Boko Haram: A Transnational Phenomenon?

Emilie Oftedal

Master's Thesis

The Department of Political Science

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

Spring 2013

II

Boko Haram: A Transnational Phenomenon?

Emilie Oftedal

Master's Thesis

The Department of Political Science

University of Oslo

Spring 2013

Number of words: 36 089

2013

Boko Haram: A Transnational Phenomenon?

Emilie Oftedal

Abstract

Boko Haram has been operating in Nigeria since the beginning of the 2000s and is among the world's most active militant Islamist groups. The fact that Boko Haram mainly conducts attacks within Nigeria has led some observers to analyze the group from a strictly domestic perspective. However, this thesis argues that given the weak states and porous borders in West Africa, the nation state is not the most relevant level of analysis. Rather, this thesis studies Boko Haram from a transnational perspective. Drawing on literature about transnationalism and the regionalization of civil wars, the thesis discusses to what extent Boko Haram should be considered a transnational phenomenon. It identifies the transnational aspects of the group and discusses what role informal cross-border movements, such as transactions of weapons, militants, and resources, have played in the development of Boko Haram.

The analysis shows that although Boko Haram's violence remains contained within Nigeria, it also has some transnational aspects. The most prominent are related to the recruitment of mercenaries and militarized refugees, training in jihadist camps in other countries of the Sahel region, and smuggling of weapons. I argue that these transnational aspects have contributed to strengthening Boko Haram in a number of ways. For example, training abroad is likely to have provided the group with skills and knowledge that enables it to conduct more advanced and deadly attacks. Still, the transnational aspects of Boko Haram should not be exaggerated. The group has conducted only one attack outside Nigeria, and with the exception of some Boko Haram members traveling to Mali, the various forms of transnational transactions discussed in this thesis do not appear to have contributed to spreading instability from Nigeria to other countries in the region.

The transnational aspects of the Boko Haram conflict would have been difficult to identify through a traditional IR state level analysis. This illustrates the importance of applying a framework that focuses not only on nation states and official policy, but also on informal transactions and other types of actors in order to understand African conflicts and security politics.

VI

Acknowledgments

List of Abbreviations

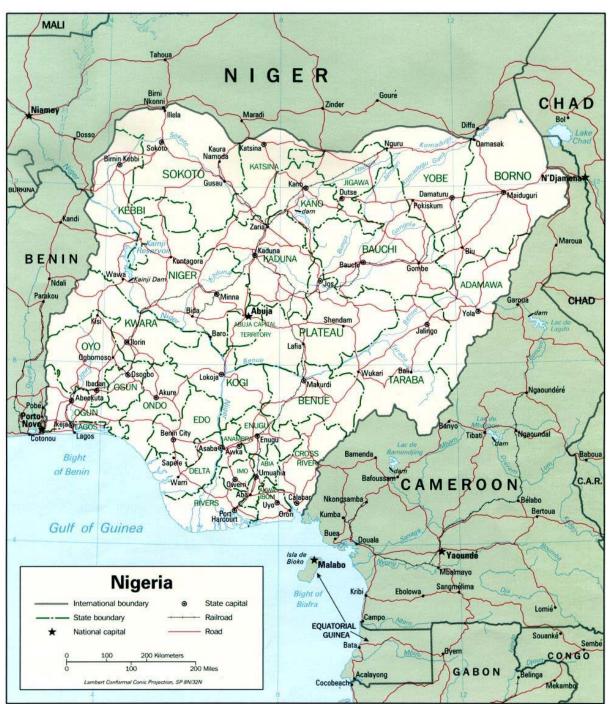|	
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
AFRICOM	Africa Command
AU	African Union
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IR	International Relations
MUJAO	Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa
NCFR	National Commission For Refugees
NCS	Nigerian Customs Service
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PDP	People's Democratic Party
RPG	Rocket Propelled Grenade
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SSS	State Security Services
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNODA	United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs

x

Map of Nigeria

University of Texas Libraries, political map of Nigeria

XII

Contents

1   Introduction

Over the last few years, Nigeria has been hit by several hundred violent terrorist attacks. Most of these attacks have been conducted by the militant Islamist group "Ahl al Sunna li al Da'wa wa al Jihad", popularly known as Boko Haram. The group has been operating in Nigeria since the early 2000s, becoming increasingly active and violent since 2010. Its main declared goals are to overthrow the Nigerian government and institute Islamic law (Sharia) (Walker 2012).

1.1   Why Study Boko Haram?

Since 2010, Boko Haram has killed more than 1000 people, and it is currently among the world's most active militant Islamist groups (AFP June 10, 2012; Global Terrorism Database October 16, 2012). All but one of Boko Haram's attacks have taken place within Nigeria. Nigeria has a population of about 160 million people, who are roughly equally divided between Christians and Muslims. The country is the largest oil producer in Sub-Saharan Africa, and has the continent's second largest economy. Nigeria is also the political and commercial center of the West African region. Hosting the headquarters of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and being the major contributor to its peace-building operations, Nigeria has long been a stabilizing force in the region (Meehan and Speier 2011: 23). The rise of Boko Haram could jeopardize this role and have adverse effects on the security situation in West Africa. While the ethnic tensions, insecurity, violence and political turmoil created by Boko Haram within Nigeria merit attention in itself, Nigeria's dominant role in the region further heightens the importance of the issue.

Despite the severe and increasing threat posed by Boko Haram, the group remains understudied. The academic literature is limited and fragmented, and some of the information it provides is contradictory and unsubstantiated. In addition, the articles that have been written mostly focus on Boko Haram in its national context. They describe how the social, economic and political situation in Nigeria has contributed to the rise of Boko Haram, how the Nigerian authorities have responded to it and how it affects Nigerian society and politics.[1] Given that the conflict is taking place within Nigeria, such an approach is undoubtedly relevant. At the

---

[1] Recently, the possible international connections of Boko Haram have also received some attention. For instance, Jacob Zenn (2013) discusses Boko Haram's relationship with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). However, Boko Haram's ties with other terrorist organizations are only one of several transnational aspects explored in this thesis.

same time, it is important to take into account that the states in West Africa are typically weak, with porous and badly controlled national borders. Ethnic affiliations, trading patterns and other transactions seldom stop at the borders. Accordingly, the nation state may not be the most relevant level of analysis when studying African conflicts (Dokken 2008). Rather, this thesis will study Boko Haram form a transnational perspective.[2]

1.2   Research Question

The goal of this thesis is to identify the transnational aspects of Boko Haram, and analyze their significance for the group's capabilities and reach. The main research question is

To what extent is Boko Haram a transnational phenomenon?

In order to answer this question, the thesis discusses the following sub-questions:

- What are the transnational aspects of Boko Haram?
- To what extent have these transnational aspects contributed to strengthening the group?
- To what extent have these transnational aspects contributed to spreading the instability and conflict generated by Boko Haram from Nigeria to its neighboring countries?

The first of these sub-questions is descriptive, while the latter two are causal. In order to answer the first, I use prior research to identify key transnational aspects of conflict and terrorism, and then assess to what extent each of these aspects are present in the case of Boko Haram. Sub-questions two and three build on the first, and concern how the transnational aspects identified in sub-question one have affected the strength and spread of Boko Haram. I will discuss to what extent the various cross-border transactions (such as movement of people, weapons and natural resources) have been important in enabling or sustaining the rise of Boko Haram, and to what extent such transnational transactions contribute to spreading the instability generated by Boko Haram back to neighboring countries. The phrasing "to what extent" reflects that this is a question of degrees rather than yes or no.

I focus on transnational transactions between Nigeria and its neighboring countries (Chad, Cameroon, Niger and Benin), but draw upon incidents in the wider West African region when relevant. For instance, the ongoing conflict in Mali receives some attention. The time-frame

---

[2] Transnationalism refers to interaction across national borders. For a more detailed definition, see the section 1.3.

for the analysis is from the emergence of Boko Haram in the early 2000s to April 2013. The purpose of the thesis is to study past developments, not to predict if Boko Haram will conduct attacks outside Nigeria (become a transnational threat) in the future.

1.3   Theories and Concepts

To answer the research questions, I will draw upon the concept of transnationalism and theories related to this. According to Checkel (2010), despite the prominence of regionalized civil wars, there is a gap between studies of transnationalism and studies of conflict. Researchers of civil war are increasingly studying the "cross-border dynamics of conflict", but fail to link this to the "now voluminous literature on transnationalism in world politics" (Checkel 2010: 7). Students of transnationalism, on the other hand, have for too long "focused on peaceful transnational dynamics (networks of activists, NGO mobilization), failing to explore how – and indeed, whether – their concepts and mechanisms work in settings where extreme violence is often the norm" (Checkel 2010: 7). One notable exception to this is the work of Karin Dokken, which links the concept of transnationalism to the nature of the state and the dynamics of conflict in Africa. In the book "African Security Politics Redefined" (Dokken 2008), she shows how various transnational transactions contributed to the regionalization of two civil wars in Africa: the Liberian civil war and the civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo. I argue that her approach is also relevant when studying Boko Haram, and this thesis builds on and further develops Dokken's conceptual framework.

Transnational relations have been defined by Keohane and Nye (1972, in Dokken 2008: 47) as "contacts, coalitions and interactions, across state boundaries that are not controlled by the central foreign policy organs of government". The concept of transnationalism thus refers to interactions across national borders that are not formally controlled. Another definition describes transnationalism as "regular interactions across national boundaries when at least one actor is a non-state agent or does no operate on behalf of a national government or an intergovernmental organization" (Risse-Kappen 1995: 3). The latter definition allows for one of the parties in the transaction to be a state, thus recognizing that transnationalism can be a network between a state on the one hand and informal actors on the other (Dokken 2008: 47). Such an understanding seems most appropriate for my purpose, since it allows me to examine not only the informal actors in the Boko Haram conflict, but also the role of the Nigerian (and possibly other) states. This is important as states have been shown to be highly relevant actors

in the transnationalisation of many conflicts in West Africa (see Dokken 2008). When I use the words transnational or transnationalism, I therefore refer to Risse-Kappen's definition and the associated body of theory.

This understanding differs from most terrorism research, where transnationalism is seldom used as an analytical perspective, but rather as a categorization tool to differentiate terrorist groups that operate internationally and are not tied to a particular state from terrorist groups that operate in a specific national territory (Transnational Terrorism, Security, and the Rule of Law 2008: 15). Boko Haram is not a transnational group in the sense of operating internationally, since it focuses on national grievances and targets (see section 4.2). However, violent operations across borders are not the only relevant aspect of transnational conflict. If cross-border transactions were important in enabling or sustaining the rise of Boko Haram, or contribute to spreading instability and conflict generated by the group back to neighboring countries, Boko Haram is still a transnational phenomenon according to the Risse-Kappen definition adopted in this thesis.

The extent of transnational relations is closely linked to the nature of the state, with weak states typically having porous borders, large informal sectors and fewer means of controlling transnational transactions than do strong states. This makes the perspective of transnationalism especially relevant when studying the West African region, where the states typically are weak and neopatrimonial networks relatively strong (Dokken 2008: 46-48).[3]

According to Dokken (2008) there is a close relationship between the phenomenon of transnationalism and the characteristics of conflicts in and between West African states. Due to the informality and lack of official control, transnationalism provides beneficial conditions for criminal and violent interactions. It also ties actors and conflicts together in complex networks of transactions, weaving the countries in the region into one conflict zone. Transnational relations can thus lead to the regionalization of civil wars. More specifically, Dokken identifies five types of transnational transactions that contribute to the regionalization of civil wars: recycling of small arms and light weapons, mercenaries and militarized refugees, "ordinary" refugees, trade in natural resources and personal relationships (see section 2.2 for further details about these aspects).

---

[3] For a definition of neopatrimonialism, as well as more information of how this concept relates to state weakness and transnationalism, see section 2.1.

Since the above aspects have already been identified as central to the transnationalisation of other African conflicts, I take them as a starting point for my analysis of Boko Haram. More specifically, I study each of the aspects in turn, discussing whether there are incidents or arguments within each category that indicate that transnational transactions have contributed to strengthening Boko Haram or spreading its consequences back to neighboring countries. I see this as a useful way to structure the analysis and break the broad concept of transnationalism down into smaller, more concrete elements. However, the above aspects have been identified through studies of civil war. In relation to Boko Haram, it is possible that some of the aspects are less relevant or that other aspects need to be added, since I am not studying a civil war in the traditional sense, but rather a militant Islamist group. The issue of how Dokken's framework can be adopted to my study is further discussed in section 2.2.

1.4   Methodology

Literature studies and semi-structured interviews are the two main methods of data collection for the thesis. Here, I briefly present the main characteristics of these methods, as well as my reasons for choosing them. For a more thorough discussion of the research design, including the main strengths and weaknesses related to reliability and validity, see chapter 3.[4]

Literature studies provide background information on Boko Haram, Nigeria and the West African region, and are useful for getting a general overview of the subjects and relevant prior research. Much government and intelligence information on Boko Haram is confidential, and the literature survey is based on open sources. Since the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001, the academic literature on terrorism and militant Islamism has grown extensively. However, most of this literature concerns the Arab world and the Afghanistan/Pakistan region. In comparison, relatively little has been written about Nigeria and Boko Haram in academic circles. International and Nigerian newspapers therefore provide an important source of information, particularly about specific incidents connecting Boko Haram to the wider region (arrests of foreign nationals in raids on Boko Haram, reports about Boko Haram receiving funding from foreign groups and organizations etc.) I have consulted major Nigerian newspapers, such as Leadership, This Day, The Guardian,

---

[4] Issues of reliability and validity are important when choosing and assessing methodologies. Reliability is a question of the precision and replicability of a study, and refers to the confidence we can place on the measuring instruments to give us the same results when the measurement is repeated on the same object. Validity relates to systematic measurement errors and concerns whether we actually measure the property we intend to measure (King, Keohane and Verba 1994: 25-26).

Vanguard, Daily Trust, PM News, and The Nigerian Tribune, as well as major international media houses such as the BBC, CNN, Le Monde, Al-Jazeera, New York Times, and Washington Post. The literature is mostly in English, but some texts are in Norwegian or French.

Due to the limited availability of secondary sources, I have chosen to supplement the literature study with interviews in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria. Among the main purposes of interviews is to get access to information that is not available elsewhere (Andresen 2006: 138), and this is also my goal. I interview researchers, religious leaders, diplomats and government officials who have followed the development of Boko Haram over time, and who have extensive knowledge about the group, Nigeria and the wider West African region.

I argue that semi-structured interviews are well adapted to the purpose of my research. Semi-structured interviews are interviews were the researcher has a list of questions that he/she asks all the respondents, but the questions are typically broad (without fixed alternatives) and the order of the questions may vary (Bryman 2004: 113). Compared to structured interviews, semi-structured interviews are more flexible and have the advantage that the questions can be general and open-ended. This allows me to follow up on interesting information that is revealed during the interviews, and enables more extensive and in-depth answers (Bryman 2004: 113). That is appropriate since I aim to develop a comprehensive understanding of a single case, rather than broad insights applicable to a number of cases. Unstructured interviews could provide even more flexibility and possibility for informants to elaborate on their own views, but at the cost of reliability, focus, and ability to compare across interviews (Hellevik 2006: 110).

Another advantage of semi-structured interviews is that their dialogue-like form allows me to establish a rapport with the respondents (Leech 2002: 665; Andersen 2006: 137). This is important in order to ensure access to information, since Boko Haram is a contested issue in Nigeria and not everyone will feel comfortable discussing it openly with a complete stranger. In addition, most of the people I interview have higher education and powerful positions, and Aberbach and Rockman (2002: 674) argue that such elites are seldom comfortable with fixed alternatives, but prefer to formulate their own answers. Due to the lack of prior research on Boko Haram, it would also have been difficult to formulate specific, close-ended questions in advance of the interviews (Aberbach and Rockman 2002: 674).

6

1.5   Outline of the Thesis

The thesis consists of six main chapters, with this introduction constituting the first. In the second chapter, I present relevant theories and concepts in more detail. I discuss the theoretical implications of varying state capacity, arguing that the perspective of transnationalism is especially relevant when states are weak. I thereafter present the concept of transnationalism and identify aspects of transnationalism that are particularly relevant when studying conflicts. These include recycling of small arms and light weapons, recruitment of mercenaries, militarized refugees and foreign fighters, "ordinary" refugees, trade in natural resources, personal relationships, training and funding. The third chapter presents the methodological framework of the study in more detail, with emphasis on issues of reliability and validity. The fourth chapter contains background information on Nigeria and Boko Haram, describing the history and characteristics of the Nigerian state and the emergence and evolution of Boko Haram. The fifth chapter constitutes the main part of the thesis. Here, I discuss the transnational aspects of Boko Haram. The analysis is structured according to the seven aspects mentioned above and described in more detail in section 2.2. I study each of the aspects in turn, identifying incidents within each category which may have contributed to enabling the rise of Boko Haram or spreading the instability created by Boko Haram to neighboring countries. The thesis concludes with a summary of the main findings and a discussion of to what extent the various aspects, when taken together, warrant an understanding of Boko Haram as a transnational phenomenon.

2   Theories and Concepts

This chapter lays out the theoretical foundation of the thesis. In the first section (2.1), I argue that the assumptions about rational, unitary states that dominate in classical international relations (IR) theories are difficult to sustain when studying conflict in weak, neopatrimonial African states. The perspective of transnationalism, in contrast, is particularly relevant in contexts were state institutions are fragmented and unstable. In the second section (2.2), I therefore elaborate on the concept of transnationalism, and present the aspects that are most important when applying the concept to violent conflict.

2.1   Characteristics of the African State: Theoretical Implications

"To understand African security politics and all the challenges involved, we need to understand the characteristics of the African state" (Dokken 2008: 27).

The way a state is built up and functions has important consequences for the way it relates to groups both within and outside its own territory. A weak or fragile state faces security challenges different to those of a strong state, and has different, more limited means to tackle those challenges. This has important theoretical implications for the study of security politics and conflict dynamics in and between African states.

The classical schools in international relations (IR), realism and liberalism, are largely based on the experiences of European countries and take the Westphalian state as their main unit of analysis (Dokken 2008: 23-24). The concept of the Westphalian state has its roots in the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, which established the European system of states and designated state sovereignty as the primary constitutive principle of political organization (Lapid 2001: 24). The understanding of the state in the classical IR theories is also highly influenced by Max Weber (Dokken 2008: 24). Weber defined the state as "a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of use of legitimate force within a given territory" (Weber 1946, in Fukuyama 2005: 8). Building on these concepts, the classical IR theories see the sovereign nation state as an important factor in international relations. This is particularly true of realism, where rational, unitary states are typically seen as the major actors, and providing security for the citizens from external threats is seen as the *raison d'être* of the state (Mansbach and Wilmer 2001: 51). Within the liberal school of thought, ideas, international institutions and economic interests receive more attention, but in most works the

understanding of the state remains within the Westphalian/Weberian framework (Agnew 1994: 56-58).[5]

However, most African states do not fit the characteristics of a rational Weberian state. Often, they do not have monopoly of violence or complete control of their territory, and many struggle to provide basic services and security to citizens in parts of the country. State institutions are often fragmented, with a variety of actors with different interests struggling for control over the state apparatus. Threats to the state are frequently internal rather than external, and come in the form of rebel groups, terrorists and civil war (Dokken 2008: 24; Thomas and Allen 2000: 198). In addition, there is often a lack of national unity and common identity, culture, language and religion. Consequently, the classical IR theories' assumption of unitary, sovereign states appears ill-suited to the realities of most African states.

In contrast, the perspective of transnationalism is especially relevant in contexts where states are weak, failed or even collapsed. As mentioned in the introduction, this is because the weakness of the state makes borders porous, increasing the opportunities for informal and illegal interactions across national boundaries. A strong state normally has many means at their disposal to restrict the negative aspects of transnationalism (smuggling of weapons and natural resources, illegal immigration etc.), for example through border controls, customs, visas, and export licenses. Weaker states usually have fewer such means at their disposal and facilitate the growth of informal networks. When state institutions are fragmented or absent, it is easier for external actors to participate in the informal economy and clandestine networks. More generally, we can say that the ability of a government to control transnational activities is a function of state structure and capacity (Risse-Kappen 1995: 25; Dokken 2008: 47-48).

State structure and capacity has been high on the agenda among scholars and policymakers since the 1990s, but there is little consensus on how to define and measure these concepts. The terms "weak", "fragile", "failing", "failed", and "collapsed" are often used interchangeably to describe African state capacity, but in practice, there is a continuum from weak to collapsed (Dokken 2008: 42). It is according to their performance – "according to the levels of their effective delivery of the most crucial political goods" – that strong states may

---

[5] There are several different strands within each school of thought, and it is important to recognize that differences of emphasis do exist. For instance, sociological liberalism attaches a greater importance to non-state actors than institutional liberalism (Jackson and Sørensen 2003). Also, it is possible to hold the conviction that states are particularly important actors in international relations, and still maintain that transnational actors and transactions affect state interests, policies and inter-state relations (Risse-Kappen 1995: 15). For more detailed presentations of the various strands within the main IR theories, see Jackson and Sørensen (2003).

be distinguished from weak ones, and weak states from failed and collapsed states (Rotberg 2003: 2). Among the political goods states are expected to provide, the most fundamental is human security: to prevent cross-border invasions and loss of territory; to eliminate domestic threats to or attacks upon the national order and social structure; to prevent crime and to enable citizens to resolve their disputes without resorting to arms or other forms of physical coercion. Other desirable political goods may include the provision of welfare services such as schools, health systems, and infrastructure, and basic political freedoms such as the right to participate in the political processes, freedom of expression and assembly (Rotberg 2003: 3). But except from security, there is little consensus on exactly which political goods should be included when assessing state capacity, or how the various goods should be measured and weighted. For the purpose of this thesis, the definitions of Milliken and Krause (2002) are adopted. At one extreme, "collapsed" refers to situations where state institutions disintegrate completely and society dissolve into a battlefield of all against all. At the other end, state weakness is a much more common phenomenon, occurring when a state does not fulfill its basic responsibilities of delivering fundamental public goods: security and public order, legitimate representation and a minimum level of welfare (Milliken and Krause 2002, in Dokken 2008: 42-43).

Lack of state capacity is increasingly seen among politicians and scholars as a major international security challenge. For instance, Francis Fukuyama (2005: xviii) argues that "weak or failed states are the source of many of the world's most serious problems, from poverty to AIDS to terrorism to drugs." However, there is no linear relationship between the degree of state failure and violence. In the case of terrorism, weak states can in fact provide more beneficial environments than collapsed states. Collapsed states present clan conflicts, logistical constraints and risk of Western military intervention, which make setting up a presence difficult for terrorist movements. Conversely, weak states provide "relative stability and basic infrastructure, sovereignty protections, and little concern over the state's ability to police its territory" (Watts, Shapiro and Brown 2007: iii). This enables terrorist movements to take advantage of improved logistics and infrastructure, while simultaneously hiding both from the weak central government and the international community (Buros October 16, 2011). This illustrates that the characteristics of a state has implications not only for which theoretical perspective is most suitable for studying its security politics, but also for the extent and forms of violence likely to emerge in the state.

10

While the formal state structures of African states are often weak, informal regimes can be very strong. Reflecting the centrality of personal networks and "big men", it is common to characterize African states as "neopatrimonial" (Fukyama 2005: 21; Thomas and Allen 2000: 286; Dokken 2008: 37). The term neopatrimonialism was developed and applied to the African state by Eisenstadt (1973), Médard (1982) and others in the 1970s and 1980s. The concept builds on Max Weber's work on various types of authority and denotes the co-existence of two Weberian ideal types of authority: patrimonial and legal-rational. The argument is that despite the existence of formal rational-legal bureaucratic structures, many African states are characterized by people in positions of authority appropriating state resources for personal gain. Political power is used less to perform public service than to acquire wealth and status for the power holder and his network of personal supporters (Bratton and van de Walle 1997, in Thomas and Allen 2000: 286). The fundamental idea behind the concept of neopatrimonialism is thus that formal state institutions are interwoven with informal, particularistic politics. As a result, public affairs are privatized: there is no clear distinction between what constitutes public and private agenda (Médard 1982). This has been used as a framework to explain the underdevelopment and ineffectiveness of many states in Sub-Saharan Africa (Thomas and Allen 2000: 286).[6]

The concept of neopatrimonialism complements the framework of transnationalism, as the combination of strong patrimonial networks with weak formal state institutions creates beneficial conditions for informal transactions and interactions of clandestine, criminal and violent character. In fact, informal transnational transactions may be seen as a cross-border extension of the informal neopatrimonial networks that often dominate within the state (Dokken 2008: 48-49).

