



Public Policy and National Development: Evaluating the Rationale for Nigeria's Youth Economic Intervention and De-Radicalization Programme

¹William Okotie, PhD & ²Ihaza Kayode

^{1&2}Department of Public Administration, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria.

¹william.okotie@uniben.edu & ²kayode.ihaza@uniben.edu

Abstract

Broadly, three platforms form the ideological pedestals for radicalization: extreme sentiments of religious, political, and ethnic ideologies. The three form the hallmark of the contagious essence of social identity. The basic nexus amongst these standards is extremism. Radicalization is an engagement towards hypnotizing, a psychic process of persuasion and convincing—whether in religion, social values, politics, or self-determination towards some tendentious goal.... de-radicalization counters this tendency; it dissuades and discourages; it is somewhat diplomatic. What radicalization (perhaps, seeks to) tighten or bind in anger or blows, de-radicalization seeks to unbind, loosen or scuffle through policy and political praxis. While radicalization extols violence, de-radicalization entails peace-building; while radicalism is often destructive, de-radicalization is often constructive; radicalism is often revolutionary. But de-radicalization is mostly evolutionary. Thus, by some theoretical/analytical methodology, this works analysis the rationale behind Nigeria's adoption of her various de-radicalization policies. It discovers that such efforts have yielded modicum of success. However, to enhance de-radicalization efforts, the work suggests that developing multifactorial but also localized programmes parallel to Operation Safe Corridor, and addressing root inequalities that contribute to radicalization, are central in gender-sensitive de-radicalization processes.

Key Words: Development, de-radicalization, economic intervention, public, public policy

Introduction

One of contemporary world's most common but inconveniencing words in sociopolitical usage is, *radicalism*. Hence, the word, *radical*, is eclectic. Many are apt to think the adjective simply as a very brave good and innovative one; yet the concept is broader than that. In its ordinary sense, *radical* connotes, not just a new, different view/action (likely to have a great effect on *status quo*), that is, it is in "...favor of thorough and complete political or social change" (Webster's, 2009, p. 1190). The radical represents "thoroughness and completeness"—concerning the most basic and important parts of something, particularly about religious, educational, philosophical, and political ideas. It could be admissible that the term is mostly considered as a left-wing, revolutionary, nasty/disagreeable, non-conformist, and obnoxious one. attitude/activity. While, a radical (one believing, holding or propagating radical ideas or principles), radicalism is expressive of those ideas; it is an attitude and a process. Often, radicalism is continuous and the radical is desirous of "...making people more willing to, first, consider newer, novel/different policies/ideas"; and, second, to be more radical in their political ideals. Such activism is radicalization—which is both a process and an activity; the praxis is often termed extremism. Invariably, terrorism, separatism/secessionism, terrorism and similar forms of violent/expressive behaviors are manifestations of radicalism.

Even though most of the world's adult population is undoubtedly aware of terrorism (a phenomenon that is as old as the existence of mankind itself), not as much understand the core of terrorism). Terrorism is violence, an open expression of radicalism. Terrorism is not but could be a feature of war; yet, it may have the elements of and could be a prelude to actual war/confrontation. Terrorism could occur in times of war as well as times of peace. In the

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latter sense, terrorism comes “within the framework of *jus in bello* and denotes the practices which appear to be uselessly cruel or odious, and are eventually interpreted as war crimes...or infringements of humanitarian law; but in peacetime, terrorism is goal-directed action against some target state” (Blishchenko & Zhdanov, 1984, p. 27). Terrorism is usually goal-directed at some target—persons, property, or institutions. Terrorism inflicts terror and violence. State versus tribe war, of secessionism is termed rebellion. Terrorism could ignite shock, neurosis and trauma amid other a kinds of psychological violence. Terrorism is aggression—the energetic activity of the mind or body, by proper assertion of forceful act or morbidly expressed in bullying, masochism, destructiveness (Watson, 1978/84). It is a political tactic, policy of using acts inspiring terror, or great fear, as a method of ruling or of conducting political opposition. The state as well as the individual can terrorize; it is an aspect of violence (Blishchenko & Zhdanov, p. 27). Terrorism is the acme of violence and radicalism.

Whether by individuals or as groups, ‘terrorism’ is usually planned violence targeted at the state. Popular view holds that to be violent is to be furious, which tends to pervert the eclectic meaning. Violence means to ‘violate’, the violation of the rights, physique and/or property of others or another. Sometimes, it could be inflicted on the self or against nature. Ordinarily, the idea of ‘violence’ is equated with the use of force. Thus, terrorism could violate persons (even kill them) or principles, nature things, or objects, by either inflicting bodily harm or infringe on their rights or freedom. Sometimes, it could be inflicted on the self or against nature. Often, terrorism is politically/ideologically motivated violence.

Terrorism is a praxis of radicalism. Let us proceed by specifying the concept and depiction an act of terrorism. The term, terrorism and ‘an act of terror’ is a derivative of the term terror. Its use and spread followed the description of the deleteriousness that followed public executions in especially post-revolution France of late 1880s; and, similarly the latent consequence—when the ecclesiastic authorities required popular attendance at scenes of executions (Blishchenko & Zhdanov, 1984). At those points, terror was already state official policy, perhaps as deterrent. On the other hand, individual terrorism is action capable of breeding social danger, great loss of life and property. Both represent an encroachment designed with a view to violent destruction of all or aspects of political and legal/administrative organizations of society. Such informed the ideological spar between the east and west in the course of the decades culminating in the establishment of the UN as arbiter. Still, later, hijackers, guerrillas, and mercenaries followed. In this way, acts of terrorism can be committed by combatants in the context of international or national conflict. Terrorism could involve in liberation struggles. Thus there could be war terror, repressive error, revolutionary terror, and sub-revolutionary terror (Wilkinson, 1973, pp. 293-308). It might be a faulty weapon which could misfire, for accomplishing different objectives. Alexander *et al* (1979) defines terrorism as “the threat or actual use of force or violence to attain a political goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation.” In all, terrorist elements include the decision, the threat or use, and the effect of violence plus international (UN) opinion on it as such—implying no specific definition of it. Yet, a difference exists between struggle and violence against domestic autocracy, foreign conquerors exterminating a people, and domestic institutions requiring radicalism. According to Felix Gross (1969, pp. 422/432), terrorism could be tactical (retributive and damaging to government), random-focused, mass terror, or dynastic assassination.

