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**THE KIDNAPPING OF THE CHIBOK GIRLS:  
A RESULT OF A THREAT TO MASCULINITIES**

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*The extremists are afraid of books and pens;  
the power of education frightens them.  
They are afraid of women*

– Malala Yousafzai

## **DEDICATION**

To all those who are suffocating in their societies,  
To those who feel different,  
Those that long to be both free and equal,  
And, as Benjamin Alire Sáenz wrote,

“To all the boys who’ve had to learn to play by different rules”

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My deepest sense of gratitude

To God, who gave me the courage to love myself as I am,

To all the women that inspire me every day,

To my Director, Nathalie, as she supported me from the very beginning,

To my brother and our endless arguments,

To my mother, her ever-present bravery, and her kindhearted spirit,

And to my father,

For his unconditional love.

## INDEX

I.	THEME	1
II.	ABSTRACT	1
III.	RESUMEN	2
IV.	RÉSUMÉ	3
V.	INTRODUCTION	4
1.	CHAPTER I THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE USE OF TERROR AS A TOOL OF OPPRESSION BY BOKO HARAM	11
1.1.	The Historic Evolution of Boko Haram	12
1.2.	Boko Haram's Religious Interpretations as supposed arguments to their behavior	19
1.3.	The International Context Where It Flourished	27
2.	CHAPTER II MASCULINITIES CRISIS AND VIOLENCE	38
2.1.	The Construction of the Masculine Ideal in Nigeria, According to Boko Haram	40
2.2.	The Masculinities Crisis as a Result to Women Empowerment	51
2.3.	Violence as a response to the Masculinities Crisis	60
3.	CHAPTER III CHIBOK KIDNAPPING AS AN ATTACK TO WOMEN	69
3.1.	Boko Haram's Ideals of Masculinity as opposed to Women Education	70
3.2.	Boko Haram's Violence as means of Subjugation to the Chibok Girls	78
3.3.	Education as an Answer to Boko Haram's Threat	88
VI.	ANALYSIS	96
VII.	CONCLUSIONS	100
VIII.	REFERENCE LIST	105

## INDEX OF CHARTS, TABLES AND IMAGES

TABLE No. 1 <i>Number of fatalities in the Boko Haram Conflict per State and Year</i>	20
CHART No. 1 <i>Nigeria's Human Development Index Evolution from 2010 to 2014</i>	26
IMAGE No. 1 <i>Map of Nigerian States that have adopted the Sharia Law</i>	33
CHART No. 2 <i>Summary of the main theories used in this Dissertation</i>	46
CHART No. 3 <i>Naila Kabeer's Perspectives on Empowerment</i>	53
CHART No. 4 <i>The relation between Women's Empowerment and Masculinities Crisis</i>	59
CHART No. 5 <i>Kaufman's Gender-based violence Seven Ps</i>	65
CHART No. 6 <i>Gender Parity Index Evolution in Nigeria from 2008 to 2014</i>	71
CHART No. 7 <i>Literacy Rate of Women, 15 to 24 years old, from 2004 to 2014</i>	71
TABLE No. 2 <i>Literacy Rate among Women, 15 to 24 years old in 2014, in selected states</i>	72
CHART No. 8 <i>Gender Perspectives in Education, an Empowering Proposal</i>	93

## INDEX TO APPENDICES

APPENDIX No. 1  
*Glossary of Terms*

116

## I. THEME

### THE KIDNAPPING OF THE CHIBOK GIRLS: A RESULT OF A THREAT TO MASCULINITIES

## II. ABSTRACT

On April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014, Boko Haram seized a Governmental School in Chibok, abducting 276 girls to force them to convert to Islam. These events have thus been examined in accordance to International Security and Governmental perspectives. This bachelor dissertation proposes to analyze the response of this extremist group to girl education taking as an example the kidnapping aforementioned. Following an African Feminist approach, the researcher explores the gender constructions of the extremists in regard to what they deem to be masculine, and how women empowerment is a threat to their identity. For this reason, an explorative methodology is used within a post-colonial approach. This avoids generalizations and ill-fitting explanations of the subject of study, focusing primarily on its understanding.

Furthermore, before addressing the Chibok abductions, this research refers to the international and local context that led to the appearance of Boko Haram, emphasizing in the contrasting relation between Westernized globalization and a regional fundamentalist revival. Following these arguments, this Dissertation considers the socio-political background of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, centering on the structure in the Northern states, which perpetuates patriarchal traditions. Likewise, this analysis is completed by an exploration on how masculinity is constructed in a binary perspective, that is in terms of the *other*. In addition, the student contemplates if these Nigerian militants would be experiencing a Hegemonic Masculinity crisis, a phenomenon that accentuates gender-based violence if male privilege is contested. Finally, this investigation ends with an additional examination of the possibility of an educational system that empowers both girls and boys against toxic gender constructions.

**Keywords:** *Feminism, Power Relations, Masculinities, Women Empowerment, Girls' Education, Nigeria, Boko Haram, Masculinity Crisis, Agency*

### III. RESUMEN

El 14 de abril de 2014, Boko Haram se tomó las instalaciones de la Escuela Estatal de Chibok y, consecuentemente, secuestró 276 niñas para obligarlas a convertirse al Islam. Desde entonces, estos eventos se han estudiado de acuerdo con la Seguridad Internacional y las perspectivas gubernamentales. Sin embargo, esta disertación propone el análisis de la respuesta de este grupo extremista a la educación de las niñas tomando como ejemplo el rapto antes mencionado. Así, siguiendo un acercamiento desde el Feminismo Africano, el investigador explora las construcciones de género de los extremistas en función de lo que consideran como masculino, y como el empoderamiento de la mujer es una amenaza para su identidad. Por este motivo, una metodología de exploración se usa de acuerdo a una postura post-colonial. Esto evitaría generalizaciones y explicaciones ineficientes sobre el sujeto de estudio, concentrándose de ésta manera en su entendimiento.

Además, antes de abordar los secuestros de Chibok, este trabajo se refiere al contexto internacional y local, los cuales llevaron a la aparición de Boko Haram, enfatizando el contraste entre una globalización occidentalizada y un resurgimiento fundamentalista. Siguiendo estos argumentos, esta Disertación considera el trasfondo socio-económico de la República Federal de Nigeria, centrándose en la Estructura de los estados del norte que perpetúan tradiciones patriarcales. Asimismo, este análisis se completa con una exploración sobre como la masculinidad se construye en una perspectiva binaria, en términos del *otro*. Adicionalmente, el estudiante contempla si los militantes nigerianos experimentarían una Crisis de Masculinidad Hegemónica, la cual acentuaría la violencia de género si el privilegio masculino es refutado. Finalmente, la investigación termina con un análisis de una posible educación de empoderamiento para niños y niñas, contra construcciones tóxicas de género.

**Palabras clave:** *Feminismo, Relaciones de Poder, Masculinidades, Empoderamiento Femenino, Educación de Niñas, Nigeria, Boko Haram, Crisis de Masculinidad, Agencia*

#### IV. RÉSUMÉ

Le 14 avril, 2014, Boko Haram s'est emparé l'école public de Chibok. Ensuite, ils ont enlevé 276 filles, lesquelles ont été forcées à se convertir à l'Islam. Depuis ce jour, ces événements ont été étudiés d'après la Sécurité Internationale et la perspective gouvernementale. Néanmoins, ce mémoire propose analyser la réponse de ce groupe extrémiste à l'éducation des filles en prenant d'exemple le rapt avant-mentionné. De cette façon, depuis un rapprochement du Féminisme Africain, le chercheur explore les constructions du genre des extrémistes en accord avec ce qu'ils considèrent comme masculin. Aussi, il veut savoir comment l'émancipation des femmes est une menace à leur identité. Ce pour cette raison qu'une méthodologie d'exploration est préférée en suivant un point de vue postcolonial. Ainsi, cette position éviterait des généralisations et des explications inefficaces à propos du sujet d'étude, en se concentrant sur leur compréhension.

En outre, avant de s'occuper des enlèvements de Chibok, ce travail fait référence au contexte international et local, lesquels ont conduit l'apparition de Boko Haram en emphasiant le contraste entre une globalisation d'occident et une résurgence fondamentaliste. En suivant ces arguments, ce mémoire considère le milieu socio-économique de la République fédérale du Nigeria, en mettant au point la Structure des états du nord, ceux qui perpétuent les traditions patriarcales. De la même manière, cet analyse est complété avec une exploration sur la masculinité compris d'après une vision de binarité, c'est-à-dire selon un *autre*. De plus, l'étudiant contemple la possibilité de l'existence d'une crise de Masculinité Hégémonique. Cette idée, par exemple, accentuerait la violence du genre si le privilège masculin est contesté. Finalement, cette investigation termine avec une analyse d'une possible éducation émancipant pour les garçons et les filles, contre les constructions toxiques de genre.

**Mots-clés :** *Féminisme, Relations du Pouvoir, Masculinités, Émancipation Féminine, Éducation des Filles, Nigeria, Boko Haram, Crise de Masculinité, Agence*

## V. INTRODUCTION

*There were more than 40 insurgents at the road block. As each vehicle drove up they commanded everyone to come down and identify themselves. When my friends and I said we were students, one of the insurgents shouted 'Aha! These are the people we are looking for. So you are the ones with strong-heads who insist on attending school when we have said 'boko' is 'haram.' We will kill you here today.'* – Words from a 19-year-old Nigerian schoolgirl, Konduga (Human Rights Watch, 2014; p. 20)

April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014: A group of men invaded the Nigerian Government Chibok School and snatched 276 girls from this institution. Boko Haram, responsible for this assault, alleged that they were saving women from sinful western education. As of 2015, only 57 of these hostages had managed to escape (Al Jazeera, 2015; Amnesty International, 2015). Those that stayed at their camp, nevertheless, faced a different kind of fate. Forced to wed some of the militants (Al Jazeera, 2015; Mazumdar, 2015), these girls were coerced into converting to Islam. Deprived from any autonomy, they were treated like slaves (Zenn, 2014), and sometimes made to murder prisoners or *infidels* (Mazumdar, 2015) and steal nearby Nigerian villages (Levs, 2015). Boko Haram took them as if they had a right over their lives.

Regarding the men that abducted them, it must be mentioned that in 2012 they had been already labeled as the greatest security threat to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Onuoha, 2012). Denouncing democracy and secularization, Boko Haram stated that their country was condemned because of its corruption. These men, previously known as a pacific youth preaching group, opted for violence as its frustration accentuated through the years (Okpaga et al., 2012). By 2009, these fundamentalists were bombing government buildings in what they considered a just jihad (Onuoha, 2012; Amnesty International, 2015). Also targeting civilians, this militia group was responsible for the death of around one thousand people, and the international displacement of hundreds (Onuoha, 2012). The conflict began escalating when, on August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011, Boko Haram conducted a suicide attack on the United Nations' Nigerian Office, and a subsequent assault on the Nigerian Police Headquarters on June 16<sup>th</sup> (Okpaga et al., 2012). In 2012, with already 950 deaths on their record, a series of bombings on the city of Kano resulted in 250 additional deaths (Okpaga et al., 2012).

Furthermore, the number of casualties ascended to 5,500 civilians, by January, 2014 (Amnesty International, 2015).

Consequently, following these violent manifestations, international concern led to academic production regarding diverse aspects of this conflict. For instance, Gary and Rubin (2014), consider a psychological perspective to analyze the Nigerian militants. The African Institute for Gender (2014) referred to the media coverage of the *Bring Back Our Girls* movement. Likewise, Nnabundo Nwabuzor and Verlum Gever (2015) contemplated the media impact of the abovementioned campaign. Other perspectives on this group include Jordan Smith's (2015) analysis on gender narrative and Islam, and Peters' (2014) religious explanation on Boko Haram's attitudes towards women. Following these arguments, Shaibu and Salleh (2015) refer to the Nigerian fundamentalists' rise, while Vitorio (2015) reflected on the impact of human trafficking using a perspective related to security.

Raging from psychology to security, each author gave a perspective on the same problem. Yet, the Chibok abductions troubled me differently. Let us, for instance, refer to how these girls wished to pursue their studies, how they had hoped to further their autonomy, and how they had met a terrible fate by committing the unfathomable crime of not following traditions. In utter dismay, I have yet to understand to what extent a group of men felt that their very idea of masculinity was being challenged by the free will of women. Thus, I decided to explore the Nigerian case, as it is a clear example of how unyielding gender constructions oppose equality and empowerment in an interconnected world. In fact, I believe that the events of April 14<sup>th</sup> seem to align under a structural dilemma in International Relations, which dwells on the contestation of power constructions and the role of the agency of each actor. In this manner, I set to consider the reasons behind this alleged threat that led this group to deter women from choosing something as simple as finishing their studies.

Nevertheless, I must first acknowledge that my research faces certain weaknesses, as I cannot access first-hand information regarding Boko Haram and the gender constructions in Nigeria. For this reason, I depend on

ethnographic and qualitative studies, and past works on the subject. These involve, for instance, the publication of History Professor Uchendu (2007) on gender in Nigeria, and the report of two local non-governmental organizations; the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme and Voices for Change (2016). I also believe that this investigation is strengthened by the gender perspectives it takes. As means of illustration, I am not only considering Nigerian women as my subjects of study, but men and their very construction of gender identity as well. Thus, this paper proposes a different understanding of violence and power as an alternative way to address conflict resolution. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that although I refer to this insurgent group in terms of its fundamentalist stance, this is not a criticism to their religion. Rather, it focuses on their extremism and political agenda.

On this matter, this analysis questions how a patriarchal structure is furthered by social practices that perpetuate gender inequality, while reacting violently towards a transformative agency that challenges this system. This is related to my studies in International Relations, as this research provides a new perspective on Conflict Resolution and Security Studies, providing a different outlook on the analysis of international affairs, addressing a gender approach with non-state actors. Yet, given the exploratory nature of this research, a hypothesis was not stated, as it is not necessary for this type of work (Betthyány & Cabrera, 2010). Furthermore, I contemplate analyzing the response of the extremist group known as Boko Haram to girl education, taking as an example the kidnapping of the Chibok girls in 2014. For this reason, I rely on the comparing and contrasting research methodology, complemented by a *post-colonial* approach that takes into account local perspectives regarding gender equality. In accordance to this, I agree with Mohanty (1988, p. 335), who believes that research and theory should acknowledge the international balance of power, to consider historic processes. Thus, I regard qualitative data, as I cannot manipulate any information, while sustaining my analysis on secondary-source documents. Also, when referring to Western theories, I must stress that these are being used through means of exploration, rather than explanation (Mohanty, 1988; p. 338)

As for my theoretical framework, I rely on the Reflectivism stance of the Great Debates in International Relations, which contemplates subjective and interpretative data while also conceiving non-state actors and a criticism to established structures (Benneyworth, 2011). For this reason, I examine Feminism, with special attention to its African counterpart. To illustrate, this current emphasizes the voices of black women, while acknowledging that a colonial past perpetuates structures of discrimination (2004, p. 130). Furthermore, following da Silva (2004, p. 131) Nigerian feminists, such as Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie, believe that women's empowerment should oppose patriarchal customs, deconstructing stereotypes related to womanhood, which involve *the goddess* or the *abnegated mother*. Both da Silva and Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie conceptualize women oppression as a consequence of certain traditions that divide men from women (Da Silva, 2004, p. 134). Likewise, African feminists believe in a critical appropriation of Western feminism, adding it to local perspectives and criticisms. Moreover, African feminists involve men in their plight for justice and equality (da Silva, 2004, p. 135).

I also rely on Masculinities Theory to sustain my analysis. Therefore, I mostly consider the hierarchy proposed by Connell (2000-2016) to understand the plurality of gender constructions and the imposition of a hegemonic ideal that shapes men's identity. Likewise, other theories, such as Kaufman's (1999) study on gender-based violence, Schrock and Schwalbe's (2009) study on manhood acts, and Lemon's (1995) elaboration on male privilege and the subsequent crisis that entails it, are observed. On this, it is important to stress that this dissertation understands Masculinity as a socio-political construction perpetuated by Patriarchy, according to Bharucha (1995, pg. 1610). It is also important to mention that although I refer to Western academic production regarding Men's Studies, I sustain my analysis by contemplating these thesis as means of exploration of different phenomena, bearing in mind that they must be complemented by other local perspectives.

Consequently, the first chapter, a contextual one, draws the relations that construct the structure that influences Nigeria, and further triggers the Nigerian extremists' agency. This serves to analyze the context that lead to the emergence

of Boko Haram. On this matter, the International scenario is marked by two main socio-political phenomena. Globalization, a historical process that rendered local identities more complex than before, is tinged with a Western influence on secularization, democracy and capitalism. Fundamentalism, nevertheless, rises as an opposing force to counter a fading identity on a changing society that deprives religion of its former political importance. In the manner of contesting ideologies, the *War on Terror*, an outcome of the 9/11 attacks on the United States, caused the appearance of Islamophobia. As a response to what is different in a Western society, they both undermined the image of the United States, particularly in the Muslim World, and, conversely, fueled extremist groups like Boko Haram.

For this reason, to properly understand the extremist group's motives on attacking civilians, such as the Chibok schoolgirls, I explore the evolution of Boko Haram from a non-violent preaching youth group to an extremist militia. Its history is spotted by repression from the government, and the militants' opposition to a secular Republic. Following the extrajudicial execution of the group's founder, Mohammed Yusuf, Boko Haram has condemned the corrupted state of the Government and therefore sustained their claims for a pure Islamic system. Furthermore, on a subsequent discussion of the causes for the existence of Boko Haram, I considered economic theories that highlight poverty as its triggering factor. I also highlight the importance of contemplating socio-political arguments, such as religious tensions in Nigeria and the failed role of the State as their main explanation. Boko Haram, thus, is perceived to be the outcome of a frustrated identity whose jihad banner is its own religious interpretation.

In the second chapter, to determine the existence of a crisis of masculinities originated by the empowerment of women through education, I contemplate a theoretical discussion of the foundations for this dissertation analysis. Although I consider Western academic production on gender equality, I use a Postcolonial Feminist methodology to conceive these studies as exploratory tools, rather than inadequate assumptions. Furthermore, I complete this analysis of local perspectives on gender construction and Patriarchy following an African Feminist stance. Although a brief preamble to Boko

Haram's identity was addressed in Chapter I, this perspective lacked its relation to the construction of Masculinity. Therefore, I refer to Connell's (2000-2016) Theory of Masculinity to explore the alleged existence of a *Hegemonic Masculinity* in Nigeria. As a result, some elements that were already analyzed, such as the group's fundamentalist thinking, are explored according to how these Nigerian extremists may interpret as a masculine ideal. It appears they follow a dichotomous gender perspective, a view which originated from the Islamic Indian political personality Mawdudi. In accordance to this perspective, Boko Haram would assert its manliness in opposition to the West, God, and women.

Yet, another concept is also drawn into the same scenario. Thus, this dissertation refers to Girls' education following the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, a successor to the Beijing Declaration of 1995 on Women's rights. As a new perspective on empowerment, it further encourages active and transformative agency, i.e. the ability to act in relation to power, to question gender norms and cultural traditions. For instance, both ethnographic and Nigerian feminist studies consider these customs to be the local representation of Patriarchy. Nigerian women, beginning to denounce their very obstacles to gender equality, were also changing existing power relations. This, nevertheless, triggered a reaction in the men that failed to adapt to this new environment. As a crisis of masculinities emerged, it was strengthened by dichotomous perspectives on masculinity and femininity. In consequence, fundamentalists, such as Boko Haram, dismissed the newly reclaimed autonomy of women, labeling it as Western-influenced. Also, vowing to eradicate it and preserve moral order, this group eventually reinforced their idea of a masculinity through their actions, a phenomenon known as *manhood acts*, to assert the previous status quo. Male privilege, threatened by the contestation of *Hegemonic Masculinity*, causes an opposition to women.

The Third Chapter relates to the methodological comparison between the theoretical support drawn on Chapter II, coupled with the historic information of Chapter I. The resulting analysis serves to interpret Boko Haram's terrorist response to girls' empowerment through education. Thus, I contemplate the situation of girls regarding education and empowerment in Nigeria. On this, the

Nigerian Government seems to praise its efforts regarding its commitment on the Third Millennium Development Goal, concerned with gender parity in education. Understanding *girls' empowerment* as merely school attendance, the National Bureau of Statistics (2015) states that equality has been attained, as for every boy in a classroom there is also a girl. Nonetheless, when reconsidering women's literacy rates of northern parts of the country, the outlook changes drastically. Furthermore, I recall the construction of a binary perspective that divides masculine from feminine in this region. In like manner, these patriarchal traditions appear to segregate women to the private sphere, while emphasizing authority with men.

Therefore, relying on the ethnographic account of victims of Boko Haram that were interviewed by Human Rights Watch (2014), a connection between unyielding dichotomous ideas on gender and women's education seems likely. For instance, the kidnapping of 276 girls from the Chibok School further illustrates a manhood act of gender-based violence. Considering Kaufman (1999), I analyze how male privilege is hidden and the threat of its disappearance motivates the group's behavior. Similarly, the final part of Chapter III refers to the exploration of a new answer to the Boko Haram conflict. Bearing in mind that this solution should prevent further confrontations, and is meant to be applied in the long term, I elaborate on the possibility of conceiving an empowering feminist education for both men and women. This idea should counter patriarchal constructions of what a man is, while at the same time motivate both girls and boys to denounce gender roles that are perpetuated through culture. By working on the identity of the young, further notions of *the other* can be prevented, and thus, gender equality attained.

**1. CHAPTER I: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE USE OF TERROR AS A TOOL OF OPPRESSION BY BOKO HARAM**

“No one is more arrogant toward women, more aggressive or scornful, than the man who is anxious about his virility” as Simone de Beauvoir would say. Recalling the abduction of the Chibok girls leads us to question the power relations that encouraged this insurgent group to claim ownership over these women. Yet, to accomplish this task, one must look to the past, even to that which seemingly holds no connection to current events. Thus, the specific objective for this background chapter would be to analyze the context that led to the emergence of Boko Haram.

Accordingly, I have chosen to compare and contrast secondary-source bibliography to analyze the context that led to the emergence of Boko Haram. This chapter is thus divided into three parts: the first one deals with the international phenomena prior to its appearance; the second one with the historic evolution of the aforementioned group; and finally, the last one refers to the religious interpretations that serve as a basis to Boko Haram.

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks on the United States, the International Community witnessed the emergence of a new conflict, the War on Terror. Fueled by Islamophobia, the United States’ crusade condemned Islam as a Terrorist movement. Consequently, the Muslim world criticized the West as it further triggered fundamentalists stances, and provided the support needed for groups like Boko Haram to thrive.

In today’s Nigeria, Globalization, a historic process that involves interconnection and diversity, could sometimes threaten local identities as they struggle to remain in a changing society. On the other hand, Fundamentalism can be seen as a reaction force that seeks to assert religious recognition on a moving scenario. These opposing notions will influence Boko Haram as a whole, and provide the basis for its behavior. Therefore, I rely on the theory of Naim (2009) and Held et al. (1999) for the socio-political conception of Globalization as a historic process influenced by the West. Likewise, Emerson

and Hartman's (2006) study on fundamentalism is used, mainly to exemplify a Western perspective on religion and secularization.

History and the ongoing evolution of Boko Haram reflects an evolution that has been marked by both an international and local context. Starting as a non-violent preaching group, Boko Haram opposed the democratic Nigerian State and started using violence to halt its advance. Attacking government buildings, they also targeted the United Nations compound, and shifted their aim to civilians as well. I therefore consider the data collected from ACLED (2015) on casualties caused by the Boko Haram conflict, and the historic information of Maiangwa et al. (2012) and Onuaha (2009), the latter giving a local perspective from the National Defence College in Nigeria.

On a historic matter, identity and religion are both based on a common background, and in the final part of this chapter I will review the fundamentalist rise in Nigeria, characterized by Boko Haram's predecessor, Maitatsine. Moreover, I address the group's founder responsibility for the creation of their religious stance. Misunderstanding Islam, Yusuf considers different conservative Islamic teachings to construct the fanatic militants' identity. I must, therefore, rely on Onuaha (2010), Adesoji (2011), and Thurston (2016) to analyze and explore fundamentalism.

### **1.1. The international context where it flourished**

The international context that is drawn around Boko Haram and Nigeria includes a series of events that are included in social, political and economic phenomena proper of the times preceding the Nigerian movement. Hence, it is important to highlight two main circumstances that influenced the current scenario where Boko Haram operates: globalization and the War on Terror. Both of these ideas greatly influenced the structure that triggered the agency of Boko Haram, and further defined the conflict.

Societies in the United States, for instance, experienced globalization arguably along their history as a consequence of evolution that promised a more

interconnected world for both markets and democracies. Parallel to this occurrence, the United States also fueled a new idea known as *Islamophobia* as a result of the attacks on 9/11. Accordingly, a new war was declared by former President W. Bush against terrorist groups, depicting the enemy as the Muslim people: The War on Terror.

Yet, the International Community was witness to another phenomenon. African and Middle-Eastern societies experienced the success of religious fundamentalism, as a contestation to the above-mentioned stance on globalization that threatened to send their spiritual identity into oblivion. These ideas paved the way to the alleged greatest security threat to the Nigerian State.

During the Cold War, the world did not foresee the importance of constructing an identity, and blinded by a primal American world view, we did not consider the impact it could have on a different culture. Thus, academics such as Emerson and Hartman (2006), have claimed that development and modernization are a consequence to secularization; they deem religion as an outdated characteristic of an age long passed (Emerson & Hartman, 2006; p. 127-128).