Part of the reason for the prominence of state weakness and neopatrimonialism in Africa is that the formal arrangements of statehood were externally introduced or imposed on many African states through colonialism. In most cases, both state borders and state institutions were artificial constructs, and many of the states created by European colonialism were unstable from the very beginning (Thomas and Allen 2000: 198). Boundaries on the continent "have not necessarily been determined by how far these states can extend power. Instead they are largely a reflection of imposed colonial structures, retained as key to state consolidation

---

[6] For more information on neopatrimonialism, see for instance Médard (1982) and Bratton and van de Walle (1997). For criticism of the concept, see Chabal and Daloz (1999) and Pitcher, Moran and Johnston (2009).

by African political elites" (Herbst and Mills 2003: 13). People with diverse ethnicities, religions and languages often found themselves thrown together in a single administrative unit by the colonial powers. There is often a lack of national unity and common identity within the state, and allegiances are often tied to communities and ethnic groups that transcend the artificially constructed boundaries. Consequently, patterns of trade, movement, kinship and loyalties seldom stop at the borders. The prominence of weak states, neopatrimonialism and cross-cutting identities makes transnationalism seem a particularly relevant lens for studying relations of conflict and cooperation within and between African states.[7]

2.2   Transnationalism and Conflict

Over the last few decades, scholars of international relations have increasingly focused on levels of interaction below and above the nation state. In the words of Ong (1999), the "inter" is now thoroughly crisscrossed by the "sub", the "trans", the "intra" and the "supra", both in practice and in the literature. The development towards more academic focus on domestic-international connections has gone through three distinct phases, according to Checkel (2012: 13-14):

The earliest phase is embodied by the work of Keohane and Nye (1972). These authors challenged the realist assumptions about states as the only actors in international politics and got transnationalism on the agenda. However, the concepts and approaches developed in this phase were relatively abstract, and resulted in little empirical research (Risse-Kappen 1995: 7). The second phase began in the 1990s, sparked by end of the Cold War and a renewed interest in non-state actors (Jackson and Sørensen 2003: 129). Scholars now began examining when and under what conditions transnational actors and relations have an effect on domestic policy. In particular, the strength of state institutions was found to an important determinant, as we saw in the previous section (Risse-Kappen 1995; Risse, Ropp and Sikkink 1999). Currently, a third generation of work is disaggregating and questioning some of the key assumptions about transnational actors, such as NGOs, exploring their motivations and why they focus on some issues and not others (Schmitz 2004; Carpenter 2007). In contrast to the earlier research that stressed ideational and normative motivations, this literature shows that

---

[7] Of course, not all African states are weak and fragmented. For instance, a sense of national identity was forged in some countries out of armed struggle against European imperialism (e.g. Algeria and Guinea Bissau), or was promoted with some success by governments following independence (e.g. Tanzania) (Thomas and Allen 2000: 198-199). However, as I argue in section 4.1, Nigeria fits the characteristics of a weak state with strong informal networks and a lack of national unity.

transnational actors are not necessarily benign, but can also be highly strategic and calculating (Checkel 2012: 14). This latest development is significant for our purpose because it entails increased interests and theorization about the negative and illicit aspects of transnationalism.

As discussed in section 1.3, I adopt Risse-Kappen's (1995: 3) definition of transnationalism as "regular interactions across national boundaries when at least one actor is a non-state agent or does not operate on behalf of a national government or an intergovernmental organization". As Risse-Kappen himself notes, this definition is very wide, encompassing almost everything in world politics except state-to-state relations. Transnational capital flows, international trade, communication on global online forums, transnational diffusion of norms and values, human trafficking, and the activities of multi-national corporations and international NGOs are very different phenomena, but they are all covered by the definition (Risse-Kappen 1995: 7-8). To avoid an understanding of transnationalism so wide that it becomes analytically meaningless, I therefore follow Risse-Kappen in adding certain restrictions.

First, I focus mainly on material transactions, that is to say transactions involving the *physical* movement of people or goods across borders, such as drug trafficking, migration, and trade in weapons and natural resources. Transnational transactions of a more abstract nature, such as learning and inspiration, can also contribute to conflict spreading across borders, for example through terrorist movements copying each other's tactics and ideology. Chapter 5 will provide some examples of such immaterial diffusion taking place, but this is not the main focus area of the thesis. However, as discussed in chapter 3 on methods, most ideational diffusion is accompanied by some physical traces, so that by studying the physical transactions one may also get an impression of the spread of ideas and knowledge.

Second, and most importantly, I concentrate on the aspects of transnationalism that are especially relevant in relation to conflict. As mentioned in the introduction, I build on the work of Dokken (2008: 57-67), which identifies five aspects of transnationalism that have been particularly relevant in relation to civil wars in Africa:

1. Recycling of small arms and light weapons: An estimated 4 million illicit weapons were circulating in West Africa at the beginning of this millennium, and light weapons are one of the main features of illicit transnational activity in the region (Dokken 2008: 57). The term "light weapons" describes all conventional weapons that can be carried by an individual combatant or by a light vehicle, including small arms (defined below), bazookas, rocket

propelled grenades, light anti-tank missiles, light mortars, shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles and hand placed landmines. "Small arms" is a sub-category, consisting of automatic weapons up to 20 mm, including sub-machine guns, rifles, and handguns (Louis 1995: 1). According to the United Nation Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA 2012), "Most present-day conflicts are fought mainly with small arms, which are broadly used in inter-state conflict. They are the weapons of choice in civil wars and for terrorism, organized crime and gang warfare." This is because small arms are cheap, light, and easy to conceal and transport – especially when borders are porous. A build-up of small arms alone does not create the conflicts in which they are used, but their excessive accumulation and wide availability aggravates tensions. The violence becomes more lethal and lasts longer, and a sense of insecurity grows, which in turn lead to a greater demand for weapons and formation of new armed groups (UNODA 2012). The war in Libya and the fall of Gaddafi in October 2011 resulted in a new wave of illicit weapons being spread throughout West Africa (Report to the UN Security Council December 2011), making this aspect of transnationalism especially relevant when studying conflicts in the region.

2.   *Mercenaries, militarized refugees and foreign fighters*: Members of rebel groups and participants in violent conflicts often move from one conflict-ridden region to another, serving various groups and causes. Fighters migrating between conflicts make recruitment of experienced militants easier, and are a major cause for regional instability in West Africa (Dokken 2008: 59-60). Dokken focuses on mercenaries and militarized refuges, but in relation to Boko Haram, it is noteworthy that Islamist insurgencies also attract so-called "foreign fighters": unpaid non-citizens who have no ties to the conflict except religious affinity with one of the parties. Since 1980, between 10,000 and 30,000 such fighters have inserted themselves into religious conflicts from Bosnia in the West to the Philippines in the East (Hegghammer 2010: 53, 57-58).

3.   *"Ordinary" refugees:* Human displacement can be both a consequence and a cause of conflict within and among societies. Large numbers of refugees moving across borders have adverse economic impacts on the states were they settle, and may create humanitarian crises and export instability (Dokken 2008: 60). According to Lohrmann (2000: 4), migration affects international security relations at three levels: First, it affects the security agendas of transit and receiving states, as well as of groups within these countries, which may perceive the migration as a threat to economic welfare, social order and political stability. Second, it may

affect the bilateral relations between the states, as migration often creates tensions and can threaten regional stability. Third, migration has effects on the "individual security and dignity of refugees and migrants, which may render them, inter alia, unpredictable actors in international relations" (Lohrmann 2000: 4).

4.   *Trade in natural resources:* "Trade in natural resources is both an element of transnationalism in itself, as well as one of the most important fueling mechanisms for other aspects of transnationalism in West Africa" (Dokken 2008: 61). Dependence on trade in primary commodities such as diamonds, oil and timber has been found to substantially increase the risk of violent conflict in and between countries (Collier 2007: 21). Natural resource abundance can contribute to violent conflict in at least two ways: First, it can be a cause of violence by making the control of a territory or industry worth fighting for, and second, it can sustain violence by covering the expenditures of actors engaged in conflict (Le Billion 2001: 561; Collier 2007: 21, 26).[8]

5.   *Personal relationships:* In line with the neopatrimonial nature of most West African states, personal alliances between central actors of the various states are of considerable importance to the formation of foreign policy in the region. There are several examples of personal ties affecting if, how and on whose side an African state or local militia gets involved in the conflicts of neighboring states (Dokken 2008: 64).

In order to assess to what extent Boko Haram is a transnational phenomenon, I need to break the broad concept of transnationalism into smaller, more easily measurable components, and the above aspects are useful stepping-stones on the way. They provide a conceptual framework for understanding how transnational transactions may have created an enabling environment for the rise of Boko Haram, as well as spreading the effects of Boko Haram back to neighboring countries. However, as mentioned in the introduction, it is entirely possible that there are some distinct sides to the Bok Haram conflict that are not captured by these aspects, particularly since they were developed based on studies of civil wars, while the nature of the Boko Haram conflict is somewhat contested:

---

[8] The observed empirical correlation between conflict and natural resources is often referred to as the conflict-aspect of the "resource curse". In addition, there is an economic aspect, which refers to the observed correlation between an abundance of natural resources and low economic growth in a country. For more about the "resource curse" and its connections to conflict, see for instance Collier (2007).

It is difficult to determine whether Boko Haram is best characterized as an insurgency, a terrorist movement or by some other label. Analysts differ on this issue, with some describing Boko Haram as an insurgent group rooted in local economic and social grievances against the state (Stewart January 26, 2012; Eveslage 2012; Campbell March 21, 2013), whereas others see it as an Islamist terrorist movement (Goodspeed January 6, 2012; Roggio November 30, 2012). By most definitions, terrorism refers to sporadic acts of violence against civilian or symbolic targets in order to create fear and achieve political aims, while an insurgency is characterized by the violence being more direct, its scope and scale wider, and popular support broader (Kiras 2007: 187-189).[9] However, these concepts are hard to define, and in many conflicts the various types of violence overlap. For instance, insurgency movements often use terrorist tactics, and "terrorist violence that escalates to a high level and which includes military targets and incites violent reprisals from the state would be classified as a civil war by many standard definitions" (Sambanis 2008: 181-182). In the case of Boko Haram, further difficulty arises from the fact that the group itself is not a highly structured and consistent organization (Oftedal 2013 forthcoming). There are instances where Boko Haram has resembled an insurgency movement, such as in 2009 when the group lead a popular uprising against the government in several northern Nigerian states (see section 4.2), but there are also examples of more 'classic' terrorist attacks, such as the suicide bombing of the UN headquarters in the Nigerian capital Abuja in July 2011.

As a group operating as part insurgency, part terrorist movement, Boko Haram differs to some extent from the scope and activities of the civil wars that formed the basis for identifying the transnational aspects in Dokken's study. Still, Boko Haram's violence has escalated to a high level, includes military targets and provokes violent reprisals from the state, and would consequently be classified as a civil war by many definitions (Sambanis 2008: 181-182). Moreover, civil war, insurgency and terrorism all fall within the category of "irregular warfare", that is to say violent conflict where at least one party is a non-state actor (Kiras 2007: 187). And although the physical manifestations of the violence vary, the different forms of violence may have certain aspects in common and result from the same underlying causes (Tilly 2003: 4-5; Sambanis 2008: 179). As Tilly (2003: 4) argues:

---

[9] For a thorough review of various academic and legal definitions of terrorism, see Transnational Terrorism, Security, and the Rule of Law (TTSRL) (2008). For a more detailed discussion on the similarities and differences between terrorism and insurgency, see Kiras 2007. For a discussion on similarities and differences between terrorism and civil war, see Sambanis 2008.

16

Although no universal law governs all episodes of collective violence, similar causes in different combinations and settings operate throughout the whole range. Collective violence resembles weather: complicated, changing, and unpredictable in some regards, yet resulting from similar causes variously combined in different times and places.

From a theoretical point of view, there is thus little reason to believe that transnational aspects which have proven central to other cases of irregular warfare in Africa should not be relevant to Boko Haram.

While there is no a priori reason to exclude any aspects, the literature on transnational terrorism provides us with some aspects of transnationalism that are relevant to add. The phenomenon of unpaid foreign fighters motivated by religious beliefs has already been mentioned and classified together with recruitment of mercenaries and militarized refugees (aspect 2). In addition to the five aspects described above, the conceptual framework for this thesis includes two additional types of transnational transactions drawn from the literature on transnational terrorism: training and funding.

6. *Training*: International training camps are an important aspect of transnational terrorism. The skills required to plan and conduct a terrorist attack can range from firing a weapon and driving a truck to constructing improvised explosive devices (IED) or even piloting an airplane. Sometimes these skills can be acquired legally by joining a gun club or attending driver or pilot training, but often they must be learned illicitly, either by trial and error, from online manuals or by attending a training camp (Scott October 4, 2012). Many such training camps are located in the Middle East and Afghanistan-Pakistan region, with camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Afghanistan, and Yemen having trained terrorists traveling in from various countries since the 1970s (Khusrav, Todd and Dongguyu 2013: 709). A sixth aspect in the conceptual framework is thus training in foreign countries.

7. *Funding*: Another aspect that may prove relevant in the case of Boko Haram is foreign funding. From literature on al-Qaeda and other extremist religious groups, we know that such groups often receive financial support from persons and organizations in other countries, in addition to collecting own funds through drug trafficking, kidnappings and other criminal activity (see Gomez 2010; Wittig 2011). Funds are often raised through imams or other religious leaders who divert parts of compulsory charitable donations known as zakat to extremist groups, or through Islamic charities operating in one or more foreign countries (Gomez 2010: 7). For instance, the Al Haramain Islamic Foundation, a worldwide charitable

organization headquartered in Saudi-Arabia, has been accused by the US Treasury of financing the al-Qaeda network, and by the Pakistani police of having contributed approximately 15 million USD to various jihadist groups in Pakistan (Gomez 2010: 9). After money has been collected, they are commonly believed to be moved between countries by hawala, a traditional, trust-based method for transferring funds, or by couriers. These informal methods make it difficult for authorities to monitor, regulate and stop the transfers (Gomez 2010: 15-16). The seventh, and last aspect included in this study is thus funding of terrorist or rebel groups from states, organizations and individuals abroad.

To sum up, I have argued that the weakness of African states entails that transnationalism is an especially relevant lens for studying conflict and security politics on the continent. I elaborated on the concept of transnationalism, and identified seven potential transnational aspects of violent conflict: circulation of small arms and light weapons, mercenaries, militarized refugees and foreign fighters, "ordinary" refugees, trade in natural resources, personal relationships, training and funding. These concepts constitute the framework for the analysis in chapter 5. More specifically, I will discuss which of the transnational aspects are present in the case of Boko Haram, and to what extent they have contributed to strengthening the group or spreading its effects to other countries. But before turning to this analysis, the next chapter describes the data collection in more detail, and discusses the reliability and validity of the study.

3   Methodology

The introduction outlined the main methods of data collection; literature studies and semi-structured interviews, and briefly argued why these are appropriate methods. This chapter further elaborates on the research design of the thesis. Section 3.1 concerns the choice of respondents for the interviews, whereas the main part of the chapter discusses the most important strengths and weaknesses of the research design with a focus on issues of reliability (section 3.2) and validity (section 3.3).

3.1   Respondents

The respondents chosen for the semi-structured interviews include diplomats, academics and religious leaders who have followed the evolution of Boko Haram for some time, as well as people working in relevant international organizations and in the Nigerian government and security forces. They can be characterized as experts or so-called "key informants": people with extensive knowledge on Boko Haram, Nigeria and the West African region (Andersen 2006: 136). They were not chosen to be representative of a population, but because they are the persons most likely to provide the information needed to answer the research questions. All in all, I have conducted interviews with 19 respondents, 16 of whom are based in Nigeria. All respondents have been anonymized due to security concerns (see section 3.2). Appendix 1 contains an overview of the date, place and reference codes for the respondents.

I saw it as highly unlikely, not to mention unsafe, to question members of Boko Haram directly, and I did not try to arrange any such interviews. Being aware of this limitation from the start, I was careful to formulate a research question that could be answered without inside information from group members. Since I focus not on internal group dynamics, but on external transactions that also involve other actors, I have not been dependent on talking to someone within the group itself in order to answer the research question. This is not to deny that such information could have provided new insights and contributed to strengthening my thesis.

The first respondents were identified by looking at the authors of the literature and news articles on Boko Haram, as well as the websites of relevant institutions, such as ECOWAS. The Norwegian ambassador in Abuja also provided me with some useful contacts. Being aware that a primary concern for research based on elite interviews is to *get* the interviews

(Goldstein 2002: 669), I tried making appointments as early as possible. From Norway, I sent potential respondents an e-mail with information about my project and asked for 45-60 minutes interviews, but it was difficult to get replies and to set firm dates for the meetings. I therefore had only three scheduled interviews when I left for Nigeria. However, during the three weeks I spent in Abuja (January-February 2013), I followed up with phone calls and got appointments with most of the people I had contacted from Norway.

While in Nigeria, I also used the snowball method, asking the first respondents to identify other possible respondents. A problem with using the snowball method is that the selection of respondents may be biased because the respondents refer to others with the same background and views as themselves (Tansey 2007: 770). I tried to avoid this by taking more than one respondent as my starting-point, and ensuring that they came from various institutions and organizations. However, most of my initial contacts were people in the international community in Nigeria, and they commonly referred me to other non-Nigerians. This may have led to a biased selection. I nevertheless argue that this is not a major problem, as I also spoke to five Nigerians in various occupations and organizations, and could find no systematic differences between their views and the ones expressed by the diplomats and other international representatives.

3.2   Reliability

Reliability concerns the precision and replicability of a study, and refers to the confidence we can place on the measuring instrument to give us the same results when the measurement is repeated on the same object (King et al. 1994: 25-26).[10] Among the various types of interviews, surveys and structured interviews are considered to have the highest reliability, because they involve a standardized list of questions and little interaction between the researcher and the respondent. One could, at least in theory, replace one researcher with another, and still get the same responses.[11] But as argued in the introduction, this standardization comes at the cost of the flexibility and in-depth answers required to get a

---

[10] One may further distinguish between intra- and inter-reliability. The first concerns whether the same researcher gets the same answer by repeating the same question to the same respondent, whereas the latter concerns whether different researchers get the same answer from the same respondent (Bryman 2004: 111).

[11] In practice, such perfect reliability is not possible when studying humans and social phenomenon: people change, interact and are affected by the first measurement, thus making it improbable that the exact same results will be obtained the second time, even in the absence of random measurement errors (Sumner and Tribe 2006: 114).

20

comprehensive understanding of Boko Haram, thus making structured interviews less suitable for my purpose.

Unstructured interviews are at the other end of the scale: the absence of fixed questions entails great flexibility, but also leads to lower reliability since the data collection is exceedingly dependent on the specific researcher. The questions and focus typically vary considerably between interviews, making comparison difficult and reducing reliability and the possibility to generalize both within and across cases (Hellevik 2006: 110; Bryman 2004: 320-321). That would be problematic in this case, since I aim to say something general on Boko Haram and want to cross-check information from various respondents in order to assess its credibility.

Semi-structured interviews – the method employed here – is located somewhere in between these two extremes, and thus balances my need for flexibility with the aim of reliability. In semi-structured interviews, the list of questions is standardized and enables comparison, but since the sequence of questions is not fixed, there is still considerable room left for the specific researcher to influence the course of the interview (Bryman 2004: 284-285; Andersen 2006: 140). Therefore, this type of interview is well adapted to the purpose of my research, although its reliability is generally not as high as with structured interviews.

The reliability of the research does not only depend on how the data was collected, but also on how the data are used and interpreted. According to King et al. (1994: 51), the most important measure to strengthen the reliability is to "report how the data were created and how we came to possess them", because this makes it possible for other researchers to assess the methodological choices and interpretations. I therefore provide a relatively detailed description of the main methods of data collection and choice of respondents. Also, I document my interview questions, what was said during the interviews and how the answers were interpreted by using a tape recorder and detailed notes. Such documentation makes it possible for other researchers to examine my methodological choices, and thus strengthens the reliability (King et al. 1994: 51; Andersen 2006: 148). To ensure accuracy and minimize the risk of misinterpretation, I have also asked each respondent to review the statements from him/her cited in the thesis before it was published. All direct quotations have been verified in this manner.

Nevertheless, the opportunity to replicate my study is reduced by the fact that I have chosen to anonymize the respondents. This was done to ensure the safety of the informants. Boko Haram has a history of violently attacking its critics, so I had to be careful how I conducted the interviews and handled the information. Ensuring anonymity so that the respondents cannot be identified from the thesis is one important measure in this regard.[12]

In order to ensure high reliability, it is also important to critically assess the contents of the collected data. As Barry (2002: 680) points out, it is not necessarily in the interest of the sources of information to be objective and tell the truth. For instance, in relation to Boko Haram, it may be in the interest of the security officials in the region to exaggerate the extent of contact between various terrorist groups in order to gain international support and funding for intelligence and counter-terrorism policies. As one of the respondents said, "Obviously, the less Boko Haram is considered a problem only for Nigeria, the bigger is the likelihood that other people, including Westerners, will be interested in supporting the Nigerian efforts against Boko Haram" (International Organization 1). Amnesty International (2012: 16) also reports that Nigerian authorities' statements on Boko Haram attacks often contain errors and inconsistencies. The information from Nigerian authorities and other security officials in the region should thus be interpreted with some caution.

Similarly, the statements and videos published by Boko Haram itself have a particular political purpose and should be met with sound skepticism. For instance, publicly overemphasizing its regional connections could be a strategy employed to enhance the group's credentials among radicals and facilitate recruitment and financial support.

As for the news reports, it is problematic that journalists do not always report their sources of information, making it difficult to assess reliability. According to Campbell (April 5, 2013), "The Nigerian press is mostly southern based and frequently misunderstands northern developments. It may betray a general bias against the North." This entails that news reports about Boko Haram, which mostly operates in the North, often contain factual errors and speculations. In addition, some incidents receive little attention in the media because journalists fear reprisals. Boko Haram has issued several threats to journalists, warning them

---

[12] In order to minimize the risk of misuse or identification of the respondents, I have made sure no names are mentioned on the recordings, that the recordings are only accessed by me, and that they will be deleted when the thesis is finished. All respondents were informed of this prior to the interview, and asked to give their consent. In the few cases were respondents did not allow the use of tape recorders, I took detailed notes instead. The project has been reviewed by the Norwegian Social Sciences Data Services (NSD) and approved as being in compliance with the Personal Data Act (Personverloven).

22

to change their reporting or face attack, and has also targeted media houses in bomb attacks. These threats entail that journalists are increasingly unwilling or unable to report news stories about Boko Haram and the security situation in Nigeria (Amnesty International 2012: 15).

Like their journalistic counterparts, the academic articles on Boko Haram often do not cite sources. Until recently, Boko Haram received limited attention among researchers, and there has been little scholarly debate. Many of the journals in which articles on the group have been published are not peer-reviewed, and the quality of the articles varies greatly.

Given these uncertainties, I have been careful to assess all information about Boko Haram critically, and use several sources and methods to cross-check the information (triangulation). For example, I asked several different respondents to confirm facts and background information that I had obtained on Boko Haram from media and academic articles. Likewise, I have compared answers from respondents with those of other respondents, and with information from secondary sources. Nevertheless, the informal and illegal character of violent extremist groups like Boko Haram entails that some of the material is difficult to verify and remains uncertain even after consulting multiple sources and methods.

3.3   Validity

The discussion about validity is structured according to Cook and Campbell's system of validity, and addresses concept, internal, and external validity. This system was developed for quantitative research designs, and also includes a fourth type of validity: statistical validity (Lund 2002: 247). However, statistical inferences are not possible based on the methods employed in this study, and statistical validity is therefore not discussed. According to some, qualitative research should not be assessed based on criteria developed for quantitative methods (see for instance Bryman 2004: 273-276; Sumner and Tribe 2006: 114), but I follow King et al. (1994: 3-4), who argue that all scientific activity rests on the same underlying logic and therefore should be evaluated based on the same criteria.

Concept validity

Concept validity concerns whether one actually measures what one intends to measure. If the operationalized variables cover all aspects of the relevant concept and nothing more, the concept validity can be considered high. Semi-structured interviews are generally seen as a

method that ensures high concept validity, because it relies on questions without fixed response categories and allows the respondents to speak freely. One can thus get a comprehensive answer, capturing more of the relevant concept than if the interview was structured – although this also makes coding and interpretation of the results more complex (Aberbach and Rockman 2002: 674).

In this study, "transnational phenomenon" is a key concept, and how it is operationalized is thus very important for the overall concept validity of the study. Breaking the concept down into several concrete aspects of transnationalism (weapons, mercenaries, training etc.), as mentioned in the introduction and described in more detail in section 2.2, is a good starting-point. However, the various aspects must be broken down into specific questions if they are to be measurable through interviews. Appendix 2 is a copy of my interview guide, and illustrates how this was done. I have formulated the questions to correspond closely to the conceptual framework, with at least one question covering each type of transnational transaction. The close correspondence between theoretical concepts and interview questions was possible because I interviewed elites familiar with applying various analytical perspectives on Boko Haram. If my respondents had been less educated, the questions would probably have had to be even more concrete and specific.

I found it challenging to formulate interview questions that were specific enough to ensure that the respondents touched upon the issues I need information about, without the questions becoming too narrow and leading. Avoiding leading questions is important because they may result in the respondent telling the researcher what he/she believes the researcher wishes to hear, instead of what he/she actually knows, thus reducing both reliability and concept validity. In the end, I opted for first asking a relatively general question (e.g. "Where does Boko Haram get its weapons?"), and followed up with a more specific question (e.g. "Do you know any examples of Boko Haram being directly involved in smuggling of weapons?") only if the issue of transnational connections was not addressed by the respondent in his/her initial response.

An advantage of collecting my own data instead of relying only on secondary sources is that the interview questions can be designed specifically to cover all aspects of transnationalism and no irrelevant aspects, thus ensuring high concept validity. Nevertheless, as discussed in section 2.2., I focus mainly on the physical aspects of transnationalism. It may be argued that this leaves out an important part of the concept of transnationalism: the spread of ideas and

24

values across borders (the immaterial aspects). However, as mentioned in section 2.2, I do include some examples of immaterial diffusion in the analysis in order to illustrate how this may have affected Boko Haram. It is also worth noting that transnational diffusion of ideas and norms rarely happens without any kind of physical contact between the parties taking place simultaneously (people meeting each other, books and DVD's being circulated across borders etc.). If the spread of ideas and values is somewhat correlated with material transactions, the material transactions may stand as proxy for the immaterial ones. Still, the overlap is not perfect, and the growth of internet communication makes it increasingly possible for ideas to spread across borders without any observable physical transactions taking place. Nevertheless, internet use is not as wide-spread in West Africa as in Europe. In Nigeria, only an estimated 30 % of the population used internet as of June 2012 (Internet World Stats 2012).