Statement of the Problem

Whether in Nigeria or elsewhere, terrorism has led to unquantifiable loss of human lives and valuable assets; it has depleted the untold resources. Some nations deploy military action as their primary counterterrorism approach; but terrorism surges. The tide is unimaginable, destructiveness inestimable, while the trajectory is indeterminable. Thus, there is upsurge in radicalism, just as there is prevailing upsurge in de-radicalization cutting across different countries of the world not as an alternative to the ongoing military actions but as a compliment to what is already there. De-radicalization is an interesting subject matter as some of the countries that adopted it have already started counting their gains even though there is not much awareness about it and the program elements that make it up. One could scrutinize the various de-radicalization programs across select countries from North, West, and East Africa.

Operation Safe Corridor was created in 2016 after the Government of Nigeria realized that it would not defeat the Boko Haram insurgents by military means alone. This was deliberately targeted at low-level jihadist recruits by the two main factions—*Jama'at al-Islamiyya* and Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP). The rehabilitation program involves vocational training, access to de-radicalization and civic programs. But many Nigerians expressed skepticism while some feel that there is a need for sufficient community consultation before the development and implementation of the program.

Boko Haram's terrorist activity has plagued mostly northern Nigeria since 2002. This terrorist organization predominantly targets younger generations due to poverty and youth unemployment, while also harming, kidnapping, and killing women and girls. Moreover, Boko Haram uses extreme religious preaching to radicalize individuals, particularly youth, against Western democracy, education, the global liberal agenda, and the Nigerian government. Boko Haram has killed around 50,000 people and displaced more than 2.5 million since its establishment. The organization also instrumentalizes women, using female-led attacks to differentiate itself from similar organizations. In response, Nigeria has deployed both hard and diplomatic approaches aimed at combatting Boko Haram and its operations. One of the soft approaches is the Military de-radicalization programme which involved the re-integration of repentant Boko Haram militants into society. Over time, Nigeria has shifted its military de-radicalization tactics to non-military methods, including negotiation, amnesty, disarmament, reintegration, and empowerment. This approach focuses on creating an environment that discourages radicalization and destroys conditions that facilitate it. However, these tactics have overlooked the differing roles and need for de-radicalization.

The research, being qualitative in nature, relies on secondary sources of data due to difficulties in tracing the ex-insurgents for interview and also the volatile nature of the villages they came from. Before understanding the importance of a gender-sensitive deradicalization process for Boko Haram, it is essential to recognize the role of women within the organization. Structural inequalities such as poverty, economic dispossession, lack of state processes, patriarchy, and corruption are central to the recruitment of women into extremist groups. Boko Haram exploits the patriarchal system in northern Nigeria, based on orthodox Shari'a interpretations, further marginalizing women through religious, legal, and social structures, limiting their civic and economic rights. Financial incentives often persuade women to join out of desperation, while some join willingly for revenge, particularly widows. However, most

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women in Boko Haram join through forced conscription and abductions. Nevertheless, the view of women as agents has been persistently problematized. The inability to discern between coercion and forced association due to benefits and structural conditions presents a significant issue in addressing why women join Boko Haram. Therefore, women's complex experiences must be considered as distinct entities within de-radicalization processes.

Objectives of the Study

Although the broad objective of the work is to examine the rationale for Nigeria's de-Radicalization programme as an empowerment public policy for social cohesion, other specific objectives include the need to establish the terrorist nature of radical extremism, how such features in Nigeria amidst the counter measures with the goal of eliminating it in Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature and Theoretical Framework

Review of related literature

Nigeria undertakes its de-radicalization programs that support Boko Haram defectors from three directions. The first is the Prison Program works with hardcore ideology members of the group convicted of violent extremist offenses or those on or awaiting trial. The program involves religious clerics teaching classes on non-violent interpretations of Islam, and vocational training handled by other staff so that when inmates fulfill their prison terms, they can integrate with the society with that vocational knowledge and with less risk of reverting to terrorism. Then the Yellow Ribbon Initiative which targeted and supports women and children associated with Boko Haram by providing psychosocial therapy and reintegration programs, and 'Operation Safe Corridor' launched by the Nigerian military in 2015 for addressing extremist ideology and providing the target group with trauma counseling. All these programs are targeted at de-radicalizing members of these sects that were radicalized teachings of clerics from the insurgent's groups and therefore understanding scholarly contributions on radicalization will aid understanding of the work.

