

The spread of jihadist insurrections in Niger and Nigeria: An analysis based on the case of Boko Haram

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Ilin boko yana hana ibada

‘The Western school impedes submission to Islam.’

Hausa proverb from the British colonization era

Introduction

When trying to understand the spread and the so-called radicalization of Islam in Sahelian Africa, one immediately faces a methodological issue: which point of reference is used? Is there a standardized Islam, one that is ‘normal’ and peaceful? What would be its geographical centre? Mecca, Kano, Timbuktu, Agadez ... or Ilorin, which was once a hotbed of active proselytism directed towards Yorubaland in the south-west of Nigeria? In the region under study, Islam has historically moved from the north and the east by following trans-Saharan trade routes. Today, however, fundamentalist ideas spread from the south, in this case Nigeria, whose influence can be explained quite naturally by its demographic and economic weight in Sub-Saharan Africa. Should we conclude that religious schools in Kano and Maiduguri have overtaken those of Agadez or Timbuktu?

Another methodological issue is that the focus on today’s terrorism tends to overshadow the violence and rigour of yesterday’s jihads. In strictly religious terms, however, Boko Haram hardly compares with the rebellion of the Maitatsine sect in 1980 or the widespread looting of the Borno region by the Mahdists of Rabeh starting in 1893, not to mention slavery in the time of Usman dan Fodio’s Caliphate after 1804. In this regard, we should stress the ambivalence of Islam regarding social order, for it is both an instrument of submission to God (the original meaning of the word ‘Islam’) and of struggle in the name of God (with the

‘jihad’). On the one hand, the Quran plays a stabilizing role when it lays the foundations of the rule of law and allows security forces to bind people together by taking an oath not to support Boko Haram.¹ On the other hand, some surahs legitimize insurgency and are used by jihadists to call Muslims to fulfil their religious duty against the state. Historically, writes Humphrey Fisher, Islam has been used, for example, to establish the authority of the ruling class in Kano, while also being used to defend the rights of the masses in Katsina.²

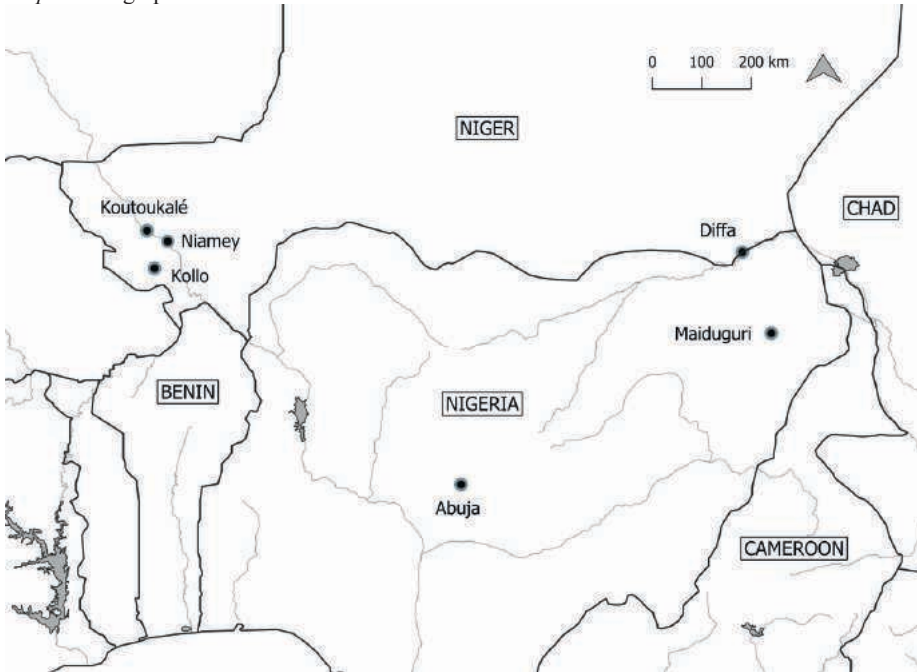
Accordingly, the goal of this study is not to locate the hypothetical centre of influence of radical Islam. Based on field surveys conducted in Nigeria and Niger from 2013 to 2015, the objective is rather to focus on ongoing changes and the modes of dissemination of sermons that challenge the social and political order. In the first part of this chapter, I focus on the main features of Islamization of the region. In the second part, I analyse the geopolitical context that saw the emergence of Boko Haram’s precursors at the border between Nigeria and Niger. Historically, the region has seen many rebellions taking place in the name of Islam. Yet, as discussed in the third part, those rebellions did not have global messianic ambitions and, with the exception of Usman dan Fodio’s jihad, most of them did not last long, regardless of the high mobility of their protagonists. From this point of view, the fourth part places in perspective the influence that Saudi Arabia may have had on the spread of the Wahhabi doctrine in Sahelian Africa.

In the Lake Chad Basin region, the current situation requires an analysis of local networks that supported Boko Haram’s jihad. The fifth part of this chapter focuses on channels through which radical ideas are usually disseminated in the name of Islam: markets, mosques, Quranic schools, prisons, and camps for displaced persons or refugees. These places not only help spread an ideology of protest; they are also spaces of interaction, socialization, and mobilization. It is important to distinguish the two. Thus, some ‘disciples’ may have decided to fight in the ranks of Boko Haram without adhering to its teachings, while others chose to follow the doctrine of the movement without going as far as taking up arms. In the same vein, it is important to place in perspective the scope and meaning of the sect’s online videos, which remain rather rudimentary despite the potential improvements one might have expected given the allegiance of a part of the group to Daesh.

¹ In Nigeria, the British were already using Islam to make the emirs in charge of enforcing the colonial *indirect rule* take an oath of allegiance. Likewise, today, volunteers who enlist in para-governmental militias must take an oath on the Quran to join the ranks of the CJTF (Civilian Joint Task Force). From my observations in the field in the Diffa Region in early 2015, the authorities of the Republic of Niger also used the Quran to encourage residents to denounce the rebels or be cursed. A next step could be to hold public sessions by forcing believers to swear on the Quran their allegiance to the Nigérien government.

² Humphrey Fisher (1975), ‘The central Sahara and Sudan’. In: Richard Gray, ed., *The Cambridge History of Africa, vol.4: From c. 1600 to c. 1790*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 63.

Map 7 Geographical distribution of Pérouse de Montclos' fieldworks



The context

Historically, the Islamization of the Sahel had little to do with an effort of conquest. While Roman settlers in the Maghreb used a wall (*limes*) to contain ‘barbarians’ from the desert, the Arabs sought to spread their civilization without resorting to military campaigns. In the Sahara, traders and preachers found shelter in fortified monasteries and entrenched camps – the *ribats*, which later lent their name to the ‘Almoravid’ dynasty in the 11th century – to Sufi ‘marabouts’ in the 18th century, and to Al-Murabitun (‘sentinels’) in the 21st century, a terrorist group born from the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) movement in Mali. But the Islamization of pagans in Sub-Saharan Africa essentially followed the routes of trans-Saharan caravan trade. In many cases, it actually resulted from very prosaic considerations that were probably less about conversion *per se* than they were about political allegiance or adherence to a system of values. In the Middle Ages, empires such as that of Mali converted to Islam to assert their authority, seek allies against the Songhai, and belong to ‘civilization’.³

³ Ulrich Rebstock (2010), ‘West Africa and its early empires’. In: Maribel Fierro, ed., *The New Cambridge History of Islam. Volume 2. The Western Islamic World, Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 144-58.

This was followed by the emergence of theocracies whose power was not based on a military jihad but on a mode of government that consecrated the influence of Muslim scholars, such as the Askiya dynasty in Gao, or the Mais of Kanem-Bornu who, in the 11th century, had begun being in contact with Islam through a missionary named Muhammad Mani.⁴ The maraboutism of Sufi brotherhoods became popular later, first with the Qadiriyya as early as the 13th century and then with the Tijaniyya. Meanwhile, Sahelian Islam spread to rural areas as the great medieval empires, founded on caravan trade and merchant activities in cities, dissolved into small agricultural kingdoms. In the 20th century, especially, Sufi brotherhoods became mass movements that managed to meet the challenges of colonization and the market economy by integrating former slaves and new urban migrants. Their sheikhs were actually criticized for exploiting their followers, asking them for money or work time to live off their donations (*hadaya*) rather than the traditional alms (*zakat*).

Over time, Islam thus spread beyond educated circles and reached the peasant masses. Indeed, the chain (*silsila*) of the Sufis' method (*tariqa*) proved particularly successful in transcending borders, from Senegal to Nigeria, including Mali, Libya, and Sudan. On a continent where the telegraph and the railroad were introduced later than they were in the Ottoman world, Muslim preachers long continued to spread their teachings through the mosque, marriage, and trade.⁵ Salafist groups, which emerged in the 1920s, began to seriously compete with the traditional methods used by Sufi brotherhoods during the oil boom of the 1970s, when the Persian Gulf countries were able to intensify their proselytizing efforts by funding the construction of mosques and by awarding scholarships. Since then, many authors have been concerned with the radicalization of African imams trained in Islamic universities in Saudi Arabia. Some have even claimed that developments in transport and new information technologies have resulted in greater interaction between Africa and the Arab world.⁶

⁴ Humphrey Fisher (1977), 'The eastern Maghrib and the central Sudan'. In: John Fage & Roland Oliver, eds, *The Cambridge History of Africa, vol.3: From c. 1050 to c. 1600*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 308.

⁵ John Spencer Trimingham (1962), *A History of Islam in West Africa*, Glasgow, Oxford University Press, p. 225.

