were expected to gain that way of thinking given that they were portrayed as victims of the Nigerian terrorist attack. After all, this is not the only time this happened, many terrorist attacks are linked to Africa, although they do not originate from there. All of this is closely connected to the Boko Haram organization which is perceived as synonymous with terrorism. In the forthcoming part, there will be more reviews about the way of presenting the organization in the Western media.

### **3.2 Boko Haram in the Media**

It turns out that in the last few years, the perception of Nigeria in the media has become increasingly negative due to the notorious Boko Haram group. This terrorist organization has become the first association with Nigeria not only on the Western media but in the whole world. There is a study that indoctrinates how does the portrayal of Nigeria appear in media as a consequence of frequent terrorist activities carried out by Boko Haram (Ezeah and Emmanuel 2016). Specifically, the study focuses on how this organization is presented in the media like BBC and Al Jazeera. Based on articles from these newspapers, Nigeria's coverage in West media is described as the country where terrorism is most developed in the world. The study also reveals that BBC more often describes Boko Haram as a terrorist group that organizes mass murders, suicides, bombing, extremism and vandalism. As a culmination, Nigeria has to deal with the negative portrayal of itself in the media, and with terrorism which had expanded its

activities in the given country. It is necessary to further study how terrorist activities are presented in the media. The distinction has to be made; whether terrorist activities are becoming the result of globalization or the blame is on one specific country. In that case, by reading BBC, CNN, or some other Western newspapers, an insight can be gained about Nigeria as a terrorist country (Gerhards and Schäfer 2013).

There are authors who believe that a country's media coverage depends on its political and national context (Gerhards and Schäfer 2013). So it is characteristic for highly developed countries that those will be reported by media in a positive spirit. Therewithal, underdeveloped countries are facing struggles on multiple levels, because they have to deal with increasingly negative coverage of themselves.

In the eponymous study it was discovered that there are similarities and differences in terms of reporting in the mentioned media. In terms of similarities, almost all media outlets reported on terrorist attack in a similar way and to the same extend. If we take into account all the reported attacks committed by terrorist organizations, there were more than 2.500 attacks in a ten year period (Gerhards and Schäfer 2013). Focusing on the big four attacks which occupied London, Madrid, Sharm El Sheikh and Amman; the coverage of them by Western media shows following data (Gerhards and Schäfer 2013):

Table 1: Number of days which the attacks were covered by CNN and BBC

	CNN	BBC
London	6	7
Madrid	6	6
Amman	6	3
Sharm El Sheikh	3	4

Source: Cited and modified from: Gerhards and Schäfer, 2013

In the previous table, it is shown how many days people have had an opportunity to read about terrorist attacks in mentioned newspapers. There is a close similarity in numbers depictions of the same events. Analyzing the articles, it can also be noticed the similarity in expression of fear, hatred, and racism by writing about attacks. For example, commonly used words in almost every article were about crime, brutality, hatred, civilians as victims, vandalism, racism, etc. Primarily, the Western is shown as victims, and all the hatred is being transformed into a terrorist organization whose head office was based in African countries. Leaving aside uniformities that were described in the former text, the light can be shed on the differentiation between manners of reporting. There is conceptual contradistinction of reporting on attacks (Reese and Lewis 2009). One side of media which is CNN writes about conflicts as a result of geopolitical disputes. Geopolitical disagreements date back to the past and do not seem to tend to diminish. Terrorist attacks which were carried out by The Boko Haram group, make further rooting in extremism, racism, and hatred which are reflected in African counties, especially Nigeria.

Notwithstanding the fact is that the victims of the attacks should not be left out, but there is an open question about the different treatment of them in the media (Gerhards and Schäfer 2013). For instance, BBC in its articles propagates the severity of the consequences caused by the attacks; and less attention is on victims as individuals. The Guardian writes about objective facts about the attack, but points out that the attack was launched with the intention of destroying London without caring about the people; their skin colour, social affiliation or religiosity (Cowan and Muir 2005). It can be concluded that this journal indicates that the attack was aimed at people in order to make them even more victimized. Substantially, these attacks are being generalized as ‘‘Muslim’’ so they are automatically identified with the Muslim population (Gerhards and Schäfer 2013).

The question of the connection between the media and terrorism is intriguing. The reader may be thinking about whether the media in any way incites terrorism, or whether they help it to carry out its inhumane activities? This topic can be considered not only by experts but also by the

general public, given that readers are members of different social strata and degree of education. One study cites: "The faceless "leaders" of Boko Haram recently sent messages to some media houses in Nigeria listing the names of highly placed personalities that they would kill. The broadcast of such names has sent some fears in the minds of those concerned and the general public" (Asogwa, Iyere and Attah 2012, 178). This is the method terrorist organization communicates with the general public and transmits intended messages, and also a strategy of intimidating people. However, it appears to be the media as a helping hand to the terrorist group in spreading the message. If the media did not report on the attacks and intentions of the terrorist group, readers would not know about them, so the intimidation would have been at a lower level. It may be possible that in this way the significance of the activities of terrorist groups would be diminished. The mass media around the world cover every step of terrorist activities, so fear will certainly spread among the people. Over and above, these groups have this in mind so they know when to use and provoke the media to undertake its activities.

The period of globalization announced new methods of communication which are reflected in the extremely fast spread of information (Asogwa, Iyere and Attah 2012). One of the goals of terrorist groups is to provoke fear among people and those to whom the message is addressed directly. By reason of globalization, the message they send is visible in a very short time on all mass media portals and national televisions across the world. Consequently, the media become active participants in the execution of terrorist activities. It is clear that the media should report on the latest international information, but sometimes the consequences should be considered, which is not always the case (White 2020). Most activities that Boko Haram organization wants to publicize are covered in the media, which means that the media are just another tool in spreading fear among the population. Therefore, it is obvious that there is a link between the media and terrorism that causes multiple consequences.

In the following text, there will be listed some headlines from researched journals about the Boko Haram. On the basis of that, it will be concluded how this organization is covered by The Guardian journal over the years, but also how the journal represents Nigeria as a country from which terror originates. The source of all the titles will be the result of personal research.



Table 2: Headlines of The Guardian about Boko Haram over the years

<b>Journal</b>	<b>Headline</b>	<b>Date of article</b>	<b>Link to article</b>
The Guardian	Is Boko Haram Nigeria's Taliban?	31.07.2009.	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2009/jul/31/nigeria-violence-boko-haram">https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2009/jul/31/nigeria-violence-boko-haram</a>
The Guardian	More than 700 inmates escape during attack on Nigerian prison	08.09.2010.	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/sep/08/muslim-extremists-escape-nigeria-prison">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/sep/08/muslim-extremists-escape-nigeria-prison</a>
The Guardian	Muslim sect kills more than 100 in attacks on north-east Nigeria	06.11.2011.	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/nov/06/nigeria-muslim-sect-attacks-death-toll">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/nov/06/nigeria-muslim-sect-attacks-death-toll</a>
The Guardian	Nigerian Islamist group's leader claims to be at war with Christians	11.01.2012.	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jan/11/nigeria-islamists-claims-war-christians">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jan/11/nigeria-islamists-claims-war-christians</a>
The Guardian	Nigeria steps up fight against Islamist extremists	14.05.2013.	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/may/14/nigeria-islamist-extremists">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/may/14/nigeria-islamist-extremists</a>
The Guardian	Attacks by Boko Haram Islamists in Nigeria leaves many dead, say witnesses	03.12.2013	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/03/boko-haram-attack-nigeria-leaves-many-dead">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/03/boko-haram-attack-nigeria-leaves-many-dead</a>
The Guardian	Hundreds march over Nigeria schoolgirl kidnappings	30.04.2014.	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/30/hundreds-march-nigeria-chibok-schoolgirl-kidnappings-boko-haram">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/30/hundreds-march-nigeria-chibok-schoolgirl-kidnappings-boko-haram</a>
The Guardian	Nigerian kidnapped girls shown in Boko Haram footage - video	12.05.2014.	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2014/may/12/nigeria-kidnapped-girls-boko-haram-video">https://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2014/may/12/nigeria-kidnapped-girls-boko-haram-video</a>
The Guardian	Boko Haram's deadliest massacre': 2,000 feared dead in Nigeria	10.01.2015.	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/09/boko-haram-deadliest-massacre-baga-nigeria">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/09/boko-haram-deadliest-massacre-baga-nigeria</a>

