

Rape as a weapon of war

The motivations of terrorist group Boko Haram for using rape as a strategy in Nigeria, 2009-2018

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Abstract:

Although the use of rape as a weapon of war has received much scholarly attention since the 1990s, this is not the case for the use of this strategy by Boko Haram. Therefore, this thesis addresses the under researched aspect of Boko Haram's strategies which especially targets (Christian) women and girls. Specifically, this thesis analyses the main reasons for Boko Haram to use rape as a weapon of war between 2009 and 2018. Additionally, the analysis brought forward here provides evidence for a connection between the use of rape as a weapon of war and the use of abductions as a strategy. This connection can be detected in variety of primary source material, as women are often raped when they are abducted in order to get them pregnant or punish them for not converting to Islam. This connection is often overlooked by the existing literature but is vital for the way Boko Haram operates. This thesis also sheds light on the importance of Nigeria's political, socio-cultural and socio-economic structure for rise of the movement and the implications of the country's gender relations on its targeting of women and girls. Overall, this thesis contributes to the rape as a weapon of war-framework, the growing scholarly literature on Boko Haram and to burgeoning work that connects gender relations with the study of International Relations.

Key words: Nigeria, Boko Haram, Rape as a weapon of war, Chibok girls, abductions.

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List of abbreviations:

HRW Human Rights Watch

INGO International non-governmental organisation

IR International Relations

NPVRN Nigeria's Political Violence Research Network

UN United Nations

UNSC United Nations Security Council

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Abbreviations

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1. Introduction:

"Rape attacks the integrity of the woman as a person as well as her identity as a woman. It renders her a homeless in her own body. It strikes at a woman's power; it seeks to degrade and destroy her; its goal is domination and dehumanization".

Since the First World War there has been a dramatic shift in casualties from military victims to civilian victims. In today's conflicts, most victims are women and children due to the rise of total warfare, where no distinction is made between civilians and (armed) combatants. However, the exact number of victims of rape and other sexual violence during armed conflict is hard to determine. Nonetheless, it is estimated that during the Rwandan genocide (1994) alone, for example, 250,000 to 500,000 women and girls were raped by combatants.² Another notorious example of mass rape in armed conflict is what occurred in the Bosnian War (1992-1995). The so-called "rape camps" gained worldwide attention and it is estimated that 20,000 to 50,000 women were systematically raped throughout the conflict.³

On June 19, 2008, The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) demanded the "immediate and complete cessation by all parties to armed conflict of all acts of sexual violence against civilians" in Resolution 1820.⁴ Hereby, the UNSC finally recognised rape as a war crime and declared sexual violence in conflict zones a matter of international peace and security.⁵ However, despite the UNSC's recognition of rape as a war crime, the severity of the problem has not diminished in recent years. One of the most recent and unpunished perpetrators of rape as a weapon of war is Boko Haram.⁶ Boko Haram, its full name Jamā'at Ahl al-Sunna lil-Da'awah wa al-Jihād, is a radical Islamist insurgent movement founded in 2002 by Muhammed Yusuf in Nigeria.⁷ The name of the insurgent movement is derived from two words, Boko and Haram, which translates as "Western education is forbidden".⁸ Initially,

¹ Aexandra Stiglmayer, *Mass Rape: the War against Women in Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 202.

² David Wingeate Pike, Crimes against Women (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2011), 53.

³ David Sverdlov, "Rape in War: Prosecuting the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant and Boko Haram for Sexual Violence Against Women," *Ornell International Law Journal* 50, no. 2 (2017): 345, doi:10.31228/osf.io/ew2uj.

⁴ "Adopting Resolution 1820," United Nations Security Council, accessed September 19, 2019, https://www.un.org/press/en/2008/sc9364.doc.htm.

⁵ United Nations Security Council, "Adopting Resolution 1820."

⁶ Sverdlov, "Rape in War," 333.

⁷ Ibid., 340.

⁸ Christiana E. Attah, "Boko Haram and Sexual Terrorism: The Conspiracy of Silence of the Nigerian Anti-Terrorism Laws," *African Human Rights Law Journal* 16, no. 2 (2016): 388, https://doi.org/10.17159/1996-2096/2016/v16n2a4.

the group set out to uproot corruption in Nigeria, which they blamed on Western influences. Ideologically, the movement opposes Westernisation, which the group believes negatively impacts the Islamic faith. Yet, the group had little impact in Nigeria until 2009. This changed when its leader Yusuf was killed by Nigerian security forces. After his death, Boko Haram regrouped under new leader Abubakar Shekau and began carrying out more severe attacks against the Nigerian government and civilians. ¹⁰ The movement is most known for its terrorist attacks, mostly aimed at Christians who make up fifty percent of the Nigerian population. Since 2009, the movement has carried out large-scale acts of violence throughout the country and the surrounding region, performing bombings, killing police officers and attacking prisons. 11 Another activity is the systematic targeting of women and girls: Boko Haram has abducted about five hundred women since 2009. It is noteworthy that these abductions are often closely connected with rape. In this regard, 2014 was a particularly important year, with the group drawing worldwide attention after perpetrating a mass kidnapping of more than 275 girls from a school in Chibok in the Borno state. 12 After this mass kidnapping, the UNSC imposed sanctions on Boko Haram, issuing travel bans and freezing assets. Nonetheless, the sanctions had no real effect on the movement's operations and the group has continued its attacks. These attacks include the specific targeting of women and girls, raping and abducting them.¹³

1. 1 Historiography:

The subject of rape within warfare has been largely ignored until fairly recently by the public and within academia. Only in the 1970s (during the second wave of feminism) did the subject first gain notable scholarly attention. According to gender studies scholar Paul Kirby, the idea of rape as a weapon of war has a distinctly feminist heritage, with feminist scholarship being the first to draw the connection between the history of war and sexual violence.¹⁴ He argues

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⁹ Sverdlov, "Rape in War," 342.

¹⁰ Osita Njoku, Agnes Princewil and Chikere Princewill, "Consequences of Boko Haram Terrorism on Women in Northern Nigeria," *Applied Research Journal* 1, no. 3 (2015): 103.

¹¹ Abdelwahab El-Affendi and Salisu Gumel, "Abducting Modernity: Boko Haram, Gender Violence and the Marketplace of Bigotry," *Hawwa*13, no. 2 (April 2015): 128-132, https://doi.org/10.1163/15692086-12341274; Trevor Cloen, Yelena Biberman and Farhan Zahid, "Terrorist Prison Breaks," *Terrorism Research Initiative* 12, no. 1 (2018): 65.

¹² Imrana A. Buba, "Terrorism and Rape in Nigeria: A Cry for Justice," *Oman Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review* 4, no. 12 (2015): 6, https://doi.org/10.12816/0019097.

¹³ "Boko Haram," Britannica, accessed November 20, 2018, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Boko-Haram
¹⁴ Paul Kirby, "How Is Rape a Weapon of War?: Feminist International Relations, Modes of Critical Explanation and the Study of Wartime Sexual Violence," *European Journal of International Relations* 19, no. 4 (2012): 799, doi:10.1177/1354066111427614.

that feminist scholars pioneered a view of sexual violence as a form of social power that is characterised by the dynamics of gender.¹⁵

One of the first authors to write about the subject was feminist journalist Susan Brownmiller. One of Brownmiller's most important conclusions is that rape is "a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear". ¹⁶ In her book *Against Our Will*, she discusses society's perception of rape over time by examining its portrayal in the media. Furthermore, she argues that rape can be used as a weapon. The book was heavily criticised by other scholars, such as professor of feminism and political activist Angela Davis. One of the main critiques was that Brownmiller's work failed to include the struggle of black women. Nonetheless, the book was simultaneously widely credited for changing public perception of rape. ¹⁷ In October 1975, TIME Magazine named Brownmiller "the first rape celebrity who is neither rapist nor rapee". ¹⁸ Even today, over forty years since its publication, the book has never been out of print. Moreover, the book is cited in almost every scholarly article about rape. *Against Our Will* laid the groundwork for scholarly discussion on rape and is therefore highly significant for this thesis and the way rape during war is defined within academia.

Although Brownmiller's book was widely discussed by various scholars during the 1970s, the idea that rape can be used as a weapon truly gained attention again in the 1990s. During this period, the attention of worldwide media and women's organisations was drawn to the atrocities and mass rapes happening in Rwanda and Bosnia. Essentially, this led to a new focus on wartime sexual violence, gaining more attention in the media and academic circles than ever before. As anthropologist Victoria Sanford states: "The 1990s were an important decade in establishing the character and dimensions of women's rights in the international arena and recognizing them as human rights". ¹⁹ Feminist arguments put forward during this period were particularly important for the recognition of rape as a weapon of war by the international community. It changed the global policy debate and ultimately resulted in legal measures with the creation of the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia and

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¹⁵ Kirby, "How Is Rape a Weapon of War?," 800.

¹⁶ Susan Brownmiller, Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape (New York: Fawcett, 1993), 15.

¹⁷ Kathryn Cullen-DuPont, Encyclopedia of Women's History in America (Da Capo Pres, 2000), 6.

¹⁸ "How a Book Changed the Way We Talk About Rape," TIME Magazine, accessed September 25, 2019, https://time.com/4062637/against-our-will-40/

¹⁹ Victoria Sanford, Katherine Stefatos and Cecilia M. Salvi, *Gender Violence in Peace and War: States of Complicity* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2016), 1.

Rwanda in 1993 and 1994 respectively. At these tribunals, wartime rape was prosecuted as a war crime, a crime against humanity and genocide.²⁰

Not only was the heightened attention for the subject of rape an important development in the 1990s, the consensus among scholars, the media and policy-makers that sexual violence can be used as a strategy or weapon of war also arose.²¹ Journalist Alexandra Stiglmayer provides multiple explanations as to why rape is used as a weapon of war. Rape can, for instance, be an instrument of genocide or an engine of war.²² These explanations shaped the academic debate around rape, reflecting on rape as having a function in nationalist, masculinist or militarist goals, such as the destruction of a community.²³

In addition to the official recognition of rape as a military strategy in the 1990s, it is important to note that much of the 1990s literature mainly focused on the events in Bosnia and Rwanda and that conclusions about rape as a weapon of war were drawn from analysing these specific events. This is also the case for Stiglmayer's book, which generally concerned the events in Bosnia. Consequently, these events have influenced the concept significantly both during and since the 1990s. Political scientists Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern elaborate on this in their study on gender violence in the Congo. According to Baaz and Stern, the framework of rape as a weapon of war has become the dominant explanatory framework in their academic field and it can be seen as an overriding theory of wartime sexual violence. They also question the framework's generalisability. Eriksson and Baaz state it must take into account that every conflict is different and therefore, there are different nuances in their contexts. ²⁴ Political scientist Kerry Crawford adds to this that the framing of rape as a weapon of war has led to national and multilateral efforts to generate more attention for the issue over the past two decades. Crawford, however, also argues that the concept's framework has apparent flaws, constraints and gaps. 25 These are partly caused by the focus on the events in the 1990s. One of the flaws mentioned is "the constrain of efforts to implement the antisexual violence agenda by virtue of the situations, concepts, and people excluded from the dominant narrative". 26

²⁰ Sanford, Stefatos and Salvi, Gender Violence in Peace and War: States of Complicity, 1.

²¹ Inger Skjelsbæk, "Sexual Violence and War," European Journal of International Relations 7, no. 2 (2001): 211, https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066101007002003.

²² Doris E Buss, "Rethinking 'Rape as a Weapon of War," Feminist Legal Studies 17, no. 2 (2009): 148, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10691-009-9118-5.

²³ Buss, "Rethinking 'Rape as a Weapon of War," 149.

²⁴ Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern, Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War?: Perceptions, Prescriptions, Problems in the Congo and beyond (London: Zed Books, 2013), 43.

²⁵ Kerry F. Crawford, Wartime Sexual Violence: from Silence to Condemnation of a Weapon of War (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2017), 182. ²⁶ Crawford, *Wartime Sexual Violence*, 182-184.

After the 1990s, the idea of rape as a weapon of war continued to gain scholarly attention. This resulted in a range of scholarly publications, providing various explanations on the topic of rape as a weapon of war. Yet, it is remarkable that little academic attention has been devoted to the concept and its connection to Boko Haram. Most existing literature concerned with Boko Haram and its connection to gender violence discusses their use of females as suicide bombers or servants. Few articles have been written about Boko Haram and its connection to rape as a weapon of war. The few articles mentioning the connection, however, fail to explain the correlation between the use of this strategy, abductions, and Boko Haram's relationship to the Nigerian government. Moreover, they do not discuss why Boko Haram changed its strategy in 2013 specifically and what its motivations were to start using rape as a weapon. This means a gap in scholarly literature exists, which this thesis aims to fill.