Internal validity

Internal validity concerns whether the relationship between the variables in the analysis may be interpreted causally (Lund 2002: 106). This thesis assesses whether cross-border transactions have been central to strengthening Boko Haram, and/or in spreading the instability and conflict generated by Boko Haram to neighboring countries. The internal validity of the study is thus a question of whether the types of transactions identified as important transnational aspects of Boko Haram (X), actually have contributed the strengthening or expansion of the group (Y). The causal relationship may be both direct (transactions between Boko Haram and a party in another country) and indirect (transnational transactions creating an enabling environment for Boko Haram activities, for instance if weapons are smuggled into Nigeria by other actors, thus making weapons cheaper and more available for members of Boko Haram).

The problem of attribution is a threat to the internal validity of all non-experimental research designs, but the challenge of controlling for all potential causes appears especially great in a process as complex as the rise of a rebel or terrorist group. If Boko Haram has been strengthened over the years, how can we know that this is in fact due to transnational transactions, and not to other causes left out of the analysis? Experimental designs are normally deemed the best solution to the problem of attribution (Lund 2002: 117), but it is difficult to see how such a method could be employed here. However, studies of a single case

(here: Boko Haram) are considered to have strong internal validity compared to other non-experimental research methods, as they allow in-depth studies of the processes and identification of the causal mechanisms that connects causes to effects (Gerring 2007: 43; George and Bennett 2005: 21-22). In a statistical study of a large number of conflicts, we may identify a correlation between conflict in one state and conflicts in neighboring states, but we have fewer opportunities to assess how or why such a connection exists (Checkel 2012). In contrast, in my study of a single case I can conduct in-depth interviews with key informants in order to follow the diffusion process and understand to what extent various types of transnational transactions actually played a role. Still, it is worth noting that it is impossible to control for all potentially relevant causes in a non-experimental research design, and so there will always be certain uncertainties regarding the causal relation (Skog 2004: 76-77).

External validity

The external validity of a study concerns to what extent it is possible to make non-statistical generalizations to and across individuals, times and places with a reasonable degree of certainty (Lund 2002: 121). In this study, the possibilities and ambitions for generalization are limited. I am not interested in determining what role transnational aspects play in the regionalization of conflicts in general, but rather in examining their role in a specific conflict, namely the Boko Haram uprising. However, I also aim to contribute to theory development by identifying various types of transnational transactions that may be relevant not only Boko Haram, but also certain other types of violence and conflict (see below). The addition of a sixth and seventh type of transnational transactions (training and funding) to Dokken's framework is an example of how my in-depth study of Boko Haram can contribute to further develop the concept of transnationalism applied to conflict.

In general, studies of a single case are considered to have low external validity, because one studies only one or a few units and it is difficult to know how representative they are of the wider universe (Lijphart 1975). There is a trade-off between the detailed and rich explication of one specific case, and parsimony and broad applicability of theories (George and Bennett 2005: 31). Still, it may be argued that some of the transnational aspects identified in this study also apply to certain other forms of conflicts, times and places. Based on the theoretical arguments outlined in chapter 2, it appears probable that transnationalisation of conflict is likely to happen in cases where states and national identities are weak, borders porous and

neopatrimonial networks strong. Also, the argument that civil war, insurgency and terrorism share many characteristics and are often not clearly distinguishable, may lead us to suppose that the transnational aspects identified from this study on Boko Haram is applicable to other types of conflicts that fall within the category of "irregular warfare", that is to say violent conflict where at least one party is a non-state actor (Kiras 2007: 187). Consequently, I argue that the conceptual framework adopted and developed in this thesis may be relevant to other cases of irregular warfare in contexts where states are weak and informal regimes strong. This is what George and Bennett (2005: 31) labels a "contingent generalization": a generalization with a high degree of explanatory richness that applies to well-defined types of cases and is valid only within specified empirical limits.

To sum up, this chapter has discussed the strengths and weaknesses of doing an in-depth case study of Boko Haram with semi-structured interviews and literature studies as the main methods of data collection. The strengths mainly relate to the possibility of capturing unclear and multidimensional concepts such as "transnational phenomenon" (concept validity) and identifying causal mechanisms (internal validity). The main weaknesses are the limited possibilities of generalizing (external and statistical validity), and the somewhat lower reliability compared to more standardized and quantitative methods. These are the classical trade-offs between depth and scope, richness and parsimony, internal and external validity. As Gerring (2005: 49) notes: "Researchers invariably face a choice between knowing more about less or less about more". However, based on the research question as well as considerations of available resources and previous knowledge on the issue, I argue that it is appropriate to prioritize flexibility, depth and comprehensiveness over representativeness and generalization.

4   Background

Before we can discuss the transnational aspects of Boko Haram, we need an understanding of the context in which it operates, as well as certain basic information about the group itself. This chapter therefore provides some relevant background information on Nigeria and Boko Haram.

The first part (section 4.1) discusses Nigerian state capacity. It gives a brief overview of the history of the Nigerian state as well as the main conflicts and challenges facing the state today, and argues that Nigeria can be characterized as a weak state. This is significant for our purpose, since poor governance and limited territorial control create fertile ground both for militant non-state actors such as Boko Haram and for transnational transactions. Having assessed the characteristics of the Nigerian state and the context in which Boko Haram operates, the second part of the chapter (section 4.2) focuses more specifically on Boko Haram itself. It provides a brief overview of the emergence and evolution of the group, as well as its main tactics and objectives.

4.1   Nigeria: Weak but not Collapsing

Boko Haram is only the latest in a series of challenges to the Nigerian state. Since its inception, Nigeria has been plagued with instability, armed uprisings, religious and ethnic tensions and violence – although not as bad as in some other African states, such as Somalia and Sudan (Campbell 2010).

The territory which today constitutes Nigeria has been home to diverse civilizations and empires over the last centuries, but none of these early empires incorporated all the territory of the present state into a single political unit. The Nigerian state was only created in 1914, when the British joined three of their West African protectorates into a single administrative unit and named it Nigeria (Falola 2012). The result was an ethnically, linguistically and religiously diverse country, housing more than 250 different ethnic groups speaking more than 500 different languages (Encyclopedia Britannica 2013). Aware of this diversity and pursuing a policy of "divide and rule", the British in practice continued to rule the northernmost protectorate as an entity separate from the two southern ones. In the North, where the Islamist Sokoto-caliphate had been strong, the British relied on traditional Islamist authorities and banned Christian missionaries. In contrast, a lack of indigenous state structures

made the South more susceptible and suitable for British influence and the adoption of Christianity (Campbell 2010: 3).

Under British rule, northern and southern Nigeria thus developed in different directions. In the North, Islam remained the dominant religion and many of the pre-colonial practices were preserved, whereas the South became predominantly Christian and increasingly part of the British Empire. The more extensive British presence in the South also meant that infrastructure and education became better developed in this area, resulting in relative prosperity compared to the North (Falola 2012).

Nigeria achieved independence from the British in 1960, but this did not mark the end of internal conflict and violence. From 1966 to 1970 the country was torn by civil war, with the southern-based Igbo ethnic group fighting to establish the Republic of Biafra as an independent state in the southeast. From the end of the civil war to 1999, there was a succession of bloody military coups (Falola 2011: xvii-xwiii). During this period, radical religious groups also flourished, and at times came into violent conflict with the ruling elite and other ethnic and religious groups (Human Rights Watch 2012: 22).

Referring to Nigeria's artificially created borders and history of recurring military dictatorships, civil war and ethnic and religious violence, various scholars and politicians have predicted the collapse of the Nigerian state. For instance, one of the most prominent Nigerian independence leaders, Obafemi Awolowo, expressed doubts about the feasibility of preserving Nigeria as one country, and warned that Nigeria was not at nation but "a mere geographic expression" (cited in Campbell 2010: 2). More recently, several Nigerian Senators have warned that Nigeria risks breaking up if Boko Haram is not stopped (see for instance Daily Trust April 19, 2012).

Still, Nigeria is a long way from a collapsed state according to the definition outlined in section 2.1, in which state collapse was characterized as state institutions disintegrating completely and society dissolving into a battlefield of all against all. As John Campbell (2010: 2) notes: "The state of Nigeria has provided a political structure for hundreds of ethnic groups to live together that has endured for fifty years." Following the death in office of General Sani Abacha in 1998, Nigeria underwent a relatively peaceful transition to democracy, and has since remained under civilian rule. Public services and infrastructure reach the majority of the population, albeit more sporadically in the North than in the South

(Encyclopedia Britannica 2013). Nigeria is also the largest oil producer in Africa, and has the continent's second largest economy (Meehan and Speier 2011: 23). The economy has been flourishing, and in 2011, Citigroup predicted that Nigeria would have the highest average GDP growth in the world between 2010 and 2050 (Nigerians Abroad February 25, 2011).

But while there has been high economic growth, the benefits have not been evenly distributed to the population, and poverty remains pervasive. Elections have been held, but reports about fraud and electoral violence are widespread (Human Rights Watch May 17, 2011). In the last few years, Nigeria has often figured among the bottom ten on indexes of governance and state capacity in Africa. For instance, Nigeria is among the ten worst performers in Africa and number 14th in the world on the Failed State Index 2012 (Messner 2012). Likewise, it is numbered 43 of 52 African states in the 2012 Ibrahim Index of African Governance (Mo Ibrahim Foundation 2012: 3).[13] In the following, it is argued that while Nigeria is not a collapsed state, it may be accurately characterized as weak. As we saw in section 2.1, state weakness can be defined as a state not fulfilling its major responsibilities: security and public order, legitimate representation and a minimum level of welfare.

Among the main challenges to security and public order in Nigeria are ethnic and religious violence – most notably in the form of Boko Haram, but there are also many other instances of conflict between various tribes and religious groups. For instance, persecution of Igbos and Christians was an important precursor to the Biafra war (Campbell 2010: 6). More recently, the adoption and implementation of Sharia law in 12 northern states in 2000 led to series of violent conflicts between the Muslim majority and Christian minorities in several northern cities (Human Rights Watch 2012: 23). Much of the violence occurs in the ethnically and religiously diverse "middle belt" of Nigeria. According to Human Rights Watch (January 27, 2011), more than 3,800 people were killed in inter-communal violence in one of these middle states, Plateau State, in the decade between 2000 and 2010.

The ethnic and religious conflicts are often further intensified by the fact that the conflict lines roughly parallel social and economic divides (Walker 2012: 14). Just like under British rule, there is still a stark contrast between the standard of living in the northern and southern parts

---

[13] There are several problems with such indexes, including problems of data collection, a focus on the nation-state whereas areas within each state can be vastly different, and combining data for an entire year while threats to state capacity and security may change much more rapidly. The exact scores should therefore be interpreted carefully. Nevertheless, the rankings provide an indication on how well Nigeria is coping with the variety of pressures with which states must contend.

of the country, with the Hausa-Fulani Muslim North being significantly poorer than the Yoruba and Igbo dominated Christian South (Human Rights Watch 2012).[14] According to a report by the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (2012: 16), 70 % of the population in North-East Nigeria – Boko Haram's traditional stronghold – lives on less than a dollar a day, compared to 50 % in the South-West and 59 % in the South-East. Similarly, female literacy rates range from 23 % in the North-East to more than 79 % in the South (National Population Commission and ICP Marco 2009: 35). Socioeconomic inequalities thus add to the ethnic, religious and regional tensions. According to Morten Bøås (2012: 1), one of the factors that must be included when explaining how Boko Haram could become the deadly and violent terrorist organization it is today is "the inequality between the north and the south of Nigeria and how this may have alienated some of the inhabitants of the north".

Another challenge to security and public order in Nigeria is the conflict in the Niger Delta, where armed insurgency has been going on for several decades. The conflict is rooted in tensions between foreign oil corporations operating in the Niger Delta area and a number of local ethnic groups who argue that the oil extraction pollutes the local environment and does not benefit the local population (Ibeanu 2000: 1). Frustrated with the situation, some groups have taken up violent action, leading to the increasing militarization of the Niger Delta (Ibeanu 2000). The government has used various strategies to quell the violence, including deploying more military and police, establishing a development commission, and granting amnesty to all militants in the Niger Delta, but with only limited success (BBC News August 1, 2012). Various groups have continued to attack petroleum infrastructure, kidnap and kill workers and steal oil. The failure of the Nigerian authorities to gain full control over this strategically important area is another indication that Nigeria is not a strong state.

Yet another challenge to the Nigerian state's monopoly of violence is, of course, Boko Haram itself. Several government advisers have expressed concern that the government has lost control over the security situation in the North and is not able to contain Boko Haram (The Guardian September 25, 2012). Nigerian media also report that public services are deteriorating as civil servants refuse to work in certain areas due to fear of attacks from the group (Nigerian Tribune September 11, 2012). It is likely that the causal arrow points in two

---

[14] It is worth noting that while the north-south division is still an important fault line in Nigerian economy and politics, it is not absolute or all-encompassing. The middle part of Nigeria is ethnically and religiously mixed, and there are portions of southern Nigeria where Muslims are in the majority or are large minorities, just as there are areas in the North where Christians are the majority or a significant minority.

directions here. Not only does Boko Haram contribute to weakening the Nigerian state, but it is also probable that the weak capacity of the Nigerian state has enabled the rise and strengthening of Boko Haram. Limited surveillance and police presence may have allowed the group to hide from the authorities and grow practically unchecked in many areas in the North. Also, the dysfunctions of the state apparatus have probably contributed to making some people more susceptible to Boko Haram's anti-state rhetoric. According to a Nigerian journalist who has reported on the group since its inception and interviewed several of its members,

> Yusuf [the first leader of Boko Haram] would have found it difficult to gain a lot of these people if he was operating in a functional state. But his teachings were easily accepted because the environment, the frustrations, the corruption [and] the injustice made it fertile for his ideology to grow fast, very fast, like wildfire.
>
> (cited in Human Rights Watch 2012: 24)

While the official Nigerian state apparatus is thus weak, informal Nigerian elite networks remain relatively strong. According to John Campbell (2010: xv), "Nigeria is run by competing and cooperating elites supported by their patron-client networks, ethnic interests, big business, and the military." These "big men" rely on personal alliances and focus on personal gain and strategic positioning rather than addressing Nigeria's national problems (Campbell 2010: xvi). As section 5.5 will show, there are even speculations that powerful politicians have been supporting and protecting Boko Haram as a means to win elections and delegitimize the current government (see for instance Okutu April 21, 2012).

Nigeria is a federal republic with 36 states. According to the constitution, the states have considerable autonomy, but the central government controls most of the public revenue. This has focused political struggle excessively on control of the federal government, as the elites of each state compete with each other for shares of the national oil income.[15] As with the rest of the population, the political elite is split along ethnic, religious and regional divides. The north-south divide is a major fault line in the elite competition over positions, power and money (Bøås 2012: 3). The current Nigerian President, Goodluck Jonathan, is a southern-born Christian, and his presidency is seen as illegitimate by many Muslims in the North. Following his election in 2011, protests and violence erupted in several northern states, leaving more than 800 people dead and 65,000 internally displaced (Human Rights Watch May 17, 2011).

---

[15] For more information on Nigerian federalism and its effects on cooperation and conflicts, see Suberu (2001).

Boko Haram both reinforces and exploits these tensions, arguing in its propaganda that the government and security forces are run by corrupt Christians from the South who use their positions to repress and attack innocent Muslims.[16]

To sum up, the Nigerian state faces many challenges to its authority, some of them with historical roots. Most prominently, Nigeria struggles with tensions and violence between various ethnic and religious groups, inability to provide security and basic services to the population in certain areas of the country, and fractionalized ruling elites more preoccupied with personal gain and maintaining their patrimonial support-networks than solving national problems. The limited capacity of the state to control its territory and hold monopoly of violence can be seen as a precursor to the rise of Boko Haram. At the same time, Boko Haram has contributed to further weakening the Nigerian state. Still, the country has held together for more than 50 years and there have been some positive developments. Nigeria is not a collapsed state, but appears to fit the characteristics of a weak state with a strong neopatrimonial regime as outlined in chapter 2. As argued in the same chapter, such a combination will most likely generate informal, transnational relations, thus making the perspective of transnationalism highly relevant when studying the Boko Haram conflict in Nigeria.

4.2   The Emergence and Evolution of Boko Haram

Having assessed the characteristics of the Nigerian state and the context in which Boko Haram operates, this section focuses more specifically on the group itself.

Boko Haram is the popular name of the militant Islamist group Ahl al Sunna li al Da'wa wa al Jihad, which has been operating in the north of Nigeria since the early 2000s. The name Boko Haram can be loosely translated as "Western education/civilization is forbidden". The group unwillingly gained this nickname due to its preaching against Western influence, attending government schools and universities, and having government jobs (Francis 2011).[17]

---

[16] For transcripts of statements in which such accusations are made, see for instance Nairaland Forum (January 28, 2012) and Nairaland Forum (January 12, 2012).
[17] For a thorough discussion of the etymology and possible meanings of Boko Haram, as well as "Ahl al Sunna li al Da'wa wa al Jihad," see Thurston (January 7, 2013).

There are several different accounts of when and how Boko Haram first emerged.[18] The one that is most widespread and detailed, and therefore appears the most plausible, traces the origins of Boko Haram to the northern Nigerian city of Maiduguri. In 2002, a group of radical youths who had worshipped at a local mosque named Alhaji Muhammadu Nidimi declared that the Nigerian Islamic establishment was intolerably corrupt and broke away from the mosque. They set up a separatist community based on strict Islamic principles in the village of Kanama, near the border with Niger. They preached an anti-state ideology and called for other Muslims to withdraw from society and return to a life under "true" Islamic law. Some see this as the beginning of Boko Haram, although that name was not yet in use (Onuoha 2010a). The neighbors dubbed the group "the Nigerian Taliban", though there is no evidence that they had any links to the Taliban or other international jihadists (Onuoha 2010b: 55). In December 2003, the group came into conflict with police, reportedly over a community dispute concerning fishing rights. Subsequent events are unclear; either the group attacked local police stations (Militant Leadership Monitor 2012a), or the army sieged the group's mosque (Walker 2012: 3). Either way, most of the group's members were killed during the conflict, including the leader. In 2004, the survivors returned to Maiduguri and rejoined the youth group originating from the Alhaji Muhammadu Mosque, now led by an Islamic cleric named Mohammed Yusuf. They continued to work for the Islamist cause, and their group eventually became known as Boko Haram (Walker 2012: 3).

In the beginning, Boko Haram was mainly focused upon withdrawal from society. The leader, Mohammed Yusuf, preached against what he saw as the failure of the modern lifestyles of Nigerian Muslims to be truly Islamic. He also criticized the 12 northern states which had recently adopted Sharia for not implementing it properly (Last 2011). He advocated a purer way of Islamic life away from society, and constructed a mosque for the group on land owned by his father-in-law. The mosque was named Ibn Tamiyyah Masjid after a 14th century Islamic scholar. Gradually a community was established around the mosque, with a cabinet, its own religious police and a large farm (Walker 2012: 3). A quiet period followed, as the group focused on recruiting new members and assembling resources (Militant Leadership Monitor 2012a). There were some tensions with the local population, and the group conducted occasional attacks on activities and places it saw as immoral, such as bars and card

---

[18] For a presentation of alternative accounts of Boko Haram's emergence, see Oftedal (2013 forthcoming).

players. Some clashes with the police also occurred, but these were short-lived and never evolved into an organized armed struggle against the state (Bøås 2012: 3).

In 2009, however, Boko Haram came into conflict with the authorities. Reportedly, members of the group who were on their way to a funeral were stopped by the police because they were not wearing motorcycle helmets. They began arguing, and shooting ensued. Several people were injured (Walker 2012: 4). The group then attacked police stations and other government buildings in the northeastern states of Yobe and Bauchi, killing several policemen. They also attacked mosques and churches (Onuoha 2010b: 59). Military responded, and five days of fighting left more than 800 killed, most of them Boko Haram members (Militant Leadership Monitor 2012a). On the fourth day of the crack-down, on July 30th 2009, Boko Haram's leader Mohammed Yusuf was captured. He died in custody shortly after. The police claimed that Yusuf was killed by security forces in a shootout while trying to escape, but Human Rights Watch in Nigeria called for immediate investigation into the killing, labeling it "extrajudicial" and "illegal" (BBC News July 31, 2009).

The death of Yusuf marked the end of the first, relatively calm period of Boko Haram's evolution. The police continued to hunt for Boko Haram members and sympathizers, making arrests and confiscating their property if they had fled. A number of the people who were suspected of supporting Boko Haram disappeared during this period (more than 100, according to a local journalist), but the police denies any involvement in this (Walker 2012: 4). Remaining Boko Haram members fled the area. Little is known about where they went from September 2009 to September 2010, but security sources in Nigeria told Reuters in January 2012 that they had traced a number of Nigerians to insurgent training camps in Algeria during this time period. Other unnamed sources point to Mail, Somalia and Cameroon (Walker 2012: 4). At the time, Boko Haram was widely believed to be extinct (Cook 2011: 4).

However, by September 2010, Boko Haram was back in Nigeria under a new leader, Abubakar Mohammad Shekau, Yusuf's former second in command. In September 2010, the group attacked a prison in Bauchi State and freed about 700 inmates, including about 100 Boko Haram members (Militant Leadership Monitor 2012a). This attack marked the start of a new phase in the evolution of Boko Haram, in which the group's assaults have become more frequent and advanced. From performing only a few attacks a year with small hand weapons and knives before 2009, Boko Haram in this second phase started conducting attacks almost every week. It began using explosives, and from 2011, suicide bombs. The growing

sophistication and frequency of attacks has been paralleled by increased causalities, with the number of people killed in attacks attributed to Boko Haram increasing from more than 100 in 2010 to almost 800 in 2012 (Oftedal 2013 forthcoming). The geographic spread of the attacks has also widened. In the beginning, most of Boko Haram's operations were carried out in the northeastern states of Borno, Yobe, Bauchi and Kano. However, in 2011, the group attacked as far west as Sokoto State, and as far south as the cities of Yola and Abuja (Cook 2011). In February 2013, the group conducted its first (and so far only) attack outside Nigeria, when it kidnapped a French family in northern Cameroon near the border with Nigeria (Bey and Tack February 21, 2013).

It thus appears that Boko Haram has gradually strengthened its capabilities and reach over the past three years. However, the development is not linear. For instance, the group has not claimed responsibility for any suicide attacks in 2013, and the last few months have seen smaller attacks mostly confined to Borno and Yobe State (Cook 2013: 11-12). Nevertheless, there is little doubt that Boko Haram today is stronger and deadlier than when it first emerged under Yusuf.

According to Morten Bøås (2012: 2), whereas Boko Haram in its first phase "focused on a combination of preaching, recruitment and violent resistance against the state, the strategy of Boko Haram II is the spectacular drama of hyper-violence." The trigger cause for this shift appears to have been the killing of Mohammed Yusuf and the emergence of a new, more radical leadership. Additional factors that have been attributed to the persistence and radicalization of Boko Haram include poverty, inequality and political marginalization of the North, support for Boko Haram from discontented politicians who seek to delegitimize the sitting government, excessive use of violence by the security forces and traditions of religious fundamentalism.[19] This thesis explores whether transnational factors and actors may also have played a role in this development.

It is not entirely clear what Boko Haram wants to achieve through its attacks. The group appears not to have issued any major ideological declaration stating its aims or program. However, based on several shorter statements made by the group, media interviews with some prominent leaders and the choice of targets, it is possible to identify some of Boko Haram's central aims. The group's objectives and ideology appears to concentrate on three main

---

[19] For a more detailed discussion of each of these causes, see Oftedal (2013 forthcoming).

issues. First, Boko Haram demands the introduction of Sharia in the whole of Nigeria, as well as stricter implementation in the 12 northern states which have already adopted it. Second, Boko Haram is preoccupied with broader issues of governance, including overthrowing the government, removing democracy, ensuring that Muslims rule Nigeria and that President Jonathan converts to Islam and steps down. Third, Boko Haram wants vengeance, particularly against the security forces for the killing of its former leader Muhammad Yusuf, but also more generally against the Nigerian authorities, whom Boko Haram accuses of corruption, repression and violence (Oftedal forthcoming 2013). Since mid-2011, there has also been an increasing focus on Christians in Boko Haram's rhetoric and targeting practices. More than 20 churches have been attacked and over 200 people killed in attacks on churches across central and northern Nigeria between 2010 and September 2012 (Amnesty International 2012: 13). Boko Haram has claimed responsibility for many of the attacks and has explicitly stated that it aims to target Christians and drive them out of the northern Nigeria (Amnesty International 2012: 13-15; Cook 2012).

However, it is worth noting that the ideology expressed in official statements may not be shared by all Boko Haram members. There have been reports about internal disagreements and fragmentation (see Oftedal 2013 forthcoming). In January 2012, a group known as Ansaru announced its formation. Its exact relationship to Boko Haram remains unclear, but according to Militant Leadership Monitor (2012b), Ansaru most likely broke away from Boko Haram because of disagreements over Boko Haram's killing of Muslims, which Ansaru has characterized as "inhumane" and "inexcusable".

Ansaru is suspected to have been involved in six major incidents: four kidnappings of foreigners, an attack on a detention facility in Abuja, and an attack on Nigerian soldiers heading for Mali (Zenn 2013c: 2). While six incidents are insufficient to draw any firm conclusions, Ansaru seems to be more anti-Western and internationally oriented in its targeting practice than Shekau's Boko Haram. For instance, Ansaru claimed responsibility for kidnapping a French engineer from his residence in Katsina State in December 2012, saying that it would continue to attack the French government and its citizens until France ended its ban on the Islamic veil and its "major role" in the planned intervention in Mali (BBC News December 24, 2012). In January 2013, Ansaru killed at least two soldiers and wounded eight others when it attacked a military convoy en route to deployment with French and West African forces in Mali. The group claimed the attack was part of a mission to stop Nigerian

troops joining Western powers in their "aim to demolish the Islamic empire of Mali" (Reuters January 20, 2013).

