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The Implications of Endemic Corruption for State Legitimacy in Developing Nations: an Empirical Exploration of the Nigerian Case

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Abstract There is an extensive literature on the ramifications of corruption for economic growth, as well as for democracy. Largely unexplored, however, is how corruption works to lessen government legitimacy and empower violent anti-state movements. In this article, the perception of corruption in Nigeria is considered. Noting that Nigeria must suppress the violent extremist group Boko Haram in order to continue to govern the nation, the connections between Nigerian perceptions of corruption and support for the movement are treated. Until this research, however, there existed no empirical evaluation of this relationship. Using analysis of a survey of over 10,000 Nigerians accomplished in 2012 and 2013, we show that issues of state illegitimacy and endemic corruption have contributed to Nigeria's present security crisis by fomenting support for non-state violent actors.

Keywords Corruption · Legitimacy · Social movements · Boko Haram

Introduction

There is an extensive literature on the ramifications of corruption for economic growth (Mo 2001; Gyimah-Brempong 2002), as well as for democracy and the health of democratic institutions (Rothstein and Uslaner 2005; Kunicová 2006; Gerring and Thacker 2004). Largely unexplored, however, is how corruption works to lessen government legitimacy and empower violent anti-state movements. As Heidenheimer (1970, p. 485) asked: "To what extent does public knowledge of extensive corruption in the administration undermine the legitimacy of the regime?" In this research, Heidenheimer's question is explored in the case of modern-day

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Nigeria. Operationalizing regime illegitimacy through support of the anti-state organization Boko Haram, it explores the relationship between perceptions of corruption among national citizens and their feelings regarding violent groups working to bring down the government.

Since its turn to violence in 2009, Boko Haram has become an increasingly salient threat to the Nigerian state and to the wider Lake Chad basin region. Itself, the mounting death toll attributed to the group has sewn fear in the population. Though the costs of violence are *ipso facto* problematic, Boko Haram's most prominent menace lies in its ability to symbolize the weaknesses in the Nigerian state. In its continued existence, in the support it receives from Nigerian citizens in the North, in its widely publicized kidnappings and bombings, Boko Haram belies the idea that the Nigerian government has a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence in the territory. A functioning state represents the intersection of violence and law within a territory (Agamben 1998) or, in the more classic formulation, functions with a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence in a given territory (Weber 1968). Widespread perception in the North that violence committed by Boko Haram has some validity, while violence committed by the Nigerian military does not, suggests that Boko Haram's relative success should be understood through the prism of Nigerian state illegitimacy.

It should be noted that, while Boko Haram is Nigeria's most immediate security concern, it is not the only violent non-state actor to challenge the legitimacy of the state. Militants in the Niger Delta, have also periodically used violent actions to achieve their aims, and the unity of the Nigerian state remains fragile. In this article, we treat Boko Haram specifically because of the timeliness of the topic, the unique depth of the threat it presents, and the particularly widespread support it has received.

The issue of illegitimacy in the Nigerian state is a complex one, and which dates back to the British founding of Nigeria as a colonial protectorate in 1914 (Ekeh 1972). Prior to this, and similar to many post-colonial states, Nigeria did not exist as a single entity. Instead, the majority of what is now the South of Nigeria was comprised of multiple tribal areas, while two Islamic Empires dominated the North. As Walker notes, the Bornu Caliphate on the Western shore of Lake Chad "was the remnant of a very old lineage, whose adoption of Islam was contemporaneous with the Norman conquest of England" (Walker 2016, xii). The other Caliphate which was in what is now the Northwest of Nigeria was the Caliphate of Sokoto established by Usman dan Fodios' jihad of 1804 which toppled the Hausa kingdoms which once existed in that part of Nigeria. Initially Britain ruled Nigeria as two distinct protectorates—the Muslim North and the quickly Christianized South. Thus, when the country was amalgamated by the British in 1914, there were two disparate regions that shared little beyond a single colonial power. Because of this history, the Nigerian state as a single entity lacks historical legitimacy, an issue that continues to loom large. Boko Haram has drawn on the Nigerian state's corruption as a means to attacking the legitimacy of the state.

