

# RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM AND THE CHALLENGES OF DE- RADICALISATION IN NIGERIA'S NORTH EAST REGION

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*Nigeria is currently confronted with a number of security challenges, originating from forces of religious extremism. Boko Haram is an epitome of such security challenge that has continuously destabilized the Nation's security. It is on this ground this research work was deemed necessary to try and de-mystify the challenges of de-radicalization. The research work studied religious extremism, with focus on its causes, upon which the challenges of de-radicalizing extremists were identified. In line with the research findings, the researchers drafted measures in form of recommendations that are deemed most suitable. Ultimately, having exploited both primary and secondary sources, the researchers adopted a mixed-methodology for data analysis and came to the conclusion that*

The Indonesian Journal of International Clinical Legal Education

DOI: 10.15294/ijicle.v3i1.42303

Submitted: Nov 11, 2020 Revised: Jan 30, 2021 Accepted: Feb 22, 2021

Available online at <https://journal.unnes.ac.id/sju/index.php/iccle>

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*Islam or Christianity in their entirety do not sanction any form of violence. As such, other factors such as socialization, economy, politics etc were explored as causative factors and these formed a base for data collection and analysis, as well as the veritable recommendations proffered to stem the deadly scourge of violent extremism and terror ravaging Nigeria and the West African sub-region.*

**Keywords:** *Radicalisation, De-radicalisation, Nigeria, North East, Religious Extrimism*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Imminent in the global security apparatus today is the dangerous menace of religious extremism which has greatly overwhelmed traditional security forces both at national and international levels. Religious extremism has evolved over the years to scary amplitude, threatening global peace alarmingly and thus the need to steer resources towards rooting out this octopus peril. Majority of the world is today faced with religious crises. One then begins to ponder; is religion really a form of social control (as expected) or is it a threat to social control? Is religion a genuine necessity for humanity? Why religious extremism cum radicalisation? In its broadest sense, religion means adherence to a set of beliefs or teachings about the deepest and most elusive of life's mysteries.<sup>1</sup> Man's inquisitiveness into the mystery of nature and life has left man with the belief of a supreme God, who can be assessed through a ritual called "religion". This angle on the origin of religion is limited to the fact that not every research into the "elusive mysteries" of the world is religious.

Similarly, Rabbi Marc Gellman and Monsignor Hartman<sup>2</sup> defined religion as a belief in divine (supernatural or spiritual) beings and the moral code (ethics) that result from that belief. This portrays at a broader scale, the contemporary perception of religion. Virtually all religions, particularly Islam and Christianity which are the most prominent, believe in a divine supreme God and have a clearly defined way of worship, described by Rabbi and Monsignor as practices. They go further to personify religion saying that beliefs give religion its mind, rituals give religion its shape and ethics give religion its heart.

Extremism, simply put, is the practice of holding the most violent opinion of, and advocacy to extreme action. Extremists are not usually moderate in their beliefs or actions and exhibit behaviour patterns in

<sup>1</sup> John, R. 2002. *The Handy Religion Answer Book*. Published on Amazon.com. United Kingdom ISBN 978-0681047167. <https://www.amazon.uk.com>

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

much more unusual pattern than one would reasonably expect (Baba-Ahmadu 1997). Dekmejian has clearly argued that religious extremism more often than not is fuelled by fundamentalist stance of religious adherents.<sup>3</sup> He posited that fundamentalism is a search for the fundamentals of faith. According to him, it refers to the doctrinaire of adherence to religious ideas, beliefs and practices. In its broadest application, therefore, religious resurgence, restoration, revivals are variants of fundamentalism in so far as the intention is to strengthen and consolidate adherence to orthodox religious teachings and practices. Unfortunately, extremism and fundamentalism are exclusively linked to Islam or even equated with it, forgetting or ignoring the literal meaning and application of the term as well as its historical origin.

To a large extent, in the Western world, research on extremism has been driven by political processes following significant terrorist attacks. Starting from Aum Shinrikyo's 1995 Sarin gas attack in the Tokyo subway, the topic '*terrorism and weapons of mass destruction*' became "*hot*". Subsequently, in the year 2000 the second Palestinian intifada against the Israeli occupation saw an increase in so-called martyrdom operations, "*suicide terrorism*" became a key word for researchers searching for grants. A year later, the 9/11 attack was launched, sequel to which research on Al Qaeda and *Salafist* jihadism became the order of the day. With the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, which outraged many Muslims in the Middle East and in Western Muslim Diasporas as well, radicalization processes began to manifest mainly in the form of 'homegrown terrorism' and this became a major research priority. With massive arrests of jihadist terrorists and supporters imprisonment in great numbers, the problem of de-radicalizing them arose. As a consequence, the Western world has seen since then, a growing number of studies on radicalization and de-radicalization of extremists.

Categorically, Boko Haram is clearly an extremist group. Consequently, the government, in a bid to execute its primary responsibility of protecting National Security, has tried over the years to curb this deadly manifestation of religious fundamentalism mainly through forceful counter-terrorism strategies. Unfortunately, this approach has done more harm than good obviously. The case of Boko Haram for instance, decapitation counter-terrorism strategy was adopted by the government in the year 2009, wherein the government assassinated the leader of the then "potential" terrorist group with the mind-set that the action would incapacitate the group. Unfortunately again, for the government, this act has since opened a can of worms that were held in check by the then presumed fanatic leader, Mohammed Yusuf. Interestingly, the government has recently made a very similar

<sup>3</sup> Dekmejian, R. 1985. *Islam in Revolution; Fundamentalism in the Arab World*. Syracuse. Syracuse University Press.

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mistake in the case of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria and the Nigeria Army. Unknown to the government perhaps, the quantum of lives lost in the battlefield in executing counter-terrorism operations could be used alive and more effectively in de-radicalising fundamentalists rather than killing them.

In line with the obvious ineffectiveness of counter-terrorism as purported in the foregoing paragraph, there is an evident research gap of exploring the root cause of Islamic fundamentalism alongside the challenges of de-radicalising the already-radical persons. This has remained a great challenge to virtually all governments faced with the menace of religious fundamentalism. This research work thus deemed it necessary to investigate those challenges inherent in de-radicalisation and further proffer measures that will ensure its effectiveness.

On another note, the geometric demographic rise in Muslim population today that calls for serious concern. This somewhat-terrific increase in population is attributable to the Islamic doctrine that allows polygamy as well as the cultural practices of the Nigerian northerners that are predominantly Muslims. Realistically, this increase in population cannot be catered for both by the families and by the government as well, the government does not have adequate structures on ground to keep the growing and increasing children and youths in the region. The street children littered on the streets of Northern Nigeria, popularly known as “Almajiri” are a product of this disproportionate scale of rapid increase in population and resources to cater for them. This then becomes a security challenge as they are prone to or become resilient to being easily radicalized.<sup>4</sup>

Interestingly, the same verses responsible for radicalisation of these apparent societal lunatics are also read, digested and believed by the non-extreme faction, however, with a different and non-radical interpretation. One then comes to wonder why there has to be elements of radicalism OR if the verses truly do preach violence. Thus, beyond this security problem, a Research problem comes to light.

Furthermore, in line with the functions and tenets of Intelligence, which promotes pro-activeness in managing security challenges, the apparent need to facilitate means of preventing radicalisation and violent extremism – by extension – became a pertinent necessity. Since the realisation of this necessity, achieving this core function of Intelligence has been but a major challenge both at National and Global level. The central idea behind this is, identifying the root causes of extremism as well as the stages of the radicalisation process with a view to nipping it in the bud. This has been a major challenge in recent history.

The United Nations is supposedly the forerunner of strategizing a comprehensive approach to a systematic prevention of religious

<sup>4</sup> Nte, N. D. 2009. Street Children and the Challenges of National Security, *Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology*, 6 (2) 28-39.

extremism. Obviously, the task has not been an easy one, despite multi-million dollar worth of efforts and resources pumped into these preventive mechanisms. It therefore further amplifies the challenges inherent in achieving de-radicalisation. Baba-Ahmadu (1997) asks the following questions; Does the Qur'an as a Holy Book sanction acts of violence? Is there a significant level of ambiguity that subjects the verses to mis-interpretation? Is it not within the province of religion to teach its adherent to be good, to shun evil and a good citizen and fulfil his duties to God so that he will enjoy the best of this world and the hereafter? These questions are fundamental to achieving the objectives of this research work because inherent in them are the fundamental problems that need to be examined objectively and thoroughly if de-radicalisation of fundamentalist must be achieved.