Hence, rape as a weapon of war has become an increasingly important subject within the academic field. It is safe to say that since the 1990s, much policy and media attention has been directed towards sexual violence, changing the framing of the subject in the global policy debate. Rape is now no longer seen as an unfortunate by-product of war, but it is seen as a strategy, weapon or tactic. However, an apparent gap in scholarly literature exists. Due to worldwide attention for the civil wars in Rwanda and Bosnia and Herzegovina, literature tends to focus on these events, leading to an analysis based on the events of the 1990s. On top of that, in the academic field, multiple explanations exist for why rape is used as a weapon. Finally, there is an apparent gap in the literature concerning articles on Boko Haram and its relation to rape as a weapon of war.

1.2 Research question and sub-questions:

As indicated in the previous section, rape as a weapon of war has become an increasingly important subject within academia since the 1990s. However, the relation between gender-based violence and Boko Haram has not received much scholarly attention, despite the increasing academic and media attention for the movement. The movement's motivations for rape in armed conflict are not entirely clear, leaving many possible interpretations for this phenomenon. Therefore, this thesis will examine the following main research question: "Why did Boko Haram use rape as a weapon of war in Nigeria (2009-2018)?".

The appointment of Boko Haram's new leader Abubakar Shekau and the increasing severity of its attacks in 2009 will serve as a starting point for this thesis. Furthermore, even though Boko Haram already used sexual violence from 2009 onwards, 2013 can be seen as a turning point for the terrorist movement. This year marked a significant shift in Boko

Haram's strategy, with gender violence becoming more deliberate than before. The kidnapping of the Chibok girls a year later illustrates this shift, showcasing the instrumental use of women in response to corresponding strategy of the Nigerian government.²⁷ The movement is still active to this day and rape as a weapon of war is still used as a strategy. However, the final report available on the movement's use of rape was published in 2018. Therefore, the timeframe for the analysis of this thesis ends in that year.

In order to answer the main research question, three sub-questions will be answered in three separate chapters. For the first sub-question, the impact of poverty, unemployment, religion and political opportunity on the movement is researched in order to find out why the group was founded and what is primary motivations are. Furthermore, these key aspects are fundamental when determining how the group could gain so many followers and power and why it uses rape as a weapon of war. Additionally, it is important to discuss the significance of the Nigerian government for the actions of Boko Haram, since scholars often argue that Boko Haram's actions are responses to those of the government. The guiding question is the following: "What is the historical, socio-economic and political context surrounding Boko Haram's rise?".

The following chapter examines the second sub-question: "How did Nigeria's gender relations influence the ideas and motivations of Boko Haram?". The prevailing notions and perceptions on gender in Nigeria are important to identify in order to interpret the motivations of Boko Haram's use of sexual violence. In existing gender violence theories, the impact of gender, socio-cultural and political structures on gender relations is highlighted.²⁸ An important theme discussed in this chapter is Nigeria's patriarchal society and its influence on both men and women.

Finally, the third sub-question is answered: "What does the kidnapping of the Chibok girls reveal about Boko Haram's reasons for using rape as a weapon of war?". The kidnapping of the Chibok girls is one of the most reported terrorist acts carried out by Boko Haram. The kidnapping of more than 275 girls generated worldwide attention for the group, resulting in a worldwide media campaign against Boko Haram and the widespread use of the hashtag "#BringBackOurGirls". The kidnapping represents the change in strategy for the movement in

²⁷ Jacob Zenn and Elizabeth Pearson, "Women, Gender and the Evolving Tactics of Boko Haram," *Journal of Terrorism Research* 5, no. 1 (2014): 47, doi:10.15664/jtr.828.

²⁸ Ronke Iyabowale Ako-Nai, *Gender and Power Relations in Nigeria* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), 38; Gage and Thomas. "Women's Work, Gender Roles, and Intimate Partner Violence in Nigeria," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 46, no. 7 (2017): 1924, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-017-1023-4; Godiya Allanana Makama, "Patriarchy and Gender Inequality in Nigeria: The Way Forward," *European Scientific Journal* 9, no. 17 (2013): 132; Skjelsbæk, "Sexual Violence and War," 223.

2013, as it actively started using women and girls to benefit their cause. Moreover, sexual violence constituted an important aspect in this event. This thesis demonstrates how abductions and rape are closely intertwined in the case of Boko Haram. Hence, this event will be analysed in order to find out possible motivations for Boko Haram's use of rape as a weapon of war.

2. Methodology

2.1 Source selection:

Little research has been conducted with respect to the victims of Boko Haram. Among the reasons for this lack of data is that there is a culture of shame, stigma and silence around sexual abuse in the conservative north of Nigeria, making it difficult to conduct research there.²⁹ However, there are some valuable sources available. These sources include video material, reports and interviews carried out and published by international non-governmental organisations and the media. Sources included in this research are from Human Rights Watch (HRW), Amnesty International, International Alert, Nigeria's Political Violence Research Network (NPVRN), BBC News and the Wall Street Journal.

A significant report for this thesis was issued by HRW in 2014. 30 HRW is an international non-governmental organisation (INGO) that investigates and reports on abuses in a variety of countries around the globe, including Nigeria.³¹ In the report, violence against women and girls in Nigeria perpetrated by Boko Haram is researched. It includes an extensive variety of interviews with victims, among them girls who were abducted at the Chibok school. Moreover, the explicit link between Boko Haram and rape is discussed. However, it is important to note that some experiences in this report come from witnesses and therefore may have some flaws. However, the report also includes a wide variety of interviews with the actual victims.

In 2018, INGO Amnesty International published a report on women who survived Boko Haram.³² It focuses on Nigeria and provides interviews with rape survivors. It also discusses the treatment of these survivors by the Nigerian authorities, which is less relevant for this particular research.

Another important organisation for this research is International Alert, who works with people affected by conflict. The aim of International Alert is to "build positive peace and reduce violence". 33 The organisation works in countries all around the world, including Nigeria. It has published multiple articles on their website regarding the experiences of

²⁹ Imrana A. Buba, "Terrorism and Rape in Nigeria: A Cry for Justice," Oman Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review 4, no. 12 (2015): 7, https://doi.org/10.12816/0019097.

³⁰ Those Terrible Weeks in their Camp: Boko Haram Violence against Women and Girls in Northeast Nigeria," Human Rights Watch, accessed November 16, 2019,

http://features.hrw.org/features/HRW 2014 report/Those Terrible Weeks in Their Camp/assets/nigeria1014w $\underline{\frac{\text{eb.pdf.}}{31}}$

About Us," Human Rights Watch, November 27, 2019, https://www.hrw.org/about-us.

^{32 &}quot;They Betrayed Us: Women Who Survived Boko Haram Raped, Starved and Dtained in Nigeria," Amnesty International, accessed November 24, 2019, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr44/8415/2018/en/.

^{33 &}quot;Who We Are," International Alert, accessed September 6, 2019, https://www.international-alert.org/who-weare.

various Boko Haram victims.³⁴ The sources provided by International Alert document the direct experiences of numerous girls and women. It has done so by transcribing what these women and girls have said about their own experiences with Boko Haram. When examining these sources, it is important to keep in mind that the names used to tell these stories are changed to ensure the protection of the victims. Nonetheless, this does not change anything about their experiences nor the bigger picture this thesis is trying to paint.

In 2013, the non-governmental organisation NPVRN published a study on violence against Christian women in northeast Nigeria.³⁵ The NPVRN documented seventeen cases of women and girls who have been raped by Boko Haram. Important to note is that the study mentions the fact that when they tried to speak to some witnesses, some were too intimidated to speak out against their perpetrators.³⁶ This statement relates to the culture of shame, stigma and silence surrounding sexual violence in the country.

Finally, two video sources from BBC News and the Wall Street Journal will be included in this thesis. BBC News is a British television network and The Wall Street Journal is an American international daily newspaper. Both also have a YouTube channel where these videos were published. There, two different speeches are showcased which were given by members of Boko Haram in 2014 and 2016. These speeches are important for the fifth chapter because they reveal the motivations for Boko Haram to specifically target women and girls. Additionally, they discuss the abduction of the Chibok girls specifically.

2.2 Concepts:

Having discussed the sources that will be used in the analysis, this section turns its attention to the main concepts used in this thesis. For this thesis, the concepts of rape, gender and rape as a weapon of war are most significant. These concepts are part of the contextual and analytical framework and help place the subject in a wider context.

In order to understand the concept of rape as a weapon of war, it is paramount to know the meaning of the concept of rape on its own. In 1998, lawyer and humanitarian Gay McDougall defined rape as:

³⁴ "Boko Haram," International Alert, accessed December 7, 2018, https://www.international-alert.org/search/node/boko%20haram.

³⁵ Atta Barkindo, Benjamin Tyavkase Gudaku and Caroline Katgurum Wesley, "Our Bodies, Their Battleground: Boko Haram and Gender-Based Violence against Christian Women and Children in North-Eastern Nigeria since 1999," *Nigeria's Political Violence Research Network* (2013).

³⁶ Barkindo, Gudaku and Wesley, "Our Bodies, Their Battleground," 5.

""Rape" should be understood to be the insertion, under conditions of force, coercion, or duress, of any object, including but not limited to a penis, into a victim's vagina or anus; or the insertion, under conditions of force, coercion, or duress, of a penis into the mouth of the victim. Rape is defined in gender-neutral terms, as both men and women are victims of rape. However, it must be noted that women are more at risk of being victims of sexually violent crimes and face gender-specific obstacles in seeking redress" 37

Important in this definition is that McDougall notes that both men and women can be victims of rape, but women are at a higher risk of being raped than men. Furthermore, she mentions women face "gender-specific obstacles". This remark is significant for this research, because it relates to the idea that women are perceived and treated differently in Nigerian society due to existing notions of gender.

This thesis adopts African affairs scholar Jacob Zenn's and gender studies scholar Elizabeth Pearson's definition of gender, which holds that "gender' is understood as socially constructed norms and roles both limiting, and permitting, the actions and expectations of men and women". 38 The perception of gender in societies is crucial when examining why rape is used as a strategy. The idea that gender is socially constructed showcases how various aspects of society influence the concept. For example, being a religious (radical Islamic) movement, Boko Haram imposes certain ideas about women regarding what they should be and how they should act.

In the case of rape as a weapon of war, multiple definitions and explanations exist; it is therefore important to establish a theoretical framework for this concept. Moreover, it is important to discuss the reasons why scholars think rape is used as a strategy, in order to determine the possible motivations of Boko Haram.

In reviewing the existing literature on the concept, it becomes evident that the main motives discussed for using rape as a strategy are: inflicting terror, humiliation, ethnic cleansing and male bonding.³⁹ Additionally, several studies emphasise the influence of gender relations and nationalism on rape as a weapon of war. As political scientist Christine

³⁷ Nancy Farwell, "War Rape: New Conceptualizations and Responses." Affilia19, no. 4 (2004): 392, doi:10.1177/0886109904268868.

 ³⁸ Zenn and Pearson, "Women, Gender and the Evolving Tactics of Boko Haram," 47.
 ³⁹ Pike, *Crimes against Women*, 59; Ceyda Kuloglu. "Violence Against Women in Conflict Zones," *Women in* the Military and in Armed Conflict (2008): 228, doi:10.1007/978-3-531-90935-6 10; Bülent Diken and Carsten Bagge Laustsen, "Becoming Abject: Rape as a Weapon of War," Body & Society11, no. 1 (2005): 111, doi:10.1177/1357034x05049853.