Boko Haram's gross violation of human rights, in addition to the group's threat to national security and integrity, has put both external and domestic pressure on the Nigerian government to quash the movement for the future of a united Nigeria and its own legitimacy (Ojo 2010; Onuoha 2012; Ogunrotifa 2013; Oviasogie 2013). Thus far, attempts have been largely military—rather than conceive of Boko Haram as drawing power from complex social forces that require systemic, organized redress from the government, the Nigerian state has limited its response to coercive means. However, this policy appears to have not only failed, but has also created a number of negative externalities. The militarization of the Nigerian state presence in the North has effectively alienated citizens, while laying bare the government's ineptitude. Government military forces have been frequently defeated, while its soldiers often find

themselves more poorly armed than their Boko Haram counterparts (Onuoh 2014). In parts of Borno State, Boko Haram moved from simple occupation of territory to the creation of a short lived "Caliphate" in which they attempted to institute Islamic forms of governance, completing for some time the delegitimization of the state in that its violence symbolized (Pieri and Zenn 2016).

Recommendations for how to accomplish the goal of eradicating the group have moved beyond traditional security plans and include the idea that the Nigerian state must deliver public goods more equitably, strengthen democratic institutions and reform the policing of Nigerian citizens in, especially, the Northeast. These recommendations exhort the state to minimize the discontent from which Boko Haram is presumed to spring, thus weakening support and ultimately undermining the movement (Comolli 2015). This article engages with a question that is fundamental to this endeavour: to what extent is the widespread perception that the Nigerian state does not exist for the betterment of the citizenry—but rather to enrich itself—spur some Nigerians to envision a better future as one that lacks a democratic state entirely?

Until this research, there has been no extensive, quantitative measurement of the actual relationship between perceptions of state governance and support of Boko Haram. In this article, we seek to close this gap, demonstrating the relationship between perceptions that the Nigerian state corruption and support for Boko Haram. Using analysis of a survey of over 10,400 Nigerians completed in 2013, we show that issues of state illegitimacy and endemic corruption have significantly contributed to Nigeria's present security crisis by fomenting support for Boko Haram specifically and violent non-state actors generally. In this paper, we argue that there is a direct correlation between endemic government corruption and sympathy for Boko Haram.

Corruption and the Developing State

There is an extensive literature on the ramifications of corruption for economic growth (Mo 2001; Gyimah-Brempong 2002). Research indicates that corruption impedes economic growth through a number of mechanisms. Gyimah-Brempong (2002) argues that, in the African context specifically, corruption diverts resources from investment in physical capital while increasing income inequality and decreasing income growth. An increase in corruption is often accompanied by an increase in rents, reducing economic efficiency and, ultimately, economic growth (Leite and Weidmann 1999). Most relevant for this research, corruption increases political instability broadly (Mo 2001).

The presence of widespread corruption has implications for democracy, as well as for the health of democratic institutions (Rothstein and Uslaner 2005; Kunicová 2006; Gerring and Thacker 2004). Rothstein and Uslaner (2005) make an argument built on Putnam et al. (1994)—corruption diminishes social trust, which weakens civil society and the democracy built upon it. Simply, corruption is widely believed to occur because people are only concerned with their individual best interests—to the extent that this is the case, democratic self-governance is impossible. Theoretically, long-standing and known corruption in a democracy should be impossible—citizens should merely vote out corrupt leaders (Kunicová 2006). When this truism is proven false, it may serve to further weaken trust in the democratic state, as voters find themselves unable to eradicate corruption, they may question their collective control of the democratic state and its institutions.

Although some political institutional arrangements may serve to foster corruption more than others (Gerring and Thacker 2004), its presence serves to universally delegitimize the authority of all forms of democratic state. Corruption also empowers non-state actors, such as religious and ethno-tribal leaders, who are powerful enough to intervene on behalf of people and garner widespread loyalty (Onapajo and Okeke Uzodike 2012). Essentially, high levels of corruption reduce the state's ability to function as a state that enhances welfare, and may therefore encourage citizens to seek that welfare through the creation of other forms of authority.

The Role of Corruption in Nigeria

The issue of corruption is unavoidable in any discussion of the Nigerian government. Defining corruption as "behaviour which deviates from the normal duties of public role because of private-regarding (family, close private clique), pecuniary or status gains" (Nye 1967, p. 417), corruption may be the central function of the Nigerian state (Smith 2010; Osoba 1996). According to Transparency International's Corruption Index, to measure the extent to which corruption is an objective problem in the nation, Nigeria is ranked 144 of 175 countries in terms of the perception of corruption in government and government dealings (Transparency International 2012). Even in the context of Africa, the most corrupt of Transparency International's regions, Nigeria's government is plagued by significantly higher levels of corruption than the "mean nation." Nigeria is also significantly more corrupt than other nations of similar wealth levels, irrespective of location. While corruption tends to decrease as overall wealth increases, Nigeria has not experienced this correlation. The functioning of the Nigerian government is much more compromised by corruption than should be expected, given the country's neighbours and its wealth position.

