Muslim Religious Extremism, Radicalization and Militancy in Northern Nigeria

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Introduction

While studiously avoiding overt reference to 'terrorism', nevertheless debates about 'radicalization and militancy' inevitably conjure up the specters of violence in politically Muslim ideological context, particularly when using organized groups and strategies, as indeed characteristic of a military (see for instance, Black 2011, Vertigans 2009, Hollander 2008, Ayoob 2008, and Rubin 2003). Linking such militancy with Islam, however gives it the coloration of terror and use of violence. Of course such radicalization and militancy is carried out within the organizational context of Islamist movements. Such movements seeking power today are faced with difficult choices regarding strategy, ranging from armed struggle to electoral efforts.

Since 1980 in northern Nigeria, the emergence of what might eventually be placed within the rubric of militant Islam has shifted the focus from a band of albeit fundamentalists in the 1980s to a committed hardcore Islamists with a clear political – and violent – ideology in the 2000s. This paper briefly traces the emergence of militant orthodox Islam[1] in northern Nigeria

Dissidence in Islam and Antecedent to Political Islam

The history of Islam is replete with groups who for either social or political reasons, prefer to follow a different path from that followed by the main Sunni orthodoxy of Islamic faith. For the most part, such dissidence, it could be argued, was not rooted in fundamental questioning of the validity of Islam as a religion, but on its instruments of implementation. In one of the early disputes about leadership in Islam after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, Ali, who became the fourth Caliph (after Abubakar, Umar and Usman) had his authority challenged by Syrians leading to a series of battles. The two armies met at Siffin in early 657, where Mu'awiya, leading the Syrians, called for an arbitration. The arbitration solved nothing, but it did serve to delegitimize Ali in the eyes of some of his supporters, who deserted Ali's army and withdrew to Nahrawan, east of the Tigris, thus earning the name *Kharijites*, literally "those who went out" or more figuratively "those who rebelled." (Kenny 2006: 22).

Based on their rejection of the criteria for mediation established in the document, they took as their slogan: "There is no judgment but Allah's" (*la hukm illa li-llah*). The initial band of protesters retreated to a site called Harura', where they were later joined by other defectors. The men among this force, which had separated itself from 'Ali's troops, were variously referred to as Muhakkima because of their slogan or Haruriyya because of their first camp. The more generic name by which they were to be known. They have three fundamental credos. First, any believer who is beyond reproach could become a Caliph, no matter how he traces his lineage; and if his

actions do not conform to the Qur'an, he can be deposed. Second, faith in Islam should be validated with proper action and belief – a mortal sin is akin to leaving Islam altogether. Third, all Muslims are equal, regardless of their race – a doctrine that makes entry into Kharijism attractive for non-Arabs who had to bear the brunt of condescending racism of Arabs, especially in racially mixed areas such as Tunisia, Mauritania, Algeria, and Libya.

The Kharijites most significant strategy, however, is their resistance to authority – as witnessed in the assassination of Caliph Ali in 661 by one of them. While the original Kharijites rooted their rebellion in a political (and indeed military) process, nevertheless the fundamental structure of their rebellion relied on their belief in *la hukm illa li-llah*. This perhaps explains why differing views emerged as to the motive of their formation. R.E. Brunnow in his 1884 doctoral dissertation, and the first major European treatise on Kharijites, perceived them as being politically motivated. Julius Wellhausen, on the other hand suggests that the Kharijites were motivated by spiritual zeal which was strong enough for them to break away from the main Muslim community and form their own clustered identity. The belief that judgment lies with Allah implied a strict orthodox interpretation of both knowledge and its attributes – unless it can be acceptable to Allah, then it is false judgment or false knowledge: a credo the Islamist group, Yusufiyya movement in northern Nigeria were to adopt in 2006.

Modern Islamism and Radical Islam
Of the few Muslim intellectuals who by 20th century would bring to fore the modernist debates about political Islam, Syed Abul A'ala Mawdudi (1903-1979) from Pakistan stood out. He also founded one of the few precursors to modern political Islamic organizations, *Jamaat-e-Islami* (the Islamic revivalist party) in 1941. This became very influential in crystallizing the idea of political Islam within a Western frame of intellectual thought, albeit retaining a core principle of Islamism – that Islam is more than a religion: it is a political system; and that Muslims must strive to maintain the purity of Islam through the enforcement of Shari'a which is to replace the secular State. This has remained the central mantra of such radicals wherever they establish themselves. Closely connected to Islamism is the issue of 'radicalism'. As Patel (2007: 42) argues,

> Islamic political radicalism in the last half-century has followed a tight pattern as a direct response to mainly US foreign policies, stretching from the installation and the support of the Shah of Iran in 1953, which led to the Islamic Iranian revolution, to the US backing of the brutal Sudanese regime of Jafaar Nimeiry leading to a coup by a radical Islamist military in 1989. The US involvement in Lebanon, with the aid of Israel as a proxy, led to the demise of a fragile coalition in the country and ushered in radical elements, which until today remain unsettled. The US in the former Soviet republics like Tajikistan has even allied with communists in order to counter the growth of Islamic movements.

Subsequently, according to Demant (2006) Islamism spread rapidly in the wake of the 1991 Gulf War, then became a threat of global proportions with the Algerian civil war, Hamas in the Palestinian territories, the wars of Bosnia and Chechnya, the Taliban in Afghanistan, al-Qaeda's international terrorism, and the rise of Islamist parties and movements in Pakistan, Indonesia, the Central Asian Republics of the former Soviet Union, and elsewhere.

Islamism, as political discourse and action that attempts to center Islam within the political order (Roy 1994; Sayyid 1997), has been a conspicuous phenomenon in different parts of the Muslim world, mainly since the eruption of the Iranian revolution in 1979. As Antony Black (2011: 306) notes, 'Islamism is a specific reaction to modern social and economic conditions, rapid urbanization, the dislocation of traditional communities and crafts, unemployment and anomie.' Cast in this mold, attaching political dominance to Islam therefore provides an alternative to Muslims living under such conditions of what they perceive as moral decay or political subjugation. By resorting to Islamism, Islamists are advocating for a return to basics of Islam and shunning away the materialism of present secular culture.

A fundamental credo of Islamist philosophy is rejection of the 'West' and its values, since such West is seen as a threat to Islam in all aspects. A second credo is obligation to Jihad (effort, struggle) in taking up arms against those deemed to be unbelievers; however, this would seem to be a last resort as other methods – persuasion, ballot box – would have to be explored first. Within this context, there literally hundreds of Islamist resistance groups that advocate various forms of radical social structures based on Islam. Most of these Islamist groups base their radicalism on perceived injustice from the larger secular (or even religious) civil society from which they operate.

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the events of September 11, 2001 however, merely accelerated the cause of Islamism; but did not initiate it. Prior to these events, Islamism had been manifest in various forms through various groups, centered principally in the Middle East – but sharing the same philosophy of ascendency of Political Islam. These groups are divided into two: the first are those restricted within particular territories and countries; while the second are those that are more transnational in their operation. The first included, for instance, *Fateh*, literally 'opening', which refers to PLO (Palestinian National Liberation Movement), founded in 1954 by members of the Palestinian diaspora – principally refugees from Palestine who were professionals working in the Gulf states. Yasir Arafat was one of its founders. *Hamas* [Harakat al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyyah, or Islamic Resistance Movement] was formed in 1987 in Gaza, Palestine, by members of the Sunni Muslim Brotherhood in response to the Israeli occupation of Gaza. It has formed the vanguard of Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation since the second Palestinian Intifada (popular resistance). *Hezbollah*, literally the 'Party of God' (from Qur'an, Al-Mujadala, 58:22) emerged in 1982 as a Shi'a resistance fighting the Israeli invasion of south Lebanon.

Eventually, however, the scales turned from animosity towards US policies in supporting unpopular regimes to internal fissures that see the emergence of demands for reforms along Islamic lines within the country. For instance, according to Salhi (2011: 37) in Somalia, Al Shahab (The Youth), an armed Islamist group, called for the establishment of a Shariah state (i.e., a state governed by Islam), proclaimed jihad against unbelievers, and urged nationalist resistance against foreign forces, speficially the African Union (AU), the United Nations, Ethiopia, and, more recently, Uganda.
In South Africa, the *Al Jama-ah* was established and registered on April 20, 2007 as a political party for South African Muslim youth, with the conscious intent to capture the votes of young Muslims. However, its

…objectives were far beyond capturing the Muslim vote. It aims to introduce Sharia in South Africa, making it the first South African political party to declare explicitly this intention (Salih 2009: 195).

In some case studies, the emergence of Islamist militancy is rooted both in political culture as well as rights violations. In Algeria, a process of political liberalization took an unexpected turn in 1990-91, when a newly created Islamic party, the Islamic Salvation Front or FIS (*Front Islamique du Salut)*, took the lead in the local and parliamentary elections. A more dramatic political U-turn took place in early 1992 when the army supported a constitutional coup to prevent the Islamic fundamentalists from forming a new government. This military intervention gave the signal for a popular insurrection by the pro-Islamic sections of the population that had contributed to the electoral victory of the FIS. (Volpi 2003). As a prelude, it lead to massive civil disobedience between 1992-1999. As Volpi (2003: vii) further stated:

> Political violence began with the arbitrary arrests and torture of pro-Islamic demonstrators by the army and the police, and with the revenge killings of civil servants by Islamic guerrillas. Later, these violent tactics were used against people who were not directly involved in the struggle for political power. At first the Islamic guerrillas waged a spectacular campaign of assassination and bombing directed at foreign nationals and assets in a desperate attempt to force foreign governments to drop their support for the Algerian junta. By the mid-1990s the use of terror had spread even to the most apolitical segments of the rural population, as blood feuds, struggles over land ownership and organised crime grew out of the confrontation between the progovernment militias and Islamic guerrilla groups.

The political situation deepened in the face of increased police and army repression on the members of the FIS, which was officially banned in February 1992. Increasingly, the actions of the repressive State apparatus created a situation in which many political activists and ordinary citizens had to reconsider their political views and practices, and form resistance Islamist guerrilla movements. The end product was countless loss of lives and property in the insurrection that followed, which in 1993 eventually lead to the formation of a coalition of various guerrilla movements fighting the government into a single militia, the GIA (*Groupements Islamiques Armés*, Armed Islamic Group) and gained its notoriety by organizing a series of attacks against civil servants and members of the government. The political strategy of the GIA was to extend the range of legitimate guerrilla targets to politicians supporting the provisional government, high-ranking civil servants and people working in the security forces' administrative departments. By its actions the GIA sought to demonstrate the inability of the state to protect its own supporters and collaborators. The group used assassinations and bombings, including car bombs as its modus operandi.

