

Echoes of Extremism: Understanding Boko Haram's Roots and Transnational Dynamics in the Lake Chad Basin

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Abstract— Boko Haram, officially known as Jama'atul Ahlus Sunnah Lidda'wati wal Jihad (People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad), emerged in Borno State, northeastern Nigeria, in 2002. The group's ideology, centered on rejecting Western education and governance, quickly morphed into violent insurgency. Over time, Boko Haram's operations expanded into Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, creating a transnational security crisis in the Lake Chad Basin. This study examines the multidimensional factors underlying the group's rise, persistence, and regional expansion. It argues that a nexus of religious extremism, socioeconomic deprivation, and weak governance has fueled Boko Haram's growth. Moreover, similar vulnerabilities in neighboring Lake Chad Basin countries have facilitated the group's transnational reach. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for addressing the systemic conditions enabling the insurgency's survival.

Keywords: Boko Haram; Lake Chad Basin; Religious Extremism; Regional Security.

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INTRODUCTION

The conflict between Boko Haram and the Nigerian government has persisted for over a decade, beginning in 2009 and primarily affecting Nigeria's northeastern region. This insurgency has caused immense social, economic, and political disruption, resulting in thousands of deaths and displacing millions. The violence has extended beyond Nigeria's borders into Cameroon, Chad, and Niger within the Lake Chad Basin (Tar & Bala, 2019; Felter, 2018). Interpretations of Boko Haram's insurgency vary widely. Some view it as part of the global jihadist network, others see it as a construct of northern Nigerian political elites, and it is also regarded as a continuation of the quest for Islamic dominance in Nigeria (Mbah et al., 2017; Mustapha, 2014; Zenn, 2014a; Zenn, 2014b). This article explores Boko Haram's insurgency, which has inflicted unprecedented havoc in northeastern Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin. It examines the group's origin, ideology, and the religious, political, and socioeconomic conditions that have fueled its rise and expansion.

ORIGIN AND IDEOLOGY OF BOKO HARAM

The origins of Boko Haram in northeastern Nigeria are subject to differing accounts. One perspective links the group to the religious reformist movement *Jama'at izalat al-bid'a wa-iqamat al-sunna* ("the community for the eradication of un-Islamic innovations and the establishment of the Sunna"), also known as *Yan Izala* in Hausa (Kane, 2003, p. 85). This movement, founded in 1978 in Jos, Nigeria, by Malam Isma'ila Idris, sought to preserve Islamic values amid modernization (Weismann, 2011, pp. 149–154). Sheikh Abubakar Gumi, the spiritual leader of *Yan Izala*, attracted numerous followers, including Mohammed Yusuf, a native of Yobe State. Internal disagreements within *Yan Izala* led to splinter movements, such as the *Ahl al-Sunna* movement, which was headed by Ja'afar Mahmud Adam. Mohammed Yusuf, once a follower and student of Ja'afar, parted ways with the movement in 2002 over ideological differences, embracing violence and rejecting modern institutions, including Western education (Amara, 2020; Umar, 2012).

Yusuf subsequently founded *Jama'atu Ahlus Sunna Lidda'awati Wal Jihad*, widely known as Boko Haram, in Maiduguri, northeastern Nigeria, in 2002. His aim was to practice and propagate what he viewed as the purest form of Islam (Anugwom, 2019). Another account traces Boko Haram's origins to the 1995 establishment of the *Ahlulsunna wal'jama'ah hijra* (People of the Sunnah and the Community), also known as the Shabaab Muslim Youth Organization, in Maiduguri, Borno State. Originally a religious study group, its ideological orientation shifted under the leadership of Yusuf after its founder, Abubakar Lawan, left for Saudi Arabia to further his studies in 2002 (Onuoha, 2014a). Yusuf's radical teachings and rejection of Western education earned the group the name "Boko Haram," which translates to "Western education is forbidden" (Ekhomu, 2019, pp. 4–6).

Regardless of its precise origins, the consensus is that Boko Haram emerged as an autonomous movement under Yusuf in 2002. Its ideology, centered on a militant form

of jihad and rejection of Western influences, laid the groundwork for its violent approach to achieving its goals (Faluyi et al., 2019). The group primarily recruits youth from the Kanuri ethnic group, which is concentrated in Borno State and extends into Cameroon, Niger, and Chad (Ojochenemi et al., 2015).