In the Nigerian context, corruption must be understood as unacceptable only in the present understanding of the democratic nation-state. Historically, governance and patronage were not mutually exclusive (Ekeh 1972)—only with the advent of the equitable representation does the expectation that the state be used for the betterment of all citizens arise and, in Nigeria, remain unmet. Though corruption is understood to have centered in the misuse of resources generated in the country's Southern oil industry (Smith 2010; Watts 2004), today it may be considered to transcend region and be endemic to Nigerian government at all levels (Shaxson 2007; Smith 2010).

It is important to note that even though corruption is rampant irrespective of region, the state, especially at the subnational level, has been able to perform many of its duties rather well, including the delivery of public services such as education and healthcare. Issues have arisen because different parts of the state at the subnational level have been more effective than others. The North, and particularly the Northeast, of the country has lagged behind in terms of access to education and healthcare, and anti-state grievances in these regions of the country are more attenuated than in other areas (Pieri and Barkindo 2016, pp. 137–138). This, added to other pre-existing factors such as historical, religious, and ethno-territorial legitimacy, create an atmosphere in which Nigerians may contemplate supporting violent non-state actors such as Boko Haram.

Corruption has also materially affected military capacity in Nigeria. Soldiers fighting the Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast of the country frequently claim that their budgeted allowance for dangerous field duties are shaved off by commanders. Former President Goodluck Jonathan's ex-aide-de-camp Col. Ojogbane Adegbe and two other army officers

were interrogated by a military panel in February 2016 for their roles in the $2.1bn arms scam, which came to be known as Dadukigate (Soriwei and Adepegba 2016). Reports highlight that troops endure arduous conditions—"they often lack tents or sleeping bags, many must scavenge for firewood to cook and they live a destitute life—hardly the motivation or replenishment required to fight a violent and constant aggressor" (Ikita 2011).

The issue of corruption in Nigeria has escalated beyond the economic sphere and into the movement of bureaucratized state functions into the realm of private decision-making. With regards to the police force, extra-judicial killings have become more frequent and further serve to weaken the state's legitimacy. Historically and in other contexts, extra-judicial killings occur entirely outside of the state—by lynch mobs, for example, or indigenous groups. Such was the case in Nigeria as late as the late 1990s (Elechi 2003). But the Nigerian police and military forces have incorporated executions into their purview, without allowing prisoners to first be tried in the judiciary (Ojo 2010). There have been a number of highly sensational cases in which police murdered, and subsequent maligned, innocent Nigerians.

These have strengthened and emboldened Boko Haram and its supporters; in fact, the extra-judicial execution of former leader Mohammed Yusuf is generally considered to be the main cause of Boko Haram's radicalization. Extra-judicial killings more generally have led to a reality in which Nigerians may be deprived of life without recourse, leading to more widespread, and terror-driven, distrust of the Nigerian state. Though not themselves corruption, these types of killings may feed into a larger picture of a state overwhelmed by private interests and of public bureaucracies overtaken by individual decision-makers.

State illegitimacy has hampered the Nigerian state's ability to contain the threat and growth of non-state perpetrators of violence. Ethno-religious, political and economic violence are commonplace across the nation, with the state unable to control most of the ensuing bloodshed (Okpaga et al. 2012a, b). But the Boko Haram movement has become symbolic not just for its high casualty numbers, but because its identity as an Islamic extremist organization has garnered it international attention and support (Onapajo and Okeke Uzodike 2012). This compounds the pressure on the Nigerian government to overcome the movement in order to retain its monopoly on the legitimate use of force and remain a coherent nation-state (Onuoha 2012). Yet, the same forces that contribute to Boko Haram's strength detract from the state's ability to neutralize that threat (Okpaga et al. 2012a, b).

Corruption and Boko Haram

We posit that it is the high level of corruption, peculiar to the Nigerian state, that has most contributed to the presence and relative success of Boko Haram as a movement, particularly in its early phases. It is important, however, to note that Boko Haram's evolution into a *takfiri* group—an Islamist movement willing to denounce as apostates and kill Muslims who do not follow its own interpretation of Islam, has done much to erode that initial support (Pieri and Barkindo 2016). The fragility of the Nigerian state's legitimacy opens space for new aspirants to power. We argue that Boko Haram may be understood as one of these aspirants, distinguished in part by its willingness to engage in violence. Boko Haram uses the frame of fundamentalist Islam to situate itself in the political space, but push factors for support often have little to do with religion, religious fervour or fundamentalism per se (Deckard, et al. 2015). As well as being Islamist in nature, Boko Haram

is also an irredentist movement that seeks to carve out an Islamic space in the Northeast of Nigeria. To Boko Haram, the Nigerian state is an illegitimate colonial construct, and they seek instead to return to pre-colonial forms of governance based on Islam. Part of the genius of Mohammad Yusuf, Boko Haram's founder, was to take genuine social and economic grievances, especially mounting anger over government corruption, and to package the solution within an Islamic framework that argues for the dismantlement of the Nigerian state.