Islamic Scholastic Ascendancy in Kano
In order to provide a tapestry against which notions of radicalism might be understood within the historiography of Islam in northern Nigeria, I will briefly look at the arrival of Islam in Kano, and the subsequent emergence of different groups who vary in methodologies from rhetorical to extremely violent. This is not to connect the contemporary emergence of Islamist groups in northern Nigeria with historical events—indeed the current situation in Nigeria owes not to history, but to contemporary events—but I wish to provide an overview of Islamic inflows and eddies in the region. Kano became a sample state because of the existence of credible

documentation detailing its local history, rather than an ethnographic account by external researchers.

According to *Tarikh Arbab* (Palmer 1908) Islam was brought to the Hausa State of Kano in northern Nigeria by a caravan of 40 Wangara cleric merchants from Mali in about 1380 (East 1932). The local chief, Sarki Yaji (1349-1385) readily accepted the new religion as a substitute to the old pagan practices of some of his people. He also decried that Islam should be adopted as a state religion in the Kano kingdom, and established an Islamic scholastic tradition in a particular area of the city of Kano where the Wangara cleric merchants settled. This settlement became known as the Madabo School, and became a university of sorts with many north African scholars visiting the School-Mosque complex. Thus sustaining the intellectual tradition established by the Madabo school was a stream of visiting scholars who came to Kano and who intensified the study Islam and Arabic language, thus enriching the existing higher educational base well established by the Wangarawa at the Madabo school.
Thus the Wangarawa scholastic dynasty left a legacy in the establishment of the first higher education centers in Kano all networked to the Madabo schooling system. It was to this school, which had established itself authoritatively in the fashion of its antecedent University of Sankore, that scholars from all over Sudan flocked to study Islamic theology in Kano. Notable among the eddy of scholars who sojourned to medieval Kano and left intellectual legacies included Ahmad b. Umar b. Aqit, who on his way to Timbuktu from the pilgrimage to Makkah taught in Kano for some time in late 1480s. Another noted visiting scholar to Kano was the Moroccan Abdul Rahman Suqan b. Ali b. Ahmed al-Qasri who was once a mufti of Fez. And in the first half of the 16th century, the Tunisian scholar, Shaikh al-Tunis came to Kano and taught. Similarly, Bornu and Aghirmi scholars were also numerous in Kano (Chamberlain 1975: 60). Generally,

> the educational system in Hausaland was framed along the Timbuktu pattern of learning in the fifteenth century...The method of education could be described as "a master seeking method", i.e. it was largely dependent on the teacher who offered the instruction, guidance and prescribed text books for an individual student until he perfected and mastered a particular branch of knowledge (Mohammed and Khan 1981: 131).

This tradition was strengthened by the arrival in Kano of Muhammad b. Abd al Karim al-Maghili, from Algeria, during the reign of the Emir of Kano, Rumfa (1463-1499) Rumfa was perceived as the most radical and intellectual reformer among the medieval Emirs of Kano, carrying, as he did, far reaching reforms in all aspects of his administration. Rumfa according to Kano tradition, was also the most pious, upright, dynamic, benevolent ruler the Kano kingdom has ever had. As a dynamic visionary and foresighted king, the political and administrative reforms as well as the establishment of Kurmi Market are still considered by *Kanawa* (people of Kano) as second to none in the entire political and economic growth of the kingdom since that time.

Although Gwarzo (1975:70) was to claim that when al-Maghili came to Kano "there was in existence some Islamic learning, but Islamic institutions had not been properly developed", this is nevertheless not so. Prior to al-Maghili's arrival in Kano there existed extensive network of theological colleges and schools under various *mallams*, all graduates of the faculties of the Madabo school, established about fifty years earlier with the arrival of the Malian Wangarawa scholars in 1380.

Further, in a re-interpretation of the whole historical drama, Barkindo (1988) suggests that by the time when Al-Maghili arrived in Kano in about 1490, Rumfa must have completed most of the his reforms. It would appear, therefore, that al-Maghili's presence in Kano served only as a catalyst towards accelerating an already reformist process of Rumfa. Perhaps the most eloquent testimony of al-Maghili's intellectual influence on Rumfa was the former's treatises. Al-Maghili wrote the first Kano Emirate constitution which was contained in *Taj-al-din fi ma yajibu ala'l muluk* and *Wasiyyat al-Maghili ila Abi Abdullahi Muhammad b. Yakub* (Muhammad Rumfa), and translated as *The Obligation of Princes* by T. H. Baldwin (1932).

The treatises, being *wasiyyat* concerning the obligation of the prince (though more accurately, in this case, the Emir) to his subjects, followed the Machiavellian framework of a "wise one" providing over-the-shoulder religious guidance to a student on what was probably the first welfarist state policy in The Sudan. Incidentally, it was actually Rumfa who commissioned al-Maghili to write the books for him — revealing a desire on the part of the ruling house Kano to identify with classical Islam, much in the same way one of Rumfa's great-grandparents did with the Wangarawa clerics. There was no doubt these constitutions written by al-Maghili for Rumfa provided the first recorded framework for the intellectual transformation of Kano on which subsequent Emirs of Kano built upon.

Thus we can say that al-Maghili set out to remove innovations in the interpretation of Islam in Kano and strengthened already existing scholastic institutions and established new ones. This was because his first acts, the appointment of an Imam for the Friday prayer, and the *qadi*, were preceded by similar act of the Madabo Wangarawa faculty decades earlier. Perhaps significantly, the Qadiriyya Sufi brotherhood—the first to be introduced in what was to become Nigeria later—was brought to Kano by Al-Maghili. As an informant for Priscilla Starrat (1993: 91) recorded:

> The Qadiriyya precede the Tijaniyya in this town, in this country of ours, Nigeria. And, indeed, the one who brought the Qadiriyya to this land of ours of Nigeria, the one who came with it was Shaikh Maghili. Shaikh Maghili, indeed, he came with the Qadiriyya, about nine-hundred years ago, more or less.

The Qadiriyya was founded by Abdul-Qadir Gilani (1077-1166) of Gilan, in Iran, although its scholastic roots were established in Baghdad. However, although Al-Maghili was credited to introducing Sufism in present day Nigeria, "it is more likely that the spread of Sufi ideas in the Sahara and the Sudan was one aspect of the general diffusion of Islamic culture spreading out from both North Africa and Egypt at this time." (Hiskett 1975:73).

Tijaniyya in the Sokoto Caliphate
Tijaniyya Sufi order was founded around 1781 by Sidi Ahmad al-Tijjani (1737-1815), who was born in Algeria and died in Fez, Morocco. Tijaniyya reacted against the conservative, hierarchical Qadiriyya brotherhood then dominant, focusing on social reform and grass-roots Islamic revival. It was brought to northern Nigeria in the 19th century by Sheikh Umar Tall (also known as Umar al-Futi), who, while on his way to the pilgrimage in Makkah from Futa Toro in present day Senegal, stayed for some years in the Sokoto, the then seat of the Caliphate of northern Nigeria. While in Sokoto, he was received by the Amir Muminin, Muhammad Bello, who was the son

of Sheikh Usman Danfodiyo, the leader of the 1804 Jihad that united Muslim northern Nigeria as a singular Islamic caliphate. During his stay, Sheikh Umar initiated many people to the Tijaniyya brotherhood – easily divorcing them from Qadiriyya which was the brotherhood followed by both Sheikh Usman Danfodiyo and his son Muhammad Bello. However, while Tijaniyya gained mass audience in Sokoto, there was no evidence to show that the leadership of the Caliphate embraced the brotherhood, thus retaining their affiliation to Qadiriyya. As Ousmane Kane (2003: 70-71) argued

> To acknowledge Muhammad Bello's conversion, whether true or not, would require the Sokoto religious establishment to reject the legacy of 'Abd al-Qadir Jilani, Usman Dan Fodio and Muhammad Bello, which was found unacceptable. As a result, the politico-religious establishment of Sokoto hardened their positions as *qadiri* and made the Qadiriyya the official Sufi order of the Sokoto Caliphate.

During a pilgrimage to Makkah, the Emir of Kano, Abdullahi Bayero (d. 1954) met the Senegalese Tijaniyya leader, Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse (1900-1975) who persuaded the Emir to accept Tijaniyya (abandoning Qadiriyya). Sheikh Niasse was able to subsequently visit Kano where he developed a massive following which lasts up to today with his posters and stickers adoring walls of homes and public transport systems. This following became subsequently referred to as Tijaniyya Ibrahimiyya— to distinguish it from Tijanniya Umariya of Umar Tall— and based its Sufi practices on extensive networks of study centers and *zawiya* (faculties) in almost every quarter of the city. These zawiyas became a focus of Tijanniya Sufi recitations and chants almost every evening. The spread of Tijaniyya Ibrahimiyya in Kano and subsequently northern Nigeria was facilitated by a group of *ulama* known as Salgawa, including Malam Tijani Usman Zangon Barebari (d. 1970), Malam Abubakar Atiq (d. 1974), Malam Shehu Maihula (d. 1988), Malam Sani Kafinga (d. 1989) and Malam Mudi Salga (b. 1932). Initiation into the Tijanniya brotherhood was accompanied by the introduction of some special characteristics: the initiation to *tarbiya* (spiritual training) and praying with one's arms crossed on the chest (*qabd*), in contrast to the majority of local Muslims who pray with their arms alongside their body (*sadl*) – a practice that was become a focal point of confrontation between the followers of the two Sufi brotherhoods.

The Qadiriyya became more widespread after the 1804 Jihad where both the leaders of the Jihad as well as leaders of the new emirates that emerged as a result of the Jihad all embraced Qadiriyya brotherhood. Kano was the exception with the spectacular success of Sheikh Niasse. Following this success and widespread acceptance of the Tijanniya, Sheikh Nasir Kabara established his own brand of Qadiriyya as Qadiriyya Nasiriyya. Both the Sufi brotherhoods, however, as Kane noted "were open to grass roots participation, especially youth and women, which partly accounts for their success." (Kane 2003:72).

It is clear, therefore that entry into the brotherhoods would have to be negotiated on the platform of youth. However, the 1980s brought newer transnational threats to the Sufi brotherhoods in the form of Saudi Wahabism and Shi'a Islam.