### 1. Objectives of the Study

This work is designed to meet the following specific objectives;

- 1) To examine the link between religious doctrines and the birth of religious extremism
- 2) To examine and possibly establish the challenges of de-radicalising religious extremists
- 3) To conceptualise religion and religious extremism
- 4) To investigate and identify the root causes of religious extremism with a view to determining their nature and impact on social process and National security
- 5) To identify the issues and prospects of De-radicalisation

### 2. Research Questions/ Hypotheses

- 1) Is there any link between the Qur'an and religious extremism?
- 2) Is De-radicalisation more effective than military counter-terrorism measures?
- 3) Is there a link between government, society and individual radicalisation?
- 4) Is there a link between social interaction and radicalization?
- 5) Is there a link between politics, economy and religious extremism?

### 3. Hypothesis:

- 1) H<sub>i</sub>: There is a relationship between the Government policies and religious extremism  
H<sub>0</sub>: There is no relationship between the Government policies and religious extremism
- 2) H<sub>i</sub>: There is a correspondence between one's economic disposition and their proneness to radicalisation  
H<sub>0</sub>: There is NO correspondence between one's economic disposition and their proneness to radicalisation

- 3) H<sub>i</sub>: Social Interaction is a major cause of radicalism in Nigeria  
H<sub>0</sub>: Social Interaction is NOT a major cause of radicalism in Nigeria.

## II. METHOD

The study adopted two approaches including; 1) questionnaire survey and; 2) in-depth interviews with youth, members of the armed forces, and intelligence and security experts. The following sections describe each of these methods/steps in details.

### 1. Population of the study

The population of this study comprises Nigerians, with significant interest in North-Eastern part of Nigeria where the activities of Boko Haram are more alarming. The population is also further divided into categories, in line with the adoption of unique data collection methods. This classification of the population helped to meet up the unique data requirement for this study. The population comprises people resident in areas where terrorist activities are most virulent, particularly Borno State. Also, members of the Military and Para-military agencies and Intelligence Experts who have had direct or indirect encounters with extremists. Borno State has a total of 27 LGA and an approximate population of over 4million. Obviously, the population of this study is very large and thus may be almost impossible to be covered by the Researcher, hence sampling becomes imperative.

### 2. Sampling and Sample Size

We adopted a stratified random sampling aimed at selecting the relevant respondents with adequate knowledge of the subject matter under review and through experiences as victims and observers of the terrorist events in the North East region of Nigeria and Bornu State in particular. Consequently, a sample size of 120 respondents was selected to include; retired/serving security personnel, students and experts in Intelligence and Security, host community members and Islamic scholars.

### 3. Method of data collection

As a corollary to the tradition of survey research, the use of questionnaire for generating primary data for the study was employed. In the same vein, the researchers adopted in-depth Interviews as a means of complementing data acquired from the questionnaire. Secondary data where required shall also be sourced from published and unpublished materials from the internet, books, journals etc relating to the topic of discourse.

#### **4. Procedure for Data Analysis**

The researchers adopted multiple analytical procedures in order to arrive at concrete and reliable research findings. As stated earlier, the questionnaire was designed in the Likert-scale format. Obtained data was analysed statistically, using computer aided programs such as Statistics Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel statistics package. Responses obtained therefrom were coded and tabulated in a frequency-percentage table each. These responses were further transmitted into pictorial Charts for easier accessibility.

For each research question, responses from related items in the questionnaire were taken used in making Analyses. Furthermore, it is pertinent to recall that the researcher adopted mixed-methodology, sequel to which a lot of data was acquired from interviews and secondary sources. These data were used by the researcher to buttress the data obtained through statistical analysis.

Finally, a test of hypothesis was conducted across the Research Hypotheses of this work.

#### **5.6 Data Analysis and Presentation**

Out of a total of one hundred and twenty (120) questionnaires distributed, only Ninety (90) questionnaires were retrieved. It is important to recall that the researchers employed both research questions and hypothesis for the purpose of this work and thus, there shall be presentation of data in form of charts, simple percentage and as well as statistical analysis of the said data, all in this section of the work.

### **III. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **A. Religious Extremism**

The study of Islamic extremism has evolved into a dynamic, constantly changing field especially as it relates to Nigeria. The majority of reviewed literature supports the hypothesis of Nigeria as a possible Islamic safe haven. In reviewing literature for Religious Extremism in Nigeria, there are five (5) areas that must be explored: ideology, origin of Islamic extremism, key influential leaders, Sharia law, and characteristics of Muslims in Nigeria.

In order to gain the clearest picture in the field of Islamic extremism, the following unclassified sources would be utilised: professional journals, magazines, books by well-known authors who are recognized as experts in the field, dissertations and unclassified websites. Modern interpretations of Islamic teachings and its culture have produced a specific ideology of extremism that is in a direct conflict with democratic philosophy of the United States and the rest of the Western

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world.<sup>5</sup> This section first examines the emergence of Islamic extremist ideology, the emergence of Islamic extremism in Nigeria, and events in and characteristics of Nigeria that make it an ideal country for establishing Islamic extremist safe havens, where Islamic extremists can entice potential recruits, raise money and launder it, maintain freedom of movement for leadership and command and control, and launch attacks against US and Western interests. Islamic teaching and its culture have produced the ideology against which the US is currently at war. Therefore, it is a requirement to examine Islam and identify what it is about Islam that produces this ideology. The literature researched critically analyzed Islam for characteristics that lead to extremism.<sup>6</sup>

Karen Armstrong's works include *A History of God*, 1993; *The Battle for God*, 2000; and *Islam: A Short History*, 2000. Taken together these books are a comprehensive work on Islam and Christianity and how they interact with one another. Armstrong's work on the matter of Islam and extremism is very informative as it explicitly identifies the origins of modern Islamic extremism. She differentiates fundamentalism from mainstream Islam, and separates Sunni extremism from Shiite extremism. Her work clearly identifies the teachings and ideology behind the modern Islamic extremist movement. For example, there exists a "doctrinal" linkage to Al-Zawahiri's and Osama bin Laden's strategic message. The linkage unveils itself in similar concepts, relations of concepts, and methods.<sup>7</sup>

Samuel Huntington takes a macro-level look at Islam and its relationship to the West. He sees Islam as a culture that in its entirety is diametrically opposed to Western individualism and secular government. His work *Clash of Civilizations*, published in 1996, has been called seminal by some of the most respected men in international affairs and political science. He clearly identifies endemic characteristics in Islamic and Western societies that cause conflict and "war." History has shown that the West and Islam are not able to coexist without war and conflict.

The relationship between Islam and Christianity, both Orthodox and Western, has seldom been stormy. Each has been the other's neck. The twentieth-century conflict between liberal democracy and Marxist-Leninism is only a fleeting and superficial historical phenomenon compared to the continuing and deeply conflictual relations between Islam and Christianity. The causes of this ongoing pattern of conflict lie not in transitory phenomenon such as twelfth-century Christian passion or twentieth-century Muslim fundamentalism. They flow from the nature

<sup>5</sup> Huntington, S. 1996. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, p. 213.

<sup>6</sup> Andy, G 2006. *Overt indicators of Islamic extremism in Nigeria*. US Army Command and General Staff College, 1 Reynolds Ave, Fort.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*



of the two religions (Christianity and Islam) and the civilizations based on them.<sup>8</sup>

Huntington rightly illustrates the historical and future conflict between Islam and Christianity or the West. He does not differentiate between Islamic extremism and moderate Islam. He states that American leaders allege that the Muslims involved in the quasi-war are a small minority whose use of violence is rejected by the great majority of moderate Muslims. This may be true, but evidence to support it is insufficient. According to Huntington, the underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is that Islam is a different civilization whose adherents are convinced of the superiority of their culture and are obsessed with the inferiority of their power. These are the basic ingredients that fuel conflict between Islam and the West (Huntington 1996 217-218).

Huntington's explanation of the endemic causes of conflict between the West and Islam lends credibility to the term "Islamic extremist." His classification of Islam has drawn criticism from scholars, such as John L. Esposito, who are of the opinion that Huntington paints too negative picture of the religion of Islam. However, Huntington's work is important because it illustrates how Islam as a religion is a fundamental unifying characteristic of the enemy the United States faces.