Nevertheless, this was not the case for every social group. Believing in homogenization, or rather, in *globalization*, the Power elites only considered their perspective as an unquestionable truth. This applies, for instance, to the experience of the United States. Emerson and Hartman (2006), both academics to the Rice University in Texas, reflect their country's opinions on religion as *underdevelopment*. Consequently, those groups that resisted the so-called progress of globalization, stress their religious identity becoming *fundamentalists*. For instance, Ahmed (2006; p. 27) notes that this is a trend in today's Pakistan with more groups emerging to support the actions of the Taliban.

Fundamentalism, thus, could be envisioned as a contestation force to a threat of loss of identity. Yet, it is important to note that this term involves an orthodox stance of religion, not precisely including devotion in itself (Emerson

and Hartman, 2006; p. 130-131), becoming a reaction to a modernizing world that threatens their worldview. Likewise, Emerson and Hartman (2006; p. 129) define it as a contextual phenomenon that responds to the XX century. It is also important to note that on this dissertation, modernization in political terms, refers to democracy, as it would be a point of discussion concerning Boko Haram.

As an opposing force, Globalization conceived under the perspective of the United States, is a social and historic process that results in the interaction of a diverse set of people and ideas, which, in theory, would relativize religion (Emerson & Hartman, 2006; p. 129), degrading it as a personal belief that holds no power and importance in Society (Emerson & Hartman, 2006; p. 130).

The universalism espoused by Globalization, is, in fact, a way to assert an alleged superiority of the West over its *others* (Amorós, 2004; p. 68), which, according to Amorós (2004, p. 68), excludes minorities, women and different religions. Fundamentalists, as a result, react to the marginalization of their religion, usually, to western values of democracy and secularization (Emerson & Hartman, 2006; p. 134).

Nonetheless, a fundamentalist stance selectively defends elements of a religion that serve specific interests, instead of including it as a whole (Emerson & Hartman, 2006; p. 134). Likewise, people belonging to fundamentalist groups believe that they are the only ones chosen by God, and those that do not support them are seen as enemies (Emerson & Hartman, 2006; p. 134). Furthermore, these groups are centered on a charismatic persona that dictates the behavior for all of their members (Emerson & Hartman, 2006; p. 134).

For instance, the Iranian Revolution could serve as an example to Fundamentalism. Kurzman (1996; p. 157) argues that one of the elements that led to the Iranian Revolution prior 1977 were the reforms furthered by the Shah's monarchy. The social group most affected by these reforms were the Islamic clerics (Kurzman, 1996; p. 157), for the Shah adopted a secularization stance that casted them aside from their traditional roles in the judiciary system,

and education in Iran (Kurzman, 1996; p. 157). As it would be further explored, Boko Haram shares these perspectives on Fundamentalism and also the fear of being neglected in a changing society regarding secularization policies.

Fundamentalism believes in traditions and in a literal interpretation of religion. Nevertheless, its counterpart, Globalization, is based upon universalism. As stated by Emerson and Hartman (2006), Globalization is considered under a Western conception. Therefore, on this dissertation, the United States is given primary importance, due to its clearly opposite position if compared to Boko Haram.

Globalization, an enduring phenomenon in the global stage, involves interconnections between countries and also the impact they have on the lives of civil society and the State (Held et al., 1999; p. 484). Likewise, Held et al. (1999, p. 485) commented that this process is based upon exchange, as diversity and cultural interactions are namely their causes (2004, p. 69-70). As a result, the communication of many cultures and points of views render an exclusivist stance obsolete. This should be considered when relating Globalization and Fundamentalism as opposites.

Although some historians argue that Globalization is a process that has existed since the first contact between nomadic peoples, Naím (2009; p. 29) argues that this is a new historical outcome starting in 1990. Given the importance to new disruptive technologies, this era bears witness to how the Internet impacts the lives of people, creating diverse connections that influence their identities. Also, Held et al. (1999; p. 486) claim that although many of the cultural products resulting from *cultural globalization* originate from the United States, this should not be identified as *cultural imperialism*.

The author also asserts that companies, and thus the capitalist world view, are the great engines behind globalization. Furthermore, some theorists assure that it is a strategy to extend the influence of the United States (Naím, 2009; p. 30). This is the opinion of Amorós (2004) when considering universalism as a tool of dominion from the West. Yet, this phenomenon offers

an opportunity to diversify opposing ideologies to that of the United States (Naím, 2009; p. 30). Also, on a different outlook on Globalization, Rosamond (2003; p. 663) argues that one of the perspectives for this phenomenon is *Europeanization*. Globalization, therefore, is constructed around a colonial past that stems from an Illustrative stance (Amorós, 2004; p. 69-70).

Moreover, Kellner (2002; p. 286) argues that the concept of Globalization may be both criticized or praised. The author notes, for instance, that its critics see it as a homogenization phenomenon that served the capitalist order, where the developed nations would take advantage of poor countries. Other theorists believe that globalization, in fact, brings a promise of freedom, democracy, and happiness. Furthermore, relating it as an ideal state would lead countries to seek, for instance, secularization.

Held et al. (1999; p. 495), nevertheless, assessed that Globalization has actually increased the already existing division between rich and poor States. In fact, it finds its bases, as per Kellner (2002; p. 287), in both technology and the global economy, which in turn help to create networks between societies. Kellner (2002; p. 288) also affirms that this occurrence, from an economic perspective, consists in the continuity of social tendencies of the logic of capital. Or as Fukuyama (1992) and Friedman (1999) believe, it is the triumph of free market and western values, like secularization. Globalization, therefore, is a contradictory process as it promotes both capitalism and democracy (Kellner, 2002; p. 292).

Kellner (2002, p. 289) also denotes the existence of *technocapitalism* which involves both the capitalist ideology and the thriving force of technology (Kellner, 2002; p. 289). Therefore, an enduring capitalism is deemed as the hegemonic force (Kellner, 2002; p. 289) that supports a universalist perspective. Moreover, as per Rosamond (2003, p.667), Globalization in itself also includes human action besides economy. This circumstance can also be defined as the interconnection between capitalism and democracy, which has negative and positive effects for individuals. On the one hand, it is seen primarily as a form of

legitimation of an ideological discourse. On the other hand, it offers opportunities to develop new political participation (Kellner, 2002; p. 290).

However, in this paper, I use Naim's (2009) perspective on Globalization, as it states that it did not erase nationalism or national identities; it only caused them to be more complex. Amorós (2004) opinions on cultural influence are worth noting, as it exemplifies how the West tends to universalize its values, such as democracy and capitalism, as an ideal to attain. In fact, Kellner (2002) already mentioned that Globalization can also be seen as a desirable outcome for countries. Moreover, Naim's perspective should be coupled with Held et al.'s (1999) critique on the interaction of different cultures. This constitutes the definition I will use on my research from now on, especially when referring to the West and Boko Haram.

As for the fear of homogenization of different identities, it is important to address a different problem that also fuels Fundamentalism. The Western perspective of Globalization is closely related to the idea of secularization, as it was demonstrated by Emerson and Hartman (2006, p. 127 – 128). Therefore, misunderstanding other religions may lead to conflict. In the following part of this chapter, I analyze Islamophobia as an element in Western societies. A concept that dates back to the late 1990s, it is conceived primarily as a political idea by activists, such as the NGO *Runnymede*, and it now involves a pledge to draw attention to anti-Muslim or anti-Islamic sentiments (Baleich, 2012; p. 180).

Islamophobia first appeared in the 1997 Runnymede Trust report, *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All*. This Britain-based NGO for cultural relations foreshadowed the existence of the term that, since 2001, has been used by the media, civil society and NGOs (Baleich, 2012; p. 180) to identify hostility towards what is different from a Western, globalization-inspired, point of view. Baleich (2012; p. 182) defines it as the negative sentiments and attitudes directed indiscriminately at Islam and its followers. Likewise, this is also a result on the so-called Global War on Terror, an aftermath of the September 11 attacks on the United States.

As Awan (2010; p. 522) argues, the fight against terror was led on different fronts, such as the media that promoted a martyr image of the United States, coupled with its then-heroic depiction of freedom defender. Awan (2010; p. 523) then compares the literary and artistic production following 9/11 as an ideological indoctrination, that ingrained hatred towards Muslim people. The author states that a power elite justifies Islamophobia with a terrorist discourse. On that account, the consequences of this hateful rhetoric are the denial of civil liberties to Muslim citizens in the United States, as well as attacks on their cultural and religious symbols elsewhere in Europe (Awan, 2010; p. 526). This portrayal of Islam tends to bind it to the idea of Terrorism, stereotyping the Muslim community (Awan, 2010; p. 527).

Using the discourse of the *war on terror*, the new stance on security matters espoused by former President W. Bush after the attacks on September 11 2001, the United States has imposed their idea on different countries (Rajwade, 2006; p. 4863). Take for instance the invasion of Iraq, an alleged suspect of the attacks. The United States has since then tortured suspects, and violated Human Rights, while failing to defend the supposed democratic principles they sought to share (Rajwade, 2006; p. 4863). Furthermore, their image was compromised after the Congress discovered no real connection between Iraq and Al-Qaeda, while the alleged weapons of mass destruction were never found. The Bush administration, after finding no threat in Iraq, justified the Invasion in this country as their mission to bring *democracy* to that region (Rajwade, 2006; p. 4864). Thus, the consequences of this War on Terror are that both prestige and credibility for the United States was lessened, particularly in the Muslim World (Rajwade, 2006; p. 4865).

In the first part of the dissertation, I attempted to emphasize concepts that supported the rise of Boko Haram. Given the international movement of globalization, Islamophobia and the War on Terror, these notions are relevant to first identify the construction of Boko Haram's identity, as they constitute the International structure that influences Nigeria. Furthermore, they held especial importance relating the group's opposition to the West, as a pivotal element to assert their masculinity. Globalization, on the other hand, is seen as a threat to

their values, and it is complete disapproval by Boko Haram. This group, as it would be seen, condemns Western values, especially the ones regarding democracy and education.

The War on Terror and the Islamophobia found in Western societies triggered an opposition to the United States, as its image was undermined in the Muslim World. Boko Haram would, therefore, support their actions on an alleged opposition to these Western values. By condemning the Western Globalization process, this extremist group seeks to assert their identity in a changing scenario. This crisis originated on the construction of the masculine ideal and has been present ever since.

## **1.2. The Historic Evolution of Boko Haram**

On an international level, the context of this conflict depended on social-political phenomena that revolved around both Globalization and Fundamentalism. As opposing ideas, they define the actions of Boko Haram in the construction of its identity. In a local context, however, Nigeria's history of a colonial past serves as the background where these militants act. According to the Commonwealth (2017), Nigeria was characterized by the interaction of Christian missionaries and a growing Muslim Empire in the early XIX century. By 1861, Great Britain annexed Lagos, and gained control over Nigeria in 1900 (The Commonwealth, 2017). In 1960, following successive constitutions, Nigeria claimed its independence (The Commonwealth, 2017). Several military coups ensued and marked the country's history until the return of civilian rule in 1999 (The Commonwealth, 2017). The new Constitution proposed a secular Federal Republic, while envisioning the possibility of Sharia law for Muslim people (The Commonwealth, 2017). This is the setting for the evolution analysis proposed in this part.

Consequently, the history of Boko Haram, whose name roughly translates to *Western Education is Anathema*, involves the continuing violence between the militants and the Nigerian State. A conflict marked by casualties on both sides, a quest for identity and the use of violence, starts as a non-violent

group that subsequently opted to use brutality as a statement of their power. Their opposition to democracy and the West, represented by the United Nations and education policies for girls, escalated throughout their evolution. Accordingly, the background information provided is important to analyze the crisis of Masculinities that Boko Haram experienced.

**TABLE No. 1**  
**Number of fatalities in the Boko Haram Conflict per State and Year**

State	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Abuja	0	68	40	0	100
Adamawa	0	21	76	66	310
Bauchi	3	11	44	3	32
Benue	0	0	0	18	0
Borno	28	238	476	918	2513
Edo	0	0	7	0	0
Gombe	0	4	24	6	50
Jigawa	0	0	1	0	0
Kaduna	0	0	137	0	174
Kano	0	6	293	63	246
Katsina	0	7	0	0	0
Kogi	0	0	33	0	0
Lagos	0	0	0	0	4
Niger	0	10	11	0	3
Plateau	32	6	20	0	193
Sokoto	0	6	6	0	0
Taraba	0	0	4	0	0
Yobe	2	191	181	111	255

**Source:** ACLED, 2015

**Produced by:** Néstor Guillermo Silverio Torres

For instance, the data collected from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED, 2015), a public assortment of information regarding violence within States, shows the evolution of the casualties in the Boko Haram conflict. Regarding, for example, the Borno State, one may find that in 2010, Boko Haram caused 28 deaths. This number escalated to 2,513 deaths in 2014. Moreover, this is the State where the abductions occurred, seemingly the most affected by Boko Haram. This data stresses the importance of understanding the evolution of Boko Haram and its use of violence to properly comprehend this group.

The origins of Boko Haram, whose real name is *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad* or *People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad* (Krech, 2011; p. 132), are traced back to Maiduguri, Borno State, in 2002: a youth Islamic group declared that the above-mentioned city, and the Islamic Institution, were corrupted beyond repair (Walker, 2012; p. 3), by their political leaders who abided by money and not by a true devotion to Islam.

Yet, according to Onuaha (2010; p. 55) this group has existed since 1995 under different names, known mostly as the Nigerian Taliban, Yusufiyah sect, and more recently, Boko Haram. No longer a youth group, it believes that the Nigerian State now lies on the hands of corrupted Muslims (Walker, 2012; p. 1). Its first registered attack happened in 2003, when the group assailed public buildings and police stations in the towns of Geiam and Kanamma, Yobo State (Onuaha, 2010).

In relation to what was addressed in the first part of this chapter, it is important to recall Maiangwa et al.'s (2012, p. 45) findings. Boko Haram was founded to counter the ever-growing globalization in Nigeria, whose *corrupted* teachings could not be implemented in the Muslim idiosyncrasy, according to the former founder, Mohammed Yusuf (Maiangwa et al., 2012; p. 45). Thus, Boko Haram pledged to Islamize Nigeria and deviate it from a corrupt political system and moral wrongdoing (Maiangwa et al., 2012; p. 45).

Their quest for their alleged salvation consisted in a political agenda that exemplified this group's interests. For instance, their demands consisted in the creation of an Islamic State, ruled by an *unaltered* Sharia Law. Likewise, they ask for justice and prosecution to those responsible of the extrajudicial executions of their members in 2009, year when a major dispute with governmental forces led to the subsequent killing of its militants and founder (Maiangwa et al., 2012; p 42). Moreover, Boko Haram insists on the release of their captive members (Maiangwa et al., 2012; p 42).

In addition, these militants have vowed to eradicate Western elements and values that are incongruent with Islamic societies. These are the secular stance of the government, and its affiliation to “westernized” educational system and capitalist economy. To illustrate, Walker (2012, p. 7) notes that they are against the *yan boko*, Nigerians known to have benefitted from the policy of indirect rule once Great Britain colonized Nigeria. They are considered traitors, who turned their backs on Allah because of money and Western influence (Walker, 2012; p. 7).

Moreover, their objectives as a group are based upon the constitution of a *pure* Islamic State. Likewise, their antagonism to the Federal Nigerian Republic is founded on a condemnation of alleged political and moral corruption that has deviated people from true Islam. Nevertheless, it is also important to consider the evolution of its tactics in its war against the State. For instance, Krech (2011, p. 133) states that Boko Haram has been increasingly related to Al-Qaeda, as their training and strategies are similar to that group’s. Although this dissertation does not focus mainly on this aspect, the following section of this chapter will contemplate their expansion of violence.

Starting in 2001, Boko Haram has used bomb attacks on a weekly basis in the North-eastern part of the country (Walker, 2012; p. 1). This year became a turning point for its actions, although authors claim the reason is yet obscure to the public. In 2003, Boko Haram had a conflict against police officers over a local pond because of fishing rights. This episode resulted in the group seizing the police officers’ weapons. Then, the police cornered the group in their Mosque, culminating in the killing of 70 of its members, including Mohammed Ali, a former leader (Walker, 2012; p. 3).

The group’s survivors then returned to Maiduguri, under the leadership of Mohammed Yusuf, to set up their own Mosque. Overlooked by authorities, Boko Haram continued to expand its influence over the states of Bauchi, Yobe and Niger (Walker, 2012; p. 3). It could be discussed, as it was in the first part of this chapter, that their violent actions are a consequence of a loss of identity to the secular Nigerian State and the globalization phenomenon. Moreover, their

hatred towards the Government was furthered due to the indiscriminate use of violence by the Security Forces, stressing their division and hostility.

In 2007, Sheikh Ja'afar Mahmoud Adam, a Muslim cleric in Maiduguri, was murdered under Yusuf's order because of his preaching against the fanatic behavior of Boko Haram (Walker, 2012; p. 4). Walker (2012; p. 4) stated that this may be seen as the turning point for Boko Haram, as it marks their detachment from the mainstream Islamic establishment. Additionally, their violent actions were marked with extremism, as since 2009, Boko Haram has been fueled by hatred to the Nigerian State, a direct result of its suppressive tactics on defense and security (Walker, 2012; p. 2).

Their separation from both the State and the mainstream Islamic institutions increased their radical stances. The group then withdrew from Maiduguri on a *hijra*, or migration, settling in Kanama village, in the Yobe state. In 2009, following an argument with the police, the Bauchi government hunted down members that were alleged supporters of Boko Haram, with seven hundred people arrested. The group started threatening the police with violence, and actually seized Maiduguri for three days. Once the government regained control of the city, it started looking for Boko Haram suspects or sympathizers, killing them without due trial (Walker, 2012; p. 4). It is also alleged that Police Officers murdered Yusuf in this way, although officials state otherwise (Walker, 2012; p. 4). This would further illustrate the aforementioned oppression used by the Nigerian Government, whose extrajudicial killings only encouraged a sentiment of hatred towards the State.

If people in Maiduguri were suspected of having a connection with Boko Haram, they were handed to the police, and presumably killed by them, according to Walker (2012; p. 4). For instance, a local journalist stated that the number of people that disappeared in this manner ascended to 100 (Walker, 2012; p. 4). During this period, Walker (2012; p. 4) affirmed that the group attracted the attention of the global jihadist movement and other rebel groups. In 2010, Boko Haram returned to Maiduguri increasing their violent behavior, as a

result of the repression the government used against them. Thus, their first attacks primarily focused on police checkpoints in Borno and Yobe.

Nevertheless, Boko Haram later expanded its targets to civilians. On Christmas Eve, approximately half dozen bombs exploded on two churches in two districts of Jos, Plateau State (Walker, 2012; p. 4). In 2011, a senior member of Boko Haram, known as Abu Dujana, told Walker (2012; p. 4) that anyone declared as enemy to Boko Haram would be killed. Thus, the extremists started robbing banks and businesses, claiming *spoils of war* (Walker, 2012; p. 5). In 2011, the group bombed the national police headquarters in Abuja and the United Nations compound in the same city (Walker, 2012; p. 5-6). Furthermore, the Duke University Press (2012; p. 17) argues that this attack on the UN compound denotes a possible affiliation with al-Qaeda. In the same year, Boko Haram had killed at least six hundred people in Nigeria, a figure that doubles in the first trimester of 2012 (Maiangwa et al., 2012; p 42). Also in this year, Boko Haram set twelve public schools on fire, forcing around 10,000 students out of education (Walker, 2012; p. 6).

In addition, these militants allegedly had a political support from the two main political parties in Nigeria that planned to use the group for their own means (Duke University, 2012; p. 16): the People's Democratic Party and the All Nigeria People's Party initially financed their activities (Duke University, 2012; p. 16). Moreover, Walker (2012; p. 3-4) argues that its funding may have come from wealthy Nigerians from the Northern states, or external sources in Saudi Arabia, a result of Yusuf's travel to that country. Yet, for weaponry, Boko Haram relied on looting after attacks on Police forces. They also smuggled them from the Libyan conflict (Duke University, 2012; p. 16).

Boko Haram's opposition to the Nigerian State is based upon their denial of the constitutional privileges granted to women and homosexuals, considering them as Nigerian citizens, and the liberal democracy in general (Maiangwa et al., 2012; p. 46). Thus, they consolidated their objective: to constitute a pure Islamic State (Walker, 2012; p. 2) that sustains its society with a *fundamental* interpretation of the Quran in Nigeria. Their political agenda explained, I must

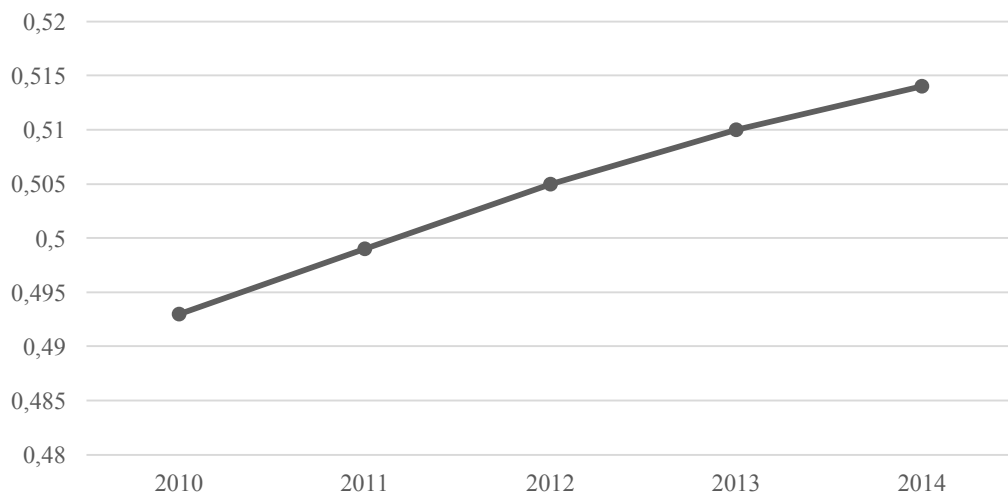
highlight that both a social and economic thesis attempt to illustrate their existence. For instance, to the Duke University Press (2012; p. 16), Boko Haram was the byproduct of an economic division between the wealthy oil-producer South, and the poverty-stricken North. This phenomenon is complemented by the demographic boom that caused unemployment for young adults, and vulnerable to the lure of shelter provided by the group (Duke University, 2012; p. 16). Furthermore, Walker (2012, p. 3) agrees with this thesis, as he claims that the strained situation is consequently aggravated by the militant's youth enrollment, in the same way that it attracts jobless Nigerians and war refugees from Chad through providing its welfare handouts, food and shelter (Walker, 2012; p. 3). Therefore, the welcoming promise to better living conditions seemed to spark their interest.

Notwithstanding, a solely economic theory seems incomplete if it does not contemplate social and political arguments. For example, according to Walker (2012; p. 2), weak institutions in Nigeria had led to consider violence the only way to counter a security threat. This is furthered by Donnelly (2011; p. 29), who argues that President Goodluck had an opportunity to end the conflict with Boko Haram in 2009, once its leader Yusuf was captured. Yet, this opportunity was lost when the founder was killed in custody (Donnelly, 2011; p. 29). Boko Haram is therefore deemed a symptom of failing governance and religious and ethnic tensions between groups in Nigeria (Donnelly, 2011; p. 30).

In other perspectives, Maiangwa et al. (2012; p. 41) address the existence of Boko Haram by proposing two different explanations: the state-failure and the frustration-aggression premises. According to Maiangwa et al. (2012; p. 42), the elements that would explain the arrival of Boko Haram are inadequate security, corruption of power elites, and police brutality among others. They argue that Boko Haram is the consequence of the failing Nigerian State to provide goods and services to its citizens (Maiangwa et al., 2012; p. 43-44) which also fuels frustration with the repressive and violent actions of the government. Accordingly, as stated above, Boko Haram is able to lure the impoverished youth with new opportunities. The authors, thus, state that non-state actors may exploit this situation to gain loyalty from a sector of the population.

The state-failure thesis mentioned before relates to the current state of affairs, in which the Government does not meet basic needs for Nigerians. These include shelter, food, primary health care, education and jobs for the people (Maiangwa et al., 2012; p. 50). To illustrate this argument, I use the Human Development Index or HDI. As an indicator of the United Nations, the HDI for Nigeria ranks this country 152 with an index of 0.514 (UNDP, 2015). This measures the role of the Nigerian State concerning health, education, inequality, gender, employment and security. Furthermore, the data provided by the United Nations Development Programme (2015) illustrates a minimum increase of the HDI, further demonstrating a lack of investment on human development.

**CHART No. 1**  
**Nigeria's Human Development Index Evolution from 2010 to 2014**



**Source:** UNDP, 2015

**Produced by:** Néstor Guillermo Silverio Torres

It is important to note that as a researcher, I consider this thesis as an important economic explanation to Boko Haram's existence. Yet, I regard the frustration-aggression thesis as an element of analysis due to its importance in the construction of the identity of militants, which would be coupled with their idea of masculinity. This thesis proposed by Maiangwa et al. (2012; p. 44) state that marginalized groups that share common pains and an identity will experience a surge of violence as a result of their dissatisfaction. Maiangwa et al. (2012; p. 49) state that the ruling elite in Nigeria has been driven by greed

instead of service to its people, stressing division in Nigeria, and fueling the disenchantment of groups like Boko Haram.

As per Walker (2012; p. 1), dialogues with this group are deemed difficult as it has many fractions, which would not guarantee the representation of all members. The Goodluck administration preference to extrajudicial killings would further strain dialogue between militants and government officials (Walker, 2012; p. 1), which would prevent conflict resolution. This is the situation the Nigerian Government faced when the abduction of the Chibok Girls occurred: tensions between extremists and security forces, marked by violence and brutality.