Radicalization is the process by which an individual or a group comes to adopt increasingly radical views in opposition to a political, social, or religious status quo. The ideas of society at large shape the outcomes of radicalization; for example, radical movements can originate from a broad social consensus against progressive changes in society or from a broad desire for change in society. Radicalization therefore is a product of several complex social phenomena ranging from social, economic and political problems that may trigger negative reaction. Randy (2011, p. 8) held that "...radicalization can result in both violent and nonviolent action, extremism radicalization leading to acts of terrorism—depending on the cause and attention given to group by the surrounding environment"; but in most cases attention is focused on violent extremism because of its negative impact on the community and the political system as whole. A number of variables can hatch and promote the process of radicalization in different circumstances dimensions and which can be independent but are usually mutually reinforcing. Radicalization that occurs across multiple reinforcing pathways greatly increases a group's resilience and lethality. Furthermore, by compromising a group's ability to blend in with non-radical society and to participate in a modern, national or international economy, radicalization serves as a kind of sociological trap that gives individuals no other place to go to satisfy their material and spiritual needs (Eli, 2009). The violent

atrocities committed by radical groups are often associated with the ways and manners the group is perceived and treated by constituted authorities otherwise, they often engage in social services that attracts large group of followers. Shira (2010:7) held the opinion that "Radicalization is a dynamic process that varies for each individual, but shares some underlying commonalities that can be explored. "Though there are many end products of the process of radicalization, to include all manner of extremist groups both violent and nonviolent and sometimes a gradualist process where it started from the non-violent strategies and resulting in a violent end. Radicalization therefore because of its dynamic nature is not only limited to religious but even political activities.

From the Islamic point of view, Vincent (2017, p. 14) stated claims that Jihadists have a "tried and tested model" of contact with different vulnerable, and extremist individuals through online messaging services or social media platforms—deploying lot of technology and social media and then rapidly manipulating them towards participating in violent action in their name” as one of the modes of recruiting. Historically, the term which is derived from the Latin word ‘radix or root’ meant anything that affected the primary nature of something though this interpretation changed over time, and by the end of the 19th century it was perceived as those who represented or supported political parties with extremist views, but it has been referred to the adoption of extreme beliefs and behaviors since 2005. The term however gained much traction after the 9/11 series of attacks in the US. In the simplest terms, it refers to all the activities that had happened before the explosive went off. Just like terrorism, it has no universally accepted definition and is hence heavily contested as it means different things to different people.

At any rate, any relevance gained through violence will require an ideology that justifies violence and is articulated in the group’s narrative which most times infers that violence is deployed as a way of protecting the group from enemies which is upheld by the group as a show of utmost duty and patriotism to the group. Working becomes relevant in the equation because it is a conduit through which people consociate with and accept ideological narratives through the promotion of violent extremism on social networks. Because of the trust in religious and eloquent leaders and sometimes influencers on social media and even trusted friends, their wired radical ideologies are accepted hook-line and sinker without due diligence or scrutiny.

It is important to note at this point that not all radicalization leads to violence or terrorism. The Canadian National Strategy for Countering Radicalization to Violence articulated this distinction by providing a different definition for ‘radicalization’ and radicalization to violence. According to the national agency, radicalization is a ‘process by which an individual or a group gradually adopts extreme positions or ideologies that are opposed to the status quo and challenge mainstream ideas. Radicalization to Violence on the other hand is the ‘process where individuals or groups adopt and/or belief system that justifies the use of violence to advance their cause Public Safety Canada, ‘National Strategy on Countering Radicalization to Violence’, 21 December 2018.

Hence, radicalization precedes violent extremism and terrorism, and not all forms of radicalization lead to terrorism which makes the emphasis of this paper, ‘radicalization that leads to violence.’ In other words, not all radicals are terrorists, but all terrorists are radicals.

Radicalization is a four-stage process of pre-radical, self-identity, indoctrination, and terrorism which involves a person joining or identifying with a group and then going on to accept the beliefs held by the group which makes him submit himself to the group to be groomed for the journey and task ahead which ultimately results in the person building the requirement to commit terrorist acts.

The Boko Haram group actually started in 1995 with Abubakar Lawan as its leader who left for the University of Medina in Saudi Arabia to study and leadership shifted to Yusuf Mohammed who was young vibrant and versatile with an ability to mobilize followers within a short period of time. When Mohammed Yusuf was captured and brutally killed by Nigerian Police, a hardline cleric in person of Abubakar Shekau took over the leadership of the group and everything started taking a different and new dimension. Nigeria became the operational base of the group and is one of the countries around the lake Chad area where the terrorist group Boko Haram has heightened fears among the citizens due to their incessant horrific attacks in some parts of the country, and over the years the overarching counterterrorism phenomena and approach has been strictly military based, with Boko Haram increasing in members to intensify its attacks. Many people were killed, properties destroyed and displaced from their towns and villages. The Boko Haram insurgents have a political purpose, which is toppling the existing Nigerian system of government and replacing it with Islamic system guided by laws from the holy 273IntroductionAn insurgency though a new phenomenon in Africa has varied definitions and dimensions, but characteristically is a violent, armed rebellion against constituted authority waged by small, lightly armed bands that practice guerilla warfare from primarily rural base areas. The unique feature of insurgency is its asymmetric nature: small irregular forces face the state's large, well-equipped, regular military. Due to this unique feature, insurgents avoid large-scale direct battles in most cases, opting instead to blend in with the civilian population in rural areas where they gradually expand territorial control and military forces. Insurgency often relied on control of and collaboration with local populations to succeed. Nigeria being the most populous country in Africa with several ethnic groups and different religious inclination among its citizens became a potential breeding ground for different conflicts and some of which tends to be religious in nature. Several Christian and Islamist radical groups exists in most part of the country, but not as complex as the emergence of Boko Haram Insurgents in the North Eastern part.