The Guardian	Boko Haram: soaring number of children used in suicide attacks says Unicef	12.04.2016.	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/apr/12/children-suicide-attacks-boko-haram-unicef-nigeria">https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/apr/12/children-suicide-attacks-boko-haram-unicef-nigeria</a>
The Guardian	Boko Haram kidnaps 22 girls and woman in north-east Nigeria	01.04.2017.	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/01/boko-haram-kidnaps-22-girls-and-women-in-north-east-nigeria">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/01/boko-haram-kidnaps-22-girls-and-women-in-north-east-nigeria</a>
The Guardian	Boko Haram returns more than 100 schoolgirls kidnapped last month	21.03.2018.	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/21/boko-haram-returns-some-of-the-girls-it-kidnapped-last-month">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/21/boko-haram-returns-some-of-the-girls-it-kidnapped-last-month</a>
The Guardian	Stolen daughters: what happened after #BringBackOurGirls?	22.10.2018.	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2018/oct/22/bring-back-our-girls-documentary-stolen-daughters-kidnapped-boko-haram">https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2018/oct/22/bring-back-our-girls-documentary-stolen-daughters-kidnapped-boko-haram</a>
The Guardian	Boko Haram fighters kill dozens at funeral in Nigeria	29.07.2019.	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/29/dozens-feared-killed-by-suspected-boko-haram-fighters-in-nigeria">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/29/dozens-feared-killed-by-suspected-boko-haram-fighters-in-nigeria</a>
The Guardian	Boko Haram kills 92 Chadian soldiers in seven-hour attack	24.03.2020.	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/24/boko-haram-kills-92-chadian-soldiers-in-seven-hour-attack">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/24/boko-haram-kills-92-chadian-soldiers-in-seven-hour-attack</a>

Source: Author

Having in mind only one title a year published by The Guardian, all the these that have just been listed in the previous text can be corroborated. First of all, it should be emphasized that in the period of researching articles 2009-2020, a difference in the frequency of publishing about this organization can be noticed. In the 2009-2014 period, only a few articles a month have been being published by The Guardian. Just after the mass kidnapping of girls by Boko Haram in 2014, the journal begins to warn the general public more often about the organization. After the event of kidnapping schoolgirls The Guardian has been publishing several dozen articles a month about cruel acts of the terrorist organization. In almost every article, Boko Haram is linked to Nigeria, so it presents the country as a source of violence, mass murder, terrorism, chauvinism, etc. Nigeria is also presented as a country whose government is not capable of taking control and

surrenders to terrorism. It has already been said that previous journals CNN and BBC reported on Boko Haram encouraging racism and religious discrimination by pointing out Muslims as terrorists; The Guardian is not an exception also. Many articles allege that a ‘‘Muslim terrorist’’ organization is committing monstrosities against innocent victims. One cannot expect a different approach to an organization that has instilled fear among people globally. All indications that Nigeria is directly linked to the brutal terrorism which occupies the world seem to be true given the way the country is framed in the mass media.

## **4. How Western media report on Boko Haram**

In the previous part, it was explained how the media represent terrorist organization Boko Haram, and thus on Nigeria as the country in which this organization has developed its establishment the most. To further research, the following text will interpret individual articles from mentioned journals with the aim of getting to know more detailed insight into how the Western media report on Boko Haram. Parts of articles from the given observation period 2009-2020 will be attached and interpreted in order to make a difference in the way of reporting between these three journals.

### **4.1. Events attributed to Boko Haram**

It is not uncommon for deeds to be sometimes attributed to those who did not commit them. That is possible with terrorist organizations because of insufficient knowledge of people about the differences between several world terrorist groups. Common features of all terrorist organizations are atrocities they have committed against humanity. These activities are not the intercession of any religion either of aspiration for independence; those are connected with destroying countries and mass killing of innocent people.

The BBC electronic archive offers articles about the Boko Haram organization from 2017, which is a relatively short period to follow all the deeds they have committed. In the given articles one

can read about only some of the crimes they were responsible for. Most of the articles refer to the mass abduction of the girls in Chibok, as well as with information on the progress of the girls' release. What is known so far about the terrorist organization is that it tries to find various ways to recruit more people to fight on their side. This was also one of the main reasons for the kidnapping of almost 300 girls who will either give birth to potential terrorists or fight in favor Boko Haram group. There is no coincidence that they negotiated for the liberation of the girls in exchange for a certain number of prisoners. The prisoners must have been former members of a terrorist group or were about to become. For the purpose of ensuring expansion from the zone they have occupied, the group has to recruit a larger number of fighters. That aim led them to recruit women either. Due to pretensions of expanding their territory and values, they have to count on more support, but the issue is the way of gaining the support which is by forcedness. In the forthcoming part of the text will be described the crucial events of the Boka Haram terrorist group.

#### **4.1.1. Chibok girls**

An unfortunate event involving the mass kidnapping of about 300 school girls resonated around the world. Almost every newspaper and journal in the world has been reported about it. By investigating, journalists were especially intrigued by the fact that the Nigerian authorities were allegedly notified about Boko Haram's attack on a school in the north-eastern part of Nigeria - Chibok (Castillo 2014). This was one of the moments when world media started to report on this event hourly. Nigeria has unofficially become a country that is ruled by terrorism, and a country where people, especially women are more vulnerable than in other countries. The mass abduction took place on April 14 when Boko Haram troops literally had stolen almost 300 schoolgirls without military resistance (Apuke 2016). The question arises as to how this was possible despite the fact that authorities were informed. Why didn't the government organize military or rescue units? As a justification it is stated that the military forces would not be strong

enough to oppose the Boko Haram organizational troops which are more numerous and equipped with superior weapons.<sup>2</sup>

The general public reacts with contempt to this unfortunate event, blaming the Nigerian government for not reacting in the time needed. CNN reports that the United States and the United Kingdom will support Nigeria in this fight for peace and against terrorism (Castillo 2014). “ (...) six US military advisers from U.S. Africa Command has arrived at the U.S. Embassy in Nigeria, part of a team of experts set to provide expertise on intelligence gathering, hostage negotiation, and counterterrorism tactics. A British team of diplomats, aid workers, and defense officials likewise landed in Nigeria on Friday” (Castillo 2014, 16). The plan was to form special units that will help the locals search for the girls. Local people, parents, and friends of girls have been looking for girls for days, and authorities did not find it necessary to make their efforts. Furthermore, some military officials refused to participate in the search. The biggest problem is that the government of this country is ruled by corruption, nepotism, and other elements that prevent its legitimate functioning.

Months later, there have been several attempts and conversations between the Nigerian government and the leader(s) of Boko Haram about releasing and delivering the girls, but all of those were unsuccessful. The main reason for their abduction is Islamization and preventing them from being educated; also the women would be used in exchange for prisoners who Boko Haram will recruit for its soldiers (BBC 2017). The terrorist organization states that education is synonymous with acquiring Western values, and that is why the girls should not educate themselves. What had been known from leaders of Boko Haram is that girls were forcibly divorced and remarried to organizations' recruiters. The main goal was to reproduce the values that Boko Haram stands for. It has been a long time since no girls have been found; until 2016 when several girls managed to escape and some of them were released after the terrorist group negotiated with the government.