Transnational Intrusion – Wahhabism vs. Sufi Groups

The writings of Muhammad ibn Hanbal (780-855), the famous Muslim theologian who declared war against the so-called intrusion of foreign influences in Islam inspired later generations of Muslim thinkers, who became known as Neo-Hanbalis, and condemned especially the Sufi orders, popular Islam and the cult of saints. Notable among the latter Muslim thinkers are Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328), Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziya (1292-1350), and Muhammad Ibn 'Abd Al-Wahhab (1703-1787). In Nigeria, one of the most prominent disciplines of this critique of Sufism which later became known as Wahhabism was Sheikh Abubakar Gumi (1922-1992) from Sokoto, although based in Kaduna, a strong pro-Saudi cleric who used his position as a leading national and international Islamic scholar and cleric and prominence to promote the credo and generally condemn Sufism and its practices. As Brian Larkin (2004: 98) pointed out

> In the early 1970s Gumi began to outline a critique of Sufism in a variety of forums, from *tafsir* (Qur'anic exegesis) at the mosque, to newspaper articles, to radio broadcasts. This critique followed orthodox Wahhabi lines: he attacked Sufism as an innovation (*bid'a*) in Islamic practice in a religion where innovation in matters of faith was not allowed; he criticized the veneration of Sufi saints and the practice of Sufi orders. In its stead, he argued for a return to the key texts of Islam—the Koran and the hadith—texts available to everyone through education and reason.

In 1972, Sheikh Abubakar Gumi published an extremely anti-Sufi book *Al-'aqida al-sahiha bi muwafaqat al-shari'a* (Bayrut, Dar al-'arabi li al-tiba'a wa al-nashr wa al-tawzi', 1972) in which he zealously set out to demonstrate the totally heterodox nature of Tijaniyya and Qadiriyya. Concerning music used in the religious performances of the Sufi brotherhoods in Nigeria, Gumi wrote:

> No one denies the fact that reading the Qur'an, listening to sermons and praising God are necessarily religious deeds…But as for playing with musical instruments such as tambourines and drums over which the law is silent on occasions such as of marriage ceremonies or birthday parties of women and children, no one would oppose that if they are done within the limits of Shari'a…But those who combine drumming with religion or the recitation of the Qur'an and the praises of Allah in the mosque , such people are considered as those who reduce their religion to a play thing and make thereby a mockery of it. They therefore fall within the group of those the Qur'an refers to when it says [Qur'an 8:35], "Their prayers at the sacred House are nothing but whistling and clapping of hands. They shall be punished for their unbelief." (Gumi, in Loimeier 1997: 193)

Interestingly, even before Abubakar Gumi came out with this interpretation of the role of music in religious performances, a noted preacher, Alhaji Lawan Kalarawi, based in Kano had been a thorn on the flesh of the Sufi brotherhoods in his consistent attacks on the use of *bandir*, especially by the Qadiriyya adherents in mosques, as well as their veneration of the Sufi sheikhs. Lawan Kalarawi's critique of Sufi practices—available only from his cassette-recorded preaching and sold in Kano markets—however, were based on orthodoxy and was emic to the Hausa society—as contrasted with the transnational Wahhabism of Abubakar Gumi's attacks on Sufism. And while Kalarawi appealed to the mass audience to wean people away from Sufi practices, Gumi had more appeal to the intellectual class as represented by professionals, civil servants, students and urban elites in northern Nigeria. His transnational connections to the Saudi scholastic hierarchy accorded him a more

sophisticated platform on which to attack Sufi brotherhoods on a more globalized level than Kalarawi's often bawdy—but thoroughly appreciated—sermons.

By 1978 a group of young Muslim Hausa who supported Gumi's anti-Sufi position had coalesced to form *Jama'at Izalat al-bid'a wa iqamat al-sunna* (Society for the Removal of Innovation and Reinstatement of the Tradition (of the Prophet Muhammad) in the city of Jos under the Chairmanship of Sheikh Isma'il Iris, and with Sheikh Abubakar Gumi as a Patron. They subsequently became referred to as 'Yan Izala, and adopted a trenchant extremist Wahhabi position against Sufism.

The Izala set up a branch in Kano under the leadership of Sheikh L. Suleiman in 1978. Setting up a formal organization was one thing, however, but successfully calling for reform—which, in the case of the Izala, means abandoning Sufism—in Kano was quite another. The inhabitants of the Kano city were, in general, deeply attached to the Sufi orders. Further, the Izala approach was a trenchant attack on Sufism and other social Hausa interpersonal behaviors (e.g. genuflecting to parents and elders, an inherited Hausa custom). As John Paden (2005:62) pointed out,

The tension between the Sufi brotherhoods and the anti-innovation legalists (Izala) came down to the role of traditional culture in the definition of Islamic identity. To some extent, an increasing number of Nigerians felt more comfortable with the ethnoreligious traditions of their own communities than the transethnic identities of the Sufis or *Izala*. There was a need for a West African rather than an Arab model of Islam, and it was clear that outside the Arab world, Muslim communities in Central, South, and Southeast Asia were making efforts to keep the spirit of Islam but allowing for variation in its cultural forms.

The first attempts to carry out open-air preaching advocating the "abandonment of local Islamic practices and return to pristine Islam" (which included labeling venerated saints such as Ahmad al-Tijani and 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani as infidels) were ruthlessly suppressed. On May 27, 1980, while members of the local committee of Izala attempted to preach within the walled city, they were attacked by partisans of the Sufi orders, and one preacher of the Izala died in the clash. Following this incident, the Izala preachers tended to avoid open-air preaching within the walled city and to operate in the suburbs outside the city wall (Kane 2003).

The Izala drew further inspiration from Gumi's incessant attacks on Sufi brotherhoods, such that he encoded his apathy towards them in his widely circulated Hausa translation of the Qur'an with commentary in 1992, and particularly his interpretation of Ayats 31 and 32 of Sarah Rum. The original Ayats stated:

> Turn ye back in repentance to Him, and fear Him: establish regular prayers, and be not ye among those who join gods with Allah, (Qur'an 31, Yusuf Ali Translation).
> Those who split up their Religion, and become (mere) Sects,- each party rejoicing in that which is with itself! (Qur'an 32, Yusuf Ali Translation).

In the Hausa commentary on these two Ayats, Gumi interpreted "those who join gods with Allah" in the following terms:

> All the Sufi orders must be banned because they divide people into different sects. The followers of a given Sufi order believe that the beliefs and practices of the order to which they

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are affiliated are better than that of the others. Thus, they would not agree to meet the disciples of another order at the time of the recitation of their litanies [*wurdi* in Hausa, *wird* in Arabic]. Moreover, the *wird* and practices of the Sufi orders include innovations contrary to Islam. Gumi commentary on Qur'an 30: 31, 32; p. 882.

In other words, to Gumi, the Sufi brotherhoods and their followers constitute a form of "mushrikeen". It is therefore not surprising that clashes occurred between the two groups.

Increasing Islamist Militancy against Authority – The Maitatsine Phenomenon
While the fires of conflict between the Sufi brotherhoods and the Izala were raging in many cities in northern Nigeria in the late 1970s, another Islamist militant group emerged; but with a difference. For while Sufi/Izala clashes were essentially contained within the house of Islam, with both the two groups holding a high degree of respect for secular government and its constituted authority, the new group chose to tread different paths. They subsequently became labeled 'Yan Tatsine, and were under the leadership of Muhammad Marwa, aka Maitatsine. They violently intruded into the public sphere in December 1980 (for various accounts, see Lavers 1984, Christelow 1985, Clarke 1987, Hiskett 1987, Isichei 1987 and Skuratowicz 2004).

The name, Maitatsine, is derived from a Hausa phrase he commonly employed against his detractors, *Alla ya tsine maka albarka*, "May God deprive you of his blessing." His followers were therefore known as the 'Yan Tatsine. Because the group was intensely suspicious of outsiders, and because the disturbances gave rise to many wild rumors and apocryphal stories, little reliable knowledge exists of the movement or its leader.

Muhammadu Marwa was reportedly born in the region of Marwa, a city in northern Cameroon, probably in the 1920s. (A Nigerian passport that he acquired gave the date 1927.) He is commonly thought to have been Kirdi by origin, a member of one of the small hill peoples, followers of indigenous religions, who inhabit the region, the plains of which have been dominated by Muslim Fulani since the jihad of the early nineteenth century. But there are also reports that at least one of his parents belonged to the Shuwa, an Arabic-speaking group living in the region. In the 1920s and 1930s there was a large-scale emigration of young Kirdi men from the hills to the plains, driven by poverty and, in 1931, by a severe famine; the young Muhammadu Marwa may have been among them. He reportedly became the servant of a Muslim scholar who inspired his conversion to Islam. On that occasion, he took his Muslim name, Muhammadu. He may have been exposed to Mahdist ideas; in the 1890s this region had served as the base for the Mahdist movement led by Haya bin Sa'id (d. 1899), a member of the Sokoto royal family.

Muhammadu Marwa is said to have come to Kano in 1945, but nothing is known of his activities there until the early 1960s. By this time he had acquired a reputation for a particularly vitriolic form of tafsir, (Qur'anic commentary) which radically differed from the mainstream Sunni commentaries in Kano and other parts of northern Nigeria. His credo seemed to have revolved around condemnation of any modern form of technology — from wearing watches, to cars, bikes, television sets etc. His mechanism of showering curses (Hau: tsinuwa) on any object or group of people that took his fancy, especially the Sufi brotherhoods, earned him the sobriquet of Maitatsine — he who curses. He also denied the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad

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and relied exclusively on the Qur'an as the source of his faith, which he imparted to his followers.

The political and religious life of Kano in the years just after Nigeria's independence in 1960 was turbulent, and Muhammadu Marwa joined in the fray. In 1962 Emir Muhammadu Sanusi (ruled from 1953–1963) had him brought before a Muslim judge on charges of illegal preaching and an offense known in the Arabic legal records as shatimah, or abusive language.

The latter offense was severely—and frequently—punished in Kano at the time, since the exchange of insults by political or religious groups often led to violence. The judge gave Marwa a three-month prison term, to be followed by deportation to his native Cameroon.

The Nigerian military takeover of 1966 brought an end to the formal powers of the emirs and in general weakened traditional social controls. This change made it possible for Marwa to return to Kano in the late 1960s. In 1971 he was issued a Nigerian passport in order to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca.