Sylvester has argued, since the 1980s feminists have continuously tried to include gender relations in the study of international relations (IR). 40 Feminist international relations theory analyses how international politics is affected by gender relations and how the core concepts of IR are gendered themselves. According to Sylvester: "IR is supposedly about the vast international and its many relations but tends to leave a fair bit of both out of its nation, including feminists, and relations of the international that do not centre on Great Power concerns". 41 One of the most influential scholars in the feminist IR theory debate is theorist Cynthia Enloe. According to Enloe: "If one fails to pay close attention to women – all sorts of women – one will miss who wields power and for what ends. That is one of the core lessons of feminist international investigation". 42 Furthermore she argues: "it does not make sense to continue analysing international politics as if women were a mere afterthought". 43 Enloe's ideas are also supported by Sylvester, who argues that: "Enloe endeavours to display the power dimensions of gendered militarism, work, and consumption that IR neglects to sight in international relations". 44 This thesis aims to contribute to the inclusion of gender relations in the study of IR by researching the implications of Nigeria's gender relations on Boko Haram. Additionally, it contributes to the field by examining the experiences of victimised women in order to find out the possible motivations for Boko Haram to use rape as a strategy. In the following section, different theories are discussed, exhibiting different motivations for using rape as a weapon of war.

According to political scientist David Pike: "rape and other sexual violence against women and girls is in fact a premeditated strategy of terrorism, a method of systematic humiliation, intimidation and terror with the goal of ethnic cleansing". ⁴⁵ This definition is emphasised by sociologist Nancy Farwell, who also discusses the argument by international relations scholar Katrina Lee Koo about rape as a weapon and strategy of war. According to Koo, rape as a weapon attacks the physical and emotional sense of security of women, while simultaneously launching an assault on women's bodies. ⁴⁶ As a strategy, it is used to achieve specific political objectives by implementing domination, terror, political repression, intimidation, torture and humiliation. The political ends also include ethnic cleansing and

⁴⁰ Christine Sylvester, *Feminist International Relations: an Unfinished Journey* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002), 8.

⁴¹ Sylvester, Feminist International Relations, 287.

⁴² Cynthia H. Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2014), 32.

⁴³ Enloe, Bananas, Beaches and Bases, 332.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 29.

⁴⁵ Pike, Crimes against Women, 59.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 392.

genetic imperialism besides the will to destroy the enemy's identity, cohesion and spirit.⁴⁷ It describes the idea that rape is used as a strategy to achieve political objectives, something which can also be observed in the case of Boko Haram.

An important author regarding the subject of sexual violence is gender studies scholar Ceyda Kuloglu, who argues that there are three meanings to war rape. The first meaning is the "booty principle" of war, which means that the victor continues to use violence against women one or two months after a war has ended. Second, rape is a way to humiliate the men of the targeted nation, as they cannot protect their women. The third meaning is "male bonding" in which women and men are victims of systematic rapes and gang rapes in order to achieve cohesion and bonding among the perpetrators. 48 Furthermore, she argues that rape is a strategy for ethnic cleansing, which has two different dimensions: "The first one has the aim of impregnating women to have children who belong to the same nationality as the perpetrators. The second aim is to force the community to flee and thus to "cleanse" the area from a specific ethnic group". ⁴⁹ Using rape as a strategy for ethnic cleansing if often described by scholars as "genetic imperialism". ⁵⁰ A clear example of genetic imperialism can be seen in the Bosnian War, where Bosnian Serbs raped Bosnian Muslim women in order to impregnate them with "little Chetniks". 51 Serbian tradition states that the father's nationality defines the nationality of the child. Thus, the motivation behind rape in this instance is creating more of your own people, in order to become the dominant group in society. Genetic imperialism relates to patriarchal society, where women are objectified and viewed as vessels for childbearing.⁵²

As argued in the discussed theories mentioned above, rape can be used as a strategy to intimidate and humiliate the enemy in order to achieve political objectives such as ethnic cleansing. Moreover, it can be used for the objective of male bonding. These theories are also supported by sociologist Bülent Diken and political scientist Carsten Laustsen, who argue that that war rape can be used as an integral part of ethnic cleansing. In addition, they argue that its primary aim is to inflict trauma and destroy solidarity within the enemy camp. In their

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⁴⁷ Ibid., 392.

⁴⁸ Kuloglu. "Violence Against Women in Conflict Zones," 228.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 229.

⁵⁰ Claudia Card, "Rape as a Weapon of War," *Hypatia*11, no. 4 (1996): 7, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1996.tb01031.x.

⁵¹ Cindy Snyder, Wesley Gabbard, J May, and Nihada Zulcic, "On the Battleground of Women's Bodies: Mass Rape in Bosnia-Herzegovina," *Journal of Women and Social Work*21, no. 2 (2006): 190, https://doi.org/10.1177/0886109905286017.

⁵² Skjelsbæk, "Sexual Violence and War," 263.

words, this is the "demoralization of the enemy". ⁵³ However, they also add an extra dimension to the previous arguments by connecting war rape to subjects such as gender and religion. According to Diken and Laustsen, religious commitments and gender differences can be used as an instrument to inflict trauma. ⁵⁴ This trauma is not only inflicted upon the women themselves, but also upon their friends, families and the communities in which they live. Diken and Laustsen base their argument on the events in the Bosnian War and the civil wars in Uganda, Liberia and Rwanda. ⁵⁵

The idea that rape is not only an attack against a woman herself, but also against her community and against the enemy, is also brought forward by the aforementioned Susan Brownmiller. According to Brownmiller, rape is an instrumental aspect of armed conflict. In her 1975 study she observed that "Man's discovery that his genitalia could serve as a weapon to generate fear must rank as one of the most important discoveries". She elaborates by arguing that the defence of women has long been a "hallmark" for masculine pride. Therefore, rape is not only a tool used to humiliate a woman, but also to humiliate her family, community and husband. In the words of Brownmiller: "The body of a raped woman becomes a ceremonial battlefield, a parade ground for the victor's trooping of the colours. The act that is played out upon her is a message passed between men – vivid proof of victory for one and loss and defeat for the other". Moreover, the fact that women are used as a tool to humiliate other men shows that the objectification of women is fundamental to rape. Additionally, she argues that often a perpetrator of rape sees his action as a heroic act, justified by God.

Another author connecting gendered ideology and rape as a weapon of war is legal scholar Doris Buss. Buss connects the influence of gender relations to the effects of nationalism. Important in her argument is the theory of feminist scholar Anne McClintock, who argues that women are "symbolic representations of the body politic". According to McClintock, all nationalisms are gendered, invented and dangerous, and they all represent the relations between political power and violence. In her eyes, nationalism is a gendered

⁵³ Diken and Laustsen, "Becoming Aject," 111.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 112.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 112.

⁵⁶ Brownmiller, Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape, 14.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 38.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 38.

⁵⁹ Skjelsbæk, "Sexual Violence and War," 263.

⁶⁰ Brownmiller, Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape, 36.

⁶¹ Buss, "Rethinking 'Rape as a Weapon of War," 148.

⁶² Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 352.

discourse and it cannot be understood without a theory of gender power.⁶³ McClintock argues that no nation in the world gives men and women the same rights and access to resources and "nations are contested systems of cultural representation that limit and legitimise people's access to the resources of the nation-state".⁶⁴ In this gendered nationalism, women are often constructed as the symbolic bearers of the nation, but at the same time they are denied the same rights as men.⁶⁵ Women are to be protected in war as the "very nation itself"; they become boundaries of the nation-state. As a result of this, they become targets for violence that is actually directed against national collectivity.⁶⁶ Buss uses Bosnia and Herzegovina as an example, saying that during this war, rape was used as a targeted policy in order to force one group of people out of a region which was claimed by another.⁶⁷

In her article "Rape as a Weapon of War", philosopher Claudia Card argues that the fact that women are targeted so much in warfare has to do with "the cross-cultural symbolic meaning among men in patriarchies". 68 This is also in agreement with the observations of the previously discussed theories that consider gender relations of paramount influence in the use of rape as a strategy. According to Card, rape is a symbol for the one who is dominant in society. By raping women, one dramatically removes the other of the most fundamental control anyone has: the control over one's own body. ⁶⁹ Card's theory relates to a point made by gender studies scholar Inger Skjelsbaek. She argues that women are targeted because in armed conflict they find themselves in a situation where patriarchal gender relations are accentuated. 70 Secondly, she maintains that women are targeted because they embody the other socio-cultural identity, meaning the identity of the perpetrator's opponent. According to Skjelsbaek, gender and other socio-cultural structures must therefore be analysed together, in order to explain why certain groups of women are targeted more than others in conflict.⁷¹ The article "On the Battleground of Women's Bodies" supports this idea by arguing that "women's experience of rape in war, like the abuse of women's human rights, is often determined by the intersection of a variety of factors, such as age, race, class, religion, ethnicity, and nationality". 72

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⁶³ McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 355.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 353.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 354.

⁶⁶ Buss, "Rethinking 'Rape as a Weapon of War," 148.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 148.

⁶⁸ Card, "Rape as a Weapon of War," 10.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 10.

⁷⁰ Skjelsbæk, "Sexual Violence and War," 222.

⁷¹ Ibid., 223.

⁷² Snyder, Gabbard, May and Zulcic, "On the Battleground of Women's Bodies: Mass Rape in Bosnia-Herzegovina," 184.

Finally, Stiglmayer, unlike other scholars, provides the argument that soldiers may not always rape women because of their own free will. According to Stiglmayer, soldiers might also rape women because they believe that if they do not participate in the act they will be beaten or raped themselves by their superiors. 73 This argument can also be linked to another argument from Stiglmayer related to gender. According to Stiglmayer, soldiers rape women because they do not want to be seen as weak. They want to prevent other males treating or regarding them as feminine.⁷⁴ This relates to patriarchal society and the gender norms present in a certain country. Moreover, she argues that it is sometimes difficult to see the individual motivations of rapist soldiers, making it harder to establish patterns.⁷⁵

This chapter has demonstrated that although rape was for a long time seen as an unfortunate by-product of war, there is now a widespread recognition within the academic debate that rape is used as a strategy. Possible motivations for using rape as a weapon of war are accomplishing political objectives such as ethnic cleansing and destroying the enemy's identity and inflicting trauma. Furthermore, as multiple scholars have argued, the gendered ideology and the socio-cultural values of the involved groups are essential for the way a group thinks and operates. This can for example be seen in the fact that by raping women, not only is shame brought upon them, but upon their entire community. In addition, it can for example be observed in the influence of nationalism on gender relations. Striking for this research is that in the theories discussed in this chapter, there is not a single theory that focuses on all possible explanations which are showcased by the different authors. Of course, no single theory is the same, but it is still important to think about all possible motivations for the use of rape as a weapon of war when examining Boko Haram's specific motives for using rape as a strategy.

⁷³ Card, "Rape as a Weapon of War," 10.
⁷⁴ Ibid., 16.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 10.

3. The rise of Boko Haram:

The next chapter describes why Boko Haram was founded and what its main motivations are. In order to understand the development and origin of the movement, it is essential to understand the historical development of northern Nigeria in terms of the historical, socioeconomic and political context. Furthermore, several different factors have contributed to the rise of Boko Haram as an insurgent group, such as poverty, unemployment, politics and religion. Therefore, this chapter discusses the importance of these factors for the rise of the movement.

According to international relations historian James Falode, the conflict with Boko Haram has gone through three different phases. The first phase can be seen as a phase of civil unrest and took place between 1995 and 2002. The second phase, between 2002 and 2009, can be perceived as a religious uprising. In the final phase, which took place after 2009, the conflict became a war on terror on one side and an insurgency on the other. ⁷⁶

It is not entirely clear when Boko Haram was precisely founded but most scholars agree its origins can be traced back to 2002 when Mohammed Yusuf became its leader. 77 Its true historical roots, however, trace back to 1995, when the Muslim Youth Organisation was founded by Abukar Lawan. 78 At first, this organisation was a non-violent movement, but this changed under the influence of Yusuf from 2002 onwards. Yusuf was a preacher and radical Islamist who had four wives and twelve children. He studied the Qur'an in Chad and the Republic of Niger, where he developed his radical views that were intolerant towards Westernisation ⁷⁹

On December 24, 2003, Boko Haram first took up arms against state security forces. attacking public buildings and police stations in the Yobe Sate. 80 These kinds of actions continued in 2004, when members attacked police stations in the Borno state. This time, several policemen were killed, arms and munition were stolen and a police station in Gwoza was set ablaze.⁸¹ In the following years, however, Boko Haram received marginal attention as a group. This changed in 2007 and 2008 when it came under surveillance by security

⁷⁶ James Falode, "The Nature of Nigeria's Boko Haram War, 2010-2015: A Strategic Analysis," *Perspectives on* Terrorism 10, no. 1 (n.d.): 46.