Compared to Ansaru, Boko Haram's objectives and attacks appear more nationally focused.[20] However, given Nigeria's weak state capacity, there is not necessarily a contradiction between Boko Haram focusing on national issues and having transnational connections. Boko Haram may very well receive funding, training, and recruits from neighboring countries, even if its rhetoric and targeting remains focused on Nigeria. Conversely, the porous borders and extensive cross-national transactions in the region mean that Boko Haram may easily have effects in Nigeria's neighboring countries even if the group does not directly attack those countries. Consequently, the fact that Boko Haram appears focused on objectives and attacks within Nigeria does not, a priori, make the perspective of transnationalism less relevant for understanding the group. Rather, the extent of Boko Haram's transnational connections is an empirical question, to which we now turn.

---

[20] The exceptions are Boko Haram's attack on the UN headquarter in Abuja in August 2011, which represents the first and only time the group has targeted an international institution, and the kidnapping of a French family in Cameroon in February 2013, which is Boko Haram's first and only attack outside Nigeria.

5 Transnational Aspects

Nigeria borders Niger, Chad, Cameroon and Benin. It has more than 1000 border entry routes from these four countries, most of which are unmanned and uncontrolled (Udeh 2011: 82). The porous nature of these borders heightens the potential of transnational transactions taking place. In the following, I discuss to what extent Boko Haram has benefited from this and identify the transnational aspects of the group. The analysis is structured according to the seven types of transnational transactions described in section 2.2 (weapons, mercenaries, refugees, natural resources, personal relationships, training and funding). Section 5.1 through 5.7 discuss the prominence of each of these types of transnational transactions, and to what extent each of them have contributed to strengthening Boko Haram and/or spreading instability from Nigeria to other countries. The various transnational aspects are discussed separately for the sake of clarity, although they are of course interlinked. For instance, the recycling of small arms and light weapons (section 5.1) will often take place through recruitment of mercenaries who bring their weapons with them (section 5.2), or through purchases facilitated by foreign funding (section 5.7). In the conclusion (chapter 6), I therefore collate the findings from the previous sections and look at all the aspects in combination.

5.1 Recycling of Small Arms and Light Weapons

After conflict, small arms and light weapons are often recycled for use in new or ongoing conflicts, either at home or in other countries. As we saw in section 2.2, the recycling of small arms and light weapons can contribute to increasing the lethality and duration of violence, and is in itself an important transnational aspect of many African conflicts.

This section first discusses the recycling of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria, assessing the scale, transit routes and origins of illicit arms flows to the country. The main part of the section then addresses the question of where Boko Haram gets its weapons and what role transnational transactions play in this. To what extent have weapons from other countries and conflicts in the region ended up in the hands of Boko Haram, and how has this affected the group's strength? Finally, it briefly discusses to what extent weapons from Nigeria and Boko Haram are being spread to other countries and conflicts in the region, thus contributing to further spreading violence and instability.

Small arms and light weapons in Nigeria

There is little up-to date information on illicit small arms and light weapons in Nigeria. In part, this is a result of the illegal nature of the transactions. Few involved in the trade are willing to discuss their activities or the scale of the operations, and their information is difficult to verify. The lack of information is also due to poor record keeping. The Nigerian Customs Service (NCS) and the police keep records of arms seizures and arrests, but the data is inconsistent and often incomplete (Hazen 2007: 42). Still, available data on the pricing of arms and ammunition, seizures of weapons and arrests for arms possession do give some insight into the types of weapons and ammunition coming into the country, as well as the patterns of sales and the scale of transactions.

A widely cited estimate by the Small Arms Survey (2003: 80) suggests that there are seven to ten million illicit small arms and light weapons in West Africa. There are an estimated one million (Ebo 2006: 1) to three million (Obasi 2002: 69) small arms and light weapons in circulation in Nigeria alone. These are rough estimations based on population size and levels of conflict. Although uncertain and somewhat outdated, they nevertheless give an indication of the scale of the problem. Civilians are said to hold the majority of weapons in Nigeria. A 2001 estimate claimed that 80 per cent of the weapons in civilian possession had been obtained illegally, because of strict laws on civilian acquisition and possession (Obasi 2002: 69). As these laws are still strict, we can assume that the proportion of illegal weapons remains high.

According to the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS), a total of 2,294 arms seizures with a value of 1.8 billion naira (11.4 million USD) were made throughout the country between January and June 2012. Weapons transit illegally into Nigeria via sea ports and across land boundaries. The transactions are difficult to trace, but a number of transit countries are often mentioned, including the four neighboring countries Benin, Chad, Niger and Cameroon, as well as Guinea-Bissau and Gabon (Hazen 2007: 33). The three main entry areas for arms smugglers are said to be in the South-West (Idi-Iroko in Ogun State and Seme in Lagos State), in the South (the port city of Warri in Delta State), and in the North-East at the border with Niger and Cameroon (Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe States) (Hazen 2007: 34; Onabanjo 2012).

The origins of the weapons are uncertain, but weapons seized by the NCS have been traced back to a variety of countries, including Iran and China (Onuoha 2011: 52-53; Daily Trust October 27, 2012). Weapons have also been recirculated from other conflict zones in the region. According to a report by IRIN, a humanitarian news and analysis service established by the UN, "There is evidence that arms flowed into Nigeria as a result of the civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia, where Nigerian soldiers were involved in peacekeeping missions. Both smugglers and soldiers brought in weapons from those conflicts" (IRIN 2006: 18). The conflict in Libya and the fall of Gaddafi in October 2011 has further exacerbated the proliferation of weapons to West Africa, including Nigeria. According to a report by a UN-mission assessing the impact of the Libyan crisis on the countries in the region,

> The Governments of the countries visited indicated that, in spite of efforts to control their borders, large quantities of weapons and ammunition from Libyan stockpiles were smuggled into the Sahel region. [...] Certain authorities indicated that some of these weapons had been smuggled into the Sahel by returnees, in particular former fighters who had been either members of the Libyan regular army or mercenaries during the conflict. Some of the weapons may be hidden in the desert and could be sold to terrorist groups like Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, Boko Haram or other criminal organizations.
>
> (Report to the UN Security Council 2011: 10)

Although the report covers several West African countries in addition to Nigeria, it is clear that Nigerian authorities are among the ones concerned about the proliferation of arms from Libya. Immigration officials have repeatedly warned of an upsurge in arms trafficking following the Libyan crisis, and Nigeria is among the most active proponents of a legally binding UN resolution on small arms trafficking (Diplomat 2; Blueprint September 3, 2012).

Boko Haram's sources of weapons

Boko Haram uses a variety of different weapons in its attacks, ranging from knives and machetes to machine guns and improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Their weapons appear to gradually have become more advanced. In 2010, the group began using explosives for the first time, and in June 2011 the group conducted the first suicide attacks recorded in Nigerian history, using vehicle-borne IEDs. However, the most common method of Boko Haram attacks is still drive-by shootings from motorcycles, using small arms (International Organization 1; Oftedal 2013 forthcoming).

When asked how Boko Haram acquires its arms, the most common reply among the respondents was that the group probably buys them. No one had any concrete evidence of this, but many respondents pointed out that it is very easy and cheap to purchase arms in Nigeria (Diplomat 1; Diplomat 2; International Organization 1; Researcher 1; Researcher 2; Corporate Representative 1). For instance, one respondent said that weapons are widely available to anyone who can pay, and told me that "If you would like to collect some arms, I think you could do it here [in Abuja]. A couple of days, a few contacts, and you could come back to Norway with a nice collection of AK-47s. It's very easy; it will cost you maybe 50 dollars, 100 dollars" (Diplomat 2). That weapons are widely available and quite cheap in Nigeria is confirmed by several research studies. For instance, the Small Arms Survey found that black market prices for AK-47 assault rifles were around 400 USD in 2007, with prices varying according to the quality and age of the weapon, where in the country it was sold, and fluctuations in supply and demand (Hazen 2007:43).

Most of my respondents explained the wide availability of cheap arms in Nigeria by reference to the porous borders, and indicated that weapons from Libya are entering the country and could end up in the hands of Boko Haram (Researcher 2; Researcher 3; Diplomat 1; Diplomat 2; Diplomat 3; International Organization 1; Corporate Representative 1). The following account was typical:

> The borders are very porous and there's a lot of corruption. I once traveled by taxi from Chad to Maiduguri, and you actually had to go looking for the border station. It's just a big desert, for many miles you can just pass straight through. And if you are stopped you just bribe the customs officials and you'll get through anyway. In Kano, we met a businessman who told us he could bring in any container he wanted to from the port in Kotonou [the major port in Benin] to Kano, 'no questions asked'. They never need to open them, so I guess it's not a problem to get weapons in. In addition, the Libya situation has presumably led to an influx of weapons, which probably benefits Boko Haram.
>
> (Diplomat 1)

That Boko Haram does in fact benefit from widespread availability of arms smuggled into Nigeria from Libya and elsewhere is probable, as many of the weapons that have been seized in raids on the group are reported to be of foreign origin. For instance, the Kaduna State police command says it has recovered hundreds of weapons from "suspected terrorists", and that "Most of the weapons, especially the AK-47s, were smuggled into the country, as they are different from the ones used by the Nigerian security personnel" (This Day September 9,

2012). Similarly, in January 2013, an unnamed "security source" told Nigerian newspapers that most of the weapons recently recovered from Boko Haram members had been traced to the weaponry used during the Libyan uprising (Vanguard January 19, 2013).

The fact that the weapons seized from Boko Haram often are of foreign origin indicates that transnational transactions constitute an important source of weapons for Boko Haram. But how directly are these transactions linked to the group? Based on the information above, it appears plausible that the recycling of small arms and light weapons have helped creating an enabling environment for Boko Haram activities, as large quantities of weapons smuggled into Nigeria make weapons cheaper and more easily accessible for members of the group. However, this does not necessarily mean that Boko Haram is directly involved in the trafficking of arms. As one respondent said:

> I think one mistake one should not make is to assume that all who are involved in arms trafficking or IED-selling are linked to AQIM [al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb] or Boko Haram. You have people who simply sell these things to whoever wants to buy them. They may not support the sect, they just sell what they have.
>
> (International Organization 1)

In fact, there were different opinions on this issue among the respondents. Some saw it as unlikely that Boko Haram was directly involved in smuggling of weapons (Diplomat 1; Researcher 1), while others thought it entirely possible (Researcher 2). One respondent pointed out that given the availability of weapons within Nigeria, it would be unnecessary for the group to risk detection and arrests of its members by engaging in arms trafficking. It would be easier and safer to buy the weapons locally (Researcher 1). In contrast, a former official of the Nigerian State Security Services (SSS) informed me that in 2011, the SSS intercepted a truck on its way into Nigeria with arms that was traced to Boko Haram (Security Official 1). However, the respondent could offer no more details about the incident, and I have not been able to find more information about it from other sources. In general, the respondents could offer little evidence directly linking Boko Haram to arms trafficking.

Still, there have been some incidents indicating that Boko Haram may be directly involved in smuggling of weapons. In February 2011, Nigerian authorities arrested a Nigerian man, Mohammed Zakaria, in the town of Maiduguri. According to the police, "Zakaria admitted during interrogation to belonging to Boko Haram and also to being the sect's arms supplier from the neighbouring countries of Chad and Cameroon" (Newstime Africa February 27,

2011). When the police raided the hideout Zakaria identified as Boko Haram's, they recovered 12 rocket launchers, two pistols, one loaded AK-47 rifle, two detonating bomb cables and more than 3,000 rounds of ammunition (Newstime Africa February 27, 2011). Similarly, in August 2012, Nigerian military reported that they had shot two suspected Boko Haram members who were trying to smuggle heavy weapons into the country across the border from Chad. According to a military spokesman, the Boko Haram members were caught carrying rocket-propelled grenades, Kalashnikov rifles and assorted ammunition. The spokesman claimed that "the weapons were heading to Maiduguri for terrorist attacks" (AFP August 1, 2012).

These events indicate that Boko Haram may be acquiring some of the weapons it needs directly from abroad. Still, human rights organizations have documented that the information from Nigerian authorities is not always accurate and that the security forces often refer to people that have been arrested or killed as Boko Haram members without there being any solid evidence of this (Amnesty International 2012). Therefore, the above reports should be treated with caution. Also, there have been very few such incidents, suggesting that the scale of trafficking by Boko Haram members or their associates is relatively limited.

Boko Haram is also said to have domestic sources of arms, including stealing from the Nigerian police and military. For instance, following an attack on a military base, Boko Haram issued a video in which the group's leader Shekau is standing on a pile of arms and ammunitions, saying that

> our members went to Monguno and easily invaded the army barracks, killed unknown number of soldiers, we packed unknown quantum of arms and ammunition which was filled in two trucks, we burnt down the excess from the armoury. They left with gallantry chanting Allahu Akbar. Here are the arms in display. We have 15 Browning rifles in our armoury now, all from Monguno barracks.
>
> (Premium Times March 19, 2013)

In addition to stealing from security personnel, Boko Haram may also be purchasing arms from them. According to one respondent, "There are a lot of soldiers here who will sell their arms for not much, because they are not very well paid" (Diplomat 2). On several occasions, Nigerian military personnel have been found to be directly involved in arms trafficking and selling of weapons to armed groups in the country. For example, in 2008 a major and five

soldiers were convicted of having sold over 7 000 AK-47 rifles, rocket launchers and machine guns to Niger Delta militants (Onuoha 2011: 53).

As mentioned above, Boko Haram's tactics have become more advanced over time. Since late 2010, explosives have been an important weapon for the group. These have developed from simple Molotov cocktails made of soda cans filled with explosives to also include large vehicle bombs and shaped charges. The increased bomb-making capability of the group has led many to speculate whether the group has gotten explosive materials and knowledge on how to assemble explosive devices from outside Nigeria. According to Scott Stewart (January 26, 2012) at Stratfor Global Intelligence, "Bombmaking is an art that normally follows a significant learning curve absent outside instruction from a more experienced bombmaker. Boko Haram's proficiency suggests the group's bombmaker(s) indeed received training from experienced militants elsewhere." Similarly, a November 2011 report by the United States House of Representatives' Committee on Homeland Security warns that Boko Haram's increasing sophistication may indicate that the group has gotten tactics and explosives training from Islamists in neighboring countries (Meehan and Speier 2011: 17). According to one of my respondents, following the first Boko Haram suicide bombing against the police headquarters in Abuja in June 2011,

> Forensic experts from the US came to Abuja to pair up with Nigerian forensic experts to do an analysis of the bombing. It became clear that what you call the IED-signature shows that it is very similar to the ones they have seen al-Qaeda use, even in Afghanistan. So you see, the tactical linkages, the dots are now being gradually connected.
>
> (Researcher 3)

However, there are competing views among the respondents. One respondent, who has studied photos of all the explosive devices employed by Boko Haram, disputes the basic assumption that the group has rapidly increased its bomb-making skills:

> The IEDs of Boko Haram, on a scale from one to ten, where ten is most advanced, are maybe at a two. EFPs [explosive foreign projectiles] are not used, there are no switches or advanced stuff. The explosives they get are mostly from mining. So the narrative that Boko Haram has advanced so fast is really not entirely accurate.
>
> (Diplomat 3)

Although such a warning against exaggerating Boko Haram's advancement may be in order, there is little doubt that the group's weapons and explosive devices have become more advanced over the last few years. This is confirmed by Nigerian security officials, media

reports, and all my other respondents. For instance, one informant described Boko Haram's development in the following manner:

> In a nutshell, you can see an evolution, first of all in terms of techniques and methods being used. I mean, we have moved from people on motorcycles shooting with AK-47s, to use of IEDs, to use of suicide bombs to coordinated acts […]. And it's not that we have shifted from one to the other, all this has added up. That does indicate an evolution in terms of weapons and how the sect is organizing its attacks.
>
> (International Organization 1)

That most respondents agree that an evolution has taken place does not, however, mean that they agree on what role transnational transactions have played in the process. One respondent stresses that the fact that Boko Haram's explosives are becoming more advanced does not necessarily mean that the group is in contact with Islamists outside Nigeria. There are also many experienced militants within the country, for instance in the Niger Delta, who could have been paid to teach Boko Haram about weapons and bomb-making (Researcher 1). Others dispute this (Researcher 2; Researcher 3; Diplomat 4), saying it is unlikely that Delta militants would communicate with Boko Haram, let alone help them making explosives: "It's pretty unlikely that northern militants would associate with southern militants. It's far away, different languages, different ideologies, different ideals" (Researcher 2). In fact, the geographical distance and cultural differences are greater between southern and northern Nigeria, than between northern Nigeria and the border areas of Niger and northern Chad, where AQIM is known to operate (Tawil 2009: 4). Also, although some of the lower-level members of the Delta militias may be criminals who could be paid to help Boko Haram, these are unlikely to know much about bomb making. The key members and leaders, who presumably are the most skilled, are also more ideologically motivated and less likely to share their expertise with others for money (Diplomat 4).

It thus appears more likely that Boko Haram has received knowledge and skills on explosives from outside Nigeria, although it is unclear from whom and in what form. One likely source is Islamist training camps (see section 5.6). It is also worth noting that there is a lot of information on explosives and bomb making available online, so that Boko Haram may have gotten part of its knowledge from online jihadist forums and other radical websites. According to one of my respondents, this is very likely, as the Nigerian security forces have recovered manuals downloaded from the internet when they have raided Boko Haram

hideouts (Security Official 1). This is still in line with the perspective of transnationalism, but as an example of immaterial diffusion of knowledge, rather than physical transactions.

When assessing the importance of transnational weapon transactions for Boko Haram, it is thus important to distinguish between two main types of weapons used by the group: firearms and explosives. There are few documented instances were Boko Haram has been directly involved in the trafficking of small arms and light weapons. Revolvers, rifles and machine guns are widely available and can be purchased relatively cheaply throughout the country, and this is the most probable source of Boko Haram's firearms. However, many of the small arms and light weapons that have been seized in raids against Boko Haram are of foreign origin, and arms that are sold in Nigeria have often been smuggled in from other countries and conflicts. Indirectly, it thus appears that transnational transactions are an important source of arms for Boko Haram. Although, as noted in section 2.2, recycling of arms does not in itself create conflict and violence, transnational transactions of weapons have made arms cheaper and less risky to get hold of, thus contributing to strengthening Boko Haram by facilitating its violence and making it more lethal.

The theoretical discussion in section 2.2 concerned the recycling of small arms and light weapons, and did not address transnational transactions of other types of weapons. However, IEDs have proven to be an important weapon for Boko Haram, as well as a likely transnational aspect of the group. The explosive material used by Boko Haram is probably from inside Nigeria, either stolen from local mining companies or produced by group members from ingredients available domestically (Stewart January 26, 2012). But as the discussion above demonstrates, the knowledge and skills required to construct the more advanced IEDs employed by Boko Haram the last couple of years have most likely come from outside the country, through training with more experienced militants and/or via the internet.

Weapons spreading from Nigeria?

It thus appears that weapons from other countries and conflicts are smuggled into Nigeria and constitute an important transnational aspect of Boko Haram. But is the flow also going the other way, with weapons spreading from Nigeria and Boko Haram to other countries? According to an article by Onuoha (2011: 50), "Nigeria now features prominently in the three-spot continuum of transnational organised trafficking of SALWs [small arms and light

weapons] in West Africa: origin, transit route and destination." However, the rest of his article focuses on Nigeria as a destination for arms smuggling, and does not mention outward flows of arms again. In general, there appears to be little information on arms trafficking from Nigeria to other countries. None of the respondents had any information on the issue, and I have found few reports about seizures of illegal weapons from Nigeria in neighboring countries. Of course, this lack of information does not necessarily mean that there are no such flows; as mentioned, illegal transactions are inherently difficult to trace. Nonetheless, the fact that there is less information about outward than inward flows of arms can be seen as an indication that there are in fact fewer weapons going out of Nigeria than into the country. This is also in line with the argument of recycling of small arms and light weapons outlined in section 2.2; being easy to move and conceal, such weapons are recycled from areas were levels of violence are diminishing and demand is falling, to areas were conflict is ongoing or intensifying. For many years, the level of violence has been higher in Nigeria than in most other states in the region. According to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Dataset (2012), Nigeria was the most violent state in West Africa in 2012, whereas neighboring Chad and Niger were among the least violent in Africa. It is thus logical that more weapons flow from the neighboring countries to Nigeria and Boko Haram, than the other way around. Consequently, although transnational transactions of weapons have contributed to strengthening Boko Haram, they do not appear to be a significant force in spreading the instability caused by Boko Haram from Nigeria to other conflicts.

5.2   Mercenaries, Militarized Refugees and Foreign Fighters

In addition to weapons, section 2.2 identified recruitment of foreign mercenaries, militarized refugees and foreign fighters as a potential transnational aspect of conflict. Fighters migrating between conflicts make recruitment of experienced militants easier, and are a major cause for regional instability in West Africa. This section analyses how important such recruitment has been in the case of Boko Haram. To what extent are people from other countries participating in the Boko Haram conflict? To what extent has this contributed to strengthening the group? In addition to discussing the inflow of fighters from other countries to Boko Haram, this section also considers the opposite movement: from Boko Haram to other countries. To what extent do Boko Haram members contribute to spreading instability outside Nigeria by participating in other conflicts in the region, such as the ongoing conflict in Mali?

Recruitment from other conflicts to Boko Haram

There is a general agreement among the respondents that the vast majority of Boko Haram members are Nigerians (Researcher 2; Diplomat 3; International Organization 1; International Organization 5). Boko Haram is said to recruit its members mainly among dissatisfied Nigerian youths, especially young men who have received some education, but cannot find a job (Bøås 2012: 3; NGO 1; Diplomat 4). The members also include former Almajiris (students in traditional Islamic schools, who live at the school compound and beg for alms to finance their teaching), who migrate from rural areas to urban centers in search of better means of livelihood or to study under renowned Islamic teachers in cities like Kano, Zaria, Kaduna, and Maiduguri (Onuoha 2010a; Diplomat 4). In addition, there are rumors that some wealthy and influential Nigerians have been members and supporters of Boko Haram, especially in the first years of the group's existence (see section 5.5).

While it is clear that foreigners are not in majority in Boko Haram, there are several indications that Boko Haram has recruited some of its militants from neighboring countries. There are some non-Nigerians among the known leaders of the group: Mamman Nur, who is believed to be second in command to Shekau, is from Chad, and Abubakar Kilakam and Ali Jalingo, two of the architects behind major attacks in the northeastern Borno State, are said to be from Niger (Zenn 2013a: 9). According to one respondent, "There is no doubt that quite a large number of foreign nationals, particularly from Chad, and also Niger and Sudan, have been arrested in raids on Boko Haram hideouts. That clearly shows that there are also foreigners among their members" (Researcher 3). For instance, in 2009, 33 people were arrested on suspicions of participation in a Boko Haram attack on a police station in the city of Kano. Some of the arrested men were Chadians who did not speak either Hausa or English (Onuoha 2010b: 59). And in the aftermath of the June 2011 bombing of the police headquarters in Abuja, "security operatives arrested 58 Boko Haram members, including some Somalians, Sudanese and Nigeriens, at a hideout in Maiduguri" (The Nigerian Tribune June 20, 2011). Similarly, in October 2012, the Nigerian military claimed it had uncovered a plan by Boko Haram to carry out massive attacks during a Muslim festival with the help of "foreign mercenaries" (AFP October 23, 2012).

These reports suggest that there has been some recruitment from neighboring countries to Boko Haram. According to some respondents, a certain foreign presence in the group is to be expected, and can be seen as a reflection of the Nigerian society more generally (Researcher

3; Security Official 1). Unauthorized border-crossings and illegal immigration are widespread, and in the words of one respondent: "In Nigeria, there are foreigners everywhere. There are people from Chad, some from Niger. People go back and forth between these countries all the time. The borders are very porous" (Security Official 1). The authorities are increasingly considering this extensive cross-border movement as a security threat closely related to Boko Haram. In October 2012, Niger and Nigeria signed an agreement on joint border patrols, with the aim of restricting movement of illicit arms and militants across the borders. Abba Moro, one of the Nigerian Ministers who attended the signing, told the press:

> […] for quite some time now, Nigeria and Niger have been holding high power meetings, and the essence is that especially the high security challenges we have in Nigeria and the international dimension that it has taken, the factor of cross border movement between Nigeria and Niger, it has become imperative that we must be able to effectively check our borders and ensure effective patrol and avoid infiltration of the Nigerian border [...] [T]his meeting is very significant to Nigeria and Niger, especially with the threat of Boko Haram and the fact that most of them move across the borders.
>
> (Iluyemi October 21, 2012)

Similarly, in February 2012, the Nigerian immigration service disclosed that it had deported 11,000 illegal immigrants, mainly from Niger and Chad, in order to curb the growth of Boko Haram. An immigration service spokesman said the repatriation "has been intensified in the past six months following the Boko Haram insurgency. We have an obligation to rid the country of undesirable elements" (AFP February 27, 2012). According to one of my respondents,

> Of course, that does not mean that 11,000 people were members of Boko Haram, but the government is saying that 'look, with what we are having and with the evidence that Sudanese, Nigeriens and Chadians are members of Boko Haram, we need to know what you are doing in Nigeria'. The ones who couldn't present evidence of valid purpose of staying in Nigeria were deported.
>
> (Researcher 3)

The perception that Boko Haram recruits members from neighboring countries thus appears to be widespread among Nigerian officials. However, several respondents cautioned that Nigerian security forces and authorities have a tendency to exaggerate the extent of foreign involvement in Boko Haram (International Organization 1; Researcher 2; Diplomat 3). One respondent said that:

I've seen a lot of reports on foreigners turning out to be false. In other words, an attack happens, they collect a bunch of immigrants and blame it on them, in order to divert the responsibility from Nigeria. So I'd say; be cautious about any reports of foreigners joining Boko Haram. That being said, there are clearly foreigners in the movement, but the number is not as large as one might think by local reports. In fact, I think it's quite bit smaller.