In a CRS report, Christopher M. Blanchard reviews Al Qaeda's use of public statements from the mid-1990s to the present and analyzes the evolving ideological and political content of those statements. The Islamic extremists who follow the guidance of Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda association have a very clear strategic message for the Muslim community at large. The three foundations, as outlined by Al Zawahiri, are as follows: most importantly, the cornerstone of Al Qaeda's religious and political rhetoric has remained consistent. Muslims should view themselves as a single nation and unite to resist anti-Islamic aggression on the basis of obligatory defensive Jihad. Non-Islamic government is unacceptable, and Muslims should join Al Qaeda and other sympathetic groups and movements in opposing those seeking to establish secular democratic governments or maintain existing governments deemed to be insufficiently Islamic.<sup>9</sup>

"Stealing Al-Qaeda's Playbook," published by the Counter Terrorism Center at West Point in February 2006, is a short but very important article. It recognizes that the Islamic extremist message and strategic plan are available for all those who wish to read them. The article claims that academia and Western Intelligence analysis have done a poor job in reading open-source documents that describe in detail what

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<sup>8</sup> Huntington, S. 1996. *Op.Cit.*, p. 218.

<sup>9</sup> Blanchard, C. 2005. *Al Qaeda: Statements and Evolving Ideology*. CRS Report for Congress. <https://www.fas.org>, page. 8.

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the strategic thinkers within the Islamic extremist core group are thinking. This report looks at the strategic communication of Al Qaeda.

Paul Marshall, a senior fellow at Freedom House's Center for Religious Freedom, has written extensively about Sharia law. Understanding that the linkage between government and religion is fused with the implementation of Sharia law helps one recognize overt indicators of Islamic extremism. As a general rule, where one finds Islamic extremism one also finds an extreme form of Sharia law. Paul Marshall identifies a moderate movement within the Islamic community and clearly points to indicators that lead to extremism. Marshall pointed to a religious battle between moderate and extreme interpretations of Islam. His analysis is important to this research because it assists in identifying distinct characteristics within the Islamic religion.

## **B. Radicalization**

Radicalization is a process through which people become increasingly motivated to use violent means against members of an out-group or symbolic targets to achieve behavioral change and political goals.<sup>10</sup> This is the process through which an individual steers from non-violence to violent or radical end of an ideology, in this context, religious ideology. Similarly, radicalization is a process leading to certain changes: in worldview, in behavior, in socialization, etc. It is a movement from moderate mainstream beliefs toward more extreme views and extreme commitment. In itself, radicalization is not negative.<sup>11</sup> Radicalization is only perceived negatively when it leads to indoctrination that supports and validates violence and terrorism.

Commonly today, radicalization is seen as a product of the 9/11 attack and it is mostly associated with Islam. In the middle-east for instance, the revival of Islam, intensified religious practices, and the emergence of Islamic political parties are often perceived as manifestations of radicalization. However in this research, efforts are made to distinguish between religiosity and radicalization as two very different processes, by way of exploring the fundamentals of the two most prominent religions in global practice today.

## **C. Boko Haram Extremist group in Nigeria**

Albeit Boko Haram has been in existence for close to a decade, as a violent insurgency, Boko Haram and the broader conflict it has

<sup>10</sup> Doosje et al 2016. *Terrorism, Radicalization and De-radicalization. Current Opinion in Psychology*. Retrieved 2019. <https://www.sciencedirect.com>

<sup>11</sup> Emil, et al 2019. *Vulnerability and Resilience of Young People in Kyrgyzstan to Radicalization, Violence and Extremism: Analysis across Five Domains*. Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan Research Institute for Islamic Studies.

generated over the years continue to top the list of the Nigerian government's urgent security priorities. This is because the Boko Haram conflict has been an exceptionally brutal episode in Nigeria's recent history, resulting in around 33,000 casualties, the abduction of hundreds - including the now globally renowned 270 schoolgirls from the community of Chibok— and the displacement of close to two million people mainly in north-eastern Nigeria and the Lake Chad region.<sup>12</sup> The following section provides a review of key proximate and structural causes that have fuelled this violent conflict.

The estimated number of Boko Haram members ranges from 5,000 to 20,000, yet there is no reliable data on this. Boko Haram is predominantly made up of the Kanuri ethnic group. It is thought that Boko Haram has splintered into two main factions: (a) the Shekau branch - has its stronghold in the Sambisa Forest (close to the Cameroon border); is much more radical in its actions; and is currently in disarray and losing influence; (b) the Al-Barnawi branch – is based further north in the Lake Chad areas; has declared allegiance to Daesh; is targeting its actions at military targets and Christians; is more sensitive about the civil implications of its actions; represents a serious more sophisticated threat; and has the support of some layers of the population. However, very recent military offensives may have significantly shifted the fight against Boko Haram. The Nigerian Army has declared that it has 'completely defeated the Boko Haram insurgents' by dislodging and occupying its headquarters in 'Camp Zairo', making the Boko Haram factional leader, Abubakar Shekau, flee.<sup>13</sup>

The Boko Haram conflict has emerged out of a wider context of recurrent sectarian strife in Northern Nigeria. Revivalist and charismatic Islamic movements have long been a part of the socio-political landscape of this region. Such movements date at least as far back in time as the 1804 jihad, or holy war, led by Islamic scholar and preacher Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio (1754 - 1817) which founded the Sokoto Caliphate—a pre-colonial state encompassing present day northern Nigeria, southern Niger, and northern Cameroon.<sup>14</sup> The region has been riven by numerous other religiously inspired radical movements since then. Notably, the Maitatsine sect, often cited as a forerunner to Boko Haram, was a fundamentalist movement that arose in the 1970 - 1980s in the northern Nigerian city Kano and triggered a violent clash with the authorities when it sought to mobilize local populations against the state, non-

<sup>12</sup> Matfess, H. 2017. *Boko Haram: History and Context*. Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of African History, Interactive Factory. [http://africanhistory.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.001.0001/acrefore-9780190277734-e-119#ref\\_acrefore-9780190277734-e-119-note-36](http://africanhistory.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.001.0001/acrefore-9780190277734-e-119#ref_acrefore-9780190277734-e-119-note-36)

<sup>13</sup> Herbert, S. & Husaini, S. 2018. *Conflict, Instability and Resilience in Nigeria*. Rapid Literature Review 1427. Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

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Muslims, and mainstream Muslims who the movement deemed to be ‘unbelievers’.<sup>15</sup>

In the words of Ngaboawaji Nte; Boko Haram can best be viewed as a continuum of the Islamic awakening in the north right from the 80’s during the Matatsine uprising and the fiery teachings of Mohammed Gumi and El Zaky Zaky of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria. Perhaps the new wave of Islamic awakening in Nigeria can be attributed to globalisation and the preponderance radical Islam across the world. In Nigeria the exact date of the emergence of the Boko Haram remains a subject of controversy, especially if one relies on media accounts. However, according to the Nigerian Director of Defence Information, Colonel Mohammed Yerima, the sect had existed since 1995, under the name of *Ahlulsunna wal ‘jama’ah hijra* (The Economist, 2009). It was then led by Abubakah Lawan, who later left the country for studies at the University of Medina in Saudi Arabia.<sup>16</sup>

Analysts also point to increased conflicts between Muslim and Christian communities in northern Nigeria during the early 2000’s<sup>17</sup> and the contemporaneous popular outcry in favor of the establishment of Sharia Law across northern Nigeria<sup>18</sup> as examples of the recurrent religious tensions that plague the region. These movements left an ideological legacy characterized by violent opposition to the state, the politicization of Islamic radicalism, and the rejection of religious pluralism, a legacy which contributed to the social receptivity of Boko Haram’s message and approach after its founding in 2002.

Boko Haram’s espousal of a specifically ‘Salafi-jihadi’ outlook has been a more immediate driver of the group’s violent approach.<sup>19</sup> Boko Haram’s original name which translates as “People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet’s Teachings and Jihad” reflects its Salafi convictions.<sup>28</sup> Much like other such movements around the world, Boko Haram also ‘claims to embody the authentic legacy of the early Muslim community... asserts the right to declare Muslim leaders apostates, rebel against allegedly infidel states, and use force to impose the Salafi creed

<sup>15</sup> Asfura-Heim, P & McQuaid, J. 2015. *Diagnosing the Boko Haram Conflict: Grievances, Motivations, and Institutional Resilience in Northeast Nigeria* [https://www.cna.org/can\\_files/pdf/DOP-2014-U-009272-Final.pdf](https://www.cna.org/can_files/pdf/DOP-2014-U-009272-Final.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Nte, N. D. 2014. Ideological Primitivism, Radical Islam and Boko Haram: Evaluating Nigeria’s New Public Safety and National Security Dilemma. *International Journal of Social Science- ARIDSS/1*, pp. 48-62.