Research that attributes the relative success of the movement to class inequities and insecurities based largely in the global capitalist system (Ogunrotifa 2013; Deckard et al. 2015) may not be at odds with the argument that corruption is crucially important to the political salience of Boko Haram. In this view, exposure to international trade markets, industrialization, the whims of foreign direct investment and the very different morality of the world culture causes individuals to seek to re-instate sometimes mythical "traditional ways" (Onapajo and Okeke Uzodike 2012). In order to resonate broadly, actors in opposition to the state frame their movements in meaning structures that are anchored in traditional values and beliefs. Of these, religion often resonates most widely across a widely diverse nation. Islam is just such a meaning structure, and this literature implies that it may be little more than a useful frame for a fundamentally secular phenomenon. This is captured in a sermon given by Boko Haram founder Mohammad Yusuf in 2009:

> How can you be elected only to embezzle money and accumulate only for yourselves, and in addition bring in to the town a group of mad people [the Joint Task Force] in the name of security? Soldiers are deployed here, torturing and exhorting money from people. What the Governor should have said was "my people who elected me should not be treated this way by soldiers." Yet the Governor continues to engage in acts of corruption. It is not fair to cheat and accumulate at the expense of ordinary people…If you cheat you will never get blessings from Allah. (Yusuf 2009)

That Boko Haram have been adept at utilizing the theme of corruption in their sermons and literature as a means of mobilizing Muslims in the Northeast to join the organization, or at the least to oppose the government, has been well noted. Ochonu (2014) for example, argues that Boko Haram presents the source of corruption as Western education. As Ochonu states, "once one buys into this rhetoric of Western education being the foundational sin it is easy to then argue, as does Boko Haram, that the solution to corruption, poverty, and maladministration is total implementation of Sharia (complete with the *hudud* punishments) in a multireligious society, or the creation of a theocratic Islamic state, with all its fantastical promises" (Ochonu 2014).

Boko Haram

Boko Haram, an organization whose name translates roughly as "Western education is sinful," has become an increasing violent terrorist organization in Northern Nigeria since its founding in 2001 (Adesoji 2010; Cook 2011). The movement vehemently opposes Western and Christian influence in the social and political fabric of Nigerian life, specifically seeking to instate Shari'a law and a strict adherence to their version of an austere Islam throughout the country (Adesoji 2010; Danjibo 2009). The organization is generally viewed under the larger rubric of Islamist religious extremism (Onuoha 2010; Cook 2011; Danjibo 2009) and may be considered the descendant of various, far smaller and less successful, radical Islamic

movements that have operated in Northern Nigeria since the Iranian Revolution in 1979 (Falola 1998; Agbiboa 2013a, b). Boko Haram claims its roots in even earlier Jihadist movements going back to the Jihad of Dan Fodio, who established the Sokoto Caliphate in 1809 (Pieri and Zenn 2016).

As Tilly et al. (1975) would have anticipated, given their argument that repertoires of action change to resonate with changing social dynamics and political realities, there have been significant ideological, structural and operational changes within Boko Haram as they have moved from a small, religious, conservative group seeking to increase the use of Shari'a in the Nigerian justice system to a violent extremist group with a large audience and expanded mandate of radical change (Cook 2011). During the time period since the group's founder and leader, Muhammad Yusuf, was executed by Nigerian security forces in 2009, effectively solidifying its anti-state leanings, Boko Haram expanded its capabilities from drive-by motorbike shootings to suicide bombers, improvised explosive device (IED), vehicle born improvised device (VBIED), kidnappings, beheadings and the release and publication of CDs, DVDs and YouTube videos in tone like those of al-Qaeda (Okpaga et al. 2012a, b).

By October 2014, Boko Haram began to display the Islamic State's flag and edited its own logo to include that flag and began copying the choreography of Islamic State's mass killings in their own video releases. The Islamic State, for its part, confirmed that it received a pledge of loyalty from the "Nigerian mujahidin" in its official magazine *Dabiq* in November 2014. The formalization of the relationship between Boko Haram and Islamic State would take place only several months later with Shekau's *baya'a* and al-Baghdadi's acceptance in March 2015 (Pieri and Barkindo 2016). As a result, Boko Haram became a recognized franchise of the Islamic State and changed its name to Islamic State's West African Province.