BOKO HARAM'S CONFLICT WITH THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT

The conflict between Boko Haram and Nigerian authorities began in July 2009 after an altercation between group members and police on June 11, 2009. This sparked widespread clashes, culminating in four days of violence starting on July 26, 2009. These confrontations resulted in over 700 deaths and the capture and extrajudicial killing of Mohammed Yusuf (Ekhomu, 2019, pp. 21–22; Onuoha, 2014b; U.S. Congress, 2011). Abubakar Shekau, Yusuf's former deputy, assumed leadership and escalated the group's insurgency through attacks on government targets, civilians, schools, and international organizations. Notable incidents included the bombing of the U.N. headquarters in Abuja in 2011 and the abduction of over 270 schoolgirls from Chibok in 2014 (Blanchard, 2016; U.S. Congress, 2011).

Boko Haram's violence has since expanded into neighboring Chad, Cameroon, and Niger, contributing to widespread insecurity in the Lake Chad Basin. By May 2011, the conflict had resulted in over 37,500 deaths, displaced over 2.5 million people, and created 244,000 refugees (Council on Foreign Relations, 2020). The group split in 2016, leading to the emergence of the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), which adopted a distinct operational focus, targeting military installations rather than civilians (International Crisis Group, 2019; Omeni, 2019, pp. 47–50).

IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

Boko Haram's ideology revolves around the rejection of Western influences, which are viewed as corrupt and morally destructive. Rooted in Salafi Jihadism, the group adheres to a purist interpretation of Islam, opposing all innovations and emphasizing strict adherence to the Quran and Hadith (Abdulbasit, 2015). Salafi Jihadism endorses violence as a legitimate means of establishing an Islamic state, supported by the doctrine of takfir, which allows for declaring Muslims who deviate from Salafi doctrines as apostates (Haykel, 2009; Østebø, 2015).

This ideology aligns with Islamism, which seeks to impose Islamic traditions as a comprehensive societal model while rejecting Westernization (Solomon, 2013). Inspired by the Quranic verse, "anyone who is not governed by what Allah has revealed is among the transgressors," Islamism advocates theocratic governance to enforce Islamic law (Forest, 2012, p. 76). Boko Haram's radical stance represents an evolutionary ideological trend among some northern Nigerian Muslims, emphasizing violent opposition to Western influences (Abdulbasit, 2015).

FUNDAMENTAL CAUSES OF THE BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY

Religious Factors

The historical roots of Boko Haram can be traced to pre-colonial and colonial religious developments in Nigeria, which created fertile ground for the group's emergence. Post-colonial religious tensions further exacerbated opposition to secularism and reinforced the conditions for Boko Haram's rise. Following Nigeria's independence in 1960, ethnic and secessionist struggles initially dominated unrest in the country. The declaration of the Republic of Biafra in the Eastern region and the subsequent civil war of 1967–1970 stands as a significant example of this turmoil (Falola, 1998; Ekwe-Ekwe, 1990).

Religious opposition to Nigeria's secular state became more pronounced after 1975, particularly during the transition to civilian rule. The Constitution Drafting Committee's proposal to define Nigeria as "one and indivisible sovereign Republic, secular, democratic, and social" was met with significant resistance from the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, the central body representing Islamic interests in Nigeria (Rufai, 2013). The Council argued that describing Nigeria as secular excluded important religious moral standards and values, advocating instead for the incorporation of Sharia law into the national legal framework and the establishment of a Sharia Court of Appeal in the federal constitution (Clarke, 1982). This proposal was strongly opposed by Christian politicians, particularly from the southern regions, who viewed it as an unconstitutional attempt by the Muslim majority to Islamize Nigeria (Rufai, 2013). The resulting religious contention during this period revolved around whether Nigeria should remain a secular state or transition to an Islamic state governed by Sharia. These debates took a violent turn during the 1980s and 1990s (Falola, 1998).

During this period, several extremist Islamist groups emerged in northern Nigeria, advocating for the restructuring of the Nigerian state into a caliphate governed by Sharia law. These included the Maitatsine movement, a militant Islamist group founded in the 1970s by Cameroonian exile Muhammad Marwa, and the Shia-inclined Islamic Movement of Nigeria led by Ibrahim Zakzaky (Gray & Adeakin, 2019). In addition, the Yan Izala movement, though non-violent, promoted conservative Islamic ideologies. A common thread among these groups was their persistent effort to impose Islamic religious ideology on Nigeria's secular framework (Ibrahim, 1997).