(Researcher 2)

The reports about recruitment of foreign mercenaries to Boko Haram should thus be treated with some caution. Contributing to the uncertainty is the fact that it is often difficult to differentiate between people from northern Nigeria and Chad, Niger or Cameroon. In the border areas, families often cut across the borders, and people speak the same languages, have the same ethnic origin and trade at the same markets. In addition, there is no functioning Nigerian identity system, so when people are arrested, there is often no way of knowing for certain if they are in fact Nigerians or from one of the neighboring countries (International Organization 2; International Organization 4; Researcher 3; Diplomat 1).

While people from Niger, Chad and Cameroon can easily enter Nigeria and some of them reportedly have joined forces with Boko Haram, there have been few reports about foreigners from outside the three adjacent countries joining the group (Zenn 2013a: 9).[21] There are large Nigerian diasporas in Europe and the United States, but there is no information about 'foreign fighters' from Western countries traveling to Nigeria to join Boko Haram (Diplomat 1), unlike the situation in for instance Syria (Pantucci 2013: 11) or Mali (Diplomat 1).

Finally, little is known about the backgrounds and positions of the non-Nigerians in Boko Haram. This uncertainty makes it difficult to evaluate the implications of foreign participation in Boko Haram, and to assess to what extent recruitment of non-Nigerians has contributed to strengthen the group. It is not clear whether Boko Haram has recruited experienced militants who have participated in other conflicts in the region, or if the foreign recruits simply are poor farmers looking for a way to survive. While the first would most likely constitute a reinforcement of the group's knowledge base and experience, the latter need not have much impact on the group's capabilities. One respondent also pointed out that there is no lack of poor and frustrated youths in the north of Nigeria, many of whom are susceptible to Boko

---

[21] One of the few reports concerns a Mauritanian who used his shop in Kano as a base for an AQIM cell that kidnapped a German engineer in January 2012. However, there is no evidence that the kidnappers or the Mauritanian were members of Boko Haram. (For more details on this incident, see Zenn 2012). On December 29, 2012, Radio Risala in Somalia also reported that "Al-Shabab fighters have entered [Nigeria] to assist the Nigerian Islamist fighters," but this report has not been corroborated elsewhere (Zenn 2013: 9).

Haram's anti-state rhetoric and willing to take up violence (International Organization 1). The group could thus easily find its foot soldiers within Nigeria, and is not dependent on foreign militants. Consequently, although some recruitment of mercenaries and militarized refuges seems to have taken place, this transnational aspect does not appear to have been vital to the growth of Boko Haram.

From Boko Haram to other conflicts

The mechanism of mercenaries and foreign fighters may work both ways, not only from neighboring countries to Boko Haram, but also from Boko Haram to other conflicts, thus contributing to spreading instability from Nigeria to the wider region. Currently, one of the major conflicts of the region is in Mali, where Tuareg-based rebels and Islamist groups seized control of large areas in the north of the country in 2012, and are now fighting French and African forces seeking to drive them out. Given the geographical proximity between northern Nigeria and Mali, as well as the ideological similarities between Boko Haram and some of the Islamist rebel groups in Mali, such as AQIM (al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb), MUJAO (Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa), and particularly Ansar Dine, this is one of the conflicts in which Boko Haram members are most likely to be implicated (Researcher 2).[22]

In the spring of 2012, local and international media began reporting that Boko Haram members had joined the rebellion in Mali. For instance, Abu Sidibe, a Malian police deputy in the city of Gao, told AFP that "There are a good 100 Boko Haram fighters in Gao. They are Nigerians and from Niger. They're not hiding. Some are even able to speak in the local tongue, explaining that they are Boko Haram" (International Business Times April 10, 2012). Other Malian security officials reported that Boko Haram fighters were in majority in the attack on the Algerian consulate in Gao in April 2012 (International Business Times April 10, 2012). Statements from the other Islamist groups in Mali and from security officials in the region have also claimed that Boko Haram is present in Mali. For instance, a MUJAO commander said in an interview that numerous Boko Haram fighters were arriving in Gao,

---

[22] Ansar Dine is a Malian-based movement, formed in 2011 by former Tuareg rebel leader Iyad Ag Ghaly. Its stated objective is to impose Islamic law across Mali. This is the same objective as Boko Haram says it wants to achieve in Nigeria. AQIM - the North African wing of al-Qaeda - has its roots in the Algerian civil war of the early 1990s, but has since evolved to take on a more international Islamist agenda. MUJAO is an AQIM splinter group, formed in mid-2011. It says its objective is to spread jihad to West Africa rather than confine itself to the Sahel and Maghreb regions, which are the main focus of AQIM (BBC News January 24, 2013).

52

and security officers from Niger have warned that Boko Haram members are transiting Niger daily on their way to Mali (Zenn 2013a: 8). Similarly, an unnamed "defense source" told the Nigerian newspaper Saturday Sun in January 2013 that "Fresh intelligence shows that Boko Haram has not only mobilized fighters to join their people in Mali but are still working hard to send more, which also explains why foreign and Malian troops have faced unexpected stiff resistance from the rebel fighters who appear more in number and well-equipped for the battle" (Information Nigeria January 26, 2013). The source added that as a result, all law enforcement agencies have been alerted to be "double vigilant at the borders, especially Nigeria's borders with Niger, Chad and Cameroon so as to check and prevent certain movements out of the country" (Information Nigeria January 26, 2013).

Again, these reports need to be interpreted with some caution. Northern Mali is a conflict area from which it is difficult to get reliable information. Many people have fled, and journalists and researchers are hesitant to travel there. The information that comes out is often vague and difficult to verify. For instance, it is reported that 'Boko Haram members were observed' in a specific town, but it is often not clear how the informants know that the people they see are in fact Boko Haram members. As one of my respondents pointed out, "it's not because you have people who speak English they are Nigerians, and not because they are Nigerians that they are Boko Haram" (International Organization 1). As mentioned in section 3.1 many actors in the region may also have an interest in exaggerating Boko Haram's international presence and connections. Still, the reports about Boko Haram's presence in Mali come from a variety of different sources, including local eyewitnesses, security officials and other Islamist groups. This indicates that members of the group are in fact in Mali, although it is difficult to say anything certain about their numbers and how closely they collaborate with the other Islamist rebel groups.

According to some respondents, many Nigerians are worried that Boko Haram members traveling to Mali will later come back to Nigeria with new skills and knowledge (International Organization 1; Diplomat 3). In the words of one respondent:

> Militants get trained when they fight, and those who survive and come back have learned a lot and can be a real big problem. There's a fear that's what's happening now. The increased pressure on Boko Haram and Nigeria may lead them to move to Mali, where they fight and get trained, and then get back to Nigeria in time before the 2015 Presidential election. That would be a big problem.
>
> (Diplomat 3)

Others also worried that Boko Haram and its splinter group Ansaru will get ideological inspiration from the Islamists in Mali and conduct attacks in their support. One respondent predicted that:

> The threat landscape for Nigeria in the face of what happens in Mali is likely going to be a diffused global terrorist threat. First, we are going to see Boko Haram trying to mount more attacks, and to justify that under their support for their Muslim brothers fighting in Mali. Two, you are going to see Ansaru continuing to also mount attacks on security establishments in support of their brothers in Mali. Three, you are going to see increased relationship between AQIM and these two groups for strategy purposes. If AQIM cannot come into Nigeria to mount attacks on Western interests, they will do as much as they can to support these two groups in terms of training and funding to mount attacks on Western interests.
>
> <div align="right">(Researcher 3)</div>

In fact, both Boko Haram and Ansaru have conducted attacks with reference to the French-led intervention in Mali. For instance, as mentioned in section 4.2 Ansaru claimed responsibility for the December 2012 kidnapping of a French engineer in Katsina State, warning that it would continue to attack the French government and its citizens until France ends its ban on the Islamic veil and its "major role" in the planned intervention in northern Mali (BBC News December 24, 2012). In February 2013, Boko Haram claimed responsibility of the kidnapping of seven Frenchmen at the Nigeria-Cameroonian border, referring to "the president of France" and his "war against Islam" (New York Times February 25, 2013).

While the timeline is short and there have been too few incidents to draw any firm conclusions, it thus appears that the conflict in Mali is connected to the Boko Haram uprising in at least two ways: First, by attracting Boko Haram fighters – who may later return to Nigeria more experienced and dangerous, and second, by turning the attention of Nigerian Islamist groups towards a more international agenda. The first is an example of physical transnational transactions contributing to spreading instability through militants moving between conflicts. The latter – ideological inspiration and solidarity attacks – is also contributing to furthering violence, but this may happen without any physical contact between the parties, and can thus be seen as an example of immaterial transnationalism.

In addition, there have been speculations as to whether the current leader of Boko Haram, Abubakar Shekau, has traveled to Mali. In January 2013, Nigerian media cited an unnamed "security source" who claimed that Shekau was in Gao, receiving treatment from Tuareg

rebels following a shoot-out with Nigerian security forces at a border crossing (Nigerian Tribune January 19, 2013). However, this claim has not been confirmed by other sources.

According to some respondents, a video of Shekau released on November 29th 2012 indicated that he was in Mali and has been influenced by the ideology of AQIM (Researcher 2; International Organization 1). In contrast to Shekau's five other video statements from 2012, the November 29 video was in Arabic and was posted on an international jihadist forum, indicating that Boko Haram is seeking a more international audience. In the video, Shekau appealed to al-Qaeda by praising "martyred" leaders such as Osama bin Laden, and labeled the United States, the United Kingdom, Nigeria and Israel "crusaders" and warned them that jihad had begun (Zenn 2013a: 8). This international orientation differs from most previous Boko Haram statements, and may suggest that Shekau has been in contact with AQIM and been influenced by their more transnational ideology. The video was also filmed outdoors, which would have been a very risky endeavor in Nigeria (Researcher 2; International Organization 1). However, one should be careful to draw to many conclusions from a single statement. Overall, there are lots of speculations and little certain information regarding Shekau's location. In the words of one respondent: "If we knew where he was, he would have been caught. […] It is very possible that Shekau is in Mali. But it is also very possible that he is in Nigeria, in Niger, in Cameroon, or somewhere else. There are very many different places where he can be" (Researcher 1).

Although Mali is the conflict zone which appears to have drawn most Boko Haram fighters, members of the group have also been in Niger and Cameroon. The major incident outside Nigeria is the aforementioned kidnapping of seven Frenchmen in Cameroon, near the border with Nigeria, on February 19th 2013. This constitutes Boko Haram's first and only attack outside Nigeria. However, Boko Haram members have previously been reported in several cities of the Far North Province in Cameroon, including Fotokol, Kousseri, Mora and Banki-Amchide (Zenn 2013a: 9). According to a diplomatic dispatch leaked by Wikileaks, the Cameroonian President Biya told the American ambassador in 2010 that he was worried about "Islamic extremists" who were "infiltrating Cameroon from Nigeria and making inroads through Cameroonian mosques" (Wikileaks February 5, 2010). On December 19, 2012, Cameroonian security forces arrested 31 suspected Boko Haram members in the border town of Banki-Amchide, and confirmed that "Boko Haram uses the border area to regroup after attacks in Nigeria, preparing for the next attacks" (Zenn 2013a: 9). There have also been

several indications that Boko Haram members are present in Niger. For instance, the authorities in Niger arrested suspected Boko Haram members in the Zinder region of Niger in September 2012, and in Diffa in February 2012 (Zenn 2013a: 9). According to Tinni Djibo, assistant secretary-general of Diffa, they arrested 15 people suspected of affiliation to Boko Haram and seized home-made explosives and grenades (IRIN News February 20, 2012).

Several of my respondents believe that there has recently been an increase in Boko Haram members traveling out of Nigeria, as a result of the recent success of Nigerian security officials at arresting and killing prominent Boko Haram members (Researcher 2; Diplomat 3). In the words of one respondent: "When military targets them one place, they pop up somewhere else" (Corporate Representative 1). Similarly, another used the metaphor of a toothpaste tube to describe Boko Haram and illustrate how militants move around the region, making it difficult to find lasting solutions: "When one solves a problem in one place, it moves to another. Like in Libya, from where you now have weapons and mercenaries going to Mali. It is like a toothpaste tube: When you squeeze it, the toothpaste just moves around inside" (Diplomat 3).

Still, Boko Haram members are not very active outside Nigeria. Besides the reports from Mali, there has been little information about Boko Haram fighters joining forces with other groups in the region. And except from the kidnapping in Cameroon, the group has never conducted an attack outside Nigeria. To the extent that members of the group are present in Nigeria's neighboring states, it seems they are using these areas as safe havens where they can seek refuge and regroup, rather than conducting attacks or fighting for other militant groups. Several respondents indicate that this is not because the group lacks the capacity to stage attacks outside Nigeria, but rather a conscious choice (Diplomat 4; Researcher 1; Researcher 2). Some respondents point out that since Boko Haram's goals are focused on Nigeria and their main grievances are with the security forces and authorities there, the group has little reason to mount attacks outside the country (Diplomat 4; Researcher 1). Others also perceive it as a strategic choice: the group abstains from violence in the neighboring states so that it can continue to retreat there when the pressure in Nigeria becomes too great (Researcher 2; Researcher 1).

To sum up, it appears that Boko Haram has recruited some people from outside Nigeria, mainly from Chad, Niger and Cameroon. There have been few reports about people outside these three countries joining Boko Haram. It is difficult to assess to what extent the influx of

56

foreign recruits has strengthened the group, due to uncertainties about their numbers, roles and skills. However, the majority of Boko Haram's leaders and members are Nigerians. It thus appears that although recruitment of mercenaries, militarized refugees and/or foreign fighters constitutes a transnational aspect of Boko Haram, it has not played an essential role in strengthening the group.

There are signs that some Boko Haram members are traveling out of Nigeria. The group has conducted a kidnapping in Cameroon and is believed to be fighting alongside other Islamist groups in Mali. In these instances, the transnational movement of Boko Haram members contributes to spreading violence and instability from Nigeria to other countries. There is also a danger that they will come back to Nigeria with new skills and experience that may contribute to further strengthening Boko Haram. However, Boko Haram's presence and activities outside Nigeria should not be exaggerated. The leadership of the group has not made any official statements urging group members to fight in Mali or elsewhere. Members who travel out appear to do so on their own initiative. To the extent that Boko Haram is present in neighboring countries like Niger and Chad, it seems the group is using these areas more as refuges and safe havens than actually conducting attacks or joining forces with other militant groups.

5.3 "Ordinary" Refugees

Mercenaries and militants are not the only people crossing borders in West Africa. As argued in section 2.2, large flows of "ordinary" refugees put pressure on economic and social resources, and can contribute to spreading conflict and instability. In this section, I discuss to what extent refugee-flows constitute a transnational aspect of the Boko Haram uprising, and whether they have contributed to strengthen the group and/or spread instability from Nigeria to neighboring countries. In order to do so, I describe the migration flows to and from Nigeria, and address the following questions: How many people are fleeing from Boko Haram? Do they flee to other countries or do they mostly remain within Nigeria? What happens in the communities where they settle?

The National Commission for Refugees (NCFR February 10, 2011) describes Nigeria as a "migration origin, transit, and destination country". As of January 2012, there were about 8.800 UN-recognized refugees in Nigeria. The majority of these have fled from violence in Liberia, Chad and other West African countries (Daily Trust November 19, 2012). In addition

to refugees, there is a large number of economic migrants in Nigeria. The majority of these are from other ECOWAS countries, in particular from Benin, Ghana and Mali (16%) (IOM 2009: 50).[23]

Although Nigeria is traditionally an important destination for migrants in the region, there are more people emigrating from, than immigrating to, Nigeria. In January 2012, 17.000 people originating from Nigeria were registered as refugees in other countries (UNHCR January 2012). The outwards flow of refugees has thus been larger than the number of refugees coming into the country. However, the vast majority of Nigerians who flee never crosses the border, but remains within Nigeria. As of January 2010, the NCFR estimated that there were more than one million internally displaced persons in Nigeria (NCFR February 10, 2011).

There are a number of causes for human displacement in Nigeria, ranging from flood, drought, and disease to conflict and violence. Boko Haram is only one of several security threats leading people to flee. Others include communal and ethnic conflicts, particularly between Hausa-Fulani herdsmen and local communities in the middle states of Nigeria, and the Niger Delta conflict in the South (ICRC 2011: 142; IDMC June 8, 2012: 4-7). There is no comprehensive and reliable overview of the number of people fleeing from Boko Haram violence as opposed to other causes. According to an estimate widely cited in the media, 10,000 people fled to Niger and Chad between October 2011 and March 2012 as a result of Boko Haram attacks and violent responses by Nigerian security forces (IRIN March 6, 2012; Reuters March 2, 2012). However, the source and basis for this estimate remains unclear. Data provided by the government and NGOs are inconsistent, generally not disaggregated by cause, and often include only people who have sought shelter at official camps, whereas most displaced people are hosted by relatives (IDMC June 8, 2012: 4). As one of the respondents said:

> It is not uncommon in Nigeria that people move anyway, for work or family. And there
> are a lot of displaced people, if not from communal violence, then from floods, or Boko

---

[23] A *refugee* is defined by the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees as: "[A]ny person who: owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country" (UNHCR 2012: 14). An *economic migrant* normally "leaves a country voluntarily to seek a better life. Should he or she decide to return home, they would continue to receive the protection of his or her government. In contrast, refugees flee because of the threat of persecution and cannot return safely to their homes" (USA for UNHCR 2013). An *internally displaced person* (IDP) is a person who has been forced to flee his or her home for the same reason as a refugee, but remains in his or her own country and has not crossed an international border. Unlike refugees, IDPs are not protected by international law or eligible to receive many types of aid (USA for UNHCR 2013).

Haram, or I don't know what. So it's sometimes difficult to make a clear link to the reason people have moved. […] I have never seen anything comprehensive about this, and I guess it's quite difficult to do such a thing because Nigeria is a country where you have several ongoing problems that may all lead, at some point, to the displacement of persons.

(International Organization 1)

Although it is difficult to determine the total number of people displaced by Boko Haram violence as opposed to other causes, there are numerous reports from specific villages and events indicating that the group's violence has led a significant number of people to flee. For instance, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported in December 2012 that more than 1000 Nigerians had fled to Niger following a Boko Haram attack on their village (Daily Times December 7, 2012). In March 2012, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported that "About 1000 migrants – most of them children separated from their families – are waiting for aid in the village of N'Gbouboua in the Lac region of western Chad having fled Boko Haram-related violence in Nigeria" (IRIN March 6, 2012). The migrants told UNICEF they fled the villages of Douri and Madaye in northeastern Nigeria when members of Boko Haram attacked them, burning down houses. Police and military forces then arrived and started firing at those who remained, claiming the villagers were Boko Haram supporters. Aid workers said the food situation in the Chadian host village was getting desperate, with many of the refugees going door-to-door begging for food. A UNICEF representative warned that the villagers "have had enough – they're starting to get angry" (IRIN March 6, 2012). Although this situation did not lead to violence, it illustrates how flows of refugees can spark tensions and put pressure on host communities.

The two reports above concern transnational migration, and show that this is indeed taking place as a result of Boko Haram's violence. However, my respondents believe that most of the people fleeing from Boko Haram remain within Nigeria (Diplomat 4; Diplomat 2; NGO 1). This is in line with the overall pattern of displacement in Nigeria: as described above, the total number of internally displaced persons is estimated to be much higher than the number of international refugees. In January 2012, Boko Haram issued a statement saying they were "giving a three-day ultimatum to the southerners living in the northern part of Nigeria to move away" (Vanguard January 2, 2012). Similarly, in March 2012, a spokesman for the group threatened to "eradicate Christians from certain parts of the country" (Leadership March 4, 2012). Following these statements, Igbo leaders in the South-East called on Igbo

families to head for safety in the South and even offered a free shuttle bus service that evacuated almost 2000 people (BBC News March 16, 2012). According to some respondents, many Christians and Igbos have fled the North since then, particularly from Borno and Yobe, which are the two states hardest hit by Boko Haram violence. Most are going south to the areas dominated by their own religious and ethnic groups, where many have relatives (Diplomat 4; Diplomat 2). Boko Haram is not only attacking Christians and Igbos, but also random civilians, government institutions, Muslim clerics and political elites. Consequently, people of other faiths and ethnic groups, including political and religious authorities, are also among the people fleeing south and to the capital Abuja (International Organization 1; NGO 1). According to one respondent,

> A lot of Christians and Southerners have left. But the political class also feels so threatened that they don't go home, so all the big people are in Abuja. I don't know if you saw the appeal of the Shehu of Borno last week? He appealed for his people to come back home, said that most of the local leaders never go home, so therefore there is no strategic leadership locally to even consider what to do about the Boko Haram situation.
>
> (NGO 1)

Collaborating this view, there have been several media reports about "ghost towns" with deserted streets, closed shops and abandoned government offices (Nigerian Tribune September 11, 2012; Reuters December 24, 2011; CNN June 12, 2012). This can become a vicious circle, with Boko Haram violence causing government officials and civilians to flee, creating ungoverned spaces where Boko Haram can operate practically unchecked, thus enabling the group to conduct further violence and causing more people to flee. In this way, the displacement of political and religious authorities from certain parts of northern Nigeria may have created an environment conducive to the activities of Boko Haram. Since most people are believed to be fleeing to Abuja and the southern part of Nigeria rather than to other countries, this should not be seen as an example of *transnational* refugee flows strengthening the group. Even so, the spread of refugees is not completely absent as a transnational aspect of Boko Haram: as illustrated by the reports from Chad and Niger cited above, Boko Haram's violence has also led people to flee to neighboring countries, albeit to a lesser extent than those being internally displaced.

Finally, refugees do not appear to have contributed to spreading conflict and instability from Boko Haram to neighboring countries. There is little information about refugees causing violence, instability or conflict in areas where they settle, whether in Nigeria or outside. One

60

reason for this may be that the flows of refugees have not been so large or geographically concentrated as to put massive pressure on any single community, thus avoiding the tensions that larger numbers of refugees often create.

Summing up, refugee flows do not appear to be a major transnational aspect of Boko Haram. Most of the people fleeing from the group's attacks and the security forces' violent response remain within Nigeria. This means that the first two ways in which refugees often contribute to spreading conflict and instability (described in section 2.2) is not coming into play in the case of Boko Haram: It does not lead to extensive tension between Nigeria and other states, and it is not perceived as a major threat by the neighboring states or local populations in those states. However, the third level may still be important, as individual refugees can be traumatized, frustrated and more susceptible to the rhetoric and activities of extremists like Boko Haram. However, Boko Haram is not known to have recruited any members among refugees in Nigeria, and the refugees of Boko Haram violence does not appear to cause much conflict or violence in the areas where they settle.

5.4   Trade in Natural Resources

Minerals, raw materials and other valuable goods can promote conflicts by providing violent actors with funding for their activities as well as economic incentives for gaining control of a territory, as described in section 2.2. Trade in natural resources has been an important transnational aspect of several African conflicts, such as timber in Liberia and diamonds in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Dokken 2008: 61-62, 71). This section addresses the question of what role transnational transactions of natural resources have played in relation to Boko Haram. It discusses what natural resources are found in Nigeria, and to what extent Boko Haram is involved in the trading/smuggling of those resources. Has trade in natural resources contributed to strengthening the group, and/or to spreading instability to neighboring countries?

Resource extraction is the most important and the fastest-growing sector of the Nigerian economy. The most economically valuable resource is petroleum, most of which is extracted from onshore fields in the Niger Delta. There are also vast reserves of natural gas, but most of the gas is produced as a by-product of crude oil. Nigeria possesses significant reserves of coal, most of which can be found in the southern part of the country in a band that stretches from Benin to Cameroon. The Jos Plateau contains tin and columbite, but mining and

production of both minerals has declined since the 1980's as a result of diminished world demand. There are iron-ore deposits and limestone in lower Niger valley and Kwara State. Other mined minerals include gypsum, kaolin, rock salt, baryte, phosphates, gold, sapphires, topazes, and aquamarines (Encyclopedia Britannica 2013).

Although Nigeria has a variety of resources, the petroleum industry remains dominant and crude petroleum account for virtually all of Nigeria's export earnings (Encyclopedia Britannica 2013). Petroleum has also been at the heart of one of the most violent conflicts in Nigeria: the Niger Delta conflict. As described in section 4.1, the conflict is rooted in tensions between foreign oil corporations and a number of local ethnic groups who argue that the oil extraction causes environmental degradation and that its economic benefits are not distributed to the local population (Ibeanu 2000: 1). Frustrated with the situation, local militant groups are kidnapping and killing workers in the oil industry, attacking petroleum infrastructure, and stealing oil. According to a report by The United States Institute for Peace (USIP) entitled "Blood oil in the Niger Delta",

> The sale of stolen oil from the Niger Delta has had the same pernicious influence on that region's conflict as diamonds did in the wars in Angola and Sierra Leone. The proceeds from oil theft are used to buy weapons and ammunition, helping to sustain the armed groups that are fighting the federal government.
>
> (Asuni 2009: 2)

This illustrates how natural resources have been both a cause of, and a factor in, sustaining violent conflict in Nigeria. But in contrast to the situation in the Niger Delta, trade in natural resources appears not to play any direct role in relation to Boko Haram. I have found no reports about Boko Haram being implicated in any activities related to natural resources, be it extraction, transport, trade, or smuggling. None of the respondents brought up the issue unprompted, and when asked, they said they had never heard anything about the group being involved in such trade (Researcher 2; Diplomat 1; Diplomat 3; Corporate Representative 1). The main reason for this seems to be that there are no significant natural resources in the areas were Boko Haram operates. With the exception of tin and columite, which can be found near Jos, all of Nigeria's natural resources are concentrated in the southern part of the country. This drastically reduces the opportunities for Boko Haram to be directly involved in the trade of such resources. As one respondent said, "There are very little resources in the North. Nigeria's big natural resource is oil. So I don't even know what Boko Haram could trade up there" (Diplomat 1).