⁶ John Hunwick (1996), 'Sub-Saharan Africa and the wider world of Islam: Historical and contemporary perspectives', *Journal of Religion in Africa* 26(3): 230-57; Dale Eickelman & Jon Anderson, eds, (2003), *New Media in the Muslim world: The Emerging Public Sphere*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, p. 213.

The geopolitical situation in the Republic of Niger and Borno State

In this context, the ‘Crescent of Terror’ has been a popular concept used to explain contemporary jihads in ‘Sahelistan’, which are understood as a kind of projection of conflicts in the Arab world.⁷ Surrounded by unstable countries such as Mali, Libya, and Chad, Niger has been examined through this same analytical lens. In the south-east, in particular, its border with Nigeria is now patrolled by armies of the international coalition that was created to combat the terrorist sect of Boko Haram (lit. ‘Western education is a sacrilege’). Although Niger is relatively less affected by the onslaught of jihadists than are Libya, northern Mali, and north-east Nigeria, the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris in January 2015 showed that the country was not entirely immune to violent acts perpetrated in the name of Islam. The issue, for analysts, is that the endogenous dynamics of religious riots have often been overshadowed by the security and media obsession with a global jihad. In reality, marabouts and preachers in Niger did not always rely on models imported from Saudi Arabia, Libya, Mali, and Nigeria to develop a radical discourse against the corruption of both the Muslim community and the elites running a ‘secular’ state. This is illustrated by the widespread rejection of ‘intellectuals’ – called *yan lakkol* in Hausa, referring to the Western ‘schools’ they attended and which supposedly drew them away from Islam.

The unrest that took place in the south of Niger, its most populated area, highlighted the importance of local dynamics of protest, which had nothing to do with any kind of conspiracy from Nigeria or the Arab world. The border town of Maradi illustrates this in its own way. Mallam Mai Zabura May, for example, who came from Tahoua and settled in Maradi around 1989, did not need to draw inspiration from the Nigerian Izala ‘eradicators’ when he began to condemn the excesses of secularism and asked that authorities take the rules of Sharia law more into account in public life, without going as far as to openly call for the establishment of an Islamic state.⁸ Al-Koumi Yahaya, a self-proclaimed prophet based in Nigeria, was also a native of Niger, where his virulent sermons against skirts and the licentious music played by local radio stations generated unrest in the Maradi Region and the Dakoro Department in the early 2000s.⁹ Although closer to the Izala’s puritanism, Mallam Falalu bin Tassiou differed from the Nigerian model in that he avoided directly opposing the syncretism of Sufi

⁷ ‘Sahelistan’ is a derogatory term which has been used since the early 2010s by some thrill-seeking journalists. One of the best examples of this is Samuel Lawrence’s book, *Sahelistan*, Paris, Seuil, 2013, p. 370. In that book, he states that Boko Haram’s epicentre is located in Sokoto ... more than a thousand kilometres from Maiduguri!

⁸ Abdoulaye Sounaye (2009), ‘Ambiguous secularism’, *Civilisations* 58(2): 49.

⁹ Moulaye Hassane, Marthe Doka & Oumarou Makama Bawa (2006), *Etude sur les Pratiques de l’islam au Niger*, Niamey, Danida, p. 86.

brotherhoods. This did not stop him from vilifying the perversion of Western secularism and the deviance of Africanized Islam, leading to his imprisonment in Niamey in 2000 when some of his followers took part in the vandalization of bars in Maradi to protest the organization of fashion shows.

Of course, Muslims in Niger have also been influenced by Nigerian fundamentalists. Both the Sufis and the Izala in Niger, for example, have been opposed to polio vaccination programmes because of rumours spread from Nigeria that accuse Western medicine of trying to sterilize Muslim women.¹⁰ The expansion of Boko Haram's radical ideas, which originated in the Indimi mosque in Maiduguri, attracts the most attention today. According to stories circulating in Diffa near Lake Chad, the founder of the sect, Mohammed Yusuf, spent his childhood years in the village of Kelakam in Niger. In fact, he was born in Yobe State in Nigeria – either in Gigir in the LGA of Jakusku, or in Na'iyyah in the LGA of Yunusari, according to the different versions available.¹¹ But he recruited many Nigériens who had come to study the Quran in Borno State.¹² Abubakar Kelakam, one of Mohammed Yusuf's first Nigérien followers, was born in the homonymous village; he disappeared after being deported from Damasak by Nigeria in 2009.

Early on, the sect's first members also used Niger as a rear base to proselytize. Even before the emergence of the group which named itself the 'Sunni Congregation for the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad' (Jama'at Ahl al-Sunnah li'l Da'wa wa'l Jihad) in 2010, and then the 'Islamic State in West Africa' (Wilayat Gharb Ifriqiyah) in 2015,¹³ a core group of young activists took advantage of the isolation and the porosity of the border area in order to set up a camp in Kanama in the LGA of Yunusari in the north of Yobe State, close to the small Nigérien town of Mainé-Soroa. It is unclear who was the leader of those who

¹⁰ Adeline Masquelier (2012), 'Public health or public threat? Polio eradication campaigns, Islamic revival, and the materialization of state power in Niger'. In: Hansjörg Dilger, Abdoulaye Kane & Stacey Langwick, eds, *Medicine, Mobility, and Power in Global Africa*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, pp. 213-40.

¹¹ Muhammad Sani Imam & Muhammad Kyari (2011), 'Yusufuyya and the Nigerian State: Historicizing the Dynamics of Boko Haram Phenomenon', *Kaduna Journal of Liberal Arts* 5(1); Ahmad Murtada (2013), *Boko Haram in Nigeria: Its Beginnings, Principles and Activities*, Kano, Bayero University, Salafi Manhaj, p. 3.

¹² They would rather go to Sokoto for mystical initiation or to Zaria and Katsina to learn Arabic. Sokoto thus attracted more than 11,000 Nigérien Islamic students in the early 2010s, almost 5% of the children sent to itinerant Quranic schools within Sokoto State. Such a proportion was however much lower when moving away from the border, towards Bauchi, for example. See Peter Clarke (1978), 'Islam, education and the development process in Nigeria', *Comparative Education* 14(2): 134; Research Triangle Institute International (2015), *Nigeria Reading and Access Research Activity (RARA): Survey of Itinerant Qur'anic Learning Centers and Almajiri Learners in Bauchi and Sokoto States*, Washington, United States Agency for International Development Nigeria (USAID), p. 2.

¹³ Boko Haram ('Western education is a sacrilege') is a derogatory term given by the local press to Mohammed Yusuf's followers during the insurrection of July 2009. Previously referred to as Yusufiyya, they first used the term 'Jama'at Ahl al-Sunnah li'l Da'wa wa'l Jihad' to sign their action in a leaflet distributed at the time of the attack on the Bauchi prison in September 2010.

were then called the ‘Nigerian Taliban’, the ‘Mujahideen’ fighters, the ‘Muhajir’ emigrants, or the ‘al-Takfir wa’l-Hijrah group’. Security sources mention a certain Muhammad Ali or Usman Ibn Abdulkadir.¹⁴ The nicknames ‘Abu Umar’ and ‘Mullah Umar’ have also been mentioned, as well as the presence of a student from the University of Maiduguri, Aminu Tashen Ilimi, who, like Muhammad Ali, allegedly left Mohammed Yusuf because he found him to be too ‘liberal’.¹⁵ Witnesses, however, speak instead of Ahmed or Hamit.¹⁶ In any case, it seems that neither Mohammed Yusuf nor Abubakar Shekau were part of that group, whose base is believed to have initially consisted of about twenty students from the University of Maiduguri.

Driven out of Geidam and then Jajibrili in Yobe State, the ‘Nigerian Taliban’ settled in rural Kanama to take advantage of cover provided by the vegetation of the Yobe River valley and the possibility of fleeing to Niger in case of problems.¹⁷ Governed according to the strictest rules of a Salafist and sectarian Islam, their ‘holy city’ aimed at creating an autonomous enclave and accommodated up to one hundred people, including women and children. But they soon came into conflict with indigenous people over fishing rights. In their version of Sharia law in the 19th century, the jihadists of the Sokoto Caliphate had indeed stated that all rivers belonged to the public domain, unlike wells dug on private land or desert oases and tanks of rain water, which were shared on a community basis.¹⁸ Of course, the residents of Kanama disliked this Islamic form of communism and asked the ‘Taliban’ to leave.

While most of them returned to Maiduguri, about twenty of them refused to comply and fled to Niger. In late November 2003, they returned to Kanama with guns, bows, arrows, spears, machetes, and home-made grenades to attack the police station, where they killed an officer and took possession of weapons and a vehicle. Anti-riot Mobile Police units, sent with trucks as reinforcements, failed to chase away the rebels, in a battle that killed half a dozen people in total. Dispatched from the barracks of Nguru, in a village that has since then been deserted by the population, the army took over and killed seven Taliban.¹⁹ The survivors sought

¹⁴ Celestine Oyom Bassey & Charles Quarker Dokub (2011), *Defence Policy of Nigeria: Capability and Context*, Bloomington (IN), Author House, p. 405. Muhammad Ali reportedly later succumbed to his injuries in January 2014.

¹⁵ Isa Umar Gusau (2 Aug. 2009), ‘Boko Haram: How it all began’, *Daily Trust*; Ahmed Salkida (1 March 2009), *Sunday Trust*.

¹⁶ Interviews in Mainé-Soroa, February 2015.

¹⁷ Summary of an interview conducted in Kanuri with Kanama district chief Alhaji Lawan Zarami, who fled to Mainé-Soroa, February 24 2015.