⁷⁷ Freedom C. Onuoha, "A Danger Not to Nigeria Alone: Boko Haram's Transnational Reach and Regional Responses," *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung* (2014): 3. 78 Onuoha, "A Danger Not to Nigeria Alone," 3.

⁷⁹ Femi Adegbulu, "Boko Haram: the Emergence of a Terrorist Sect in Nigeria 2009–2013," *African Identities* 11, no. 3 (2013): 265, https://doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2013.839118.

⁸⁰ Onuoha, "The Islamist Challenge," 55.

⁸¹ Ibid.,55.

operatives in Abuja.82

One of the most important events in the history of Boko Haram took place in 2009. During that year, the movement violently clashed with the police who were enforcing the wearing of helmets for all motorcyclists. This clash led to the death of several policemen and the government cracked down on the group. This resulted in a full-scale escalation and the military ended up killing almost 800 people, most of them Boko Haram members. Furthermore, the government took Mohammed Yusuf into custody and killed him in an "extrajudicial execution". As mentioned earlier, the unlawful killing of Yusuf was the incentive for Boko Haram to adopt a more combative approach. Additionally, the group regrouped fast and soon it continued its attacks on a more unprecedented scale. It also got a new leader under the name of Abubakar Shekau. Although information about Shekau is scarce, it is clear he has had a significant impact on Boko Haram. After he took charge in 2009, he introduced the concept of *takfirism*. This means that Muslims and non-Muslims who have betrayed Islam are viewed as infidels who deserve death. According to Shekau, Muslims who engage in dialogue with Christians are conspirators against Islam.

Prior to 2010, Boko Haram occasionally used guerrilla tactics of hit and run, but it had no real apparent strategy. ⁹⁰ Its activities mainly included religious, civil or social acts of insubmission to the "established local norms". ⁹¹ However, this changed after Yusuf's death. After his death, the group started to use bombs on strategic locations and in 2011 a suicide bombing aimed a United Nations building killed 21 people and injured 73 others. ⁹² Moreover, from 2010 onwards the movement acquired more advanced weapons such as automatic rifles, surface-to-air-missiles and AK-47 rifles, whereas before it used weapons such as Molotov cocktails, knives and locally made guns. ⁹³ Tactics became more sophisticated, including the use of the internet, specifically YouTube, in order to reach a wider audience. ⁹⁴ In 2014, Boko

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⁸² Ibid.,56.

⁸³ Wisdom Iyekekpolo "Boko Haram: Understanding the Context," *Third World Quarterly* 37, no. 12 (2016): 2222.

⁸⁴ Onuoha, "A Danger Not to Nigeria Alone," 6.

⁸⁵ Falode, "The Nature of Nigeria's Boko Haram War, 2010-2015: A Strategic Analysis," 44.

⁸⁶ Iyekekpolo, "Boko Haram: Understanding the Context," 2222

⁸⁷ "An Introduction to Boko Haram's Ideologues: from Yusuf to Shekau," African Research Institute, accessed November 17, 2019, https://www.africaresearchinstitute.org/newsite/blog/introduction-boko-harams-ideologues-yusuf-shekau/.

³⁸ African Research Institute, "An Introduction to Boko Haram's Ideologues."

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Falode, "The Nature of Nigeria's Boko Haram War, 2010-2015," 43.

⁹¹ Ibid., 44.

⁹² Ibid., 44.

⁹³ Ibid., 44.

⁹⁴ African Research Institute, "An Introduction to Boko Haram's Ideologues."

Haram was even named the deadliest terrorist organisation in the world by The Institute for Economics and Peace. During that year, the movement was responsible for almost seven thousand deaths, generating over 80 percent of deaths from terrorism in Nigeria. After a peak of violence in 2014 and 2015, the number of deaths caused by the movement fell dramatically. Boko Haram was pushed out in several northern provinces by the Nigerian army. Yet, the group still has control over some pockets of territory and villages. It continues to launch deadly attacks, including suicide attacks and the abduction of civilians, among it mainly women and children.

3.1 Political instability:

Over the last few decades there has been a significant amount of political unrest in Nigeria which has left the general population dissatisfied. Thus, it is important to understand the Nigerian political environment in which Boko Haram operates, in order to understand why the movement was founded.

Until 1903, the Sokoto Caliphate was West Africa's most powerful state. The Caliphate, formed between 1804 and 1808, covered today's northern Nigeria, parts of southern Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and Benin. Nonetheless, it fell under British colonial rule in 1903. Major political, cultural and judicial changes were implemented, leaving some elements of the Sharia law in place. However, parts that were viewed as too extreme were removed. ¹⁰⁰ In northern Nigeria, this was perceived as the elevation of Christian jurisprudence over Islamic judicial heritage. ¹⁰¹

In 1960, Nigeria gained independence and the north (predominantly Muslim) and the south (predominantly Christian) were federated. Additionally, a secular constitution was created. Despite this, democratic government was only installed in 1999. This was after the

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⁹⁵ Marius Pricopi, "Tactics Used by the Terrorist Organisation Boko Haram," *Scientific Bulletin* 21, no. 1 (January 2016): 40, https://doi.org/10.1515/bsaft-2016-0035; "Terrorist Killings up by 80% in 2014, Fuelling Flow of Refugees, Report Says," The Guardian, accessed November 13, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/nov/17/terrorist-killings-up-by-80-per-cent-2014-fuelling-flow-refugees-global-terrorism-index

⁹⁶ Pricopi, "Tactics Used by the Terrorist Organisation Boko Haram," 41.

⁹⁷ "Boko Haram in Nigeria," Council on Foreign Relations, accessed November 17, 2019, https://www.cfr.org/interactive/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/boko-haram-nigeria.

⁹⁸ Council on Foreign Relations, "Boko Haram in Nigeria."

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Valerie Thomson, "Boko Haram and Islamic Fundamentalism in Nigeria," *Global Security Studies* 3, no. 3 (n.d.): 48.

Thomson, "Boko Haram and Islamic Fundamentalism in Nigeria," 48.

¹⁰² Ibid., 48.

country was ruled by military dictatorship for over sixteen years. ¹⁰³ Soon after the shift towards democratic rule, twelve Muslim majority states implemented Sharia law in an effort to solve the country's problems. ¹⁰⁴ Since 1960, the country has witnessed periodic outbursts of violence and there has been a strong influence of regionalism based on ethnicity and religion versus nationalism. ¹⁰⁵ Electoral and communal violence has made Nigeria unsafe, and its population fears for terrorist attacks, kidnappers, militants and armed gangs on a daily basis. ¹⁰⁶

Oftentimes it is argued by scholars that Nigeria is a "failed state", since the government has little or no control over a significant part of its territory. Consequently, the rise of Boko Haram can be seen as a symptom of the failure of the state in Nigeria. The ease with which the group has generated its following reveals a large discontent of the population with wider society and the state as a whole. Marginalised groups feel a sense of alienation and insecurity, which Boko Haram exploits to promote its narrative of mistrust towards the government.

According to political economist Freedom Onuoha, the leadership failure in the country can even be perceived as the root cause for Boko Haram's insurgency. Onuoha argues that "the political elite have failed to judiciously utilise public resources to address acute human security vulnerabilities in the country". 111 Due to this failure of the political elite, many citizens have become distrustful towards Nigerian politics, leading them to join groups like Boko Haram. 112 This idea is supported by political scientist Wisdom Iyekekpolo, who says that the most important factor for the rise of Boko Haram is political opportunity. Even though ideology and economy also play significant parts in why the movement was created, it is political opportunity which has ensured the start of the insurgency of Boko Haram. 113

Essentially, Iyekekpolo argues, there must be political opportunity for insurgency to take root. 114 In Nigeria, political actors have left the population angry, frustrated and deprived, and

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¹⁰³ Oladayo Awojobi, "The Socio-Economic Implications of Boko Haram Insurgency in the North-East of Nigeria," *International Journal of Innovation and Scientific Research* 11, no. 1 (2014): 144.

Thomson, "Boko Haram and Islamic Fundamentalism in Nigeria," 50.

Stuart Elden, "The Geopolitics of Boko Haram and Nigerias 'War on Terror," *The Geographical Journal* 180, no. 4 (2014): 418; Thomson, "Boko Haram and Islamic Fundamentalism in Nigeria," 48.

¹⁰⁶ Awojobi, "The Socio-Economic Implications of Boko Haram Insurgency in the North-East of Nigeria," 144.

¹⁰⁷ Elden, "The Geopolitics of Boko Haram and Nigerias 'War on Terror," 420.

¹⁰⁸ El-Affendi and Gumel, "Abducting Modernity," 129.

¹⁰⁹ Tbid., 134.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 138.

¹¹¹ Onuoha, "The Islamist Challenge," 62.

¹¹² Ibid 62-63

¹¹³ Iyekekpolo, "Boko Haram: Understanding the Context," 2222.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 2219.

thus have created ideal circumstances for religious ideological actors to influence the population with their ideas. 115 In the case of Boko Haram, it wants to reform and purify the political system in Nigeria, freeing it from Western culture and values which it believes are the root cause of present economic hardship and corruption. 116

3.2 Poverty and unemployment:

The Nigerian economy is one of the largest economies in Africa and the country is the biggest oil producer on the continent. In spite of this, there is an enormous inequality of wealth in the country. Many parts of Nigeria have absolute poverty levels above 70 percent, especially in the northeast. 117 In 2003, one year after Yusuf took the role of the movement's leader, almost 70 million people out of 128 million lived on less than one US dollar a day. 118 The present inequality and poverty is not a phenomenon of the last few decades, but has been persistent since the beginning of the nineteenth century. 119 Already since then, oil wealth has been mismanaged and there has been a lack of proactive economic policies. 120

According to political scientist Oladayo Awojobi, violence, conflicts, insecurity and terrorism are often caused by high poverty rates in societies. ¹²¹ Boko Haram is mostly active in the northern region. This region suffers more than the southern regions in terms of poverty and unemployment, showing a possible link between poverty and the rise of Boko Haram. 122 Yet, it is important to keep in mind that most terrorism scholars argue that the primary reason for terrorism to take root in society is not the presence of poverty, though it does play an important role. 123

As stated by Ivekekpolo, the economic hardship that prevails in northern Nigeria has resulted in aggression and frustration and the level of poverty present in the region has proved to be a mobilising factor for members of Boko Haram. 124 According to Iyekekpolo, there are two explanations for the economic causes of insurgency. The first is the standpoint of those who view economic conditions as sources of frustration which lead to insurgency and

Awojobi, "The Socio-Economic Implications of Boko Haram Insurgency in the North-East of Nigeria," 146. 122 Hamisu Salihu, "Is Boko Haram a 'Child' of Economic Circumstances?," International Journal of Social Economics 48, no. 8 (n.d.): 1185.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 2222.

 ¹¹⁶ Iyekekpolo, "Boko Haram: Understanding the Context," 2213.
 117 Elden, "The Geopolitics of Boko Haram and Nigeria's 'War on Terror," 419.

^{118 &}quot;Nigeria," World Bank, accessed October 8, 2019, https://data.worldbank.org/country/nigeria.

¹¹⁹ Ivekekpolo, "Boko Haram: Understanding the Context," 2222.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 2222.

¹²³ James A Piazza, "Rooted in Poverty?: Terrorism, Poor Economic Development, and Social Cleavages," Terrorism and Political Violence 18, no. 1 (2006): 160, https://doi.org/10.1080/095465590944578. ¹²⁴ Iyekekpolo, "Boko Haram: Understanding the Context," 2215.

aggression. The second point of view entails the notion that economic interest, greed and opportunity can be a reason for insurgency. Yusuf spoke about poverty regularly and he argued that "the way out of the predicament was for devout Muslims to "migrate from the morally bankrupt society to a secluded place and establish an ideal Islamic society devoid of political corruption and moral deprivation". ¹²⁶ In this statement, the first theory that Iyekekpolo mentions can be observed, since the frustration from economic challenges is showcased. Moreover, this theory is supported by the fact that the movement mainly derives its members from unemployed graduates and disaffected youths. These young men migrate from rural areas to urban areas in search of a better life. ¹²⁷ However, due to the fact that there are not many employment opportunities in the cities, many of these men end up contributing to the ethno-religious conflicts in these areas by joining groups like Boko Haram. ¹²⁸

Still, it is significant to note that not all members of the group are young, unemployed men. Wealthy, well-educated and influential people are also among the members of the movement. Furthermore, even though in the case of Nigeria a clear connection between poverty and insurgency can be discerned, there are also places in Nigeria and beyond where poor economic conditions do not result in insurgency. Therefore, it is essential to keep in mind that poverty can be observed as an influential factor in Boko Haram's motivations and why it could rise as a group. However, it is not necessarily the root cause. Other factors, like political opportunity and radical religion, have to be considered as well.