By the late 1970s the petroleum boom had brought a major new injection of wealth to Kano, and with it came rapid social change. For many of the established residents of the city this meant accelerated incorporation into the modern sector of Nigerian society, especially through the state-run secular school system. At the same time, young men were drawn from the countryside in increasing numbers. Many of them followed a traditional pattern in the region, leaving their families to become Qur'anic students (Hausa, almajirai) and supporting themselves and their teacher through begging (Hausa, bara) and casual labor. The economic and educational changes of the 1970s made this group increasingly marginal. Such youth were the main recruiting ground for the 'Yan Tatsine. Groups affiliated with them sprang up in other towns in northern Nigeria and developed their own separate ritual centers.

Starting in 1977, the aggressive preaching of Marwa's disciples and the growth of his community of followers inspired vociferous public complaints. The approach of the turn of the Islamic century (fourteenth century ah) in 1979, an event associated with the arrival of a renewer of the faith, apparently inspired Marwa to announce his claim to prophethood. In 1978, as Nigeria returned to civilian rule, Kano state elected a governor from the People's Redemption Party, Abubakar Rimi. The Nigerian presidency, however, was captured by this party's conservative rival in northern politics, the National Party of Nigeria. The distrust between the federal and state levels of government hampered efforts to control the 'Yan Tatsine.

On 26 November 1980, Governor Rimi issued an ultimatum demanding the dispersal of the large group of followers who had gathered around Marwa's compound in 'Yan Awaki Quarters, just outside the old walled city. At this time, the arrival of Libyan troops in the Chadian capital of Ndjamena added to public anxiety. Governor Rimi took no immediate action on the expiration of the ultimatum. Rumors circulated that the 'Yan Tatsine planned to take over the city's two main mosques at congregational prayers on Friday, 19 December. The day before, however, a group of 'Yan Tatsine entered into a violent confrontation with the police at Shahuci Field, near the emir's

palace. With bows and machetes, they drove off the police, captured weapons, and burnt trucks.

Ten days of heavy fighting ensued in which more than four thousand people were killed. Many were victims of vigilante groups that sprang up around the city and attacked anyone they suspected of belonging to the 'Yan Tatsine. The Nigerian army finally was called in to quell the disturbances. Marwa and his followers fled their stronghold on 29 December. Marwa himself was killed in the process and some one thousand of his followers arrested. In October 1982 violent disturbances linked to the 'Yan Tatsine occurred in the city of Maiduguri in northeastern Nigeria. Other disturbances followed at Yola (March 1984) and Gombe (April 1985).

The 'Yan Tatsine movement follows a pattern common in Muslim West Africa that may be termed "religious separatism," Such groups embrace heterodox practices and esoteric interpretations of the Qur'an (Christelow 1985). They emphasize their own purity and refuse contact with the rest of society. Muhammadu Marwa was especially known for his condemnation of all modern innovations from bicycles to radios and buttons. He reportedly accepted only the Qur'an as a valid source of religious teaching, yet as a prophet claimed the right to issue new religious injunctions, or at least new interpretations of the Qur'an. He had no known links with other Islamic groups of either Sufi or Wahhabi orientation. However, as Kastfelt (1989: 84) argued,

> The anti-authoritarian and unorthodox religious character of the Maitatsine movement was combined with a strong social and political radicalism, emphasized by its rejection of the authority of the Kano State government and by the social composition of the Maitatsine followers, most of whom were recruited from among the urban poor of northern Nigeria.

Thus while the Sufi/Izala movement operated within the confines of constituted authority, and can be considered emically, rather than etically violent, nevertheless their respect for authority provided a limited check on the spread of their internal violence.

The Yusufiyya Movement — From Rhetoric to Islamism
The spiritual leader of the what later became Yusufiyya movement was AbuYusuf Muhammad Yusuf (1970-2009), who resided in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria. He was a Tsangaya [Qur'anic college] product and early enough in his preaching life, became heavily involved in Islamic youth activities. One of the most prominent northern Nigerian Islamic preachers in Maiduguri with a particular endearment by youth, was Sheikh Mahmud Jafaar, a Saudi-trained scholar who intensified the activities of existing Ahl-Sunna group—a loose term that refers to many interest groups within ultraorthodox Islam—and preached against innovations in Islam, which included veneration of saints and Shi'ism. His style of preaching, full of rhetoric and contemporary examples, coupled with a relatively simple lifestyle, painted a down-to-earth advocacy for Islam which made him an instant star preacher. Yusuf and other teeming youth were attracted to his inner core group and Yusuf was eventually made the leader of the youth wing of the group, Shababul Islam [Islamic Youth Vanguard].

Extensive undercover reporting of the genesis of the group by Abdulkareem Ogori, and reported in *The Politico* (Nigeria, December 18, 2010), claimed that the Shababul Islam in Maiduguri was soon populated by young, rich and well-educated members who became influenced by the teachings of radical UK-based Islamic scholar, Sheikh

Abdullah al-Faisal (Ogori 2010), originally Trevor William Forrest. Al-Faisal was born in 1964 in St. James, Jamaica, and emigrated to the UK in 1981, when he was about 17 and traveled to Saudi Arabia where he spent about eight years before earning a degree and converting to Islam before returning to the UK in 1989. According to BBC News Profile on him, "Al-Faisal spent years travelling the UK preaching racial hatred urging his audience to kill Jews, Hindus and Westerners. The imam called on impressionable teenage boys to learn how to use rifles, fly planes and use missiles to kill "all unbelievers. In return for becoming martyrs, he promised them the reward of a place in paradise." (BBC 2007, online).

Apparently the Maiduguri youth who belonged to Shababul Islam became fascinated by Al-Faisal's teachings through access to his tapes, some of which condemned the West and its lifestyle and the Salafis [Wahhabis]—and that became a mantra of the Shababul Islam; a mantra to which Muhammad Yusuf took up with great gusto—to the consternation of his elders in the Ahl-Sunna main group, which included Sheik Jafaar. This in fact lead to their parting of ways, with Yusuf leaving the Ahl-Sunna and fully engaging in Shababul Islam activities, with a strong anti-Western knowledge and lifestyle message. This attracted a lot of more youths to a mosque he set up within Maiduguri metropolis.

From the analysis of his taped preaching, widely available in mosque markets throughout northern Nigeria, Muhammad Yusuf's sermons focused on the following:

1. condemning the constitution of Nigeria, referring it as "dagut" (idolatry)
2. condemning aspects of the conduct of modern western schooling
3. condemning anything that is related to government and consider whoever is in it as an infidel
4. accusing the Nigerian government of not allowing them to practice their religion

It is the persistent theme of condemning aspects of Western schooling that earned the group the sobriquet of 'boko haram' in the Nigerian media, an expression widely translated, very wrongly, as 'Western education is sin.' This is because it is assumed that 'boko' – an Hausa onomatopoetic of 'book' – means 'Western education based on Western books'. Strictly, it does not. This mistake is often made by scholars with poor understanding of Hausa language, lack of content analysis of the group's statements, and overt reliance on newspaper accounts of the groups' activities. For instance Abimbola Adesoji (2010: 100) states that:

> "Boko Haram" is derived from a combination of the Hausa word boko meaning "book" and the Arabic word haram which is something forbidden, ungodly or sinful. Literally, it means "book is sinful", but its deeper meaning is that Western education is sinful, sacrilegious or ungodly and should therefore be forbidden.

The word 'boko', according to the most authoritative lexicon of Hausa language has 11 meanings, all but one of which gravitate around the first, which is: *doing anything to create impression that one is better off, or that t. is of better quality or larger in amount than is the case* (Bargery 1934: 117). In other words, deception. The last meaning (no 11) given to the word by Bargery is for 'English book' – but the classical definition of 'boko' retained its original meaning, at least in colonial period, of deception. Thus technically, 'boko haram' means 'deceptive knowledge which is

sinful', not 'Western education is sin'. This is because charlatan marabouts—basing their epistemology on faulty interpretation of Islamic injunctions to deceive clients—are also technically 'yan boko' (dispensers of deceptive knowledge). In Kano and other core Hausa areas of northern Nigeria, the expression 'dan boko' was used derisively to refer to anyone who puts in airs and graces of pretense of being a socialite or a sophisticate. And since those who go to Western schools usually had such airs and graces based on their assumed superior status as potential government employees—thus guaranteeing job security—it became natural to apply such term to such people.

However, according to the new dictionary of the Hausa language published 2006 by the Center for the Study of Nigerian Languages, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria, the word 'boko' acquired semantic extension due to its usage to refer to Western knowledge, at least in one of the four meanings in the dictionary. Subsequently, the CSNL (2006: 50) came up with four meanings of the word:

> **boko** (*bookòo*, *sn., nj.*) (i) ilimin zamani. (ii) rubutun Hausa da baƙaƙen Romawa. (iii) giri. (iv) makirci…
>
> [boko (*bookòo*, *sn., nj.*) (i) modern knowledge. (ii) Hausa written in Latin alphabet. (iii) deception, lying. (iv) guile]…

Thus Muhammad Yusuf's lectures and writing were geared precisely towards convincing his followers that knowledge inspired by Western ideas is false in some respects, but neither he, nor his followers after his death, ever actually proclaimed that such knowledge is sinful. He thus used the word 'boko' in its original Hausa context to mean 'false'. It is the process of demonizing the movement that created the projected medieval persona of the group as condemning Western education – a fact they found amusing, since they not only use products of Western technology and knowledge (laptops, arms, explosives), but at one stage they even had a full-blown website to proclaim their ideals. In addition, their attack on Bauchi prison in August 2010 was facilitated by extensive use of Google Map which helped them to map out the prison location and its access roads, and subsequently take strategic locations that hampered counter attack by security agents, as documented in their video release, *Gazwatu Abi Ibrahim* [Abi Ibrahim's War].[2]

Within seven years (1999-2006), Muhammad Yusuf succeeded in indoctrinating more than 2000 young people who either resigned from their various working places or abandoned education at university or polytechnic level and in several cases tore their certificates and embraced other petty businesses, while accepting Muhammad Yusuf's credo.[3] Based on this, the followers of Muhammad Yusuf became referred to often even amongst themselves) as Yusufiyya [followers of Yusuf's teachings]. However, their formal tag for themselves was Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jama'a ala Minhaj as-Salaf ['People of the Way of the Prophet Muhammad and the Community (of Muslims), in line with the earliest generation of Muslims']. The Nigerian media, however, prefer the catchier 'Boko Haram' almost always accompanied with a translation explaining the name to mean 'Western education is sin'.