¹⁸ Chafe, Kabiru Sulaiman (1999), *State and Economy in the Sokoto Caliphate: Policies and Practices in the Metropolitan Districts, 1804-1903*, Zaria, Ahmadu Bello University Press, p. 79.

¹⁹ According to the military, security forces also took about fifty prisoners, including two women and a four-year-old child. A total of 18 people reportedly died in December 2003, including two policemen in Kanama and Geidam. See IRIN, 25 January 2004; Anna Borzello (14 January 2004), ‘Tracking down Nigerian Taleban’s sect’, *BBC News*. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3393963.stm>

revenge by raiding and burning the police stations of Geidam and of Bayamari in the LGA of Bosari, then that of Babban Gida in Tarmuwa. Each time, they seized the opportunity to get their hands on weapons, ammunition, and vehicles without any casualties, since the police had previously deserted those places. Before retreating to Borno, in early January 2004, insurgents also killed another police officer in Damaturu, the administrative capital of Yobe State.

Photo 11 Banner with pictures of Boko Haram suspects (Photo: Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos)



What happened next is more widely known and does not need to be repeated in detail. What should be remembered is that after further skirmishes with Nigerian security forces around the Mandara mountains at the Cameroonian border until October 2004,²⁰ the survivors of the battle of Kanama went to Maiduguri to join the ranks of Mohammed Yusuf's followers in the Indimi mosque and then the

²⁰ The LGAs of Kala-Balge, Bama, and Gwoza were the most affected. In Kala-Balge in October 2004, insurgents kidnapped a dozen policemen, who are still missing. In Gwoza, they allegedly lost 28 men during a battle with the police in September 2004. The first recorded attack in Cameroon took place much later, in April 2012, when the insurgents burglarized the Amchide police station to steal weapons.

railway station. At that time, the movement was already looking to expand to Diffa and Mainé-Soroa. But it was the extrajudicial execution of Mohammed Yusuf in July 2009 that gave Niger a true strategic dimension as it welcomed and accommodated followers that had been driven out of Nigeria by military repression. In December 2011, the authorities thus uncovered a plan to attack the city of Diffa. In September 2012, they dismantled a cell of five Boko Haram members who had settled in Zinder in order to procure weapons.²¹ Since then, the situation has continued to deteriorate. Regularly under attack, the border area was turned into a battlefield when, early in 2015, an anti-terrorist coalition was formed by the armies of Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon.

Porous borders or global Islam?

Besides its military aspects, the extreme case of Boko Haram raises questions about the circulation of ideas among Muslim fundamentalists in Nigeria and Niger. In this regard, we should distinguish the effects caused by proximity to a permeable border, on the one hand, from the global ambitions of a proselytizing Islam, on the other. Historically, the current territories of Nigeria and Niger have experienced many jihads. Usman dan Fodio (1754-1817), heroic figure and founder of the Sokoto Caliphate, was born in the Republic of Niger in Maratta, near Galmi, about 50 km from Birnin Konni. A lesser-known Fulani from Niger, Mallam Dubaba, aka 'Sheriff ad-Din', also mobilized Hausa, Kanuri, and Shuwa Arabs to launch a holy war against Baghirmi, where he was killed around 1875.

Because of their mobility, pastoralists and traders played an important role in the dissemination of this military Islam. In today's northern Cameroon, for example, the Fulani who fled the Kanuri of the Borno Empire during Usman dan Fodio's jihad were the first to establish a new Emirate in Maroua in 1808.²² In the 1880s, still in northern Cameroon, Hayatu bin Said, a Mahdist opponent to the Sokoto Caliphate, then set up a camp at Balda, which attracted people from as far away as Sudan.²³ At the time, he made an alliance with famous warlord Rabeh, who conquered Baghirmi in 1892 and Borno in 1893. Defeated, the Shehu of Borno was executed near the Yobe River along today's Nigérien border. His successor took refuge in the Sultanate of Damagaram near Zinder, while Rabeh set up his palace near Dikwa, where Boko Haram has a strong presence today.²⁴

²¹ Testimony gathered by the author in the prisons of Koutoukalé and Diffa in 2014 and 2015.

²² Martin Njeuma (1994), 'The Usmanuya system, radicalism and the establishment of German colonial rule in Northern Cameroon, 1890-1907', *Paideuma* 40: 116.

²³ Martin Njeuma (1971), 'Adamawa and Mahdism: The career of Hayatu Ibn Sa'id in Adamawa, 1878-1898', *The Journal of African History* 12(1): 61-77.

²⁴ Mohammed Kyari (2006), *Borno in the Rabih Years, 1893-1901: The Rise and Crash of a Predatory State*, Maiduguri, University of Maiduguri, p. 207.

In the early 20th century, the border drawn between the British and French colonies of Nigeria and Niger did not put an end to the incursions of rebels acting in the name of Islam. Waged against the French in Kobkitanda in the Niger region of Dosso in early 1906, the revolt of Alfa Saibu, a blind, mystical, and millenarian ventriloquist-cum-marabout, is probably the best known, while many others have fallen into oblivion. Defeated, its leader fled to Nigeria, where he was known by the Hausa name of Shaibu dan Makafo (lit. 'Shaibu the Blind'). There, in the camp of Satiru, he joined the ranks of Mallam Isa, another Mahdist rebel who had taken over from his late father, Mallam Maikaho, who had died in prison after proclaiming himself Mahdi in January 1904. Composed of peasants, prisoners, runaway slaves, and scholars, many of whom were from Gobir, the 'Satirawa' defeated British troops in February 1906, before being crushed and having their camp razed to the ground a month later.²⁵ As for Alfa Saibu, he was beheaded on the market square in Sokoto in March 1906.

The uprisings of Kobkitanda in Niger and of Satiru in Nigeria share strong similarities in their objectives, their modes of propaganda, and their strategies. Alfa Saibu and Mallam Isa knew each other before the start of their revolts, which were scheduled to take place on the same dates. Both mobilized poor people from various ethnic and social backgrounds who wanted to evade the power of traditional authorities and the Fulani Sokoto Caliphate. Like Kobkitanda, Satiru was a place of refuge, whose name actually came from the Arab *satara* and the Hausa *soutoura*, which both mean 'to protect'. Contrary to what the French and the British believed, however, the revolts did not result from a large transnational and pan-Islamist conspiracy fomented by the Qadiri, the Ottomans from Libya, and their German allies.²⁶ For Kimba Idrissa, they were primarily protests against abuses by local authorities.²⁷ They were neither a reaction to Western modernity nor an ethnic struggle to defend a traditional aristocracy that had lost its spiritual, judicial, and economic power because of the abolition of slavery and the imposition of a new colonial order.

From this perspective, crossing the border between Nigeria and Niger played a rather limited role and had nothing to do with the internationalization of a global jihad or an anti-colonial revolution. It was just helpful in providing an escape from the British or French justice systems when they failed to negotiate a right of

²⁵ Paul Lovejoy & Jan Hogendorn (1990), 'Revolutionary Mahdism and resistance to colonial rule in the Sokoto Caliphate, 1905-6', *Journal of African History* 31(2): 217-44.

²⁶ Following an assassination attempt on the Zinder district commander in March 1906, the case was nonetheless used to justify a military expedition to occupy Agadez. See Christopher Harrison (1988), *France and Islam in West Africa, 1860-1960*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 48.

²⁷ Kimba Idrissa (1994), 'Les révoltes paysannes et anticoloniales dans l'Ouest du Niger, 1905-1906', *Paideuma* 40: 196 & 208.

prosecution or an extradition.²⁸ Occasionally, it also protected people fleeing Sokoto.²⁹ But the ‘Islamist’ revolts of the time were usually very local, as with Miji-n-Aoua, a fallen Hausa chief. His small rebellion was probably organized from Katsina and led to the murder of a British officer in Nigeria and of a French expatriate in an attack against the Tessaoua prison in Niger in June 1927. Obsessed by the idea of a large Mahdist conspiracy, the British saw in it a matter of international proportions when in fact it was a mere act of revenge.³⁰

Such incidents continued to take place after the independence of Nigeria and Niger in 1960; but they were also short-lived, rarely documented, and soon forgotten by everyone except for a small circle of elders at a very local level. We could mention, for example, the 1967 revolt of Youra Bourdou, a Fulani prophet from the village of Ladou, located south of Geidam in today’s Yobe State. Nigerian authorities were mobilized by the Biafra War at the time, nearly a thousand kilometres away, and called up the Republican Guards of Niger to suppress the rebellion. A *goumier* from Toubou, named Yunus, killed the troublemaker and, according to legend, was made to commit suicide shortly thereafter by the magical powers of his victim. In the region of Geidam, still, elders also speak about the case of a healer of the Tijaniyya in the village of N’gourou who would claim he could fly like an angel in order to cheat Fulani herders before being killed in Kano around 1982.

In such a context, Boko Haram’s rebellion seems to have moved to a completely different level. On the one hand, insurgents were actually able to take advantage of international borders in the region to escape Nigerian security forces.³¹ On the other hand, they used a global rhetoric to challenge the state by borrowing from the phraseology and the iconography of the Arab jihadists of al-Qaeda and Daesh. Referring to a world revolutionary Islam is also what fundamentally differentiates Boko Haram from previous millenarian insurgencies which ravaged northern Nigeria, including the Maitatsine revolts of 1980-1985. That being said, it is not incompatible with the deep local roots of a sect whose first model was the Sokoto Caliphate.³² In its genesis, Boko Haram was a proselytizing movement preaching

²⁸ Nigeria and Niger have also served as a refuge for traditional leaders who were sued by colonial authorities over a variety of cases, ranging from slave trade to sedition. See Daouda Mamadou Marthé (2015), *Dans les marches nord du Borno (Bornou). Les mutations politiques coloniales dans l’Est nigérien (1893-1960)*, Paris, L’Harmattan, p. 294.