<sup>17</sup> Walker, A. 2012. *What is Boko Haram?* Washington DC, US Institute of Peace. Washington, DC: Library of Congress. World Politics, Vol. 63, No. 2, pp. 203-245. <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR308.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Thurston, A. 2016. *‘The disease is unbelief’: Boko Haram’s religious and political worldview*. The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World No. 22. Brookings Institution, Washington DC. [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Brookings-Analysis-Paper\\_Alex-Thurston\\_Final\\_Web.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Brookings-Analysis-Paper_Alex-Thurston_Final_Web.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

and a strict interpretation of Islamic law on civilians'.<sup>20</sup> Though a minority amongst northern Nigerian Muslims, Salafis have attracted ardent followers by making fundamentalist appeals, through which they portray themselves 'as a vanguard of true Muslims within a wayward society,' as well as through their adept use of local media and 'urban networks of mosques and schools'.<sup>21</sup> These hard-lined stances have triggered disagreements, competition, and conflict not only with other Muslim groups but also within Nigeria's Salafi movement itself. As a subgroup within this fractious community, Boko Haram's more violent approach has been understood as a means of differentiating itself amidst the 'fierce intra-Salafi competition for audiences'.<sup>22</sup> Thus, from the ideological standpoint, both the much wider historical context of sectarian conflict and the more immediate and volatile impetus of Salafi-Jihadism have contributed to providing the immediate spark that has ignited this violent conflict.

The Boko Haram crisis has also been fuelled by the confluence of the national issue of corruption and the dramatic poverty and inequality that persists in Northern Nigeria. Nigeria's political and economic elite who have benefited from the oil political-economy have also created an almost self-sustaining status-quo marked by opulence and conspicuous consumption. At the same time, nearly three quarters of the population in Nigeria's north live in poverty while the northeast of Nigeria, the birthplace of Boko Haram, has the worst poverty rates in the country.<sup>23</sup>

The frequently coercive responses of the Nigerian government to the Boko Haram insurgency have also been one of the driving factors of the conflict. The deadliest phases of the insurgency only began after the police, following a skirmish with the group in July 2009, carried out a 'bloody purge of the group's members and anyone they suspected of being a Boko Haram supporter and sympathizer'.<sup>24</sup> The number of people who were executed by the police in this period is said to be 'more than a hundred'.<sup>25</sup> The police also executed the group's founder, Muhammad Yusuf, without trial while he was under their custody during this period. This response by the state initially dislodged Boko Haram from Maiduguri and sent its remaining members into hiding. However, this brutal crackdown ultimately gave rise to a more violent phase of the Boko

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>23</sup> ICG 2016. *Nigeria Women and the Boko Haram*. Report No.242. ICG. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/nigeria-women-and-boko-haram-insurgency>; ICG, International Crisis Group 2016. *Kyrgyzstan: State Fragility and Radicalisation*, Crisis Group in Central Asia: Root Causes, Social and Economic Impact of Return Migration Regional Field Assessment

<sup>24</sup> Walker, A. 2021. *Op.Cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

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Haram insurgency as the group soon emerged under a more fanatical leadership, driven by revenge and a narrative of victimhood.<sup>26</sup>

The vacuum of state authority in the areas under the most severe threat from Boko Haram also meant that various criminal groups have seen the chaos as an opportunity for profit. In this light, Matfess observes that 'the cells that developed and joined the group in this time period were less ideologically oriented than their predecessors and showed greater interest in criminality and material gain.'<sup>27</sup> Instances of such criminality including, 'bank robberies robbing, cash-in-transit convoys, assassinations for hire, and trafficking illegal weapons and drugs,' have been cited as one of the sources of Boko Haram's sustained access to funding, a factor which has greatly extended the conflict.<sup>28</sup>

The Buhari presidency has brought about a debatable period of relative improvement in the Boko Haram's crisis marked by significant gains made by the Nigerian government but also dire humanitarian crises as well as resistance and evolution on the part of the insurgents. The Nigerian government, through its regional collaboration through a Multinational Joint Task Force established with Cameroon, Niger, and Chad has been able to regain most of the territory initially lost to the insurgents. However, Boko Haram have innovated various new approaches to violence including its increased use of women and children as suicide bombers in civilian population centers. Yet, perhaps the most distinctive aspect of the current phase in the Boko Haram conflict is the humanitarian crises it has triggered which is said to affect up to 8.5 million people. Exacerbated by environmental challenges posed by famine and the drying-up of Lake Chad as well as demographic pressures caused by displacement across national and international borders of large numbers of people, the scale of this aspect of the crises still remains to be fully grasped.<sup>29</sup>

#### **D. Nigerian Shiite Movement**

Although there are controversies surrounding the categorization of the Shiite movement in Nigeria as an extremist group, the researcher finds it noteworthy, sequel to recent developments. A flashpoint of possible future conflict was exposed in a 2015 clash between the Nigerian army and members of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN), a Shiite Sect based in the northern Nigerian state of Kaduna (NSRP, 2017). Violence erupted when a military convoy carrying Nigeria's army chief, General Tukur Burutai, confronted a procession of Shiites who had blocked a major road while participating in a religious ceremony. The ensuing clash led to the arrest of Sheik Ibraheem El-Zakzaky, the leader

<sup>26</sup> Asfura-Heim, P & McQuaid, J. 2015. *Loc.Cit.*

<sup>27</sup> Matfess, H. 2017, *Loc.Cit.*

<sup>28</sup> Asfura-Heim, P & McQuaid, J. 2015. *Op.Cit.*, p. 30

<sup>29</sup> Herbert, S. & Husaini, S. 2018, *Loc.Cit.*

of the IMN, and to the deaths of members of the Shiite group, including El-Zakzaky’s wife and son. A spokesman of the group claimed that as many as a thousand of its members were killed in this clash. Although a commission of inquiry was set up in 2016 by the Kaduna State Government to investigate the incident, the IMN boycotted these proceeding asserting that the commission was biased in favor of the military.<sup>30</sup> Since then, the IMN has carried out sustained protests—some of which have been forcefully dispersed by the state— in northern Nigerian cities demanding the release of their leader from state custody. There are risks of escalation and further clashes with the state given the group’s ‘longstanding rejection of the secular state and Zakzaky’s advocacy for an Iranian-style Islamic revolution’.<sup>31</sup> Additionally, the fierce opposition between the Shiite group and Nigeria’s Sunni majority, particularly Salafi organisations, has been cited as a potential axis for future conflict.<sup>32</sup>

#### IV. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

**Table 1: Questionnaire distribution**

	No. of questionnaires administered.	Number of questionnaires retrieved.
Online Administration	70	56
Physical administration	50	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>90</b>

**Table 2: Gender Characteristics of Respondents**

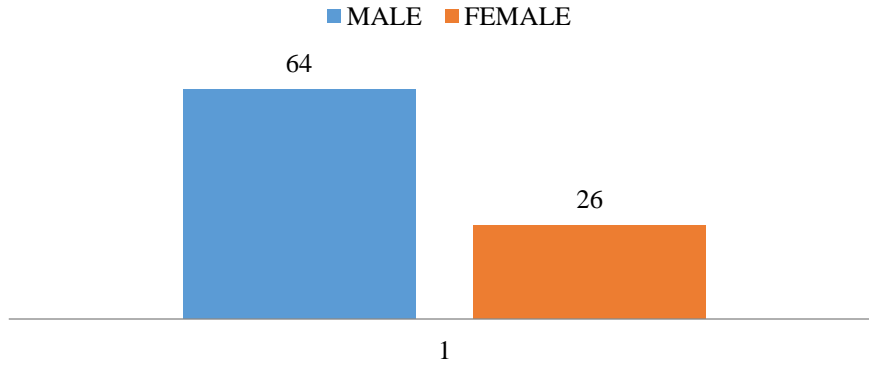
Gender	Frequency	Percent
MALE	64	71.1
FEMALE	26	28.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>30</sup> SB Morgen Intelligence, 2016, *Nigeria is Playing with fire, again*. SB Morgen Intelligence [http://sbmintel.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/201610\\_Shia-Crisis.pdf](http://sbmintel.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/201610_Shia-Crisis.pdf) *Security Policy, Occasional Paper Series* 4. Washington, DC: Government

<sup>31</sup> Obasi, N. 2015. *New Risks on Nigeria’s Shiite fault-line*. ICG blog <http://blog.crisisgroup.org/africa/nigeria/2015/12/16/new-risks-on-nigerias-shiite-fault-line/>

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

### GENDER DISTRIBUTION GRAPH



The above chart shows that 64 (71.1%) Respondents out of a total of 90 respondents are of the Male Gender. Meanwhile, 26 (28.9%) are of the Female Gender.