3.3 Religion:

Nigeria is Africa's most populated country with an estimated population of 150 million. The population consists of roughly fifty percent Muslims and forty percent Christians. The rest of the population adheres to indigenous religions. Additionally, ethnicity plays an important role in the identity of Nigerians and often ethnic loyalty is seen as more important than national identity by its population. For example, Nigerians see themselves as Igbo, Hausa-Fulani or Yoruba, among others. The Igbo, the main ethnic group in south-eastern Nigeria,

¹²⁵ Ibid., 2213.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 2215.

¹²⁷ Onuoha, "The Islamist Challenge," 62.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 63.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 56.

¹³⁰ Elden, "The Geopolitics of Boko Haram and Nigerias 'War on Terror," 418.

¹³¹ Thomas J. Davis and Azubike Kalu-Nwiwu, "Education, Ethnicity and National Integration in the History of Nigeria: Continuing Problems of Africas Colonial Legacy," *The Journal of Negro History* 86, no. 1 (2001): 1, https://doi.org/10.2307/1350175.

¹³² Davis and Kalu-Nwiwu, "Education, Ethnicity and National Integration in the History of Nigeria," 1.

mainly constitutes of Christians and the group is strongly opposed to Sharia law.¹³³ The Hausa-Fulani are the predominant ethnic groups in the northern region. These ethnic groups have been politically dominant since 1960 and Islam is an essential component to their identity. Furthermore, their culture is deeply patriarchal.¹³⁴ The Yoruba are mostly urban ethnic groups and both Islam and Christianity take root in the identity of these groups. Paramount is that among these different ethnicities there is also a history of hostilities and rivalries.¹³⁵ From 1999 to 2003, over ten thousand people died in religious violence and many more deaths have occurred since then.¹³⁶

Scholars often highlight extreme ideology as a significant actor in the rise of insurgent groups. 137 Political scientist Barbara Harff, for example, argues that insurgency becomes an option wherever individuals with extreme ideologies seek to attain political power. 138 This argument is supported by religious studies scholar Matthew Lauder, who concludes that religious ideology drives insurgency. According to Lauder, insurgents feel like they have exclusive access to sacred knowledge. In their eyes, the outside world is corrupt and illegitimate and the world is divided into the profane and sacred, and salvation can only be achieved by eliminating corrupting and evil influences. 139 Essentially, extremist groups are inclined to use extreme violence in order to gain political power. When this is achieved, they use this power to further advance their extreme ideology in society. 140

The philosophy of Boko Haram is rooted in orthodox Islam and is based on extreme Islamic teaching which rejects Western ideas and institutions. Some scholars argue that the organisation is an outgrowth of the Maitatsine movement and riots of the 1980s, during which the first major uprisings of fundamentalist Islam appear in Nigeria. The goal of Maitatsine was to purify Islam and he was an inspiration for Yusuf, who agreed with this doctrine.

As mentioned in the introduction, Boko Haram is translated as "Western education is forbidden". The origin of its rejection of Western education is the struggle between the Islamic-educated northern Nigerians and the classes of Western-educated Nigerians. This

¹³³ "Ethnicity in Nigeria," PBS, accessed November 22, 2019, https://www.pbs.org/newshour/arts/africa-jan-june07-ethnic 04-05.

¹³⁴ PBS, "Ethnicity in Nigeria."

Davis and Kalu-Nwiwu, "Education, Ethnicity and National Integration in the History of Nigeria," 2.

¹³⁶ Onuoha, "The Islamist Challenge," 55.

¹³⁷ Iyekekpolo, "Boko Haram: Understanding the Context," 2216.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 2216.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 2217.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 2217.

¹⁴¹ Onuoha, "A Danger Not to Nigeria Alone," 3.

¹⁴² Thomson, "Boko Haram and Islamic Fundamentalism in Nigeria," 51.

struggle originated during British colonial rule.¹⁴³ Also part of this struggle was Ahmadu Bello, the former premier of northern Nigeria from 1954 until 1996. Bello wanted to create a mix between Western and Islamic education in order to create a kind of Islamisation of Western-styled education.¹⁴⁴ Yusuf disliked this and believed the Nigerian system represented the Western education model (boko) and Christianity, which he believed undermined Islam.¹⁴⁵ Yusuf thought Western education to be destructive and believed that the northern Nigerian states were governed by false and westernised Muslims.¹⁴⁶ In order to moderate Western education through Islamic schoolarship, he founded a religious complex in Maiduguri, Borno State, with an Islamic school and mosque.¹⁴⁷

Besides Boko Haram's rejection of Western education and influences, its mission is to overthrow the Nigerian state and it wants to impose strict Islamic Sharia law in the entire country. Sharia is an Islamic legal system and it is meant to guide the daily lives of Muslims. The law constitutes a system of duties for all Muslims and is seen as the expression of God's command. In Boko Haram's beliefs, any member who dies for the movement dies for the cause of the Islamic Sharia state and they automatically go to paradise. The movement is motivated by the idea that the Nigerian state is filled with immorality and thus the best thing to do for a devoted Muslim is to establish an ideal Islamic society without "moral deprivation". Consequently, this is why Boko Haram for example attacks places presenting the state. According to the group, Islam must be purified and society must go back to that of its pious ancestors.

In conclusion, Boko Haram has not always been a violent movement – this changed when Mohammed Yusuf became its leader in 2002. Yusuf believed that Nigeria should be purified from Westernisation and his views proved a pivotal influence for the group. From 2002 onwards, the movement became more violent and religious uprisings became a hallmark for Boko Haram. 2009 marked a true turning point with Yusuf's death and the fact that the group started to use strategic bombings and acquired more advanced weapons.

It can be argued that religion is an important component of Boko Haram's motives.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 2218

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 2218

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 2218.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 2218.

¹⁴⁷ Thomson, "Boko Haram and Islamic Fundamentalism in Nigeria," 50.

¹⁴⁸ Onuoha, "The Islamist Challenge," 56.

^{149 &}quot;Sharia Law," Britannica, accessed November 12, 2019, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Shariah.

¹⁵⁰ Adegbulu "Boko Haram: The Emergence of a Terrorist Sect in Nigeria 2009–2013," 267.

¹⁵¹ Onuoha, "The Islamist Challenge," 56.

¹⁵² Iyekekpolo, "Boko Haram: Understanding the Context," 2218.

The ultimate goal for Boko Haram is to implement Sharia law in the entire country of Nigeria, while simultaneously wanting to change the education system and society as a whole by removing influences of Christianity and Westernisation. Nevertheless, even though religion is very important and can be discerned as a significant motive for Boko Haram's existence, poverty should also be regarded as an important motivator and plays a significant part in the movement's success. Due to high poverty rates and unemployment levels in the country, many young men are left frustrated and discontent with their lives, making them easy targets for Boko Haram. Essentially, the frustration from economic hardship is an incentive for people to join the movement. Yet, even though the economic challenges in Nigeria and the group's religious ideology are very important in the rise of Boko Haram, it is political instability which is essential to its "success". Due to the fact that Nigerian politics has left people angry and unsatisfied, Boko Haram seized the opportunity to take root as a movement. Moreover, insurgency becomes a choice when people with extreme ideologies seek to attain political power. Therefore, political opportunity can be observed as the root cause for the rise of Boko Haram, while obtaining political power can be seen as the main objective.

4. Gender relations in Nigeria:

This chapter describes the perceptions of gender in Nigeria, in order to address how this influenced the ideas and motivations of Boko Haram. Key to finding out what the impact is of gender relations on the group is the concept of patriarchy. Patriarchy is a very important aspect of Nigerian society and has proven very influential for Boko Haram. Furthermore, aspects like sexual violence, enforced marriage, politics and education are discussed.

As sociologist Tempitope Oriola has stated, Boko Haram's gender ideology "draws on prevailing attitudes and cultural practices regarding the social value, market value, and ultimately desirability of women in a patriarchal society". This idea is supported in a report from the International Crisis Group that argues that the connection between gender-based violence and Boko Haram should be understood in the context of the North East's heavily patriarchal societies and a widespread adherence to Islamic beliefs and practices. Nigerian society is patriarchal in nature, which is a major feature of a traditional society. In the country, men are likely to see their wives as homemakers rather than as wageworkers. Women are primarily seen as mothers, daughters and as household labourers. This perception of women is also adopted by Boko Haram.

In 1977, patriarchy was defined by feminist Adrienne Rich as:

"A familial-social, ideological, political system in which men by force, direct pressure or through ritual, tradition, law, and language, customs etiquette, education, and the division of labor, determine what part women shall or shall not play in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male."

Political scientist Godiya Makama builds on this definition by arguing that in a patriarchal society, a structure of a set of social relations exists which enables men to dominate women. ¹⁵⁷ It is a system that differentiates based on sex and provides material advantages to males, while it simultaneously places severe constraints on the roles of females in society. ¹⁵⁸

¹⁵³ Temitope B Oriola, ""Unwilling Cocoons": Boko Harams War Against Women," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 40, no. 2 (2016): 108, doi:10.1080/1057610x.2016.1177998.

¹⁵⁴ International Crisis Group, "Nigeria: Women and the Boko Haram Insurgency," *Crisis Group Africa Report*t (2016): 1-34.

Anastasia J. Gage and Nicholas J. Thomas, "Women's Work, Gender Roles, and Intimate Partner Violence in Nigeria," *Archives of Sexual Behavior*46, no. 7 (2017): 1924, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-017-1023-4. Godiya Allanana Makama, "Patriarchy and Gender Inequality in Nigeria: The Way Forward," *European Scientific Journal* 9, no. 17 (2013): 131.

¹⁵⁷ Makama, "Patriarchy and Gender Inequality in Nigeria," 115.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 116.

Tradition, culture and religion have determined the relationships between men and women for centuries and have ensured male domination in all parts of society. According to Makama, patriarchy justifies the marginalisation of women in education, politics, business, domestic matters, inheritance, economy and family. 159 Moreover, practices like female genital mutilation and widowhood practices have been part of Nigerian cultural traditions. 160 Practices against widows include restriction to the home and hair-shaving, but in some regions women even are forced to drink the bath water of their dead husbands as part of the mourning process. 161 It is important to note, however, that the Nigerian woman has to be placed in the context of the country's regional and ethnic differences. ¹⁶² For example, in some regions women are more affected by harmful widowhood practices than in others, while women in the South West have better education than in the rest of Nigeria. 163 Despite these differences, all Nigerian women are seen as subordinate to males and they occupy a secondclass status in society. 164 As a result of their ascribed gender roles, the self-esteem and selfworth of women is heavily affected, making it harder for them to stand up and bridge the gender gap. 165

Besides the fact that patriarchal notions result in the marginalisation of women, they also encourage violence and discrimination against women. 166 This can already be detected in the early stages of childhood. An example of this is that the male child is preferred over the female child and often couples consult oracles in order to ensure that their child will be male. 167 The preference for boys in the country is considered one of the strongest in West Africa. 168 Boys are less likely to suffer abandonment, discrimination, prejudice or rejection. 169 Additionally, during times of disasters or emergencies, many Nigerian parents attend to their male children before they tend to their female children. ¹⁷⁰ Besides the preference for male children, children are already taught early on in their lives that women should submit to the

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 116.

¹⁶⁰ Zenn and Pearson, "Women, Gender and the Evolving Tactics of Boko Haram," 51.

¹⁶¹ Ogbole Orokpo, "Women and Political Participation in Nigeria: A Discourse," International Journal of Social Sciences and Conflict Management 2, no. 2 (2017): 75.

¹⁶² Orokpo, "Women and Political Participation in Nigeria," 77.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 77.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 77.

Makama, "Patriarchy and Gender Inequality in Nigeria," 116.

¹⁶⁶ Ako-Nai. Gender and Power Relations in Nigeria, 38.

¹⁶⁷ Otutubikey Izugbara, "Patriarchal Ideology and Discourses of Sexuality in Nigeria," Africa Regional Sexuality Resource Centre (2004): 7.