In their organizational structure, the Commander in Chief (*Amir ul-Aam*) is the leader of the entire group. He has two deputies (*Na'ib Amir ul-Aam I & II*). Each State (where they exist) has its own *Amir* (Commander/Leader), and each Local Government Area also has an *Amir*. Below the Local Government *Amirs* are the

remaining followers. They also organized themselves according to various roles, such as Soldiers and Police, etc.

Yusufiyya Epistemology

From the explicit contents of the lectures and debates of their leaders and some of their preachers, and from their interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunnah, they regard nonmembers to be *kuffar* (disbelievers; those who deny the truth) or *fasiqun* (wrong-doers).

Most the accounts so far of Yusufiyya in Nigeria and in the international press (itself based on ground accounts in Nigerian press) tended to rely on the more esoteric aspect of their visibility – the violent confrontations with constituted authority, especially the Police, and how such violence filtered to the community.

None of the accounts, so far, seemed to have paid attention to a textual analysis of the views of the members of the Yusufiyya movement themselves, particularly their founder and leader, Muhammad Yusuf, who after his death in 2009 became referred to as Imam Muhammad Yusuf by his followers – which seemed to have martyred him.

In this section I want to present the actual philosophy of Yusufiyya – in their own words, based on the transcript of a debate held between Muhammad Yusuf of Yusufiyya, and the Imam of the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University of Technology, Bauchi, Malam Isa Aliyu Ibrahim Pantami, as well as Imam Idris Abdul'Aziz of Bauchi. The Pantami debate took place on Sunday 25th June 2006, as identified by the lead debater, Malam Pantami. The Abdul'Aziz debate took place in February 2008.

In the first debate, the Pantami Debate[4]—which lasted for 02:48:51—the two scholars clearly displayed deep respect for each other's opinions, but ended on a stalemate, which each defending his views. The overall purpose of the debate was to determine the acceptability of Western Education and modern democratic institutions within an Islamicate culture.

Pantami lead the debate by usually asking a probing question, and following the answers given by Yusuf with another questions. The first series of questions dealt with Yusuf's understanding of Western Education:

> *Pantami: What is Mallam's view on Western Education; and indeed what does he understand to be Western Education?*
> There are three perspectives on knowledge in Islam. The first is knowledge which is in line with what the Qur'an and the Hadith (saying of the Prophet Muhammad) taught. Second, a perspective is where such knowledge clash with what the Qur'an and the Hadith contain. The third is a neutral perspective – which neither clash nor support Qur'an and the Hadith; for as the Prophet (Muhammad) said in his hadith concerning People of the Book, "if they bring to you anything that agreeable in Qur'an, accept it; but if they bring anything that contradicts Islam, reject it; and if they bring anything that neither contradict nor support the Qur'an, it is your choice to accept or reject it."
>
> Well, this is the perspective I accept – if any form of knowledge is to be pursued for its sake, not following the structure of any government form of education, then I have my own reservations – I thought that is what the learned colleague asked of me, right?

The debate then moved on to etymologies of education, specifically Western Education:

What is Western Education?
Western Education is the body of knowledge that came to us through European colonialists, and included learning medicine, technology, Geography, Physics and so on. And of course the English language itself. They can all be used if they do not clash with the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and we can teach these subjects to our own children in our schools – so long as they do not contradict Islamic teachings. If they do, then we should discard them.

In this statement Muhammad Yusuf has more or less outlined his fundamental philosophy which is based on his Islamist core values – not accepting anything which, to him, does not have a place within the knowledge framework of Islam. It is clear, therefore, that he did not reject, out rightly, Western education, but has issues with certain aspects of information usually taught in Western schools. Thus as the debate continued – and became more heated – it became increasingly clear that the Yusufiyya credo seemed to be against mainly scientific knowledge, as explained in the following dialogue:

What do you say about a student who goes to Bayero (University) or University of Maiduguri to study Physics, Geography, Chemistry and others
Following the current educational structure we follow in Nigeria, it is haram (forbidden).

What about a student studying medicine with the hope of helping his fellow Muslims, or to work in a government school or in a Radio station, is this haram in Nigeria or not?
There two aspects to this. One that is rooted in the necessary educational laws, and other that governs community services. Anything to do with the government is haram, although even in this, there are different perspectives from Islamic scholars about this it being haram.

Why do you see it as haram. What examples can you give?
I am happy you asked this question. First there is a subject they call Biology. This teaches people the origins of man, and that man was not created from clay (as outlined in the Qur'an Sura 23:12 which says: "Man We did create from a quintessence (of clay)." It teaches that human beings had a separate origin from this, and they evolved. So you see, in just one subject, I have given an example of evolution.

In Geography, they have a theory of revolution. In their understanding, the sun is central to a group of ten planets including the earth. They gave names to the planets such as Mars, Jupiter, Uranus, Mercury and others. These names were derived from Greek gods. This directly contradicts what the Qur'an and Hadith stated, therefore studying this (Geography) is haram, because of this contradiction.

In Sociology they keep debating about the nature of Allah, the most high. In their view, there is honest doubt as to whether Allah exists or not; some teach that since they cannot physically see Allah, then He does not exist.

Then there is something they call Geology[5] in which they have something they call Big Bang Theory which teaches that Allah created the world in four millions years and three minutes and one second – which directly contradicts what Allah says in the Qur'an:

Your Guardian-Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and is firmly established on the throne (of authority): He draweth the night as a veil o'er the day, each seeking the other in rapid succession: He created the sun, the moon, and the stars, (all) governed by laws under His command. Is it not His to create and to

govern? Blessed be Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds! (Qur'an 7:54, Yusuf Ali translation).

And then in the university course outlines in Geography, they have a course called Time Scale, in which they explain how Allah created the world in three million years. This contradicts the verse in Surat Fussilat of the Qur'an that says:

Say: Is it that ye deny Him Who created the earth in two Days? And do ye join equals with Him? He is the Lord of (all) the Worlds.. (Qur'an 41:9, Yusuf Ali translation)

In Chemistry they have something called Energy – they claim that it is not created, and it has no end. This is equating energy with features of Allah most high, who is has no beginning and no end.

Most learned Sheikhs (that had gone by) had explained these. One of them was Sheikhul Islam Ibn Taymiyya (may Allah agree with him), who in his book *al-Furqan baina Awliya al-Rahman wa-Awliya al- Shaitan* [6] explained that the mystics of Islam (Sufis) talked about Saints who in their thinking claim there is no veil (hijab) between them and Allah, meaning they claim to see Allah when they get into a state of spiritual ecstasy. This belief is the same as believing in the concept of Energy, because both deny the existence of Allah, and that He did not create the world and all its contents.

Yusuf's epistemology is therefore based on Ibn Taymiyyah's book, *The Decisive Criterion between the Allies of the Merciful and the Allies of the Devil*, and right away sets the stage for his non-compromising views on the role of secular epistemology in Islamicate social structure.

When it became clear that Yusuf was mixing his scientific facts up, Pantami challenged him to prove the Islamic implausibility of the Theory of Evolution[7] – which Yusuf seemed to have a particular issue with – using Yusuf's own rule of engagement at the beginning of the debate in which he stated that a form of knowledge could be acceptable to Muslims if it does not contradict the sayings in the Qur'an. Yusuf kept referring to Ibn Taymiyyah's book as his reference point – and which Pantami asks him to point out exactly what Ibn Taymiyya said about creation. At one point, Pantami had to ask whether Yusuf had been to at least primary school – to which Yusuf responded in the negative:

First, Mallam, and apologies for this question is not asked without any ulterior motive, have you ever attended a primary school in your life?
No, I have not
You have not been to at least primary school, so how can you explain things you don't know
The reason is that Islam is clear on the things that contradict it; further I did not just say these things are bad in Islam, no, I studied them first through Ibn Taymiyya and what he says and that clearly show contradictions in some aspects of Western form of knowledge.

Pantami then spent considerable time explaining how he uses the internet, particularly Islamic da'awah (propagation) websites such as www.islamtoday.com, as a depository for asking questions and receiving answers on all aspects of Islam from learned scholars who are acknowledged authorities in the field. Consequently, the general consensus of the Islamic scholars at Islamtoday wesbsite is that it is indeed expected of Muslims not only to accept responsibilities in non-Muslim governments, but to also be very proactive in this, as their presence is likely to reduce any possible damage that might be done to Muslims in general. Thus the general consensus would

be that it is desirable for Muslims not only associate with non-Muslims, but to also acquire their form of knowledge.

Yusuf seemed to have got annoyed at this, and chided Pantami by pointing out that Pantami is not talking to himself and the need to refocus attention on the debate at hand – the Islamic viability of Western form of education and knowledge in its present structure in Nigeria. Yusuf then proceeded to insist that the only arbiter in deciding what is valuable knowledge to a Muslim is the Qur'an, not an internet website or its contents. In this, Yusuf actually uses the Kharijite template "There is no judgment but God's" (*la hukm illa li-llah*). Thus if any form of knowledge is not in the Qur'an or sanctioned by Ibn Taymiyyah, then it is haram (forbidden) to Yusuf and his followers. Considerable time was spent even on the word "haram" itself and the distinction between what is merely not approved [bai halatta ba] and what is forbidden (sinful, haram), with Pantami insisting on differentiating between an undesirable knowledge (because it cannot be used) and harmful knowledge which is prohibited. It is easy to see why Yusufiyya were seen as proclaiming that 'Western knowledge is sin', because in the Pantami debate, Yusuf stuck to the word "haram", as his justification for shunning any form of knowledge not in the Qur'an – although he does accept other forms of knowledge that do not challenge the very nature of God.

However, Yusufiyya's views were brought clearly in another debate with Idris Abdul'Aziz, of Bauchi, and recorded in February 2008. This was more heated and contrasted sharply with sober Pantami Debate. The central core of this debate was to refute the participation of a Muslim in any democratic government that is not based on principles of Islamic Shari'a, but it also reinforced Yusuf's views on Western schooling.