**Table3: Age Distribution of Respondents**

AGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
18-25	6	6.7
26-35	39	43.3
36-45	38	42.2
46-55	7	7.8
Total	90	100.0

### AGE DISTRIBUTION GRAPH

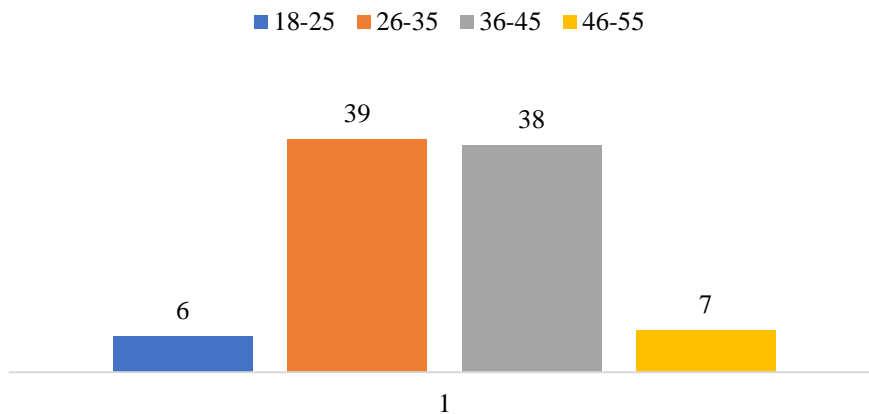


Table 3 shows that 6 respondents were between the ages of 18-25 which corresponds to 6.7%, with 39 respondents corresponding to 43.3% which were between the ages of 26-35. Furthermore, 38 respondents which correspond to 42.2% were between the ages of 36-45. Meanwhile, the remaining 7 respondents were between the ages of 46-55. The Age



distribution correlates with the target-population for such a study, in that, majority of the population are between the ages of 26 to 45.

**Table 4: Religious Affiliation of Respondents**

RELIGION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Christianity	22	24.4
Islam	65	72.2
Others	3	3.3
Total	90	100.0

**RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION GRAPH**

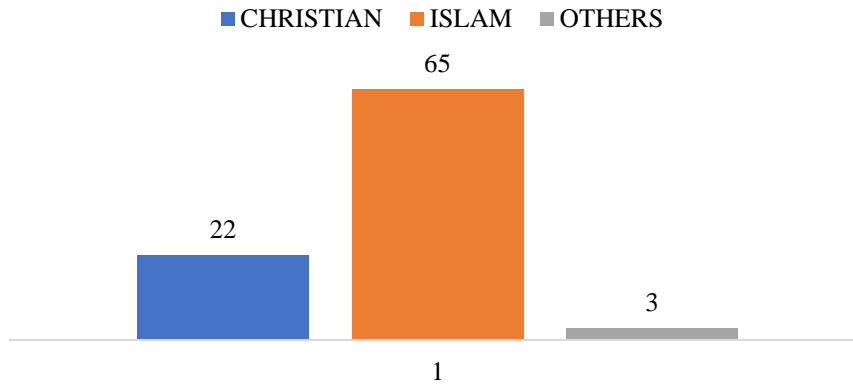


Table 4 shows the religious affiliation of respondents with a total of 90, out of which 22 (24.4%) are Christians and 65 (72.2) are Muslims. Meanwhile 3 (3.3%) are of other religions not specified. It is therefore displayed in the above chart that a majority of the respondents are Muslims, most likely in line with the area of study.

**Table 5: Marital Status of Respondents**

MARITAL STATUS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Single	53	58.9
Married	25	27.8
Widowed	1	1.1
Divorced	11	12.2
TOTAL	90	100.0

### MARITAL STATUS GRAPH

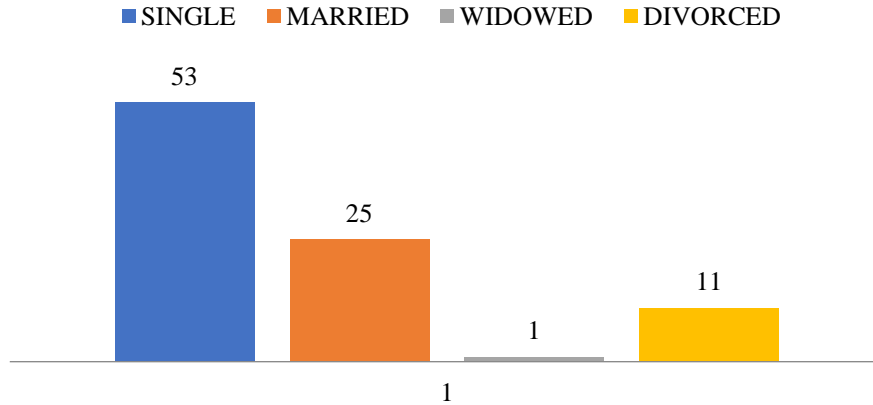


Table 5 shows the marital status of respondents. Out of 90 respondents, 53(58.9%) were single, 25(27.8%) were married, 1 respondent was widowed and 11(12.2%) were divorced.

**Table 6: Educational Status of Respondents**

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percent
SSCE	7	7.8
NCE/ND	24	26.7
BACHELOR/HND	50	55.6
HIGHER DEGREE	9	10.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### EDUCATION STATUS GRAPH

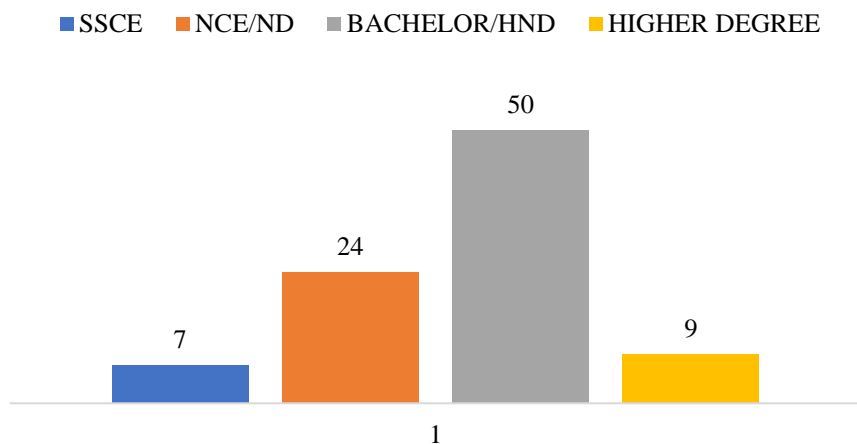


Table 6 shows the distribution of Education Status across respondents. As showed in the chart, 7 (7.8%) were SSCE holders, 24 (26.7%) were NCE/ND holders and a total of 50 (55.6%) were Bachelor’s Degree/HND holders. Lastly, 9 (10%) were of the Higher Degree cadre.

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Skilled	37	41.1
Unskilled	29	32.2
Self-employed	24	26.7
TOTAL	90	100.0

### OCCUPATION STATUS GRAPH



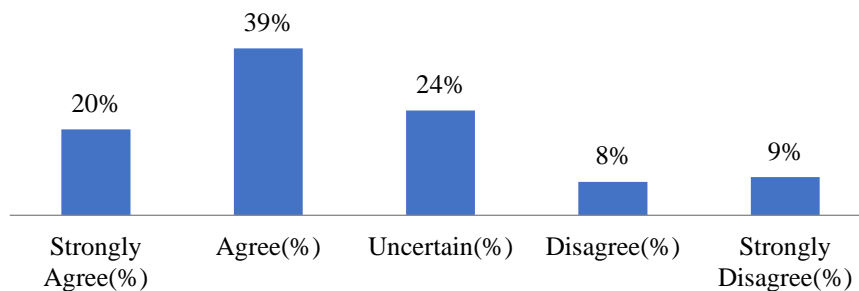
Represented in the table and figure above is the occupational representation of respondents for the study. The result showed that 37 (41.1%) of respondents had skilled occupation, 29 (32.2%) had unskilled employment, while 24 (26.7%) are self-employed.

## V. DATA ANALYSIS

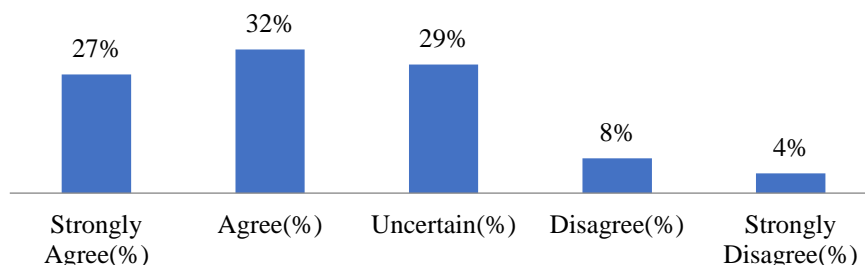
To analyze each research question, the researchers used responses from related items in the questionnaire. These responses are presented in charts for easier accessibility.