²⁹ Chased by Usman dan Fodio’s troops, the Hausa in Gobir, for example, found asylum in Maradi, where they were welcomed by their former opponents from Katsina. Accused of witchcraft and removed from power by his peers, the Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammad Tambari, then fled to Niger in 1930. See Guy Nicolas (1979), ‘Détours d’une conversion collective. Ouverture à l’Islam d’un bastion soudanais de résistance à une guerre sainte’, *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 48: 83-105.

³⁰ Jean Chapelle (1987), *Souvenirs du Sahel: Zinder, lac Tchad, Komadougou*, Paris, L’Harmattan, p. 80.

³¹ Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos (2015), ‘Boko Haram et la souveraineté du Nigeria: une histoire de frontières’, *Hérodote* 159: 58-75.

³² Abdulbasit Kassim (2015), ‘Defining and understanding the religious philosophy of jihādī-Salafism and the ideology of Boko Haram’, *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 16(2-3): 173-200.

da'wa, unlike al-Qaeda, which has always been a logistical platform only, initially at the service of Afghan *mujahideen*.

From Arabic to Kanuri

Close attention should also be paid to the way Mohammed Yusuf and his successor Abubakar Shekau disseminated their teachings and mobilized followers.³³ A point of clarification should first be made. Indeed, the academic literature on terrorism tends to highlight the devastating impact of Saudi Wahhabism on contemporary jihadist movements,³⁴ therefore suggesting that African Islam is but a mere receptacle for the seditious ideas of fundamentalists in the Gulf countries.³⁵ Yet, Arabic is not the language of preaching in areas where very few people can understand it.³⁶ Along the border between Niger and Nigeria, Hausa is the main language used for Quranic exegesis (*tafsir*) and large religious gatherings (*wa'azin kasa*). In fact, it has gradually replaced Fulfulde as a sacred language.³⁷ From Sokoto to Kano, Fulani jihadists eventually learned Hausa and gave up their native language by integrating indigenous cultures instead of imposing their vision of the Quran. Meanwhile, Hausa migrants and merchants spread their language in neighbouring countries. In Chad, for example, they married Arabic-speaking women, and their children learned only Hausa: a process that the French supported to counter the influence of the Senussiyya Order from Libya.³⁸

In the case of the Kanuri of Borno, Boko Haram recruited mostly on the basis of a linguistic and ethnic community. 'Trust' (*amana* in Hausa and Kanuri) was crucial in the spread of a movement. In a way, Mohammed Yusuf's discourse also flattered the Kanuri who were proud to be the first in the region to have converted

³³ On the different phases of the sect's recruitment process, see Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos (2016), 'Boko Haram: A jihadist enigma', *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 27(5): 878-95.

³⁴ For a critique of the excesses of those theories, see Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos (2015), 'Du Nigeria au Maghreb: le chaînon manquant entre Boko Haram et Al-Qaïda', *Maghreb-Machrek* 222: 111-22.

³⁵ Paradoxically, this view is in line with the classic literature on the topic, which presents African Islam as marginal and separated from the Muslim world by the Sahara 'barrier'. For an example of this, see John Spencer Trimingham (1962), *A History of Islam in West Africa*, Glasgow, Oxford University Press, p. 262.

³⁶ At Nigeria's Independence, even the Northern Region's head of government, the Sardauna of Sokoto, did not speak Arabic. As a result, he had to be represented by Abubakar Gumi, his Qadi and the future founder of the Izala, during the inauguration of the Arab League in 1962. See John Hunwick (1996), 'Sub-Saharan Africa and the wider world of Islam: Historical and contemporary perspectives', *Journal of Religion in Africa* 26(3): 239.

³⁷ Even before colonization in Katsina, for example, Hausa prisoners were so integrated into Islam that their captors had no right to sell them as slaves and therefore preferred to cut their tongue to prevent them from identifying themselves! See Louis Brenner & Murray Last (1985), 'The role of language in West African Islam', *Africa* (London) 55(4): 444.

³⁸ Guy Nicolas (1978), 'L'enracinement ethnique de l'islam au sud du Sahara. Etude comparée', *Cahiers d'études africaines* 18(71): 353-58.

to Islam, as early as the 11th century, and to have created a homogeneous community of believers, in contrast with the Hausa and their pagan minorities, the *maguzawa*.³⁹ However, Boko Haram always adopted a pan-Islamist position and never made any ethnic claims. Using Kanuri meant adapting to local constraints in order to recruit followers within a population that did not speak Arabic.⁴⁰

The sacred language of the Quran thus formed a linguistic barrier that hindered the spread of Islam. In the 19th century, for example, only a handful of scholars could read and write in Arabic; many marabouts simply practised geomancy in the sand and without books. For a long time, the mystical and hermetic orders of Sufi brotherhoods limited the teachings of their method (*tariqa*) to an elite made up of Muslim clerics. Their *ulema* jealously sought to keep a monopoly on knowledge; their main concern was to preserve the purity of the Quran, not its dissemination or its translation into Hausa. That is in fact the reason, in 1972, Muammar Gaddafi founded the Islamic Call Society (al-Dawa al-Islamiyya), in order to spread the teaching of Arabic, of the Quran, and of Sharia law all at the same time.

Another important point is that the jihadists in the Sahel did not always need foreign models to challenge secular powers. Historically, for example, Usman dan Fodio fought to create an independent Islamic state, without pledging allegiance to the sultan of Constantinople or the Sharif of Mecca.⁴¹ Being a follower of the Qadiriyya, and not of the Wahhabi movement, he refused to renounce the cult of the saints and soon broke away from the too-radical teachings of his mentor, who was based in the Aïr mountains. He also did not draw inspiration from the Sudanese Mahdism, even though some saw him as a sort of Messiah, a belief which he refrained from refuting too vehemently in order not to disappoint his followers. The dissemination of Wahhabi ideas in Nigeria was in fact posterior to Usman dan Fodio's jihad. It dates from the second half of the 19th century when, for example, a certain Mallam Ibrahimu was executed in Kano in 1870 because he advocated a departure from the Maliki school to join the Saudis' Hanbali school; his followers then fled to Lagos, where they were given the Hausa nickname of 'forgers'

³⁹ Called *arna* or *azna* (sg. *arne*) in Niger and *maguzawa* (sg. *ba maguje*) in Nigeria, Hausa animists get their name from an Arabic and Persian word, *majus*, which refers to the status of 'protected' people, *dhimmi*, in Islamic lands. Heavily influenced by Islamic culture, they speak the same language as the Muslim Hausa (called *yan riga* because they wear boubous) and they equate *Ubangiji*, their supreme deity, to Allah. Mostly found in rural areas, they are different from other villagers in that they do not seclude their women; they do not follow the ablution rituals; they allow teenagers to flirt; and they drink millet beer. See Jerome Barkow (1973), 'Muslims and Maguzawa in North Central State, Nigeria: An ethnographic comparison', *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 7(1): 59-76.

⁴⁰ The locals are generally multilingual and the Kanuri language keeps losing ground, even in Maiduguri, where Hausa, which is used as a language of commerce, may have become dominant.

⁴¹ Mervyn Hiskett (1994), *The Sword of Truth: The Life and Times of the Shehu Usman dan Fodio*, Evanston (Ill.), Northwestern University Press, p. 137.

(*shargidi*).⁴² These movements nonetheless remained furtive, and it was not until the 1970s oil boom that Izala fundamentalists emerged under the aegis of Abubakar Mahmud Gumi a sheikh trained in Saudi Arabia.

The true global space that is Mecca, as well as the Islamic University of Medina, certainly played a role in framing the doctrine of the ‘Society for the Eradication of Evil Innovations and the Re-establishment of Orthodoxy’ (Jama’at Izalat al-Bida wa Iqamat al-Sunnah), which is the Izala’s full name. Close to the Saudis, Abubakar Gumi for example used his position in 1973 to ban the pilgrimage for members of the Ahmadiyya brotherhood, which is influential in the south-west of Nigeria. As for the founder of the ‘Nigerian Taliban’, Muhammad Ali, and Mohammed Yusuf’s Izala mentor, Mahmud Ja’afar Adam, they developed their teachings after being trained in Saudi Arabia, while an early follower of Boko Haram, Bashir Mustafa, had studied in Medina before his killing in 2010.

However, the pilgrimage has also contributed to the expansion of Sufi brotherhoods, the great rivals of Wahhabi and Saudi forms of Salafism in Africa. It has legitimized the emergence of Tijaniyya jihadists such as El Hadj Muhammad al-Amin, a.k.a. ‘The Soninke’, in Mali or the founder of the Toucouleur Empire in Senegal, El Hadj Umar Tall, who had also studied Islam in Cairo for four years.⁴³ As for Nigeria, the encounter in Mecca in 1937 between the Emir of Kano, Abdullahi Bayero, and the Senegalese Tijaniyya leader, Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse, was crucial. It is indeed the starting point of the expansion, in the most populous country in Africa, of a movement that had first started to spread from Senegal, following trade routes towards Ghana, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. In the Kano region, specifically, *talakawa* masses were drawn to Tijaniyya because it was closer to the people and less elitist than the Qadiriyya brotherhood of the *sarakuna* nobility. In 1945, a visit of Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse then finally convinced the Emir of Kano to rally a movement that allowed him to overcome the tutelage of the Sultan of Sokoto, a member of the Qadiriyya.

