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Boko Haram and Sexual Violence as a Weapon of Warfare

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Abstract

Boko Haram gained international attention in 2014, where the insurgency abducted 276 girls from a boarding school in Chibok in Northern Nigeria. The abduction sparked global campaigns and initiatives on various social media platforms called #BringBackOurGirls. However, Boko Haram has persistently terrorised in the Northern parts of Nigeria and its citizens for almost a decade. Women and girls have repeatedly been targeted in the insurgency's attempt to reach its objective, namely, an Islamic caliphate across Nigeria. This thesis aims at describing and exploring how and why Boko Haram utilises sexual violence as a weapon in their warfare. Boko Haram's exploitation of women and girls have been examined through a scrutinisation of statements from women, girls, and insurgents in order to analyse why they are exerting sexual violence, here amongst, rape. In order to explore and investigate the former, I have examined gender dynamics and perceptions between women, girls and the insurgents through the theoretical framework of hegemonic masculinity to analyse the masculinity culture that is reflected. Additionally, I have employed various conceptualisations of sexual violence in warfare to explain potential motivations for the actions carried out. Based on the research carried out in this thesis, I conclude that the sexual violence exploited by Boko Haram aims at targeting the Nigerian society from a collective perspective through cultural and societal relations. Furthermore, hegemonic masculinity is greatly expressed in Boko Haram's warfare and the dynamics between women, girls and insurgents are embedded in socially constructed gender norms and perceptions, which subordinate women. This reflects women's position in the Nigerian society, which emerges from cultural norms and expectations that carries traces of a patriarchal society. Therefore, I argue that Boko Haram exerts sexual violence towards women and girls in order to promote various messages that reflect their objective, which is reached through the objectification and dehumanisation of women and girls.

Keywords: Sexual violence, Boko Haram, Warfare, Masculinity, Gender perceptions, Hegemony.

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Introduction

Conflict, violence, and power are three concepts that are highly intertwined in the Boko Haram conflict in Northern Nigeria. Conflict is conceptualised as irreconcilable objectives between groups or individuals and can be peacefully resolved through dialogue and negotiation (Moser and Clark, 2001, p. 6). However, if the former is not achieved, the utilisation of violence and forceful measures can emerge (Moser and Clark, 2001, p. 6). There are various definitions and forms of violence but according to the World Health Organisation, violence can be defined as: “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation” (World Report on Violence and Health, 2002, p. 4). Violence is moreover interrelated with power, and in particular power structures in a society, where an individual, group or community is targeted and violated (Moser and Clark, 2001, p. 6).

This thesis examines the sexual violence and exploitation of women and girls as a weapon of warfare in the Boko Haram conflict in Northern Nigeria. Sexual exploitation and violence such as rape, have throughout the years been exerted in armed conflicts, both as a weapon and as an intentional military strategy to target the opposing forces (“Sexual violence”). This has been evident in armed conflicts in recent years, as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Iraq, amongst others (“Sexual violence”). Despite the continuous targeting of women and girls in armed conflicts, it is only in recent years that the international community has recognised sexual violence as a weapon and a war crime, which thus can induce prosecution (Ochab, 2017). In 2008, the United Nations Security Council implemented ‘Resolution 1820’ that states “Rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity or a constitutive act with respect to genocide” (Resolution 1820, 2008).

The Islamic insurgency Boko Haram has repeatedly targeted women and girls through their warfare and exploited them sexually. The abduction of women and girls as a weapon of warfare was allegedly initiated as a form of revenge and counter-response to the Nigerian government, which later became an ordinary raiding procedure (“Threat Tactics Report”, 2015). Approximately around December 2011, the Nigerian police instigated arrests and detainment of wives and children of Boko Haram insurgents, as an attempt to pressure

the organisation to negotiations (Pearson and Zenn, 2014). Between 2011-2012, more than one-hundred family members were taken into custody, here amongst, the Boko Haram leader, Abubakar Shekau's wife and other relatives, despite not having any evidence that to some extent affiliates the detainees with Boko Haram crimes (Pearson and Zenn, 2014). This detainment of Boko Haram's family members is arguably a turning point in the warfare, as the insurgency's tactics changed hereon.