**Research Question 1:** Is there any link between the Qur’an and Religious extremism?

### Q7: Islam is a Religion of Peace



**Q8: Islam does not sanction any form of physical violence**



From the data above, as regards Research Question 1, it is evident that a higher percentage of respondents dis-align with the fact that there is a link between the Qur’an and Religious extremism. The graph titled Q7 shows that a higher percentage of the respondents agreed that Islam is a religion of peace, contrary to the premise that there is a link between Islam and Religious Extremism. To further test the opinion obtained and displayed in graph Q7, graph Q8 shows a high percentage of respondents agreeing that Islam does not sanction any form of physical violence. This data corresponds with that obtained in graph Q7.

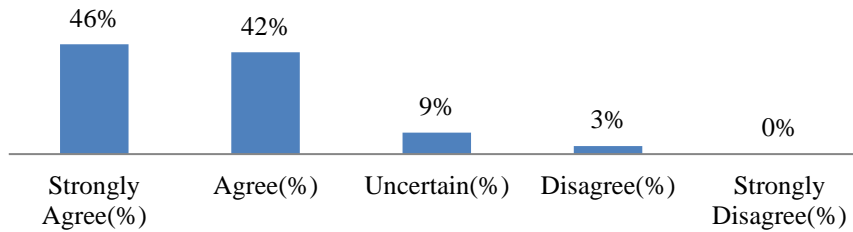
Furthermore, to buttress this finding from the questionnaire survey, it is pertinent to makes reference to the literature reviewed herein as part of this research work, wherein the researcher explored and cited quite a number of authors, pointing to the fact that there is no base for violence in the Qur’an. Among interviewed Respondents, Respondent 2, who is a prominent Islamic Scholar, also emphasized the non-tolerance of “unjust” violence in Islam.

As earlier pointed, Yasir (2013) takes on the issue of religious fundamentalism through a unique scope. In his attempt to preach against radicalization, Yasir opines that Muslim scholars should not preach hatred, violence or anything that will incite their followers to exhibit any acts of violence against others. In his view, there is a time and a place to join hands, regardless of theological differences. He goes further to reiterate that Islam does not only allow Muslims to cooperate, it commands them to cooperate with anyone, of any background or religion when it comes to something of good to the society.

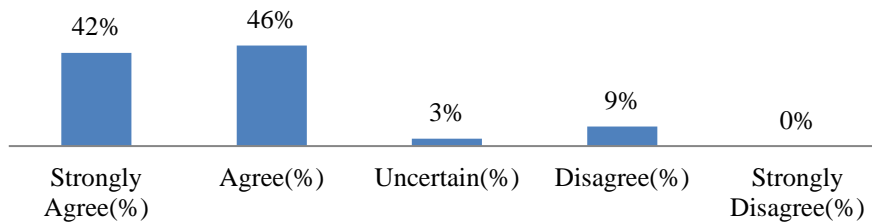
Sequel to the above, one can rightly submit that fundamentalism has to do with strict adherence to one’s religion; such people are ideally peaceful and are preoccupied with the study and observance of their religion. Secondly, Islam is not spread by Jihad of sword, any violence; intolerance associated with Islam has its roots from Manipulation of religion for political, economic or other factors. It is thus, logical to conclude that Islam does not sanction any form of violence.

**Research Question 2:** Is De-radicalisation more effective than military counter-terrorism measures?

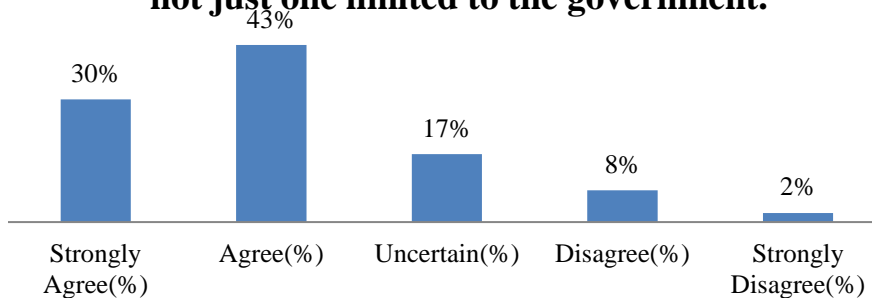
**Q11: Parents will play a vital role in upbringing and as such they have a role to play in Radicalization and De-radicalization**



**Q12: The De-radicalization of Extremists is best achieved through orientation and re-orientation rather than Military operations**



**Q13: The De-radicalization of extremists in Nigeria should be a collective responsibility, not just one limited to the government.**



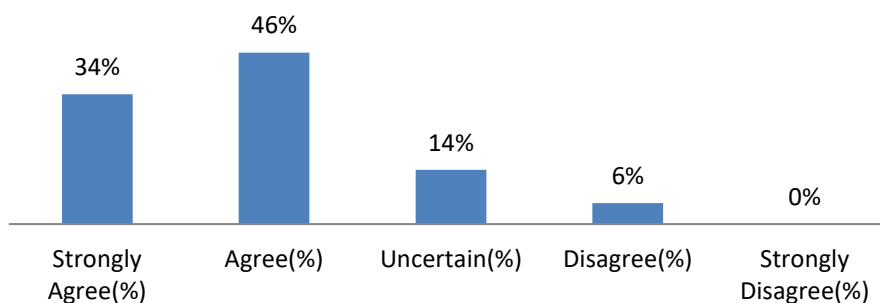
To test the proposition that De-radicalization is more effective than Military Counter-Terrorism measures, the researcher picked items Q11, Q12 and Q13 as displayed above. As shown in Q11, a larger percentage Agree that parents would play a vital role both in radicalization and de-radicalization process. This means, one’s susceptibility to radicalization is attributable to parental care given at early age. Also, the effectiveness of De-radicalization is also more dependent on parental influence rather

than forceful means. The parameter from which item Q11 measures the proposition that de-radicalization is more effective than military counter-terrorism is dependent upon the hypothesis that upbringing of a child determines the adulthood behavior exhibited. To buttress the above, it emphasized that learning through observation may be more efficient than learning through direct reinforcement.<sup>33</sup> Through observation, we learn not only how to perform some behavior but also what will happen to us in specific situations in specific situations if we perform that behavior.

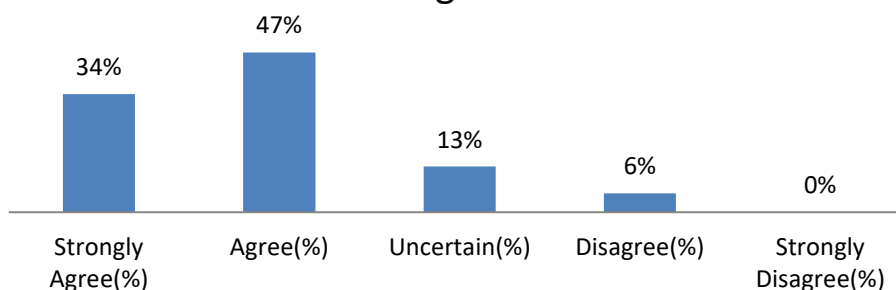
Furthermore, Item Q12 proposes that De-radicalization is best achieved through Orientation and Re-orientation. To this, a greater percentage of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed. This corresponds with responses to item Q13 which proposed that De-radicalization of extremists in Nigeria should be a collective responsibility not just one limited to the government. Thus, it is safe to conclude on the bases of these analyses that De-radicalization is more effective than Military counter-terrorism measures.