As factions started emerging within the group and intra-conflicts consumed the whole movement. Most of the leaders of the groups including top commanders were either killed or captured, and their followers started losing faith in the struggle and started surrendering in large numbers to the military, while others flee the battle front and later handed themselves to the authorities. With this development therefore, the government introduced several policies that may lead to rehabilitation, reconstruction and reintegration to consolidate on the victory at the battle front. But counterterrorism requires both a hard and soft approach, and one of the soft approaches is a de-radicalization program. This program was introduced, practiced, and sustained and successful in some countries of the world where terrorists have been operating. Nigeria is one of the countries where the terrorist group, Boko Haram raises fear among Nigerians due to their incessant horrific attacks in some parts of the country. Over the years, the overarching counterterrorism phenomena and approach has been strictly military based, but later it was comprehensive which was ushered through the introduction of 'Operation Safe

Corridor' and establishment of de-radicalization center in Malam Sidi, Gombe state. The program involves categorization of the captured Boko Haram members and those who voluntarily lay down their weapons and surrender themselves to the security agencies were considered for the program. The study was conducted using qualitative research approach through content analysis by contextualizing radicalization, de-radicalization and the policy goal of 'Operation Safe Corridor'. Qur'an. In pursuance of this political goal, the group devised a program of social services and has an overt, even legal, political wing that operates within the area. Their covert wing carries out attacks on military forces with tactics such as raids and, as well as acts of terror such as attacks that cause deliberate civilian casualties. The group raided so many military formations in the region and carted away with sophisticated weapons and some military officers that were abducted. The Jama'tu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awatiwal-Jihad (People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad) as they wished to be called but popularly known as Boko Haram, very active in poor and arid north-eastern Nigeria (and also active in Niger, Cameroon, and Chad) has caused an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 deaths and displaced over 2.3 million people since 2009. Between 2009 and 2015, the group took control of extensive territories in north-eastern Nigeria, including major cities such as Maiduguri; devastated lives of millions; and constituted a significant threat to the Nigerian state.

Overall, some 15 million people have been adversely affected by the insurgency and counterinsurgency (COIN) efforts. Boko Haram fighters inflicted terror by slaughtering civilians in villages and towns, abducted thousands of people, forcibly marrying off women and girls to their fighters, and conducted mass-casualty terrorist attacks against mosques, markets, and camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs). In the process of these operations by the insurgents, they took control of some vast areas and villages and the youth there were forcefully recruited into the group, also in the cause of raiding towns and cities in the area they captured and took some youth along with them while retreating back to their camps. While some converts were recruited through the activities of their agents all over the places and this resulted in attracting, converting and radicalizing a large population of youth within the ages of ten to thirty years old. A large number of youth of all sex were recruited and indoctrinated with the radical ideas of the sect through their teachings. More so, because of the vulnerable nature of the region because of its economic and social backwardness as a result of government neglect, the group capitalized on 274 Ahmed Wali Doho

The four-stage model of the terrorist mindset paints a clearer picture of how terrorists are triggered and move up the ladder of radicalization until they become terrorists. This model was developed by Randy Borum (2003) and cited by CIDOB. It explains how grievances and the feeling of vulnerability transform into hatred against a specific group, agency, or government and how the hatred is used to justify violence and terrorism (Fecha de publicación, 2016).

Radicalism/terrorism span a wide ranging scale, traversing age gender—with ideological trend (religious and political) most common. By and large, we could define terrorism as “the product of fanatical violence perpetuated generally in order to realize some political end to which all humanitarian or ethical beliefs are sacrificed” (Wilkinson 1973, pp. 292). Terror

certainly is a method of violence; terrorism is the application of such method through individual terrorist act.

Accordingly, Brian M. Jenkins "...terrorism has become a new element in international relations..." (1975, p. 13). Accordingly, if terrorism is an expression of radicalism, then, broadly, the former could be understood and classified based on two broad general motivating criteria: one whether the act is individual, organizational or state; and two, whether the act is internal/local (insurrection) or international (ideological and political). From these two general categories, we could isolate the following five typology of terrorism: (1) Individual-state; (2) organizational-state; (3) individual international; (4) organizational-international; and (5) state-state. Let us describe these trends or forms along some sensational examples of each episode seriatim.

Individual-state terrorism is a necessity by one individual or group which discerns despair and political doom for political struggle against existing system. This common trend is usually internal to a state. But individual political terrorism is conscious struggle against a government; yet individual terrorist acts may be genuine politico-ideological struggle but mostly inexpedient and therefore reject-able.

Organizational-State terrorism is usually the leftist terrorism which often turns out to be a specific manifestation of protest against racism, colonialism/political domination, foreign occupation, poverty, and despair. It could degenerate to revolution, as were the Arab Springs of 2011 and beyond. This trend mostly cuts across ideological divides, but depending on the perception of the organization, targets may extend to the international as was the attack on the US Embassy in Benghazi, Libya 2012 by members of the Islamic militant group, Ansar al Sharia. This also occurs where a state is a victim in its own territory of subversive and/or terrorist acts by irregular, volunteer, or armed bandits.

Individual international terrorism involves a wide range of instances essentially unconnected with any state whatsoever. What can be said to be connection of state with this strength place of planning of the act like individual national terrorism. This can be study reacting terror inform of violence antagonism in a foreign land however most time the planning execution is done in stage by a foreign national who must have come to residence in guise of either tourist, education/research or asylum.

Organizational-international terrorism is the terror of the class in power; terror of the class struggling for power; or revolutionary-terror and counter-terror. Whether international or against the state, individual terrorism appears as intellectuals perceive the necessity of struggle against perceived or real undesirable system.