In 2016 however, long time Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau was ousted from his role by Islamic State, which also announced that the new leader of Boko Haram is now Abu Musab al-Barnawi (BBC News 2016). In a voice recording, al-Barnawi's said that Shekau had violated Islamic tenets by "killing fellow Muslims, including members of the terrorist Islamist group, living a life of luxury with his wives, neglecting starving women and children, and failing to provide food and weapons for insurgent fighters" (Sahara Reporters 2016). In a statement of his own, Shekau said that a coup had been staged against him, and announced himself as emir of Jama'atu Ahlissunnah Lidda'awati Wal Jihad—the name Boko Haram used prior to its affiliation with Islamic State (Iaccino 2016).

This signifies a serious split in Boko Haram between members who will remain loyal to Shekau and what has been resurrected as Boko Haram without ties to Islamic State, and those who will pledge allegiance to Barnawi and Boko Haram's continued relationship with Islamic State. These changes bring into question the extent to which Boko Haram as part of Islamic state will now be able to continue in their attempts to dismantle the Nigerian state and to seek the establishment of an IS-affiliated emirate in West Africa. The emerging split in Boko Haram has the potential to change the dynamics of jihad in the region, particularly if the different factions of Boko Haram turn against each other for power in the region.

The Fight to Defeat Boko Haram

The Nigerian state needs to suppress the Boko Haram movement in order to continue to effectively, and legitimately, govern the nation (Ojo 2010; Onuoha 2012; Ogunrotifa 2013;

Oviasogie 2013). As Serrano and Pieri (2014) note, however, current efforts by the Nigerian government to control the movement using military and police units have been unsuccessful in a rather spectacular way. In attempting to control Boko Haram, the government has directly and publically caused a large numbers of civilian casualties (Serrano and Pieri 2014) and a series of surprisingly ineffective exhibitions of incompetence in terms of response time, fighting capacity and general efficacy (Adesoji 2011).

Given the failure of military remedies to solve the Boko Haram crisis, recommendations for how to effectively fight the group increasingly go beyond traditional security plans. These recommendations acknowledge the importance of state fragility in fomenting the dissatisfaction that fuels support for Boko Haram and include the idea that the Nigerian state must deliver public goods more equitably, and strengthen democratic institutions and reform policing departments' treatment of everyday Nigerians.

This is something that President Mohammadu Buhari highlighted during the 2015 Nigerian Presidential campaign. On April 1, 2015, Buhari made a televised address to the nation; the speech is significant because it outlines the key themes his administration intended to prioritize. He noted: "In tackling the insurgency [Boko Haram], we have a tough job to do. Boko Haram will soon know the strength of our collective will. We should spare no effort until we defeat terrorism." At the same time he recognized that the solution does not lie solely with the military but also with addressing wider societal concerns broadly, and corruption particularly: "Corruption creates unjustly enriched people…and undermines democracy. Corruption will not be tolerated by this government." He further announced that, "Your constitutional rights remain in safe hands. You will be able to voice your opinion without fear of victimization."

These calls in part may have been an attempt by Buhari to reassure those concerned about Buhari's own previous record as a military dictator in the mid-1980s. They may ascribe capability to a state that largely lacks it. In positing the state as capable of delivering public goods, strengthening democratic institutions and reforming police departments, scholars may be overlooking a more fundamental phenomenon—the degree to which the Nigerian state is not functioning as a legitimate state. In this research, we suggest that corruption may be understood as the act through which, inter alia, a bureaucracy exists to privately enrich its members, thus abnegating the existence of the state as an autonomous entity. We posit that, insofar as citizens believe the largest problem in and for Nigeria to be corruption within the government itself, they will be more inclined to support anti-state entities.

This Research

Given the extensive literature regarding corruption, state legitimacy and Boko Haram, we seek to empirically investigate linkages. We ask: How does the perception of corruption as problematic correlate with support for and beliefs about Boko Haram? Drawing on these literatures, we hypothesize that perceptions of high levels of corruption will correlate with relatively greater levels of support for Boko Haram and a more positive belief set regarding the organization as respondents demonstrate decreased confidence in the Nigerian government.