In answering the question of whether boko is 'haram or not' Muhammad Yusuf provided the same stock answer he gave in the Pantami Debate – about the three structured perspective of knowledge in Islam: accept, reject, neutral; although in this particular debate he added the dimension of 'kuffar' [unbelief] if the form of knowledge in any way challenges any attribute of Allah. It is clear that he has refined his arguments from the 2006 Pantami Debate. In answering the question as to whether boko is haram or not, he stated that in the "current state of education in Nigeria",

> …it is haram, based on its structure because the content matter contradict the oneness of Allah. It is haram because they combine males and females in the same place. It is haram because they honor Christian days. It is haram because they teach things that question the very nature of Allah.

Abdul'Aziz cuts him short by insisting that he did not ask Yusuf to explain the circumstances of acquisition of knowledge in contemporary educational systems in Nigeria; all he had asked was for Yusuf to bring a quotation from the Qur'an, the Hadith or other learned scholars ["ba fahimtar ka ba" – not your own understanding] that prove boko is haram in Islam. Yusuf started by trying to provide a background to his statement that boko is haram – and was cut short by AbdulAziz who still insisted he was not interested in structures of knowledge or division (although he promised they will discuss that eventually), but for the purposes of definition of terms, so that they all on the same page, Yusuf should provide a single quote from the Qur'an that made boko haram. Yusuf countered by stating that he needed to provide a background

to his answer – and they kept on arguing. Eventually, however, Yusuf provided the verse which Abdul'Aziz wanted in the following dialogue:

Alright, here it is:

> And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or the slaves whom their right hands possess, or male servants free of physical needs, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex; and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And O ye Believers! turn ye all together towards Allah, that ye may attain Bliss. (Qur'an 24:31, Yusuf Ali translation).

This ayat is clearly contradicted in their schools because boko schools enable people to see each other's nakedness. Secondly, Allah, the most high has stated in the Qur'an:

> He Who has made everything which He has created most good: He began the creation of man with (nothing more than) clay. (Qur'an 32:7, Yusuf Ali translation)

Yet they teach that man evolved. This is *shirk* (retraction from Islam) and anyone who attends the schools will have to learn that. They also teach people about the solar system – this is a lie, and they are falsifying information on behalf of the creator. These are the reasons why boko is haram.

O.K. let's go back to the verse you quoted (Qur'an 32:7), do you have any reference to any other scholar who uses this verse as a basis for making boko haram?
If that is the case, then let us establish boundaries of boko; you tell me what you think it is, and I will give you my own version.

What I understand with boko is modern knowledge which was brought to us by British colonial administration; some of which is in conformity with Islam, and there are parts that are not in conformity with Islam. There are in fact things they included in boko which were borrowed from Muslims. This is my understanding of boko.
Each knowledge has three perspectives in Islam – one that is acceptable, one that is not acceptable, and one that is neutral. This is my understanding of Western knowledge.

But Mallam, if any form of knowledge has these three perspectives, can we condemn it completely and call it haram? You did say it was haram, right?
Yes, I repeat, Boko is haram…

…cuts in….Yawwa [aha, that's it!]
BUT in the way they teach it. You should have asked me if they have various kinds, then I could explain….

…cuts in… that's what you said (boko haram), that's what you said
Yes, but the current structure of delivery in this country makes it haram. Did I say so or not?

You said it!
There you are then!

But are you saying the entire structure is haram?
The structure of the West African Examinations Council Syllabus is haram

Consequently, to Muhammad Yusuf, any form of organized modern secular education is considered sinful in Islam because of its potentials in aiding immorality.

After the Pantami Debate in 2006, Muhammad Yusuf released a book which he wrote in Arabic. The title of the book is *Hazihi Akeedatum wa Minhaju Da'awatuna* (This is Our Manifesto and Our Path). The book is out of print now. It contains about 300 pages and was published in 2009. A counter argument to Yusuf's views was also published in Arabic in 2009 (Jalo 2009), while earlier, another author wrote what was prefaced Yusuf's ideas against Western knowledge in 2008 (Alkanawi, 2008)—although Yusuf's book was actually a second printing, and likely to have been published in 2008.

Yusuf's book outlines the essential features of Yusufiyya philosophy, based on the fact that they had been garnering media attention at their sermons and religious gatherings, particularly on Western knowledge, Shi'a, and participation in government employment and elective process. From a close reading of the book, it would also appear Yusuf's writing drew its inspiration from two books of Ibn Taymiyyah – *Minhaj as-Sunnah an-Nabawiyyah* [The Pathway of as-Sunnah an-Nabawiyyah] and *al-Furqan baina Awliya al-Rahman wa-Awliya al- Shaitan* [The Decisive Criterion between the Allies of the Merciful and the Allies of the Devil]. As stated in the section of the book in a section dealing with 'Dangers of Western Schooling', he stated: [8]

> According to Darwinism, human beings originated from a small animal which evolved over millions of years before becoming human. Subhannallah! This is a big lie! Whereas Allah has detailed how He created human beings from dust and water. This is our belief and on which we base our Islam. The amazing aspects of creation are stated in the Qur'an in many places:
>
> Ar-Rum 30:20:
> Among His Signs in this, that He created you from dust; and then,- behold, ye are men scattered (far and wide)!
>
> Al-An'am 6:2:
> He it is created you from clay, and then decreed a stated term (for you). And there is in His presence another determined term; yet ye doubt within yourselves!
>
> Al-Muminun 23:12
> Man We did create from a quintessence (of clay);
>
> As-Sajda 32: 7-8
>
> 7. He Who has made everything which He has created most good: He began the creation of man with (nothing more than) clay,
> 8. And made his progeny from a quintessence of the nature of a fluid despised:
>
> At-Tariq 86:5-6
> 5. Now let man but think from what he is created!
> 6. He is created from a drop emitted-
>
> And the Prophet said: Allah has created Angels from light, and He created Djinns from fire, and He created Adam from what has been aforementioned. So where do we place this truth of monotheistic narration, as compared to the unbelief of this man, Darwinism [sic].(Yusuf, 2009: 89-90).

In another passage dealing with democracy,

> I am warning you about the troubles of our modern times, especially on democracy, infidel, modern idol to whom its followers worship. We will not accept, interact, or partake in this democracy because it is the path of infidels; following it, interacting with it and using it is following the path of the infidels. It is prohibited for any Muslim to be in it, or to elect an infidel under the system of democracy. (Yusuf 2009: 63).

Muhammad Yusuf's preaching subsequently attracted the attention of Nigerian security agencies over the years leading to detentions, but he had always been released, often to a very tumultuous welcome from his followers in Maiduguri. Some of the activities of the Yusufiyya movement seemed targeted at taunting the authorities. For instance, when the Borno State government introduced a new law insisting on motorcyclists to wear crash-helmets, and implemented by a police task force, Operation Flush Out II, Muhammad Yusuf and his disciples refused to abide by the new law; and since they openly intimidated almost everyone else, they were left alone. And yet it is this singular implementation of the law that triggered the violent confrontation in July 2009. Earlier, in June, some members of the Muhammad Yusuf's group conveyed the corpse of one of them who died to the cemetery. On the way, they came across one of their members being punished by Operation Flush operatives for contravening the crash helmet law. They went to his rescue, and in the process the security operatives fired sporadic shots and in the stampede many of the followers were hit. This incidence raised tension among his disciples.

On Thursday 11 June 2009, Muhammad Yusuf released a video titled "Budaddiyar Wasika ga Gwamnatin Tarayya" [Open Letter to the Federal Republic of Nigeria]. It was clear from the video that Muhammad Yusuf had declared war on the Federal Republic—ironically not on the basis of Islamist tendency, but on what he perceive to be denial of his human right to assembly. It was an open call to arms, and the members of the sect responded with gusto. As he stated in the video:[9]

> We have stopped listening to their saber-rattling. Our brothers do not hate you, it is not because you are in PDP or in ANPP [main political parties in Borno State, the home turf of the movement] that they hate you. We did not do anything to them to make them hate us. They only hate us because we have faith in Allah and because we do not accept government of democracy. They don't hate us because we love Allah, no no, no, only when he slights them. Why do they not attack other citizens – only us who believe in Allah and His prophet. Whose property have we ever destroyed? Who is it we slaughtered like a ram? Who is it did we enter their houses and ransacked them? Just because we Allah said, and the Prophet (Muhammad) said, then they detest us because of our turbans – and yet this is not enough, they have to shoot us with their guns. This is my explanation. We will no longer listen to anyone (for mediation); their time is up. We will no longer accept invitations for mediation from anyone. We will not accept the shooting of 20 of our members, and we will not let it go, and we will not listen to anyone anymore. You gave the soldiers the orders to shoot us….

It is instructive that although Yusufiyya did not advocate direct imposition of Shari'a at that stage – just a withdrawal from any system that does not conform to Islam. Thus unlike the Kharijites, they did not openly, at least in the preaching of Muhammad Yusuf, advocate for violent change of government. However, the incidence in early June 2009 provided the trigger to move to the next level in extremism – from persuasion to confrontation; often as was widely reported, with deadly consequences, including the killing of Muhammad Yusuf at 39 years on 30th July 2009 in the hands

of Nigerian police who claimed in news reports that he was killed attempting to escape.

From Debates to Violent Actions
The virtual destruction of the Yusufiyya movement by the Nigeria security forces in July 2009 and the death of their leader, Muhammad Yusuf, drove the movement underground for almost six months. In 2010 they began a systematic insurgency against security forces—both the police and the army—as well as those who collaborated with the security forces leading either to their capture, or shooting. From January 2010 to June 2011, they carried out more than 20 documented attacks which included shootings, bombings, including suicide bombing.[11]

Their most spectacular public re-emergence was on 7 September 2010 when a cell of the group led a massive well-armed attack on Bauchi prison, freeing over 700 detained members of the movement. They distributed two leaflets to terrified residents of the area. The first was on half A4 printer paper on which the following was written: "Jama'atu Alhlissunnah lidda'awati wal Jihad ba Boko Haram ba", which means "Jama'atu Alhlissunnah lidda'awati wal Jihad [Followers of the Sunnah of the Prophet [Muhammad] for Propagation [of Islam] and Jihad] not Boko Haram." This is the first time the group has articulated its own nomenclature, since they have never referred themselves as Boko Haram.