These historical religious tensions and militant activities created a foundation upon which extremist groups like Boko Haram could emerge, further deepening the divide between secularism and religious dominance in Nigeria. The call to reject the democratic and secular Nigerian state again remains the central goal of Boko Haram's insurgency. Solomon (2015) noted that Mohammed Yusuf, in his preaching, made clear the religious underpinnings of the emergence of Boko Haram when he noted that: We want to re-emphasize that our main objective is the restoration of the Sharia Legal System in line with the teachings of the Holy Qur'an. We want the Nigerian Constitution to be abrogated and Democracy suspended, and a full-fledged Islamic State established. We want to emphasize that trouble started in this part of the world

when the white men came, colonized our land, chased away the Emirs and righteous leaders and then replaced the system with Western Legislative, Judicial and Executive procedures. They also changed our pattern of learning and upbringing to the detriment of moral teachings; that were exactly what prompted the establishment of our organization. (p. 90). While this indicates an inevitably strong connection between religion and the emergence of Boko Haram, Mohammed Yusuf also linked his group's ideology to the deplorable socioeconomic and political conditions in Nigeria. Although he did not promise that Boko Haram would make any improvements in these circumstances, such rhetoric attracted more sympathizers to his cause.

Political Factors

Political developments in Nigeria have significantly contributed to the emergence and escalation of the Boko Haram insurgency. One major political factor is the persistent politicization of Nigeria's ethnic and religious diversity. The political landscape of Nigeria is sharply divided along regional, ethnic, and religious lines, predominantly between the Muslim-dominated North and the Christian-dominated South (Aghedo & Osumah, 2012). This fragmentation dates back to the colonial era, when the British amalgamated ethnically, linguistically, and religiously distinct groups into a single Nigerian state in 1914. During Nigeria's decolonization in the 1950s, major political parties were similarly aligned along regional and ethnic lines: the Northern People's Congress (NPC) in the Hausa-Fulani-dominated North, the Action Group (AG) in the Yoruba-dominated West, and the National Council of Nigerian and the Cameroons (NCNC) in the Igbo-dominated East (Siollun, 2009).

Following independence in 1960, these ethno-regional political divisions led to tensions and violent conflicts, culminating in the First Republic's collapse in 1966 (Agbibo, 2013). The ensuing crises, including the 1967-1970 civil war triggered by the Eastern region's secession and the declaration of the Republic of Biafra, further destabilized the nation (de St. Jorre, 2012; Ekwe-Ekwe, 1990; Faluyi et al., 2019; Thomas & Falola, 2020). The persistent economic decline and rampant corruption exacerbated these tensions, leading to multiple military coups and intermittent civilian rule until the restoration of democracy in 1999 (Siollun, 2009).

During this period, elite politicians manipulated ethnic and religious divisions to secure power. Politicians often mobilized social groups for political support, promising rewards in exchange for loyalty. However, when their demands were unmet, these groups frequently turned against the political system. Such divisive politics provided a fertile environment for Boko Haram's emergence. Senator Ali Modu Sheriff, a former Borno State governor, allegedly supported Boko Haram in its early stages, using the group's militia, known as Ecomog Boys, for electoral purposes in 2003. Sheriff is believed to have provided financial and logistical support to the group but later failed to meet their demands for implementing strict Sharia law, prompting the group to adopt extremist measures against the state (Iyekekpolo, 2016). Mohammed Yusuf, Boko Haram's founder, rejected Nigeria's secular state and Western-style democracy, urging

his followers to prepare for jihad (Iyekekpolo, 2020). A confrontation between Boko Haram and Borno's Operation Flush Joint Task Force in 2009 escalated the group's activities into a full-blown insurgency (Mustapha, 2014).