The historic evolution of Boko Haram further illustrates their plight with an unyielding identity, contrasted with a changing country. Nigeria, facing both fundamentalism and globalization, is the battlefield for this group. Confronted by injustice and extrajudicial killings, Boko Haram thus believes that the only way to purge the rampant corruption in the country, and its moral decay, would be with the Sharia Law and an Islamic State (Maiangwa et al., 2012; p. 50). This led them to attack the Government first, the United Nations, and finally civilians. Nevertheless, their religious perspective on Islam is not yet considered. This serves as an element on the construction of both their identity and their violent behavior. The first part of this chapter already addressed the fundamentalist opinion which will be further addressed in next part.

### **1.3. Boko Haram's religious interpretations as supposed arguments to their behavior**

Analyzing Boko Haram involves, as it was seen above, a brief coverage of both international and local contexts. This is a history of an escalating conflict between the Nigerian State and this extremist group. Elements like the War on Terror, and religious fundamentalism stressed the construction of a fanatic identity, whose aim is to fully implement Islam and the Sharia Law to all States, and therefore save Nigeria from the alleged unscrupulousness of democracy. Therefore, a focal point of analysis must be the exploration of the religious

arguments that Boko Haram used as a banner on their *jihad* against the Government and civilians, especially women.

Nevertheless, I must stress that this research does not focus on a denunciation to Islam, but rather to the political and extremist stance of certain groups that use religion as a platform to further their interests. Consequently, Islam must not be misunderstood as Fundamentalism. To illustrate this, Danjibo (2009; p. 3) marks the difference between these two concepts. He defines Islam by emphasizing the word *Salam*, which would translate as *peace*; it is the belief of one's submission to the Will of Allah based upon five pillars, which are: belief in one monotheistic God, prayer, fasting, arms giving, and pilgrimage to Mecca (Danjibo, 2009; p. 4). This dissertation does not address Islam as a religion nor its cultural impact as a whole. Au contraire, the criticism of this work focuses mainly on the identity of Boko Haram, and therefore, its political *agency*.

Therefore, I draw attention to Thurston's (2016; p. 8-9) statement on Boko Haram's emergence, as the author clarifies that their existence cannot be explained solely by demography, poverty or marginalization of the northern part of Nigeria. Rather, he emphasizes that Boko Haram is the consequence of political and ideological elements proper from Northern states. This is in accordance to Maiangwa et al.'s (2012) conclusion on how frustration drives a certain type of *agency*. Hence, I will try to explore a more complex element of Boko Haram's identity. To this end, Fundamentalism shall be considered as a countering reaction to secularization.

As previously noted, Boko Haram's actions are aimed to undermine a growing *globalization* trend in Nigeria, interpreting this as democracy and capitalism. On this matter, I use Danjibo's (2009; p. 1-3) findings on political affairs, as he states that Western Societies emphasize secularization in the State. It is argued that religion must be displaced to a secondary role or disappear altogether. Led by Marxian thought, social theorists ignored the importance of faiths (Danjibo, 2009; p. 3), and failed to foreshadow the conflict this would provoke concerning identity and the actions of certain groups of people.

Boko Haram illustrates this conflict and proves the consequences it could have. Priding themselves in being the *true* and *only* representation of Islam in this country, these fanatic militants do not fit with the reportedly secular Republic of Nigeria. For this reason, I believe that as with their violent evolution, their religious views are the outcomes of history and power relations in this country. For this reason, let us reflect on Adesoji (2011; p. 101-104), an author who presents the elements and different perspectives that led to the rise of fundamentalism in Nigeria, starting his discussion with an antecessor to Boko Haram in the eighties.

The *Maitatsine*, according to Adesoji (2011; p. 101-104) were the result of both economic and social factors. As with Boko Haram, these militants were known because of their violent acts. For instance, this group's name comes from a Hausa word meaning *the one who damns*, a reference to its founder, Muhammadu Marwa. Indeed, Marwa was characterized by his hostility to the Nigerian State, to Western technology, and by his tendency to use curses (Adesoji, 2011; p. 101). This information draws a first connection: Fundamentalism in Nigeria, since the beginning, was closely related to an enduring opposition to the West.

In the same manner as Boko Haram, the *Maitatsine* were first considered a consequence of poverty. For instance, Adesoji quotes the *economic distress* thesis espoused by Lubeck (1985) so as to illustrate the emergence of the followers of this group. Known as the *Yan Tatsi*, Marwa's supporters were *gardawa*, scribe's disciples, who lived on the charity of pious Muslims. Accordingly, this theory proposes the oil boom of the seventies as an aggravating element for the Northern states (Adesoji, 2011; p. 102). To illustrate, the new capitalist Nigerian perspective stressed economic deprivation to the impoverished North that lived under traditional supply-and-demand economy (Adesoji, 2011; p. 102).

Yet, this research considers the aspects of identity and its ensuing agency. Therefore, I agree with Adesoji (2011; p. 103), who observes the

arguments of Hickey (1984), emphasizing the socio-political conception of fundamentalist groups. By condemning the secularity of the Nigerian State, expressed in the 1979 Constitution, both the Maitatsine and Boko Haram have labeled the Nigerian Republic as *dagut* or *taagut*, evil and unworthy of the cooperation of faithful Muslims. As a result, this could be interpreted beyond the economic disparities between the North and the South. Therefore, it is important to relate socio-economic information, with the exploration of the construction of their religious imagery.

Adesoji (2011) illustrated the predecessor to Boko Haram, and I have thus found similarities between both groups, ranging from their emergence to their political stances. It is important to highlight a key element that is common for both: the underpinning piece of their religious views. Fundamentalism, a shared characteristic for Maitatsine and Boko Haram, is the exclusivist stance that believes in literal interpretation of sacred writings (Danjibo, 2009; p. 4). It is also a *microscopic* understanding of the same religious teachings (Danjibo, 2009; p. 4). Furthermore, it has gradually grown in Nigeria since 1980 (Adesoji, 2011; p. 99). This extremist religious opinion would support Boko Haram's behavior, which contrasts sharply with democracy and secularization. As a result, violence and conflict are ignited.

The Maitatsine uprising, from 1980 to 1985, was the first major expression of religious extremism in Nigeria (Despoja, 2011; p.100). This period, seemingly an omen to Boko Harm, was punctuated with a series of violent manifestations in different parts of the country. Arising on 1980 in Kano, other demonstrations were soon followed in 1982 in Kaduna, 1984 in Yola, and finally 1985 in Bauchi (Adesoji, 2011; p. 101). This conflict preceded Boko Haram, but reflects a similar quest to assert an identity. The Nigerian State is closely related to both groups as well.

On this matter, Thurston (2016, p. 5) indicates another socio-political feature to Boko Haram's Fundamentalism and the responsibility of the State. He mentions that a chronic persecution to Muslim people in Nigeria, and the government's oppressive response, have sustained the construction of their

identity (Thurston, 2016; p. 5). I must, therefore, recall the findings of Maiangwa et al. (2012, p 42), who demonstrated the abuse of violence by Nigerian security forces with the extrajudicial executions of some of their militants in 2009. The brutality exercised by the State only fueled a Fundamentalist perspective of condemning governmental corruption.

As per Danjibo (2009), Fundamentalism can be conceptualized on a framework of sectarian violence. In addition, I consider the division this author marks in Islam: the Shiites and Sunnites. Key differences map their political stances, especially regarding the State and the West. For instance, whereas Sunni Muslims believe that Islam can be integrated to society and the governments, Shiite Muslims believe that Islam must be practiced in its pure and unaltered form (Danjibo, 2009; p. 4). The Shiites, moreover, strongly condemn the functioning of States as democracies, and label them as *satanic* (Adesoji, 2010; p. 99).

Both sects seem to have influenced Boko Haram. Mohammed Yusuf, its former leader, allegedly belonged to the Nigerian Shiites, also known as the Islamic Society of Nigeria. Yet, he also left this sect in the end (Adesoji, 2010; p. 98-99). It seems likely that Boko Haram's sentiment of opposition to the democratic Nigerian Government was inspired by a Shiite stance, while their aim to consolidate an Islamic State ruled under Sharia Law, as well as their violent practices, are drawn from Sunni-inspired groups. Furthermore, Onuaha (2010, p. 57) believes that the fanatic militants' ideology is based upon their interpretation of Orthodox Islam, dictating that Western values, such as education and democracy, should be prohibited.

Although Boko Haram's name means *Western Education is Anathema* (Onuaha, 2010; p. 57), it is important to note that this is a generalization and does not involve all their objectives, nor is it an accurate description for them. Boko Haram, for example, has manifested that they actually oppose Western Society as a whole, preaching the superiority of Islam (Onuaha, 2010; p. 57), an echo of what Maitatsine proclaimed. According to one of its members, their mission is to *clean* the Nigerian State from Western education and the vices that

have stained it (Onuaha, 2010; p. 57). Their exclusivism is founded on a Fundamentalist perspective, condemning everything outside their perception. For instance, non-members, as stated by Onuaha (2010; p. 57), are considered *kuffar*, or disbelievers, and *fasiqun*, or wrongdoers.

The religious exclusivism of Boko Haram is advanced by yet another conservative attitude on Islam. According to Thurston (2016, p. 9), Boko Haram declared themselves as a *Salafi* group, meaning that they abide by the early teachings of their religion, applying literal interpretation to sacred books as *manuals* to everyday life. Nevertheless, Salafists are a minority even in northern Nigeria (Thurston, 2016; p. 9), and they have denounced Boko Haram's violence. In fact, as for 2016, Salafist leaders declared their opposition to them (Thurston, 2016; p. 10). Yet, they also provide a mapping on the interpretation of Boko Haram's religious arguments.

Nigerian Salafism appeared with Abubakar Gumi, a law student that concluded that traditional Muslim scholars did not properly understand Islam. He opposed the mystic Islamic tradition of Sufism, and, in 1978, his followers founded *Jama'at Izalat al-Bid'a wa-Iqamat al-Sunna* (The Society for the Removal of Heretical Innovation and the Prophet's Model), a group known as Izala. After Gumi's death, Izala found itself divided. Consequently, some of its leaders, who gloried in having studied abroad in Saudi Arabia, commenced to recruit young preachers (Thurston, 2016; p. 10).

Thus, Mohammed Yusuf, future founder of Boko Haram, enrolled himself with the Salafists (Thurston, 2016; p. 10). From them, he learned their perspectives on literal and conservative interpretation of Islam. Moreover, Yusuf followed the teachings of today's Salafi-jihadi theorists, such as Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi. In fact, from him he learned the idea of *al-wala' wa-l-bara'*, which translates to loyalty to those considered true Muslims and *disavowal* from all others (Thurston, 2016; p. 12).

It is under these circumstances that Boko Haram declared abiding by a Salafist stance. And, although Salafists have distanced themselves from the

aforementioned extremist group, Thurston (2016, p. 10) states that they are closely related. Moreover, he believes that the materialization of Boko Haram must not be seen as an offspring to Izala, but rather as a result of inner competition for devotees (Thurston, 2016; p. 10), alongside economic and social elements in a divided country. The breach between both Northern and Southern states, existing since Maitatsine, further accentuated religious extremism in Boko Haram's identity.

For instance, the following image exemplifies the Federal Republic of Nigeria divided into North and South, and the legal adoption of Sharia Law:

**IMAGE No. 1**  
**Map of Nigerian States that have adopted the Sharia Law**



**Source:** CSM Nigeria, 2016  
**Produced by:** CSM Nigeria

As it was stated above, the Republic of Nigeria is a Secular State, yet it allows the existence of Islamic Law (The Commonwealth, 2017). Likewise, it is important to draw a connection between this map and the data on casualties due to Boko Haram, gathered from ACLED (2015). Northern states, especially Borno, are the main areas of influence for Boko Haram. According to Adesoji (2011), the existence of religious fanatic groups is explained by economic, social and political reasoning.

In 1999, after 33 years of failed democratic periods intertwined with dictatorships, the transition seemed difficult to align with Islamic tradition. Northern governors applied the Sharia Law in their provinces as a way to assure locals that they would remain true to the *moral foundations* conceived in Islam, in contrast to the supposedly *corrupted* South (Thurston, 2016; p. 11). Correspondingly, twelve northern states implemented the Sharia in criminal law (Kenhammer, 2013; p. 292). This resulted in a dual legal system and a state religion, although this was not contemplated in the Constitution (Adesoji, 2011; p. 110).

*Part II,*  
*Powers of the Federal Republic of Nigeria:*  
(...)  
*10. Prohibition of State Religion.*  
(...)  
(The Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999)

On September 19 of the same year, a resulting movement started with Ahmed Sani Yerima, governor of the Zamfara state. As part of his political campaign, Yerima proposed to implement Sharia Law once elected. This, in fact was the discourse for the All People's Party, the opposition to the Government (Kenhammer, 2013; p. 293). Kenhammer (2013; p. 293) argues that the proposal was a strategy to gain legitimacy from Muslim voters, as they believed that the imposition of secularity lowered them to *second-class citizens* (Adesoji, 2011; p. 111). This was stressed by their perception of a tyrannical government (Adesoji, 2011; p. 111).

Meanwhile, Yusuf inspired a fundamentalist rhetoric in Borno. He stated that Sharia law alone might not save Muslims from moral corruption, but rather a whole Islamic System (Thurston, 2016; p. 11). This discourse, based on the collection of arguments of both Sunni and Shiite sects against the Nigerian State, and following a Salafist perspective on Islam, was the foundation of Boko Haram's religious stance, and their perception of women. Although not yet explained, it is important to consider the elements that start forming Boko Haram's masculine identity, or rather, their idea of *hegemonic masculinity*. As will be seen later, this is related to what their militants believe as an *ideal man*.

Thus, Yusuf illustrated devotion while abiding by Islamic customs, and disloyalty by following Western values, such as its model on Education (Thurston, 2016; p. 12). Yusuf also believed in *izhar al-din*, or the way one may express its faith through public action, coupling this belief with a condemnation of following teachings other than Allah's (*al-hukm bi-ghayr ma anzala Allah*) (Thurston, 2016; p. 12). This is a clear reference to Western values, which from this point onward will be unacceptable to Boko Haram. As per Thurston (2016; p. 12-13), Yusuf's, and consequently Boko Haram's success is due to what the author named the *fragmentation of cared authority*: after colonial rule, and subsequent independence, Islamic leaders known as *emirs* maintained their status in the North. However, for Yusuf, they were corrupted and failed in their mission of maintaining their religion (Thurston, 2016; p. 13).

After Yusuf's death in 2009, Abubakar Shekau assumed Boko Haram's leadership. As his successor, he also had an unyielding stance between Islam and democracy. And, although Shekau's direction is not deemed as religious as Yusuf's, he uses Salafi rhetoric to justify the slaughter of civilians, the assaults on those who abide by Western values of democracy and education, and the bombing attacks on public institutions (Thurston, 2016; p. 14). The former leader ingrained the identity of Boko Haram with a rigid fundamentalist perception that would resonate and guide the actions of the fanatic militants on the day they abducted the Chibok girls.

Yet, on the changing leadership of Boko Haram, I also considered Thurston (2016; p. 6), who believes that the religious narrative may not be representative of the group as a whole, but is used, nonetheless, as a way to justify their violence. Therefore, the alleged theological and political stance of Boko Haram consists in both an opposition to a value system other than their interpretation of Islam, and their politics of victimhood. The former states a *religious exclusivism* that shuns away from behaviors deemed divergent from Islam, such as Western education, democracy, constitutionalism and pacific coexistence with other faiths (Thurston, 2016; p. 5). The case that would be developed in this dissertation is the abduction of the Chibok girls, fully addressed in the third chapter.

Thus, following the studies of Onuaha (2010), Adesoji (2011), and Thurston (2016), I can presume Boko Haram is the byproduct of a changing society that involves both fundamentalism and globalization within their territory. Moved by an opposition towards the West, which is also triggered by Islamophobia and the War on Terror, Boko Haram relied on violence to assert their identity. Moreover, its founder, Muhammad Yusuf, constructed Boko Haram's religious stance based on different currents of conservative Islam. For instance, he supported his vision with both Sunni and Shiite arguments against a democratic state, and furthered a fundamentalist perspective by considering Salafists teachings on literal interpretation of the Quran. Consequently, this led to a religious exclusivist identity, which condemned any dissident attitude against this group.

In conclusion, bearing in mind that the specific objective for this chapter was to analyze the context that led to the emergence of Boko Haram, it was found that this group is influenced by different factors, ranging from the international context, to local history. The Structure that triggered their violent agency is marked, on a Global level, by opposing notions of both Globalization and Fundamentalism. The former, a historic process that is influenced by Western perspectives of secularity, is conceptualized in both capitalism and democracy. The latter is triggered as a reactionary force to the loss of religious identity. Moreover, the War on Terror and Islamophobia, both outcomes of the

9/11 attacks on the United States, fuel anti-West sentiments that serve as a platform for groups like Boko Haram. Furthermore, on a local level, Boko Haram is considered the outcome of political, religious and economic tensions in Nigeria. Impoverished Northern states, where Government's protection is absent, rely on conservative religious views and sustain extremist militias. The militants' claim of corruption from the Government is further fueled by State repression and extrajudicial killings, encouraging a hateful discourse against the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Yet, these arguments that attempt to explain the group's existence must also take into account an exploration of their religious views. Following their founder's lead, Mohammed Yusuf, Boko Haram relies on both Sunni and Shiite arguments against the democratic Nigerian State, wishing to implement a fully Islamic system. In addition, their character is constructed around a Salafist stance that dictates literal and orthodox interpretations to Islam. Thus, Boko Haram's identity was explored in political and social perspectives. Nevertheless, it lacks an important element that would describe the group's behavior toward women: their masculine ideal.

## 2. CHAPTER II: MASCULINITIES CRISIS AND VIOLENCE

There is no single way to be a man; no true consensus on how to define masculinity. Yet, society would like to think otherwise, relying on violence to assert, or rather, to impose on men an unyielding character. Masculinity, as a social construction, defines itself in opposition to femininity and women. Therefore, once the power relations that sustain these notions are contested, men are left with no gender individuality. Boko Haram, as was noted above, bases its identity on fundamentalism and on opposition to the Nigerian State. Moreover, the Chibok schoolgirls abduction reveals a new element: that of an alleged frustration of gender constructions. Yet, this subject encompasses a wide range of theories that attempt to explore the root causes that triggers this phenomenon. For this reason, this chapter's specific objective is to study the existence of a crisis of Masculinities caused by women empowerment through education.

Moreover, this theoretical discussion contemplates feminist perspectives on different concepts, ranging from women's agency to gender-based violence. Following a postcolonial feminist methodology, I take into account both *Western* and local academic production to explore the subject of analysis, avoiding ill-fitting generalizations. Further, this will be accompanied with ethnographic and qualitative studies on the experiences of Nigerians regarding gender constructions. To that end, the first idea considered in this chapter refers to the existing hierarchy on the plurality of Masculinities: the *Hegemonic Masculinity*. This part will attempt to acknowledge the way Patriarchy presents itself in this country, while influencing the ideal masculinity for Boko Haram. This concept will be combined with that of women's empowerment through education, conceived under the United Nations' perspective. Next, I analyze the crisis of Masculinities, a reactionary force that responds to the contestation of men's identity, which is related to the empowerment of minorities. Finally, I will reflect on how the aforementioned dilemma may result in gender-based violence, as male privilege is contested and an unstable identity feels threatened.

Concerning Hegemonic Masculinity and Boko Haram, I mostly refer to Raewyn Connell's (2000-2014) works, as this author examines the hierarchy and

plurality of Masculinities. Nevertheless, Postcolonial and African Feminism are also contemplated, so as to render Connell's theory relevant to the Nigerian perspective. Furthermore, it is important to mention the struggling nature of the masculine ideal, as different forms of it compete to position themselves among new threats and challenges in a patriarchal system. Likewise, an African gender outlook involves an inclusive stance towards men, while bearing in mind a post-colonial methodology that avoids generalizations concerning the subjects of study.

Kabeer's (2005) findings on empowerment, on the other hand, illustrate a new concept that is alien to Masculinities. Nevertheless, it is intertwined with the violence expressed by the Hegemonic ideal Connell mentioned. Following the Millennium Development Goals' perspective, empowerment must be both transformative and active. On this account, it would grant women positive Agency to regain the power that was taken from them. Moreover, Lemon's (1995) work suggests that men that do not adapt to these changing power relations will experiment a *Masculinities crisis*, especially if minorities position themselves on traditionally men-held spheres. This, alongside a historic and ethnographic discussion from Uchendu (2007) and local NGOs will allow us to create an image of gender constructions in Nigeria.

Understanding Masculinities crisis entails taking into consideration gender-based violence. Given, for instance, that men feel frustrated with their identity and loss of authority over women, violent reactions seem to be a consequence to this phenomenon. Therefore, the works of Kaufman (1999) explain how *Manhood Acts* towards women are a way to assert the power that has been objected. Likewise, the author also explains the relation to male privilege as the cause of this brutal behavior. In this part of the chapter, the final piece of theoretical analysis refers to how violence is constructed around men and gender. Before exploring on the abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls, I must first lay the foundations for the analysis of its identity as masculine, and patriarchal, beings.

## 2.1. The Construction of the Masculine Ideal in Nigeria, According to Boko Haram

Boko Haram has declared its hostility to democracy and secularization, as both elements undermine part of its identity. Yet, to complete this analysis, I must also consider what this group fathoms as the definition of being a *man*. This will involve, for instance, reflecting on gender constructions in Nigeria, and their underpinning elements, such as power and authority. Accordingly, Masculinities Theory can interpret the way a *Hegemonic Masculinity* is imposed on Nigerian men, while at the same time being perpetuated by Boko Haram. And, although this dissertation considers *Western* academic production, it is used, as Mohanty (1988, p. 338) would state, to understand this dilemma rather than to explain it.

The starting point for this discussion will be an overview of African Feminism, for it sustains this dissertation analysis. Appropriately, this exploration will delve in post-colonialism, as it is a concept closely related to African perspectives on gender equality. For instance, this trend proposes a way to rethink theory from the Global South, to include ignored perspectives that are closer to the problem itself. This unequal scholastic participation of African men and women, according to Lloyd Brown, is owed to their studies not being written in European languages (da Silva, 2004, p. 129). As per da Silva (2004; p. 129), for example, Western Academia has left behind the voices of black women, while imposing irrelevant solutions to their problems. Similarly, Carole Boyce Davis evidenced the oppression suffered by African women, composed by racist colonialism and the construction of a rule over the indigenous peoples by foreigners (da Silva, 2004; p. 130).

In regard to post-colonialist Feminism, Mohanty (1988, p. 335) states that the West has sustained a hegemonic scholar production, affecting and influencing the studies of developing countries. Her criticism does not ignore the work of different Western women on Feminism; rather, it seeks to hear different voices. Therefore, the author (1988, p. 336-335) contemplates three main arguments against Western academia, especially regarding gender equality

production. Firstly, she denounces the construction of the category of women as a coherent, universal, group with the same interests and aims and with no attention to their economic and ethnic background. Secondly, she rejects the Universalist stance on methodology to comprehend women, used *cross-culturally*. Thirdly, she criticizes the assumption of the same political model of power applied to different countries.

To avoid Western academia limitations, women should not be contemplated as a coherent group of analysis, as it would reduce them to *material subjects* and victims of subjugation (Mohanty, 1988; p. 338). Western feminist discourse, for example, emphasizes the existence of women oppression as a universal occurrence, instead of attempting to understand the reasons behind a given specific circumstance of violence (Mohanty, 1988; p. 338). Homogenizing women, and men, as a consistent category further ignores historic processes with incongruent assumptions (Mohanty, 1988; p. 344). Therefore, this dissertation will not use Connell's Masculinities Theory, as a generalizing explanation to Boko Haram. Rather, it will focus on the exploration of its identity and its relation to education.

Moreover, it must be noted that as per Mohanty (1988, p. 347-348), methodologies that assume concepts and ideas coming from the West to be applied regardless of a country's historical process are deemed as imperialistic. This is the reason why I initially regarded the historic evolution of Boko Haram, and its relation to the international context. In addition, this chapter will include ethnographic information related to the Nigerian gender imagery, so as to include local perspectives and avoid suppositions.

Power relations, seen from a Western perspective, tend to victimize women as powerless objects, without considering their context and furthering a paternalistic point of view (Mohanty, 1988; p. 351-353). I must stress the explorative nature of my work, as I refer to the research of a specific event. Consequently, the Chibok schoolgirls' abduction cannot be considered a broad example of women's experiences in this country. To illustrate this argument, the International Crisis Group (2016, p. 20) believes that, although women in North-

eastern Nigeria suffer from patriarchal violence, their interaction with Boko Haram should not be generalized as victims to the extremist group, as many women participate within it and perpetuate exploitation.

In addition, Connell (2014; p. 1-6) argues that feminist theory has experienced an economy of knowledge, where theory produced from the Global North is preferred rather than that coming from the South. To address the patriarchal dimensions of inequality, Feminism needs a world scale, a mosaic framework that integrates theory from the South and the North (Connell, 2014; p. 14). To illustrate, the author (2014; p. 5) affirms that scholars on Feminism have advanced on a *colonization of gender*, rather than its globalization. Thus, she (2014; p. 13) encourages a world-centered perspective on gender and Masculinities, with a post-colonial stance that considers hegemony.