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<sup>2</sup> Amnesty International, Nigeria: Security forces failed to act on warnings about Boko Haram attack hours before the abduction of schoolgirls, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/03/nigeria-abduction-of-schoolgirls-security-forces-failed-to-act-boko-haram/> Accessed: 02.02.2021.

The kidnappings by the organization continued so that in the next few years, to date, several more mass kidnappings have taken place. The Human Rights Watch insists on raising awareness among the general public and reminds them that Nigeria is still not a safe place for women, even after a few years of the first mass abduction (Human Rights Watch 2019). Nonetheless, the media and the general public demand from Nigerian authorities to take action, but it do not seem to be sufficiently independent and capable of countering a terrorist organization. Parents of kidnapped children are in the shackles of helplessness because there is nothing they can do to find their daughters except to wait for the authorities. The key question is for how long will it last?

The Nigerian government must take special measures to get the girls back to their homes. In the meantime, a change of the governing system followed, which was believed to be undertaking some constructive actions to save the girls. Human activism seems to have done more for girls than the entire government. The movement named “Bring our girls back” gathered numerous supporters. The group’s aim was to make pressure on the government and to raise awareness not only among the country but the entire world (The International Crisis Group 2016). The main idea the movement advocated flared up around the world, pressuring the authorities to respond and take steps. Nonetheless, the president announced that negotiations were underway with the Boko Haram group, nothing concrete was done for girls’ liberation. It is considered that in addition to being forcibly remarried, girls were obliged to participate in the activities of the terrorist organization, were raped, and used as human slavery (Taylor 2017). This gives importance not only to the missing girls but also raises awareness of human trafficking and human slavery. The state must strive to ensure the basic human rights which are enshrined in the legal framework of the international organizations. Moreover, the state must grant these rights to its citizens (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2016).

CNN reports that after years of painstaking struggle, most of the girls are liberated (CNN 2017). Through negotiations between the government and the organization, dozens of girls were released over time, and in May 2017, as many as 82 girls were brought back to their homes. This

does not mean that Boko Haram stopped with the kidnappings; neither has it meant that government should put an end to making efforts to combat the violation of basic human rights.

The case of Chibok girls was never fully resolved because not all the girls were returned to their homes, which only allowed this organization to continue with the mass kidnappings. This has only further empowered Boko Haram to carry out its atrocities knowing that no one could stop them; not that the state army could confront them. Almost all global media have been reporting on Chibok abduction that put women's fundamental rights to life and education in question. Boko Haram has increased its power and increased its reputation based on creating fear. Given their notoriety, fewer and fewer fighters joined them so they had to forcibly recruit their potential members. The practice of kidnapping girls was not over; moreover, it is believed that in the last few years a total number of abducted individuals were children and women.

The latest news in 2020 was another mass kidnapping of more than 300 schoolboys, and this scene is very reminiscent of the event already discussed in the previous paragraphs. The act was controversy over whether Boko Haram stood behind the crime because it did not take the blame for it, but the authorities were convinced that the abduction took place in the areas ruled by this terrorist group (BBC 2020). The abduction came to an end just a week after it happened when almost every kid had been brought home.

#### **4.1.2. Female bombers**

As mentioned in the introductory part, in order to acquire new territories, Boka Haram began to recruit women either who have precisely defined roles in the system of a terrorist organization. Being a woman in a terrorist group is only an aggravating circumstance for her as an individual. Besides that the women have to do their duties in a group, they also face violence. After the previously described event, the organization started using women as fighters which caused the crucifixion of women into several demanding levels (Markovic 2019). A particularly frightening fact is that some of the women used in the bombings were under the age of 15, which places them in the age group of children. Most women were used in suicide bombing attacks because

that ensures less death of male warriors. By all means, the war force of Boko Haram is multiplying due to their activities, while on the other hand it is decreasing due to the deaths they cause. „Since 2014, Boko Haram has quickly become a group that has used the female suicide bomber more than any other terrorist group in history’’ (Markovic 2019, 2).

It should be emphasized that Boko Haram was not the first group to invent suicide bomber tactics, but nowadays it uses women the most. Although gender role stereotyping dictates that women are the fairer sex and are not prone to brutality; the case of female bombers states the opposite. The figure 2 is shown the comparison of male and female suicide bomb attacks of the 2011 – 2018 period of time. It is clear that after 2014 female suicide bomb attacks grown because of force recruiting women in the group. The alarming fact is that the number of female attacks is almost equal to mens’ bomb attacks, and in some cases, it’s even larger. Such an indicator is just a sign that Boko Haram is more than successfully implementing tactics that protect male fighters and kill those who are targets. Besides the fact that kidnappings do not exclude young males (BBC 2020), women are becoming greater plunder for this group.

Female terrorists build various roles in these groups, although many of them are peripheral or auxiliary. The role of women in the commission of terrorist acts may seem marginalized, but they have committed crimes that have been equated with mens’ atrocities (Markovic 2019). As the group started to use this tactic, they realized multiple benefits from female bombers (Pearson 2018):

- The fact that women would give up on her life for a terrorist organization has a strong impact on a positive presentation of the group;
- Female suicide bombers are used to prevent the death of men considering that they are in deficit;
- Women can more easily pass through security measures;
- The role of women in the terrorist organization can provoke a reaction of shame in men who are not members of the group, so it could induce men to join them.
- Women are being used to fill the gaps created by the high mortality of men.



One should not omit the fact that many women have joined terrorist organizations on their initiative for reasons such as patriotism, nationalism, extremism, adherence to religion, etc (Spriznak 2000). The primary motivation of a certain number of female fighters was the loss of their closest family members, so they wanted to revenge and fought against opposition forces. It should be underlined that women are generally not voluntarily engaged in these inhuman acts. It was mentioned that they had been abducted and forced to fight on the side of Boko Haram. This cruelty cannot be justified by anything other than by the atrocities committed by the organization to satisfy personal interests. Their goals make the population feel vulnerable and marginalized on their own territory. This means that even areas not controlled by Boko Haram are now insecure and threatening for citizens.

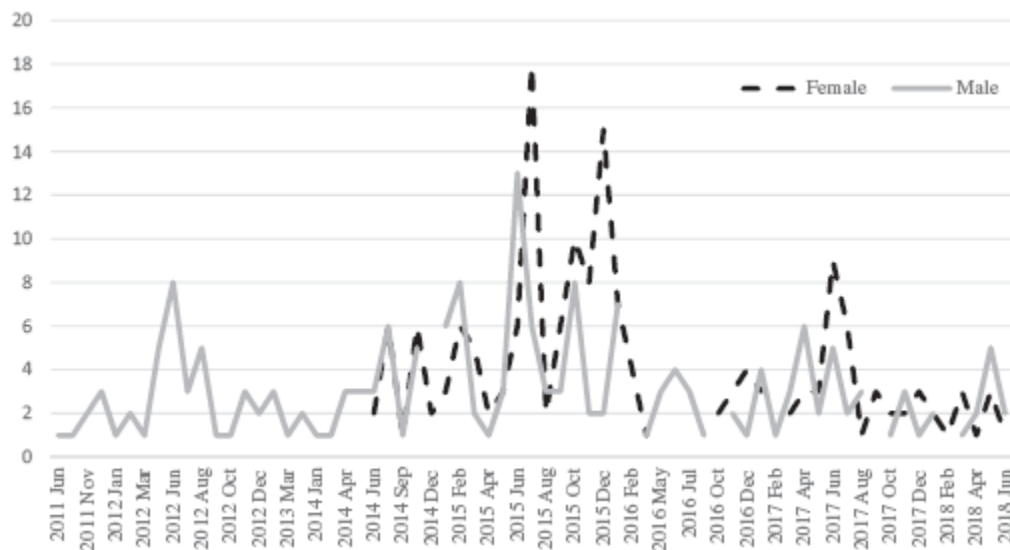


Figure 2: Comparison between male and female suicide bombing for a period 2011-2018  
(Markovic 2019: 13)