State-State terrorism obtains where there is a commission of acts of terrorism against a State b groups formed of servicemen of another State, whether directly undertaking, tolerating or encouraging such also count as aggression. The premise of cyber terrorism is that as nations and critical infrastructure became more dependent on computer networks for their operation, new vulnerabilities are created: "a massive electronic Achilles' heel." A hostile nation or group could exploit these vulnerabilities to penetrate a poorly secured computer network and disrupt or even shut down critical functions (Lewis 2002). Before the 21st century, a rival nation would

sponsor individual/agency spying on the technology and developments of some other country (or its aligning one); today, cyber-espionage and systematic cyber-sabotage have almost wholly but dangerously taking-over that tact.

An act of terrorism is to draw attention to a particular political cause or situation, though the objective may be longer term—raising money to enhance political struggle, obtaining the release of political prisoners, spreading general terror, removing/replacing a ‘strong political personality’, or even to provoke reprisals and aggression. These could raise international tensions; exacerbate existing armed conflicts and strike at enduring political and social structures/development. The typical features of an act of terrorism include: violent action capable of attracting the attention of the general public; a political motive underlying the commission of a terrorist act, plus the fact that the act itself targets person(s) or a group or state or representatives of their interests; absence of reliable alternative(s) to achieve such goals. The underling goal is to intimidate and compel some source to fulfil the objectives and demands underlying the commission of the terrorist act(s). According to Karpets (1979, 98), terrorism is usually “...organized to commit murder, use violence, take people hostage for ransom or other demands, and forcibly deprive freedom, to inflict torture and blackmail. By and large, the eminent trends of terrorism include ‘right-wing’ (using as its theoretical foundation the ideological divide—aimed on either ends against communist/working-class movements and capitalist scheme of progress as in US forceful overthrow of ‘obnoxious’ regimes in Africa), and the inherently cruel ‘organizational’ (especially often founded on radical religious extremist/fundamentalist convictions directed against rival ones as in the activities of Al Qaeda and the Taliban)—where, the international law may be somewhat helpless (Asekhauno & Okojie, 2022).

International terrorism is an indication of the internationalization of radicalism.; while the terror wave is global, the major context is between world’s leading religions, the west and eastern ideologies, and among the major world powers—notably the US, Russia, and China, with Iran and North Korea as emerging cyber aggressors and conveners of newer alignments. Yet, internal radicalism (as expressed in individual/group terrorism) in Nigeria takes different shapes—from kidnapping, secessionism, banditry, and the general sense of fear.

Policy/Public policy

The term, policy is wide in application; but for the purposes of this work, we shall take it as “the general principles by which a government (or establishment) in its management of public affairs” (Garner, 2009, p. 1276). *Public policy*, commonly, is government’s legal instrument to ensure the operations of a sector or agency so as to ensure that the care of the citizens is optimized. Inherent in this is the fact that such policy indicates the government’s programme to achieve a certain goal for the good of the people. Public policy is a statutory instrument of government, whether general or specific. Public policy represents the proposed course of action of the government or one of its divisions. Public policy is what idea government chooses (not) to implement. It is the integrated courses and program of action that government has set, and the frame work or guide it has designed to direct actions and practices in certain problem areas. Generally, public policies are meant to enhance societal problems particularly those considered to require public or collective action (Ikelegbe, 2006). The policy process is a sequential pattern of action, a complex web of structure, activities and interaction relating to

techniques, strategies, resources, costs, benefits and policy goods and services among persons, groups and agencies. It consists of several activities and interactions between the environment which generates demands, the political system or more accurately the conversion process which converts and translates demands and preferences into policy output and the implementation system which consists of implementing agencies and activities (Larkey, 1979). State bureaucracy or the civil service is known to be an integral part of the executive branch of government. It is the institution charged with the function of formulating and implementing policies and programmes of government. It therefore becomes the agency through which the activities of the government are realized. Public bureaucracy possesses the necessary expertise, skills competence and experiences (Ikelegbe, 2006; *see* Onyekwelu *et al*, 2015).

Rourke (1976) noted that the policy making power of bureaucracies is also inherent in their being the administrative organization for implementing policy. The implementing function enables bureaucratic policy influence in two ways. First, it sets the range within which policies could be made. The bureaucratic abilities, experiences and orientations sets, restricts or facilitates policy choices. Political leaders make policies that their bureaucracies have abilities to implement. Second, political leaders also know that implementation success will be facilitated, if the appropriate bureaucratic agencies are well disposed towards policy. Sometimes such discretionary action constitutes new policy thrusts, or forms the basis for new policy actions (Onyekwelu *et al*, 2015). Public policy is a veritable instrument deployed by government for the purpose of optimizing the social welfare and well-being of the citizenry. Perhaps, this explains why the concept has received much scholarly attention. But there have been varied views on what the concept means. Sharma, Sadana and Kaur (2012) posit that public policy is the relationship of a governmental unit to its environment. This view is quite broad as it leaves details of the nature of such relationship. For Adebayo (1998) public policy is the determination, declaration and crystallization of the will of the community. This implies that a major building block for an effective public policy is the will or expectation of the community as the participation of the people in the policy process is crucial to the support for and success of government policies (Laxmikauth, 2011).

According to Larson (1987), a good understanding of public policy provides a platform for appreciating the magnitudes of linkages between public policies and regulation of behaviors, organization of bureaucracies, distribution of development benefits, allocative efficiency, institutional structures and philosophical justification of government and governance. This understanding provides the premise for a wide variety and substantive areas of interest such as sustainable grassroots/rural economic/financial development, energy, defense, environment, education, infrastructure, taxations, housing, social security, health, economic empowerment and opportunities, urban development among others as issues contingent upon public policy instruments (Dye, 1981).