¹⁶⁸ Izugbara, "Patriarchal Ideology and Discourses of Sexuality in Nigeria," 8.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 8.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 8

authority of men and that men should be in control.¹⁷¹ Moreover, boys are taught that violence is acceptable, while girls are taught that they should tolerate the violence of men.¹⁷² Essentially, female socialisation encourages women and girls to be submissive while the ideal man has to be strong, tough and aggressive.¹⁷³ In the case of Boko Haram, a clear distinction between male and female roles can be observed as well. Boko Haram's ideology puts men in "hyper-masculine combat roles" in their duty to violently oppose the West.¹⁷⁴ As discussed earlier, Boko Haram generally attracts young, angry and unemployed men. Thus, Boko Haram's combative ideological masculinity seems to spark a certain resonance with a portion of disenfranchised Nigerian men.¹⁷⁵

According to gender studies scholars Anastasia Gage and Nicolas Thomas, patriarchy is at the core of sexual violence aimed at women in Nigeria. ¹⁷⁶ Violence against women by non-state and state actors predates the country's independence. Since the era of the Nigeria-Biafra Civil War (1967-1970), women have been known to be direct victims of abuses that violate their human dignity such as molestation. ¹⁷⁷ Furthermore, a culture of silence surrounds the problem of sexual violence. A reason behind this culture of silence is that the laws to protect women in Nigeria are inadequate and formal mechanisms to seek justice are often ineffective. ¹⁷⁸ An example of this ineffectiveness can be observed in rape cases, where police are not trained sufficiently to handle such instances. Moreover, policemen do not always take reports on sexual abuse seriously. It often happens that policemen feel like the abuse was the woman's fault due to, for example, exposing her body parts or dressing inappropriately. ¹⁷⁹ On other occasions, sexual violence is excused because it is believed that men's behaviour is naturally uncontrollable. 180 Additionally, another aspect of the legal system which makes it harder for women to report their experience, is that the burden of proof lies with the prosecution. This means that women have to prove that they did not consent. However, under Muslim law, a woman's testimony is not as valid as that of a man. 181 On top of that, the

¹⁷¹ Ako-Nai. Gender and Power Relations in Nigeria, 38.

¹⁷² Ibid., 38

¹⁷³ Izugbara, "Patriarchal Ideology and Discourses of Sexuality in Nigeria," 10.

¹⁷⁴ Zenn and Pearson, "Women, Gender and the Evolving Tactics of Boko Haram," 51.

^{1/5} Ibid., 51.

¹⁷⁶ Gage and Thomas, "Women's Work, Gender Roles, and Intimate Partner Violence in Nigeria," 1924.

James Okolie-Osemene and Rosemary I. Okolie-Osemene, "Nigerian Women and the Trends of Kidnapping in the Era of Boko Haram Insurgency: Patterns and Evolution," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 30, no. 6-7 (2019): 1151.

¹⁷⁸ Makama, "Patriarchy and Gender Inequality in Nigeria," 125.

¹⁷⁹ Izugbara, "Patriarchal Ideology and Discourses of Sexuality in Nigeria," 27.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 27.

¹⁸¹ Makama, "Patriarchy and Gender Inequality in Nigeria," 125.

weakness of the rule of law is also caused by the lack of political will to protect women from these violations. 182

Furthermore, another factor making it easy for men to get away with sexual violence is the fact that early marriage is widely practised. ¹⁸³ Often these marriages are forced and arranged, while on other occasions women give their consent out of fear of the consequences for rejecting the marriage. ¹⁸⁴ For example, they fear their fathers will throw out their mothers, or that they will be disowned. ¹⁸⁵ Power imbalance creates opportunity for sexual violence and leaves women vulnerable, especially in armed conflict. ¹⁸⁶ This can also be seen in the case of Boko Haram. Its members often rape women and the group executes forced marriages between its members and women and girls.

As indicated earlier, girls and women are primarily seen as homemakers and wives in Nigeria. These ideas thoroughly influence the chances of women in different aspects of society like politics and education. Even though the Nigerian population consists of about fifty percent women, their participation in informal and formal structures remains insignificant. The Nigerian constitution allows women to participate in politics, but the domain of politics is truly unfeminine due to the fact that women do not substantially participate in the political arena. This has been the case since Nigeria's independence, and only a few women have been elected into various posts since the 1999 elections. A reason for low female participation in politics stems from the fact that Nigerian society frowns upon women who choose to leave their husband and children at home. The socio-cultural dependence of women is therefore a key factor of their low participation in politics.

Concerning education, women are often unable to go to school and they live their lives cleaning the house and looking after their children.¹⁹¹ Educational opportunities are defined by poverty and patriarchal attitudes towards gender roles.¹⁹² This means, for example, that when parents do not have enough resources to send multiple children to school, they prefer

¹⁸² Okolie-Osemene and Okolie-Osemene. "Nigerian Women and the Trends of Kidnapping in the Era of Boko Haram Insurgency," 1151.

¹⁸³ Oriola, ""Unwilling Cocoons"," 105.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 105.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 105.

¹⁸⁶ Okolie-Osemene and Okolie-Osemene. "Nigerian Women and the Trends of Kidnapping in the Era of Boko Haram Insurgency," 1152.

¹⁸⁷ Makama, "Patriarchy and Gender Inequality in Nigeria," 116.

¹⁸⁸ Orokpo, "Women and Political Participation in Nigeria," 75.

¹⁸⁹ Makama, "Patriarchy and Gender Inequality in Nigeria," 125.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 132.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 115.

¹⁹² Ibid., 121.

giving their sons an education over their daughters.¹⁹³ Investing in a daughter would not benefit the family in the long run since she will be married off, unlike in the case of boys.¹⁹⁴ Consequently, the level of illiteracy among women is substantially higher, especially in the northern part of the country, where poverty rates are higher.¹⁹⁵ By taking away educational opportunity, women lack critical self-awareness and knowledge over their socio-economic conditions and environment.¹⁹⁶

As mentioned earlier, Boko Haram rejects Western education. However, it also believes that it is a waste of time to educate women or girls, since in the group's perception, they exist purely for the purpose of marriage and bearing children. Essentially, girls in the education system are seen as wrong and unnecessary. This relates to their interpretation of the Islamic faith, which regards women as inferior to men. This point of view can also be observed in the kidnapping of the Chibok girls, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Moreover, its rejection of Western education and girls going to school can be observed in a 37-minute-long speech which was given by Abubakar Shekau on March 25, 2014. In this speech, he said: "Western education is a sin, university is a sin. Stop going to university, bastards! Women, go back to your homes!". In this speech, Boko Haram took credit for the attack on Giwa camp, which was one of the Nigerian army barracks in Maiduguri. The Nigerian army took a blow from Boko Haram and the speech was meant to mock Shekau's enemies. Unfortunately, this speech is no longer available on YouTube where it was first posted. However, historian Elodie Apard has transcribed the speech in her article "The Words Of Boko Haram: Understanding Speeches by Mohammed Yusaf and Abubakar Shekau".

According to public administration scholar Ogbole Orokpo, an important factor contributing to the stereotyping of Nigerian women as wives and mothers is religion.²⁰¹ It reinforces the barriers that prevent them from participating socially, politically and economically.²⁰² An example of this is that traditions and cultural beliefs in Nigeria see the wife as property of her husband and therefore, he has the moral right to punish her for her

¹⁹³ Ibid., 121.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 121.

¹⁹⁵ Ako-Nai. Gender and Power Relations in Nigeria, 37.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 37

¹⁹⁷ Oriola, ""Unwilling Cocoons"," 103.

Mok Shen Yang, "Gender-Based Violence and the Boko Haram in Nigeria," *Global and Policy* 3, no. 2 (2015): 46.

¹⁹⁹ Elodie Apard, "The Words of Boko Haram: Understanding Speeches by Momammed Yusaf and Abubakar Shekau," *Afrique Contemporaine* 3, no. 255 (2015): 60.

²⁰⁰ Apard, "The Words of Boko Haram," 62.

²⁰¹ Orokpo, "Women and Political Participation in Nigeria," 82.

²⁰² Ibid., 82.

perceived wrongdoings.²⁰³ These women depend on their husbands and families for everything and there are barely any opportunities for them to gain independence.²⁰⁴

As explained in previous chapters, Boko Haram has an aversion towards Christianity and Westernisation and it wants to rid the country of these influences. The group, however, seems to target Christian women specifically. This is also stated in a report from NPVRN, which shows that by 2013, 45 percent of those killed by Boko Haram were Christian women and children. 205 Yet, attacks against Christian women in northern Nigeria are not something only practised by Boko Haram. In the region, a generic culture of discrimination can be observed.²⁰⁶ Therefore, the violence perpetrated by Boko Haram against Christian women can be regarded as an extension of other long-term and institutionalised discriminatory practices. 207 Christian women have faced discriminatory practices in domestic and professional spheres, resulting in acid attacks because they are accused of "un-Islamic" practices. ²⁰⁸ Such practices include taking a job or not wearing a hijab, for example. ²⁰⁹ Moreover, women are often accused of "dishonouring Islam". An example of an instance where this anger towards Christians was visible was in 2006. A Christian female teacher confiscated a Qur'an from a student in Bauchi, after which riots took place in which more than fifty Christians were killed. 210 In the aforementioned 2015 speech by Shekau, he also claimed: "In Islam, it is permitted to take the wife of an infidel. Soon, we're going to take those women and sell them in the market. Danger, danger, danger!". ²¹¹ In this quote, the fact that the group looks down upon Christians is truly seen, as they encourage Muslims to take Christian wives from their men. Additionally, the fact that they do not value the lives of women can be observed, as they encourage other Muslims to sell these women at markets. This also relates to patriarchal society and the idea that women are the property of men.

Thus far, this thesis has shown that poverty, unemployment, religion and political opportunity are all influential factors for the rise and motivations of Boko Haram. In this chapter, it is argued that besides these factors, the influence of Nigeria's gender relations has also been significant for the ideas and motivations of the group. The main reason for this is that its ideology draws upon Nigeria's attitudes towards women. Vital for the movement is

²⁰³ Makama, "Patriarchy and Gender Inequality in Nigeria," 125.

Orokpo, "Women and Political Participation in Nigeria," 82.

²⁰⁵ Barkindo, Gudaku and Wesley, "Our Bodies, Their Battleground," 25.

²⁰⁶ Zenn and Pearson, "Women, Gender and the Evolving Tactics of Boko Haram," 50.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 50.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 50.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 50.

²¹⁰ Ibid, 50.

²¹¹ Apard, "The Words of Boko Haram," 60.

Nigeria's patriarchal nature which ultimately translates to the perception that men are seen as superordinate in comparison to women. Results of these attitudes are, for example, that women are barely represented within politics and boys have more educational opportunities than girls. The influence of patriarchal views and religious notions present in Nigeria can be observed in the ideas of Boko Haram, as they claim that women should be mothers and wives first and foremost and that girls should not go to school. Additionally, it believes that men should be tough and aggressive, which leads to its hostile tactics used towards Christians and other civilians. Moreover, due to Nigeria's approach and attitudes towards sexual violence and the lack of action taken towards it, women are often silent about their experiences. Furthermore, sexual violence regularly happens in forced marriage, which ultimately means women do not have their own say about their own body, as they have to adhere to their husband's will. The culture of sexual violence and early enforced marriage can also be traced back to Boko Haram, as it frequently takes part in these practices. Finally, attacks against Christian women in Nigeria are not only perpetrated by Boko Haram but are part of a generic culture of discrimination and the violence of Boko Haram can be regarded as part of institutionalised and long-term violence towards Christian women in the region.

5. The kidnapping of the Chibok girls:

One of the most reported terrorist attacks by Boko Haram is the kidnapping of the Chibok girls in 2014. Moreover, the kidnapping marked an important event in the change of strategy of the movement in 2013. Consequently, this chapter will look at what this kidnapping reveals about Boko Haram's reasons for using rape as a weapon of war. Significant in answering this question are the possible reasons brought forward by scholars to use rape as a weapon, why the movement's strategy changed in 2013 specifically, and the importance of the connection between kidnapping and rape as a weapon of war.