There is a study that indicates that women have a couple of roles in the terrorist group Boko Haram (Ola 2020):

- Forced women who did not join the terrorist organization on their initiative. In the previous text was described how women can end up in the group against their will. In

this case, the role of women is marginalized and they do not have any rights in the group;

- Women whose motivation is developed on revolution and have made the decision to become a member on their own. They seem to have become aware of the marginalized position in which society finds themselves, so have decided to join the organization;
- Women who are prone to delinquency or violation. For this reason, they follow some of their inner aspirations such as combativeness against the government or other fractions who disagree with their values and goals, nationalism, extremism, etc;
- ‘Women clientelism’ is a specific group whose motive is based on opposing traditional values that dictate the oppression of social strata, especially women.

The ability to enumerate different roles of women in organizations only suggests that they are becoming more present in those. Each of the above terms testifies to the role of a woman that she carries out in the group, whether it is a voluntary or a forced role. Even when she has voluntarily joined the organization, a woman still have marginalized rights compared to man. The question of why Boko Haram increasingly successful in recruiting women for its members is not a mystery. It has already been emphasized several times why women are important as fighters and suicide bombers, and the socio-economic situation, which will be described in the following part, additionally contributes to these activities (Ola 2020). A society where the socio-economic situation is not favorable for women leads them to turn to sources that make them independent and able to earn money. Most percentage of the poor are women who depend on their husbands or family. Nigerian women are struggling with violence on multiple levels because social and religious norms are more male-minded. Given that there are not many ways to make money, they are facing with an inability to take care of themselves, and also their health and social status have been at stake for decades (Okeke 2000).

The devastating news resonated in February 2016 in media sharing the information of two women committing suicide while simultaneously activating a bomb that killed 58 innocent people (CNN 2016). Knowing that women will be easier to incorporate into society, Boko Haram is increasingly sending them on these suicide missions. This time, two women killed

dozens of people, and it is assumed that they were at the ages of 16 and 18. More surprising is the fact that the youngest girl who committed a suicide attack was only 7 years old. The same CNN report shows a larger number of bomb attacks in the period 2011-2017 done by women – 244 attacks out of total of 338. Knowing that this problem has become insurmountable since 2014, international forces and Western developed countries are sending help and support to Nigeria. Special forces have been fighting on the side of Nigerian citizens against Boko Haram. A similar situation was also reported by The Guardian which announced that the British authorities had been sending special units that included woman soldiers (The Guardian 2018).

All the world media report on social atmosphere characterized by fear, violence, and terrorism in Nigeria, with a special appeal that these inhuman living conditions must be stopped as soon as possible. The question arises, how is it possible that this terrorist organization has expanded its influence so much in certain parts of Nigeria? The initial part of the thesis referred to the origin and development of the Boko Haram organization; then the attention was drawn to the brutal acts that had been committed by the group and the way the acts were presented in the media. The following part of the text will describe the key roles of leaders of the organization. What would be the thing which leaders use to recruit and motivate men and women to fight against humanity? Is it charismatic power, fear, personal aspirations, or something else which led people to join the group?

## **4.2 The Leaders**

The Boko Haram movement was founded as a small organization of young men who wanted a change in society. Mohammad Yusuf, the founder of this movement, had a vision of Nigeria in which Sharia replaces all man-made laws. However, Yusuf was killed by the authorities, and thus this organization only became more brutal in accomplishing its goals. With the new leader, Abubakar Shekau, Boko Haram continued its activities. In 2016, there was a split, where those who support Shekau and those who sided with Yusuf's son, Abu-Musab al-Barnawi, separated. However, Shekau has published videos since the split in which he refers to his people by the original name of the organization - Jamatu Ahlis Sunna Lidawatti wal Jihad.

Between the two prominent leaders of the group Boko Haram, there are several similarities. However, their leadership styles differ significantly due to their characteristics. At the same time, the media tries to create a certain image of both people. Yusuf led the organization when it still did not pose a serious threat, and an image of him as a charismatic Islamic cleric was created. On the other hand, Shekau is at the head of a group that has been carrying out many brutal actions in recent years, and he is presented as the face of terror. A more detailed description of these two personalities will be given below, based on available information about their past, as well as what the media says about them.

#### **4.2.1 Muhammad Yusuf, a charismatic Islamic cleric**

Mohammad Yusuf, the founder and the first leader of Boko haram, was often portrayed as "an opportunist and a religious entrepreneur", who created a large group of supporters of Boko haram and brought donations to grow influential and secure material rewards (Montclos 2014). Given the importance of Muhammad Yusuf as a historical figure, in the text below his personality and life will be described, emphasizing his political activity.

The first leader of Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad was Mohammed Yusuf, who was born on the 29th of January in 1970 in Girgir village in Jakusko, which is today a part of Yobe State in Nigeria. He was 39 years old when he was killed on the 30th of July in 2009. Mohammed was also known as Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf, especially among his followers and people interested in Boko haram's activity. Yusuf was a Nigerian terrorist, who founded Boko Haram in 2002. He had been the group's spiritual leader during those seven years until he was killed in what's known today as the 2009 Boko Haram uprising. Not many photos of Mohammed Yusuf are available on the Internet. In figure 3 there can be seen one that was created during the speech of Mohammed Yusuf in front of cameras.



*Figure 2: Mohammad Yusuf (YouTube 2011)*

Regarding his private life, he is considered to have lived an opulent lifestyle, as he owned property that was multiple times more valuable than the property of an average Nigerian citizen at the time (Boyle 2009). Also, it is a fact that „Nigerian Taliban“, as he's often called, was highly educated in a Western context, notwithstanding the fact that he believed that the concept of a spherical Earth is contrary to Islamic teaching and should be discarded. In addition to that, he rejected Darwinian evolution and the concept of the condensation cycle that creates rain<sup>3</sup> (Boyle 2009). When he died, Yusuf left twelve children he had with his four wives. One of his sons, Abu Musab al-Barnawi, has claimed in an IS video to be the legitimate leader of the organization his father founded, opposing Abubakar Shekau. This conflict led to the group being divided in August 2016 (BBC 2016).

When it comes to Yusuf's schooling, he received a local education (Ostebo 2012). Firstly, his father made him familiar with Islam, which later, after he had developed his own views, made him competent to spread religious awareness and influence others (Barkindo 2017). He is today considered a self-proclaimed Nigerian teacher, whose upbringing could be described as privileged, and who reportedly received a Western education (Anti-Defamation League 2011).

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<sup>3</sup> In an interview for BBC, Yusuf stated: "There are prominent Islamic preachers who have seen and understood that the present Western-style education is mixed with issues that run contrary to our beliefs in Islam" (Boyle 2009).

Nigerian academic Hussain Zakaria stated Yusuf was „graduate educated and very proficient in English" (Boyle 2009), however, his proficiency in English is questionable today since there is not enough evidence to prove this. Notwithstanding his oratorical talents and charisma, he has dropped out of secondary school (Salaam 2013). In order to compensate for this, along with an enthusiasm for the theological study that seems prevalent amongst Northern Nigerian Muslims, he registered for and got a Quranic education in countries such as Chad and Niger (Salaam 2013) (Barkindo 2017), when he became a Salafi. Analysts assume that he adopted radical ideology during the period when he was in these countries (Salaam 2013).