As a result, southern theorizing involves a critical appropriation of Northern Theory, combined with proper empirical knowledge (Connell, 2014; p. 7). Following a historic account of Boko Haram, I stress this stance as I use different perspectives on Feminism, originating from diverse countries and backgrounds, to investigate Boko Haram as a subject of analysis. At the same time, I avoid generalizing women as victims and oppressed objects of research. Thus, this is the post-colonial view that has sustained this dissertation.

Postcolonial Feminism includes local perspectives in research, and denounces a paternalistic view on the experiences of women in other countries. On that account, I must also base my explorative research on African Feminism. As evidenced by Essof (2001, pg. 124), this type of theory must be reviewed in all of its schools of thought. Addressed by the Nigerian writer Amina Mama, these concern with different perspectives on gender equality. The first one states that it is a bourgeois Western invention and that it lacks meaning for African women in general. On the other hand, the second one recognizes the importance of feminism, but inquires a name change. Examples of this stance are the *womanists* or the Islamic feminists (Essof, 2001, pg. 124). The third school of thought, according to Mama, suggests seizing the concept of feminism through the experiences of African women (Essof 2001, pg. 125).

Moreover, African feminists, according to Phanel Egejuru and Ketu Ketrak, believe that it is important not to segregate men from the reconstruction of the continent (da Silva, 2004, p. 135). To illustrate this point, let us recall da Silva's (2004, p. 135) words on this theory, as the author stressed that it would seek justice for all people. On a local level, Nigerian Feminists have criticized a unitary, patriarchal-oriented, vision of religion, culture or tradition, as these terms are subject to interpretation (Pereira, 2009; p. 265). For example, Pereira (2009, p. 266) states that Nigerian conflicts relate to competing groups of men, while being dependent on their degree of militarism. In fact, the author (2009, p. 266) considers that masculinities are expressed in different spheres of society aside from violent power. On this regard, she contemplates culture, religion, and politics, concluding that women's bodies are bound to represent a moral order (Pereira, 2009; p. 267).

Thus, for this Bachelor Dissertation, I will rely on the third school of thought of African Feminism. As stated above, Nigerian Feminists on this stance believe in a *critical appropriation* of Northern theory, following Connell's (2014) terms. This would allow the comparison and contrast of the works of Connell's (2000-2014) Masculinities Theory, while emphasizing Nigerian perspectives concerning gender constructions, Boko Haram, and their regard on violence. In addition, Nigerian Feminism also focuses on the study of men and their identity. As per Pereira (2009), power structures concerning the body of Nigerian women in relation to men is also part of the studies on African Feminism. Therefore, this will sustain the exploration of masculinity as a gender construction.

I will refer to a different context and consider postcolonial perspectives on masculinity. Therefore, I must explore the construction of gender in relation to Patriarchy, male privilege, women and femininity. For instance, I will reflect on the work of Bharucha (1995), who provides starting remarks concerning the irreconcilability of men and the Feminist theory. According to this author (1995, pg. 1610), some men opposing feminism could be, in fact, detractors of

Patriarchy. Yet, they would not acknowledge that instead of criticizing the system, they are actually against their ideas of masculinity.

Bharucha (1995, pg. 1610) also argues that the terms *man*, *masculine* and *manly* are not quite classified and defined. This is in accordance to Mohanty's (1988) arguments of avoiding a generalization of theory imposed to the Global South. The author then states that someone that was born a man, or someone that is masculine, is not necessarily due to their sex. Therefore, he ventures with a provisional definition for masculinity, taking distance from the traditional sense as a natural and inherent characteristic for men. He defines it as a social and political construction that is later developed through patriarchic interventions (Bharucha, 1995; pg. 1610). This coincides with Connell's Masculinities theory, referring to her studies on hierarchy: the author considers that some historic moments and circumstances of power consolidation define what it is to be a man, an idea that would be furthered by popular consent (Bharucha, 1995, pg. 1610).

Once having established a postcolonial perspective on men gender constructions from a Global South, I will now focus on Connell's studies of the plurality of masculinity. As there are diverse forms of being a man, it must be noted that all these identities are subject of an unattainable ideal for men and young boys. Hegemonic Masculinity, thus, is a concept developed in regard to the gay liberation movement of the seventies, through their understanding of men suffering in a Patriarchal society (Connell, 2015; p. 2-3). This idea was further defined as the set of practices that accentuated men dominance over women (Connell, 2015; p. 3).

Although, in theory, a minority of men around the globe may enact their local vision of Hegemonic Masculinity, this is still a normative feature in gender relations (Connell, 2005; p. 3). This concept shrines the most valued characteristics of being a man, illustrated as an unachievable goal to fulfill (Connell, 2005; p. 3). Additionally, men that still perceive patriarchal benefits from this concept show *complicit* masculinity (Connell, 2005; p. 3) that will accentuate their relation towards dominance and gender inequality.

Nevertheless, I must stress that the above-mentioned concept of *Hegemonic Masculinity* is not identical in every society. Indeed, Patriarchal hierarchies are subject to historical change, with some forms of masculinity being replaced by new ones (Connell, 2005; p. 3), all in an enduring struggle to assert a certain type of ideal upon other. Moreover, Connell (2005; p. 7) confirms that these diverse Masculinities are bound to change, in regard to their current concept of hegemony. Therefore, Masculinities are the diverse forms of being a *man* in each country (Connell, 2005; p. 6). As with the Nigerian case, this gender construction must be contrasted to its historical process and in relation to culture and religion. For instance, elements that would dictate Boko Haram's gender perspective might be influenced by Nigerian's colonial past, its current politics and their fundamentalist vision.

Connell (2015; p. 22) also suggest a new framework to understand Hegemonic Masculinity. The local level, which refers to relations within families and communities, is the base of the construction of a gender hegemony. Moreover, the regional level involves cultural and nation-state aspects that would affect a country as a whole. Finally, the global level considers the world stage, and exemplifies the imposition of a masculine ideal upon different countries and cultures. These different degrees of analysis provide diverse insights to the construction of men's identity. As a result, I will focus on the regional level of a masculine ideal, as it involves the Federal Nigerian Republic in contrast to Boko Haram's fundamentalist perspective. This research, consequently, explores the concept of masculinities in relation to women empowerment. Therefore, I follow Connell's (2005, p. 24) argument on Hegemonic Masculinity, as she states that it is subject to be challenged in a scenario that rendered it obsolete (Connell, 2005; p. 24).

**CHART No. 2**  
**Summary of the main theories used in this Dissertation**

Postcolonial Feminism	African Feminism	Masculinities Theory
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global South perspectives</li> <li>• Western theory is used to explore the problem, rather than to explain it</li> <li>• Women and men are not a coherent object of analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical appropriation of Western theory</li> <li>• Patriarchy present in culture and religion</li> <li>• Concerned with Men and Masculinities studies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Masculinity as a political and social construction</li> <li>• Plurality of Masculinities, all under an Hegemonic unattainable ideal</li> <li>• Hegemonic Masculinity depends on its context</li> </ul>

**Source:** Mohanty (1988), Connell (2005; 2014) Essof (2001), Bharucha (1995), da Silva (2004), Pereira (2009)

**Produced by:** Néstor Guillermo Silverio Torres

To complement the theoretical discussion started above, I use Chart No. 2. This bachelor dissertation will sustain its analysis on both perspectives: Postcolonial and African Feminism, as the research basis to understand gender construction in Nigeria, and more importantly, under Boko Haram. Post-colonialism, for instance, provides a local framework on critical perspectives for Masculinities Theory, further illustrating Nigerian experiences in regard to Men Studies. Moreover, it is used to explore the subjects rather than to provide simplistic explanations of its existence. African Feminism, and more specifically, Nigerian Feminism, clarify the patriarchal obstacles Nigerian Women face, as contrasted with a generalization of their struggle. Furthermore, Masculinities theory, considerably influenced on a postcolonial perspective, states the changing nature of *Hegemonic Masculinity* as dependent on local historical processes and culture. Only by *critically appropriating* these ideas, will we be able to understand Boko Haram's gender construction.

Once having defined the theoretical support for my research, I will address the elements of fundamentalism that accentuated the construction of

Masculinity with reference to Boko Haram. Nevertheless, concerning religious gender ideas is a broad subject, and, following a postcolonial perspective, one should avoid assumptions and suppositions that reduce the exploration of these elements. To illustrate, according to Muslim feminists, the Quran does not depict a *singular* type of masculinity (De Soudy, 2013; p. 13). Therefore, to map the elements the Nigerian extremists used to establish their identity, we should delve on their misunderstandings in regard to gender norms.

Thereby, according to one of Prophet Muhammad's *hadiths*, i.e. tradition, pious men in Islam must cultivate a valiant spirit and heroic devotion to Allah (De Soudy, 2013; p. 10). Notwithstanding, he does not mention marriage, procreation or family, all of these important elements to Muslim men (De Soudy, 2013; p. 10). Furthermore, De Soudy (2013, p. 10) states that a masculinity inspired by the Quran is a subjective idea that depends on the person defending this concept. Mainly, it serves an individual's interests. The author (2013; p. 9) also argues that the construction of this identity shapes the understanding of Islam. These could be further discussed as elements of a misleading perspective on the conception of gender and religion. By way of illustration, the *Hegemonic* values mentioned above respond to specific interest of a group of people. And, as with Fundamentalism, they reflect a political agenda.

As per Hopkins (2006; p. 337), there are two main masculinities discourses in Muslim youth. One emphasizes manliness and patriarchal values, while the other stresses the allegedly feminine behavior of studying. The author states that the latter is recurrent in Muslim environments in Western societies, where he conducted his research. Hopkins (2006; p. 340) also finds that Muslim young boys consider the house as a feminine territory, associating it with housekeeping. This is a construction that has been rooted in the identity of Muslim youth and men. Moreover, the author's conclusions provide us a first illustration to the Hegemonic Masculinity conception of Boko Haram, based upon binary gender norms and the relegation of women to a specific private sphere. I agree with Hopkins (2006, p. 341), who believes that Patriarchy

originates from culture, rather than religion. Once again, this dissertation will not address Islam, only fundamentalist extremism.

To illustrate this point, we would regard the case of Syed Abdul Ala Mawdudi, a political figure of post-imperial India, as he succeeded shaping a binary conception for fundamentalist Masculinity. Namely, his work defined men by opposing them against three other ideas: God, the West and women in general (De Sondy, 2013; p. 12). Although one of his teachings, found in the book *Purdah*, presented the ideal Muslim woman, he also created the vision for an ideal Muslim man following a dualistic gender perspective. Afterwards, his stance has resonated throughout other Muslim leaders in other countries (De Sondy, 2013; p. 17-18) particularly in fundamentalist backgrounds that agree with Mawdudi's definition of manliness.

Consequently, Muslim feminists have highlighted the importance of breaking the binary construction of Muslim men and God, Muslim men and the West, and Muslim men and women (De Sondy, 2013; p. 12). Therefore, the definition of Masculinity must be constructed in opposition to an antagonistic idea. As a result of a dualistic society, femininity would be the opponent of masculinity (De Sondy, 2013; p. 11). This, thus, has paved a Mawdudi-inspired logic that sustains Boko Haram's worldview.

For example, the relation Mawdudi explores in regard to God is also expressed in the Nigerian fundamentalist militia. As Walker (2012; p. 4) already mentioned, the separation of this group from the *mainstream* Islam in Nigeria, calling it corrupted beyond repair, exemplifies how their masculinity is constructed in regard to religion. Additionally, recalling Boko Haram's opposition to Western influence in the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Maiangwa et al., 2012; p. 45) would be in the accordance to Mawdudi's arguments. Following his ideas of hostility towards the West, the extremists would accentuate their manliness. The final element on a Mawdudi-inspired approach would be the opposition to women and femininity, an argument that can be illustrated with the abductions of the Chibok schoolgirls.

Following Mawdudi's idea of masculinity, Boko Haram has asserted its identity in opposition to three other ideas. Yet, it is important to complete this analysis with a study on fundamentalism and gender. As it was noted above, religious extremism was already addressed in its historical and political perspectives. Now, I will emphasize the work of Ahmed (2006) as it elaborates on fundamentalist gender norms and constructions. He starts this discussion by dividing fundamentalism in both *high* and *low*. The former stance is espoused by educated individuals that abide by a narrow interpretation of Islam. The latter expresses another scenario regarding illiteracy a religious extremism. Both types of this attitude are repressive towards women (Ahmed, 2006; p. 11), and according to Ahmed's division, Boko Haram would align to low Fundamentalism.

To further illustrate his arguments on gender construction and Masculinities, Ahmed (2006; p. 21) exemplifies them with the Taliban fundamentalism in Pakistan. The author argues that the notion of being a man is more related to advancing patriarchal agendas, rather than following the teachings of Islam. The same would be true in Nigeria, with the aims of Boko Haram, as they seek power and dominance, both qualities of a masculine construction. As for other religious extremist groups, Masculinity is related to aggression, violence and power (Ahmed, 2006; p. 21).

In addition, other characteristic that would apply to Boko Harm and fundamentalist masculinities is further addressed by Ahmed (2006; p. 24): youth that flank the ranks of Islamic extremists are forced to accept fundamentalist concepts as a consequence to poverty, while being sent to religious schools in haste to counter globalization and their fading cultural existence (Ahmed, 2006; p. 25). This would be related to Boko Haram's opposition to the West, especially concerning democracy and secularization.

Accordingly, the elements that have been analyzed can provide a framework to define Boko Haram's gender construction. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight the diversity of masculinities that Connell addressed, bearing in mind that every country and community is exposed to a different ideal

of Masculinity. Therefore, Hegemonic Masculinity, being subject to a historical process, might be contested by another ideal that wishes to overthrow it in its hierarchy. Regarding the Nigerian extremists, they have claimed that their country is *infected* by Western values, like democracy. For instance, as was noted in the first chapter, a conflict of identity related to their stances concerning secularization and political corruption points to a struggling Masculinities scenario, where traditional values of manliness are replaced by western-style perspectives that oppose their customs. This would be the outcome of the conception of the Southern Nigerian States, following the adoption of secularity in the Republic. Boko Haram, therefore, would seek to assert its idea of Hegemonic Masculinity over the Nigerian community.

De Sondy (2013) also illustrated that a Mawdudi-inspired worldview is based upon a dichotomy perspective. In particular, the conception of this orthodox Islamic political persona defines Masculinity by opposing it against the meaning of the West, God and Women. The discussion above already addressed the antagonism Boko Haram expressed towards the West. Now, following the contradiction of Masculinity and Femininity, it is important to mention the base of this group's actions. For instance, its discourse undermines the constitutional rights of women and homosexuals (Maiangwa et al., 2012; p. 46). Regarding God, one should remember that Boko Haram, as a *Salafi* group, has deviated from mainstream Islam, labeling it as corrupted.

In conclusion, Boko Haram is deemed to position their idea of Hegemonic Masculinity that has been casted aside by a new democratic and western-influenced identity in Nigeria. This is further illustrated by their way of defining what it is to be a man in opposition to different concepts. For instance, they stress their masculinity by defining it with a fundamentalist perspective. Likewise, they oppose Western values, as a way to assert their Hegemonic Masculinity. Thus, their relation to women that are outside their understanding of gender norms may elicit conflict resulting, for example, in the abduction of the Chibok Girls; in a crisis of Masculinities.

## 2.2. The Masculinities Crisis as a Result to Women Empowerment

As was noted above, Boko Haram seemingly wishes to perpetuate their idea on *Hegemonic Masculinity*, using fundamentalism as means to further patriarchal and political agendas. A phenomenon that Connell (2005) already envisioned, as this unyielding gender construction is subject to be challenged and contested. Yet, the consequences of this conflict were not addressed in the previous paragraphs. Therefore, this part of the second chapter will contemplate the ensuing effects of opposing toxic notions of men's identity. Known as Masculinities Crisis, these reactions are connected to women and, as it would be seen, equality. Thus, I shall begin the present discussion by firstly referring to *empowerment* as a concept. This would be followed by the relation between men and women in the African, and more specifically, Nigerian scenario. Finally, the resulting findings of these studies will be applied in the Boko Haram case.

On a first remark regarding empowerment, it is important to mention that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in 1948, serves as a basis for its discourse. For instance, Connell (2015, p. 1) accentuates that this has settled equality between men and women as a recognized element in International Law. Nevertheless, this idea may be criticized as a Western-oriented definition, especially under Boko Haram's perspective. On this matter, it is important to mention that although the Beijing Declaration of 1995 consider education as a women's right, for the purpose of this research, the following arguments will be aligned to the Empowerment definition according to the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, as it exemplifies current State commitments and actions:

*Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women*  
*Target 3.A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015*  
(United Nations, 2000)

Following this line of thought, I contemplate Kabeer's (2005) perspectives on Empowerment and Education, both concepts that will be essential to analyze the Chibok School abduction. The author's observations

begin by firstly defining *Disempowerment*. She conceives it as the given status of a specific group of people who initially possessed power and had it taken from them, especially regarding decision-making (Kabeer, 2005; p. 13-14). Moreover, as Disempowerment mainly entails the lack of possibilities to choose from (Kabeer, 2005; p. 14), individuals become dependent on other people to decide for them.

*Disempowered* women, for example, will be continually controlled given the absence of other opportunities. Nevertheless, possibilities to challenge this structure, aside from being extant, must also be visible (Kabeer, 2005; p. 14). According to Kabeer (2005, p. 14), not all choices are considered pertinent for empowerment. These must be strategic and vital for one's life, such as freedom to pursue education. Otherwise, interiorized power relations of subjugation will result in a cycle of powerlessness. *Empowerment* consequently refers to the contestation of this condition, while regaining the ability to decide over one's affairs (Kabeer, 2005; p. 13-14).

In accordance to Kabeer's (2005) perspectives, this analysis eventually relates to the aspect of *Agency* as the process followed to determine over changing possibilities, in contestation to a *disempowered* structure (Kabeer, 2005; p. 14). On this regard, the author notes that the outcomes of this concept depend on the individual. Hence, Agency may be seen as positive, such as the power *to* decide over one's life; and negative, as power *over* someone as a figure of authority (Kabeer, 2005; p. 14). Empowerment, therefore, requires a positive force capable of contesting existing power relations that subjugate one's will (Kabeer, 2005; p. 14), while accentuating self-worth (Kabeer, 2005; p. 15).

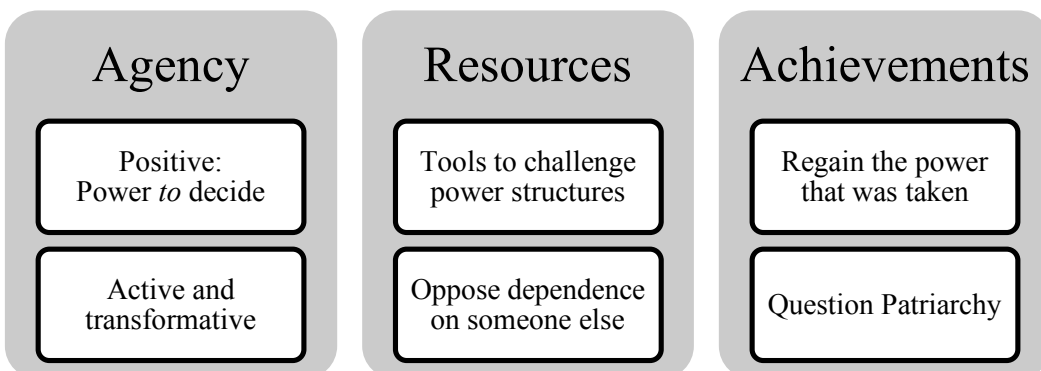
Furthermore, Empowerment relates to an *active* Agency, which dictates the will to act against the established power relations (Kabeer, 2005; p. 15). It also requires *transformative* Agency that challenges patriarchal structures (Kabeer, 2005; p. 16). To illustrate this point, Kabeer (2005, p.16) stresses Education, as it encourages women to think about their own wellbeing, as well as that of their families, and it may challenge existing structures (Kabeer, 2005; p. 16). Nonetheless, Education, to be truly empowering, must be *transformative*.

If not, Patriarchal societies could use it as means of indoctrination that teaches women to perpetuate traditional gender roles (Kabeer, 2005; p. 17). Therefore, women’s empowerment through education should question power constructions (Kabeer, 2005; p. 17).

Kabeer (2005, p. 15) also considers other elements that constitute Empowerment, aside from Agency, being *Resources* and *Achievements*. On this regard, Resources relate to the tools needed to attain it (Kabeer, 2005; p. 15). Recalling the alleged disempowered status of an individual, the author stresses that Positive Agency, i.e. power over one’s life, is undermined if it depends on someone else (Kabeer, 2005; p. 15). Education, therefore, illustrates a new way to challenge this status quo, especially the resource of information. She concludes her observations on Empowerment by analyzing Achievements (Kabeer, 2005; p. 15). This element involves the outcomes of agency and resources, given free will and a contestation of power structures (Kabeer, 2005; p. 15), and being its ultimate objective to de-construct the status quo.

Hence, for the purpose of this Dissertation, the perspective on Women Empowerment follows the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals, emphasizing girls’ education as a way to encourage gender equality. Moreover, as summarized by Chart No. 3, I also consider the Kabeer’s (2005) criticism to this stance to further implement Empowerment as a contestation force to Patriarchy.

**CHART No. 3**  
**Naila Kabeer’s Perspectives on Empowerment**



**Source:** Kabeer (2005)

**Produced by:** Néstor Guillermo Silverio Torres

On a local perspective, empowerment must be conceptualized in regard to African women, while at the same time abstaining from assumptions, or considering them as a coherent analysis group. Yet, following da Silva (2004, p. 132), a majority of women in this continent are burdened with a gendered image of motherhood. This author (2004, p. 132) underlined, for instance, that African cultures relate women to maternity, even favoring male children. In addition, Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie, a Nigerian Feminist, has concluded that women oppression and traditions are bounded together (Da Silva, 2004; p. 134), as with weddings that present brides as possessions to be acquired. This is known, according to Wendt (1995; p. 70-73) as a social structure that depends on shared perceptions and expectations, and is perpetuated by practices and processes.

To illustrate Ogundipe's argument, let us contemplate the comments of the Islamic Sage Usman dan Fodio, ruler of the Great Islamic Empire of Sokoto. Reigning in today's Nigeria (1804 – 181 BC), he drew the portrait needed on pious Islamic women (Njoh & Akiwumi, 2012; p. 6), establishing that they were expected to be concealed in their houses, not to leave except for religious duties (Njoh & Akiwumi, 2012; p. 6). Furthermore, women were obliged to wed, as one of their main duties (Njoh & Akiwumi, 2012; p. 6). Therefore, fundamentalists advocate maintaining traditional gender roles for women, such as the *caregiver* or the *mother*, while at the same time, extending their dominance over them (Berer & Sundari Ravidran, 1996; p. 9). These enduring traditions, as the Nigerian feminist stated, constitute the face of Nigerian Patriarchy. Furthermore, Northern Nigerian state would face a patriarchal customary social structure with specific gender roles for women and men.

As was noted above, the empowerment discourse for this dissertation is based upon the United Nations, through the Millennium Development Goals. Conceived alongside education, Nigerian feminist thought this concept as a way to challenge cultural traditions that burden women with patriarchal power relations. These findings, nevertheless, must be contrasted on a general gender framework to assess its connection to Masculinities Crisis. Therefore, the next paragraphs will address certain constructions around Nigerian masculine identity contemplating both history and regional perspectives.

To analyze this, History Professor Uchendu (2007), of the University of Nigeria, relates the elements of an enduring subjugating mentality in accordance to what Connell (2015; p. 16) named a historical process. Masculinities in Nigeria involve rigidity and oppression, as a remnant of Nigerian colonial past (Uchendu, 2007; p. 292). This country's history finds its background in British imperialism while perpetuating masculinities notions throughout the construction of the current gender relations between men and women. For instance, the British rule over Nigeria taught male privilege over women (Uchendu, 2007; p. 292), as they were expected to be men's attendants in housekeeping. Moreover, considering the historic arguments of Uchendu (2007; p. 293), this further reinforced prejudice towards female education and employment. Hegemonic Masculinity, therefore, appears to undermine women's autonomy via the enforcement of men's privilege (Connell, 2015; p. 16).

Supporting this argument, Ahmed (2006) ponders upon the existence of *Hyper-masculinity* as a historical process that accentuates dichotomous views on gender. According to his studies on *low* fundamentalists groups, he believes that young boys exposed to extremism are shunned from women to be shaped as masculine beings for their communities. They are, thus, separated from the *feminine* (Ahmed, 2006; p. 27), only to be subjects of interactions with the *masculine*. In this manner, the construction of gender is only complete once it is contrasted to its contrary. That is, men's identity seems to be consummated when asserting their masculinity over women. As per Lemon (1995; p. 63), for instance, definitions of Masculinity have reacted historically to definitions of Femininity.

To assess the existence of a binary gender perspective in Nigeria, I contemplate two ethnographic works on this matter, one being the conclusions of two local NGOs, while the other being the findings of the University of Nigeria. By way of illustration, let us first refer to the ethnographic study conducted by the two local NGOs, as it elaborates on women's perspectives regarding gender equality in the Federal Republic. The Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP) and Voices for Change (V4C), directed a qualitative study over the Borno, Kaduna, Lagos and River states to estimate the

situation of masculinities and male privilege in this country. Their life narrative interviews consisted in focus group discussions (FGD) in each State. Two FGD, for instance, were aimed at men between 18 and 25, who were not married and did not have children. Moreover, two additional FGD targeted married men over 35. Likewise, one FGD included women between 18 and 25, while another referred to women older than 35 (NSRP & V4C, 2016; p. 9).