The endemic corruption within Nigeria's political system also contributed to Boko Haram's rise. Political corruption, including embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds, has eroded public trust in the government. For instance, Transparency International ranked Nigeria 146th out of 180 countries in its 2019 Corruption Perception Index. Since independence in 1960, approximately \$380 billion in oil revenue has been reportedly stolen or wasted. Under President Goodluck Jonathan's administration, an estimated \$2.1 billion allocated for combating Boko Haram was misappropriated (Thurston, 2018). Mohammed Yusuf capitalized on these grievances, especially the widespread dissatisfaction with corruption and poor governance in the North, to attract support. His critique of corruption resonated with unemployed and marginalized youth, helping him expand Boko Haram's base under the guise of addressing socioeconomic disparities (Meagher, 2014).

Another political factor is the Nigerian government's inadequate conflict management strategies. Historically, inter- and intra-religious violence, such as the Maitatsine crisis of 1980 and subsequent clashes in Kaduna and Kano, highlighted the state's inability to address sectarian tensions effectively (Falola, 1998; Human Rights Watch, 2003). These unresolved grievances fueled feelings of victimization, particularly among northern Muslims, undermining trust in the government. Boko Haram exploited this sentiment by positioning itself as a defender of oppressed Muslims. In a 2009 video, Yusuf accused the government of anti-Muslim bias, arguing that the state systematically oppressed and targeted Muslims during religious conflicts (Bakur, 2011). Yusuf's extrajudicial killing in 2009 by the police further reinforced Boko Haram's narrative of victimization. His successor, Abubakar Shekau, explicitly cited Yusuf's death as justification for the group's violent activities, portraying their insurgency as retaliation against state aggression and discrimination (Thurston, 2018).

Socioeconomic Factors

Another significant reason for the emergence of Boko Haram and its resort to violence is socioeconomic marginalization. However, the relationship between socioeconomic factors and the Boko Haram insurgency remains highly contested. In an interview with CNN, former President Goodluck Jonathan noted that Boko Haram is neither the result of misrule nor poverty but rather a local terror group (CNN, 2013). The ruling party also ruled out poverty as a cause of Boko Haram's insurgency, as most of the victims are equally poor (Umoru, 2013). Similarly, the President of the Christian Association of Nigeria, Pastor Ayo Orisejafor, also notes that Boko Haram is propelled by a religious ideology and not poverty (Olatunji, 2014).

Contrary to the above assertions are findings by the 15-member committee set up by the Kano State Governor, Rabi'u Kwankwaso, to investigate the factors causing unrest in the city following the 2012 Boko Haram attacks, which killed at least 185

people. The committee found that poor governance, poverty, and unregulated migration were the causes of the crisis (AFP, 2012). Similarly, the governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria and emir of Kano from 2014 to 2020, Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, noted that the absence of job opportunities and poor standard of living is directly responsible for the insecurity and terrorism in the region (Mustapha, 2014). A critical analysis of the socioeconomic conditions of the northeastern geopolitical zone indicates that its deteriorating state has been an important contributor to the rise and sustenance of the Boko Haram insurgency.

The average living standard in Nigeria has been consistently low, despite its natural resource wealth, the continuous inflow of oil revenue, and its place as the largest economy in Africa (World Bank, 2019). A majority of Nigerians cannot meet basic human and socio-economic needs such as access to food, quality education, effective healthcare service delivery, pipe-borne water, proper shelter, and employment opportunities (Varin, 2016). Such conditions remain worse in the north where poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy are lamentably high. In 2010, 69 percent of Nigeria's population, equivalent to 112 million Nigerians, were defined as poor with the southeast and southwest geopolitical zones having poverty rates of 67.0 percent and 59.1 percent respectively. The northeast, the epicenter of Boko Haram's insurgency, and northwest geopolitical zones had poverty rates of 76.3 percent and 77.7 percent respectively, making the northern zone the poorest part of the country (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012). The northeast also had the highest unemployment rates in Nigeria. With a national unemployment rate of 23.9 percent in 2011, Borno state had an unemployment rate of 27.7 percent; Bauchi, 41.4 percent; Gombe, 38.7 percent; and Yobe state, 35.6 percent. Comparatively, in the south, Lagos in the same year, had an unemployment rate of 8.3 percent; Osun state, 3 percent; Abia state, 11.2 percent; and Anambra state, 12.2 percent (Ojochenemi et al., 2015).