The Islamist Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria (MSSN), formed in 1954, inspired Yusuf to take the initiative to spread the ideas he believed in, and in that way, to make the society better (Ostebo 2012). The analysis of Yusuf's engagement in religious activities, and therefore, his early political activities, can be traced to the 1990s, when he was a member of a Shi'a sect, the Islamic Movement in Nigeria. He was inspired in particular by Ibrahim al Zakzaky, a prominent Muslim preacher who was the head of the abovementioned Nigerian Islamic Movement (Sulaiman 1993). What Yusuf resented was the insufficiently strict observance of Allah's laws and moderate interpretation of the Qur'an in this organization. The main reason for the inconsistency in the application of Islamic principles are the problems that arise in the legislation of the state, where there would be discrimination between Muslims and non-Muslims, which makes the legal system unsustainable. After some period, Yusuf left the movement dissatisfied with their practice, and joined the Jamaatul Tajdid Islam (JTI) in Borno state (Barkindo 2017).

Besides Zakzaky, the Salafi scholar Ja'far Mahmud Adam had a significant influence on young Yusuf. Sheikh Ja'afar later left JTI to form the Salafi organization *Ahl Al-Sunna*, and Yusuf became the leader of its youth wing. Yusuf was seen as the probable successor of Sheikh Ja'afar because of his brilliance. Nonetheless, after meeting Muhammad Ali, he became additionally radicalized, choosing a more stringent, Salafist understanding of Islam (Barkindo 2017), which induced him to establish Jama'at Ahli-Sunnah lid-Da'wati wal-Jihad on these tenets some years later.

In 2002, Yusuf finally embarked on his own ideological pathway, distinctive from mainstream Islamists or Salafis in the country. He founded Boko haram in a village outside of Maiduguri. For the religious and political purposes, there was a religious complex, including a mosque and an Islamic school, where the actions were prepared, and meetings held. Soon many underprivileged Muslim families from across the country, as well as from Niger, Chad, and Cameroon, registered their sons at this school. The organization was interested in more than simply tutoring, therefore the school grew into a recruiting spot for jihadis, and students were becoming militants, whose membership was supposed to be the basis for achieving political goals in terms of creating a state based on Islamic laws.

As a passionate and persuasive speaker, Yusuf managed to motivate a huge number of people in the state, encouraging them to become members of Boko haram. According to Max Weber's theory, Yusuf was a charismatic leader, since he was able to connect with people on a deep level. The difficult conditions in which the population of Nigeria lived provided fertile ground for the spread of the ideas promoted by Yusuf. It was proven in many historical moments that in difficult times, people need hope and faith to manifest in one person, who should lead them from there towards a better future.

Even though the initial actions were aligned with the main idea on which Boko haram was based, during the period of seven years when Yusuf was the leader of Boko haram, some inconsistency was noticed between his preaching and his own material circumstances. Precisely, some signs of selfishness were noticeable in his behavior. That is to say, although he had encouraged his followers to resist the sins of Western civilization, Yusuf himself did not hide that he indulged himself in using technology and driving vehicles produced in the Western countries, which was prohibited by his own teaching. He was seen driving a Mercedes-Benz, using mobile phones, eating imported food, which could make his supporters rethink their loyalty, since they were encouraged to live modest lives, abandoning western products and eating domestic food, such as dates and other cultivated fruit. Still, his group was growing rapidly while he was alive, despite the mentioned signs, and his followers even endeavored to defend their leader's behavior after his death (Salaam 2013).

Before the Boko Haram riots in 2009, not many had known about Muhammad Yusuf. Some indications are suggesting that the police had known him well, as he had been arrested several times previous to the event that started the organization's insurgency (Salaam 2013). At first, the activities of Yusuf's group did not represent a significant threat to the government, so that there were no notable clashes between police and organization. However, the situation has significantly reversed in 2009, during the event explained earlier. In retaliation, mass executions of group members, among which was Yusuf, were carried out by the police after they regained control, resulting in the few surviving members and sympathizers fleeing, some leaving Nigeria altogether. The leader was not hurt badly in this event, and he was captured.

A video posted on YouTube shows Yusuf being interrogated by Nigerian security agents, shortly after his imprisonment (SaharaTV 2009). Not long afterward, the police reported that he had been killed in an attempt to escape, and a frightful picture of his corpse was published in media (Gusau 2009). Several versions of the explanation for the death of Mohammad Yusuf have appeared in the media. At first, the police insisted that he was killed in a shootout with security men, yet a BBC journalist in Maiduguri replied that Yusuf was captured and paraded before journalists with no apparent signs of injuries. A Daily Trust reporter said the corpse outside the state police headquarters had several gunshot wounds. It was discovered later that before he was killed, Yusuf requested that people pray for him to have the mercy of God (Gusau 2009).

#### **4.2.2. Abubakar Shekau, the face of terror**

The image of Yusuf's bullet-riddled body was supposed to intimidate and divide the organisation. However, it continued to exist with a new leader at its head. Still, Boko haram members have regrouped following the new leader - Abubakar Shekau, who was regarded as the most intellectually talented religious individual of the first generation of Ahl al-Sunna li'l-Da'wa wa'l-Jihad (Brigaglia 2013-2014).



Compared to the founder of Boko Haram, Abubakar Shekau or Abu Mohammed Abubakar bin Mohammad al-Sheikawi, which is his full name, is far more direct in his projects and speeches. As he became the leader of the organization, it has turned more towards committing violent activities, somewhat neglecting to educate the population in the same manner as this was done under Yusuf's leadership. Although both leaders have remained a mystery for the world, there is less information available about Shekau's past and present life, which makes his personality even more intriguing. For instance, it is not known when he was born. While some say he could be 35 or 36 years old, others suggest he is over 44. This is proof of the monopoly that Shekau has over information. In other words, if even the precise identity of this man is unknown to the authorities and the public, the videos he occasionally publishes become the only source of information about him.

While Yusuf was seen as a "charismatic Muslim cleric", Shekau is portrayed as a manifestation of brutality and even savageness, which can be noticed in his actions. Unlike Yusuf, Shekau does not possess exceptional oratorical skills, and he impacts his followers through fear and respect rather than inspiration. Still, he does have an extraordinary ideological devotion and cruelty at the same time. Because of that, the members of the group gave him the nickname "Darul Tawheed", which means a "specialist in tawheed", which refers to the Islamic idea of an ideal unity with Allah (BBC 2014).

The analysis of Shekau as a leader should be based on Ingram's extended version of Weber's theory of leadership. Ingram points out four different types of charismatic leaders in Islam societies: secularist, modernist, radical and militant. Shekau would be, in that sense, a militant leader, as militants believe that Islam must supersede all other sorts of government or political systems, and force is an indispensable element of establishing pure Islamic societies (Ingram 2006).

The media represents Shekau as a "fearless loner, a complex, paradoxical man - part-theologian, part-gangster" (BBC 2014). Due to that, the media named him "the Black Bin Laden." A journalist who has dedicated his professional life mainly to the activities of Boko Haram, Ahmed

Salkida, contributed to the creation of Shekau's profile as it is known to the public today. Salkida noticed: "He (Shekau) hardly talks, he is fearless", and that he has "an intense ideological commitment and ruthlessness". In addition to that, Shekau is said to have a "photographic memory" and is "well-versed in theology" (BBC 2014). Moreover, within the organization, Shekau does not interact directly with the group's foot soldiers – instead, he uses his power through a few picked cell leaders, but even their communication is minimal.