Nigerians interviewed by the NSRP and V4C (2016, p. 19-20) acknowledge that new generations face changing gender relations, as women are given more freedom to pursue education and a career. Nevertheless, Nigerian men believe they become a man depending on their education, employment and marital status (NSRP & V4C, 2016; p. 11), while emotion is seen as a weakness that impedes true manhood (NSRP & V4C, 2016; p. 12). Nigerian men also believe in authority, especially regarding the family given a conception of men as breadwinner, as elements of masculinity (NSRP & V4C, 2016; p. 12). In comparison, ideal women in Nigeria are seen as submissive, and supportive to men (NSRP & V4C, 2016; p. 14-15). Therefore, the NSRP and V4C (2016, p. 5) believe that Nigerian men and youth who fail to adapt to a changing power relation with women, tend to elicit conflict (NSRP & V4C, 2016; p. 5)

Likewise, the University of Nigeria study conducted by Uchendu (2007; p. 289-290) on Nigerian youth follows the interview of thirty-seven Nigerian men and thirty-three Nigerian women that have received certain third-degree education. The interviewees' age ranged from twenty to twenty-seven years old. Furthermore, the aim of this research was to explore the gender constructions in a schooled background, contrasting it with orthodox thinking. Uchendu (2007, p. 279) therefore concludes that for Nigerian men, marriage is an important way to show an ideal Masculinity (i.e. *Hegemonic*). Likewise, having a family declares this identity by emphasizing virility and dominance over their children and wives. The result of this work aligns with the author's thesis of a prevalent notion of Masculinities from a colonial past founded in power relations in regard to women, a conclusion that also echoes the NSRP and V4C (2016) findings. Nigerian men, consequently, seem to construct their manhood on violence and in opposition to femininity.

Moreover, I must underline that the aforementioned perspective on empowerment through information, a stance aiming women, contrasts with local conceptions of Education. For instance, as Danjibo (2009, p. 8) notes, northern Nigerian children who are taught under Islamic schooling reject western-educated children (Danjibo, 2009; p. 8) and therefore, Western education as a whole. Furthermore, this author (2009; p. 8) argues the existence of an *almajeri syndrome* in more religious states. This mainly refers to male children in Qur'anic schools being forced to beg on the streets, so as to earn a living for themselves and their teachers. Considering Kabee's (2005) criticism on Empowerment, I must therefore acknowledge that there seems to be neither a transformative, nor an active force behind this type of education that is directed specifically to men.

As a result, two contradictory elements have been dawn on the same scenario. While the empowerment discourse encourages women to defy gender constructions assigned to them, Nigerian Masculinities emphasize power relations favoring men. The ensuing consequences of the existence of both elements is known as Masculinities crisis. Consequently, I will finish this part of the second chapter contemplating studies on this form of conflict. I mainly refer to Lemon's (1995) work on the reasons behind this men's trouble, while also considering the criticism of Heartfield (2002) to the term. And, more importantly, these final paragraphs will measure the opposition men may have to women.

It has to be noted, nevertheless, that to refer to men as a subject of research invokes an academic debate with diverse tendencies, especially since Feminism has been seen as a threat to social order and the notion of male privilege over women (Lemon, 1995; p. 63). As a consequence, this theory has been contested by different movements. The anti-feminism stances, for instance, argue that women do enjoy privileges and that men are the true victims of gender inequality. On the other hand, Pro-male movements, related to the latter, state that the solution to Masculinities crisis lies in re-positioning traditional male values to counter a *feminization* in social life. Finally, the pro-feminist

male movements agree with feminist arguments and further their work on men's studies (Lemon, 1995; p. 64). This is the foundation for this chapter's analysis of Masculinities Crisis: the importance of conceptualizing the identity of men alongside a criticism of Hegemonic Masculinity.

As evidenced above, there is no true consensus on the research for men's identity. This is due, partly, to an author bias on the subject. Consider, for instance, that the mere definition of Masculinities crisis has been contested and criticized by Academia, especially by pro-men movements and anti-feminist discourse. Yet, rather than avoiding criticism, I must dwell on it to acknowledge the importance of the discussion of this concept. According to Heartfield (2002; p. 1) the so-called Masculinities crisis would be a conceived response to a male loss of power to women, while at the same time *demonizing* men as problematic. This author (2002; p. 11-13) concludes that this concept does not exist. He believes that it is based on ideological bias that criticizes men, encourages passivity and emotion, and punishes resistance. For him, their loss of power is not due to women, but to the capital. I would like to argue, though, that this study is aimed to the British Society and does not consider the relation to violence and oppression in other parts of the world, such as the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Therefore, let us examine other authors on the emergence of this type frustration.

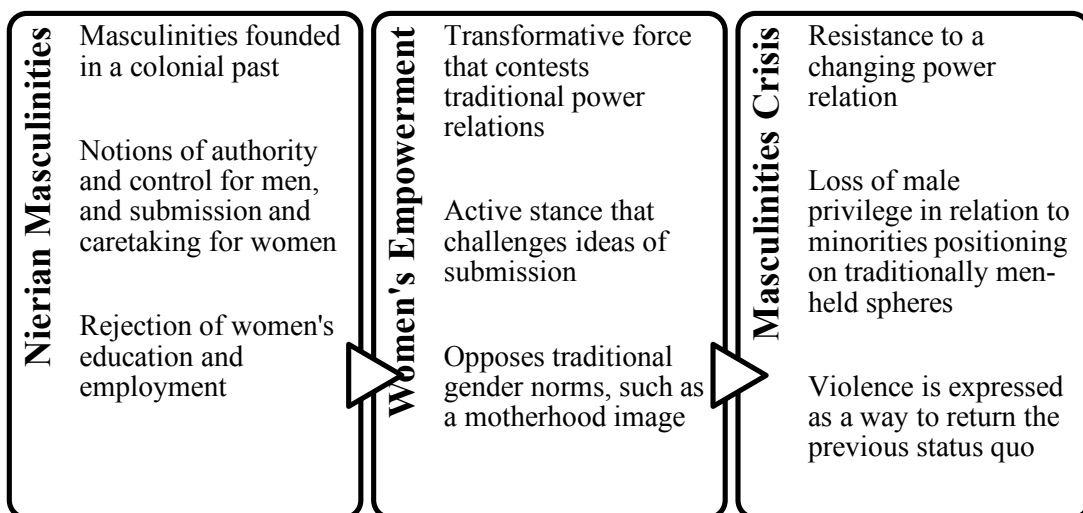
The theory of Masculinities crisis, initially focused on the identity of men and their passive attitude towards the new wave of Feminism (Lemon, 1995; p. 62). Men, thus, entered a crisis, which could only be solved once the status quo of Patriarchy returned to what it was before Feminism in the 60s. Their *male victimization* thesis was sustained by anti-feminist and homophobia (Lemon, 1995; p. 62). Contemporary Masculinity Crisis theory, nevertheless, is quite a different picture. It states that men are constrained by patriarchal definitions of what it is to be a man (Lemon, 1995; p. 62). In addition, referring to the causes of this phenomenon, Lemon (1995, p. 63) first argues that although the patriarchal stereotypes are contested, mass media and religious institutions will perpetuate these ideals. Moreover, this plight for men is caused by women

emancipation movements, the gay liberation, the communication revolution and their declining physical and emotional health (Lemon, 1995; p. 63).

The gay liberation movements, for instance, have criticized Hegemonic Masculinity, while at the same time being seen as transgressions to patriarchal order (Lemon, 1995; p. 64). Moreover, the media and the new popular culture, offer a contradictory image of men. It first depicts violent macho-like individuals, while at the same time asserting a sensitive *new man* (Lemon, 1995; p. 64). Lemon (1995, p. 68) consequently states that Masculinities crisis may be, in fact, a crisis of power legitimacy, as it involves male resistance to a changing society and the consequences of power distribution between men and women. This frustration refers to the negative perception of a privileged group in regard to minorities, like women and homosexuals, who are positioning themselves in traditionally man-held spheres (Lemon, 1995; p. 69).

To illustrate the connection between the concepts recently addressed, the following chart exemplifies the relation between the Nigerian perspective on Masculinities, Empowerment through education and a resulting Masculinity crisis:

**CHART No. 4**  
**The relation between Women’s Empowerment and Masculinities Crisis**



**Source:** NSRP & V4C (2016), Uchendu (2007), Kabear (2005), Lemon (1995)  
**Produced by:** Néstor Guillermo Silverio Torres

Thus, following the study of Lemon (1995), it seems the empowerment discourse that encourages women to follow a *transformative* Agency that contests cultural power relations causes a crisis in the Nigerian Masculinities imaginary. To challenge the *disempower* status of women involves education as means to de-conceptualize gender roles, such as the *housewife*. Meanwhile, the identity of men, founded in oppression from a colonial past, is unwilling to accept the changing gender relations. Masculinities crisis is then the result of this new conception of power, gender and identity, that is divergent from a customary patriarchal social structure. Northern Nigerian men, being taught on religious institutions that preserve gender roles, consider that this new empowering wave of education for women is alien to their culture. Boko Haram successfully stresses their opposition to Western-like teaching and the changing values of women in their society. Their actions, combined with a misinterpretation of Islam, vow to return to tradition. And, thus, gender-based violence appears.

### **2.3. Violence as a response to the Masculinities Crisis**

Boko Haram seems to experience a Masculinity Crisis, as this group advocates to restore a previous status quo that favored Nigerian men over women, reinstating cultural traditions and gender roles. Empowerment through education is seen as a threat by these extremists, and this results in actions like the Chibok Girls abduction. Yet, the very acts of violence that a Masculinity Crisis may produce need to be analyzed as well. For this reason, I will refer to the theory of *gender-based* violence. For this discussion, nevertheless, it is important to recall Connell's hierarchy of Masculinities. As a starting point, exploring the notions of Hegemonic Masculinity and violence may help us understand the motives behind Boko Haram's attacks.

Physical violence is not always present in Hegemonic Masculinities, given the differences among them (Connell, 2015; p. 13). Nevertheless, Connell (2015, p. 5) also portrays the pursuit of this ideal as a process that may cause specific forms of barbarity. Although *hegemony* does not necessarily imply brutality, it can include it as means of enforcement (Connell, 2015; p. 3).

Moreover, this can be furthered by culture, institutions and persuasion (Connell, 2015; p. 3), which would be in accordance to a fundamentalist thinking in Nigeria. Hegemonic Masculinity, thus, presents itself as a viable solution to a contestation of a patriarchal system (Connell, 2015; p. 24), with the means necessary to accomplish this task. Given a Masculinity Crisis due to a loss of power over women, gender constructions foster this kind of conflict.

The changing notions of Hegemonic Masculinity are bound to historic processes, seeking to reaffirm a fading masculine identity. Moreover, in a dichotomous society where men and women are divided from birth, young boys need to identify themselves as masculine beings through its symbolic construction (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009; p. 281). This, in addition to a pursuit of the masculine ideal, will create a system devoted to men and masculinities. Furthermore, this will be evidenced through the existence of *Male Privilege*. Hence, before addressing *gender-based* violence itself, I must explore the constructions of entitlement that are parallel to a Masculinity crisis. Invisible to men, this is intertwined with culture (Bathrick & Kaufman, 2001; p. 2), and will only be visualized as women denounce its existence (Bathrick & Kaufman, 2001; p. 2). Therefore, the empowerment of minorities may create a conflict with male privilege (Connell, 2015; p. 6; Lemon, 1999; p. 69), and conflict may lead to violence.

Once Hegemonic Masculinity is confronted by femininity, it will try to eradicate it (Ahmed, 2006; p. 22). Men attempting to attain a certain masculine ideal may enact violence to assert that vision. Particularly, this is what Schrock and Schwalbe (2009, p. 281) define as manhood acts. According to these authors (2009, p. 282), for instance, men's identity acquires significance through force. Consequently, men seek to differentiate from women and assert their masculinity, while at the same time perpetuate Patriarchy (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009; p. 287). On that account, they must perform a set of actions to declare their manliness in regard to other men, whilst oppressing women (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009; p. 279). Therefore, Manhood acts are the actions undertaken by men to achieve dominance, asserting a supposed privilege, encouraging

women's submission and avoiding exploitation (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009; p. 281).

The causes of gender-based violence, as per Fried (2003, p. 96), stem from individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural elements (Fried, 2003; p. 96). All of these are based upon gender inequality, hence the uneven distribution of power between men and women (Fried, 2003; p. 96). As a result, Patriarchy must be conceived as a system that thrives under the above-mentioned inequalities. Likewise, following Schrock & Schwalbe (2009) and Lemon (1995), manhood acts will accentuate a men's identity while deterring minorities to challenge the status quo. Thereby, violence in men is furthered by the hegemonic nature of masculinities, as it serves to assert a given ruling order (Kaufman, 1999; p. 1).

Consequently, the following paragraphs will consider the studies made by Kaufman (1999), as they involve both the construction of masculinity and the patriarchal power around it. For instance, this author (1999, p. 1) has identified seven different causes of violence in men, concluding on his *seven Ps* theory. As the speaker in a workshop in North Kathmandu, Kaufman elaborated his work following a United Nations' perspective on the importance of involving both men and women to counter gender inequality. To illustrate, his postulates mainly refer to ideas of male privilege and entitlement that accentuate an oppressing identity in men, while straining them with a violent Hegemonic Masculinity ideal. Yet, in accordance to a post-colonial feminist methodology, I must highlight that I use this theory as means of exploration, rather than justification.

The first element of analysis Kaufman (1999) ponders on is *Patriarchal Power*. The starting point of this discussion contemplates the enduring presence of Patriarchy as a system, with its changing nature, in different countries. Further, violence has also been interiorized in societies while being implemented in ideologies and social structures (Kaufman, 1999; p. 1). We could acknowledge, for instance, that fundamentalist thinking exemplifies this argument. This, then, serves as a vehicle of patriarchal power to ensure the existence of privileges for a group wielding it (Kaufman, 1999; p. 1). Please note

that Bathrick and Kaufman (2001) referred to male privilege, and its oblivious existence to men, as a cause of violence. Patriarchy, ergo, uses ferocity to rest unquestioned.

The second unit of analysis for gender-based violence is *Entitlement of Privileges* (Kaufman, 1999; p. 2). Men living in a patriarchal society consider, consciously or unconsciously, that they possess benefits for the sole reason of being men. Yet, if a group of people denounce the aforementioned privileges, violence ensues as a way to reclaim them (Kaufman, 1999; p. 2). Empowerment of minorities, particularly women, tend to trigger this aspect of the *Hegemonic* masculinity identity. This resonates with Lemon's (1995) theory of Masculinity crisis, a phenomenon that is provoked by a failing realignment of men to different power relations.

This is followed by *Permission* (Kaufman, 1999; p. 2). Violence is not forbidden in society; rather, it is encouraged (Kaufman, 1999; p. 2). Brutality, for example, is also expressed as a rightful way to seek one's goals in customs and religious teachings (Kaufman, 1999; p. 2). Although this is a generalization that may not be true to all communities, it may be applied to the Nigerian case. For instance, I contemplated Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie's arguments against cultural traditions as burdens that prevent gender equality. Also, Nigerian ethnographic studies (Uchendu, 2007; NSRP & V4C, 2016) recognize that culture places importance on the idea of men's authority. Given the identity construction of Boko Haram, a connection seems to appear in regard to their violent behavior and their quest to uphold their misleading interpretations of Islam.

The fourth P is the *Paradox of Men's Power*, and it refers to the contradictions in which a patriarchal society is built upon (Kaufman, 1999; p. 2). Men's power is based on the notions of fear and mistrust (Kaufman, 1999; p. 2), and the ideal of a *hegemonic masculinity*. Men, subsequently, react violently to hide the fear that has been triggered by these paradoxes (Kaufman, 1999; p. 3), and even to assert the status quo that has been challenged by a particular group. This type of violence is the result of the fear of not wielding power (Kaufman,

1999; p. 3), to be disempowered as women are, and be deprived of their authority. Furthermore, this ambiguity thesis aligns with men's rejection of emotion, a finding the NSRP and V4C (2016) discovered in their interviews.

Subsequently, we encounter the *Psychic armor of Manhood* (Kaufman, 1999; p. 3). This relates to the construction of manhood, founded mainly on the detachment of the feminine, resulting on an inability to empathize with the feelings of others (Kaufman, 1999; p. 3). Equally, Schrock & Schwalbe (2009) relate manhood acts as a way to seek recognition from other men, while aiming to attain hegemonic masculinity. A Psychic Armor of sorts is therefore constructed around a society that conceives gender in binary terms. Moreover, detaching men from femininity only perpetuates a *hyper-masculine* environment that serves to accentuate fundamentalism (Ahmed, 2006; p. 22)

The sixth unit of analysis is *Masculinity as a Pressure Cooker* (Kaufman, 1999; p. 3). This involves the way men are taught to suppress their emotions, later channeling them into anger (Kaufman, 1999; p. 3). Manhood is consequently constructed around power and control, meaning that if men lack these elements, they are not men at all (Kaufman, 1999; p. 4). This argument can be associated with the differentiation of men and women, excluding emotions as a feminine attribute (NSRP & V4C, 2016).

The final P refers to *Past Experiences*, which encompass previous encounters with violence that men have endured (Kaufman, 1999; p. 4). This may include, for instance, the violence expressed among men and against them. As for Boko Haram, violence has been an underpinning element of its relationship between civilians and the Nigerian State, marking their behavior with a forceful stance. Let us recall, for instance, the extrajudicial killings of 2009 that Maiangwa et al. (2012) illustrated as an abuse of power from the Nigerian State. These events, coupled with the attacks and bombings of the fundamentalists, define the violent behavior of this group.

By means of illustration, Chart N. 5, summarizes Kaufman's (1999) seven *Ps* of gender-based violence, underlining that these are a power

construction around a patriarchal system. Further, it must be noted that Boko Haram's acts seem to line along these arguments, which would give us an insight regarding cultural male privilege and the entitlement over women that traditions seems to impose.

**CHART No. 5**  
**Kaufman's Gender-based violence Seven Ps**

**Patriarchal Power**

- A system that perpetuates violence

**Entitlement of Privileges**

- Benefits that, once denounced, trigger a Masculinity Crisis

**Permission**

- Cultural interiorization of violent behavior

**Paradox of Men's Power**

- Rejection of emotion

**Psychic armor of Manhood**

- Detachment from femininity

**Masculinity as a Pressure Cooker**

- Channeling suppressed feelings into anger

**Past Experiences**

- History dotted with violence among men

**Source:** Kaufman (1999)

**Produced by:** Néstor Guillermo Silverio Torres

The final piece of our analysis for gender-based violence regarding Boko Haram must contemplate the group's misinterpretations of religion. Fundamentalism focuses on asserting an identity that has been threaten to disappear, giving meaning to the lives of its members and regaining power (Mernissi, 1988; p. 8). Mernissi (1988, p. 10) believes that, based on a feeling of revivalism and longing the past, Fundamentalism is a reaction against social changes in gender roles (Mernissi, 1988; p. 11). Concerning gender equality, fundamentalists may argue that globalization can destroy their society, as it vows to change traditional power relations. Yet, this only happens to a group's misconception of religion.

To illustrate, low fundamentalists, such as Boko Haram, do not cultivate *Logos*, or logical reason, and lack *Eros*, or sensibility. Communities that are deprived from both *Eros* and *Logos* perpetuates itself through violence (Ahmed, 2006; p. 26). This type of response, furthermore, originates from a hyper-masculine environment, scenarios characterized by casting aside into oblivion the notions of femininity, both theologically and psychologically. The feminine is estranged into the notion of *the other* (Ahmed, 2006; p. 22), as a way to reclaim individuality. As was noted above, Boko Haram appears to follow a Mawdudi-inspired conception of Islam that particularly emphasizes Masculinity in opposition to women. That is, their identity acquires significance only if contrasted with another element.

Empowered women, under the United Nations' terms, caused Muslim societies to oppose this conception of changing power relations, as it represented a new set of boundaries (Mernissi, 1988; p. 9) and the loss of identity. For instance, the Taliban in Pakistan are an example of the obliteration of the feminine in a theological context. It means the lack of different spiritual virtues associated with Allah, which are seen as weakness to these extremists. For instance, Ahmed (2006, p. 25) acknowledges that these would be Mercy, Compassion, Love and Peace, among others. These qualities may also be rejected by Nigerians, who deem emotions as feminine (NSRP & V4C, 2016), indicating that Boko Haram also accentuated its distance from any notion of femininity.

As per Bathrick and Kaufman (2001, p. 1), men use violence as a successful way to deter a challenge to their authority, to maintain control and perpetuate the status quo. At the same time, fundamentalism seeks to regain control over society, and in a more specific sense, over women that have sought autonomy (Berer & Sundari Ravidran, 1996; p. 8). This situation seems to endure, as it was already noted in 2001 by the then United Nations Development Fund for Women, or UNIFEM. The subordinated status of women in society has been legitimized by culture and traditions, as well as norms and social institutions, leaving women in a disempowered status in regard to men. Although a predecessor to UN Women, UNIFEM nevertheless remarked a

predominant situation that is also relevant and present in the ethnographic findings of Uchendu (2007), and the NSRP and V4C (2016).

The use of brutality, or the very threat of it, diminishes the presence of women in society (Fried, 2003; p. 91). In other words, manhood acts serve as deterrence to avoid change regarding existing power relations and traditions. Hence, violence impedes women to be conceived as first-class citizens, and is also an obstacle to upholding their human rights (Fried, 2003; p. 91). Furthermore, being found in different spheres of social life such as religion (Fried, 2003; p. 91), gender-based violence attacks women depending on different elements of their identity (Fried, 2003; p. 91). Yet, analyzing violent manhood acts towards women is, in fact, connected to violence against other men, and against themselves (Kaufman, 1999; p. 1). This would further give us insights to contrast Boko Haram's use of cruelty, its identity, and their interpretation of Islam.

Fundamentalist agendas vow to return to a moral order that has been contested, thus reinforcing abandoned gender roles for women (Berer & Sundari Ravidran, 1996; p. 8). It has rejected feminism, mainly the United Nations' perspective on Empowerment, as a divisive force that has alienated women from their husbands and families (Berer & Sundari Ravidran, 1996; p. 9). Thus, it opposes this stance as a contradiction to their interests (Berer & Sundari Ravidran, 1996; p. 9), that is, demonizing gender equality. Therefore, the quest of the disempowered to regain control over their own lives can be violent, as a way to maintain the reigning order of society, Patriarchy.

Masculinity Crisis are triggered once men fail to consider the changing power relations, a consequence to women's empowerment. Yet, on a deeper level, this type of frustration is mainly due to a condemnation of preconceived male privileges that have granted men dominion over women. Burdened by traditions and patriarchal culture, they should comply by the status quo of Patriarchy. Nevertheless, if women denounce male privilege and empower themselves in regard to an active and transformative agency, this situation can be aggravated by violence. In fact, following Kaufman's (1999) theory on

gender-based violence, we can acknowledge that this kind of conflict is rooted in the construction of the identity of men. Therefore, using religion as a façade, groups like Boko Haram consider violence as a deterrent factor to halt the contestation of their privilege.

Thus, following the specific objective for this chapter, which was to study the existence of a masculinities crisis given women empowerment through education, Boko Haram seems to perpetuate an idea of *Hegemonic Masculinity* that is threatened to disappear. Yet, the first overview of this group's identity lacked a gender perspective that would refer to the root causes for its violent behavior and actions. Moreover, an exploration of these terms indicates that the Nigerian fundamentalists seem to align to a Mawdudi-inspired perspective that defines masculinity in opposition to the West, God and Women. Under the banner of an alleged pure Islam, these extremists in fact seek to impose traditions and cultural norms upon those who question them. As a parallel occurrence, Nigeria is also influenced by the United Nations' empowerment discourse, which encourages women to challenge power relations and Patriarchy. Accordingly, men who failed to adapt to these changes experienced a Masculinities crisis, as their male privilege was denounced, and their power over women questioned. Boko Haram, therefore, in an attempt to assert its identity, enacted violent manhood acts to reinstate the previous status quo. And, the main specific manhood act I will focus on is the events that occurred on April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

### 3. **CHAPTER III: CHIBOK KIDNAPPING AS AN ATTACK TO WOMEN**

The specific objective for this final methodological chapter is to interpret Boko Haram's terrorist response to girls' empowerment through education using Gender Theory. Therefore, to understand the Chibok Schoolgirls abduction, I must first refer to the national situation concerning girls' school enrollment and relate it to the gender construction around Boko Haram's identity. This will be followed by an analysis of Masculinities Crisis, and the use of gender-based violence that led a group of men to assert their Hegemonic Masculinity through this event. Moreover, I conclude this part of the dissertation exploring a new proposal on education for both men and women, a perspective that may counter Nigeria's divisive perspective on masculinity/femininity, and thus prevent future conflict related to Boko Haram.

While the Government applauds progress made to attain Gender Parity in educational institutions, Northern Nigerian states are exposed to dichotomous gender notions and fundamentalist indoctrination. Further, this constitutes a Patriarchal society that perpetuates male privilege. Yet, once their traditions are contested by educated girls, groups like Boko Haram feel that one of the core elements that define their gender construction is threatened. Hegemonic Masculinity, the sole solution for these militants, would turn to violence so as to deter women from furthering their contestation of Patriarchy, resulting in violent manhood acts.

This type of actions seems to explain the Chibok kidnappings of April 14, 2014. Relying on a Human Rights Watch's (2014) ethnographic study on the girls that escaped Boko Haram, I explore the unspoken motives that caused this violent reaction from this group. Moreover, I recall Kaufman's (1999) analysis on gender-based violence and male privilege, as I attempt to identify the reasons behind their alleged entitlement over women. Although the militants have not made overt declaration regarding gender equality, this methodological discussion relates theory and qualitative information to illustrate how their Hegemonic Masculinity ideal contrasts to women empowerment.