Further disparity between the north and south can be observed in Nigeria's educational sector. The deplorable state of education in the northern region has cumulated in a high rate of illiteracy among its populace making it not only the poorest region in Nigeria, but also the region with the worst literacy level. In 2012, Lagos, Nigeria's commercial capital located in the south, had a literacy rate of 92 percent whereas Kano, the north's commercial capital and Nigeria's second-biggest city, had a literacy rate of 49 percent. Similarly, northwestern Sokoto state had a very low literacy rate of 10 percent compared to the national average of 53 percent. In the northeastern state of Borno, the hotbed of the Boko Haram insurgency, the literacy rate was under 15 percent (Hoffman, 2014). A survey by the Northern Education Initiative (NEI) revealed that the northeastern region has the highest percentage of children between the ages of 6-16 who have no access to education. Borno state had 72 percent of such children, making it the state with the poorest access to basic education (Edeh, 2011).

A similar survey on the Basic Education and Living Conditions of Orphans and Vulnerable Children by the Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Development of Bauchi State and NEI, also revealed that some 65.5 percent of girls in Nigeria's

northeastern region lack access to basic education. Only 49 percent of boys and 37.1 percent of girls in the region had access to basic education (Edeh, 2013). According to the survey, there were over 17.5 million orphans and vulnerable children in Nigeria, and they form a large percentage of *Almajirai*. *Almajirai* are Qur'anic school pupils who study the Quran under the guidance of a Qur'anic teacher (Mallam) who compels them to beg for food and financial assistance on the streets. As a result, they are extremely vulnerable to being indoctrinated and eventually recruited by violent extremist groups such as Boko Haram (Aluaigba, 2009; Edeh, 2013). Wole Soyinka (2012), the Nobel laureate, argued that the *Almajiris*:

have been deliberately bred, nurtured, sheltered, rendered pliant, obedient to only one line of command, ready to be unleashed at the rest of society.... From knives and machetes, bows and poisoned arrows they have graduated to AK-47s, homemade bombs, and explosive-packed vehicles. (Soyinka, para.7)

The deteriorated state of education in Nigeria's northern region is traceable to the implementation of the colonial indirect rule system. Because the British colonial administrators were not committed to introducing Western-style education in the region, their policies concerning Western education and religion in the Muslim dominated northern Nigeria stemmed from the ideological orientation that the region's culture and religion was discrete and must be protected from the corrupt influence of modernity. The British colonial administrators, therefore, trained northern Nigerian elites in a way that encouraged Muslim aristocracy with a very conservative mindset towards Western civilization. Christian missionaries were blocked from the northern territory for fear of undermining the Muslim aristocracy (Barnes, 2009). The emirs, who were also strong defenders of Islamic education, discouraged Western education due to their fear that it would destroy the Islamic culture and style of learning and replace it with Christianity which they consider heresy (Anugwom, 2019). This limited northerners' access to Western-style education, a system of education which had already been well established in the south by Christian missionaries (Falola, 1999). The socioeconomic frustration created in the northeastern region due to the entrenched poverty, unemployment, and inequality created an opportunity for Boko Haram to step into that void as a rival to the authority of the state and an instrument for change. Kashim Shettima, a former Governor of Borno state, emphasized during an interview with Ochereome Nnanna (2012) that:

over a period of thirty years, the ruling establishment abandoned the common people ... Nobody bothered about their education and health, and nobody cared how they made their living ... This was the ready-made situation that the late leader of Boko Haram sect, Mohammed Yusuf, capitalized on. He started organizing the youth, procuring for motorcycles for their transport business, helping them set up small businesses, assisting them to get married at little cost and generally creating... an alternative society. (paras. 80–10)

Overall, the rise and sustenance of the Boko Haram insurgency in northeastern Nigeria must be understood as the result of the interplay between Islamic religious doctrinal fragmentation and radicalization, and sociopolitical complexities within the region. The increasingly intolerant, radical, and disruptive approach to intra-Muslim doctrinal disputes in the region laid the foundation for social disorder. However, bad governance, elite manipulation of the political system, weak state institutions, and extreme socioeconomic marginalization, created the opportunity for Boko Haram members to resort to violence as a means to defend their religion and to seek a change in the social order.