However, many of Nigeria's Muslim clerics do not perceive Shekau as a scholar and doubt his perception of Islam. With this presentation of the leader of Boko Haram to the public, it is clear that he has become a symbol of violence and terror in West Africa for a reason. Parts of some of his videos released in May 2014 in which accentuated he enjoys killing people just as much as he "enjoys killing chicken and rams"<sup>4</sup> were broadcasted worldwide on TV news (Brigaglia 2013-2014).

Shekau recorded several videos, through which he has been communicating aggressive messages to the world, declaring most of the crescendo of aggression that has marked the ostensibly unstoppable rise of the organization to worldwide prominence (Brigaglia 2013-2014). In a 15-minute video posted on YouTube, which was allegedly recorded in his shelter in a remote area of northern Cameroon, Abubakar Shekau explained the group's violence against Christians, saying that the core motif was an act of revenge for previous attacks on Muslims, adding that his group would not be destroyed by the government's security forces (Chothia 2012).

While the world watched Shekau address the public via videos on the Internet, the Nigerian media claimed that Shekau was dead and that only an actor hired as Shekau's double addresses the world and threatens Christians. Nigerian military sources have reported that Shekau is dead

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<sup>4</sup> Shekau stated: "I enjoy killing anyone that God commands me to kill - the way I enjoy killing chickens and rams," in the video clip that was released just after Boko Haram had conducted one of its most violent and most lethal onslaughts in Kano, northern Nigeria's largest city, in January 2012, in which more than 180 people were killed (BBC 2014).

several times, yet he has always appeared in another video and sent a new message - not only a direct one but also an indirect message, as he was creating an image of authorities as incompetent deceivers. This fact contributes to the creation of the image of Shekau in public, where he rises above the army, police, and government.

At the same time, the Western media attributed to Shekau that by communicating to the public through these videos, he seeks to create the same atmosphere Osama bin Laden managed to create in the previous years.

Still, the question remains – *who is, in fact, a man who presents himself as the leaders of Boko Haram in the videos?* Is it Abubakar Shekau or a member of the organization that has many resembles Shekau? And also, if it is Shekau, what is known about him? On the other hand, another question arises: Is Shekau dead? If so, who runs the Boko Haram organization? Figure 4 shows two images representing a man who addressed the public as Abubakar Shekau. There is a possibility that these are two different people, however, there is no solid evidence to confirm this statement.



*Figure 3: Abubakar Shekau in videos 2010-2013 (left) and 2013-2014 (right) (Brigaglia 2013-2014)*

One year after Mohammad Yusuf was killed, in 2010, Boko haram attacked a prison in Bauchi state, releasing hundreds of the organization's supporters (Chothia 2012). Shortly after Yusuf was killed, Shekau took over the organization. Besides, he married one of Yusuf's wives and adopted their children. This shows that Shekau is ready to react quickly and make plans for the future of the Boko Haram movement.

Abubakar Shekau remains an enigma to the public. Still, he maintains his presence in the media through the videos he publishes. This way, he manages to make up for what he lacks - he is not a charismatic leader like Yusuf, but he succeeds at efficiently ruling Boko Haram and even expanding it.

### **4.3. Editorials and opinions of the Western “commentariat”**

In the introductory part of the paper, it is emphasized that the research will be done through the prism of the Western media coverage of Boko Haram. All chapters were based on newspaper articles from three media journals that were analyzed, so through similar case studies. After all that has been said, the question arises as to how much the media actually has an impact on Boko Haram through how they present it; also, how they create the public opinion about the organization by reporting in a certain way? The word Western “commentariat” refers to three analyzed media and their perception of the group. For that purpose, there are also some public opinion leaders whose activism will be explained in the next chapter, but this will primarily concentrate on the concretization of the Western media conglomerate as a role of “commentariat”.

One of the main goals of the global media is to raise awareness of international events, giving them certain significance. It is obvious that some media events receive more attention compared

to others; this seems to be the case with Nigeria and Boko Haram. A couple of years after the organization was created, Western journals rose a number of articles for the purpose of ‘‘getting to know’’ a newborn terrorist group (BBC 2016). It seems to have not given enough importance at the first steps of developing the organization, so the world was not aware of the danger it may cause. The violence Nigerian citizen had to face was confined to the territorial boundaries without sufficient engagement of foreign forces to help. The role of media did help in proclaiming information about the cruelty of Boko Haram, but it was covered differently in analyzed media.

For instance, The Guardian has been publishing reports on Boko Haram and Nigeria in such an objective manner compared with the following two. One of the reasons why this opinion was created is the method of reporting on Boko Haram – The Guardian reports are the longest one with a detailed description of events. The thing which is an especially noticeable element in BBC and CNN journals when writing about Boko Haram is favoritism. In most parts of the articles, these two journals seem to blame Nigeria for the violence that is happening in the country. The article headlined ‘‘*Why can’t Nigeria protect its children from Boko Haram*’’ reports about abductions of the terrorist organization, but with a significant dose of guilt directed at Nigeria (CNN 2020). It is certain that the government is most responsible for internal state events, but terrorism has become a global problem that must be stopped by global activities. The title in an article requires an answer to ‘‘*Why Nigeria has not defeated Boko Haram*’’, and again represents Nigeria as an incapable state to face terrorism (BBC 2014).

Boko Haram is presented as an organization that makes people impossible to meet basic living needs and endangers the population in terms of fundamental human rights. The West describes them as a group that despises women’s rights and treats females as slavery that must either reproduce the groups’ values, either die for them. Considering that every kind of education refers to the Western patterns of behavior, it must be forbidden for all social strata, especially for women. The role of women is being marginalized due to their purpose to give birth and bring up children in accordance with national customs. Also, the most important thing is that Boko Haram

requires a process of Islamization that justifies the argument that an Islamic state is emerging within Nigeria.

To this day, one of the largest terrorist organizations has been and will be continuing to destroy the society and economy of a once-wealth country; and none of the international institutions want to help. The Western media zealously reports on the horrific situation in Nigeria, which is thousands of miles away from their motherland. While terrorism exploits the country's resources and destroying Nigeria's prosperity; the West is racing to send more words of support. Special emphasis is placed on *words* because Nigerian citizen has not seen much of aid activities from foreign governments.

The way Boko Haram is framed in the media is brutal and causes fear and unrest. However, an organization like this deserves no less given the weight of the crimes they commit. Millions of citizens who live in the critical territory of Nigeria have long forgotten what it is like to be carefree and live in peace. Families are not safe in their homes; parents cannot protect their children, and the state security authorities cannot defend their citizens. This is a case that requires activities by international governments that must do something to prevent terrorism from widening. Although the media portrays a picture of terrorism happening '*somewhere far away*' other terrorist organizations like ISIS or Al Qaida proved that there are easy ways to make it international. For the time being, Boko Haram operates in the regional territories but it cannot be predicted how much it could expand its power. Instead of the media using subjective narratives and headlines describing Nigeria's inability to fight terrorism, they should appeal to international powerful forces to join troops on the enemy. As long as the media has the potential to influence public opinion, they should use it to encourage others to activism based on international solidarity and peace.

#### 4.4. Western engagement or just “celebrity colonialism”

As Boko Haram carried out more and more terrorist attacks, more people reacted, primarily through social media. It is a fact that events such as the kidnapping of girls in Chibok attracted significant public attention, and many prominent people responded by providing some support. Nevertheless, the question arises: *what is the real nature of that support?*. In other words, is providing support to the terrorized population of Nigeria a genuine effort by the West to protect the vulnerable or just another form of celebrity colonialism?

As the number of celebrities appearing in the media with their views of the situation in Africa and the potential ways to help those in need rises, there is a question whether their intentions are sincere or shallow. The celebrity fascination with Africa is very present in media, but it is obvious that this is not enough. In other words, the efforts of compassionate celebrities to alleviate problems such as poverty and disease in Africa could bring more harm than good. The term “celebrity colonialism” is, therefore, used to illustrate how Western stars can use their publicity for bizarre and unsettling purposes "to leverage public institutions in purportedly “vulnerable” nations" (Clarke 2020).