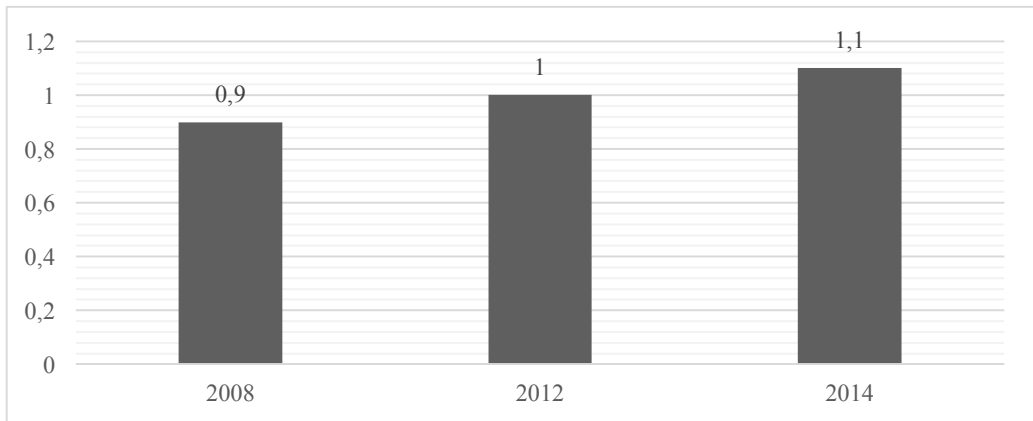
Finally, the last part of this Chapter envisions a possible solution to counter Boko Haram and avoid future conflicts. While stressing that this solution would be valid in the long-term, I also emphasize the need to use a gender perspective in education. Including both men and women, a characteristic of African Feminism, is one of the elements that proposes the deconstruction of patriarchal values. Further, this new empowering gender perspective in Education could serve to unite a dichotomous society that thinks about gender in binary terms, while avoiding a *hyper-masculine* environment that elicits violence and the settling of male privilege.

### **3.1. Boko Haram's Ideals of Masculinity as opposed to Women Education**

Both previous chapters served to outline the context in which Boko Haram thrived, alongside theoretical arguments that explored perspectives on the Nigerian extremists' identity. Consequently, these paragraphs already addressed how a fragile Hegemonic Masculinity ideal could shatter once exposed to the empowerment of women, and the contestation of their privileges. Yet, to discuss this group's stance regarding girls' education, I must first contemplate the Nigerian situation under these terms. That is, I will rely on facts and figures related to literacy, school attendance, and the Federal Republic's position on the Millennium Development Goals.

For instance, the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the Nigerian President on Millennium Development Goals (2015, p. 5) affirms that this country has witnessed increasing equality in both primary and secondary educational levels, despite what the Government considered a "prevailing patriarchal culture". Likewise, the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (2015, p. 7-8) states that, following the Gender Parity Index, Nigeria accomplished the proposed objective in the Third Millennium Development Goal. Empowerment, strictly under this sense, referred to parity in attendance of boys and girls in academic institutions. Therefore, in 2014, there was a girl for every boy enrolled in school. This relation is exemplified in the following chart:

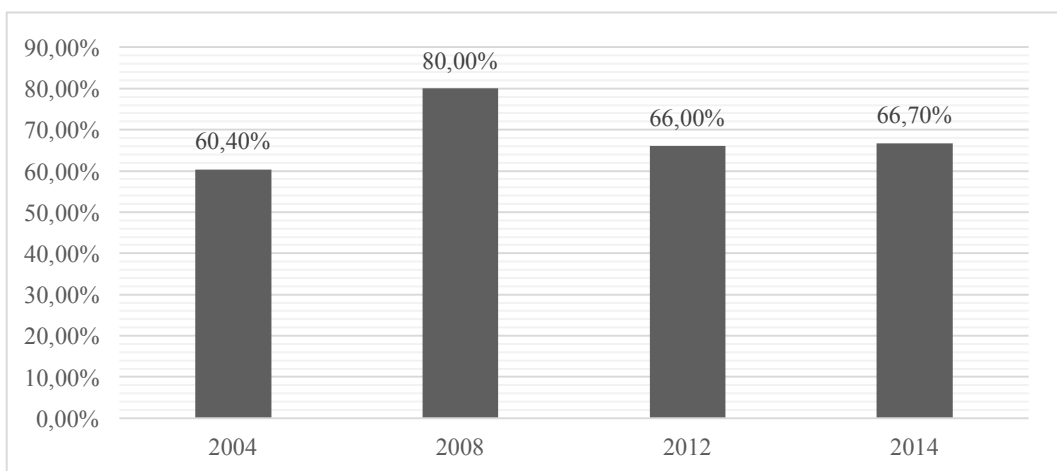
**CHART No. 6**  
**Gender Parity Index Evolution in Nigeria from 2008 to 2014**



**Source:** The National Bureau of Statistics (2015)  
**Produced by:** Néstor Guillermo Silverio Torres

Other perspectives related to Nigeria’s progress in girls’ education are illustrated by the United Nations Children’s Fund. For instance, this organization found that the literacy rate of women between 15 and 24 years descended from 80% in 2008 to 58% before 2012, only to ascend to 66% in the same year (UNICEF, 2013; The National Bureau of Statistics, 2015). Chart No. 7. contemplates these changing figures from 2004 to 2014:

**CHART No. 7**  
**Literacy Rate of Women, 15 to 24 years old, from 2004 to 2014**



**Source:** The National Bureau of Statistics (2015)  
**Produced by:** Néstor Guillermo Silverio Torres

Yet, this progress related to women’s education differs depending on local contexts. Bearing in mind that Boko Haram’s area of influence focuses on

the Northern part of this country, I should also correlate data concerning how empowerment, according to the United Nations' perspective, is uneven in each state. For instance, in 2007, UNICEF (2007; p. 1) already noted the unequal situation of girls' access to basic education, claiming it remains low on northern states. For example, about 20% of Nigerian women in this territory were literate and have attended school (UNICEF, 2007; p. 1). The National Bureau of Statistics agrees with this position, and demonstrates that little advancement has been made, as shown by the following table:

**TABLE No. 2**  
**Literacy Rate among Women, 15 to 24 years old in 2014,**  
**in selected states**

Northern States		Southern States	
State	Percentage	State	Percentage
Sokoto	10,70%	Rivers	98,00%
Bauchi	13,00%	Enugu	97,00%
Yobe	16,00%	Imo	95,00%
Borno	20,00%	Delta	94,10%

**Source:** The National Bureau of Statistics (2015)

**Produced by:** Néstor Guillermo Silverio Torres

The official position of the Nigerian Government praises their advancement in regard to women's education. Yet, data concerning the Northern states, the same that have adopted Sharia Law, seem to indicate otherwise. For example, in 2007, UNICEF (2007, p. 1) already considered that it is more likely that girls do not participate in education than boys in this region. The National Bureau of Statistics (2015) corroborates this information. Furthermore, contrary to the United Nation's perspective, Njho and Akiwumi (2012; p. 14) found a negative relation between the empowerment discourse espoused by the Millennium Development Goals and African Muslim Women. To illustrate, these authors argue that these women are not deemed empowered in regard to their participation on education attendance, literacy, non-agricultural employment, and political participation (Njoh & Akiwumi, 2012; p. 14).

In like manner, the perspectives on education in this country are different depending on the region. For instance, while the Government hailed its progress

in gender parity on the country as a whole, Northern Nigerian States dismiss Western education and women education altogether. Quoting Sanusi (2007), Danjibo (2009, p. 8) states that this system of isolation from Western education dates back from colonial times, when British authorities collaborated with emirs to *shield* the North from any foreign influence, including the South's (Danjibo, 2009; p. 8). As a result, this country differs between the types of education children have, depending on their states: *makarantan boko* or western-education schools, *makarantan addini* or the schools for religious instruction, and *makarantan allo* or the Qur'anic schools (Danjibo, 2009; p. 8).

Indeed, as expressed by Table No.2, girls in Northern states do not enroll as much in schools if compared to Southern states. Moreover, male children are the only ones that receive some kind of education, taught under religious schools, and expected to beg for their teachers. This phenomenon, according to Danjibo (2009; p. 8), is known as *almajeri syndrome*. Hopkins (2006, p. 337-341) corroborates this information, as the author defines that the public sphere is masculine territory, whereas the private sphere is feminine. On this extremist notions of binary construction, women are relegated to their houses. Furthermore, Hopkins' (2006, p. 337) findings on the perception of attending school as a feminine behavior is relevant to the Northern Nigerian states, where Western-like education is ridiculed.

Additionally, ActionAid (2012), an International Non-Governmental Organization that works with women education in Nigeria, believes the current situation for girls and empowerment is due to the gender roles imposed on them. As per da Silva (2004), this echoes the African Feminism perspectives on patriarchal obstacles. These involve motherhood or a caregiver image (ActionAid, 2012; p. 16). Nevertheless, Nigerian girls aspire to receive education, regardless of poverty and possible pregnancy and marriage (ActionAid, 2012; p. 4). Moreover, the Nigerian State, which issued its' 2006 Gender Policy, stressed the importance of female education to increase development (ActionAid, 2012; p. 8). In this regard, federal and local governments, NGOs and some religious organizations advocate support for these measures (ActionAid, 2012; p. 8). Seemingly, this constitutes a positive scenario

for empowerment, in opposition to Boko Haram's demands in favor of traditions.

In accordance to what Kabeer (2005) considered as empowerment, Nigerian girls who received education apparently question their gender roles. This is exemplified in the qualitative interviews to those who attended the *Transforming Education for Girls Program*. Organized by ActionAid (2012, p. 13), the study, conducted on 629 girls, showed that starting in 2008, 41% of the interviewees considered early marriage an obstacle to education. By 2012, this percentage decreased to 28%, demonstrating that a majority of the interviewees did not feared to be wedded before ending their studies. Likewise, ActionAid (2012, p. 14) found that 85% of the girls in their program stated they had the same rights to education as boys. Eighty-three percent considered that society should encourage girls to pursue higher studies (ActionAid, 2012; p. 14). Further conclusions appear to relate urbanization and the access to information (ActionAid, 2012; p. 15). This would explain the opposition of the impoverished rural Northern states to girls' education.

This qualitative study, alongside the figures exposed by the Nigerian Government, correlate education with a way of contestation to patriarchal structures. For instance, as per Kabeer (2005, p. 13-14), girls without schooling would be placed in a *disempowered* status, relying on education to regain the right to choose and manage their own life again. That is, to reclaim the ability to decide over many possibilities that are both extant and visible. Likewise, according to Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie (da Silva, 2004), African Feminism needs to de-construct customary gender roles to overcome obstacles to education, such as pregnancy and poverty. Girls are thus empowered once they are given the ability to decide over important matters in their lives, such as pursuing a career and deciding to marry once they end their studies. Yet, while women cast aside these traditions, a failing ability of some men to adapt to these new power structures may cause conflict.

The Nigerian Government, following the United Nations' perspective, states that girls' attendance to school may provide gender equality. In this

manner, I need to recall Kabeer's (2005, p. 13-15) criticism on empowerment to find if education in itself is the resource used to achieve autonomy. Thus, let us contemplate one of the author's arguments: a fueling Agency that is both *active* and *transformative*. Active, as it involves actions against the existent power structures, such as patriarchal values that neglect women the ability to be independent. And transformative, as its outcomes result in women contesting the gender norms assigned to them, such as their roles as premature mothers and caregivers (Berer & Sundari Ravidran, 1996; p. 9). On this subject, the National Bureau of Statistics (2015) and ActionAid (2012) found an improvement on gender parity. For instance, the girls that attended the *Transforming Education Program* commenced to conceive equal opportunities in comparison to their male peers, and eventually dismissed early marriage as their obligation. Furthermore, their findings resonate with that of Dr. Uzoma Aja-Okorie (2013; p. 278), from the Nigerian University of Abakaliki. To illustrate her conclusions, she indicates that educated women tend to marry at 25 or 30 years, an antithesis to early-wedding traditions.

As it was stated in the previous chapter, Empowerment revolves around the ability to regain autonomy from someone else that wields power against a *disempowered* group. Moreover, this also entails contesting the already existing gender relations that are perpetuated by culture. As per the Senior Special Assistant to the Nigerian President on Millennium Development Goals (2015, p. 5), and the ethnographic studies of both NSRP & V4C (2016) and Uchendu (2007), Nigeria seems to be exposed to patriarchal traditions founded in binary perceptions of gender. Therefore, this dissertation explores the conception of Northern Nigerian women as a disempowered group, while acknowledging the power of men, like Boko Haram, that stems from Male Privilege. To illustrate, Kabeer's (2005) findings point that Boko Haram possesses a *negative agency* as they feel they have an authority *over* women. In contrast to the transformative nature of women empowerment, i.e. the power *to* change the status quo (Kabeer, 2005; p. 14), men like these extremists conceive it as a threat to one of the deepest elements of their identity. Likewise, this new-found autonomy could destabilize a patriarchal structure that is, as per Wendt (1995, p. 73), constructed by shared understandings and expectations of gender norms.

Accordingly, gender-based violence studies relate that men who believe to be entitled to women, be it to their bodies or their very agency, dread this change. Consequently, in an inability to adapt to the changing power structures, they react violently to assert the former cultural status quo. On this regard, it is important to return to the construction of the masculine ideal in Boko Haram's terms and, more importantly, their opposition towards women. Up until this point, we have outlined the situation regarding women's education in this country. It must be noted, therefore, that this discourse is based upon the commitment of the Nigerian Government to the Millennium Development Goals, alongside the African Feminism denouncement of patriarchal traditions. Yet, bearing in mind that Boko Haram claims an utter disregard for *Western values* (Onuaha, 2010; p. 57), the whole idea of women's empowerment is alien to this group, dismissing it as a globalizing invention that threatens their customs and their identity.

As it was concluded on Chapter II, Boko Haram is, in fact, defending their idea of *Hegemonic Masculinity*, establishing that it should reign over a social hierarchy and over other gender constructions that shape men in Nigeria (Connell, 2015; p. 3). In addition, the struggle of this group against the Government, aside from being a socio-economic consequence, exemplifies their quest to assert their masculinity, particularly in regard to women. Considering Connell (2015; p. 7-24), Hegemonic Masculinity is bound to a historical process and a local context, thus prone to be contested. Therefore, her theory provides a starting point to outline the conflict and frustration of the Nigerian fundamentalists. For instance, the local context Connell contemplated could be the Northern Nigerian states, where different perspectives on Masculinity parallel fundamentalist stances. It is important to mention, nonetheless, that Boko Haram's gender constructions may not be applied to a global context in itself. Rather, it is a local manifestation of Patriarchy, replicated in the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Boko Haram, thus, exemplifies the consequences of a fading patriarchal culture in regard to a growing autonomy for women. Therefore, these extremists permeate their Hegemonic Masculinity idea with a religious banner, abiding by a

fundamentalist political agenda. Likewise, as a *Salafi* group, Boko Haram only considers early teachings of Islam and literal interpretations to the Quran (Thurston, 2016; p. 9). These arguments help us separate Boko Haram from an alleged religious perspective, identifying them in terms of their identity and gender constructions. For instance, after analyzing the group's historic evolution, it seems that they comply with a Mawdudi-inspired gender construction that defines identity in contrast to God, the West and women (De Sondy, 2013; p. 12).

De Sondy's (2013) arguments are further explained with Boko Haram's rejection of the constitutional secularity of the Nigerian State. Their action, coupled with their claims over the only pure Islam followers in Nigeria, accentuate how these militants define themselves in regard to Allah. Furthermore, their opposition to the West is already stated through their name, as they condemn mainly democracy (Adesoji, 2010; p. 99), encouraging devout Muslims to avoid participating in this alleged corrupted invention. Likewise, this resistance is rooted as a reaction to a fading identity that feels intimidated by the growing globalization in Nigeria. To illustrate, I must underline their goal, an Islamic State, where unaltered Sharia Law would provide justice for all Nigerians (Maiangwa et al., 2012; p. 42). In the same manner, women empowerment, is a foreign notion to these militants.

This dissertation addressed the first elements of Boko Haram's masculine identity on chapter I. Yet, the following chapters explored the complex notions of gender constructions according to this group. For instance, following the Mawdudi-inspired theory, the masculine construction of Boko Haram is only completed once they have shunned themselves from the feminine, creating an irreconcilable distance between men and women. Basing themselves on a binary perception of society, these militants despise the Nigerian Constitution as it grants equality to women and homosexuals (Maiangwa et al., 2012; p. 46). Nevertheless, girls that started challenging these toxic notions of Hegemonic Masculinity by empowerment via an active and transformative agency, provoked that this group felt its idea of masculinity threatened.

In this manner, considering ethnographic studies based upon Nigerian perceptions concerning education and gender, and the figures of women's participation in school, the Government declared the existence of an "enduring patriarchal culture" that is changing to a different one where girls are being educated, thus contesting these notions. This would confirm Kabeer's (2005) criticism on empowerment to generate both an active and transformative agency. Yet, this situation differs in Northern States, where a patriarchal structure relates to male-only religious education. Following a dichotomous perspective on gender, cultural norms distance men from women and acknowledge their masculinity in opposition to God, the West, and women. This Mawdudi-inspired logic is present in Boko Haram, as it allegedly condemns Western-values and the disruption of traditions. Therefore, women's empowerment through education, a notion alien to this group, would be dismissed as an invention originating from Globalization. As a result, they would oppose this idea so as to assert their identity as men. That being so, a girls-only institution, such as the Chibok Government School, could be considered a threat to their very idea of Hegemonic Masculinity.

### **3.2. Boko Haram's Violence as means of Subjugation to the Chibok Girls**

Concerning women's education, Nigeria faces two different scenarios. On the one hand, the Government hails its progress to attain the Third Millennium Development Goal, stressing that Gender Parity in Schools has been achieved. Nevertheless, Northern Nigerian states, the area of influence of Boko Haram, are exposed to low literacy rate for women and fundamentalist indoctrination for boys. As a consequence, the Nigerian extremists consider women empowerment as a threat to both their culture and their male privileges. Frustrated as they were with these changing gender relations, this group seemed to consider a manhood act as a way of deterrence to avoid further contestations to their idea of *Hegemonic Masculinity*. Thus, the following paragraphs will explore the abduction of the Chibok Schoolgirls that appears to exemplify these arguments, as the Masculinities crisis noted on chapter II.

Being responsible for snatching at least 500 girls in Northern Nigeria, with 276 girls from Chibok alone (Human Rights Watch, 2014; p. 1), Boko Haram appears to feel entitled over women. To further explore this phenomenon, I should analyze reports concerning their violent acts and kidnappings. Consequently, I contemplate Human Rights Watch's (2014) ethnographic study *Those Terrible Weeks in Their Camp* that relates the gender-based violence suffered by the victims of this group. The interviews, conducted from June to August 2014, illustrate the life narrative of 30 persons abducted from April 2013 to April 2014, and the account of 16 witnesses (Human Rights Watch, 2014; p. 1).

Regarding the evolution of this group's tactics, Human Rights Watch (2014, p. 1) seems to echo Walker (2012, p. 4), as this organization notes that Boko Haram's attacks have shifted from governmental targets to civilians. Moreover, the group allegedly assaults those who refused to convert to Islam, kidnapping especially Christian women (Human Rights Watch, 2014; p. 16), and claiming that the abduction of schoolgirls is due to a punishment for their Western education, or a lack of devotion to Islam (Human Rights Watch, 2014; p. 20). As means of illustration, consider the interview of a 17-year-old girl who escaped after the events in Chibok:

*What kind of knowledge are you looking for here? Since you are here to look for Western education, we are here to confront it and teach you the ways of Islam – Words of a Boko Haram militant the day of the abduction of the Chibok Schoolgirls (Human Rights Watch, 2014; p. 20)*

On April 14, 2014, Boko Haram arrived to the Government Girls Secondary School in Chibok, in the Christian area of Borno State (Human Rights Watch, 2014; p. 27). On that same day, the schoolgirls were supposed to take their *West African School Certificate*, a series of examinations intended for English-speaking students (Human Rights Watch, 2014; p. 22). According to the Chibok schoolgirls that managed to escape, the Nigerian fundamentalists probably broke into the school grounds to steal from the brick-making machine and gather food and supplies (Human Rights Watch, 2014; p. 23). Yet, facing no

other obstacle, they initially pretended to be policemen and later abducted 276 girls from this institution (Human Rights Watch, 2014; p. 23).

*Two men told us we should not worry, we should not run. They said they had come to save us from what is happening inside the town, that they are policemen. We did not know that they were from Boko Haram. The rest of the men came and started shouting 'Allahu Akbar' and at that moment we realized, they were Boko Haram. We were told to be quiet. One of them told us that the horrible things we heard happening elsewhere, like burning houses, killing people, killing students, kidnapping people, would happen to us now. We all started crying and he told us to shut up – Words from a 18-year-old Chibok schoolgirl regarding her abduction (Human Rights Watch, 2014; p. 23)*

In addition, the group's success regarding the Chibok abductions promptly led Boko Haram to consider kidnapping girls as a new modus operandi in their jihad against the Nigerian State (Human Rights Watch, 2014; p. 23). Conversely, although the assault on the Chibok Girls School does not appear to have been previously planned, it reveals the ulterior motives behind such attacks. For instance, Boko Haram's militants claim that they were, in fact, *saving* women from discrimination and mundane burdens, like work. As it was later stated, women would be freed from these pains, for they would convert to Islam in the Islamic Kingdom Boko Haram claims to reign (Human Rights Watch, 2014; p. 1):

*You are no longer in Nigeria. You are now in an Islamic kingdom. Here, women's rights are respected, not like in Nigeria where women are made to work, farm, fetch water and firewood, and where you have all types of discrimination. This is the reason why we are rescuing Christian women like you. In our Islamic kingdom, there will be no discrimination because everyone will be Muslims – Words from a Boko Haram militant to a 19-year-old detainee (Human Rights Watch, 2014; p. 1)*

Following the claims of Boko Haram, a connection must be drawn between the alleged cultural traditions they wish to defend and the existence of Patriarchy in Nigeria. As noted above, women's education seems to challenge these cultural expressions while at the same time deflating part of the militant's masculine persona. Likewise, this frustration could result in gender-based violence. For this reason, in the following paragraphs, I refer to Human Rights Watch (2014; p. 25) as the organization retells how girls in abduction were exposed to violence, especially Christian and schoolgirls. On this matter, interviews highlighted the physical abuse and labor they were meant to endure.

For instance, they were forced to follow a caregiver role, performing diverse chores in Boko Haram's camp, such as cleaning and cooking (Human Rights Watch, 2014; p. 26). Girls were also told to participate in armed conflicts, whereas by guarding ammunition or by luring security forces into a trap (Human Rights Watch, 2014; p. 26). Sometimes, they were forced to kill captives (Human Rights Watch, 2014; p. 26).

It must be stressed that the experiences of women within the fundamentalists' camp should not be generalized, as it depends on different factors. To illustrate, some girls were not put into work because of their *beauty*, according to Boko Haram's militants, and were served by the others (Human Rights Watch, 2014; p. 27). Yet, the rest of them suffered violence and punishments because of their faith. For instance, interviewees told Human Rights Watch (2014, p.28) that Christian girls were threatened to death if they did not convert to Islam. Girls were also forced to wed the group's members (Human Rights Watch, 2014; p. 30). Reportedly, Abubakar Shekau decided this kind of fate for the Chibok girls (Human Rights Watch, 2014; p. 31).

In accordance to this alleged entitlement over the body of women, some were raped or sexually abused during their abduction (Human Rights Watch, 2014; p. 33-35). The life narrative contemplated by Human Rights Watch (2014; p. 33-35) confirms that insurgents molested them regardless of their marital status. Other reasons also included their faith and not having supported their cause (Human Rights Watch, 2014; p. 35):

*When we arrived at the camp they left us under a tree. I managed to sleep; I was exhausted and afraid. Late in the night, two insurgents shook me and another woman awake, saying their leader wanted to see us. We had no choice but to follow them, but as soon as we moved deep into the woods, one of them dragged me away, while his partner took the other woman in another direction. I guessed what they had in mind and began to cry. I begged him, telling him I was a married woman. He ignored my pleas, flung me on the ground, and raped me. I could not tell anyone what happened, not even my husband. I still feel so ashamed and cheated. The other woman told me she was also raped, but vowed never to speak of it again as she was single and believes that news of her rape would foreclose her chances of marriage – Words of a 19-year-old victim (Human Rights Watch, 2014; 35)*

The actions of Boko Haram against women cannot be assumed as simple manifestations of violence. Indeed, the causes that at first glimpse seem invisible must be explored in relation to the theoretical foundation of this dissertation. On this matter, the following paragraphs will consider how Masculinities Theory, gender-based violence, and further elaborations on the group's identity apply to the events of April 14<sup>th</sup>. As a starting point, it must be mentioned that the abduction of the Chibok Girls occurred in a Government Girls Secondary School (Human Rights Watch, 2014; p. 63), which supports the idea that Boko Haram opposes both the Nigerian State and Women Empowerment. Moreover, feeling that education was a threat to their idea of Hegemonic Masculinity, this group allegedly enacted violence as a way to stress this same idea as a solution to the contestation of their patriarchal power (Connell, 2012).