In addition, the smuggling of natural resources and other valuable goods require a network through which the goods can be transported and sold. One respondent pointed out that Boko Haram is unlikely to have such a network in place, since Nigeria is located south of the main smuggling routes and the trade is dominated by the nomadic Tuareg people, with whom Boko Haram has little contact:

> Other movements in the region, like AQIM, have been very involved in smuggling, trade of resources, drugs, cigarettes, various goods. […] AQIM has benefited of a tradition of smuggling by the Tuaregs, they have done it for a long time. They were the ones who traded slaves along the whole desert from Mauritania to Djibouti, the old trade routes and caravans go there. Here [in Nigeria], yes, there are some south-north routes crossing Borno, Kano, Sokoto [cities and states in northern Nigeria], but the activity is not controlled by the people Boko Haram is rooted in. You cannot improvise this, you have to be part of the system, the culture, the network. If you are not a Tuareg, you will not be able to make this kind of trade. It is not possible, because you do not have the knowledge, the background, the relations to do it. All this is intricated, it's a system. I don't think Boko Haram has these opportunities, and it doesn't have the background to do it. It's a matter of fact. Even if they would like to, they don't have the network.
>
> (Diplomat 2)

The above statement may somewhat understate the extent of contact between Boko Haram and the Tuaregs. Given the porous nature of Nigeria's borders and Boko Haram's reported presence in neighboring countries with significant Tuareg populations, such as Niger and Mali (see section 5.2 and 5.6), it is likely that there is at least some contact between them. Moreover, it is not only Tuaregs who trade and smuggle goods in West Africa (Researcher 1). Nevertheless, it holds true that the major traditional trade routes pass north of Nigeria, and that there is little evidence of Boko Haram being involved in transactions of natural resources and other valuable goods, such as cigarettes and drugs.

To briefly sum up, trade in natural resources does not appear to be an important transnational aspect of Boko Haram. The group is not known to be directly involved in, or benefit economically from, smuggling of such resources. Consequently, it is difficult to see how such trade could contribute to strengthen the group or spread the conflict outside Nigeria. The limited significance of trade in natural resources can be attributed mainly to the virtual absence of such resources in Boko Haram's operating area, but may also be due to relatively limited connections to the region's main smuggling networks.

5.5   Personal Relationships

According to the frameworks of transnationalism and neopatrimonialism, personal connections play an important role in Nigerian and West African security politics. This section discusses the significance of such personal connections in relation to Boko Haram. First, I discuss the alleged support of some Nigerian politicians to Boko Haram. Thereafter, in order to assess the extent of transnationalism, I focus on personal relationships that cut across the borders. Two main questions are discussed. First, are there personal alliances between prominent figures of Boko Haram and foreign supporters (for instance in other terrorist groups) and if so, is this contributing to strengthening Boko Haram? Second, are there personal alliances between central actors in Nigerian politics/security and neighboring states, and if so, is this affecting how those states react to Boko Haram? The latter could also indirectly affect the strength of Boko Haram, as the actions of neighboring states towards the group form an important part of the context in which it operates.

National connections

According to my respondents, support from local politicians played an important role in the initial development of Boko Haram in the mid-2000s (Diplomat 2; Corporate Representative 1; Diplomat 4; Researcher 3; International Organization 3). In the words of one respondent, the involvement of Nigerian politicians with Boko Haram is a "public secret" (Researcher 1). More specifically, the governor of Borno State, Ali Modu Sheriff, is said to have supported Boko Haram with funding and arms in exchange for electoral support in the 2007 elections. The group's first leader Mohammed Yusuf had a lot of young followers who were "crucial in terms of helping win the election", given their number and "energy to go into violence" (Researcher 3). Sheriff wanted to take advantage of this, and persuaded Yusuf into supporting his administration of Borno State.

> In exchange for their support, they were promised positions in the government. […] I think that since you have a very weak system of government in Nigeria, with very little accountability and prosecutions of governors, you cannot disguise the fact that there is a possibility that they also funded the movement and maybe even armed it.
>
> (Researcher 3)

Such appropriation and use of state resources for personal gain by local politicians and elites is in line with the concept of neopatrimonialism described in section 2.1. Other respondents

corroborate this view, saying it is likely that Sheriff used his financial and political powers to protect Boko Haram, and that he supported the group financially and with weapons in order to use its members as "political thugs" (Corporate Representative 1) or a "militia" (Diplomat 2) in his campaign to be re-elected. According to one respondent, Sheriff mixed Yusuf's followers with more criminal and violent gangs, and it was from then on the group became more aggressive and began to mount more violent attacks (Corporate Representative 1).

However, over time, there were increasing disagreements between Yusuf and the local political establishment. Yusuf sustained his critique of the government's implementation of Sharia, and as his movement continued to grow, Sheriff increasingly perceived it as a threat (Corporate representative 1; Researcher 3). Tensions grew, and culminated in the ban of Yusuf and his followers from Borno State and the 2009 crack-down on the group in which Yusuf and several hundred of his supporters were killed, as described in section 4.2.

Since then, there have been speculations about various other Nigerian politicians supporting Boko Haram as a means to delegitimize and destabilize the current government. For instance, the former commissioner of Borno State, Alhaji Buji Fai, is suspected to have been a financial supporter of Boko Haram until he was killed in the 2009 riots (Researcher 3). Currently, Mohammed Ndume, a Senator from the People's Democratic Party (PDP) is on trial for providing financial and logistic support to Boko Haram (Soniyi July 4, 2012). The Nigerian president Goodluck Jonathan himself has warned against the presence of Boko Haram members and supporters in his government and the security forces (Bøås 2012: 3).

It is hard to determine to what extent such accusations are reliable. Nigerian politicians consistently accuse each other of being connected to Boko Haram, and it is difficult to know if this information is based on facts or just part of the political power game. Many of my respondents believe that although local politicians probably supported the group in its initial years, they are no longer likely to actively do so – at least not or in any large or consistent manner (Diplomat 2; Researcher 3; Diplomat 1). Over the years, Boko Haram has become so violent and radical that it would be a liability for any politician to be associated with it. In the words of one respondent, "violence is really part of political life here, and Boko Haram has been included in this process from the mid-2000s until 2011 or 2012, when it became too much of an insurrection, a terrorist organization. Then of course it was too difficult for the political leaders to continue to use it, to control it" (Diplomat 2). It thus appears that support from local Nigerian politicians initially played a role in strengthening Boko Haram by

providing the group with funding and possibly arms, but in recent years, such support has become less prominent. On the other hand, although the overall active support from Nigeria elites may have diminished, some of the personal relationships that were in place during the first years of the group's existence persist:

> [B]efore 2009 it wasn't a complete taboo to affiliate with him [Yusuf] or his followers. And three years later, although they don't necessarily agree with the direction the group has taken, it's not like these relationships don't exist. In some cases they may have been relatives with someone who ended up becoming a fighter.
>
> (Researcher 2)

This could be part of the explanation for why there are still occasional reports about Nigerian elites having contact with Boko Haram members,[24] although overall their active involvement in the group is believed to have diminished.

Transnational connections

Regarding personal relationships between members of Boko Haram and supporters outside Nigeria, the information is even more uncertain. I have found no information about Boko Haram leaders forging alliances with people in official positions in neighboring countries. This contrasts with many other African insurgent groups, which have received support from politicians in neighboring states. For instance, the leader of the Liberian rebel army, Charles Taylor, had three of the region's key figures as his allies: the Burkina Faso President Compaore, the Libyan leader Colonel Gadaffi and the President of Côte d'Ivoire, Houphouet-Boigny. They provided the rebels with military training and support (Dokken 2008: 62). Similarly, the armed groups in The Democratic Republic of Congo "received support from states and nonstate actors of the region for ideological, economic, ethnic and strategic considerations" (Dokken 2008: 72). Such active support from state leaders appears not to have taken place in the case of Boko Haram. However, it can be argued that the leaders of neighboring countries support the group more indirectly by tolerating its presence in their territories. According to some respondents (Diplomat 1; Researcher 2), as long as Boko Haram does not conduct any attacks in Nigeria's adjacent states, these states are unlikely to actively fight the group and may be willing to overlook that it sometimes uses their territory to regroup and seek refuge, as described in section 5.2. In the words of one respondent:

---

[24] See for instance This Day (October 22, 2012), where a suspected Boko Haram member is reported to have been arrested in the home of his uncle, Senator Ahmed Khalifa Zanna.

"There have been no attacks against them [the neighboring countries]. And this seems to be the way it often works in West Africa: as long as they don't do anything, they are tolerated, they are allowed to have their bases and training camps in Chad or Niger or other places" (Diplomat 1).

Various non-state actors in the region appear to be more actively involved with Boko Haram. There are lots of speculations about Boko Haram's leaders linking up with other terrorist groups, such as al-Shabaab in Somalia and AQIM, al-Qaeda's North African branch. In November 2011, Abu Qaqa, a spokesman for Boko Haram, claimed that "any Muslim group that is struggling to establish an Islamic state can get support from al-Qaeda if they reach out to them. […] It is true that we have links with al-Qaeda. They support us and we support them" (Vanguard November 24, 2011). In an interview with The Guardian (January 27, 2012), Qaqa also said that "Al-Qaeda are our elder brothers. During the lesser Hajj [pilgrimage] in August 2011, our leader travelled to Saudi Arabia and met al-Qaeda there. We enjoy financial and technical support from them. Anything we want from them we ask them." According to members of the Borno religious establishment, Boko Haram's former leader Yusuf also went on Hajj to Saudi Arabia on two occasions in the mid-2000s. There, he made contacts with Salafists who provided the group with funding (Walker 2012: 3).

It thus appears that both Yusuf and Shekau have established personal relationships with Islamists outside Nigeria, and that these connections have provided the group with some backing. However, the above claims should be interpreted with some caution. They are very general, and include no reference to specific al-Qaeda leaders. As argued in section 3.2, it may be in Boko Haram's interest to exaggerate its connections with other terrorist groups. One of my respondents thinks the link between Boko Haram and al-Qaeda is "overplayed", arguing that if there were in fact close connections between al-Qaeda's and Boko Haram's leadership, "you'd see more anti-Western attacks from Boko Haram" (Corporate Representative 1). Several other respondents agree that there are significant differences between Boko Haram's nationally oriented targeting practice and grievances on the one hand, and al-Qaeda's more global jihadist ideology on the other (Researcher 1; Diplomat 4). One also point out that AQIM is said to be racist, with its leadership mostly consisting of "white" Arabs, making them unlikely allies of Boko Haram's commanders (Corporate Representative 1).

Nonetheless, a wide range of sources claim to have evidence that Boko Haram has links with other terrorist groups in the region, including the President of Niger (Reuters June 7, 2012), Nigerian security officials (AFP February 23, 2012), and General Carter Ham, head of the US military's Africa Command (ARICOM). The latter stated in July 2012 that "there are signs that Boko Haram, al-Shabaab and AQIM are increasingly coordinating their activities. […] Most notably I would say that the linkages between AQIM and Boko Haram are probably the most worrisome in terms of the indications we have that they are likely sharing funds, training and explosive materials" (The Guardian June 26, 2012). As we shall see in section 5.6, Boko Haram members are known to have trained with both AQIM and al-Shabaab, and it is difficult to imagine how this could come about if there were no connections between members of the groups. At the very least, such training could be expected to result in some personal connections being established. Some links between Boko Haram and other military groups in the region are thus very likely to exist, although the precise nature and extent of collaboration is difficult to determine.

More generally, it is also noteworthy that languages, ethnicities and cultural identities cut across the border areas of Nigeria, Benin, Chad, Cameroon and Niger. There are regular interactions across the borders, and many Nigerians have relatives in the neighboring countries. Even when people are not directly related, their cultural identification may be tied more closely to people living across the border than to the nation state (Flynn 1997). Common identities, language and ethnicity make cross-border movement and interaction easier. This increases the opportunities of Boko Haram to blend in with the local population in neighboring countries and recruit, regroup and plan attacks there without attracting attention. According to a man living in Cameroon, close to where Boko Haram kidnapped the French family in February 2013, "the problem is that it's hard to identify Boko Haram [members]. You can't recognize them" (France 24 March 2, 2013).

Despite evidence of Boko Haram members being present in Nigeria's neighboring countries (see section 5.2), the issue of Boko Haram is not high on the political agenda in the region. Nigeria is the dominant economic and political power in West Africa, as described in section 4.1. This position may help explain the cautious approach of other state leaders. They have made few official remarks about Boko Haram, and have been careful not to criticize the Nigerian authorities' handling of the group. It appears that they are interested in maintaining a friendly relationship with President Goodluck Jonathan and other key Nigerian figures, and

they are less vocal on the issue of Boko Haram than other problems in the region (International Organization 3). This also holds true for ECOWAS, the main regional organization. Indirectly, this hesitancy may benefit Boko Haram, as it makes coordinated regional efforts to curb its activities less likely. According to one respondent,

> ECOWAS as an organization seems not to really meddle with internal politics of Nigeria as a big member state, the most powerful contributing ECOWAS member state. You would rather see more attention and efforts into other member states' crises or issues […], like the situation in Guinea Bissau, the situation in Mali, the problems happening for instance in Togo, and other places. But you will not see any strong interventions or reactions on the Boko Haram issue.
>
> (International Organization 3)

Of course, part of the reason for this may also be that the ECOWAS member states simply are not very concerned about Boko Haram. According to one of my respondents (Researcher 2), as long as Boko Haram concentrates on conducting attacks within Nigeria, it is seen mainly as a Nigerian problem. Neighboring leaders do not consider it a major threat, and have shown relatively little interest in the group:

> They tend to view it only as a Nigerian issue. And to an extent it's true. With the exception of the February 2013 kidnapping of a 7-member French family in northern Cameroon and some other small Boko Haram operations in Cameroonian border towns, it hasn't seeped over the borders too much; it has mostly been contained within Nigeria. So the neighboring states see it as Nigeria's problem, and are just thankful that they don't have it.
>
> (Researcher 2)

However, some respondents believe that this is changing, saying there is increasing concern among the leadership of Nigeria's adjacent countries that the group's influence and activities may spread (International Organization 3; International Organization 5). If so, we may expect to see more involvement from foreign leaders on the Boko Haram issue in the future.

All in all, Boko Haram appears to have both national and transnational connections. The group has connections to Nigerian elites, who are likely to have provided the group with funding and used it to obtain and maintain powerful positions. In addition, Boko Haram has ties to terrorist groups in other countries, although the exact nature and extent of the connections are difficult to determine. The group's connections to terrorist movements outside Nigeria constitute a transnational aspect that is likely to have contributed to strengthening Boko Haram, by allowing its members to learn from and be inspired by other

Islamist militants. In addition, more general ethnic and kinship relations with people in neighboring states may make it easier for Boko Haram members to cross the borders to hide and regroup outside Nigeria. On the other hand, Boko Haram is not known to have received direct support from political leaders or other elites in neighboring states. Nevertheless, the apparent willingness of neighboring state leaders to overlook the problem may be seen as a more indirect form of support.

5.6 Training

Boko Haram has been able to sustain its violent insurgency against Nigerian authorities for several years, and has planned and conducted hundreds of terrorist attacks. Where did the group get the knowledge and skills required to do this? Is there any evidence of Boko Haram members receiving training in other countries, in line with the perspective of transnationalism?

As argued in section 2.2, the skills and knowledge needed to conduct violence and terrorist attacks can be obtained from a variety of different sources, both legal and illegal. The possibilities of Boko Haram learning from jihadist forums on the internet and from combat experience in other countries, such as Mali, have been addressed in section 5.1 and section 5.2, respectively. In addition, Boko Haram members have trained in training camps outside Nigeria. One of the countries in which such training is reported to have taken place is Somalia, where the militant group al-Shabaab conducts a violent insurgency against the government and has, at times, controlled large parts of the territory. In June 2011, BBC reported that "Nigerian security sources" believed Boko Haram was receiving training in camps outside Nigeria, possibly in Somalia (Fisher June 21, 2011). Nigerian security officials also asserted that Mamman Nur, who is believed to the group's second in command, returned to Nigeria from Somalia in the late spring or early summer of 2011 (Mail and Guardian August 31, 2011). This is consistent with a June 2011 statement issued by Boko Haram, which read:

> Very soon, we would wage Jihad on the enemies of God and his prophet. We want to make it known that our Jihadists have arrived [in] Nigeria from Somalia where they got serious training on warfare from our brethren who made the country ungovernable and forced the interim government to relocate to Kenya. We want to assure all security agencies that we would frustrate their efforts. By the grace of God, despite the armoured

carriers that they are boasting of, they are no match with the kind of training we acquired in Somalia.

<div align="right">(Vanguard June 17, 2011)</div>

According to one of my respondents, the training Boko Haram refers to in the above statement is suicide attacks: "If you look at the history of their attacks, the 'kind of training' they had received was in suicide bombing. They said this on the 15th [June 2011], and on the 16th the real test of that training was the suicide attack on the police headquarters" (Researcher 3). This was the first suicide attack ever registered in Nigeria, and the first time Boko Haram used vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VIED). Two months later, the group launched a second suicide attack, this time targeting the UN headquarters in Abuja and killing at least 21 people (Cook 2011: 3). As noted in section 5.1, many observers saw the transition to VIEDs and suicide attacks as a dramatic leap in Boko Haram's capability, indicating that the group had received training from other terrorist networks (Stewart January 26, 2012).

In addition to Somalia, there have been many reports about Boko Haram members receiving training in other parts of the Sahel region, particularly in Niger and Mali. Some of these are listed in a chronological order below:

- In December 2011, members of the UN assessment mission on the impact of the Libyan crisis on the Sahel region reported that they had been informed that Boko Haram had established links with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and that some of its members had received training in AQIM camps in Mali during the summer of 2011. They also reported that seven Boko Haram members were arrested while transiting through Niger to Mali, "in possession of documentation on manufacturing of explosives, propaganda leaflets and names and contact details of members of AQIM they were allegedly planning to meet" (Report to the UN Security Council 2011: 11-12).

- In April 2012, Nigerian and international media reported that Mohammed Suleiman Ashafa, accused by the Nigerian authorities of being a middleman between Boko Haram and al-Qaeda, had admitted to facilitating training of several members of Boko Haram in the Sahel (Mizrokhi April 16, 2012).

- In June 2012, Niger's president Mahamadou Issoufou said he had evidence that Boko Haram was running training camps in Gao, Mali (Reuters June 7, 2012).

- In July 2012, the two Boko Haram members Khalid al-Barnawi and Adam Kambar, as well as the group's leader Shekau, were designated as "foreign terrorists" by the United States. Both al-Barnawi and Kambar were reported to have trained in Algeria in an AQIM training camp in 2009 (Zenn 2013b: 3).

- In September 2012, Nigerian military said it had arrested an immigration officer for being an active member of Boko Haram. According to a military spokesman, he confessed to "having been trained alongside 15 other members of the sect on weapon handling, assassination and special operations in Niger" (This Day September 29, 2012).

- In December 2012, General Ham, the head of AFRICOM, said that AQIM was operating terrorist training camps in northern Mali and that members of Boko Haram had traveled there (New York Times December 3, 2012).

- Addressing Nigerian soldiers headed for Mali, the Chief of Army Staff, Lt-General Azubuike Ihejirika, said that "We have evidence that some of the terrorists operating in Nigeria were trained in Mali" (Daily Trust January 18, 2013).

Again, one should not blindly trust statements from security officials in the region. Most of the above statements are very general, and do not include details on specific members, locations or times for Boko Haram receiving training abroad. Still, the reports come from a variety of different sources and nations, and are collaborated by many of my respondents (Diplomat 2; Corporate Representative 1; Researcher 2; Researcher 3). For instance, according to one respondent, there are "very strong signs that they [Boko Haram] train people with AQIM. They probably also train people with al-Shabaab in Somalia, and perhaps even send people further" (Diplomat 2). When asked about how he knew this, the respondent rejected that it was based solely on statements from secondary sources and Boko Haram itself: "This is something we have independently verified." The respondent said that information collected by British, American and French intelligence services confirm that Boko Haram has indeed received training outside Nigeria (Diplomat 2).

There have also been some more specific reports about Boko Haram's training from the local population in various Malian towns. For instance, locals in Timbuktu say hundreds of Boko Haram members have trained at a camp run by Ansar Dine militants in the town. They claim about 200 Nigerians arrived in April 2012, and say that from then on new militants came almost every day. According to a man who was hired to cook for them, the militants did physical exercises, learned to assemble assault rifles and practiced firing shoulder-mounted weapons. Commanders from Boko Haram and Ansar Dine are said to have given newcomers 4,000 West African CFA (about 8 USD) to enlist. According to the locals, the militants all fled into the desert as French military strikes against Timbuktu intensified in mid-January 2013 (Wall Street Journal February 1, 2013). While some of the details in this story are inconsistent (for instance, the cook is reported saying that 200 Nigerians arrived in 300 cars), it leaves little doubt that some militants from Nigeria have indeed received training in Mali.

It is difficult to determine the exact number of Boko Haram members who have received training abroad, as well as the contents of their training. What is clear is that for Boko Haram to get access to new knowledge and skills, it suffices that a relatively small proportion of its members receives training and/or battle experience from other militants and conflicts. As one respondent pointed out, "They don't need to train many people. If you train a few and they are smart, they can also train the others" (Diplomat 2).

Nevertheless, one could question to what extent Boko Haram's activities actually require advanced knowledge and skills. As noted in section 4.2, most of Boko Haram's attacks are drive-by shootings from motorcycles. The skills needed for this can be obtained legally by attending a driver school, practicing at a firing range, or by trial and error. Consequently, the group could have continued using these tactics without any training in jihadist training camps. Still, the group has also conducted a number of more advanced attacks, involving dozens of attackers and the use of coordinated IEDs. Although much information is available online, including instructions on how to construct IED's, many of the online manuals contain errors and are incomplete, and as one respondent said, "You still need some training to avoid it exploding in your house" (International Organization 1). Studies have shown that few terrorists have been able to conduct successful bomb attacks solely based on information on the internet. Socialization and practical training in training camps are still considered important factors for success (Stenersen 2008; Nesser 2008).

That some Boko Haram members have received training abroad does not automatically rule out that the group members also train within Nigeria. However, some of the respondents believe this is improbable, citing the Nigerian security forces' attention to, and violent crackdowns on, any Boko Haram related activity. For instance, one argues that an open-air training location, as seen in the video issued by Boko Haram in November 2012 (see section 5.2), "seems unlikely" to be found in Nigeria, as "the security forces are exercising relatively tight control, and you would imagine that if such a thing had existed in Nigeria, it would have been discovered at some point" (International Organization 1). Others say the group has previously had training camps in northern Nigeria (NGO 2; Diplomat 1), and believe this is still possible given the fact that "the Nigerian bush is wide, there are wide expanses where they can set anything up" (Diplomat 1). In fact, in February 2013, the Nigerian security forces discovered two Boko Haram camps in the northeastern Borno State, one in a game reserve and the other in a forest. They raided the camps, killing 17 "suspected Boko Haram members". A military spokesman said the camps were fortified and had training facilities, armory, accommodation, kitchens, vehicle holding areas, latrines and water points. According to him, the camps were used to conduct training and plan "attacks, killings and bombings" in nearby towns (Leadership February 2, 2013). However, there are no signs that Boko Haram has contributed to further spreading instability outside Nigeria by using these camps to train members of other Islamist groups.

To sum up, it thus appears that Boko Haram is not only training outside Nigeria, but also within the country. Still, training constitutes an important transnational aspect of the group, with a variety of different sources indicating that Boko Haram members have received training in Somalia, Niger, Mali and Algeria. Such training has most likely contributed to strengthening the group by providing members with knowledge and skills that would otherwise have been difficult to obtain. This has enabled the group to successfully conduct larger, deadlier and more elaborate attacks.

5.7   Funding

As mentioned in section 2.2, al-Qaeda and other terror networks are known to have received financial support from organizations and individuals in a variety of countries. The conceptual framework thus outlined foreign funding as one potential transnational aspect of conflict. In order to assess the significance of such transnational financial transactions in the case of Boko

Haram, this section discusses the group's sources of financing. From where does Boko Haram get its money? Is there any evidence of Boko Haram receiving financial support from individuals, groups or states outside Nigeria?

However, before beginning a discussion of Boko Haram's sources of financing, it is necessary to address the more basic question of how much money Boko Haram actually needs. The respondents differ on this issue, ranging from those arguing that Boko Haram needs very little (Researcher 1), to those believing that the group's activities require "substantial" amount of funds (Diplomat 2; Diplomat 4; International Organization 4). One respondent says that Boko Haram does not need much money, as it "appears to be a movement that is very ideologically motivated, which mean that they don't have to pay their fighters" (Researcher 1). The respondent says most of the group members hold "normal" positions within the local communities, such as workmen and traders, and that they are ideologically rather than financially motivated. If they had been motivated by profit, it would have been much easier for Nigerian security forces to infiltrate the movement and get information on it: "There is little doubt that he Nigerian army and intelligence services are working on getting a foothold, but they can't get in, and that indicates that the core members, those who plan the attacks, have a high degree of ideological motivation. If it had been about money, it would have been much easier to get in" (Researcher 1). In contrast, other reports indicate that the group does in fact compensate its fighters. For instance, in the beginning Boko Haram is said to have attracted new members by offering food, shelter and welfare handouts (Walker 2012: 3), and recently, media have reported that the group pays new members to enlist (Wall Street Journal February 1, 2013). Of course, these perspectives need not be mutually exclusive. It is very possible that the leaders and core members of the group are ideologically motivated, whereas some of the lower-level foot soldiers have been paid for joining the group or performing specific tasks, such as transporting goods or driving the motorcycles used in drive-by shootings.