In 2014 many celebrities joined the call to raise awareness of the terror faced by the population of Nigeria, as well as women around the world, who are deprived of the right to education and freedom. Among them, the then First Lady of the United States, Michelle Obama, who launched the campaign #bringbackourgirls to save the girls, stood out (Eberhardt 2014). In addition, many other celebrities spoke about the problem, including Malala Yousafzai, and Angelina Jolie, who are both activists (BBC 2014).

Although much was said in public about the event, the Western effort and impact, was insignificant. Obama stated Americans would support the Nigerians, but although much was said in public about the event, the western effort - and impact - was minimal. Obama said Americans would help the Nigerians, but the help included not more than giving advice and sending several dozen Air Force men to the area to use drones to find the girls (McKelvey 2016). Non-profit

organizations did send their help to the population of Nigeria, however, that solves the problem only in a very short time.

It is evident that efforts have been focused on verbal support and raising awareness about the right of girls to education. However, it is also possible that some celebrities even exploited the situation. For example, actress Maggie Q posted on her Twitter profile: "I've never wished I was actually NIKITA- till these girls went missing in Nigeria. So frustrating and heartbroken #BringBackOurGirls", recalling the protagonist of the series "Nikita" whose character she plays (Twitter 2014).

Celebrities reacted very quickly to the Chibok girls event, but they stopped talking about this problem very quickly, and the kidnapped girls have been forgotten shortly afterward. Later, some journalists criticized celebrities who started the campaign and gave hope to grieved families and then forgot about them. Public attention and media coverage vanished, leaving the families of the missing girls feeling rejected, not only by the Nigerian government but by the whole world (Sesay 2019) .

What also needs to be noticed is the way in which the girls who managed to escape after being kidnapped, answer the questions in the interviews they give. In particular, the Chibok girls who escaped often glorify the West and Western principles in interviews, which can be interpreted as an attempt by the Western countries to make their impact seem bigger than it was.

However, it remains an indisputable fact that the women who are referred to as „Chibok girls“ now when talking about this event, are women who escaped from Boko Haram soldiers on their own, or girls that were freed thanks to the efforts of the state of Nigeria. So, although many celebrities provided their support virtually, there is no evidence that any influential person was directly involved in the release of the girls.



## **5. Nigerian socioeconomics**

As the world is being developed by social, industrial, and technological instruments, paradoxically it becomes an increasing threat to humanity. Countries direct their resources to achieve economic growth and rise higher on development scales, but thus encourage inequalities in the distribution of wealth and population's vulnerability. Economic and social inequalities can be observed at the national and global levels. In this case the main focus will be on Nigeria as the country facing the catchphrase of 'Africa new economy' and terrorism which is destroying every potential progress. Although Nigeria is presented as an important economic power on the African continent, the economic problems are closely related to terrorism (Imhonopi and Urim 2016). It can be said that one of the crucial reasons for Boko Haram movements is being poor. In addition, the terrorists fight against foreign influence in their homeland, so they are capable of sacrifice lives for it. Fighting poverty and creating it at the same time is the way that terrorists affect the socio economic situation which became established rut.

Forasmuch as globalization is present in all parts of the world, countries like Nigeria do not permit it to affect it. Groups operating in those countries, such as Boko Haram, do not allow Western influential leaders to involve in a given state's decision and exploit their homeland. As the impact of globalization is powerful, they must offer greater resistance. Members of almost any Islamic terrorist organization believe that every kind of education is a way of approaching the West, and Western social values must not be reproduced in their fatherland. A country that is ruled by anarchy, corruption, and poverty, characterized by underdevelopment on many levels is generally a typical example of a country that is commanded by terrorism (Imhonopi and Urim 2016).

The citizens of Nigeria face vulnerability and uncertainty from terrorist attacks. There is almost no sector of the economy that can succeed because of its instability. Therefore, the situation is not enough attractive to foreign investors. The public sector is corrupt and unable to counter terrorism. No one wants to invest in a country that is often bombarded by a terrorist organization that does not allow foreigners to approach. Nigeria's industrial development is seriously

threatened by the activities of organizations that pursue their goals through bloodshed. As a result, The Human Development Index is not in an enviable position. The population cannot make progress if the basic needs are not satisfied. In addition, the unequal distribution of wealth affects the increase in social inequalities. This ranks Nigeria in the 161<sup>st</sup> position out of a total of 189. (Human Development Report 2020). Several HDI indicators are health, education, the composition of resources, inequality, poverty, human security, etc. Compared to the world's HDI, Nigeria is at a poorly level according to almost all indicators.

The following figure 4 represents GDP trends in the 2009-2021 period of time. As it can be seen, the growth rate of this indicator was at an acceptable level in the first two years of observation; but later rates fall drastically to the point that in 2016 and 2020 exceed below the minimum rank.

As mentioned, terrorism is closely related to the economic growth of Nigeria and this figure only validates it. Due to the actions of terrorist forces, GDP is declining which indicates that the state cannot develop its economic resources properly, nor the situation attracts interested investors. From this perspective, it seems that there is no point of return for Nigeria in the coming period and that terrorism threatens to cause even worse indicators. If it wants to maintain itself at a sustainable level and to improve its socio-economic status, Nigeria will have to devise strategies to counter the forces of terrorism.

As the world is being developed by social, industrial, and technological instruments, paradoxically it becomes an increasing threat to humanity. Countries direct their resources to achieve economic growth and rise higher on development scales, but thus encourage inequalities in the distribution of wealth and population's vulnerability. Economic and social inequalities can be observed at the national and global levels. In this case the main focus will be on Nigeria as the country facing the catchphrase of 'Africa new economy' and terrorism which is destroying every potential progress.

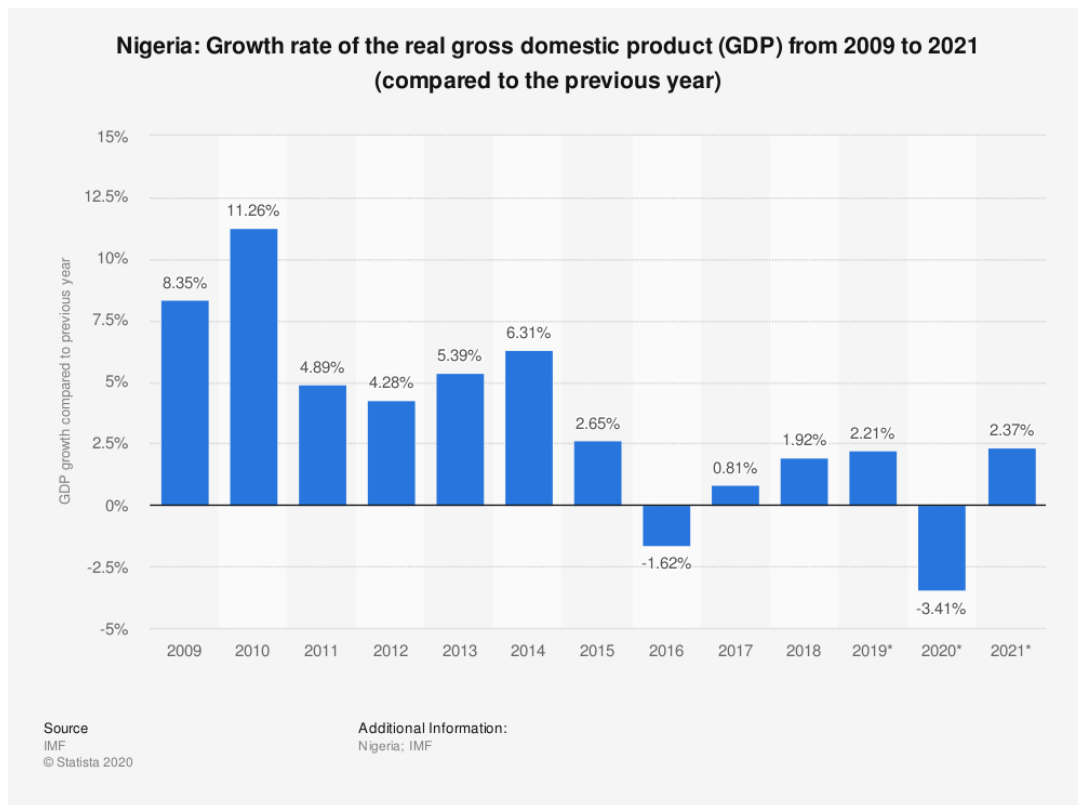


Figure 5: Growth rate the real gross domestic product from 2009 to 2021 (compared to the previous year)