In the article "Consequences of Boko Haram Terrorism on Women in Northern Nigeria", it is argued that the abductions and detention of, and increased violence against, women by Boko Haram are for tactical purposes. 212 Nonetheless, it does not mention why Boko Haram uses these strategies. As discussed before, rape as a weapon of war can be used to achieve political objectives such as ethnic cleansing. Additionally, it is for example used to humiliate the enemy, to inflict terror or to enhance male bonding among a group's members. Although these theories do not mention Boko Haram, a number of articles connect rape and the movement. One of these articles is written by sociologist Temitope Oriola and is the sole article discussing the specific connection between Boko Haram, the concept of rape as a weapon of war, and why it is used as a strategy. According to Oriola, the systematic rape of women is a fundamental aspect of the organisation's strategy for continuity and it is a deliberate attempt to produce progeny, similar to the events in Bosnia. 213 In the perception of the movement, women who are pregnant can be monitored and identified by their communities and their child can be kidnapped when it grows up. 214 This creates a new generation of children and Boko Haram thus sees these women as "bearers of its future". 215 Consequently, the group's sexual violence is mainly aimed towards women and girls in the reproductive age (14 to 45 years).²¹⁶ Furthermore, Boko Haram sees women who are already married or who already have children as undesirable. ²¹⁷ This argument about "women as bearers of the future" supports the aforementioned theory about using rape for genetic imperialism. Furthermore, as mentioned in the previous chapter and emphasised by Oriola, Boko Haram believes they have the right to take the wives of anyone who does not share its

²¹² Osita Nioku, Agnes Princewill and Chikere Princewill, "Consequences of Boko Haram Terrorism on Women in Northern Nigeria," Applied Research Journal 1, no. 3 (2015): 104.

²¹³ Ibid., 108. ²¹⁴ Ibid., 107.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 107.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 108.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 108.

religious beliefs.²¹⁸ Moreover, he also argues that by using sexual violence, members are able to feel superior and they can fulfil their quest for power.²¹⁹ Yet, it is important to note that Oriola does not mention the connection between Boko Haram's use of kidnappings and rape as a strategy and fails to discuss the impact of the actions of the Nigerian government on the movement.

Another scholar who makes the connection between sexual violence and Boko Haram is Christiana Attah. Although not referring to the concept of rape as a weapon of war specifically, public law scholar Christiana Attah argues that the sexual violence used by Boko Haram against women is meant to humiliate the Nigerian state and destroy the "social fabric of society", where being a virgin is highly valued. Furthermore, she supports the idea of Oriola, arguing that the movement wants to create offspring through deliberate pregnancies, so that these children can continue the insurgency. Additionally, the article mentions the connection between rape and the abduction of the Chibok girls. It does not mention, however, why the movement changed their strategy specifically in 2013.

According to political scientist Oladayo Awojobi, rape and kidnapping are part of Boko Haram's strategies and both methods are used as weapons of war, arguing that "according to security analysts, Boko Haram sect is using these girls as a human shield to prevent the military onslaught on their camps. The sect is on kidnapping rampage, they continue to kidnap and most of their victims are women. Aside kidnapping, some of the women they kidnap are sexually abused and in some scenarios, foot soldiers of Boko Haram forcefully married some of these women to satisfy their sexual orgy." Awojobi hereby connects the use of rape and kidnapping, but fails to demonstrate what the importance is of the strategy of rape for the movement.

It is important to consider that from 2009 until 2013 Boko Haram did not target women and girls specifically.²²³ Two scholars who explain Boko Haram's change in strategies in 2013 are Jacob Zenn and Elizabeth Pearson. According to them, kidnapping is a fairly recent development for the movement, as the first suggestions of the strategy emerged in statements by Boko Haram in January of 2012.²²⁴ In that year, Shekau released a video

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²¹⁸ Ibid., 107.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 112.

²²⁰ Attah, "Boko Haram and Sexual Terrorism," 388.

²²¹ Ibid., 389.

²²² Awojobi, "The Socio-Economic Implications of Boko Haram Insurgency in the North-East of Nigeria," 148.

Buba, "Terrorism and Rape in Nigeria: A Cry for Justice," 6.
 Zenn and Pearson, "Women, Gender and the Evolving Tactics of Boko Haram," 47.

message in which he threatened to kidnap the wives of government officials. 225 This was a response to the imprisoning of the wives of Boko Haram members by the Nigerian government. 226 However, only a year later the movement actually carried out its first kidnaping, marking an important moment for the evolution of Boko Haram's strategy.²²⁷ Since 2013, the movement has kidnapped hundreds of women and girls and Boko Haram has perpetrated numerous psychological and physical abuses against them in captivity.²²⁸

Boko Haram's first kidnapping was the abduction of a French family in northern Cameroon, who were then brought back to Nigeria. 229 Over the course of 2013, Boko Haram continued to carry out a series of kidnappings in which the instrumental use of women was one of its main features. ²³⁰ Furthermore, Zenn and Pearson argue that Boko Haram targets Christian women specifically. Since July 2013, the Christian Association in Nigeria has reported on the abduction of Christian women and has discerned a pattern of intimidation. kidnappings, compulsory conversion to Islam and forced marriage. ²³¹ Zenn and Pearson's observation is also supported by a report from the International Crisis Group, where it is argued that Boko Haram mainly abducts Christian women in order to spread their version of Islam, as well as punishing local adversaries. 232

An example of this dates back to May 2013, when Boko Haram carried out an attack on police barracks in Bama, in the Borno State. 233 In this attack, the movement captured twelve Christian women and children. These abductions followed a battle with security forces in which more than one hundred people were killed. ²³⁴ Following this attack, Shekau released a video message claiming responsibility for the kidnappings of these women and children. In this video he promised to make them his "servants" if certain Boko Haram members and their wives would not be released from prison.²³⁵ These members and wives were arrested in 2012 by the Nigerian government and more than one hundred women and children were detained. among them Shekau's wives.²³⁶ The targeting of friends and family of suspects is a common

²²⁵ Ibid., 47.

²²⁶ Ibid., 47.

²²⁷ Ibid., 47.

²²⁸ Buba, "Terrorism and Rape in Nigeria," 6.

Zenn and Pearson, "Women, Gender and the Evolving Tactics of Boko Haram," 47.

²³⁰ Ibid., 47.

²³¹ Ibid., 49.

²³² International Crisis Group, "Nigeria: Women and the Boko Haram Insurgency," Africa Report N242 (2016):

<sup>7.
&</sup>lt;sup>233</sup> Zenn and Pearson, "Women, Gender and the Evolving Tactics of Boko Haram," 48.

²³⁴ Ibid., 47.

²³⁵ Ibid., 48.

²³⁶ Ibid., 48.

policing practice in the country, aiming to strike at the heart of Boko Haram. ²³⁷ In a YouTube video from January 2012, Shekau accused the Nigerian government of the "kidnapping" of women and several other videos with the same message followed. ²³⁸ The women captured in Bama by Boko Haram, however, had nothing to do with the Nigerian government and were not directly involved in the conflict.²³⁹ A few weeks after they were released from captivity, they were interviewed by television channel Al-Jazeera. 240 In these interviews, the women said explicitly that their abduction was a response to the government's kidnappings of Boko Haram's wives and children. 241 Thus, it could be argued that the abductions of women and children by Boko Haram are a response to the same strategy of the Nigerian government, with the objective of releasing the group's own members. ²⁴² Hence, when analysing the argument of Zenn and Pearson, a clear strategy of abduction by Boko Haram can be identified. Although they do not connect this strategy to the movement's use of rape, this connection can be seen in several interviews with Boko Haram's victims which will be discussed below. These experiences are essential material for this thesis, since they provide insight into the possible motivations of the movement to use rape as a weapon of war.

In the report "Those Terrible Weeks in their Camp" by HRW, eight cases of sexual violence are documented.²⁴³ Five of these cases are documented through interviews with the actual victims, while three of the cases are described by witnesses. The five interviewed victims range in age from fifteen to twenty-two years old. Four of the sexual assaults took place after the girl or woman was forced to marry a Boko Haram member.²⁴⁴ In these four cases, commanders appeared to make an effort in protecting the victims before they were married. In two cases, however, insurgents took advantage of the absence of their commanders, sexually assaulting the abductees who were waiting to be married.²⁴⁵ In the report, one of the victims who is interviewed is a fifteen-year-old girl who was abducted in 2013. She spent four weeks in the captivity of Boko Haram. In the interview, she says:

²³⁷ Ibid., 48.

²³⁸ Ibid., 48.

²³⁹ Ibid., 48.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 48.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 48.

²⁴² Ibid., 47.

²⁴³ Those Terrible Weeks in their Camp: Boko Haram Violence against Women and Girls in Northeast Nigeria," Human Rights Watch, accessed November 16, 2019,

http://features.hrw.org/features/HRW 2014 report/Those Terrible Weeks in Their Camp/assets/nigeria1014w

²⁴⁴ Human Rights Watch, "Those Terrible Weeks in their Camp," 33. 245 Ibid., 33.

"After we were declared married I was ordered to live in his cave but I always managed to avoid him. He soon began to threaten me with a knife to have sex with him, and when I still refused he brought out his gun, warning that he would kill me if I shouted. Then he began to rape me every night. He was a huge man in his mid-30s and I had never had sex before. It was very painful and I cried bitterly because I was bleeding afterwards". 246

This quote does not only discuss her experience with rape, but it also demonstrates the fact that Boko Haram takes part in forced marriage, even when someone is underage. Another interview in the report reveals the sexual abuse of a nineteen-year-old woman who has children and who was already married before taken captive:

"When we arrived at the camp they left us under a tree. I managed to sleep; I was exhausted and afraid. Late in the night, two insurgents shook me and another woman awake, saying their leader wanted to see us. We had no choice but to follow them, but as soon as we moved deep into the woods, one of them dragged me away, while his partner took the other woman in another direction. I guessed what they had in mind and began to cry. I begged him, telling him I was a married woman. He ignored my pleas, flung me on the ground, and raped me. I could not tell anyone what happened, not even my husband. I still feel so ashamed and cheated. The other woman told me she was also raped, but vowed never to speak of it again as she was single and believes that news of her rape would foreclose her chances of marriage". 247

In this case, the insurgents did not care whether the woman was married or not when sexually abusing her. Furthermore, it showcases the influence of the culture of silence and shame surrounding sexual abuse in Nigeria. Nonetheless, these two quotes do not say anything about the specific motives of the insurgents to rape these women, even though they are important in establishing the connection between abductions and rape.

A report from Amnesty International shows that women who were forced to marry Boko Haram members were raped. Yet, women and girls who were not married to them also fell victim to rape. 248 Hence, it can be observed that women are both at risk of being sexually assaulted by the movement whether they are married or not. Still, it is important to keep in mind that even though it does not really change anything for the victim, marriage does matter

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 33-34.
²⁴⁷ Ibid., 34.

²⁴⁸ Amnesty International, "They Betrayed Us."

for the insurgents. In their eyes, waiting to be married until they have sex is important and can be related to their religion. As argued before, the insurgents believe that in marriage, sex is the wife's duty and therefore when they wait, they believe that they do not do anything wrong. However, as can also be seen in the report from HRW, waiting for marriage is not always valued, as in two of the cases mentioned the insurgents ignored their commands and raped the girls although they were waiting to be married.

On the website of International Alert, an interview with the experiences of Habiba and her teenage daughter Ladi can be found (not their real names). They were kidnapped by Boko Haram and held captive for over a year. During this time, both Habiba and Ladi became pregnant: "They forcefully took us, held us captive, and married us against our will. What pained me the most is seeing my own daughter also being sexually violated and I couldn't do anything to help her out". This again shows that women who are taken captive are often married off to the insurgents and have children. Moreover, it showcases the fact that women are deliberately humiliated during their captivity, having to watch someone they love being raped in front of them.

In November of 2013, the NPVRN published a study on violence against Christian women in northeast Nigeria. ²⁵⁰ In this study, the rape of six women is discussed who were held in a house in Maiduguri. Important about this study is that it explicitly mentions what the reason was for the insurgents to assault these women. According to the report, the six women who were interviewed were held for two weeks and they were repeatedly raped because of the fact that they were Christians. ²⁵¹ This confirms the argument that Boko Haram explicitly targets Christian women because of their religion.

The previous sources have shown a clear connection between abductions and the use of rape and thus the consequences of Boko Haram's change in strategy which took place in 2013. Another illustration of this change can be observed in the case of the Chibok girls. On April 14, 2014, 276 girls were kidnapped from the Government Secondary School Chibok, in the Borno State. This mass abduction of the Chibok girls is one of the largest attacks carried out by Boko Haram. During the attack on the school, the members were dressed in military uniforms and acted as if they were there on behalf of the Nigerian state, taking girls

²⁴⁹ "Life after Boko Haram: Habiba and Ladi's Story," International Alert, accessed November 25, 2019, https://www.international-alert.org/stories/life-after-boko-haram-habiba-and-ladis-story.