The magnitude of the pilgrimage pushed the Wahhabis to compromise and welcome Muslims who did not follow their Hanbali rituals, including the Shiites.⁴⁴ After taking control of Mecca in 1924, the Saudis had first banned some prayers, destroyed some ancient tombs and restricted the access of religious leaders of the three other orthodox Sunni Islamic schools of jurisprudence: the Hanafi, Maliki, and Shafi’i. But the regime did not have oil money and was quite poor. It needed the financial and political support of the Muslim world to recognize its sovereignty

⁴² Mervyn Hiskett (1980), ‘The “Community of Grace” and its opponents, the “Rejecters”’: A debate about theology and mysticism in Muslim West Africa with special reference to its Hausa expression’, *African Language Studies* 17: 126.

⁴³ See, for example, Humphrey Fisher (1970), ‘The early life and pilgrimage of Al-Hajj Muhammad Al-Amin the Soninke (d. 1887)’, *The Journal of African History* 11(1): 51-69.

⁴⁴ David Long (1979), *The Hajj Today: A Survey of the Contemporary Makkah Pilgrimage*, Albany, State University of New York Press, pp. 95 & 108.

and independence. As a result, it had to restrain the zeal of its sectarian supporters in the Ikhwan ('brothers') militia. During a world congress in Mecca in 1926, the authorities formally allowed believers from other countries to perform their own rituals.⁴⁵ Since then, the increasing number of pilgrims has forced the monarchy to negotiate national quotas and tone down the masculine rigour of original Wahhabism, as women now make up half of the pilgrims who travel to Mecca each year.⁴⁶ Under the pretext of modernizing the holy city, the Saudis also began to raze old buildings, including the mausoleums of the Prophet's family, not just the Sufi shrines which the Wahhabis despise. Giving in to easy oil money, they disfigured the site and built an American-style city.⁴⁷

Historically, moreover, Mecca was mainly a sanctuary, not a hub for jihad training. For Africans, exile to the holy city may have been a form of silent protest, instead of resorting to violence.⁴⁸ Indeed, Mecca was a place of refuge, or even of illegal immigration, because of its special and cosmopolitan status within the Saudi territory. Thus, it is there that Mohammed Yusuf went in search of an alibi and asylum when Nigerian security forces started looking for him after the uprising of the Taliban in Kanama in 2003. It is also there that, during his own pilgrimage in 2004, the Deputy Governor of Borno State, Adamu Shettima Yuguda Bilal, negotiated the return to Maiduguri of Boko Haram's founder. The Wahhabi influence of Mecca on Mohammed Yusuf is actually questionable. The founder of Boko Haram had already radicalized before the pilgrimage. Once back in Maiduguri, he then broke away from the Salafist Izala, who considered him a heretic.

The role played by Saudi Arabia in framing a global Salafi ideology deserves further discussion. Historically, Sahelian jihads in the 18th and 19th centuries were led by Africans and not by Arab preachers.⁴⁹ Among them, only three had made the pilgrimage, and it was the colonizer who stressed their alleged Wahhabi or Mahdist connections.⁵⁰ Usman dan Fodio, for example, never went to Mecca. Trained in Agadez in Niger, he also did not need the Qadiriyya to take up arms, even if the brotherhood's teachings may have legitimized his fight. His successors

⁴⁵ Achille Sékaly (1926), 'Les deux congrès islamiques généraux', *Revue du monde musulman* 64: 22.

⁴⁶ Robert Bianchi (2004), *Guest of God, Pilgrimage and Politics in the Islamic World*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 358.

⁴⁷ Ziauddin Sardar (2015), *Histoire de La Mecque. De la naissance d'Abraham au XXI^e siècle*, Paris, Payot, p. 476.

⁴⁸ Murray Last (1970), 'Aspects of administration and dissent in Hausaland, 1800-1968', *Africa* 40(4): 352.

⁴⁹ Nehemia Levtzion (1987), 'The eighteenth-century: Background to the Islamic revolutions in West Africa'. In: Nehemia Levtzion & John Voll, eds, *Eighteenth-Century Renewal and Reform in Islam*, Syracuse (NY), Syracuse University Press, pp. 21-38.

⁵⁰ Roman Loimeier (2010), 'Africa south of the Sahara to the First World War'. In: Francis Robinson, ed., *The New Cambridge History of Islam: Volume 5. The Islamic World in the Age of Western Dominance*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 273.

also avoided going away, at a time when a journey to Mecca took several years and would have forced them to relinquish power, like the Christian kings during the Crusades. As Humphrey Fisher notes, the Fulani from Sokoto's ruling class were afraid of a possible rebellion of the Hausa masses, who identified less with their emirs, perhaps because Islam had been imported into the region by foreign preachers of Fulani, Kanembu, Kanuri, or Wangarawa (Mande) stock.⁵¹ Theologians also justified such bending of religious duty by arguing that taking part in jihad opened the gates of Paradise and exempted believers from their obligation to go to Mecca. Additionally, a local legend had it that the first pilgrimage of the Sultan of Sokoto would herald the end of the world and provoke a mass exodus of God's chosen people, the Fulani, towards the Gulf. Paradoxically, it was the British colonizer who, by consolidating the authority of the caliphate and developing transport, made it possible for the ruler to leave in order to perform his religious duties.

Local networks of Islamic preaching

Today, it is not exactly clear whether Mecca facilitated the mobilization of Boko Haram's followers. For example, out of 51 presumed members of the sect held in the prisons of Koutoukalé and Kollo in Niger, only one had made the pilgrimage.⁵² In the long run, there should not be too many speculations about the effects of globalization and advances in telecommunications. In practice, Boko Haram's process of recruitment and indoctrination still relies heavily on personal contacts and individual affinities in a context of strong solidarity based on lineage, or even of *omerta*, in the face of abuses from government forces, who are perceived as occupation troops.⁵³ Since the early 2000s, the sect's expansion highlights the importance of local networks that make possible the dissemination and transmission of a radical Islam. In those networks can be found the usual places of indoctrination for jihad: markets, mosques, prisons, Quranic schools, camps for refugees or displaced persons. Videos of Mohammed Yusuf's sermons on DVD,

⁵¹ Humphrey Fisher (1977), 'The eastern Maghrib and the central Sudan'. In: John Fage & Roland Oliver, eds, *The Cambridge History of Africa, vol.3: From c. 1050 to c. 1600*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 326; Olayemi Akinwumi & Raji Adesina (1990), 'The Wangarawa factor in the history of Nigerian Islam: The example of Kano and Borgu', *Islamic Studies* 29(4): 375-85.

⁵² Interviews conducted by the author early 2015.

⁵³ Complicity at the local level thus explains why it was difficult for the army and the police to apprehend the rebels. Smugglers and Mbororo Fulani herders in the region, for example, are used to evading the police, even when it means not denouncing the bandits who rob them and give a part of their booty to village chiefs in order to buy the silence of the authorities. See Saïbou Issa (2010), *Les 'coupeurs de route'*. *Histoire du banditisme rural et transfrontalier dans le bassin du Lac Tchad*, Paris, Karthala, 273 p.; Saïbou Issa (2006), 'La prise d'otages aux confins du Cameroun, de la Centrafrique et du Tchad: une nouvelle modalité du banditisme transfrontalier', *Polis, Revue camerounaise de science politique* 13(1-2): 119-46.

audio cassettes, and MP3 files have contributed to the movement's reputation. With the information we have so far, however, it is difficult to assess the role they may have played in recruiting followers and fighters who joined the jihad for a variety of other reasons: personal vendettas, persecution by security forces, opportunism, etc.

Mosques are, in principle, preferred spaces for the teaching of Islam, especially for the Izala, more so than for Sufi brotherhoods. Mohammed Yusuf's determination to create his own religious centre (*markaz*) close to the railway station in Maiduguri highlights their importance, while his second-in-command, Abubakar Shekau, preached in his own mosque, called Daifatul Mansura. In the dictatorships of the Arab world, mosques became the main place of protest and dissent, as other mediums of opposition were progressively shut down (political parties, trade unions, universities, associations), somewhat as churches were in East European Communist countries. In the Lake Chad Basin, however, Islam is also preached outside the mosque with outdoor recitations (*tajwid*) or exegesis (*tafsir*) of the Quran. Before the military crackdown of 2009, Boko Haram's followers went to bus stations and markets in small communities such as Geidam. There, they managed to reach farmers who would come to town to sell their agricultural products outside the days of prayer on Fridays.

Observers emphasize the role of Koranic schools in indoctrinating itinerant students called *talibé*, or, in Nigeria, *almajirai* (sg. *almajiri*) in Hausa and *fukarbe* in Fulani (sg. *pukaraajo*). In *Newsweek* magazine in Lagos on 16 January 2012, famous Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka, a self-proclaimed atheist, compared for instance the *almajirai* to a 'horde' of unemployed people in the service of terrorism and criminal politicians.⁵⁴ Indeed, many commentators liken the *almajirai* to street children and feel that they have been radicalized because they live in poverty and have nothing to lose. According to them, Quranic students make up the bulk of the sect's recruits. Of the 34 Boko Haram veterans interviewed in Maiduguri and Bama in 2014, for example, it turns out that the vast majority had gone to Quranic rather than public schools.⁵⁵ However, other surveys yield different results. Among the 51 suspects believed to be sect members who were interviewed by the author in the prisons of Koutoukalé and Kollo in Niger in early 2015, the number of those who had attended primary school was the same as those who had attended Quranic schools. It should also be noted that 15 of them had never been to school, either public or Quranic.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ <http://europe.newsweek.com/wole-soyinka-nigerias-anti-christian-terror-sect-boko-haram-64153?rm=eu>

⁵⁵ Sani Umar & David Ehrhardt (2015), *Pathways to Radicalization: Life Histories of JAS Members*, Abuja, NSRP, p. 9.