Data

In order to investigate the research questions, we utilize the results of a survey completed by Gallup in Nigeria from 2013.[1] The face-to-face surveys included both open- and close-ended questions and were completed with 10,482 Nigerian residents in every region of Nigeria, with both urban and rural residents represented. Respondent demographics were representative of the Nigerian population in terms of gender, age, education and ethnicity. Survey interviews were completed in respondent's choice of English, Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba or Pidgin. The survey covered topics as diverse as religion, family, politics, household amenities and demographic characteristics and established the extent to which respondents supported violence generally and their views of Boko Haram specifically.

Methods

Relationships between responses in the Gallup survey were analysed using ordinal logistic regression procedures, appropriate given the ordinal nature of the dependent variables and the analyses' passing of appropriate parallel lines tests (Harrell Jr 2001). We used responses to the following questions to operationalize respondents' perceptions of corruption and feelings regarding Boko Haram.

Independent Variable

In order to operationalize the extent to which respondents understand corruption as problematic, we use responses to a single survey question: "What is the Biggest Problem in Nigeria?" Respondents who chose "corruption" as Nigeria's biggest problem can be understood to believe it to be extremely challenging to the Nigerian state. But, additionally, respondents who choose corruption over other options, including economic, social, and military, choose the sole option that *is regarding the Nigerian state* itself. These respondents represent a striking proportion—49.1 % of the total respondent set. The response to this question represents the independent variable of this analysis.

Dependent Variables

In order to estimate the relationship between perceptions of corruption and willingness to believe in, and support, non-state violent actors, we employ three distinct questions. These questions all speak to different facets of this support: a belief that Boko Haram could realistically weaken the Nigerian government, whether that would represent a positive eventuality, and whether Boko Haram is successful overall.

Do You Believe That Boko Haram Presents a Threat to Security?

Those respondents that believe that Boko Haram presents a real threat to security may be presumed to have greater faith in the organization's abilities and strengths.

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[1] In order to access survey data, please contact the corresponding author.

Conversely, those respondents who believe Boko Haram to not be a threat have less faith. This is a binary, dummy variable—and 74.5 % of respondents believe that Boko Haram presents either "a large threat" or "somewhat of a threat."

How Negative, or Positive, Is Boko Haram's Influence in Nigeria?

We may surmise that respondents thinking that Boko Haram's influence is "very positive" have lost faith in the Nigerian state so completely as to think a militant, anti-State organization is a positive addition to the national stage. This, also, is a binary variable, with the combination of "very positive" and "somewhat positive" being considered a positive evaluation regarding the influence of Boko Haram on Nigeria. Of the 10,482 respondents, 21.9 %, or 2292 people, felt Boko Haram had a positive influence on Nigeria. Other respondents chose neutral or negative options.

How Successful Is Boko Haram?

This variable approximates the extent to which respondents believe Boko Haram to be a generally successful organization. We created a binary, dummy variable, aggregating the responses of "very successful" and "somewhat successful," with 30.3 % of respondents claiming that Boko Haram is a successful organization.

Control Variables

In order to isolate the relationship between perceptions of corruption and support of anti-state violent actors, we consider the possibility of a number of other effects on respondent belief sets. Using both the survey instrument and the demographic characteristics of respondents, we control for the following variables:

Efficacy of Government at Reducing Terrorism in Nigeria

Responses to this question proxy the extent to which terrorism is perceived to be controlled by the existing state. We consider this response in order to account for the extent to which anger with government ineptitude, in and of itself, is correlated with support for Boko Haram, rather than the corruption that we have posited. We create a binary variable from responses that rank the Nigerian government as "very ineffective" or "someone ineffective," as opposed to those that consider the government to be "somewhat effective," or "very effective." Of the valid responses, which constitute all but 6.8 % of the total responses, 38.9 % of respondents considered the Nigerian government ineffective at reducing terrorism.

Gender

Brison (2002) finds that radicalism is largely the province of men, with women being more conservative and less likely to espouse violence as a desirable means of change. In order to control for the possibility of gender identity influencing belief set, we use the measure for respondent gender. Of respondents, 50.8 % were men and the remainder identified as women.

Age

In other research, violence has been posited to be associated with youth (Hendrixson 2003). Given this, younger respondents, irrespective of their perceptions of corruption, may feel more positively about Boko Haram. Therefore, we control for age in this model. The mean age of the respondent set was 31.6, with a standard deviation of 12.2.