Most respondents agree that Boko Haram's attacks in themselves are not very expensive; weapons and explosives can be stolen, bought relatively cheaply, or constructed by the group itself (see section 5.1). However, just like most other insurgent or terrorist groups, Boko Haram is believed to have additional costs that are not directly linked to the attacks. They need money

not only for the weapons and operations, but mostly for everything else, like if someone gets killed they need to pay for the funeral, the widow, and as an Islamic movement they would normally have some kind of social element, handing out food and so on. And also for propaganda, they are really big now on the internet, so they obviously invested in that. They have this whole operations not directly linked to the attacks, which they probably wouldn't need that much money to stage – just buying the weapons, explosives, which they may even be stealing.

(International Organization 4)

Several other respondents share the conviction that Boko Haram provides various "social services" and has considerable non-attack related expenses (Diplomat 4; Diplomat 2; Researcher 3). While it is impossible to determine the exact amount of money Boko Haram uses, it thus appears likely that the group needs funding not only for its weapons and fighters, but also other activities not directly linked to violent activities.

How then does Boko Haram get its money? As already discussed in section 5.1 and 5.4, the group is not believed to be directly involved in transnational transactions of weapons, natural resources and other valuable commodities such as drugs and cigarettes. In the words of one respondent,

> We have not seen evidence to prove that Boko Haram has been involved in transnational criminality to generate funding. […] But to a very large extent domestic criminality has been a key funding opportunity. Particularly bank robberies and cash machines has been a key avenue for raising money for the Boko Haram.
>
> (Researcher 3)

Several other respondents also identify bank robberies as an important funding source for the group (Researcher 2; Diplomat 2; Security Official 1; Diplomat 4). Walker (2012: 5) refers to an unnamed source said to be close to Boko Haram, who believes the group has made about 500 million naira (about 3 million USD) on bank robberies, although such claims cannot be verified. While bank robberies are thought to have been an important avenue for raising money for Boko Haram, their profitability may have diminished over the years, as the deteriorating security situation has led many banks and ATMs in the most violent parts of northern Nigeria to close (Nigerian Tribune September 11, 2012). The banks that remain open have very little cash, "so attacking a bank is not very rewarding now" (Diplomat 2). One of my respondents had himself interviewed a Boko Haram member who was recently arrested for participating in a bank robbery. The robbers only got about 3000 naira (about 19 USD) from the attack (Security Official 1).

In addition to bank robberies, the respondents often mentioned financial support from Nigerian politicians and other elites as an important source of money for Boko Haram (Diplomat 2; Corporate Representative 1; Diplomat 4; Researcher 3; International Organization 3). This issue has already been discussed in some detail in section 5.5, so here it suffices to reiterate that it is likely that Boko Haram has received some funding from Nigerian politicians, at least in the initial years of the group's existence.

Financial support from Nigerian politicians and bank robberies were the two sources of Boko Haram funding most commonly mentioned by the respondents. These are both examples of domestic avenues for raising money. Several respondents underlined that there is enough money within Nigeria, so that Boko Haram need not go outside the country to seek funding (NGO 2; International organization 1; Diplomat 2). Even though poverty is widespread, the high economic inequality means that there are also a number of very wealthy individuals. In the words of one respondent:

> If they [Boko Haram] received money from abroad, it was not much, because their agenda is very much national. And there's enough money in this country for not being obliged to go out and seek it. The traditional rulers have a lot of money, and are very well funded by the money they can get from the state.
>
> (Diplomat 2)

Although most of my respondents emphasized the domestic sources of Boko Haram funding, there have also been reports from other sources about funding from outside Nigeria. According to a relative of former Boko Haram leader Mohammed Yusuf, 40 % of Boko Haram's funding comes from outside of Nigeria (Zenn 2013a: 9). He does not, however, elaborate on the sources or countries of origin for these funds. Other reports provide more concrete examples. For instance, in February 2012, the newspaper the Nigerian Tribune reported that "recently arrested key figures" of Boko Haram had told security agents that Boko Haram initially relied on donations from its members, but that its links with AQIM opened it up to more funding from groups in Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom. According to the newspaper, members of Boko Haram confirmed that a charity organization based in the United Kingdom, the Al-Muntada Trust Fund, has given financial support to the group (Nigerian Tribune February 13, 2012).The allegation against Al-Muntada was taken up in British press, but the organization itself has denied having any connection to Boko Haram (Al-Muntada Trust Fund September 2012). Another foreign source of Boko Haram funding reportedly uncovered in the police investigations was the Islamic World Society, with

headquarters in Saudi Arabia (Nigerian Tribune, February 13, 2012). An intelligence report based on police investigations and military operations against Boko Haram hideouts in December 2011, also asserted that Boko Haram has received 40 million naira (which equals about 250,000 USD) from an unnamed Algerian organization (Premium Times May 13, 2012). As previously noted, Boko Haram's spokesman Abu Qaqa has also said that the group receives funding from al-Qaeda, but there is little concrete evidence to support this claim (The Guardian January 27, 2012).

Due to the covert and informal mode of financial transactions to extremist groups, it is difficult to verify the reports about Boko Haram's funding. This section has shown that the respondents emphasize Boko Haram's domestic sources of money, but the reports above suggest that Boko Haram has also received some financial support from outside of Nigeria. Still, it seems probable that domestic crimes and money from local supporters have been more significant sources of funding for the group than transnational financial support. Given Boko Haram's national agenda and targeting practices, the group has received relatively little attention outside Nigeria, and domestic actors are more likely than foreigners to be interested in the activities of the group. Thus, although some isolated transnational transactions are believed to have taken place, funding does not appear to be a major transnational aspect of Boko Haram or to play a key role in strengthening the group. Neither have I found any evidence of financial flows going in the opposite direction, from Boko Haram to militants Islamists or other actors outside Nigeria.

6   Conclusion

This thesis has discussed to what extent Boko Haram should be considered a transnational phenomenon. In order to answer this question, I have identified the transnational aspects of Boko Haram, and discussed to what extent they have contributed to strengthening the group and/or spreading instability from Nigeria to the wider region.

So far, I have considered the various transnational aspects of Boko Haram separately. This has enabled a more thorough and systematic discussion of the importance of transnational transactions in each category. However, the various aspects are interlinked, and the research question concerns Boko Haram as a whole. In the conclusion, I therefore look at all the aspects in combination. I summarize the main points of the thesis, and discuss which transnational aspects are the most prominent, how they relate to each other, and to what extent the various aspects, when taken together, warrant an understanding of Boko Haram as a transnational phenomenon.

The theoretical starting point for my analysis was Dokken's study of the regionalized civil wars in Liberia and The Democratic Republic of Congo, in which five transnational aspects of the conflicts are identified: recycling of small arms and light weapons, recruitment of mercenaries and militarized refugees, flows of 'ordinary' refugees, trade in natural resources, and personal relationships. In section 2.2, I argued that civil wars, insurgencies and terrorism all fall within the category of irregular warfare and share many characteristics. Consequently, Dokken's framework could be applied to the case of Boko Haram, although it is not a civil war in the traditional sense. And indeed, my analysis has shown that many – but not all – of the transnational aspects identified by Dokken were also important for Boko Haram. Still, the dynamics of civil war and terrorism are not identical, and I found it necessary to further develop the conceptual framework by adding insights from studies of transnational terrorism. From these studies, we know that travel to jihadist training camps and financial support from abroad are common transnational characteristics of terrorist networks. I therefore added training and funding as two transnational aspects to be examined in the analysis of Boko Haram. The result was a framework of seven transnational aspects that could potentially be relevant to Boko Haram.

In order to collect the information needed to determine which of these aspects (if any) were present in the case of Boko Haram, and how they had affected the strength and spread of the

group, I conducted literature studies and semi-structured expert interviews in Abuja, Nigeria. The main benefit of this research design is that it allowed me to do a comprehensive in-depth study of the various transnational aspects of Boko Haram, whereas the main weakness is the limited ability to generalize the findings.

The analysis has shown that although Boko Haram's violence remains contained within Nigeria, it also has some transnational aspects. The most prominent are related to the recruitment of mercenaries and militarized refugees, training and weapons. In the case of weapons, Boko Haram is seldom directly involved in the transnational transactions, but the group has benefited from the wide availability of cheap arms smuggled into Nigeria by other actors. In contrast, training is a type of transnational transactions in which Boko Haram is directly involved, with group members traveling to training camps in various countries of the Sahel region, including Somalia, Niger and Mali. Boko Haram has also recruited some people from neighboring countries, but the influx of foreign fighters appears limited. Conversely, a number of Boko Haram fighters are believed to have traveled to other countries in the region, and some are reportedly participating in the conflict in Mali.

I have argued that these transnational aspects have contributed to strengthening Boko Haram in a number of ways. First, training abroad is likely to have provided the group with skills and knowledge that enables it to construct more advanced bombs and stage more deadly attacks. Second, the extensive smuggling of small arms and light weapons into Nigeria entails that weapons are inexpensive and widely available. Although Boko Haram is not known to be directly involved in the smuggling of such weapons, the transnational transactions of weapons are likely to contribute more indirectly to strengthening the group by making weapons cheaper and easier to acquire. The transnational aspects of Boko Haram also contribute to furthering conflict and instability outside Nigeria. This is particularly evident in the case of recruitment, where we have seen that Boko Haram fighters are traveling out of Nigeria to join Islamist rebels fighting French and African forces in Mali. This could, in turn, lead to a strengthening of Boko Haram, if members who have been in Mali return to Nigeria with new skills and combat experience, as well as possible ideological inspiration from the more globally oriented jihadists in Mali.

Still, the transnational aspects of Boko Haram should not be exaggerated. The violence has mainly been contained within Nigeria, and with the exception of some Boko Haram members traveling to Mali, the various forms of transnational transactions discussed in this thesis do

80

not appear to have contributed to spreading instability from Nigeria to other countries. Also, as the discussions in the previous chapter have shown, not all the types of transnational transactions identified in the conceptual framework are equally important in the case of Boko Haram. This is particularly evident with regard to trade in natural resources, which have been important causes and drivers of many conflicts in Africa, but have not been significant to Boko Haram. This may be due both to the absence of natural resources in the area in which the group operates, as well as limited connections to the region's main trade and smuggling networks. Likewise, although some people have fled to neighboring countries as a result of Boko Haram attacks and violent government response, the majority of refugees have remained within Nigeria. Flows of refugees are thus not an important transnational aspect of the Boko Haram conflict.

The significance of transnational funding and personal connections is more unclear. There are some indications of both Boko Haram's funding and its connections transgressing national borders, but due to the informal and covert nature of the transactions, they are difficult to verify. At the same time, there are also rumors about personal relationships and financial support from elites within Nigeria, but again, it is hard to determine their extent and implications.

Chapter 5 discussed the various aspects separately for the sake of analytical clarity, but it is important to note that they overlap and are related to each other in a number of ways. For instance, Boko Haram members not only get trained in jihadist training camps (section 5.6), but also from combat experience in other countries (section 5.2). Moreover, the fact that Boko Haram members train with AQIM and al-Shabaab (section 5.6) is likely to also generate personal connections between members of the groups (section 5.5). The fact that trade or smuggling of natural resources is not a transnational aspect of Boko Haram (section 5.4), also implicates that such transactions cannot be an important source of funding for the group (section 5.7). And many of the politicians who are rumored to have close personal connections to Boko Haram (section 5.5) are the same as those who are said to have funded the group (section 5.7).

The interlinkages and varying significance of the different transnational aspects illustrate the importance of taking a comprehensive approach in order to get a nuanced understanding of to what extent Boko Haram should be considered a transnational phenomenon. In contrast, studies that look at only one or a few aspects are likely to result in a portrayal of the group

that is biased and incomplete. For example, some analysts focus on the group's historical origins, stated objectives or targeting practices, and conclude that Boko Haram is a predominantly domestic phenomenon (Stewart January 26, 2012; Eveslage 2012; Campbell, March 21, 2013). Others focus on Boko Haram's known and assumed connections to other terrorist movements, and describe the group as "al-Qaeda linked", an "international terrorist threat" and "global jihadists" (Goodspeed January 6, 2012; Roggio November 30, 2012).

By taking a more comprehensive approach, this thesis has shown Boko Haram is neither a completely national nor a completely transnational phenomenon. Rather, the group should be classified somewhere in between these two extremes. The group has some transnational aspects, mainly related to training, weapons and, to a lesser extent, recruitment. In other areas, such as staging of attacks and refugee flows, the group remains a predominantly domestic issue.

With respect to the generalizability of these findings, it may be useful to differentiate between the empirical and theoretical level. Whereas the specific empirical findings (for example that training, weapons and recruitment constitute the most important transnational aspects) are valid only in the case of Boko Haram, the general conceptual framework identifying potential transnational aspects of conflict can apply to a wider range of cases. As this thesis has shown, many of the transnational aspects identified through Dokken's studies of civil war also applied to the terrorist/insurgency group Boko Haram. By adding two transnational aspects from the literature on transnational terrorism (funding and training), this thesis has also contributed to further theory development by making Dokken's framework better adapted to analyze other types of conflict, in addition to civil war. I argue that the transnational aspects identified here is applicable to cases of irregular warfare in context where states are weak and informal regimes strong, although their exact significance is something that needs to be determined in each case. For instance, a study of the regional causes and consequences of al-Shabaab in Somalia may take the seven transnational aspects identified in this study as a starting point, but find that, unlike the case of Boko Haram, personal connections, funding and trade in natural resources play the most significant roles. If the conceptual framework is applied in this way to a number of cases, one may gradually uncover patterns of differences and commonalities between various conflicts. This is in line with the aim outlined in section 3.3 of understanding the transnational aspects of one single case – Boko Haram, but at the same time contribute to theory development.

The transnational aspects of the Boko Haram conflict would have been difficult to identify through a traditional IR state level analysis. From the perspective of the nation state, Boko Haram appears to be a Nigerian issue. Among several hundred attacks conducted by the group, only one has been in another state's territory; the February 2013 kidnapping of a French family in Cameroon. The neighboring states have not shown any signs to intervene with the situation in Nigeria, and have given limited attention to the issue in their foreign policy and official statements. However, this analysis has shown that although Boko Haram's violence remains contained within a nation state, it has transnational aspects and ties to the security situation in the wider region. This illustrates the importance of applying a conceptual framework that focuses not only on nation states and official policy, but also on informal transactions and other types of actors in order to understand African conflicts and security politics.

Nevertheless, the approach chosen here is not perfect. By formulating a research question that focuses on identifying the transnational aspects of a conflict, there is a danger that important local and national causes and implications are ignored or understated. For instance, by concentrating on how *transnational* transactions have contributed to strengthening Boko Haram, this thesis has largely ignored the *national* factors contributing to the group's emergence and persistence, such as local mismanagement, unemployment and poverty. Similarly, we have seen that a lot of people have fled their homes due to Boko Haram-related violence. This undoubtedly causes a lot of problems and suffering, but since most of the migrants remain within Nigeria, it is not considered an important consequence from a transnational perspective. Conversely, it is possible that Boko Haram has some transnational aspects that were not discussed in this thesis, because the data collection and analysis focused mainly on the seven aspects identified in the conceptual framework. For instance, more attention could have been given to the immaterial aspects of transnationalism, such as ideological inspiration and imitation. Comparing Boko Haram's teachings with the ideologies of other militant Islamist groups in the region is one interesting avenue for further research.

Finally, it is noteworthy that the transnational aspects of a conflict are not static, but may change over time. In general, Boko Haram appears to have become more internationally oriented over the last year, making reference to groups and conflicts outside Nigeria in its statements, posting videos in Arabic on jihadist websites, and in February 2013, conducting its first and (so far) only attack outside Nigeria. The emergence of Ansaru, which has targeted

Westerners more consistently and is more explicitly internationally oriented, may also result in closer connections between Nigerian Islamists and other extremist groups in the region. Such developments could lead to transnational transactions becoming more important in the future.

Literature

Aberbach, Joel D. and Bert A. Rockman (2002). "Conducting and Coding Elite Interviews", *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35 (4): 673-676.

AFP (August 1, 2012). "Nigeria Islamists killed at Chad border: military".
URL: http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iAic5DvBdtHOmxy96ZPzTKvcAXjQ?docId=CNG.d5514f749a7ad3759a659047be4df987.681 [Accessed March 4, 2013].

AFP (February 23, 2012). "Nigeria defence chief says Boko Haram has ties to Al-Qaeda", by Ola Awoniyi.
URL: http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5g1HSCZCkSQ8eU0k6BBd2pC4ZNylg?docId=CNG.72ca66ee1a4afc263528e0bb35442cac.5f1 [Accessed December 12, 2012].

AFP (February 27, 2012). "Nigeria repatriates 11,000 'undesirable' foreigners".
URL: http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5j6LxnUNkkVgq41ojct_nb1ws0iYw?docId=CNG.7f5a2ee87ef35e8f79ee0bc452062a3c.7c1 [Accessed November 13, 2012].

AFP (June 10, 2012). "Boko Haram church attacks kill 3, wound dozens in Nigeria".
URL: http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gLrrJ37u-BZjdhwFDGf7GW5kksdg?docId=CNG.2642c64437ac95c7b942b67f42682196.641 [Accessed June 12, 2012].

AFP (October 23, 2012). "Nigeria claims Boko Haram recruiting foreigners for attacks during Muslim festival".
URL: http://africanoutlookonline.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5227:nigeria-claims-boko-haram-recruiting-foreigners-for-attacks-during-muslim-festival&catid=29:courts-a-crime&Itemid=53 [Accessed March 11, 2013].

AFP (September 29, 2012). "Nigerian security officers arrested for Boko Haram links".
URL: http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5j8u4K8EJ1niSYbJoYmXX2__d7olA?docId=CNG.8f3911cf91ecd80e7bb405b134a8bbe7.141 [Accessed October 2, 2012].

Agnew, John (1994). "The Territorial Trap: The Geographical Assumptions of International Relations Theory", *Review of International Political Economy* 1 (1): 53-80.

Al-Muntada Trust Fund (September 2012). "Response to Observer Article 09/09/12".
URL: http://www.almuntadatrust.org/response-to-observer/ [Accessed September 12, 2012].

Amnesty International (2012). *Nigeria: Trapped in a cycle of violence*. Report by Amnesty International. London: Amnesty International Ltd.

Andersen, Svein S. (2006). "Aktiv informantintervjuing", *Norsk Statsvitenskapelig Tidsskrift* 22: 278-298.

Andres, Amado Philip de (2008). "West Africa Under Attack: Drugs, Organised Crime and Terrorism as the Threats to Global Security", UNISCI Discussion papers no. 16, January 2008.

Armed Conflict Location and Event Dataset (2012). "Trend 3: The Most and Least Violent States in 2012". URL: http://www.acleddata.com/the-most-and-least-violent-states-in-2012/ [Accessed March 6, 2012].

Asuni, Judith Burdin (2009). "Blood Oil in the Niger Delta", United States Institute for Peace (USIP) Special Report no. 227, August 2009.

BBC News (August 1, 2012). "Nigeria's precarious oil amnesty".
URL: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-19067711 [Accessed August 10, 2012].

BBC News (December 24, 2012). "Nigeria: Islamist group Ansaru 'kidnapped' French man".
URL: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-20833946 [Accessed January 5, 2013].

BBC News (January 24, 2013). "Mali crisis: Key players".
URL: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17582909 [Accessed March 12, 2013].

BBC News (July 31, 2009). "Nigerian sect head dies in custody".
URL: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8177451.stm [Accessed June 7, 2012].

BBC News (March 16, 2012). "Nigeria attacks: 'Boko Haram bombed my church'".
URL: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17369800 [Accessed March 14, 2013].

Berry, Jeffrey M. (2002). "Validity and Reliability Issues in Elite Interviewing", *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35: 4, 679-682.

Bey, Matthew and Sim Tack (February 21, 2013). "The Rise of a New Nigerian Militant Group", *Security Weekly*, Stratfor Global Intelligence.
URL: http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/rise-new-nigerian-militant-group [Accessed March 27, 2013].

Blueprint (September 3, 2012). "Nigeria leads campaign against small arms at UN".
URL: http://blueprintng.com/2012/09/nigeria-leads-campaign-against-small-arms-at-un/ [Accessed March 4, 2013].

Bøås, Morten (2012). "Violent Islamic uprising in northern Nigeria: from the "Taleban" to Boko Haram II", NOREF Article, February 2012.

Bryman, Allan (2004). *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Buros, Randi L. (2011). "Realism vs. Liberalism in the Development of Counterterrorism Strategy", *Small Wars Journal*, October 16, 2011.
URL: http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/realism-vs-liberalism-in-the-development-of-counterterrorism-strategy [Accessed October 18, 2012].

Campbell, John (2010). *Nigeria: Dancing on the Brink*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Campbell, John (April 5, 2013). "Boko Haram and Ansaru in Northern Nigeria", *Africa in Transition.* URL: http://blogs.cfr.org/campbell/2013/04/05/boko-haram-and-ansaru-in-northern-nigeria/ [Accessed April 8, 2012].

Campbell, John (March 21, 2013). "The BBC and Nigerian Islamist Terror", *Africa in Transition.* URL: http://blogs.cfr.org/campbell/2013/03/21/the-bbc-and-nigerian-islamist-terror/ [Accessed April 3, 2012].

Chabal, Patrick and Jean-Pascal Daloz (1999). *Africa Works: Disorder as a Political Instrument.* Oxford: James Currey.

Checkel, Jeffery T. (2010)."Transnational Dynamics of Civil War", Simons Papers in Security and Development. No 1/2010, School for International Studies, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver.

CNN (June 18, 2012). "Boko Haram claims responsibility for Nigeria church bombings".
URL: http://edition.cnn.com/2012/06/18/world/africa/nigeria-church-bombings [Accessed March 14, 2013].

Collier, Paul (2007). *The Bottom Billion. Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cook, David (2011). "The Rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria," *CTC Sentinel* 4 (9): 3-5.

Cook, David (2012). "Boko Haram Escalates Attacks on Christians in Northern Nigeria". *CTC Sentinel*, 5 (4).

Cook, David (2013). "Boko Haram: Reversals and Retrenchment", *CTC Sentinel* 6 (4): 10-12.

Daily Times (December 7, 2012). "Boko Haram: 1,000 Nigerians flee to Niger Republic as refugees- UN". URL: http://dailytimes.com.ng/article/boko-haram-1000-nigerians-flee-niger-republic-refugees-un [Accessed March 11, 2013].

Daily Trust (April 19, 2012). "Nigeria: Tackle Boko Haram Before Collapse, Senators Tell FG". URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201204190304.html [Accessed October 17, 2012].

Daily Trust (January 18, 2013). "Nigeria: Boko Haram Trained in Mali - Army Chief", by Ismail Mudashir, Maryam Ahmadu-Suka and Victor Edozie.
URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201301180599.html [Accessed March 21, 2013]

Daily Trust (November 19, 2012). "Nigeria: 5,000 Refugees in Nigeria – UNHCR", by Nasir Imam. URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201211190564.html [Accessed April 19, 2013].

Daily Trust (October 27, 2012). "Nigeria: Briton convicted of smuggling arms".
URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201210270355.html [Accessed March 6, 2013].

Daily Trust (October 3, 2012). "Nigeria: Senate - Lack of Political Will Halting Nigeria's Progress". URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201210030780.html [Accessed October 4, 2012].

Dokken, Karin (2008). *African Security Politics Redefined*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ebo, Adedeji (2006). "Small Arms Proliferation in Nigeria: A Preliminary Overview", in O. Ibeanu and F. Mohammed (eds.) *Oiling the Violence: The Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Niger Delta.* Abuja: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

Eisenstadt, Samuel N. (1973). *Traditional Patrimonialism and Modern Neopatrominialism.* London: Sage Publications.

Encyclopedia Britannica (2013). "Nigeria".
URL: http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/414840/Nigeria [Accessed March 2, 2013].

Eveslage, Benjamin (2012). "Is Boko Haram the new al Qaeda?… Not so fast".
URL: http://www.leglobaliste.com/2012/10/03/is-nigerias-boko-haram-a-transnational-threat/ [Accessed April 3, 2013].

Falola, Toyin (2011). *The History of Nigeria*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing.

Fisher, Jonah (June 21, 2011). "Are Nigeria's Boko Haram getting foreign backing?", *BBC News.* URL: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13843967 [Accessed June 8, 2012].

Flynn, Donna (1997). "'We are the border': identity, exchange, and the state along the Bénin-Nigeria border", *American Ethnologist* 24 (2): 311-330.

France 24 (March 2, 2013). "North Cameroon living in shadow of Boko Haram".
URL: http://www.france24.com/en/20130301-north-cameroon-living-shadow-boko-haram [Accessed April 3, 2013].

Fukuyama, Francis (2004*). State-building: Governance and World-Order in the 21st Century.* New York: Cornell University Press.

George, Alexander L. and Andrew Bennett (2005). *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Gerring, John (2007). *Case Study research. Principles and practices.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Global Terrorism Database (October 16, 2012). "New data reveals al-Qaida-linked groups among most active terrorist groups in the world", START Consortium 2011 data from Global Terrorism Database (October 16, 2012).
URL: http://www.start.umd.edu/start/announcements/announcement.asp?id=424 [Accessed April 30, 2013].

Gomez, Juan Miguel del Cid (2010). "A Financial Profile of the Terrorism of Al-Qaeda and its Affiliates", *Perspectives on Terrorism* 4 (4): 3-27.

Goodspeed, Peter (January 6, 2012). "Al-Qaeda-linked terrorists targeting Christians, turning Nigeria into cauldron of religious strife", *National Post*.
URL: http://fullcomment.nationalpost.com/2012/01/06/al-qaeda-linked-terrorists-targetting-christians-turning-nigeria-into-cauldron-of-religious-strife/ [Accessed April 3, 2013].