⁵⁶ For similar results, see also Lisa Inks, Rebecca Wolfe & Iveta Ouvry, eds, (2016), *Motivations and Empty Promises: Voices of Former Boko Haram Combatants and Nigerian Youth*, Portland (Orgeon), Mercy Corps, p. 24.

Historically, the first members of the ‘Nigerian Taliban’ in Kanama were from the University of Maiduguri, such as Bili Tashe, Grema Terrab, and Maikanti Ndimi, the son of a rich merchant from Borno State who had made a fortune in oil and in whose mosque the founder of Boko Haram, Mohammed Yusuf, delivered his first sermons.⁵⁷ Kabiru Sokoto and Aminu Sadik Ogbwuche, the brains behind the attacks on St. Theresa Church in Madalla in 2011 and on the Nyanya bus station in Abuja in 2014, also went to high school, and the latter even took courses at the university level. Their level of education did not prevent them from turning to violence, just like Sheikh Ibrahim el-Zakzaky’s ‘Shiite’ extremists who were part of the MSS (Muslim Students Society) and who recruited heavily on campus at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria.⁵⁸ Also, available studies on other countries show that there is no clear correlation between levels of education and involvements in terrorism.⁵⁹ A great example of this is Marc Sageman’s work based on the profiles of 172 imprisoned al-Qaeda members, not to mention Osama bin Laden and his successor, Ayman al-Zawahiri, who was trained as an engineer and a physician.⁶⁰

In Nigeria, the role of the *almajirai* remains controversial, both in the media and in academia. On the one hand, some believe that education and knowledge promote negotiation skills because they make it possible to approach the ruling class and identify the right people with whom to start a dialogue. In contrast, ignorance leads people to overthrow established powers for lack of being able to talk to them. For others, however, young people who have gone through the secular school system are more likely to be attracted to jihad than those who attended a Quranic school and who have at their disposal arguments to condemn the use of violence. Thus, one of the Quranic students, originally from Geidam, who was interviewed by the author in early 2015 in the Koutoukalé prison explained that their marabout would threaten to whip them if they were caught attending a Boko Haram sermon. The sect did not hide its hostility towards the traditional teaching practised by *mallams*,

⁵⁷ It is actually thanks to their financial resources that, during a meeting in Damagum in Yobe, they convinced Mohammed Yusuf to join their extremist positions against Western education. See Abdul Kareem Ogori (18 December 2010), ‘Return of the Boko Haram’, *Politico*, pp. 11-16.

⁵⁸ Officially, Ibrahim el-Zakzaky denies being Shiite in order to attract Sunni Muslims. Funded by Teheran, he was nonetheless presented as the Nigeria’s Shiite leader on the English-speaking channel of the Iranian television in an interview broadcast on 25 March 2013 (video in possession of the author). As for the number two of his movement, Mallam Muhammad Turi, he was an accountant who received his diploma from the University of Maiduguri and who was reportedly killed by the Nigerian Army during an attack on Ibrahim el-Zakzaky’s house in Zaria in December 2015.

⁵⁹ Philip Keefer & Norman Loayza, eds, (2008), *Terrorism, Economic Development, and Political Openness*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 83-115; Kamaldeep Bhui, Nasir Warfa & Edgar Jones (2014), ‘Is violent radicalisation associated with poverty, migration, poor self-reported health and common mental disorders?’, *PLoS ONE* 9(3). doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0090718. For the cases of Jordan, Morocco, Pakistan, Turkey, Lebanon, and Palestine, see Alan Krueger (2008), *What Makes a Terrorist: Economics and the Roots of Terrorism*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, pp. 24-37.

⁶⁰ Marc Sageman (2004), *Understanding Terror Networks*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press.

who therefore had to hide their writing tablets (*allo*) to escape the wrath of insurgents. Attached to the principle of the oneness of God (*tawhid*) and hostile to the intercession of the saints in Sufi cults, Salafists indeed consider Quranic school marabouts to be charlatans, and they criticize the secret prayers of their medical prescriptions, written on small pieces of paper and contained in gris-gris (*kundi*). In any case, the theory about the religious indoctrination of *almajirai* would apply only to Boko Haram's first phase of proselytization (*da'wa*), before the military crackdown in 2009, when the group had to go into hiding and began to forcibly recruit young people or attract opportunist 'mercenaries' who came to fight alongside jihadists to get their share of the spoils of war.

In this regard, security studies specialists have a tendency to convey contradictory messages. On the one hand, they consider that Quranic schools lead to terrorism by indoctrinating future jihadists. On the other, they feel that these schools have lost their role as teachers of the rules of Islam, the foundation of social order. With the competition generated by the development of public schools during the oil boom in the 1970s, they produced young illiterates who were marginalized and unable to find a place in the labour market, which made them ideal recruits for armed groups. In one case, Quranic schools are thus criticized for what they teach; in the other, they are criticized because they no longer teach! Such a paradox also brings to mind the ambivalence of Boko Haram's rejection of a public education system which, affected by the economic crisis of the 1980s and 1990s, had virtually ceased to function in many parts of northern Nigeria.

We should also take into account the ambivalent character of Quranic schools, which can be both a hotbed of radicalization or, conversely, a bulwark against the sectarian abuses of intolerant Islamic fundamentalists. In reality, different kinds of institutions teach the Quran under the supervision of teachers (*mallamai* in Hausa). For Mervyn Hiskett, *tsangaya* or *makarantun allo* Quranic schools are but simple kindergartens where children learn only to memorize and recite surahs.⁶¹ Murray Last points out that these institutions gained momentum mostly during the colonial period, when the pacification of the country and the abolition of slavery allowed farmers to let itinerant marabouts take their children away, as they could not feed them properly and their agricultural work was not needed during the dry season.⁶² A French administrator of the Mainé-Soroa border region said about them in 1934 that there was 'nothing special to report'.⁶³ In fact, Quranic schools are similar to

⁶¹ Mervyn Hiskett (1975), 'Islamic education in the traditional and state systems in northern Nigeria'. In: Godfrey Brown & Mervyn Hiskett, eds, *Conflict and Harmony in Education in Tropical Africa*, London, Allen and Unwin, p. 141.

⁶² Murray Last (1997), 'The "colonial caliphate" of northern Nigeria'. In: David Robinson & Jean-Louis Triaud, eds, *Le temps des marabouts: itinéraires et stratégies islamiques en Afrique occidentale française, v. 1880-1960*, Paris, Karthala, p. 76.

⁶³ Claude Boraud (August 9, 1934), Rapport de tournée de recensement du canton de Mainé Soroa, Mainé Soroa, p. 15.

the *kuttab* (sg. *katatib*) of the Arab world and are different from the ‘Institutes for Islamic Higher Education’ (*makarantun ilmi* in Hausa). In Nigeria, they are open to students of all ages, including adults, and teach Arabic, theology, and law under the guidance of an *alim* (pl. *ulama*).⁶⁴ They also differ from *madrasahs*, which were regulated by a 1934 colonial law and were initially created to train Quranic judges, before they adopted the national curriculum and started accepting women under the reformist pressure of the Izala in the 1970s.⁶⁵

In the Nigerian system, *madrasahs* and Institutes for Islamic Higher Education are in fact part of the Muslim establishment. Unlike Saudi Arabia or Iran, however, they are not intended to train administration officials, except for the judges (*qadi*) of the colonial judicial system. Moreover, Nigerian *madrasahs* are less bureaucratic than they are in the Arab world, Indonesia, or Turkey, whose education systems and diplomas are more standardized. But the Izala philosophy, often dominant, advocates the infiltration of its followers into the state apparatus and not an open and armed confrontation with the secular power, a position that was also at the origin of the ideological rift between Mohammed Yusuf and the Izala. A priori, nothing leads us to assume that Islamic and modern types of education are necessarily incompatible and mutually exclusive; in Borno, Quranic private religious schools actually develop following the example of Christian schools that survived the nationalization of missions at the end of the Biafra War in 1970. In any case, there are no records of Boko Haram officers attending Nigerian *madrasahs*. As for Mohammed Yusuf, he was expelled by the Izala from the Indimi mosque in Maiduguri precisely because he did not have the theological training and qualifications required by the Saudi curriculum to teach the Quran; unlike Usman dan Fodio, his charisma and oratory skills were more important than his knowledge of Islam in spreading his beliefs.

It also turns out that the sect did not develop through *madrasahs* but by establishing dissident mosques and preaching outdoors, in markets, before the extrajudicial execution of its founder during the military crackdown in July 2009. Since then, the group has continued to rally to its cause those who suffer the abuses of security forces. Prisons and camps for displaced people then became recruiting grounds.⁶⁶ In Africa, little is known about the way in which overcrowded prisons may indoctrinate, radicalize, and prepare young delinquents for jihad, unlike Western prisons in which detainees are separated carefully. In Nigeria and to a lesser extent in Niger – namely, in Diffa in July 2015 – it is a fact, however, that

⁶⁴ Unlike its Arab and Iranian meaning, the *ulema* in Nigeria is a cleric and a scholar who has precedence over the *ustaz*, a preacher who is more of a counsellor or a schoolmaster, the *mallam*. *Ulema* is a function; *ustaz* is a title.

⁶⁵ Muhammad Umar (2004), ‘Mass Islamic education and emergence of female “ulama” in northern Nigeria: Background, trends, and consequences’. In: Scott Reese, ed., *The Transmission of Learning in Islamic Africa*, Leiden, Brill, pp. 99-120.

⁶⁶ Some even offer theories about hypnosis practices in training camps in rural areas.