The second leaflet on full A4 paper, and titled 'In Maye Ya Manta.' [If the perpetrator has forgotten (the victim will not)], contained the first articulation of their new militant insurgency stating, amongst others:

> Everyone can attest to the fact that since we started our activities about eight to nine years ago, we have never molested anyone. We only preach that it is forbidden to follow any path contrary to what Allah through his Messenger [Prophet Muhammad] commands to follow. You are all witness to the sudden attack on us in our mosque during the early dawn prayer by this oppressive government, shooting and killing our members and arresting others. And yet there are, among our Muslims brothers, those who act as agents of the government and point us out for the government forces to kill or arrest. This serves as a general notice to all: fighting this government is mandatory on everyone. Whoever refuses this will be accountable to Allah. For us, we would rather die than fail Allah on the account of our deeds. Whoever can, join us; if not, shut up, for it does not concern you, leave us alone, and watch what will transpire.

The leaflet was signed 'Jama'atu Alhlissunnah lidda'awati wal Jihad, which is waging the Jihad in the country called Nigeria.' JASLWJ thus formally declared its Islamist agenda in August 2010, as well as launched its name. This is because prior to this, the group had been focused on proving its epistemological stand on various aspects of knowledge with various scholars. Thus assault on the group by the Nigerian security forces and the subsequent state-sanctioned killings of their various members from July 2009 metamorphosed them into a hardcore militia, whose modus operandi borrows heavily from Al-Shabab of Somalia and GIA of Algeria, and centers around fighting the Government with any means necessary. Interestingly, up to that time, there was no clear ideological focus in the groups' messages—either on tape or video. Their main grouse were two: killing their leader and followers, and not being left alone to preach Islam in the way they understood it.

In January 2011 a new VideoCD surfaced in northern Nigeria containing a direct address by Yusuf's second-in-command, Imam Abu Muhammad Abubakar Bin Muhammad Shekau, who had taken over the leadership of the movement. Indeed Muhammad Yusuf himself had anointed Shekau as his successor in a phone-clip video interview recorded apparently by Nigerian security forces after his capture few hours before he died in July 2009. The new message declared a fresh war on the Nigerian government, and also stated:

> Muslim brethren, we did not make unlawful anything except what Allah [and the Prophet] has made unlawful. We did not make lawful except what Allah [and the Prophet] has made lawful. This is what we have been saying. We rebel against western inspired knowledge. We rebel against democracy. We rebel against any structure or arrangement not from Allah or His prophet. We have adopted Allah's structure, i.e. the Qur'an and the Hadith on the path of Ahl-Sunna wal Jama'a. We rebel against the Shia. We rebel against the Tatsine. We rebel against any labeling. You will not find us in [these labels of groups]…But if you look for us in the Qur'an and the Hadith, you will find us there by Allah's special grace. [Imam Abubakar Shekau, 2010, VCD, *Taqaddum*, time code 23:53].

This declaration was followed by a series of increased sniper attacks on security forces (police stations, police and army check points), with increasing use of both improvised explosive devices (IED) and ready-made bombs often lobbed at security patrols or remotely exploded near security patrols. Included in the violence were also targeted assignations of individuals considered by the group to have either betrayed them or provided support to the security forces to prosecute them. The sum of all these was to create a climate of fear in Maiduguri, which later spread to Bauchi; so much that the mere mention of a possible visit to a State by the group was enough to send fears of trepidation—despite the group's repeated insistence that they do not target civilians whom they do not consider in the enemy camp.

However, their most visible presence—bringing them into the Islamist militia's 'big league'— came in two spectacular suicide bombings—introducing a first in Nigerian militancy. The first occurred on Thursday 16th June 2011 in which a suicide bomber and a member of the group, Alhaji Mohammed Manga, detonated explosives packed in his car in the vicinity of the headquarters of the Nigerian police force in Abuja [the capital], killing five people, including himself. In a recorded telephone interview to journalists (Salkida 2011a), the group's spokesman Abu Zaid explained:

> Although the Force headquarters was among the list of our targets, we made it a priority and acted quickly because of the empty threats of the Inspector-General of Police that he would eradicate us within two weeks… we planned it as a suicide attack right from the onset. The attacker left his will to his family and a message to Nigerians. We were together and he bid everyone farewell. He was calm and looked peaceful even when he had decided to give his life away; many brothers envied him and wished it was their turn to act. The bomber said he had sacrificed his life for Allah's sake and urged other believers to do likewise. So far, we have screened nearly 100 persons for suicide attacks for this year alone in Nigeria, while more than this number are getting ready for next year.

In this singular act JASLWJ proved their determination to make their points across. However, more was to come. On Monday 15th August 2011 a member of the JASLWJ, Abu Mohammed, drove a car packed with explosives into a compound during police cadet officers screening exercise. When he failed to obey commands to

stop, the security forces shot and killed him, preventing him from exploding the car and killing the cadet officers (Mbaya and Abimaje 2011).

On Friday 26th August 2011, Muhammad Abul Burra, a member of the JASLWJ drove a car at a high speed laden with explosives and rammed it into the ground floor of the United Nations headquarters in Abuja, killing 23 people, including himself. In another telephone interview with the reporter Salkida of *Blueprint* newspaper, the deputy spokesperson of the group, Abu Qaqa explained that:

> "Our relationship with Al Qaida is very strong. In fact, our leader (Shekau) and his team were in Mecca for the lesser Hajj to consolidate on that relationship. And we carried out the attack on the UN building when he was about to go into a meeting with Al Qaida leadership in order to strengthen our negotiation position."

> As you can see, all over the world people have been talking, everyone has been talking, even the Sultan of Sokoto has sympathized with the victims. But where was the Sultan when soldiers entered mosques in Maiduguri and stepped on the Holy Qur'an in Biu and killed a little girl at Budum in Maiduguri? The Sultan didn't come out to condemn that attack as he condemned this because he was a soldier. Between the UN and the mosque, which is greater?…Of course, *our objective is to place Nigeria in a difficult position and even to destabilize it and replace it with Sharia*. Whether we will conduct such Islamic government or not is a different issue." (Salkida 2011b).

He said the group intends to take Nigeria back to the pre-colonial times when the Sharia law was practiced. It in this statement that the Islamist agenda first appeared forcefully—to ensure compliance with Shari'a in at least those Nigerian states that had re-implemented the Shari'a penal code since 1999.

Conclusion
It is clear that there is a paradigm shift in Nigerian militant Islamism in which at least three distinct typologies evolved. The first was rhetorical clash between Sufi brotherhoods, although there were occasional violent confrontations. The two opposing brotherhoods however, formed a truce when the Wahabbist Izala group emerged, leading to a second stage in Muslim radicalism in the country. This was because the Izala's ultraorthodox philosophy interpretation of Islam pitched them against the Sufi brotherhoods' veneration of saints.

The third was the escalation of the Nigerian economy, leading to a vast army of jobless youth that provided a fodder for any revolutionary—which apparently happened in the case of the series of Maitatsine fundamentalist uprisings in the 1980s. The fourth, so far, was the emergence of Jama'atu Ahl-Sunnah Lidda'awati wal Jihad (JASLWJ) as a group of initially rhetorical preachers, driven underground by the Nigerian security apparatus leading to violent confrontations, and eventually, Islamist agenda to ensure compliance with the Shari'a in an Islamicate society. In my use of the term 'Islamicate' to refer to northern Nigeria, I borrow Marshal Hodgson's original conception of the word who created it in the following argument:

> …if the analogy with 'Christendom' is held to, 'Islamdom' does not designate in itself a 'civilization', a specific culture, but only the society that carries that culture. There has been, however, a *culture,* centred on a lettered tradition, which has been historically distinctive of Islamdom the *society,* and which has been naturally shared in by both Muslims and non-Muslims who participate at all fully in the society of Islamdom. For this, I have used the adjective 'Islamicate'. I thus restrict the term 'Islam' to the *religion* of the Muslims, not using

that term for the far more general phenomena, the society of Islamdom and its Islamicate cultural traditions…'Islamicate' would refer not directly to the religion, Islam, itself, but to the social and cultural complex historically associated with Islam and the Muslims, both among Muslims themselves and even when found among non-Muslims. (Hodgson 1977:58-59 including emphasis).

With this extended conception, I argue that JASLWJ emerged out of discontentment with both social and political structures of an Islamicate social culture of northern Nigeria, framed against the background of American War on Terrorism which portrayed United States – consequently the amorphous "West" – as undesirable to Muslim social culture. This was backed by the rhetoric of international radical scholars—whose lectures are readily available on the Internet via download sites such as YouTube—such as Al-Faisal. JASLWJ adherents sought to substitute the Islamicate social structure with what they perceived to be a more Islamic structure – following antecedent Kharijites—another term they abhor when labeled against them, since in their philosophy, Nigerian government is not Muslim, and the original Kharijites opposed a Muslim government—in their adoption of any means necessary to bring about violent change; violence which has ricochet effects not only on the instruments of the State, but also at followers of their faith. In this course of action, their ready template seemed to be the Taliban of Afghanistan, the Al-Shabab of Somalia, and the Armed Islamic Group (GIA, *Groupe Islamique Armé*] of Algeria.

The emergence of JASLWJ in northern Nigeria signals a paradigm shift in the growth of Islamic militant tendencies in northern Nigeria – a shift that seems to be in line with a new age and often designer destructive tendencies of transnational dimensions and antecedents. There was indeed a remarkable transformation in the nature of the membership of such emergent militant Islamists.

This is because the emergence of 'Yan Tatsine in the 1980s was situated within African postcolonial labor theories and often Marxist frameworks (e.g. Bashir 1983, Lubeck, 1985). Followers of the militant Islamist group were seen as disenfranchised unlettered urban poor who were intimidated by their poverty and lack of access to quality life in the city dwellings they found themselves, especially after rainy seasons are over in the rural areas and they migrated to town to survive as urchins and city debris.

I argue that application of this particular strand of Marxist theory does not, however, explain the subsequent emergence of the urban guerilla sniper tactics of JASLWJ who had access to technology, skills, training and transnational networks of fellow militant Islamists from where they leant the tactics of urban guerrilla warfare.

The American military campaigns in Iraq (Operation Desert Storm, 2 August 1990 – 28 February 1991) and (War on Terrorism, 2001) following the September 2001 terrorist attacks on US soil did not create militant sympathies with Al Qaeda, the alleged perpetuators of the attacks. Protests against the attacks, as well as sympathies with Osama bin Laden are reflected in streets protests or in the private sphere of the home, e.g. naming newly born babies 'Osama' in honor Osama bin Laden); but for the most part protests remained street affairs attracting large number of urban youth in Ibadan, Kano, Kaduna and other areas, rather than systematic allegiance with Al Qaeda or its methodologies. The emergence of JASLWJ seemed set to change all that and create a link between Islamist militants in northern Nigeria and Al Qaeda cells.