Furthermore, the violence the girls endured during captivity apparently responds to the gender roles Nigerian Muslim women were culturally assigned. For instance, as was noted on chapter II, Boko Haram apparently conceive traditions in accordance to the teachings of Usaman dan Fodio, the Islamic Sage of the Great Islamic Empire of Sokoto, who stated that pious women were meant to be concealed in their houses, and to be wedded as an obligation to men (Njoh & Akiwumi, 2012; p. 6). Moreover, this self-proclaimed entitlement over women would be influenced by the remnants of the British rule in Nigeria, the colonial past firstly addressed in chapter I, the same which furthered the idea of servitude for men, increasing the division of men and women in terms of employment and education years to come (Uchendu, 2007; p. 292-293).

Parallel to these traditions, other ideas thrived under the discourse of the United Nations. For instance, women's education, as demonstrated by Kabeer (2005), NSRP & V4C (2016), and ActionAid (2012), would encourage girls to challenge these patriarchal obstacles. Nonetheless, Boko Haram interpreted this form of agency as an act against their male identity, and later stressed their idea of *Hegemonic Masculinity* as a solution to this contestation of their male privilege. This, as Connell (2015, p. 24) states, is a driving force to position itself among a supposed threat, possibly entailing violence.

Moreover, following my analysis on the fundamentalist stance of Boko Haram and its historic evolution, it is important to recall the principal mission of this group, to purge the Nigerian State from corruption and its vices (Onuaha, 2010; p. 57). Thus, these extremists exemplify their beliefs via *izhar al-din*, through their public actions (Thurston, 2016; p. 12). Therefore the Chibok abduction could be interpreted as a faithful behavior, under their perspective. Yet, as a fundamentalist agency, it uses religion as a standard to further a political agenda. It is likely, therefore, that these militants experience a *Masculinities Crisis*, as their patriarchal values are contested while they attempt to assert them (Lemon, 1995; p. 62).

The very abduction of the Chibok Schoolgirls also relates to what Schrock and Schwalbe (2009, p. 282) named as manhood acts. Hence, this event could be analyzed as an action to distinguish men from women, while at the same time maintaining male privilege and the existent status quo. The authors mention that these type of efforts are aimed to oppress women, or rather to maintain their disempowered status. For instance, they are meant to reinforce dominance, privilege, submission and exploitation (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009; p. 281). On this matter, it is important to analyze the Chibok kidnapping as a manhood act of gender-based violence. Accordingly, I regard Kaufman's (1999, p. 1-4) study of how a Hegemonic Masculinity in crisis may be explained through the author's Seven Ps.

Following his gender-based theory (1999) addressed in chapter II, I relate concepts of Male Privilege, Hegemonic Masculinity, and additional information regarding the subject of study. Therefore, I start this discussion by firstly encountering that Nigerian Northern States already exhibit the existence of *patriarchal power* as traditions has been passed down through generations. As a social construction, dating from the XIX century and the British rule over the country, women were relegated to their houses to serve men. Further, the perspectives of local Feminists, such as Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie, affirm the existence of a patriarchal culture that instills gendered roles, such as mothers and caregivers (da Silva, 2004; p. 132). Hegemonic Masculinity, depending on a local context, perpetuates these relations. For instance, as Njoh and Akiwumi

(2012, p. 6) state, this region appears to be influenced by cultural perceptions of women as wives who must be jealously concealed, not to participate in the public sphere. Additionally, the historic account of Professor Uchendu (2007) concludes that these power structures neglected them aside from employment and education. Therefore, a violent manhood act as the Chibok abduction is in accordance with what Bathrick and Kaufman (2001) considered as deterrence to challenge Patriarchy.

Concerning the *entitlement of Privileges* of Boko Haram, it is important to note that the militants of this group do not consider the existence of these benefits, arguing that they, in fact, were helping women to be free from servitude. For this reason, their devout public deeds, *izhar al-adin*, involved kidnapping the schoolgirls from Chibok. Yet, recalling the life narratives collected by Human Rights Watch (2014), I must stress that these extremists believed their actions were just and in benefit of women. On this aspect, these girls appear to embody the end of the invisible privileges their culture constituted, hence using violence to insist on their Hegemonic Masculinity. Regarding this idea, it is important to highlight Lemon's (1995, p. 63) remarks on Masculinities crisis. As the author concluded, empowering minorities will cause conflict with the ruling elite. That is, a transformative education will threaten the negative agency that Boko Haram, as a group of men, wields over women.

Further, society encourages the *permission* needed to trigger gender-based violence, as its power structures acknowledge the submission of women over men. This follows the previous arguments on a patriarchal culture, and the entitlement of women's bodies to serve men. Consequently, Boko Haram's actions are based upon their misunderstanding, a fundamentalist stance, of Qur'anic teachings, finding support for their actions on these perceptions. Recalling Ahmed's (2006, p. 21) conclusions on Hegemonic Masculinity, it is worth mentioning that this ideal can be related to aggression and domination. In accordance to a Mawdudi-inspired gender logic, Boko Haram's Hegemonic Masculinity appears to acquire significance when controlling women and femininity. Thus, this group may have believed it was their right to kidnap the

Chibok Schoolgirls. Further, this aligns to what Wendt (1995, p. 70) considered as the creation of a structure through social practices and processes. That is, culture perpetuates a patriarchal structure.

Regarding the *paradox of men's power*, it must be mentioned that Boko Haram' plight also induces fear over men and women as means of action. Therefore, this would explain why their militants, who are victims of the constraints of a toxic notion of masculinity, react violently to counter the fear of losing power over women. They also dread to be disempowered by the changing relations that education proposes. This relates to both their fading identity as Muslims in a globalizing Nigeria, and the contestation of women to patriarchal structures. As per Kaufman (1999, p. 2), gender-based violence isolates men as attackers, and further fuels their frustration. To illustrate the author's arguments, the ethnographic study of Human Rights Watch (2014) serves to identify the increasing fear civilians have towards this group.

On the subject of the *psychic armor of manhood*, it is important to recall Ahmed's (2006, p. 26) elaboration on low fundamentalists. This kind of groups, like Boko Haram, do not cultivate both Logos and Eros. Logos, which is the reason, is absent from illiterate militants that form the ranks of this group. This aligns to Maiangwa et al.'s (2012; p. 44) findings on their economic profile. Being the Nigerian Government absent in the impoverished Northern States, religious educated boys are drawn to Boko Haram's welfare handouts (Walker, 2012; p. 3). Yet, more importantly, the lack of Eros, or emotion, is purposely meant to estrange men from women, so as to assert their masculinity. This is what Syed Abdul Ala Mawdudi conceived as the proper way to be a Muslim man (De Soudy, 2013; p. 12). As it was demonstrated in previous paragraphs, the Nigerian fundamentalists seem to abide by his dichotomous gender perspective. Furthermore, the resultant hyper-masculine environment promotes violence and antagonizes women, placing them as the *other*. Only by separating the feminine from the masculine, should their identity acquire significance.

*Masculinity as a pressure cooker* is what Kaufman (1999) believes that encourages men into violence. In agreement with Ahmed's (2006) theory on

hyper-masculinity, it appears that a dichotomous separation from the feminine led to repress emotion, a deemed weak characteristic. Consequently, Boko Haram's militants are taught to channel this frustration with anger. Ahmed (2006) exemplified his argument with the Pakistani Taliban, who dismiss compassion and love to accentuate their power. Nevertheless, these findings relate to the Nigerian fundamentalists, while exploring the consequences of their Masculinities crisis. Given, for instance, women's contestation of patriarchal traditions, the group's gender construction is also challenged. This further elicited violence and resulted in the abduction of the Chibok girls.

In addition, *past experiences* indicate that Boko Haram has been marked with violence. To illustrate, these previous events refer to the Government's responsibility in the extrajudicial executions of some of the militants kept in custody in 2009 (Maiangwa et al., 2012; p 42), or the bombing attack on the United Nations compound (Walker; 2012; p.5-6). The history of this group and the Federal Republic of Nigeria is stained with blood and conflict from both sides. Regarding their evolution, a subject addressed in chapter I, it appears both militants and Nigerian security forces have exercised violence against each other. Therefore, knowing only brutality, they direct it to civilians as well. As a result, the Chibok Girls kidnapping, and the violence against their captives, demonstrate this point.

Following Kaufman's (1999) analysis on gender-based violence, it appears that Boko Haram relies on violence as a way to reclaim the privileges that women's empowerment challenge. For instance, Berer & Sundari Ravidran (1996, p. 8) also note that fundamentalists, such as the Nigerian extremists, seek to reestablish a negative agency, i.e. power *over* someone, that has been lost. In result of this, women are targets of gender-based violence to the extent they contest their oppression. Moreover, as it was demonstrated by Mawdudi's dichotomous notions of masculinity, De Sondy's (2013, p. 11) findings indicate that this group believes that femininity is the antagonist of their *Hegemonic Masculinity*.

Boko Haram, thus, seems to be unaware of the existence of male privilege in Nigeria. As a result, they would not overtly declare that women's empowerment threatens their idea of Hegemonic Masculinity. Rather, the methodological discussion of this chapter helps us to explore the unuttered motives behind the abductions of the Chibok schoolgirls. Education, on this scenario, served as the turning point that encouraged girls to rethink traditions, and eventually triggered a Masculinities Crisis. To illustrate this argument, let us consider Bathrick & Kaufman (2001, p. 2) as the authors mention that patriarchal power over women is only visible once it is challenged. Likewise, the Boko Haram's hyper-masculine environment, which is deprived of any notion of femininity, furthers the construction of a toxic masculine ideal that acts on violence and oppression as means to retain power *over* women. For example, this aligns to Connell's (2012) view on the fragile nature of the hierarchy of masculine constructions, and the alleged manhood acts that assert this binary conception on gender (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009)

Ahmed (2006, p. 22) states that once Patriarchy is contested by women's empowerment, men react violently. The author (2006) illustrates his argument by considering the Pakistani Taliban. As it was noted above, these low fundamentalists reject notions of compassion and love, fueling their opposition to western education. Correspondingly, Maiangwa and Agbiboa (2014, p. 54) confirm that they wish to halt women's autonomy by denying their education and using violence as means of reprimand. An example of this is the case of Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani advocate of girls' right to education. This girl was shot on the head by the Taliban in 2012 because she pledged for children to continue studying (Maiangwa & Agbiboa, 2014; p. 53). Furthermore, although the analysis on this event cannot be replicated as an explanation to the Nigerian case, this Dissertation contemplates their likeness. As a result, using this theory on the events of Chibok, it appears that a Masculinities Crisis led Boko Haram to act violently to deter women from undermining their identity as men.

As a consequence, the Chibok schoolgirls abduction serves to identify the underpinning elements that led to Boko Haram's frustration. Yet, please note that these findings do not attempt to blame women's empowerment as the reason

behind Masculinities Crisis. Indeed, the analysis indicates that men, such as these militants, do feel threatened by their loss of power over women, by the changing power relations that are changing a patriarchal structure. Hence, I must stress that this work's intentions are far from victimizing men and their fragile ideas on Hegemonic Masculinity. For instance, anti-feminist groups and stances may, in fact, interpret the analogy between women's education and violence as a way to discourage women to seek a transformative and active Agency over their lives. This would only let the status quo remains unquestioned. Rather, this dissertation does the opposite. It attempts to emphasize the need to work on the identity of men to adapt the new power relations of both men and women. It seeks to prevent conflict by addressing education.

### **3.3. Education as an Answer to Boko Haram's Threat**

*Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:*

(...)

*(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.*

(...)

(United Nations, 1948)

Boko Haram, experiencing a Masculinities crisis in regard to the changing gender norms in Nigeria, would seek to contend their ideas of Hegemonic Masculinity. In this manner, previous chapters addressed the construction of the identity to this group, and how elements, like fundamentalism and patriarchal traditions, map this conflict in a gender perspective. As it was stated, women empowerment triggers gender-based violence as means of restraint to maintain a status quo of both domination and male privilege. Yet, these findings also delineate an answer to the unequal setting of this situation. Although not an immediate response, transformative and active agency to boys and girls promises a new outlook on this conflict that can be included for next decision-makers. Therefore, the final part of Chapter III would be dedicated to examine how education can challenge this toxic notions of gender dichotomy.

Education, as it was noted on chapter II, can provide an empowering framework to challenge patriarchal structures and advocate for equality. Following this argument, the benefits of girl engaged in schools, according to UNICEF (2007; p. 1), include women empowerment as agents of society. It also involves education concerning HIV/AIDS and protection against sexual exploitation. Therefore, in 2007, around 900 schools received direct support from UNICEF, especially aimed for girls (UNICEF, 2007; p. 2). Moreover, as per Al-Okorie (2013, p. 272), this stance could benefit both men and women, as it affirms their Human Rights. Further, this would be in accordance to Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948), and Kabeer's (2005) criticism on a transformative and active agency. Similarly, this may constitute a driving force that instills possibilities for the country's future. On this matter, it is also important to note that it is a way out of poverty (Aja-Okorie, 2013; p. 272). To illustrate, economic deprivation was considered in chapter I addressing the socio-economic causes of the existence of Boko Haram, the problems that constitute the Northern Nigerian states.

This discussion is situated on the existent commitments made by the Federal Republic of Nigeria to fulfill Human Rights. For instance, apart from its dedication to the Third Millennium Development Goal, this country has followed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Human Rights Watch, 2014; p. 54). Additionally, it supports African equivalents, such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (Human Rights Watch, 2014; p. 54). Correspondingly, the Nigerian Government has evolved its policy on Education, rendering it gender-focused (Aja-Okorie, 2013; p. 274). Nonetheless, as was noted above, it was met with a negative reaction by Boko Haram. This group, who despises both democratic and empowering discourses, labeled the State's proposals as Western-influenced. As a blazing symbol of a real-life threat to the militants' identity, the militants sought to eradicate initiatives like the Girls' Secondary School in Chibok.

Notwithstanding, this paper does not intend to justify the Nigerian Government as inequality between men and women has not yet been resolved. Following this argument, while the Government (National Bureau of Statistics, 2015; Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs, 2015) states that gender parity in schools has been achieved, other international indexes indicate otherwise, exploring different dimensions of gender equality. For instance, regarding the Gender Equality Index, Nigeria ranks in number 118 out of 134 countries (Aja-Okorie, 2013; p. 274). Likewise, as the National Bureau of Statistics (2015) acknowledges, Northern Nigerian States show low literacy rates for women. Thus, this is exemplified by the Borno state's government, as it considers a net attendance of girls in education of 29%, compared to the national average of 53% (Hatch, 2014). In addition, about 50% of girls in Northern Nigerian states do not engage in formal or informal education, a situation worsened by Boko Haram's violence (Hatch, 2014).

Moreover, as Human Rights Watch (2014, p. 55) also states, Boko Haram undermines the right to education of every child, not only girls. I consider important to recall the almajeri syndrome in Northern Nigeria, as boys are taught under fundamentalists teachings that perpetuate poverty, while girls are neglected from the public sphere altogether. In addition, I believe this is what Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie conceived as patriarchal traditions in her country. Therefore, I stress the declarations of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, an entity that conceived gender perspectives in education as a way to prevent conflict, early as 2001. Their conclusions seem to be applicable to the Nigerian case in regard to the abductions of schoolgirls. Yet, to fully comprehend the extent of such answer, it is important to consider the context where the Nigerian Government, and organizations like the United Nations, operate.

In agreement with Uchendu's (2007) and NSRP & V4C's (2016) qualitative studies, Patriarchy appears to be related to Nigerian traditions (Asiyanbola, 2005; p. 2). Furthermore, it dates back before Boko Haram, to today's Nigeria's XIX century. In the case of the country's colonial past, both culture and social constructions stressed the difference between men and

women, while imposing a servitude role for women. Additionally, these notions seem to have endured the passage of time. For instance, as for 2016, Nigerians associated Masculinity with a lack of emotion and power, and femininity with submission and caregiving (NSRP & V4C, 2016). Other gender roles, for instance, emphasized the importance of marriage and the authority men wield over their families (Uchendu, 2007). These unequal power relations between men and women interiorized the idea of male privilege. In this regard, it is important to think back to Bharucha (1995, pg. 1610), who established that masculinity is a political and social construction that depends on Patriarchy.

On this matter, dichotomous views on masculinity/femininity have been perpetuated through cultural constructions and interactions. For instance, men in this country are entitled to participate in the public sphere, outside the household domain (Asiyanbola, 2005; p. 2), while women remain relegated to it. As a way to separate the masculine and the feminine, boys have a higher access and enrollment in education than girls. Yet, this dissertation contemplates the possibility of an inclusive perspective in schools that would counter toxic notions of Hegemonic Masculinity. This should address Ahmed's (2006, p. 27) study, as men tend to be deviated from women from an early age to construct their identity as masculine beings.

According to Lemon (1995, p. 63), men define their Hegemonic Masculinity by contrasting it against notions of femininity. Consequently, the hyper-masculine environment, a space deprived from notions of emotion, sustain gender division, further providing a thriving scenario for low fundamentalist groups like Boko Haram. Gender education, nevertheless, could challenge these views while also encouraging women empowerment (Asiyanbola, 2005; p. 2). As it involves children and young adults, this perspective can prevent patriarchal values to establish rigid notions of both masculinity and femininity, thus constructing their identity with no opposition to each other. Also, it would avoid the what Schrock and Schwalbe (2009) defined as manhood acts that perpetuate oppression and a negative agency *over* women.

This inclusive education contrasts with other perspective, especially regarding Nigerian Northern states. For instance, *makarantan boko*, or Western education schools, are dismissed in this region (Danjibo, 2009; p. 8), an action that could also be interpreted as a way to stress a fundamentalist masculinity, deviating from the Government's discourse. Moreover, *low* fundamentalists like Boko Haram, characterized by illiteracy and religious fanaticism, denounce the loss of traditions that studying could carry. Aja-Okorie (2013) mentions, for instance, that cultivated girls tend to choose to be wedded at 25 or 30 years old, a contraposition to Nigerian patriarchal culture.

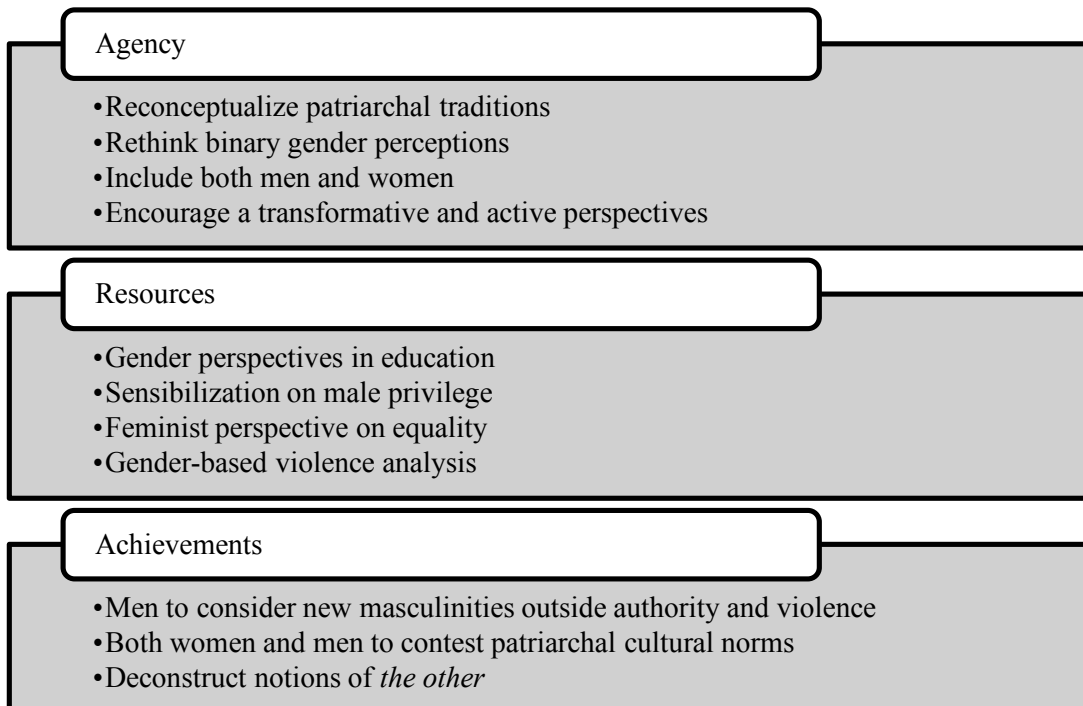
Accordingly, let us contemplate on Abubakar Shekau's, Boko Haram's leader, statement on this regard: "Western education is sin, it is forbidden, and women must go and marry" (Human Rights Watch, 2014; p. 20). In turn, the frustration of this group's Hegemonic Masculinity could be envisioned as a crisis of power legitimacy (Lemon, 1995; p. 68). Nevertheless, if male privilege is to be contested from educational institutions, it needs to address gender constructions for both girls and boys. On this regard, the Government's intent on women's empowerment was already questioned on its efficiency. Now, a new solution can integrate both women and men to generate a social perspective that is aware of the inequalities in the country. For this reason, men and boys need to be also considered as subjects of policy-making, as women and girls move to their traditionally-held spheres. Should this Masculinities crisis be unattended, resulting manhood acts will follow (Lemon, 1995; p. 69).

The new gender-empowering perspective should align with African Feminists' claims to include men in their path to construct a new continent (da Silva, 2004, p. 135). Likewise, following Connell's (2005) Masculinity Theory, they should be involved in the feminist movement, identifying them as human beings instead of oppressors that are prone to violence (Connell, 2005; p. 9). Following this argument, Kaufman (1999, p. 5) acknowledges that it is necessary to involve men and boys to end violence by first rejecting its patriarchal nature, but at the same time making them part of the change. On this point, I should stress that my previous remarks were meant as a way to avoid conflict. For instance, if masculinity depends on patriarchal constructions, an

identity crisis will be triggered on each occasion minorities denounce them. Therefore, without disregarding the experiences of women, men should be encouraged to acknowledge the privilege they possess, and actively join a quest for equality.

For instance, let us bear in mind Fried’s (2003, p. 106-107) agreement with an educational solution to end gender-based violence. His considerations include empowering women and girls and providing an egalitarian legal framework, while also stressing the importance of literacy and education. The Federal Republic of Nigeria appears to follow these recommendations with its 2006 Gender Policy on female education (ActionAid, 2012; p. 8) and its efforts to attain gender parity in school (National Bureau of Statistics, 2015; Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs, 2015). Yet, although the Government fulfilled its commitment on the Third Millennium Development Goal, its policies did not fathom how to include boys in such initiatives.

**CHART No. 8**  
**Gender Perspectives in Education, an Empowering Proposal**



**Source:** Bathrick & Kaufman (2001), Kabeer (2005), Aja-Okorie (2013)

**Produced by:** Néstor Guillermo Silverio Torres

Following Kabeer's (2005) criticism on true empowerment, Chart No. 8 summarizes an educational proposal to include boys and girls in gender equality. In terms of Agency, this idea encourages both an active and transformative perspective that contests the present dichotomy in Nigeria. Moreover, regarding resources, it is important to mention that feminist views in school may help youth to acknowledge male privilege to further challenge it and other patriarchal cultural norms.

As means of illustration, Bathrick and Kaufman (2001, p. 3) state that in order for men to acknowledge male privilege, they must listen to the experiences of women (Bathrick & Kaufman, 2001; p. 2). The authors' thesis insists in exploring the results of engaging women in gender equality, while at the same time challenging male privileges (Bathrick & Kaufman, 2001; p. 3). In like manner, to end gender-based violence, a profound reconceptualization of power relations is needed (Kaufman, 1999; p. 4). It is also important to challenge the toxic notions of masculinity, basing on principles of respect and love (Kaufman, 1999; p. 4). Nevertheless, I must stress that this proposal must be envisioned from a local perspective. Following a post-colonial thinking, I cannot endorse this solution without considering the perspectives of Nigerians, and their own culture, to work for gender equality.

Thus, echoing Aja-Okorie's (2013; p. 280) recommendations to the Nigerian government, it is important to conceive a different solution to the Boko Haram conflict. In this way, including a gender equality perspective in schools. For instance, the Nigerian Government has fulfilled its commitments regarding gender parity in school, and has modified its policies aiming to encourage girls' enrollment in educational institutions. Nevertheless, this public actions have not addressed the gender constructions boys face. Moreover, given the unyielding dichotomous traditions on masculinity/femininity, women's empowerment is condemned while men, like Boko Haram, attempt to assert the male privileges that were contested using violence. This final part of chapter III explores possible ways of including men in gender equality, so as to encourage them to acknowledge their privileges and reconsider their gender constructions. For instance, if they are truly involved in the de-construction of toxic notions of

masculinity, conflict and violence may be prevented. Men, therefore, would no longer would respond to a fading Hegemonic Masculinity that is fueled by the fear of losing power over women.

In this manner, the methodological discussion of this chapter referred to the specific objective of interpreting Boko Haram's terrorist response to girls' empowerment through education, using Gender Theory. This seems to indicate that these insurgents are, in fact, against women's education. It must be noted, nonetheless, that this conception is alien to the group, who has thrived under fundamentalism and patriarchal traditions of Northern Nigerian states, and in opposition to democracy and Western values. On this matter, the Sharia-abiding region imposes a dichotomous view on masculinity and femininity, educating boys with fundamentalists teachings, while at the same time relegating women to the household domain. Therefore, Boko Haram, following a Mawdudi-inspired view on masculinity, believes that women are not meant to go to school. Consequently, they abducted 276 girls from a Government School in Chibok. This, considered to be a manhood act to assert masculinity and reestablish traditions, is proof of how a Hegemonic Masculinity in crisis may elicit gender-based violence. Nevertheless, there seems to be a solution regarding this conflict. Aside from only considering gender parity a success in Nigeria, governmental decision-makers should consider including men in their policies. Further, an inclusive empowering education for both boys and girls may help to contest patriarchal customs and avoid constructing an identity in terms of *the other*. If we are to attain equality, we should understand gender outside toxic and unyielding social norms.