**Research Question 3:** Is there a link between government, society and individual radicalisation?

**Q10: Corruption is one of the causative factors of Terrorism in Nigeria**

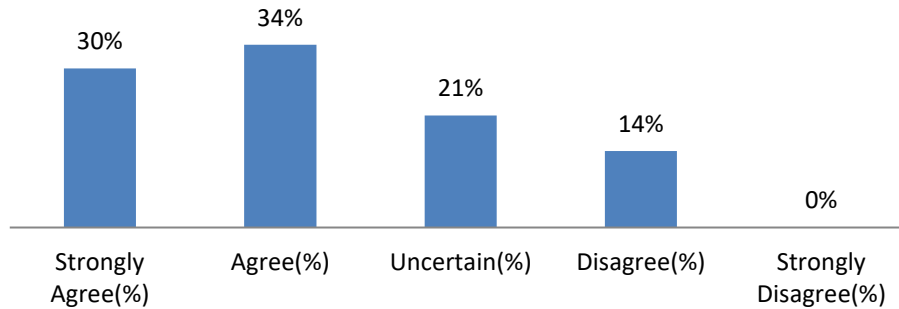


**Q14: Injustice promotes radicalisation in Nigeria**



<sup>33</sup> Adishi, E 2011. *Behavior; The Subject Matter of Psychology*. Delta State.Up-Deen Printers. ISBN 978-33872-12-7

**Q15: There is a relationship between government policies and religion extremism**



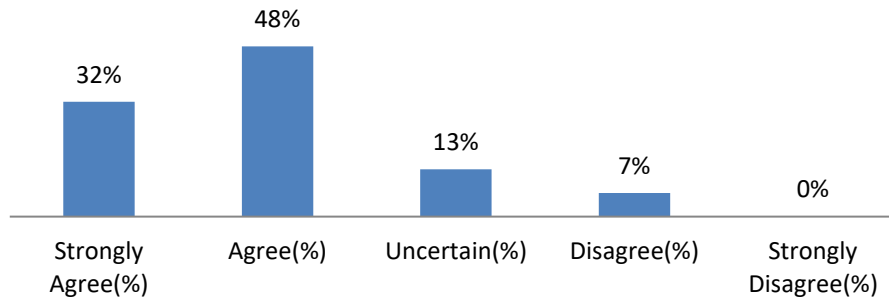
For Research Question 3, which seeks to ascertain if there is a link between the government, society and individual radicalization; the researcher utilized items Q10, Q14 and Q15. These items are anchored on three (3) major factors which are; Corruption, Injustice and Government Policies. To Item Q10, as shown in the graph, a larger percentage of the population agreed with the proposition that corruption is one of the causative factors of terrorism in Nigeria. This also corresponds on a close margin with responses for item Q14 which proposes that Injustice promotes radicalization in Nigeria. Lastly, a larger percentage of the respondents agree that there is a link between government policies and radicalization in Nigeria.

It is a known fact that corruption, among other government inefficiencies is a propellant or accelerant of deprivation and frustration amongst any given populace. Albert Cohen in Chukwu posits that people engage in deviant behavior because they are relatively deprived and thus put in a state of Status Frustration.<sup>34</sup> This status frustration propels one to becoming “delinquent” and by extension, prone to radicalization. It therefore means that government plays a key role in creating a hostile environment that may propel one to being radical OR create an enabling environment for one that is already radical.

<sup>34</sup> Chukwu, C. 2014. *The Fundamentals of Sociology; An Introduction*. Lagos: Serenity Publishers ISBN 978-978-077-305-2; Chukwu, C and Azuka, C. 2014. *Simplifying B.Sc Project Writing for Undergraduates*. Lagos, Serenity Publishers ISBN 978-978-950-979-9.

**Research Question 4:** Is there a link between social interaction and radicalization?

Q17: Social Interaction is a major cause of radicalism in Nigeria



In examining the link between Social Interaction and radicalization, the researcher picked responses from Item Q17, which proposes that social Interaction is a major cause of radicalism in Nigeria. A total of 32% and 48% of respondents strongly-agreed and agreed respectively. Social Interaction can be seen as one of the grand causes of radicalism, in that, behaviors do not originate in isolation but by association. As earlier pointed by Adishi that learning through observation may be more efficient than learning through direct reinforcement.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, Chukwu<sup>36</sup> in explaining Edwin Sutherland's Differential Association theory stated that "individuals learn deviant behavior from those close to them who provide models of and opportunities for deviance". This implies that social interaction is indeed a gateway to radicalization and as such must be guided.

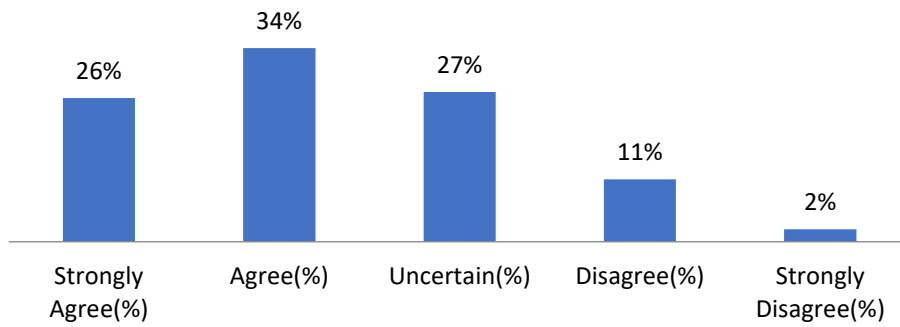
<sup>35</sup> Adishi, E. 2011. *Loc.cit.*

<sup>36</sup> Chukwu, C. 2014. *The Fundamentals of Sociology; An Introduction*. Lagos: Serenity Publishers ISBN 978-978-077-305-2; Chukwu, C and Azuka, C. 2014. *Simplifying B.Sc Project Writing for Undergraduates*. Lagos, Serenity Publishers ISBN 978-978-950-979-9.

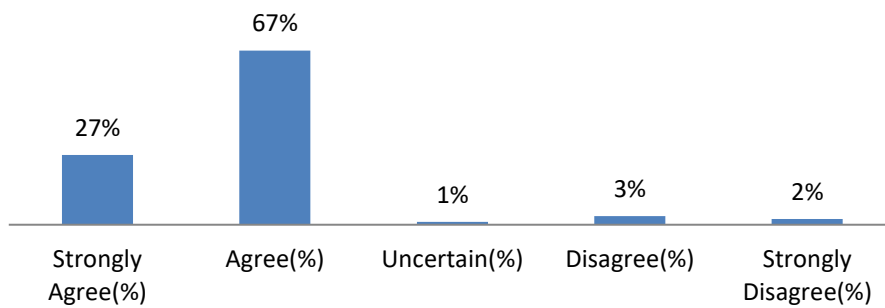


**Research Question 5:** Is there a link between politics, economy and religious extremism?

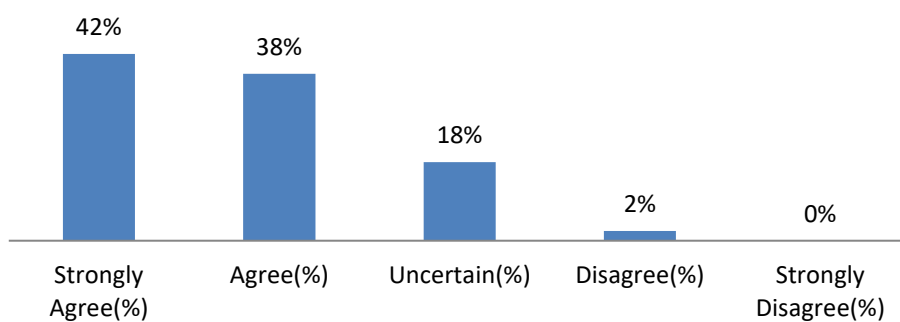
**Q2: Terrorism in Nigeria is Politically motivated**



**Q3: People become radical extremists as a result of status frustration**



**Q6: Unemployment increases one's susceptibility to radicalisation**



Religious Extremism and the Challenges of De-radicalisation

To examine the link between politics, economy and religious extremism in Nigeria, the Researcher utilized Items Q2, Q3 and Q6 to data generation and analysis. For Item Q2, which proposed that Terrorism in Nigeria is politically motivated, a large percentage of the population Agree. For Item Q3 which proposed that people become

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radical extremists as a result of status frustration, the larger percentage of the respondents Agreed, as shown in the graph. Lastly, item Q6 which proposed that Unemployment increases one's susceptibility to radicalization shows a larger percentage strongly agree. These responses therefore indicate that there is a link between economy and religious extremism.

To further buttress the above; Robert Merton's social structure theory makes a good reference. According to Merton, the society is oriented towards materialistic goals and the means of achieving such goals is limited to a particular class (by Government), as such, the limited class strives to devise means of achieving societal goals by deviant means.