Two incidents illustrate this possible convergence. First was the attempted bombing of a Northwest Airlines Flight 253on its landing approach to Detroit on 25th December 2009 by a Nigerian man, Umar Faruk AbdulMutallab. The fact that AbdulMutallab, only 23 years (and in Nigerian tradition, a little more than a "child") and son of an extremely wealthy Nigerian banker, and who lived a privileged existence all his life with studies outside Nigeria, including an engineering degree in the UK, and travels around the world could allegedly be recruited by Al Qaeda militant network refutes the labor and Marxist theories of the northern Nigerian Islamist militancy; for in a single day, AbdulMutallab was able to indicate a more destructive influence than what JASLWJ and 'Yan Tatsine could have achieved.

The second incident appeared out of a more bloody, but non-Islamist incidence. On 19th January 2010 violent riots erupted in Jos, in the Middle Belt section of Nigeria. From all accounts of the riots, it would appear to have been on matters of territoriality, with one group claiming ownership of the land (ethnic Berom) and insisting that others (especially Muslim Hausa) were settlers and have no right to occupancy (for a historical treatment of the problem see, for example, Je'adayibe 2006, Muhammed and Adeoye 2006). Immediately after this, Al Qaeda North Africa issued an open invitation to Muslims in Nigeria for training and ammunition so that they can "fight their enemies". This was followed at one stage by the picture of Muhammad Yusuf on one of Al Qaeda's websites, celebrating his martyrdom.

From all indications, JASLWJ, like many other religious extremist groups is not out to commit robbery, rape, or other such materialistic or non-ideologically motivated crimes. Members are usually morally upright people of integrity with alternative interpretations about important issues in Islam, but who are convinced that they are absolutely right and should be left alone to preach their religion.

When the violence started escalating in northern Nigeria, the Federal Government set up a Presidential Committee on Security Challenges in the Northeast Zone under the chairmanship of Ambassador Galtimari committee in August 2011 to explore possible ways of dialogue with the group. In a swift reaction, the group's spokesman, Abul Qaqa sent an email response to various newspapers in Nigeria, stating, in part:

> Nobody was willing to address the fundamental issues we raised and therefore, those that made the recommendations are on their own…We did not recommend the setting up of any committee under whatever name or guise. We do not recognize the Sultan of Sokoto as the leader of the Muslims…what we are saying is that we want a Shari'a State that will ensure equity, justice and the fear of God. (Idris, 2011:2).

Consequently, their actions and motivations come from their faith-based ideology and interpretation of Islamic religious texts. An ongoing intellectual and ideological engagement with such extremists by Muslim activists, 'former fanatics' and the scholars they respect can dissuade those who are prone to violence as a way of furthering their religious interests. The biggest challenge is finding the appropriate entry point to such engagement. The rationales for religious violence therefore cannot be addressed effectively by the existing law-enforcement agencies, because reducing such extremism requires advocating a more balanced ideological discourse from within the framework of Islam.

According to DCCN (2009) to be credible, such advocacy must be faith-based and involve distinguished Muslim scholars who have the patience to deeply understand their particular extremist positions, who can quote extensively from well-respected traditional authorities, and who can respect the bridge-building Ethics and Etiquettes of Disagreement in Islam (*Adab al-Ikhtilaf*). As a rule, such extremist groups also have very little knowledge and appreciation of fields such as the Principles and Methodology of Islamic Jurisprudence (*Usul ul-Fiqh*) and of the Higher Objectives and Intents of Islamic Law (*Maqasid al-Shari'ah*).

Without such an intellectual and ideological engagement with such extremists (even though sincere), the use of brutal force can only temporarily silence or frustrate such groups—as indeed the emergence of JASLWJ as a militia army shows. Force often makes them become more fanatical and go underground where they are more difficult to monitor and engage—as the case of the GIA in Algeria clearly demonstrates. With the response of the Nigerian authorities to the JASLWJ being violent, a window of opportunity has now been created for the escalation of that violence through transnational channels that are far more deadly, and with far-reaching consequences, than videotaped rhetoric and debates.

Notes

1. By 'orthodox Islam' I refer to conventional traditional Sunni Islam, and thus exclude any debate on Shi'ite Islam in northern Nigeria. This is because the radical militancy alluded to in this paper was contextualized within Sunni Islam.
2. This was www.mansoorah.net, and which contained a pdf file of one of the member's papers. The site was down as of August 2011. However, they opened a blog at http://yusufislamicbrothers.blogspot.com/ which made it clear that they were aware of the debates about them on the Internet, including Facebook.
3. Based on undocumented accounts by informants in Maiduguri who were close to the group at its peak.
4. The quoted debates from the Pantami Debate were in Hausa language. The translations are mine.
5. The actual word "Geology" was also used in this narrative by Muhammad Yusuf.
6. *al-Furqan baina Awliya al-Rahman wa-Awliya al- Shaitan* [The Decisive Criterion between the Allies of the Merciful and the Allies of the Devil].
7. In this Hausa explanation, Muhammad Yusuf used the actual expression, "theory of revolution" in English – indicating his familiarity with it, although not understanding; for in one scene they were debating the Darwinian theory of evolution, and in the next they were discussing planetary revolutions.
8. I would like to thank Mu'allim Abdalla Sani ibn Shu'aibu of Dandago, Kano city who helped in translating the original passages into Hausa, from which I further translated into English. I also acknowledge the invaluable assistance of Adamun Adamawa of Bauchi who graciously lent a copy of the original Yusuf's book for scanning.
9. As is the case with all his public speeches and debates, this was in the Hausa language. The translations are mine.
10. Using the dating stamped on the files in the CD, since the was nowhere in the debate where the date of the debate was recorded, as in the Pantami Debate.
11. These attacks were fully chronicled by Maje El-Hajeej, an investigative reporter for Hausa Leadership in the edition of the newspaper dated 30th June 2011, pp. 4-5, 20.

Sources and Filmography

At least five video recordings were available in northern Nigerian markets and traffic light DVD vendors that capture three of the main manifestos of JASLWJ. In addition, there are claimed to be many books written in Arabic by the late leader of the group, Muhammad Yusuf; although these do not seem to be widely available. The most recent was *Hazihi Akeedatum wa Minhaju Da'awatuna* (This is Our Manifesto and Our Path, Yusuf 2009).

The first is what I call the Pantami Debate. This was a *muqabala* (debate) between Malam Isa Aliyu Ibrahim Pantami, the Chief Imam of the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University of Technology, Bauchi, and Muhammad Yusuf, who accepted to the debate on a special invitation. The debate took place on 29 Jumadal Ula 1427 (Sunday 25th June 2006) in Bauchi and sold only within the shops/mosques of Boko Haram. After the outbreak of hostilities between Boko Haram and the Nigerian Police Force in 2009 which eventually lead to the death of their leader, Muhammad Yusuf, the Pantami Debate surfaced at various markets in Kano. The debates lasts for 2:48:15 hours, and was produced by CDWEB/Darul Islam, Bauchi (no address listed). The full title of the DVD is *Muqabala Kan Matsayin Karatun Boko da Aikin Gwamnati a Najeriya* (Debate on the Status of Western Education and Government Employment in Nigeria), although the cover the DVD carries a different title which nevertheless conveyed the content. This was *Takaddama – Boko A Musulunci: Halal ko Haram* (Debate – Western Education in Islam: Forbidden or Acceptable?). Although the Pantami Debate lasted for over 2:48 minutes, the first 30 minutes were spent by the two scholars setting the scene and establishing the rules of engagement. The actual debate started at the 31st minute, and it is from the transcript of this that I extracted the section of this paper that deals with the epistemology of Boko Haram.

The second was debate by Boko Haram Musabaka No 2, which I call the Democracy Debate, with Idris Abdul'Aziz, also Bauchi as the Pantami Debate, and recorded early February 2008, but produced 26th February 2008.[8] It was marketed by Al-Kitab Wassunah Cassette, Islamic Propagation Center, Jos, and titled "Muqabala kan Karatun Boko da Aikin Gwamnati a Najeriya" VCD 3 (Debate on Western Education and Civil Service Employment in Nigeria). Although it was labeled VCD 3 (indicating it is part of a series), there was no listing at the beginning or at the rather abrupt ending of the video of the others in the series. However, a similar CD was also issued by Darul Islam, Bauchi.

The two main issues discussed in debate were general education (especially university level) democracy, constitution and their viability in Islam. This debate was more heated and rowdy, with each of the debaters trying to get a point across, and being interrupted by the other – so much that it is often difficult to discern when a particular point is exhausted. Yet throughout, they both remained almost cheerful towards each other, and the feeling conveyed was that of two people who agree to disagree on certain issues.

The third video from Muhammad Yusuf recorded a single sermon that led to the bloody events of July 2009 which lead to his own death. It was recorded on Thursday 11 June 2009 (from the opening statement made by Muhammad Yusuf himself). It was titled "Budaddiyar Wasika Zuwa ga Gwamnatin Tarayyar Najeriya" [Open Letter to the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria]. The video lasts for 1.16.08 hours, and was marketed by Khairul Huda, Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria. Following the death of Muhammad Yusuf, the video became widely available via mobile phone networks. It was the final testament of a revolutionary and provided the template for the Islamist violence that was follow from January 2010 in northern Nigeria. Over videos were not so widely publicized, but often sent to newspaper journalists (particularly Blueprint, Abuja) who subsequently make them available to the public. The Internet video sharing site, YouTube also has many clips of the group
(http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=boko+haram&suggested_categories=25%2C22%2C28&page=3) – although their authenticity cannot be verified.

The fourth video was titled *Gazwatu Abi Ibrahim* [Abi Ibrahim's War], and released by the Public Affairs unit of the JASLWJ. It details the attack on Bauchi prison in September 2010. However, more than that, it show a young militia member, Abi Ibrahim, explaining how he strategically planned the attack with Google map – indicating clearly that not all 'boko' is haram.

The fifth and final video, titled *Taqaddum* [Presentation] was a speech by Abubakar Shekau, who took over the leadership of JASLWJ after the death of Muhammad Yusuf. Released in December 2010, it had a mastering time code of December 20, 2010. In the speech, the group openly declared further their manifesto and what they stood for—including a 'no retreat, no surrender' reaffirmation of their right to practice their religion without fear or molestation from Nigerian security forces.

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