Theoretical Framework

For every research, the theoretical framework is seen as a collection of interrelated concepts to frame research to enable the researcher explain, predict and interpret the research findings (Akintoye, 2015). According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016, p. 85), it is “the underlying structure, the scaffolding or frame of your study”. Theoretical guide or framework helps to provide an explanatory direction in the process of an academic research. The theoretical

standpoint adopted for present work and for its investigational analysis, the work adopts the *Public Goods and Public Bads Theory*.

Public Goods and Public Bads Theory

Both are approaches in regional environmental degradation and the free-rider problem. The theories emphasize two contrary standards. On the one hand, Public good refers to “an entity that provides benefits to all individuals simultaneously and whose enjoyment by one person in no way diminishes that of another”, and Public bad “refers to any entity that imposes costs (deprivation) on groups of individuals simultaneously” (Todaro & Smith, 2011, p. 486). Specifically, the public good theory is adopted to account for the desirability of the security policy 40 as against its public bad counterpart. *Public Goods* represent a positive commitment to environmental justice as against its *Public Bads* counterpart.

Nigeria’s De-Radicalization Policies

Nigeria’s de-radicalization policy relies on a non-kinetic approach to complement its military counterterrorism efforts. Flagship programs focus on disengaging, rehabilitating, and reintegrating former affiliates of extremist groups like Boko Haram. Because counterterrorism has been the fodder for the news for decades now it has gained prominence as national and international kinetic actions against terrorists. This continued in the face of growing incidents of terrorism across different continents and regions and a realization that military actions alone even though required for counterterrorism, are no longer sufficient hence the need for the incorporation of a non-kinetic which is a softer humane and preventive approach done in a manner that new sets of extremists are not created by trying to extinguish the existing ones.

It is impossible therefore to evoke a conversation on countering violent extremism (CVE), counterterrorism and de-radicalization without having the required insight about terrorism and why people get radicalized. The essence of this paper is to understand the concept of terrorism, radicalization, why people get radicalization, and the de-radicalization aimed at purifying the extremists. Furthermore, the paper hopes to conduct a comparative analysis of the de-radicalization programs that were adopted in Egypt a transcontinental country in North Africa, Somalia and Kenya in East Africa, and Nigeria in the West African sub-region. Understudying these four African countries alongside Nigeria became necessary because these countries are marking impacts at different levels with their homegrown de-radicalization programs. The uniqueness and similarities of each of these countries’ de-radicalization programs will be appraised in the cause of this presentation to establish the strengths and weaknesses of the identified programs.

Africa over the years has not just been renowned as the home to homemade terrorist organizations, but it has also served as the base, training ground, and transit route for international terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS. The African continent has been dealing with terrorist-related issues for decades now and most of its wrestle included the fight against Al-Qaeda, ISIS, al-Shabaab, Boko-Haram, the Lord’s Resistant Army, and the like. One of the approaches adopted by the regional body in its counterterrorism is the development of several policy and legal instruments that serve as the roadmap in the fight.

Prominent among these instruments is the Organization of African Union (OAU) Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism (1999). Amid the chaos, Africa prides itself as the originator of ‘deradicalization’ as it is known today as the terminology first emerged in the Arab states of Egypt and Algeria in the late twentieth century before spreading to other countries and regions of the world.

One of the major requirements of the convention is for participating parties to criminalize ‘terrorism’ in their local laws according to the guidelines provided in the convention while stipulating areas of jurisdiction and cooperation among participating states. The comparison also hopes to point to improvement opportunities that the countries of interest may decide to leverage for better results.

De-radicalization: An Analysis of Counterterrorism Strategy in Nigeria

Unarguably, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is the most powerful body in the international system, mandated to maintain global peace and security, promote cooperation. Now that we have provided perception into terrorism and radicalization-to-violence which is the initial stages before the act of terrorism is carried out. ‘The expose’ suggests that nobody was born a terrorist. In other words, radicalization is a phase in life where one decides to take up new behaviors by exhibiting a distinct attitude due to changes in beliefs, morals, and ideologies. This is reinforced by the definition published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP) which I consider instructive even though the definition was hypothesized with the North African model of ‘de-radicalization’ where the methodology takes cognizance of the behavioral, ideological, and organizational dimensions in mind. It defined de-radicalization as the ‘process of working to combat extremism in groups or individuals that have already committed violence. De-radicalization is a non-linear action that does not necessarily follow the same pattern and produce the same result, but it is a time when the radicals are indoctrinated to take off their old behavioral clothes and put on new ones with a series of justifications. Hence, it is usually a learning process triggered by needs, narrative, and network as we already adopted in the 3Ns of radicalization.

Furthermore, since de-radicalization is acquired/learned (one was not born radical), irrespective of tribe, race, political affiliations or religious beliefs, then it can be un-learned. Such is the essential basis of ‘de-radicalization,’ a notion which in a nutshell involves all the processes that a radicalized person must go through to get rid of extremist views before eventual reintegration into society. Additionally, there is the need for an understanding of radicalization itself without which we cannot develop a valid de-radicalization methodology which again underscores that there cannot be de-radicalization without radicalization.

Therefore, the overarching aim of de-radicalization is to peacefully move individuals or groups of persons away from extremist views so they can abandon extremist views, disengage from terrorism, get rehabilitated, and reintegrate into society. Different countries are designing de-radicalization programs to soothe their distinct realities but regardless of the nature and strategy deployed in the program, the target persons are often potential terrorists, serving inmates in the prisons, convicted criminals, and repentant extremists.