According to Jacobs et. al. (2000, p. 2), violent sexual acts derive from power structures in a societal context and are not solely motivated based on individual desires. Throughout this thesis, the sexual violence exerted by Boko Haram is examined through a gendered perspective with masculinity structures and dynamics as the foundational basis. In the scrutinisation of gendered violence, it is pivotal to investigate it as a "phenomenon within the context of patriarchal social relations and that all such violence should be situated analytically within a sexual violence approach even where no overtly sexual act is involved" (Jacobs et. al., 2000, p. 2).

Research question

Sexual violence exerted by Boko Haram is examined through the theoretical and analytical framework of hegemonic masculinity, in order to explain and analyse how the gender dynamics and mechanisms are expressed and arguably creates the foundational basis for the actions carried out. This is obtained through a scrutinisation of the masculine culture that is present from a collective perspective through cultural, social and structural relations. The gender dynamics and hierarchy are highly embedded in culture, which is reflected in Boko Haram's warfare. Kirsten Hastrup (2004, p. 14) argues that culture is 'natural' and that human beings subconsciously adapt themselves in relation to other people, which then creates a larger unity. Culture is therefore collective and thus shared by more people while creating a form of social acknowledgement (Hastrup, 2004, p. 15, 179). Additionally, Hastrup argues that culture is a community and connections between contemporary time and the past, and between the society and its history (Hastrup, 2004, p. 179).

There are various motivations, mechanisms and conditions for why women and girls are targeted in armed conflicts through sexual violence and rape. The main focus of this thesis is on the actions carried out by Boko Haram, and how women and girls have been exposed to sexual violence by male combatants. Therefore, the objective of this thesis is to examine *why* the gendered violence is occurring and *how* the sexual violence can be

interpreted as a weapon of warfare through the following research question: **How and why is sexual violence used as a weapon in the Boko Haram conflict in Northern Nigeria?**

Boko Haram

The Islamic insurgency, Boko Haram, has in recent years obtained a vast amount of attention in the international community within the global and political sphere after organising and carrying out various attacks on schools, public institutions, religious buildings, politicians, civilians and the Nigerian police and army (Sergie and Johnson, 2015).

Origin and motivation

Boko Haram was founded in 2002 in Maiduguri in the state of Borno by Mohammed Yusuf, a Salafist cleric, with the objective to inaugurate an Islamic state through sharia law and sharia criminal courts across Nigeria (Sergie and Johnson, 2015). In the timeframe of 2002-2009, the insurgency was considered a non-violent organisation who solely opted for change by advocating to the Muslims of Northern Nigeria (Sergie and Johnson, 2015). The advocacy revolved around the belief that the citizens should not actively participate in the Nigerian society, as it was assessed to be an illegitimate non-Islamic state (Sergie and Johnson, 2015). The alleged ‘change’ was initiated through the creation of a religious complex by Yusuf, which consisted of both a mosque and an Islamic School (“Who are Nigeria's Boko Haram”, 2016). These institutions promoted the belief that it was ‘forbidden’ for Muslims to participate in social and political activities affiliated with Western society, which amongst others, include secular education and electoral voting (“Who are Nigeria's Boko Haram”, 2016). This notion is further reflected in the name ‘Boko Haram’, which transcribes into ‘Western education is forbidden’ (Asuelime and David, 2015, p. 1). The insurgency is recognised by this name on the international platform, however, originally, in its peaceful era, the organisation was recognised as ‘Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’ awati’ Wal-Jihad’, which translates into ‘Association for propagating the Prophet’s Teachings and Jihad’ (Asuelime and David, 2015, p. 1). Moreover, throughout the years, clashes between Muslims and Christians, and encounters between the insurgency and the Nigerian government motivated the insurgency to radicalise whilst initiate military operations from 2009 and on-going (Sergie and Johnson, 2015).