## VI. ANALYSIS

This dissertation's general objective was to analyze the response of the extremist group known as Boko Haram to girl education taking as an example the kidnapping of the Chibok girls in 2014. In accordance to this, I considered a comparing and contrasting research methodology to examine secondary-source ethnographic studies on Nigerian gender constructions, and other qualitative data concerning this country. Moreover, combined with a post-colonial approach, my work was meant to explore the subject of study, rather than attempt to explain this situation. For this reason, I mostly refer to Connell's Masculinities Theory, as well as African Feminism and local perspectives of gender equality, to comprehend how this group shapes its identity in terms of what they define as being a man. Thus, I decided to investigate how a Patriarchal structure of power can be perpetuated by practices, while also using violence as a deterrence to challenge agencies that seek to de-construct it.

Moreover, this research was divided into three chapters, each aiming to explore a different trait of Boko Haram's Identity. Thus, chapter I was designed to analyze the context that led to the emergence of these militants. Chapter II, on the other hand, studies the existence of a crisis of Masculinities that is caused by women empowerment through education. Further, chapter III interprets this group's terrorist response to girls' empowerment through education using Gender Theory. As noted, every part illustrated a complementary perspective on gender constructions that involved history, fundamentalism, and agency.

On this matter, following the historic account of Boko Haram, it appears that this group has been influenced by two opposing phenomena. In the international context, while Globalization stressed the importance of democracy and secularization, an opposing perspective to Muslim peoples appeared following the attacks of 9/11. This encouraged sentiments of Islamophobia and further tarnished the image of the West for Islamic extremists. Moreover, in a local context, Nigeria experiences a fundamentalist revival following the adoption of Sharia Law in the impoverished Northern states, which accentuated their opposition to a westernized South.

Nevertheless, this division between Northern and Southern states has been shaped by different circumstances. For instance, dating back to Nigeria's colonial past, the British rule over the country accentuated the cultural distance amid regions by emphasizing the role of northern emirs to counter external, and southern, influence. Likewise, these practices perpetuated certain traditions that conceived gender in binary terms. For instance, customary religious views stressed the separation of men and women; the former being relegated to the private sphere with specific obligations, like marrying and being a mother. Thus, this local structure firstly reacted in the eighties, as the first religious group, Maitatsine, rose to oppose the alleged moral decay of the country. Although their insurgency lasted until 1985, it marked a precedent on how identity defined agency.

Following the return to democratic civilian rule in 1999, the Federal Republic of Nigeria stressed the possibility for states to abide by the Sharia law. The Northern region, therefore, accepted the change to counter the supposed corruption of the ruling elite. Meanwhile, the conflict between the Government and a preaching group escalated. Known as Boko Haram, these insurgents condemned constitutional secularity and Western-like education and values. They based their behavior in a Salafi stance that vowed to return to religious traditions, while also being influenced by the two main branches of Islam. For instance, according to a Shiite perspective, they opposed democracy, while abiding to a Sunni approach for a pure Islamic State.

In 2009, tensions were at their highest when the government murdered Muhammad Yusuf, the then-leader of Boko Haram, in an extrajudicial execution. Abubakar Shekau assumed the direction of this group and followed the fundamentalist perspective of his predecessor. In this point, it is important to mention that, coming from the state of Borno, a patriarchal structure has greatly determined the construction of their identity. To illustrate, African Feminists perspectives, such as Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie, have stated that traditions are responsible for gender inequality. Moreover, the dynamics of the Northern states supports her thesis. For instance, the lack of presence of the Federal Government

to relieve welfare needs, and the unyielding customary views of these states, accentuated a socio-economic background for the emergence of groups like Boko Haram.

Furthermore, the patriarchal structure for this region perpetuates the gender roles assigned to women, as they are expected to marry before they end their studies. Men, nevertheless, are influenced by an almajeri syndrome, a consequence of fundamentalists teachings directed at boys that encourages them to beg on the streets to earn money and sustain themselves and their teachers. Qualitative and ethnographic studies, in addition, evidence that masculinity is constructed in terms of power over family and violence, deprived from any notion of emotion. This aligns with the conception of low fundamentalists, who are characterized by illiteracy and lack of both Eros (sensitivity) and Logos (reason), thus establishing a hyper-masculine environment. Femininity, on the other hand, depends on submission and caregiving.

Moreover, bearing in mind that Boko Haram acts according to this construction, it seems likely that this group complies by a Mawdudi-inspired view on masculinity. These teachings define what it is to be man in opposition to God, the West, and Women. The Nigerian fundamentalists thus exemplify this argument by firstly condemning mainstream Islam in Nigeria. They also denounce western-like conceptions of democracy and secularization. And, in their attempt to assert their identity, they estrange women as *the other*. Following Connell's gender hierarchy, it appears that Boko Haram is, in fact, struggling to position their perception of Hegemonic Masculinity in their country. Moreover, this idea, which is meant to be contested, can react violently to re-establish itself within the structure.

Regarding girls' education, the research shows that the Nigerian government has committed to the United Nations' Third Millennium Development Goal. The State's position praises its accomplished gender parity in schools. On this matter, empowerment is conceived as pursuing studies to encourage a transformative and active agency that contests customs, while stressing the ability to regain autonomy and power *to* decide over their lives.

Qualitative studies demonstrate, for instance, that women enrolled at schools are challenging traditions like early marriage. They are also more prone not to be subjects of inequality, as they have more opportunity for employment. Nevertheless, a closer examination on the low women literacy rate illustrates that Northern states still enforce a patriarchal structure.

Therefore, the analysis shows how the abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls, in fact, is a manhood act that deters women's empowerment to assert a patriarchal structure. This is mainly due to a Masculinities crisis that has been triggered by the contestation of the region's traditions. This has turned to gender-based violence to re-establish the previous status quo and power relations. Further, this event exemplifies how male privilege was perpetuated through practices, thus consolidating in this way an entitlement over women.

Nonetheless, this dissertation concludes on the exploration of education as a countering reaction to this problem. The idea invites decision-makers to conceive empowerment while involving boys against gender constructions and toxic notions of masculinity. For instance, this would avoid further conflict, as men would no longer construct their identity in terms of opposition to the *other*. Consequently, a new way to be a man will be envisioned, casting aside notions of power and authority, to further challenge the patriarchal structure.

## VII. CONCLUSIONS

Thus, the concluding remarks for this research are as follows:

- The aftermath of the 9/11 attacks on the United States, triggered the so-called *War on Terror*, the same which targeted Muslim people as terrorists and incited Islamophobia. Consequently, the Muslim World opposed the already deteriorated image of the United States. This served as a political background for the emergence of Boko Haram, and the construction of its identity.
- Western perspective on Globalization involves secularization and democracy, placing them as political outcomes that countries should seek. On this matter, Globalization, under Naim's perspective, furthers the complexity of local identities, as they are exposed to a cultural homogenization.
- Globalization is considered a threat to groups like Boko Haram, as it promotes democracy and secularization, and places religion at the personal sphere. The loss of importance of religion provoked conflict as it is considered a loss of identity as well.
- Fundamentalism is a reactionary force to Globalization, as it seeks to assert religious identity while opposing interaction between different cultures. Boko Haram's identity is also based upon this stance.
- Boko Haram's hatred towards the Nigerian state is due to the Government's repressive use of the force. Its actions are, therefore, fueled by the condemnation of its members to extrajudicial executions in 2009, as it vows to establish a pure and non-corrupted Islamic State.
- The Nigerian State has failed to provide education, shelter and jobs for the youth, who became increasingly captivated by the welfare handouts of Boko Haram.

- Boko Haram's opposition to the Nigerian government is founded on claims of corruption and moral decay, thus looking for an Islamic State ruled by Sharia Law. The indiscriminate use of force by the Government further fuels their arguments on this matter.
- Both Boko Haram and its predecessor, Maitatsine, shared similarities concerning their identity and their appearance. For instance, the Maitatsine group was also the outcome of a compilation of economic, political and religious elements on an impoverished Northern Nigeria.
- In 1999, Nigeria returned to civilian rule and adopted a new Constitution that ratified State secularism, while at the same time recognized Sharia Law. This furthered the division between North and South, being the Northern States where Sharia Law would be used as Criminal Law.
- Boko Haram considered that Sharia Law alone could not save Nigeria, and demanded a full Islamic State.
- Boko Haram's founder, Muhammad Yusuf, used different Islamic conservative currents to construct Boko Haram's religious identity. Yusuf, for instance, based upon Shiite stances to condemn democracy and Western influences. He also considered Sunnism on his demands for an Islamic State. Finally, he abided by Salafist teachings, to sustain Boko Haram's literal interpretation to the Quran. Consequently, he assembled a religious exclusivism that denounced dissident perspectives outside Boko Haram.
- Concerning the gender construction of Boko Haram, this group seems to follow a Mawdudi-inspired logic of Masculinity, as it defines what it is to be a man in opposition to the West, God and Women.
- *Low* Fundamentalists, like Boko Haram conceive gender in binary terms and use religion as a banner to further their political and patriarchal agendas.

- Nigerians seem to have certain gender construction, regardless of their educational background. For instance, men are thought to be masculine to the extent of their power over women and their children. Women, on the other hand, are expected to be submissive and follow traditional roles of mother and caregiver.
- Unyielding and dichotomous notions regarding gender may elicit conflict if these are contested. Therefore, Masculinities crisis are the result of men losing authority over women. Regarding Boko Haram, and Nigeria in general, an empowering education that encouraged girls to abandon traditional gender norms may trigger this type of crisis, and may consequently involve violence to reclaim the former status quo.
- Following Kaufman's theory on gender-based violence, it can be further deduced that Masculinity crisis are the consequence of a contestation to male privilege, resulting in the use of violence to deter a change in power relations. Nigeria's traditions, accentuating unyielding notions of masculinity and femininity, are thus considered to be the previous reigning order with given gender norms for women.
- Ethnographic studies on Nigerian young population of youth, whose age ranged from twenty to twenty-seven years old, show that men and women consider masculinity as a matter of authority and power over the family. Likewise, ideal femininity is deemed as submission and caregiving. Nevertheless, these traditional notions are changing with new generations, as women are granted the access to education and employment. Therefore, traditional gender norms, such as early motherhood, are being contested
- The contestation of culture and traditions through empowerment may lead groups like Boko Haram to use gender-based violence to reclaim the power they held over women. Thus, the opposition discourse these extremist had regarding the West and democracy is combined with their failing ability to adapt to different power relations.

- The Nigerian Government acknowledges the progress made to ensure Gender Parity in School, towards achieving the Third Millennium Development Goal. Nevertheless, it also recognizes a patriarchal culture present in the Northern states. In the area of influence of Boko Haram, the Sharia-law region, literacy rates for women range from 10% to 20%.
- Women's education in Nigeria seems to have a positive impact, encouraging both a transformative and active agency against patriarchal traditions. For instance, according to ActionAid (2012), in 2008 41% of the girls enrolled in their *Transformative Education Program* believed that early marriage was an obstacle to finishing their studies. By 2012, the percentage dropped to 28%. In this manner, it appears that girls are contesting traditions related to motherhood.
- Northern Nigerian States are exposed to *makarantan addini* or the schools for religious instruction, and *makarantan allo* or Qur'anic schools, instead of western education. Principally aimed at male children, this type of education results in an *almajeri syndrome*, where boys are expected to beg to earn a living. This kind of education, contrasting to the official discourse on women empowerment, is neither active nor transformative.
- Boko Haram, following a Mawdudi-inspired gender construction, dismissed girls' education as a Western invention alien to the traditions they bowed to protect. Women's empowerment thus triggers a Masculinities Crisis, which in turn elicits violence and manhood acts, like the Chibok Schoolgirls abduction, as means to re-establish previous cultural status quo.
- The Chibok schoolgirls abduction was not a preordained event. Rather, it occurred once Boko Haram did not find obstacles to detain them. Yet, this event also exemplifies the underlying male privilege that sustains the entitlement over women's bodies. Following the official discourse on gender parity in educational institutions, girls did not follow traditions on gender roles, such as early marriage. Boko Haram, therefore, relied on the abduction to deter further questioning to their patriarchal culture.

- Boko Haram's Mawdudi-inspired dichotomous gender notions, alongside patriarchal traditions that relegated women to a private sphere, provide the sustain for their actions. For instance, being a Government School, under an official commitment to United Nations' Third Millennium Development Goal, and located in the Christian area of Borno, the Chibok abduction is considered a *manhood act*, as it expresses and asserts their Hegemonic Masculinity ideal over a threat to their identity.
- Boko Haram's Masculinity crisis responds to the progress made by an active and transformative agency that challenges gender relations. While their idea of Hegemonic Masculinity is sustained by patriarchal traditions, they enact gender-based violence to assert a negative agency *over* women.
- New educational proposals should include both boys and girls to deconstruct binary gender perspectives and contest patriarchal traditions.
- Boys should be encouraged in school to acknowledge their male privilege and to avoid toxic Hegemonic Masculinity.
- By also empowering boys in gender perspectives, and deconstructing patriarchal notions on traditions, they could avoid estranging women as *the other*, in relation to whom they need to assert their masculinity.
- Following a post-colonial perspective, this new educational proposal should be culturally sensitive, taking into account local perspectives of equality instead of generalizing men and women as objects of study.

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## APPENIXES

### APPENDIX No.1: Glossary of Terms

- **Abubakar Shekau:** The leader of Boko Haram that enacted the Chibok Schoolgirls' Abduction in 2014 (Thurston, 2016; p. 14). He assumed the direction of the Nigerian militants in 2009, after Mohammed Yusuf was murdered in an extrajudicial execution. He followed his predecessor's *salafi* stance.
- **African Feminism:** A current of thought in the Feminist movement that proposes to de-construct gendered images of womanhood and contest customary roles assigned to them. It also emphasizes the need to include men in the reconstruction of the African continent (da Silva, 2004, p. 130-135).
- **Agency:** Defined under a feminist perspective, agency refers to the ability to act in accordance to power. Therefore, a negative agency relates to authority *over* someone, while a positive one considers power *to* do something. Following the Empowerment Theory, agency needs to be both transformative, as it opposes a patriarchal structure, and active, as it encourages the will to change the status quo of disempowerment (Kabeer, 2005; p. 14-15).
- **Almajeri syndrome:** A social phenomenon that occurs in Northern Nigerian states, where boys who are educated under fundamentalists teachings are forced to beg in the streets, so as to earn a living for themselves and for their teachers (Danjibo, 2009; p. 8).
- **Boko Haram:** The subject of study of this dissertation, Boko Haram is an extremist fundamentalist group that originated in Maiduguri, Borno State. Known under different forms from 1995, their original name is **Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad** (People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad), Boko Haram is the name Nigerians gave to the militants, meaning "Western Education is Anathema". This group opposes democracy and "western values" and has shifted his attacks to civilians since

2001. It has vowed to establish an Islamic State with a ruling unaltered Sharia Law for all Nigerians (Krech, 2011; p. 132. Onuaha, 2010; p. 55. Walker, 2012; p. 1. Maiangwa et al., 2012; p. 45).

- **Borno:** The far-eastern Northern state of Borno holds the hometown for Boko Haram, the city of Maiduguri. This is also the state where the Chibok abductions took place. Abiding by Sharia Law, this region has a literacy rate for women of 20% (The National Bureau of Statistics, 2015).
- **Crisis of Masculinities:** This refers to the ensuing frustration of unyielding gender notions for men once that, in a patriarchal structure, male privilege is contested. It relates mainly to the construction of identity, and is triggered by the empowerment of minorities, like homosexuals and women (Lemon, 1995; p. 62).
- **Disempowerment:** In contraposition to Empowerment, Disempowerment refers to a situation where a group of people who once possessed power, had it taken from them (Kabeer, 2005; p. 13-14).
- **Empowerment:** Conceived under the terms of *agency*, *resources*, and *achievements*, Empowerment relates to a situation where a group of people reclaims power (Kabeer, 2005; p. 13-15). For this dissertation, I mostly consider Empowerment through education.
- **Fundamentalism:** A countering reaction to globalization and the loss of customs, Fundamentalism encourages literal, and often, misconceptions, of religious texts and religious exclusivism. In turn, *High* Fundamentalism refers to and educated group of people that encourages traditions. On the other hand, *Low* Fundamentalism involves illiteracy and violence. Both forms are repressive towards women (Ahmed, 2006; p. 26. Emerson and Hartman, 2006; p. 130-131). Moreover, on this Dissertation, Low Fundamentalism is analyzed in regard to its connection to Boko Haram

- **Gardawa:** These are known to be Islamic scribe's disciples in Nigeria, who lived on the charity of pious Muslims, and were the followers of the first fundamentalist group of the country, *Maitatsine* (Adesoji, 2011; p. 102).
- **Gender Dichotomy:** Or binary perspectives on gender. A social structure that divides both the feminine from the masculine. Being an irreconcilable gap between men and women, it perpetuates gender roles assigned to them. It also constitutes part of the construction of the identity of Boko Haram, defining it against a notion of *the other* (De Soudy, 2013; p. 12).
- **Gender Parity Index:** An international Index that measures women's assistance to educational institutions in regard to men's. It has been used by the Nigerian Government to identify its progress in relation to girl's empowerment in education (The National Bureau of Statistics, 2015; p. 7).
- **Gender-based Violence:** A type of violence directed especially towards women and girls. Moreover, the root causes for this violent behavior stems from a Masculinity Crisis, of men failing to adapt to a loss of authority over women, and of their male privilege (Fried, 2003; p. 96. Kaufman, 1999; p. 1-4)
- **Global South:** In opposition to the *North*, this term relates to countries that have been labeled as underdeveloped, and that usually are found in the southern hemisphere. It is usually used in post-colonial production (Mohanty, 1988; p. 338). Other similar terms used throughout this Dissertation refers to the relation of Western and Eastern societies.
- **Globalization:** A social historic process of interconnectedness that has stressed western conceptions of democracy and secularization. Although it primarily focuses on a cultural homogenization, it also accentuates local identities rendering them more complex (Emerson & Hartman, 2006; p. 129. Naím, 2009; p. 29).

- **Hadiths:** Islamic traditions that were passed down by Prophet Muhammed (De Sonny, 2013; p. 10).
- **Hegemonic Masculinity:** Following the plurality of Masculinities, Hegemonic Masculinity is the ideal form of being a man regarding a gender hierarchy. Although unattainable, this idea shapes the identity of men and boys in each society. It depends on local, regional and global contexts, and responds to every manifestation to Patriarchy. It is also meant to be contested, and is seen as a solution to assert a patriarchal structure (Connell, 2000-2016).
- **Hyper-masculinity:** In a *low* fundamentalist scenario, it states a structure where both Logos (reason) and Logos (emotion) is absent. Further, it lacks any notion of femininity, such as compassion and love, as they are deemed as weakness, encouraging violence and authority (Ahmed, 2006; p. 26).
- **Islamophobia:** A term firstly used in the 1997 Runnymede Trust report, *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All*. Since 2001, it has acknowledged the violent behavior of a western-globalization perspective that generalizes Muslim people as terrorists (Baleich, 2012; p. 180).
- **Izala:** Considered as the group that advocated for a Salafi stance in Nigeria. It was founded in 1978 by Abubakar Gumi, under the name of **Jama'at Izzalat al-Bid'a wa-Iqamat al-Sunna** (The Society for the Removal of Heretical Innovation and the Prophet's Model). Izala considered that Nigerians had no proper knowledge of Islam (Thurston, 2016; p. 10).
- **Izhar al-din:** A term that denotes the expression of Islamic faith through public actions (Thurston, 2016; p. 12).
- **Jihad:** The struggle against what opposes Islam. Under Boko Haram's perspective, their jihad is meant to be against the corrupted secular Federal Republic of Nigeria (Walker, 2012; p. 3).

- **Makarantan:** Makarantan refers to the different types of education in Nigeria. **Makarantan addini**, for instance, considers the schools for religious instruction. **Makarantan allo**, on the other hand makes reference to the Qur'anic institutions. Contrastingly, **Makarantan boko** involves the Western-education schools opposed by Boko Haram and characterized by secularity.
- **Male Privilege:** In a Patriarchal Structure, male privilege relates to the benefits men are taught for being men. In the Nigerian case, for instance, this refers to the servitude of women to men. Moreover, this construction is oblivious to men, and once it is contested, may create conflict to assert the previous status quo (Connell, 2015; p. 6. Lemon, 19995; p. 69. Uchendu, 2007. Uchendu, 2007; p. 292)
- **Manhood Acts:** Bearing in mind that masculinity is a socio-political construction, and that it acquires significance through practice, Manhood Acts are the actions meant to conceive dominance over others, assert male privilege privilege, maintain women's disempowerment and avoid exploitation (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009; p. 281). For instance, this Dissertation considers Boko Haram's Chibok Abduction an example of manhood acts.
- **Maitatsine:** A word from Hausa that means *the one who damns*, this is the name of the first fundamentalist group in Nigeria whose uprising occurred from 1980 to 1985. Founded by Muhammadu Marwa, they were known for a hostility to the Nigerian State and Western technology. It predated Boko Haram, yet also shared some characteristics with the latter, like their religious exclusivist stance (Adesoji, 2011; p. 101-104).
- **Mohammed Yusuf:** Arguably, Boko Haram's founder. Yusuf was firstly enrolled with Salafists groups in Nigeria, of whom he learned fundamentalism and religious exclusivism. He was killed in 2009, in a extrajudicial execution by security Nigerian forces, although the Government maintains that he was shot while trying to escape. Abubakar Shekau assumed the group's leadership following his demise (Maiangwa et al., 2012; p. 45. Thurston, 2016; p. 10).

- **Patriarchy:** Considered to be a structure perpetuated by social practices and processes (Wendt, 1995; p- 70-73), Patriarchy relates to the system that sustains male privilege and encourages Hegemonic Masculinity for men. It is also founded on a negative agency of power *over* women.
- **Post-colonialism:** Or Postcolonial Feminism. This refers as a theoretical movement that denounces a theoretical conquest of the West (or the Global North) over other academic production, seemingly referencing historic imperialism. On a feminist perspective, it encourages a critical appropriation of western gender equality production, while emphasizing local voices and experiences. It also denies considering women, and men, as homogeneous objects of study with ill-fitting assumptions that attempt to explain patriarchy as a universal occurrence. Rather, it stresses that gender inequality happens differently in each context, and that theory should be used to explore the conflict rather than to describe it (Mohanty, 1988; p. 336-340)
- **Power Relations:** Also, Gender Relations. According to Empowerment studies, Power Relations revolve around the interconnections of the existent structure between the disempowered and the ones who took power from them. As the reigning status quo, it can be contested, requiring active and transformative agency (Kabeer, 2005; p. 14).
- **Religious Exclusivism:** A fundamentalist that states that places a given religious perspective among the others. Recalling Salafism, Boko Haram exemplifies a posture known as *al-wala' wa-l-bara'*, or loyalty to those considered true Muslims and rejection to all *infidels* (Thurston, 2016; p. 12).
- **Salafism:** An orthodox Muslim ideology that concerns only literal interpretation of the Quran. Although a minority in Northern Nigeria, this stance was adopted by Yusuf, who later instilled it in the Boko Haram worldview (Thurston, 2016; p. 9-10).

- **Secularization:** A characteristic of western democratic societies that divides Politics from religion, placing the latter in the individual's sphere (Emerson & Hartman, 2006; p. 127 – 128).
- **Sharia Law:** This refers to a legal system that abides mainly by the teachings of the Quran and those of Prophet Mohammed. In Nigeria, Northern States adopted it as a countering reaction to the South and in an attempt to remain faithful to their moral conceptions (Maiangwa et al., 2012; p. 50. Thurston, 2016; p. 11).
- **Shiites:** One of the two main currents of Islam, Shiites believe that their religion should be practiced in its pure and unaltered form, condemning the Democratic State (Danjibo, 2009; p. 4. Adesoji, 2010; p. 99). Boko Haram is inspired by this opposition to the Government.
- **Structure:** In contraposition to Agency, Structure refers to social constructions that are sustained by shared perceptions and knowledge of ideas and traditions, also perpetuated by practices and processes (Wendt, 1995; p.70-73). In this Dissertation, Patriarchy is the Structure analyzed.
- **Sunnites:** As the other current in Islam, Sunnis believe that their religion can be incorporated into societies and governments (Danjibo, 2009; p. 4). Thus, Boko Haram also aligns with this stance when demanding an Islamic Nigerian State.
- **Syed Abdul Ala Mawdudi:** An Islamic political personality, Mawdudi was known for his elaborations on gender constructions for devout Muslim men. Although his teachings were known in Post-imperial India, they have been taken by other charismatic Islamic leaders. Mawdudi states that masculinity is defined in opposition to three other concepts: God, the West, and women (De Soudy, 2013; p. 12). Boko Haram seems to align with this perspective.
- **West:** Compared to the Global North, the West refers to democratic and secular societies, such as the United States. Boko Haram also includes a set of values, such as empowerment and equality, as part of the West, and thus labels the

United Nations, and its perspectives, as western-oriented. Moreover, concerning post-colonialism, this term describes, for instance, the stance of a power elite, usually white, that believes that experiences are the same for everyone.

- **War on Terror:** A new security perspective furthered by the United States President, George W. Bush, after the 9/11 attacks. As a discourse, it generalized Islam with terrorism, and consequently triggered Islamophobia (Rajwade, 2006; p. 4863).
- **Yan Tansi:** The fundamentalists Nigerians that founded the first religious extremist group in Nigeria, *Maitatsine* (Adesoji, 2011; p. 102).