Boko Haram often attacked prisons, police stations, and barracks in order to release believers and, at the same time, gain new recruits. When he was arrested in November 2008 along with 63 disciples after trying to take over an Izala mosque in Monguno, Abubakar Shekau, for example, preached in the central prison of Maiduguri, which he then attacked in July 2009 to release his former fellow inmates.⁶⁷

As the situation worsened, the fighting also caused people to move within Borno State or to neighbouring countries. Authorities thus feared the infiltration of Boko Haram amongst refugees and displaced persons. Indeed, Islam gives a particular value to victims of an exodus, in reference to the journey (*hijra*) of Prophet Mohammed and his companions, driven out of Mecca to Medina in 622. In the eyes of the fundamentalists, in particular, fleeing is just as legitimate as the holy war (jihad) and hiding (*taqiyya*) to fight against the invader and the oppressor. A Muslim who refuses to leave the lands of the heathen can even be considered an infidel. Usman dan Fodio's fighters, for example, treated such persons as criminals and seized their property, but not their women and children, unlike the unbelievers.⁶⁸

However, Islamists do not always approve of the mobility of pastoralists. Paradoxically, the Fulani of the jihad in Sokoto could be seen as bad Muslims because they were often on the move, prayed outside the mosques, performed their ablutions with sand for lack of water, and shunned their religious obligations to take care of their herds. Himself a man of the city, the Prophet did not fail to denounce the immorality of Arabian Bedouins. It was Ibn Khaldun, instead, who praised the loyalty (*'asabiyya*) of nomads and farmers, as opposed to the corruption of merchants and urban dwellers.⁶⁹ For the famous Arab historian of the 14th century, urban populations were weakened by their 'governmental and educational laws', with armies made up of mercenaries and sedentary officials. On the contrary, rural nomads were braver because they fought for the survival of their community; besides, they were more willing to obey religious laws founded on divine rather than human injunctions.⁷⁰ That is actually what happened when, from the 18th century, Fulani pastoralists resumed the efforts to Islamize the Sahel

⁶⁷ Interview with Professor Mohammed Kyari in Yola, 27 October 2015.

⁶⁸ Herbert Richmond Palmer (Jul. 1914), 'An early Fulani conception of Islam', *Journal of the Royal African Society* 13(52): 407-14. Herbert Richmond Palmer (Oct. 1914), 'An early Fulani conception of Islam (Continued)', *Journal of the Royal African Society* 13(53): 53-59. Herbert Richmond Palmer (Jan. 1915), 'An early Fulani conception of Islam (Continued)', *Journal of the Royal African Society* 14(54): 185-92.

⁶⁹ Joseph Schacht (1977), 'Law and justice'. In: Peter Malcolm Holt, Ann Lambton & Bernard Lewis, eds, *The Cambridge History of Islam, Vol. 2: Islamic Society and Civilization*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 541.

⁷⁰ Ibn Khaldun, Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad (2002), *Le livre des Exemples*, Paris, Gallimard, p. 379.

beyond cities such as Timbuktu, where clerics were more eager to defend the interests of traders than to reform and moralize the state.⁷¹

At the local level, refugees and migrants could therefore be both the recipients and the vehicles of proselytism, like the Wangarawa people of Mali who came to settle in Kano from the 14th century, or the Umayyad exiles who started the Islamization of the Kanem-Bornu Empire in the 11th century.⁷² In such a context, Boko Haram preachers targeted displaced people and farmers alike, which was done either in reference to the Quran, or in memory of the Sokoto jihad, or, pragmatically, to control the old contraband routes of the caravan trade. In refugee camps in Niger, Chad, and Cameroon, idle youths were also preys of choice for jihadists in search of recruits. Moreover, exile may have facilitated conversion efforts, something that had already been observed in Nigeria during the evacuation of some 45,000 Gungawa from the Yauri Emirate to allow for the construction of the Kainji dam in 1970.⁷³

Boko Haram, a special case?

All things considered, it would seem that the modes of dissemination of Boko Haram's ideology do not fundamentally differ from other jihadist insurgencies in the region, which also recruited fighters outside of mosques and among refugees or captives. Current changes are more the result of military and technological considerations. Historically, Usman dan Fodio's teachings had been passed on in writing, or orally (*tariqa*) in the case of Sufi brotherhoods. Meanwhile, leaders of the Tijani revival of the 1950s, called *al-fayda* ('the flood') or, sometimes, *tajdid* ('renewal' in Arabic), innovated by preaching on the radio.⁷⁴ At the time, they had also to overcome the reluctance of the *ulema*, who did not want to mix the reading of the Quran with profane noises and to let listeners hear the Holy Book

⁷¹ Nehemia Levtzion (1987), 'The eighteenth-century: Background to the Islamic revolutions in West Africa'. In: Nehemia Levtzion & John Voll, eds, *Eighteenth-Century Renewal and Reform in Islam*, Syracuse (NY), Syracuse University Press, pp. 21-38.

⁷² Thomas Hodgkin (1975), *Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 24.

⁷³ At the time, the resettlement programme had given preference to Muslims, who made up 20% of the population, giving them access to housing, jobs in the public sector, loans and water pumps, while the complaints of 'pagans' were consistently rejected by the courts. See Frank Salamone (1983), 'The clash between indigenous, Islamic, colonial and post-colonial law in Nigeria', *Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law* 21: 44; Frank Salamone (1975), 'Becoming Hausa: Ethnic identity change and its implications for the study of ethnic pluralism and stratification', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 45(4): 417.

⁷⁴ Andrea Brigaglia (2009), 'Learning, gnosis and exegesis: Public tafsīr and Sufi revival in the city of Kano (northern Nigeria), 1950-1970', *Die Welt des Islams* 49: 334-66; Andrea Brigaglia (2007), 'The Radio Kaduna Tafsir (1978-1992) and the construction of public images of Muslim scholars in the Nigerian media', *Journal for Islamic Studies* 27: 173-210; Brian Larkin (2008), *Signal and Noise: Media, Infrastructures, and Urban Culture in Nigeria*, Durham (NC), Duke University Press, p. 8.

inadvertently while engaged in impure acts. Unlike more scriptural fundamentalist movements, this did not stop many Sufi sheikhs from favouring oral contests to challenge the religious content of cheap Salafi books sold at the market.⁷⁵

As for Mohammed Yusuf, he used the Izala's methods to participate in theological debates on television in Borno State and disseminate his sermons through DVDs, cassettes, or MP3 files.⁷⁶ The production of his videos was probably entrusted to one of the sect's early supporters, Mustapha Adam, who ran an audiovisual communication company called Dandagare.⁷⁷ Boko Haram has also used more basic broadcasting techniques in rural areas – for example, in Niger by distributing leaflets written in Arabic and Hausa at the mosque in the village of Kelakam near Mainé-Soroa, as late as 2011. By the mid-2000s, Mohammed Yusuf's sermon handouts were also being circulated covertly.⁷⁸ They eventually led to a self-published book, which was reprinted 15 days later on 6 May 2009, just two months before the uprising that led to the extrajudicial execution of Mohammed Yusuf.⁷⁹

Boko Haram thus did not really introduce anything new in terms of dissemination technology. Neither its founder nor its critics stopped using books in a region where access to telephone networks and to the Internet had always been poor.⁸⁰ In Jos in July 2015, Mohammed Yusuf's successors attempted to assassinate Muhammad Sani Yahya Jingir, the head of the Izala and a sheikh known for the tirades contained in his pamphlet entitled *Boko Halal*. In this respect, we should not focus too much on the viral videos showing Abubakar Shekau chewing a toothpick⁸¹ while claiming responsibility for the kidnapping of

⁷⁵ Roman Loimeier (2003), 'Patterns and peculiarities of Islamic reform in Africa', *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33(3): 237-62.

⁷⁶ Élodie Aparid (2016), 'Les mots de Boko Haram. Décryptage de discours de Mohammed Yusuf et d'Abubakar Shekau', *Afrique Contemporaine* 255: 43-74.

⁷⁷ Other very local production companies then appeared under the name of Darul-Islam, Khairul-Huda, and Sautus-Sunnah.

⁷⁸ In March 2015, these sermons were also compiled, edited, and posted online via the group's new media channel, Al-Urwah al-Wuthqa. Accessed 11 September 2015:

https://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/jamc481_at-ahl-al-sunnah-li-l-da_wah-wa-l-jihc481d-22grouping-of-sermons-of-the-ime481m-abc5ab-yc5absuf-mue1b8a5ammad-bin-yc5absuf22.pdf

⁷⁹ Mohammed Yusuf (2009), *This Is Our Faith and Our Da'wa*, Maiduguri, Al Farba, p. 166.

⁸⁰ It is estimated that in 1900, just before British colonization, between 250,000 and 500,000 books circulated in today's northern Nigeria; they were essentially religious works, sometimes just simple copies, held by individuals or emirs, for lack of public libraries. See Murray Last (2008), 'The book in the Sokoto Caliphate'. In: Shamil Jeppie & Souleymane Bachir Diagne, eds, *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, Dakar, CODESRIA/HSRC, p. 140. For general information about the spread of Islam in the Sahel through books written in Arabic, see Murray Last (2011), 'The book and the nature of knowledge in Muslim Northern Nigeria, 1457-2007'. In: Graziano Krätli & Ghislaine Lydon, eds, *The Trans-Saharan Book Trade: Manuscript Culture, Arabic Literacy, and Intellectual History in Muslim Africa*, Leiden, Brill, pp. 178-211.