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²⁵⁰ Barkindo, Gudaku and Wesley, "Our Bodies, Their Battleground."

²⁵¹ Ibid., 25.

Oriola, ""Unwilling Cocoons"," 99.

²⁵³ Ibid, 104.

in multiple vehicles.²⁵⁴ The event became headline news and many celebrities campaigned for the girls' release. 255

According to the earlier mentioned report of HRW, the initial goal of Boko Haram was to attack the school in order to steal a brick-making machine as well as other supplies and food. Yet, this objective changed once the movement realised the fact that they had such easy access to young women and girls without encountering much resistance. 256 The men put as many girls as possible in one truck and the remaining girls were forced to walk for about thirty miles to the Sambisa forest camp. ²⁵⁷ Some girls escaped, for example by jumping out when the trucks had driven off, or fleeing when they went to the bathroom. ²⁵⁸ Overall, 57 out of 276 girls managed to escape. 259

According to Awojobi, Boko Haram used this kidnapping so that the girls could be used as a human shield, in order to prevent the Nigerian military from attacking their location in Sambisa forest. 260 Furthermore, legal scholar David Sverdlov argues that Boko Haram kidnapped the Chibok girls because of the group's mission to end Western education.²⁶¹ The Borno State has a large Christian population and ninety percent of the Chibok girls were Christian.²⁶² He argues that the movement's insurgents believed that by attacking schools, parents would stop sending their children to non-Koranic schools. 263 During the attack. the movement separated the Muslim girls from the Christian girls. Christians were given the choice to convert to Islam or face conditions such as domestic servitude. Muslim girls, however, were able to leave. 264

On May 5, 2014, many news outlets reported on a video released by Shekau. One of these news outlets was the Wall Street Journal, on its YouTube channel. In the video, Shekau took credit for the abduction of the Chibok Girls. 265 This video was sent by Boko Haram and

²⁵⁵ El-Affendi and Gumel, "Abducting Modernity," 128.

²⁵⁶ Human Rights Watch, "Those Terrible Weeks in their Camp," 23.

²⁵⁷ Ibid, 23.

²⁵⁸ Ibid, 23.

²⁵⁹ Oriola, ""Unwilling Cocoons"," 104.

²⁶⁰ Awojobi, "The Socio-Economic Implications of Boko Haram Insurgency in the North-East of Nigeria," 148. ²⁶¹ Sverdlov, "Rape in War," 342.

²⁶² Ibid., 342.

²⁶³ Ibid., 342.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.,342.

²⁶⁵ "Boko Haram Leader Says in Video Group Abducted Girls," Wall Street Journal, accessed November 24, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9BU8AflC4g.

obtained by the AFP news agency. 266 The message of Shekau is translated by the Wall Street Journal as:

"I abducted a girl at a western education school and you are disturbed. I said western education should end. Girls, you should go and get married. I abducted your girls. I will sell them in the market, by Allah. There is a market for selling humans. Allah says I should sell. He commands me to sell. I will sell women. I sell women". 267

Shekau hereby clearly rejects Western education. Furthermore, the idea that women should be homemakers and wives can be detected in the statement that they should go and get married. Moreover, it demonstrates the believe that women are objects that can be sold. The message also has a religious component with Shekau arguing that he acts on behalf of Allah. Therefore, it can be argued that Shekau uses religion in order to justify his actions and possibly reach a wider audience.

In 2016, Boko Haram released another video on social media about the Chibok girls. In the video, one of the insurgents says: "If our members in detention are not freed, let the government and parents of the Chibok girls know that they will never find these girls again". 268 From this video, it can be argued that Boko Haram uses women and girls in order to have their insurgents released. Additionally, the video shows a number of girls who are held captive by the movement, some of them holding babies, showing possible signs of forced marriage and sexual assault. This is also confirmed in the video, as one girl says that forty of the girls have been "married" to Boko Haram insurgents. ²⁶⁹

In the HRW report, twelve of the women who were abducted from the Chibok school are interviewed.²⁷⁰ They told HRW that in the camps they were brought to, many women and girls fell victim to sexual abuse, including rape. Moreover, they told the INGO that most women there were either taken because they were students or because they were Christians.²⁷¹ Furthermore, the report argues that when the women were abducted, they were forced to convert to Islam. If they refused, they were subjected to physical and psychological abuse,

²⁶⁶ "Boko Haram 'to Sell' Nigeria Girls Abducted from Chibok," BBC News, accessed November 24, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-27283383.

Wall Street Journal, "Boko Haram Leader Says in Video Group Abducted Girls."

²⁶⁸ "New Boko Haram Video Claims Some Chibok Girls Were Killed by Airstrikes," Washington Post, accessed November 26, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/08/14/new-boko-haramvideo-claims-some-chibok-girls-were-killed-by-airstrikes/.

Washington Post, ""New Boko Haram Video Claims Some Chibok Girls Were Killed by Airstrikes."

Human Rights Watch, "Those Terrible Weeks in their Camp," 1.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 2.

including rape.²⁷²

According to Oriola, the attention the movement has generated with this attack has transformed the group. ²⁷³ Before the kidnapping, Boko Haram was relatively unknown. However, this changed with the attack on the Chibok girls. Oriola argues that sexual violence in conflict generates huge attention and with this attention comes an enhanced sense of group solidarity and opportunities for membership recruitment and fund-raising. ²⁷⁴ He also argues that after the attack in Chibok, there are several known instances of girls who got married and vowed that they would never go to school again. ²⁷⁵ According to the HRW report, the relative ease with which the group could carry out the kidnapping of the Chibok girls "emboldened the group to step up their abductions elsewhere". ²⁷⁶ Even though some of the Chibok girls have managed to escape, many of them are still missing today. On April 14, 2019, five years after the abduction of the 276 girls, Al Jazeera reported that 112 girls are still missing. ²⁷⁷

The analysis conducted in this chapter shows that the abduction of the Chibok girls reveals a wider pattern of Boko Haram's deliberate targeting of women and girls. Furthermore, as seen in the available articles about the connection between Boko Haram and rape, the various motives for the movement to use rape as a strategy are: rape as a strategy for continuity, producing progeny and humiliating the Nigerian state. Moreover, rape is used by insurgents to feel superior in their quest for power, and they use women and girls as human shields.

Fundamental to the movement's strategy is the paramount change detectable in 2013, when Boko Haram started to deliberately abduct women. Essential to why the movement adopted this new strategy was the corresponding method of the Nigerian government, which focused on arresting the wives and children of the group's members. Due to these arrests, Boko Haram started to abduct Nigerian women in order to get their own women released. When examining interviews with victims of Boko Haram's abductions, the connection between kidnapping and sexual assault becomes truly vivid. In addition, these interviews show that forced marriage is essential for the way the movement operates. Critically, it is mostly Christian women who are targeted. By forcing these women to get married and

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²⁷² Ibid., 2.

²⁷³ Oriola, ""Unwilling Cocoons"," 111.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 112.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 112.

Human Rights Watch, "Those Terrible Weeks in their Camp," 23.

²⁷⁷ "Nigeria's Chibok Schoolgirls: Five Years On, 112 Still Missing," Al Jazeera, accessed November 22, 2019, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/04/nigeria-chibok-school-girls-years-112-missing-190413192517739.html.

convert to Islam, they can create Muslim offspring and spread their faith and ideas. Nonetheless, while the movement changed its strategy in 2013, the explicit targeting of women did not truly gain noteworthy attention from the public until the abduction of the Chibok girls. These girls were targeted because of their Christian faith, because they were students, and in order to use as human shields. Furthermore, two years after their abduction, Boko Haram tried to use them in order to get their own members out of prison. Additionally, the experience of the Chibok girls discussed in the HRW report reveals that rape is not only part of forced marriage, but it is also used as a tool used to punish women who refuse to adhere to Islamic teachings. Finally, the fact that the attack generated so much attention resulted in the group's motivation to continue with this strategy elsewhere.

6. Conclusion:

6.1 Conclusion of the research:

This thesis set out to study the reasons for Boko Haram to use rape as a weapon of war in Nigeria from 2009 to 2018. The thesis has demonstrated that even though rape as a weapon of war has become an increasingly researched topic within the academic field since the 1990s, the connection between the concept and Boko Haram has not been made in a variety of research. When examining the existing literature on rape as a weapon of war in general, it becomes evident that scholars argue that the main objectives to use this strategy are: humiliation, inflicting terror, ethnic cleansing and male bonding. Moreover, the importance of gender relations and socio-cultural structures are emphasised. Most important, however, is that the use of the strategy is meant to reach certain political objectives, which can also be observed in the case of Boko Haram.

It became evident in chapter three that 2002 was an important year for the movement, as Yusuf became its leader and adopted a violent strategy. However, only after Yusuf's death and the appointment of Shekau as the group's leader, did the real transformation of Boko Haram's tactics start. Under Shekau's leadership the movement became more advanced, using more complex strategies and weapons. Still, the most important factor accounting for the rise of the movement is the fact that it had political opportunity. This can be seen as the root cause for the movement's success, as a major part of the population felt a sense of insecurity and alienation, which Boko Haram was able to exploit to promote their narrative against the Nigerian government. In addition, obtaining political power can be seen as the main objective for the movement. Other significant factors in its success and motivations are religion and poverty, with both helping to attract a large base of followers.

This thesis has also demonstrated that gender relations have been a major influence on the ideas and actions of the movement, with patriarchal society being especially fundamental for the perceptions of the group. Boko Haram drew (and still draws) upon Nigeria's patriarchal nature and perceptions of women as homemakers and wives, whose purpose should be having children and taking care of their husbands. Moreover, the fact that men should be aggressive and hostile led to hostile tactics used towards Christians, with Christian women constituting Boko Haram's main target. Additionally, the culture of silence surrounding sexual violence and women forced into (early) marriage has also been of paramount influence to Boko Haram, as the group frequently took part in these practices. It still does so up until the present day.

Fundamental to the movement's strategy aimed towards (Christian) women and girls

is the corresponding strategy of the Nigerian government, targeting Boko Haram's wives and children. Due to this strategy, Boko Haram has specifically targeted women and girls since 2013, in order to get its own people back. Yet, it has chosen to continue this strategy after the abduction of the Chibok girls as it discovered how much attention it could generate with such an attack. Moreover, the strategies of abductions and rape have truly proven to be intertwined. Due to Nigeria's gender relations, women are seen as property, which results in Boko Haram 'taking' Christian women and forcing them to convert to Islam. Therefore, the abductions are not only reprisals towards the Nigerian government, but also aim to spread the Islamic faith. Forced marriage, accompanied by rape in order to produce progeny, constitute important components of this strategy. Furthermore, the abductions are used as a tool against Western/Christian education, since the group does not believe women should go to school and it fights against Western influences in the country. Lastly, rape is used to instil fear or as punishment, not only against the Nigerian government, but also against women or girls if they do not want to step away from their religion. Overall, this thesis has shown that rape as a weapon of war truly constitutes an important aspect of Boko Haram's strategy with as its aim, spreading the Islamic faith, inflicting terror, producing progeny and humiliating Christian women and the Nigerian government.

6.2 Limitations and reflection:

For this research, there were certain limitations, as the link between rape as a weapon of war and the movement constitutes a neglected research area until today. Therefore, further research into this subject could provide more insights into the group and its motivations. For example, the availability of in-depth material addressing the motivations of the insurgents themselves is lacking, and only a few speeches which have been released over the past few years can be found. Therefore, it would be highly valuable to conduct interviews with (former) Boko Haram insurgents, as they have true insight into the strategy of the movement. This is of course very difficult and dangerous, having thus been the major limitation of this thesis. However, the findings from this thesis make several important contributions to the current literature by making the explicit connection between the strategies of using rape and abductions, and looking at the environment in which Boko Haram adopted such strategies. Moreover, the analysis of Boko Haram undertaken here has extended our knowledge of the rape as a weapon of war framework and has contributed to the inclusion of the research of gender relations within IR. Finally, the insights gained from this thesis may be of assistance to

future scholarly work on the movement and other terrorist groups that also use rape as a weapon of war.

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