Household Income and Job Status

There has been extensive conversation regarding the role of socio-economic position and relative deprivation in creating the conditions conducive to terrorism (Deckard and Jacobson 2015; Agbiboa 2013a, b). Because this argument is bottom-up, rather than top-down, these variables represent a fundamentally different argument than the one posited in this research. In order to address them, then, we control for job status and the perception of adequate household income. Of respondents, 23 % are involuntarily unemployed and seeking a new position. Household income is a subjective measure in this research. Although we have data on monthly income in Nigerian Naira, we have chosen to use perceptions of financial security to control for proxies of relative deprivation. Simply, we do not consider actual earnings, but respondents' understanding of these earnings as sufficient and adequate for their needs. Table 1 shows the distribution of the household income variable.

Religion and Level of Religiosity

Boko Haram is framed as a religious organization. Although earlier research explicitly rejects the relationship between religious belief and support for Boko Haram (Deckard, et al. 2015), we control for respondent level of religiosity in order to preclude the possibility that it is merely the more religious who support Boko Haram. We also control for religion. Our respondent set is 53.7 % Muslim, 44.9 % Christian and about 1 % other.

Analysis and Findings

Our analysis of the survey data yields provocative results regarding the importance of the perception of corruption as Nigeria's largest problem. Using binary logistic procedures

Table 1 Distribution of household income variable

	Frequency	Percent
We do not have enough money for the basic needs	2023	19.3 %
We are able to buy only basic products	3665	35.0 %
We are able to buy what is necessary, but we cannot afford more expensive goods	3204	30.6 %
We are able to buy some more expensive goods, but should save on other things	849	8.1 %
We can afford almost whatever we want	354	3.4 %
Missing	386	3.7 %
Total	10,482	100 %

Table 2 Binary logistic regression on "Boko Haram is a threat"

	Boko Haram is a threat		
	B	S.E.	Exp(B)
Corruption	0.398***	0.055	1.488
Ineffective anti-terrorism	0.004	0.056	1.004
Male	0.077	0.055	1.08
Age	−0.001	0.002	0.999
Income sufficiency	−0.076**	0.027	0.926
Unemployed	0.22**	0.067	1.246
Religiosity	0.678***	0.05	1.97
Muslim	0.254***	0.056	1.289
Constant	−1.013	0.197	0.363

on three dummy dependent variables, we found corruption to be a significant predictor of support for Boko Haram. We detail these results in Tables 2, 3 and 4. These tables should be interpreted as the results of any logistic regression. Exponentiated-b values list the change in the odds of a positive value in the dependent variable given a one-unit increase of the reported independent variable. For example, an exponentiated-b of 0.25 for a given independent variable should be interpreted as a 25 % increase in the odds of the dependent variable coming to pass given a one-unit increase in that independent variable.

In seeking to predict the belief that Boko Haram is a threat to the Nigerian state, the belief that corruption is the most serious problem in Nigeria is a significant force, even after controlling for the other variables predicted to be salient to the dependent variable. As detailed in Table 2, believing that corruption is the largest problem in Nigeria is associated with odds of seeing Boko Haram as a threat that are 148 % of those associated with a respondent who believes that Nigeria has some other, more important, problem. Neither age, gender, nor conception of the state's efficacy as an anti-terror organization is significantly associated with the perception that Boko Haram is a threat—but respondents from more financially successful households were less likely to view the organization as a fundamental threat. Conversely, the

Table 3 Binary logistic regression on "Boko Haram is a positive influence"

	B	S.E.	Exp(B)
Corruption	0.593***	0.057	1.81
Ineffective anti-terrorism	−1.001***	0.062	0.367
Male	0.185**	0.057	1.203
Age	−0.022***	0.003	0.978
Income sufficiency	0.153***	0.028	1.166
Unemployed	0.233**	0.067	1.262
Religiosity	−0.344***	0.053	0.709
Muslim	1.393***	0.063	4.028
Constant	−0.644**	0.214	0.525

Table 4 Binary logistic regression on "Boko Haram is successful"

	B	S.E.	Exp(B)
Corruption	0.197***	0.049	1.218
Ineffective anti-terrorism	−0.345***	0.051	0.708
Male	0.128**	0.049	1.137
Age	−0.01***	0.002	0.99
Income sufficiency	−0.003	0.025	0.997
Unemployed	−0.171**	0.057	0.843
Religiosity	−0.137**	0.045	0.872
Muslim	0.517***	0.05	1.677
Constant	−0.066	0.182	0.936

unemployed, the religious and Muslims had greater odds of feeling Boko Haram was a threat to Nigeria.