### Test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis One:

H1: There is a relationship between the Government policies and religious extremism

Ho: There is no relationship between the Government policies and religious extremism

Rating	Observed	Expected	df	$\chi^2$	p	$\alpha$	Decision
Strongly Disagreed	0		3	8.667	0.034	0.05	Significant Accept H <sub>1</sub> (p<0.05)
Disagreed	13	22.5					
Uncertain	19	22.5					
Agreed	31	22.5					
Strongly Agreed	27	22.5					
Total	90						

From the results displayed in the above Table, it can be seen that when a chi-square analysis was conducted on the relationship between government policies and religious extremism, a  $\chi^2$  value of 8.667 was obtained with a p-value of 0.034 at 0.05 level of statistical significance. On the basis of this result obtained, it can be seen that the obtained p-value (0.034) was lesser than the chosen alpha (0.05) guiding the study. It, therefore, indicates that there is a significant relationship between governmental policies and religious extremism in Nigeria The alternate hypothesis was therefore accepted.

### Hypothesis Two

Hi: There is a correspondence between one's economic disposition and their proneness to radicalization

H0: There is NO correspondence between one's economic disposition and their proneness to radicalization

Rating	Observed	Expected	df	$\chi^2$	p	$\alpha$	Decision
Strongly Disagreed			3	37.55		0.05	Significant Accept H <sub>2</sub>

Disagreed	6	22.5			0.000		(p<0.05)
Uncertain	12	22.5					
Agreed	43	22.5					
Strongly Agreed	29	22.5					
Total	90						

From the results displayed in the above Table, it can be seen that when a chi-square analysis was conducted on the relationship between political undertone and acts of extremism, a  $\chi^2$  value of 37.55 was obtained with a p-value of 0.000 at 0.05 level of statistical significance. On the basis of this result obtained, it can be seen that the obtained p-value (0.000) was lesser than the chosen alpha (0.05) guiding the study. It, therefore, indicates that there is a correspondence between one's economic disposition and their proneness to radicalization. The alternate hypothesis was therefore accepted.

**Hypothesis Three**

H<sub>3</sub>: Social Interaction is a major cause of radicalism in Nigeria

H<sub>03</sub>: Social Interaction is NOT a major cause of radicalism in Nigeria

Rating	Observed	Expected	df	$\chi^2$	p	$\alpha$	Decision
Strongly Disagreed	2		4	27.5	0.000	0.05	Significant Accept H <sub>3</sub> (p<0.05)
Disagreed	14	18.0					
Uncertain	19	18.0					
Agreed	32	18.0					
Strongly Agreed	23	18.0					
Total	90						

From the results displayed in the above Table, it can be seen that when a chi-square analysis was conducted on the relationship between social interaction and causes of radicalism in Nigeria, a  $\chi^2$  value of 27.55 was obtained with a p-value of 0.000 at 0.05 level of statistical significance. On the basis of this result obtained, it can be seen that the obtained p-value (0.000) was lesser than the chosen alpha (0.05) guiding the study. It, therefore, indicates that there is a significant relationship between social interactions and major causes of radicalism in Nigeria. The alternate hypothesis was therefore accepted.

## VI. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**A. Summary**

This work has critically examined religious fundamentalism, extremism and the challenges of de-radicalization. The research was carefully designed to explore the concepts of religious extremism as well as the challenges or factors impeding the actualization of effective de-

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radicalization of extremists. This work has carefully explored Religion (with more emphasis of Islam), what connotes religious extremism and what not, with a view to proffering effective solutions to the challenges of de-radicalization in Nigeria. The researcher spread the factors that cause radicalization across domains such as Religion, Politics, Socialization, Economic factors. These domains provided a basis for generation of data by the researcher.

The above was achieved through both primary and secondary data obtained from surveys, books, journals, articles as well as online journal publications or e-books. These data were both qualitatively and quantitatively analyzed to form a basis upon which recommendations will be formulated hereafter.

## **B. Conclusion**

Having carefully analyzed literature herein and analyzed the generated data across the aforementioned domains, the researcher came to the general finding that there is more to religious extremism than religion as it is publicly perceived. However, the findings of this research work are itemized as follows:

- 1) There is no basis for religious extremism in both Islam and Christianity
- 2) Religious fundamentalism does not ipso-facto epitomize religious extremism or radicalism
- 3) The Concept of Jihad is erroneously perceived and wrongly applied in contemporary media
- 4) De-radicalization is a more effective counter-terrorism strategy than military operations. Military counter-terrorism operations have been found to be impediments to achieving De-radicalization
- 5) There is a correlation between government policies and the radicalization process. The government, through their policies, directly or indirectly increases individual's susceptibility to radicalization.
- 6) Although direct link between economy and radicalization has not been established, research findings herein indicate that there is a link between economic situation and one's susceptibility to radicalism
- 7) Radicalization is primarily a product of Social Interaction as it has been established in this research work that behavior does not occur in a vacuum but rather is learned through observation.

## **C. Recommendations**

In line with the above research findings, the researchers have carefully drafted measures to avert the challenges of de-radicalization. They are itemized as follows:

**1. Institutionalization of worship centers**

Mosques and Churches are found in virtually all corners of the country. These centers of worship are primary social interaction centers for virtually every member of the Nigerian society. Unfortunately, these structures are built and operated with little or no government regulations, thereby leaving the subjects vulnerable to disinformation. These misinformed populace are often most prone to radicalization and becoming nuisance to the general society. Thus, it is highly recommended that government put in place structures and measures that would regulate the building, establishment and management of such religious centers.

**2. Drafting and supervision of curriculum for Islamic schools**

Having established that a lapse in Islamic education is a major causative factor as regards religious extremism, the knowledge passed on to students should be carefully monitored by the government. The government should be in a better position to draft Islamic Education curriculum, through the respective departments of the Ministry of Education, for the various Islamic schools across the Nation. This should include the traditional Al-majiri Islamic schools popular in Northern Nigeria. Also, beyond drafting such curriculum that is void of extremist elements, the government should put measures in place to monitor their implementation to ensure there is no deviation so as not to defeat the primary purpose.

**3. Standardized way of monitoring child parenting in line with international practice**

A Child is seen as his/her parent's business until he/she becomes a problem to the society. Every religious extremist today was once raised by a parent and most often, parents that were not extremists. Thus, this indicates that a lapse in parenting goes beyond being an individual or family problem, but a societal problem. As such, the government has a key role to play by creating standards of parenting and agencies chiefly saddled with the responsibility of ensuring that parenting is done in accordance with National and International standards.

**4. Re-orientation programs for radical extremists by the National Orientation Agency (NOA)**

As a finding of this research work, that re-orientation is a better counter-terrorism strategy than military operations and the use of other forms of force, it is thus recommended that government draft measures to re-orient the radical elements. Clearly, decapitation among other military strategies has proved ineffective because killing the head has only grown more heads in the terrorist network. Therefore, the NOA as an agency should design programs aimed at changing the psychology of radical elements as would yield more positive results.

**5. Incorporating Terrorism and Insurgency studies in all Secondary and Tertiary institutions' curriculum.**

As a means to manage the orientation of youth and steer them away from violence and radical mind-sets, educating them on Terrorism and Insurgency in their various schools would go a long way in pre-informing them of the dangers of radicalism to both themselves and the Nation at large

**6. Creating an enabling environment for youth development so as to keep all youth engaged**

As discovered in this work, unemployment is one of the factors that increase susceptibility to radicalism. As such, this is seen as a major challenge to de-radicalization and should be curtailed by the government so as to ensure optimum engagement of youth in productive rather than destructive activities.

**7. Social Media campaigns to educate the youth on the dangers of radicalization to National Security**

Undoubtedly, social media has become the most populated media in Nigeria and the world at large. The social media has the widest network and coverage of people and this is made possible with the use of Internet. Thus, it should be a platform used by the government and non-governmental organizations to carry out campaigns to enlighten the youth on the dangers of radicalization. This would go a long way in reaching out to the radical elements of the Nigerian populace as well.

**8. Organizing National programs with the aim of fostering Unity**

National Unity is the bedrock of peace and safety. Any nation that lacks the spirit of national unity is prone to being threatened by radical elements who seek to destroy its nationhood. As such, the government should strive to design National programs such as inter-ethnic sports competitions with the aim of fostering National Unity.

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***Conflicting Interest Statement***

All authors declared that there is no potential conflict of interest on publishing this article.

***Funding***

None

***Publishing Ethical and Originality Statement***

All authors declared that this work is original and has never been published in any form and in any media, nor is it under consideration for publication in any journal, and all sources cited in this work refer to the basic standards of scientific citation.

***Cite this article as:***

Nte, N. D., Abdulaziz, B. A., & Isah, A. (2021). Religious Extremism and the Challenges of De-radicalisation in Nigeria's North East Region. *The Indonesian Journal of International Clinical Legal Education*, 3(1), 77-110. <https://doi.org/10.15294/ijicle.v3i1.42303>