Resource: (Statista 2020)

## 5.2 Economic roots of Boko Haram

The media - both on a local and global level - does not hesitate to describe terrorist events that attract a lot of attention, as was the case with the Chibok girls. However, it often omits elements concerning a broader understanding of terrorism. Specifically, while the activities of the Boko Haram organization are often written about from a distance, at an evident level, the media often does not go to the root of the problem.

Terrorism is often linked to the economic conditions of a community, but it seems that the economic root of Boko Haram's activities has been left out of the media reporting framework. At the beginning of the paper, it was explained how the historical conditions had caused the

emergence of this organization, but as time went on, the organization has changed, which can be related to the existing economic conditions.

Considering the economic root of the problem of the existence and operation of Boko Haram is important in order to stop violence and brutality, since armed conflicts can almost certainly not be a solution, especially not in the long run. As Jeffrey Feltman, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, told the Security Council in his briefing on peace and security in Africa stressed, the Boko Haram crisis must be addressed holistically and beyond “an exclusively security lens” (UN News 2016).

The media deals with the problems that Boko Haram creates for society in different ways. For example, there is strong optimism in the Nigerian media, while other African media mostly place the described event solely in a negative context. Finally, the Western media reports on events in Nigeria from a distance and writes about the necessity of taking action. Such incomplete reporting of events creates a different perception of the problem in public around the world. The problem is, therefore, that the economic root of the crisis is not recognized in the media. However, complete reporting requires greater access to information on Boko Haram organizational and hierarchy structure, the implementation of its tasks, and the members themselves, which is almost impossible to obtain.

In order to shed light on the economic aspect of the cause of the problem that resulted in the emergence of Boko Haram, it would be necessary to consider the economic status of its members. In this regard, it would be necessary to consider whether the members of the group are predominantly employed or unemployed, and from what families they come - whether they come from materially deprived families or not, etc. The organization attracts poor, unemployed people as well as refugees by giving out welfare and shelter, meaning that the most effective weapon in the fight against Boko Haram is the implementation of policies to improve the living standards of the population of Nigeria.

In addition, the (real) level of corruption in Nigeria remains outside the media framework. As pointed out earlier, Nigerian media often report with an unfounded dose of optimism. The reports highlight the plans and efforts of the government and the president of Nigeria to suppress violence and terrorism in the country. It even happened that the authorities declared victory over Boko Haram, and that, in fact, marked only the beginning of brutality. The media reports on what the authorities are telling the people regarding the plans for the fight against terrorism, however, the economic conditions that led to the creation of Boko Haram are not considered in more detail.

Outside media, the government does not show commitment to its responsibility to improve the economy through adequate policies directed towards the improvement of free social services and amenities such as safe roads, potable running water, hospitals with sufficient medicines, schools with satisfactory teaching support, qualified teacher, and other necessities.

The economy of Nigeria is categorized as a middle-income, mixed economy, and emerging market. Some of the industries with the highest growth rates are the manufacturing, financial, service, communications, technology, and entertainment sector (Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 2021). Unemployment is one of the main problems in this economy. In 2011, after Boko haram carried out several attacks and imposed severe financial pressure on the national economy, Nigeria's unemployment rate rose to 23.9 percent contrasted to 21.1 percent in 2010 and 19.7 percent in 2009 – when the country declared a victory against Boko haram, as reported by the National Bureau of Statistics (Akeju and Olanipekun 2015). This economic situation only further undermines the dissatisfaction of the population, which may explain why young people find solace in an organization such as Boko Haram.

Many factors at the same time contributed to the underdevelopment of Nigeria, and thus encouraged the evolution of Boko Haram. However, they are left out of the media framework, so the picture of the situation in Nigeria that the world sees is incomplete. It is a fact that the media cannot have much information about Boko Haram and its activities. On the other hand, Boko Haram seems to use that fact knowingly and does everything it can to keep the situation as it is.

## 6. Conclusion

Former colonial powers still find ways to expand their influence in countries around the world. The Boko Haram organization was established to oppose this. The organization, which was born from the idea that Western education is a sin, has expanded its scope to a broader social sphere, attracting media attention at the local, regional and global levels. Western media have more or less a unanimous standing when it comes to depicting the group and its actions. For the most famous western media, like the Guardian, CNN, BBC or Washington Post, Boko Haram is unquestionably an infamous organization that needs to be defeated ideologically and operationally. Nevertheless, the manner in which framing and advocacy has been done was the central theme of this master thesis.

Corrupt government along with a high degree of social inequality and injustice is a fertile ground for the spread of terrorist ideas, believing that the violent implementation of Allah's laws will help achieving the ultimate goal - living in accordance with Sheria, not Western principles. Although the group's activities have not significantly expanded beyond the borders of Nigeria, media around the world are ready to comment on another large-scale terrorist attack or the group's leader video. Remaining one of the most notorious terrorist organizations in the world, this group has received widespread media coverage. Notwithstanding its unsavory reputation, there have been several attempts to explain the way and the reasons why the group has come into existence, how it carries out attacks, and what political goals it achieves, all under the premise that only by following those prepositions, would it ever be feasible to address the issues of conflict, anti-terroristic actions and propaganda, and prevention of further suffering. However, building a narrative that revolves around criminality and terrorism is a multifaceted task, especially bearing in mind the bias likely to be present concerning the mentioned topics.

In the western media, however, the image of African countries is full of stereotypes and negative attitudes to African citizen. This fact greatly affects the very way Nigeria is presented in media. Namely, it is shown as the country of violence, mass murder, terrorism, chauvinism, and a country whose government is not capable of taking control and surrenders to terrorism. Many

articles allege that a “Muslim terrorist“ organization is committing monstrosities against innocent victims, while the leader of the organization is described as „the face of terror“. All indications that Nigeria is directly linked to the brutal terrorism which occupies the world seem to be true given the way the country is framed in the mass media.

Given the scale of Boko Haram's activities at some point, as well as the degree of media engagement in reporting on those activities, celebrities are expected to react to what is happening. However, that reaction often starts and stops with hashtags, without actual actions. In this regard, the question of the Western “commentariat” and celebrity colonialism arises. It turns out that the world public is not doing much to help the people of Nigeria, and Boko Haram continues to attract new members and funds in various ways.

It is a fact that the media cannot have much information about Boko Haram and its activities. On the other hand, Boko Haram seems to use that fact knowingly and does everything it can to keep the situation as it is. In these circumstances, Nigeria remains a country linked to terrorism and uncontrolled violence, and events such as the kidnapping of Chibok girls intensify this impression, which, combined with passive Western reporting, results in increasing poverty, discontent, and suffering for the Nigerian people.

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