The odds of holding the belief that Boko Haram is a positive influence on Nigeria are also highly correlated with the perception that corruption is the biggest problem in the nation. These data are presented in Table 3. In fact, believing that corruption is the largest problem in Nigeria is associated with odds of seeing Boko Haram as a positive influence that are 181 % of those associated with a respondent who believes that corruption is less important or dire. All control variables play a significant role in predicting this dependent variable—with perception of corruption having the greatest effect after identifying as Muslim—the self-identification of Boko Haram as a Salafist organization not surprisingly limits the association of Christians in this context. Notably, male respondents, respondents in wealthier households and unemployed respondents have elevated odds of believing Boko Haram to be a positive influence. Conversely, those who believe that the Nigerian government is ineffective in the fight against terrorism, who are older or who are more religious have decreased odds of believing Boko Haram to be a positive influence.

The final dependent variable to be analysed finds that the odds of holding the belief that Boko Haram is successful are also highly correlated with the perception that corruption is the biggest problem in the nation. Specifically, believing that corruption is the largest problem in Nigeria is associated with odds of seeing Boko Haram as a positive influence that are 21 % greater than those associated with a respondent who believes that other issues are more problematic. Many of the control variables play a significant role in predicting this dependent variable—including the government's efficacy in Nigeria's version of the War on Terror, gender, age, job status, religiosity and religion. Muslim men who believe that corruption is Nigeria's largest problem have the greatest odds of believing Boko Haram is a successful organization, with odds diminishing with the belief that the government is ineffective, unemployment and high religiosity. These data are detailed in Table 4.

Discussion and Conclusion

The finding that corruption is a fundamental factor in the support or sympathy for Boko Haram in Nigeria is telling, and it reveals a crisis in Nigerian society that precedes Boko

Haram itself—namely, the widespread failure of democratic institutions in Nigeria and an attendant lack of state legitimacy. This is not to suggest that many in state institutions do not try to fulfil their civic roles, but to recognize that corruption is indeed widespread. This corruption exacerbates a myriad of factors that leads to deepening perceptions of the illegitimacy of the Nigerian state.

There is widespread agreement that the Nigerian state needs to suppress Boko Haram in order to move forward with the governance of Nigeria (Ojo 2010; Onuoha 2012; Ogunrotifa 2013; Oviasogie 2013). Recommendations for how to accomplish this include obvious security recommendations and are found throughout this literature. Increasingly, however, is the recommendation that the Nigerian state must essentially professionalize—making its civil service a fair and just bureaucracy accountable to the needs of the populace, independent military and police agencies that work to protect Nigerians irrespective of their social position, ethnic affiliation or ability to pay, and a general accountability to the needs of national citizens, rather than a commitment to self-enrichment. We argue that these goals can be proxied through survey questions about corruption and respondents' perception of corruption.

Our data confirm these beliefs. Rather than being driven exclusively by religion, religiosity, ethnicity, amenities—or lack thereof—a significant amount of the support for Boko Haram is driven by disgust with the corruption, indeed with the lack of autonomy, within the Nigerian state. This finding holds even after controlling for lack of state ability to adequately confront the threat of Boko Haram. Simply, the state's corruption in the face of widespread pressure to move beyond patronage pushes some Nigerians to support another attempt at state—one dominated by Boko Haram.

This is something that President Buhari has committed himself to doing, but the road ahead is long, and corruption is ingrained and institutionalized across many layers of Nigerian society. Buhari has recognized that battling corruption is important to changing perceptions of state illegitimacy in Nigeria, and made this a central pillar of his Presidential acceptance speech on April 1, 2015:

> We shall strongly battle another form of evil that is even worse than terrorism—the evil of corruption. Corruption attacks and seeks to destroy our national institutions and character. By misdirecting into selfish hands funds intended for the public purpose, corruption distorts the economy and worsens income inequality. It creates a class of unjustly-enriched people.
>
> Such an illegal yet powerful force soon comes to undermine democracy because its conspirators have amassed so much money that they believe they can buy government. We shall end this threat to our economic development and democratic survival. I repeat that corruption will not be tolerated by this administration; and it shall no longer be allowed to stand as if it is a respected monument in this nation (Lere 2015).

In future research, we intend to treat the issue that underlies this line of research. If corruption is a deciding factor on determining support for anti-state groups, then what determines corruption? In this article, we discuss the implications of corruption—and state fragility—on violence, but there is no indication that these dynamics are solely at the discretion of the state. Rather, states, institutions, civil society and citizens all work together to construct a functioning governmentality. This is a key dilemma that needs to be addressed in Nigeria, as well as in corrupt societies elsewhere. Even if the Nigerian military were effective—and it is not—long-term solutions demand making civil society work including, above all, minimizing corruption.

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