Boko Haram’s gendered terrorist strategy commodifies, instrumentalizes, and

weaponizes women, making them both agents and victims of violence. Operationally, women enhance group cohesion, carry out attacks, increase reproductive capacity, sustain control in camps, and serve as bargaining chips with the Nigerian government. For example, abducted girls are 'married' to increase group cohesion and consolidate loyalty. The UN reported severe wartime sexual violence against women in Boko Haram, including sexual slavery, rape, forced pregnancy, and forced prostitution. Rape is used not only as punishment or torture but also to produce the next generation of militants. Women have also been used in suicide bombings and as human shields since 2014. Furthermore, Boko Haram strategically uses women as bargaining chips, such as in 2015 when they abducted women and children to negotiate with President Goodluck Jonathan. Nevertheless, evidence shows women willingly and actively engaging in violence, such as shooting at Nigerian soldiers during rescue operations, indicating their allegiance. This demonstrates that women are not only victims but also play an increasingly important role in Boko Haram's tactical operations, whether willingly or unwillingly. Therefore, a gender-sensitive understanding of the fluctuating role between agency and victimhood is crucial to comprehending the distinct functions of women in Boko Haram and informing deradicalization policies and initiatives.

Boko Haram instrumentalizes the feminization of violence to achieve its agenda. However, Nigeria has gaps in addressing these gendered differences. Three core deradicalization policies and initiatives for Boko Haram members currently exist. At the governmental level, two key deradicalization programs have been developed. First, the Prison Program focuses on individuals awaiting trial for violent extremist offences. This program uses Imams to educate individuals on a non-violent understanding of Islam to reduce the risk of rejoining Boko Haram, and it includes vocational training centres. However, women are rarely detained and put on trial due to the perception of women as only victims in times of conflict. In the 2017 and 2018 Boko Haram trials, out of 200 members, very few women were prosecuted, with many being minors and acquitted. This trend reflects the tendency to see women mainly as victims, despite evidence of their involvement in violence.

Second, Operation Safe Corridor is a Nigerian military initiative that provides trauma counseling to address extremist ideologies among defectors. However, these initiatives have been critiqued by some lawmakers due to insufficient consultation on their implementation and development. Additionally, these programs have failed to include the role of women within the group, consequently rendering them invisible. For example, Operation Safe Corridor does not admit women due to conservative cultural and religious norms in Northern Nigeria that impede close interaction and association among genders. Thus, the Nigerian government's strategies assume that integrating women into their pre-Boko Haram lives is sufficient. The exclusion of women from government-led deradicalization programs further marginalizes them post-Boko Haram.

Third, the Yellow Ribbon Initiative, operated by the Neem Foundation, provides reintegration support and psychosocial therapy to young women and children affected by Boko Haram, aiming for empowerment. This initiative underscores the need for gender-sensitive deradicalization processes. However, it also highlights the government's failure to see women beyond the victim framework, reproducing normative discourses that depict women as a homogeneous group of passive victims. While acknowledging that women are

disproportionately affected by conflict, it calls for a nuanced understanding of the insecurities women face and their roles in perpetrating violence, whether willing or unwilling. Consequently, women may continue to exploit this invisibility by working with Boko Haram, putting themselves in danger and continuing Boko Haram's aims.

Analysis

Radicalism takes several forms in Nigeria. One of the most violent is the radicalism of banditry and insurgency. Efforts to reverse the trends have yielded little or no good results. Much of the excuses for racialization border around religious, political and ethnic extreme sentiments.

Overall, this article has explored the critical need for sensitive deradicalization processes to effectively counter Boko Haram's impact in Northern Nigeria. Moreover, it has evaluated the importance of recognizing the multifaceted and complex roles of women within the terrorist organization to move beyond the simplistic victim/terrorist dichotomy. A key finding of this article is that Boko Haram exploits women through extreme patriarchal structures. Here, women have differing motivations and roles they play within the organization, which require tailored interventions that acknowledge women's varied experiences.

Another central takeaway is that Nigeria's current policies and initiatives at both governmental and civil society levels are limited because they exclude women's unique needs within current Nigerian deradicalization policies. This finding is reinforced by the example of the Prison Program and Operation Safe Corridor, which rendered women invisible in post-conflict recovery efforts. Moreover, the Yellow Ribbon Initiative demonstrates the potential for gender-sensitive approaches, yet, as a civil society initiative, it highlights the government's limitations in framing women solely as victims

Some of the legal and policy frameworks that provide the blueprint and guidelines for the ongoing deradicalization programs in Nigeria are the Terrorism Prevention and Prohibition Act (2022), The National Security Strategy developed by the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) in 2014, the National Counterterrorism Strategy (NACTEST) 2016, and the Policy Framework and National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (2017).

Nigeria now has three deradicalization programs that support terrorist defectors and their families. The prison program works with the clients in its facilities who are either convicted and serving their jail terms or awaiting trials; next is the OPSC program which was mentioned previously and coordinated by the Nigerian Army. The OPSC receive defecting terrorists and conduct cross-agency profiling of them before categorizing them as high or low-risk and then deciding which of the series of deradicalization program is good for them. The Yellow Ribbon Initiative is a NEEM Foundation's deradicalization program that provides support to women and children associated with terrorism by providing psychological therapy and reintegration programs.

The focal point officers selected from different participating government agencies on a need basis are responsible for overseeing the implementation of the legal and policy frameworks relating to the prevention of violent extremism in Nigeria. Nonetheless, all the

activities around counterterrorism which includes all de-radicalization programs are coordinated by the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA). Insurgents have been defecting in their droves since the commencement of the amnesty program in 2016. A military source in a 2021 publication said that as many as 7000 fighters have defected alongside their families and captives. Still, the actual number of defectors is not known as the terrorists including the foot soldiers and their commanders have continued to defect from their groups in recent times. In a recent workshop on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE), and Disengagement, Disassociation, Reintegration, and Reconciliation (DDRR) in Abuja titled 'Overview of Operation Safe Corridor (OPSC), a presenter that 2167 clients have graduated from the OPSC program since its inception. 2559 clients graduated in March 2023 and the OPSC center is currently being expanded to take more clients as more and more terrorists continue to defect.