REGIONALIZATION OF THE BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY

Although Boko Haram originated in northeastern Nigeria, its violence and insecurity have not remained confined to this region. In his inaugural speech on May 29, 2015, Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari emphasized that "Boko Haram is a typical example of small fires causing large fires" (Comolli, 2015, p. 109). The division of the Kanem-Borno Empire among countries within the Lake Chad Basin as a result of Western colonialism has left the people in the region with shared histories, languages, and cultures. These commonalities laid the foundation for Boko Haram to operate not only locally but also transnationally. From its inception, the charismatic preaching of the group's founder, Mohammed Yusuf, attracted followers from neighboring countries, including Niger, Cameroon, and Chad (Comolli, 2017).

Several conditions within the Lake Chad Basin have facilitated Boko Haram's ability to expand and sustain its operations. Like Nigeria, countries such as Cameroon, Chad, and Niger have weak state institutions, limited government control in border areas, and porous borders. These regions are plagued by organized crime, including arms and drug trafficking, as well as severe poverty and underdevelopment (Uwakwe & Miapyen, 2018). Governance issues such as elite corruption, poor management of state resources, and endemic inequality have further exacerbated the vulnerability of these areas to extremist activity (Mahmood & Ani, 2018). For instance, Cameroon's Far North Province, a hub for Boko Haram's activities, has over 74% of its population living below the poverty line, compared to a national average of 37.5%. The region also records the lowest school enrollment rate in the country at 46%, compared to a national average of 84.1%, with more than 75% of youth underemployed (International Crisis Group, 2016).

Boko Haram has also exploited the Basin's existing cultural, ethnic, and Islamic religious ties. Although pre-colonial kingdoms such as Kanem-Bornu, Bagirmi, Wadai, and Mandara diminished due to colonialism, Maiduguri in Nigeria's Borno State remains a symbolic cultural center. The city and its surrounding areas host communities that trace their heritage back to these historic kingdoms (Jumare, 1993). This shared cultural identity has fostered loyalty and cohesion, helping Boko Haram gain local sympathy and support. These affinities explain why the insurgency has escalated easily across the Lake Chad Basin while remaining largely concentrated in northeastern

Nigeria, which shares more socio-cultural similarities with parts of Chad and Cameroon than with other northern Nigerian regions.

Environmental challenges, particularly the dramatic shrinking of Lake Chad, have also played a crucial role in Boko Haram's regional expansion. Lake Chad, a critical resource for freshwater, fishing, and agriculture, serves over 30 million people across Nigeria, Chad, Niger, and Cameroon (Salkida, 2012). However, the lake has experienced a dramatic decline in size, shrinking by 90% over the past 60 years due to overuse and climate change. Its surface area, which was 26,000 square kilometers in 1963, had decreased to less than 1,500 square kilometers by 2018—a situation described as an “ecological disaster” by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, 2018, para. 3). This environmental crisis has devastated livelihoods in the region, leading to crop failures, livestock deaths, and the collapse of fishing activities. The resulting poverty and unemployment have created conditions ripe for extremist exploitation. Boko Haram has capitalized on this desperation, offering material rewards to recruit individuals in the area (Ndahi, 2017). During a forum of Lake Chad governors in Maiduguri, Mamman Nuhu, the executive secretary of the Lake Chad Basin Development Commission, stated that “the whole of the Boko Haram problem has its roots in the drying of the lake, which has left millions with no means of livelihood” (Africa Research Bulletin, 2018, p. 3). Similarly, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, the UN Secretary-General's special envoy to West Africa and the Sahel, highlighted the lake's disappearance as a primary cause of poverty and unemployment, turning the region into a fertile recruitment ground for extremist groups like Boko Haram (Africa Research Bulletin, 2018).

CONCLUSION

The Boko Haram insurgency is the result of a combination of overlapping and interrelated factors. At its core are deep-rooted intra-Muslim doctrinal divisions that have been pursued violently in northeastern Nigeria over the years. However, political and socioeconomic challenges in Nigeria have created an enabling environment for these religious ideologies to resonate with disenfranchised youth seeking redress for societal inequalities. Additionally, the cultural, ethnic, and religious ties within the Lake Chad Basin, coupled with shared governance and economic vulnerabilities, have facilitated the transnational spread of Boko Haram's activities. The persistent vanishing of Lake Chad has further compounded the crisis by intensifying poverty and unemployment, providing fertile ground for extremist recruitment. Addressing the Boko Haram insurgency requires a multifaceted approach that targets these root causes, including improving governance, addressing poverty, and fostering regional cooperation to combat the insurgency's transnational reach.

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