Hazen, Jennifer M. (2007). "Small Arms, Armed Violence, and Insecurity in Nigeria: The Niger Delta in Perspective", an Occasional Paper of the Small Arms Survey. Geneva: Small Arms Survey.

Hegghammer, Thomas (2010). "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and the Globalization of Jihad", *International Security* 35 (3): 53-94.

Hellevik, Ottar (2006). *Forskningsmetode i sosiologi og statsvitenskap*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Herbst, Jeffrey and Greg Mills (2003). "Africa and the war on terror", *The RUSI Journal* 148 (5): 12-17.

Human Rights Watch (2012). "Spiraling Violence. Boko Haram Attacks and Security Force Abuses in Nigeria". Report by Human Rights Watch.
URL: http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/nigeria1012webwcover.pdf [Accessed October 16, 2012].

Human Rights Watch (January 27, 2011). "Nigeria: New Wave of Violence Leaves 200 Dead". URL: http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/01/27/nigeria-new-wave-violence-leaves-200-dead [Accessed October 17, 2012].

Human Rights Watch (May 17, 2012). "Nigeria: Post-Election Violence Killed 800".
URL: http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/05/16/nigeria-post-election-violence-killed-800 [Accessed October 1, 2012].

Ibeanu, O. (2000). "Oiling the Friction: Environmental Conflict Management in the Niger Delta", *Environmental Change and Security Project Report 6*.
URL: http://www.wilsoncenter.net/sites/default/files/Report6-2.pdf [Accessed 21.9.2012].

ICRC (2011). "Annual Report of the International Committee of the Red Cross".
URL: http://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/annual-report/icrc-annual-report-2011.pdf [Accessed March 13, 2013].

IDMC (June 8 2012). "Increasing violence continues to cause internal displacement", Summary of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre's (IDMC's) internal displacement profile on Nigeria. URL: http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/(httpInfoFiles)/626A561B49959107C1257A1700482850/$file/nigeria-overview-june2012.pdf [Accessed March 13, 2013].

Iluyemi, Victor (October 21, 2012). "Nigeria sees joint border patrol with Niger as significant to fight Boko Haram", *World Stage News*.
URL: http://worldstagegroup.com/worldstagenew/index.php?active=news&newscid=6424&catid=3 [Accessed January 4, 2013].

Information Nigeria (January 26, 2013). "Boko Haram Takes Battle To Mali".
URL: http://www.informationng.com/2013/01/boko-haram-takes-battle-to-mali.html [Accessed April 15, 2013].

International Business Times (April 10, 2012). "Nigeria's Boko Haram Militants Join Mali Rebellion". URL: http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=4&hid=113&sid=1b2268c1-b38b-4e07-966c-4b7f0b377120%40sessionmgr114&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=bwh&AN=325915.20120410 [Accessed June 15, 2012].

Internet World Stats (2012). "Usage and Population Statistics".
URL: http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats1.htm [Accessed November 21, 2012].

IOM (2009). *Migration in Nigeria: A Country Profile 2009*. Geneva: International Organization for Migration.

IRIN (2006). "Guns Out of Control: the continuing threat of small arms", Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) In-Depth, May 2006. URL: http://www.irinnews.org/In-depth/58952/8/Guns-Out-of-Control-the-continuing-threat-of-small-arms [Accessed March 1, 2013].

IRIN (March 6, 2012). "NIGERIA-CHAD: Migrants fleeing Boko Haram violence await aid", Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN). URL: http://www.irinnews.org/Report/95014/NIGERIA-CHAD-Migrants-fleeing-Boko-Haram-violence-await-aid [Accessed March 13, 2013].

Jackson, Robert and Georg Sørensen (2003). *Introduction to International Relations. Theories and Concepts.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jane's Intelligence Review (January 10, 2012)."UPDATE: Shadow play - Boko Haram names political sponsors". URL: http://search.janes.com/Search/documentView.do?docId=/content1/janesdata/mags/jir/history/jir2012/jir11275.htm@current&pageSelected=allJanes&keyword=bokoharam&backPath=http://search.janes.com/Search&Prod_Name=JIR& [Accessed June 22, 2012].

Khusrav, Gailbulloev, Sandler Todd and Sul Dongguyu (2013). "Common Drivers of Transnational Terrorism: Principal Component Analysis", *Economic Inquiry* 51 (1): 707–721.

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba (1994). *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Kiras, James D. (2007). "Irregular Warfare: Terrorism and Insurgency", in John Baylis, James J. Wirtz, and Colin S. Gray (eds.) *Strategy in the Contemporary World. An Introduction to Strategic Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lapid, Yosef (2001). "Rethinking the "International": IBO Clues for Post-Westphalian Mazes", in Albert Mathias (ed.): *Identities, Borders, Orders: Rethinking International Relations Theory.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Last, Murray (2011). "Nigeria's Boko Haram", Muslim Institute Blogs. URL: http://www.musliminstitute.org/blogs/travel/nigerias-boko-haram-professor-murray-last [Accessed October 31, 2012].

Le Billon, Philippe (2001). "The political ecology of war: natural resources and armed conflicts", *Political Geography* 20: 561-584.

Leadership (February 2, 2013). "Nigeria: 17 Boko Haram Members, Soldier Die in JTF Raids" by Sadiq Abubakar. URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201302020129.html [Accessed February 3, 2013].

Leadership (March 4, 2012). "We're Planning A 'War' On Christians - Boko Haram Spokesman", URL: http://leadership.ng/nga/articles/18121/2012/03/04/were_planning_war_christians_-_boko_haram_spokesman.html [Accessed March 19, 2012].

Leech, Beth L. (2002). "Asking Questions: Techniques for Semistructured Interviews", *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35 (4): 665-668.

Lijphart, Arend (1975). "The Comparable-Cases Strategy in Comparative Research", *Comparative Political Studies* 8 (2): 158-177.

Lohrmann, Reinhard (2000). "Migrants, Refugees and Insecurity. Current Threats to Peace?" *International Migration* 38: 3-22.

Louis, Christopher (1995). The Social Impacts of Light Weapons Availability and Proliferation, UNRISD Discussion Paper No. 59. URL: http://www.essex.ac.uk/armedcon/story_id/Social%20Impact%20.pdf [Accessed October 19, 2012].

Lund, Thorleif (ed.) (2002). *Innføring i forskningsmetodologi*. Oslo: Unipub.

Mail and Guardian (August 31, 2011). "Mamman Nur masterminded UN attack, says Nigeria", by Camillus Eboh. URL: http://mg.co.za/article/2011-08-31-mamman-nur-masterminded-un-attack-says-nigeria/ [Accessed June 21, 2012].

Mansbach, Richard W. and Franke Wilmer (2001). "War, Violence and the Westphalian State System as a Moral Community", in Albert Mathias (ed.): *Identities, Borders, Orders: Rethinking International Relations Theory.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Médard, Jean F. (1982). "The Underdeveloped State in Africa: Political Clientelism or Neo-patrimonialism?", in Clapham, Christopher (ed.), *Private Patronage and Public Power: Political Clientelism and the Modern State*. London: Frances Pinter.

Mehaan, Patrick and Jackie Speier (2011). "Boko Haram - Emerging Threat to the U.S. Homeland". United States House of Representatives, Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence. Report to 112th Congress 1st Session, November 11, 2011.
URL: http://homeland.house.gov/sites/homeland.house.gov/files/Boko%20Haram-%20Emerging%20Threat%20to%20the%20US%20Homeland.pdf [Accessed September 27, 2012].

Messner, J. J. (ed.) (2012). *The Fund for Peace Failed States Index 2012*. Annual Report from The Fund for Peace. URL: http://www.fundforpeace.org/global/library/cfsir1210-failedstatesindex2012-06p.pdf [Accessed October 1, 2012].

Militant Leadership Monitor (2012a). *Boko Haram: A Militant Leadership Monitor Special Report. Personalities behind the Insurgency*, Washington DC: The Jamestown Foundation.

Militant Leadership Monitor (2012b). "Abu Usmatul Al-Ansari Announce Breakaway Faction", Brief, *Terrorism Monitor* 3 (6): 2.

Mizrokhi, Elena (April 16, 2012). "Nigeria's Boko Haram and Sahel Insecurity", Geopoliticalmonitor. URL: http://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/nigerias-boko-haram-and-sahel-insecurity-4663 [Accessed June 7, 2012].

Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2012). "2012 Ibrahim Index of African Governance: Summary", October 2012. Swindon: Mo Ibrahim Foundation.

Nairaland Forum (January 12, 2012). "English Transcript of the New Boko Haram Video!". URL: http://www.nairaland.com/844497/english-transcript-new-boko-haram [Accessed September 21, 2012].

Nairaland Forum (January 28, 2012). "Translation of Boko Haram Briefing". URL: http://www.nairaland.com/857032/translation-boko-haram-briefing [Accessed September 21, 2012]

National Bureau of Statistics (2012). "Nigeria Poverty Profile 2010". URL: http://www.tucrivers.org/tucpublications/Nigeria%20Poverty%20Profile%202010.pdf [Accessed November 7, 2012].

National Population Commission (NPC) and ICF Macro (2009). *Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2008*. Abuja: National Population Commission and ICF Macro. URL: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADQ923.pdf [Accessed November 7, 2012].

NCFR (February 10, 2011). "Facts". Compiled by The National Commission For Refugees (NCFR). URL: http://www.ncfr.gov.ng/index.php/component/content/article?id=7 [Accessed March 13, 2013].

Nesser, Petter (2008). "How did Europe's Global Jihadis Obtain Training for their Militant Causes?", *Terrorism and Political Violence* 20 (2): 234-256.

New York Times (December 3, 2012). "American Commander Details Al Qaeda's Strength in Mali", by Eric Schmidt. URL: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/04/world/africa/top-american-commander-in-africa-warns-of-al-qaeda-influence-in-mali.html [Accessed March 21, 2013].

New York Times (February 25, 2013). "Video Shows Group Holds Family Seized in Cameroon". URL: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/26/world/africa/video-claims-french-familys-kidnappers-are-nigerian-extremists.html?_r=0 [Accessed March 15, 2013].

Newstime Africa (February 27, 2011). "Islamist sect financier is killed by police in Nigeria". URL: http://www.newstimeafrica.com/archives/16532 [Accessed October 2, 2012].

Nigerian Tribune (February 13, 2012). "Boko Haram's funding traced to UK, S/Arabia. Sect planned to turn Nigeria into Afghanistan. Arrested kingpin opens up", by Taiwo Adisa. URL: http://odili.net/news/source/2012/feb/13/600.html [Accessed February 24, 2013].

Nigerian Tribune (January 19, 2013). "Boko Haram leader, Shekau, found in Mali". URL: http://www.tribune.com.ng/news2013/index.php/en/component/k2/item/3422-boko-haram-leader-shekau-found-in-malihttp://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/01/boko-haram-leader-shekau-shot-in-mali/ [Accessed March 11, 2013].

Nigerian Tribune (September 11, 2012). "Boko Haram: Civil servants, bankers desert offices in Yobe". URL: http://tribune.com.ng/index.php/front-page-news/47378-boko-haram-civil-servants-bankers-desert-offices-in-yobe [Accessed October 4, 2012].

Nigerians Abroad (February 25, 2011). "Citigroup picks Nigeria as one of Global Growth Generators". URL: http://nigeriansabroadlive.com/citigroup-picked-nigeria-as-one-of-its-%E2%80%983g%E2%80%99-global-growth-generators/ [Accessed October 4, 2012].

Obasi, Nnamdi (2002). *Small Arms Proliferation and Disarmament in West Africa: Progress and Prospects of the ECOWAS Moratorium*. Abuja: Apophyl Productions.

Oftedal, Emilie (2013 forthcoming). *Boko Haram: An Overview*. A Norwegian Defence Research Establishment Report (FFI-rapport). Scheduled to be published in June 2013.

Okutu, Peter (August 21, 2012). "Elechi accuses politicians of hijacking Boko Haram", *Vanguard*. URL: http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/08/elechi-accuses-politicians-of-hijacking-boko-haram/ [Accessed August 21, 2012].

Onabanjo, Dipo (2012). "How Illegal Arms Threaten Nigeria's Unity", *Tell Magazine*. URL: http://www.tellng.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=1786:how-illegal-arms-threaten-nigeria%E2%80%99s-unity [Accessed March 6, 2013].

Onuoha, Freedom C. (2010a) "The 9/7 Boko Haram Attack on Bauchi Prison: A Case of Intelligence Failure", Peace & Conflict Monitor Special Report (2010). URL: http://www.monitor.upeace.org/archive.cfm?id_article=754 [Accessed June 27, 2012].

Onuoha, Freedom C. (2010b). "The Islamist challenge: Nigeria's Boko Haram crisis explained", *African Security Review* 19 (2): 54-67.

Onuoha, Freedom C. (2011). "Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation and Human Security in Nigeria", *Conflict Trends* 1: 50-56.

Pantucci, Raffaello (2013). "British Fighters Joining the War in Syria", *CTC Sentinel* 6 (2): 11-15.

Pitcher, Anne, Mary H. Moran and Michael Johnston (2009). "Rethinking Patrimonialism and Neopatrimonialism in Africa", *African Studies Review* 52 (1): 125-156.

Premium Times (March 19, 2013). "Boko Haram threatens JTF spokesperson, demands prisoners exchange for French nationals". URL: http://premiumtimesng.com/news/125659-boko-haram-threatens-jtf-spokesperson-demands-prisoners-exchange-for-french-nationals.html [Accessed March 20, 2013].

Premium Times (May 13, 2012). "Boko Haram gets N40 million donation from Algeria", URL: http://newsrescue.com/boko-haram-gets-n40million-donation-from-algeria/?wpmp_tp=1#axzz21jGQc1Bf [Accessed July 26, 2012].

Report to the UN Security Council (2011). "Report of the assessment mission on the impact of the Libyan crisis on the Sahel region, 7 to 23 December 2011". URL: http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/N1220863.pdf [Accessed July 21, 2012].

Reuters (December 24, 2011). "In Nigeria's North, Deadly Clashes With an Islamist Group". URL: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/25/world/africa/in-nigerias-north-deadly-clashes-with-boko-haram.html?_r=0 [Accessed March 14, 2013].

Reuters (January 20, 2013). "Islamists Ansaru claim attack on Mali-bound Nigeria troops – paper". URL: http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/01/20/uk-nigeria-violence-idUKBRE90J0AX20130120 [Accessed January 21, 2013].

Reuters (June 7, 2012). "Mali: Leader Warns of Jihadi Camps". URL: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/08/world/africa/niger-president-warns-of-jihadi-camps-in-mali.html [Accessed November 18, 2012]

Risse-Kappen, Thomas (1995). "Bringing transnational relations back in: introduction", in Thomas Risse-Kappen (ed.) *Bringing transnational relations back in. Non-sate actors, domestic structures and international institutions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Roggio, Bill (November 30, 2012). "Boko Haram emir praises al Qaeda", *The Long War Journal.* URL: http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/11/boko_haram_emir_prai.php [Accessed April 3, 2013].

Rotberg, Robert I. (ed.) (2003). *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Sambanis, Nicholas (2008). "Terrorism and Civil War", in Philip Keefer and Norman Loayza (eds.) *Terrorism, Economic Development, and Political Openness*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Skog, Ole-Jørgen (2004). *Å forklare sosiale fenomener: En regresjonsbasert tilnærming*. Oslo: Ad Notam Gyldendal.

Snyder, Jack (2004). "One World, Rival Theories", *Foreign Policy* 145: 53-62.

Soniyi, Tobi (July 4, 2012). "Nigeria: Terrorism - Court Resumes Ndume's Trial", *This Day*. URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201207040581.html [Accessed July 26, 2012].

Stenersen, Anne (2008). "The Internet: A virtual Training Camp?", *Terrorism and Political Violence* 20 (2): 215-231.

Stewart, Scott (January 26, 2012). "Nigeria's Boko Haram Militants Remain a Regional Threat", *Security Weekly*, Stratfor Global Intelligence. URL: http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/nigerias-boko-haram-militants-remain-regional-threat [Accessed July 26, 2012].

Stewart, Scott (October 4, 2012). "Terrorism Tradecraft". Stratfor Global Intelligence. URL: http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/terrorism-tradecraft [Accessed October 19, 2012].

Suberu, Rotimi T. (2001). *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria*. Washington DC: US Institute of Peace Press.

Sumner, Andrew and Michael Tribe (2008). *International Development Studies: Theories and Methods in Research and Practice.* London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Tansey, Oisin (2007). "Process Tracing and Elite Interviewing: A Case for Non-probability Sampling", *PS: Political Science and Politics* 40 (4): 765- 772.

Tawil, Camille (2009). *The Al-Qaeda Organization in the Islamic Maghreb: Expansion in the Sahel and Challenges from within Jihadist Circles*. Report by the Jamestown Foundation. Washington DC: The Jamestown Foundation.

The Guardian (January 27, 2012). "Boko Haram vows to fight until Nigeria establishes sharia law", by Monica Mark. URL: http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jan/27/boko-haram-nigeria-sharia-law [Accessed November 23, 2012].

The Guardian (June 26, 2012)."Africa's Islamist militants 'co-ordinate efforts in threat to continent's security'", by David Smith.

URL: http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jun/26/africa-islamist-militants-coordinating-threat [Accessed February 19, 2013].

The Guardian (September 25, 2012). "Nigeria braces for escalation in terrorist attacks". URL: http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/sep/25/nigeria-terrorist-attacks-boko-haram [Accessed October 17, 2012].

The Nigerian Tribune (June 20, 2011). "Abuja bomb blast: Police swoop on Boko Haram. Arrest 58 suspects while jubilating. Sudanese, Somalians, Nigeriens among them". URL: http://www.nigerianhomepage.biz/news-from-across-the-nation/terror-watch-in-nigeria/4117-abuja-bomb-blast%3A-police-swoop-on-boko-haram-%E2%80%A2arrest-58-suspects-while-jubilating-%E2%80%A2sudanese,-somalians,-nigeriens-among.html [Accessed March 10, 2013].

This Day (October 22, 2012) "Boko Haram Suspect Was Arrested in Ex-Governor's House". URL: http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/boko-haram-suspect-was-arrested-in-ex-governor-s-house/128386/ [Accessed March 18, 2013].

This Day (September 29, 2012). "Army Arrests Immigration Officer, Others over Boko Haram Links". URL: http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/army-arrests-immigration-officer-others-over-boko-haram-links/126376/ [Accessed October 30, 2012].

This Day (September 9, 2012). "Nigeria: Boko Haram - How Recovered Arms Are Left in Armouries". URL: http://allafrica.com/stories/201209090233.html [Accessed September 11, 2012].

Thomas, Alan and Tim Allen (2000). "Agencies of Development", in Alan Thomas and Tim Allen (eds.) *Poverty and Development in the 21st Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Thurston, Alex (January 7, 2013). "Boko Haram: What's in a Name?", Sahel Blog. URL: http://sahelblog.wordpress.com/2013/01/07/boko-haram-whats-in-a-name/ [Accessed January 8, 2013].

Transnational Terrorism, Security, and the Rule of Law (TTSRL) (2008). "The Evolving Threat of Transnational Terrorism in Policymaking and Media Discourse", The European research project on Transnational Terrorism, Security, and the Rule of Law (TTSRL) Deliverables, Work package 2, Deliverable 2. URL: http://www.transnationalterrorism.eu/tekst/publications/WP2%20Del%202.pdf [Accessed October 11, 2012].

Udeh, Chinedu (2011). "Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorist Financing in West Africa: Challenges and Strategies", *African Journal for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism* 2 (1): 69-88.

UNHCR (2012). "Convention and protocol relating to the status of refugees". The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). URL: http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.html [Accessed April 19, 2013].

UNHCR (January 2012). "Statistical Snapshot". Data compiled by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). URL: http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e484f76.html [Accessed March 13, 2013].

UNODA (2012)."Small Arms". United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. URL: http://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/SALW/ [Accessed October 19, 2012].

USA for UNHCR (2013). "What is a refugee?" URL: http://www.unrefugees.org/site/c.lfIQKSOwFqG/b.4950731/k.A894/What_is_a_refugee.htm [Accessed April 19, 2013].

Vanguard (January 19, 2013). "Boko Haram leader Shekau shot, escapes to Mali". URL: http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/01/boko-haram-leader-shekau-shot-in-mali/ [Accessed January 20, 2013].

Vanguard (January 2, 2012). "Boko Haram issues three-day ultimatum to Christians". URL: http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/01/boko-haram-spokesman-threatens-christians-troops/ [Accessed July 26, 2012].

Vanguard (June 17, 2011). "Boko Haram cautions civilians". URL: http://www.vanguardngr.com/2011/06/boko-haram-cautions-civilians/ [Accessed October 3, 2012].

Vanguard (November 24, 2011). "Al-Qaeda assist us and we assist them – Boko Haram spokesman". URL: http://www.vanguardngr.com/2011/11/al-qaeda-assist-us-and-we-assist-them-boko-haram-spokesman/ [Accessed June 8, 2012].

Walker, Andrew (2012). "Special Report: What is Boko Haram?" United States Institute of Peace Special Report. URL: http://www.usip.org/publications/what-boko-haram [Accessed January 11, 2013].

Wall Street Journal (February 1, 2013). "Timbuktu Training Site Shows Terrorists' Reach". URL:http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323926104578278030474477210.html [Accessed February 2, 2013].

Watts, Clint, Jacob Shapiro and Vahid Brown (2007). "Al-Qa'ida's (Mis)Adventures in the Horn of Africa". A Counter Terrorism Centre (CTC) Report. URL: http://www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Al-Qaidas-MisAdventures-in-the-Horn-of-Africa.pdf [Accessed October 29, 2012].

Wikileaks (February 5, 2010). "Cable 10YAOUNDE83, Cameroonian President Biya Gives Ambassador". URL: http://wikileaks.org/cable/2010/02/10YAOUNDE83.html [Accessed December 12, 2012].

Witting, Timothy (2011). *Understanding Terrorist Finance*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Zenn, Jacob (2012). "Boko Haram's Dangerous Expansion into Northwest Nigeria," *CTC Sentinel* 5 (10): 1-5.

Zenn, Jacob (2013a). "Boko Haram's International Connections", *CTC Sentinel* 6 (1): 7-13.

Zenn, Jacob (2013b). "A Brief Look at Ansaru's Khalid al-Barnawi - AQIM's Bridge Into Northern Nigeria", *Militant Leadership Monitor* 6 (3): 3-4.

Zenn, Jacob (2013c). "Cooperation or Competition: Boko Haram and Ansaru After the Mali Intervention", *CTC Sentinel* 6 (3): 1-8.

Appendix 1: Respondents

Date	Place	Respondent Reference
8.1.2013	Oslo – London (phone)	NGO 2
18.1.2013	Oslo – Washington DC (phone)	Researcher 2
22.1.2013	Oslo	Researcher 1
25.1.2013	Abuja	Researcher 4
25.1.2013	Abuja	Researcher 3
26.1.2013	Abuja	Diplomat 3
28.1.2013	Abuja	International Organization 2 International Organization 4
1.2.2013	Abuja	Diplomat 4
1.2.2013	Abuja	International Organization 3 International Organization 5
4.2.2013	Abuja	Diplomat 1
4.2.2013	Abuja	Religious Leader 1
6.2.2013	Abuja	Security Official 1
6.2.2013	Abuja	Corporate Representative 1
7.2.2013	Abuja	Diplomat 2
7.2.2013	Abuja	NGO 1
8.2.2013	Abuja	International Organization 1 International Organization 6

(The respondents' reference numbers have been assigned according to their order of appearance in the text).

Appendix 2: Interview guide

(Questions in parenthesis only to be used if the issue is not addressed by the respondent in his/her initial response):

1. *On the respondent:*
- Full name
- Work place, title/position, tasks
- How long worked on Boko Haram/security in Nigeria

2. *On Boko Haram in general (to double-check the background information from other sources – not necessary to ask all respondents these questions):*
- Can you give me a short description of how Boko Haram first emerged?
- How has Boko Haram evolved over time?
- What would you say are the main reasons for the emergence and growth of Boko Haram?
- What are the group's main goals?
- What do we know about Boko Haram's organizational structure?

3. *The context: On cross-border transactions and Nigeria in general:*
- To what extent do the Nigerian authorities control the national borders?
- What types of goods are brought illegally into and out of Nigeria? (weapons, drugs, natural resources?)
- To what extent do people move freely across the borders? What kinds of people? (refugees, militants, traders, smugglers?)

4. *On the transnational aspects of Boko Haram:*
- Where does Boko Haram get its weapons? (Are there examples of Boko Haram being directly involved in smuggling of weapons? Do they buy weapons that have been smuggled?)
- Where does Boko Haram get its funding? (Are there examples of Boko Haram receiving foreign funding? If so, from whom and why?)
- Where does Boko Haram get its training? (Are there examples of Boko Haram members receiving training outside Nigeria? If so, where? What kind?)
- To what extent are people from other countries participating in the Boko Haram uprising? (From which countries? In what roles? What are their motivations?)
- To what extent has the Boko Haram uprising led people to flee? (How many? Where? What happens in the areas where they settle?)
- To what extent is Boko Haram involved in the trading of natural resources? (Which resources?)
- To what extent are the neighboring countries interested in/ concerned with the Boko Haram uprising? (Why/why not?)

- To what extent would you say that Boko Haram is linked with al-Qaeda or other terrorist networks? (What is the nature of their connections?)
- Do Boko Haram members have connections to political leaders or other elites in neighboring countries? (Who?)
- Is Boko Haram involved in the conflict in Mali, or other conflicts in the region? (In what ways?)
- Does the Boko Haram uprising have any consequences in other countries in the region? (If so, how?)

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Is there anyone else you think it may be useful for me to meet with?