The government developed strategies for combating insurgency by creating a series of frameworks to guide stakeholders in responding to de-radicalization at different levels. Responding to these challenges includes identifying the root causes and an enactment of the National Assembly called the Terrorism Prevention and Prohibition (Amendment) Act 2022, the National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST), and other policy frameworks aimed at coordinating these measures at the national level. 'With this, the government provided clear legal and policy directions that connect peace, security, and development at all levels.

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Recommendations and Conclusion

Centrally, the protection and empowerment of the youths/women should go beyond de-radicalization programs to prevent radicalization and ensure sustained peace. Deconstructing Northern Nigerian patriarchal structures, such as removing barriers to employment, finance, and social participation for women, would be the first recommendation to return agency to women. Okech's fieldwork discovered that Boko Haram's attractiveness is partly based on the power women receive when joining the group. In practice, the architecture of reintegration and de-radicalization processes need to account for the sociocultural structures women return to, including the loss of financial and social power. Therefore, the first recommendation is to address the root causes of gendered inequalities and disparities, including socioeconomic barriers, in the region at a governmental policy level to prevent women from returning to Boko Haram after the realization that they do not possess the same level of power when reintegrated into society.

Informed by this nuanced understanding, the second recommendation lies in developing gender-sensitive policies and initiatives that officially acknowledge women's complex and

differing roles to overcome the victim/terrorist dichotomy. This intersectional underpinning is backed by research on women in Boko Haram, which shows that factors such as age, class, and reproductive capacity affect their power and responsibilities within the organization. Therefore, deradicalization interventions and policies must move beyond essentializing women into a single isolated category and instead recognize their varying experiences.

Third, a more practical and tangible recommendation includes the implementation of a women-focused, multifactorial, and systematic programmes paired with localized de-radicalization efforts that account for Northern Nigerian cultural practices and customs. For instance, creating initiatives such as Operation Safe Corridor for women, providing a government-led, deliberate strategy that acknowledges women's roles and experiences in Boko Haram, ensuring sustained peace in Northern Nigeria. Other women-focused initiatives could include women-led and facilitated de-radicalization and peace processes, not because women are perceived as inherently peaceful, but to allow agency and ensure they do not reoffend. To do so, increasing women's representation in these initiatives would ensure that their experiences are integrated, addressing their interlocking vulnerabilities and preventing radicalization. Importantly, these recommendations should not be implemented in isolation, but rather are optimized by their symbiotic development and implementation.

Operation Safe Corridor was created in 2016 after the Government of Nigeria realized that it would not defeat the Boko Haram insurgents by military means alone. This was deliberately targeted at low-level jihadist recruits by the two main factions—Jama'at Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awatiwal-Jihad and Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP). The rehabilitation program involves vocational training, access to de-radicalization and civic programs. But many Nigerians expressed skepticism while some feel that there is a need for sufficient community consultation before the development and implementation of the program.

As the fight against terrorism intensifies globally is evident that nations of the world have gained considerable experience in its diverse approach through the appraisal of lessons learned. One such lesson is that a security-based counterterrorism approach is still relevant and necessary but no longer a sufficient measure. Furthermore, there is now the need to channel more resources to a preventive and not reactive approach to containing terrorism. Additionally, the members of the communities are expected to play significant roles in preventing violent extremism in their various communities.

Impactful de-radicalization program requires understanding the uniqueness of each of the participating individuals and groups and the motivation for getting radicalized in the first place. The case of Mugisha an ex-radical member of Al-Shabaab from Rwanda is a typical example of a person getting radicalized due to rejection from his biological father. One of the lessons learned from Mugisha's journey to terrorism and eventual de-radicalization is that you cannot develop tailored psychological support for a radicalized person if you haven't first understood the dynamics that led to the individual imbibing extremist views. Another success factor during Mugisha's de-radicalization was that most of the security personnel involved in the process treated him humanely. His de-radicalization became successful because most of the people he encountered in the process showed him empathy.

Finally, there is no one-fit-for-purpose approach to developing de-radicalization programs aimed at countering violent extremism as has been expounded in this paper. However, it is important to note that different countries are beginning to appreciate the many benefits that come with the soft approach to countering terrorism and adopting these measures to soothe those evolving realities. Though Egypt started this remarkable evolution on the African continent much of what it has done and done is not readily available in open source for public use. The same applies to Somalia and Kenya which decided to replicate the strategy. All these underscores the fact that the subject of deradicalization is still at its formative stages hence the need for more work and research to be dedicated to understanding its essentials across the board.

Specifically, the Nigeria government must design vigorous legal and policy framework providing legal and authoritative justifications for their choice of deradicalization programs which must be explicit on the target participants for the programs; define each of the programs and their attendant benefits; must establish the involvement of internal and external stakeholders and their expected levels of involvement; must establish accountable government agencies and their implementing partners; must establish modalities for monitoring and evaluation of expected and actual outcomes. Besides, there must be transparency that breeds accountability on the part of the government since most of the country's budgetary allocations are channeled to the program. The citizens and members of the general public must be kept informed of the needs, progress made, the resources required, and the support desirable. This strategy would give the people a sense of ownership of the program especially for countries that have adopted the community-whole approach to de-radicalization. And, finally, there is the need to establish objective metrics for tracking the successes of the programs.

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