⁸¹ Made from acacia or arrack, the *miswak* in Arabic, also called *makarkari* in Hausa, is deemed to have the virtues of a toothpaste because it contains fluoride. To Salafists, it meets Prophet Mohammed's recommendation of brushing one's teeth daily upon waking up, at the time of the ablutions before prayer, when the mouth has a foul smell.

the Chibok schoolgirls in 2014. In the context of rumours about his death or his exile in Mali in 2012, then Libya in 2015, Mohammed Yusuf's successor is actually just as present ... when he is absent.

However, his disappearances are not part of a communication strategy that would try to ridicule the authorities and resurrect an invisible imam whose death has been announced several times by Nigeria and Cameroon. Abubakar Shekau's absences are also different from the masking of Subcomandante Marcos of the Zapatista liberation army in Mexico. Neither do they seem to mirror the precautions of the Taliban in Afghanistan, who tried to hide the death of Mullah Omar, or the instructions of safety and anonymity of Daesh jihadists in Iraq, who have reduced the public appearances of their leaders to avoid drone attacks. In terms of strategy, the release of Abubakar Shekau's messages simply depends on opportunities to shoot videos which people in Borno are not able to watch anyway because of a lack of Internet access (only excerpts are broadcast on Hausa radio stations, which are very popular). In practice, the messages he started broadcasting in 2014 were first intended for the media; they were less used to relay the movement's ideology than to build the image of a terrorist group seeking international visibility.⁸²

In the region, Boko Haram's communication strategy had to take on other forms that have remained inaccessible to Western media. It never reached the level of sophistication of the Izala in Nigeria or jihadist groups in Arabic countries.⁸³ The sect actually remained a rather rudimentary and primitive organization that did not manage to acquire the propaganda tools of a political party or a guerrilla movement: radio station, underground press, website.⁸⁴ Unlike Hamas or Hezbollah, for example, it did not create Islamic NGOs to raise funds, recruit young people, develop social projects, and be represented abroad.⁸⁵ Technically, Mohammed Yusuf established a religious centre (*markaz*) in Maiduguri, formed a youth movement (*Shabaab*) in 2007, and granted loans to its poorest members.⁸⁶ He tried to attract young people by paying for their wedding ceremonies and asking them for favours in return. His most accomplished form of assistance has been the creation of a fund that would later support the widows of combatants killed in the

⁸² Élodie Aparé (2015), 'Boko Haram, le jihad en vidéo', *Politique africaine* 138: 135-62.

⁸³ In an interview to the journal of the Islamic State *Al-Naba* in August 2016, a successor to Abubakar Shekau, Habib Muhammad Yusuf 'al-Barnawi', thus acknowledged that the original name of the group, the 'Sunni Congregation for the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad' (Jama'at Ahl al-Sunnah li'l Da'wa wa'l Jihad) was too complicated to pronounce and gave room for a nickname like Boko Haram ('Western education is a sacrilege').

⁸⁴ Since 2013, the Izala have their own television channel, *Sunnah TV*, which complements Internet websites such as www.jibwisnigeria.org or <https://www.facebook.com/dandalinsunna/>

⁸⁵ See, in this volume, the insert 'Islamic NGOs in Niger and Nigeria'.

⁸⁶ Usman Gaji Galtimari, ed., (September 2011), Final Report of the Presidential Committee on Security Challenges in the North-East Zone of Nigeria, Abuja, Federal Government of Nigeria, p. 16.

battlefield, in contrast with the inability of the Nigerian state to pay pensions to the families of police officers or soldiers killed by insurgents.

Boko Haram was also able to capitalize on the anger of people who did not benefit from the country's wealth. The sect became popular by spreading accusations against the corruption of the elite, the sacrilege of apostates, and the abuses of the ruling class within a supposedly democratic system. Just like the Tijani or Usman dan Fodio's Fulani in the past, Boko Haram contested the Muslim establishment in order to make the knowledge of Islam accessible to the masses. From this point of view, it is reminiscent of the efforts of the Sokoto jihadists to teach the Quran to young people and women of the nobility, until their successors became part of the colonial order and tried to muzzle the criticism of Muslim scholars and opponents.⁸⁷ In its own way, Mohammed Yusuf has contributed to the dissemination, the fragmentation, and the 'democratization' of Islam against the elites' monopoly on knowledge.

Conclusion

Compared with past insurgencies, Boko Haram's novelty must be put into perspective in this regard.⁸⁸ Beyond military and technical aspects, the group will probably not leave much of a legacy from a strictly religious perspective. Like other jihadist groups in the 19th century, its members mostly wanted to reform and spread the teachings of Islam through preaching (*da'wa*) and disseminating the writings of their emir. Despite the current focus of terrorism studies on the role of Internet and social networks, Abubakar Shekau's propaganda videos do not give a full account of the progression of the group's ideology. The quality of state institutions better explains why Boko Haram thrived in Nigeria and not in Niger, which is poorer but where social inequalities are less pronounced.⁸⁹

Indeed, Nigeria is a federation that never had a single-party system. Niger, on the contrary, is a former military colony that developed on the basis of a police state whose local officials are still appointed by Niamey, despite recent

⁸⁷ Jean Trevor (1975), 'Western education and Muslim Fulani/Hausa women in Sokoto, northern Nigeria'. In: Godfrey Brown & Mervyn Hiskett, eds, *Conflict and Harmony in Education in Tropical Africa*, London, Allen and Unwin, p. 248.

⁸⁸ Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos (2015), 'Boko Haram et la mise en récit du terrorisme au "Sahelistan": une perspective historique', *Afrique contemporaine* 255: 21-41.

⁸⁹ The Nigerian state's failure to act is impressive in this regard. As soon as 1994, the Borno State Islamic Preachers Board warned the government against the radical sermons of Jafar Adam Mahmud at the Indimi mosque, where Mohammed Yusuf was to begin his career in Maiduguri. In Borno State, a 1977 decree and laws of 1981 and 2010 were actually supposed to regulate sermons and grant licenses to qualified people endorsed by emirates' councils. Violators risked small fines or imprisonment for up to six months, which was extended to ten years in 2010. In the same vein, a committee set up in 2000 to extend the scope of Sharia law planned to control and coordinate the activities of preachers and to register all Quranic schools in local governments.

decentralization efforts. As a result, the country does not have the centrifugal tensions that Nigeria has, at least on its southern flank. Its national narrative is stronger and its institutions seem more robust at the local level. Niger has also inherited from the secular values of the French Republic, unlike British Nigeria, where the *indirect rule* favoured a stricter application of Sharia law. Within the sphere of influence of the Sokoto Caliphate, in particular, the British established a kind of government ‘by proxy’ that used the sultan’s vassals to collect taxes and maintain law and order. Emirs were in charge of dealing with land and criminal cases in *alkali* courts (the Hausa version of Arab *qadi*), while customary law ruled family and business disputes. In contrast, the French followed a ‘republican’ model with a government ‘by consent’ and the support of opinion leaders such as the Sufi brotherhoods in Senegal.

Demographics also played a role. Compared with Niger, where 95% of the population is Muslim, Nigeria is much more populated and heterogeneous ethnically and religiously. Although both countries have comparable sizes, the challenges of colonial administrations were quite different in this regard. Few in numbers, the French ruled vast territories that were sparsely inhabited, while the British had to manage large masses.⁹⁰ Besides, Christians and Muslims in Nigeria have a roughly similar weight, which may have exacerbated inter-religious competition and promoted the radicalization of fundamentalists. Finally, the country is more urban, a setting that is more conducive to the emergence of Salafi movements.⁹¹

In this context, the spread of Boko Haram is certainly not just the result of the success of its communication and globalization strategy. Contrary to Abdulbasit Kassim’s statements, the group is not the first one in Nigeria to have tried to reconcile the revolutionary tradition of Sokoto with the demands of modernity in the context of a pan-Islamic jihad.⁹² At the crossroads of Saudi Wahhabism and the Qadiri teachings of his mentors from the Fulani aristocracy, the founder of the Izala, Sheikh Abubakar Gumi, had already begun, at Independence, to modernize Nigerian Islam on the basis of a spiritual effort. In any case, the comparison with Usman dan Fodio is not always relevant. Just like the Fulani who fought paganism

⁹⁰ In the early 20th century, there was roughly one settler for every 4,000 Africans in Niger, compared with one for 15,000 in Nigeria. See Camille Lefebvre (2015), *Frontières de sable, frontières de papier: Histoire de territoires et de frontières, du jihad de Sokoto à la colonisation française du Niger, XIXe-XXe siècles*, Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne, p. 268.

⁹¹ Roman Loimeier (1997), *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 415 p.; Paul Lubeck (1986), *Islam and Urban Labor in Northern Nigeria: The Making of a Muslim Working Class*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 362 p.; Paul M. Lubeck (1987), ‘Islamic protest and oil-based capitalism: Agriculture, rural linkages and urban popular movements in northern Nigeria’. In: Michael J. Watts, ed., *State, Oil, and Agriculture in Nigeria*, Berkeley, University of California Press, pp. 268-90.

⁹² Abdulbasit Kassim (2015), ‘Defining and understanding the religious philosophy of jihādī-Salafism and the ideology of Boko Haram’, *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, pp. 173-200.

and decadent Hausa kingdoms in 1804, Mohammed Yusuf's followers rose against corrupt and repressive powers. Unlike Usman dan Fodio's fighters, however, they faced the forces of a modern postcolonial state formed on the basis of a model imported by the British. From this point of view, it should be mentioned that the 1804 Jihad was not bounded by internationally recognized borders. Paradoxically, it is the division of the world into sovereign states that gave Boko Haram its global dimension in the 21st century.

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(West African Politics and Society Series ; 4). ISBN 978-90-5448-184-3.