Boko Haram has the means and power to target various segments in the North Nigerian community. According to Amnesty International, the number of fighters is somewhat unknown, however, it is estimated to around fifteen-thousand (“Boko Haram at a glance, 2015). Initially, the insurgency targeted mainly Christian, politicians, and other

government officials, however, as the organisation evolved throughout the years, Muslim leaders who did not support the values of Boko Haram was also targeted, and in some instances, killed (“Those Terrible Weeks”, 2014, p. 17-18). From an overall perspective, Boko Haram arguably targets people who oppose their ideology on Western influence (“Those Terrible Weeks”, 2014, p. 17-18).

Muslims in Northern Nigeria supported Boko Haram in the emergence of the insurgency, as it was believed that this form of religion practising could potentially develop and improve the population’s lives and create better socio-economic conditions (“Boko Haram: Behind”, 2016). In addition to the support that Boko Haram received from some of the Muslims in the area, the organisation has since gained international attention from other insurgencies. In 2011, U.S. officials stated that the group were affiliated with Somalia’s al-Shabab, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (Sergie and Johnson, 2015). Officially, the organisation asserted allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of the Islamic State in March 2015, who in return confirmed the relationship by proclaiming the insurgency as their ‘jihadi brothers’ (Onuoha, 2016). In the aftermath, Boko Haram was acknowledged as the ‘Islamic State in West Africa Province’ (ISWAP) until June 2016 where disagreements concerning leadership caused the organisation to dissolve into two directions (Onuoha, 2016). The disagreement occurred between IS and the new Boko Haram leader, Abubakar Shekau, who was inducted as leader after Yusuf was killed in 2009 by the Nigerian government (Matfess, 2017). Shekau did not accept and acknowledge the guidance received from IS, which further caused a substantial part of the group to dismantle and continue with the new IS appointed leader for Boko Haram, Musab al-Barnawai, while Shekau continued his insurgency (Onuoha, 2016).

In order to create an understanding of the motivations for the insurgency and its objective to Islamise the Nigerian state, it is crucial to briefly shed light on the historical and political circumstances in Nigeria. Despite its recognition as one of the largest African countries with more than 174 million citizens and a great number of natural resources, Nigeria is considered one of the necessitous nations in the world (Sergie and Johnson, 2015). Approximately sixty-one percent has less than one dollar to live from on a daily basis and these economic inconsistencies are distinct between the North and South/Delta (Sergie and Johnson, 2015). In the Northern part of Nigeria, an estimated seventy-two percent of the population live in poverty, whereas, the number is twenty-seven in the South, followed by thirty-five in the Niger Delta (Sergie and Johnson, 2015). The poverty is highly caused by

corruption, which creates a gap between the elite and the ‘others’, which has caused conflicts and mistrust for decades (“Boko Haram: Behind”, 2016).

In 1999, after six years of dictatorship of General Sani Abacha, the Northern part of Nigeria had the opportunity to pursue new political conditions (“Northern Nigeria”, 2010). After the return of the democracy, twelve states in the North reinstated Sharia law, however, it was only implemented fully in two states (“Northern Nigeria”, 2010). This has created a demand for Islamic law being implemented in politics in the North, in order to terminate the on-going corruption (“Boko Haram: Behind”, 2016). Boko Haram appears to have taken advantage of this request by the promotion of Sharia in Nigeria (“Boko Haram: Behind”, 2016).

Strategies and tactical operations

In its warfare, Boko Haram utilises different strategic and tactical operations in order to target the ‘enemy’. Throughout the years, the insurgency has initiated and organised assassinations, suicide bombings, kidnappings of foreigners and local women and children for different purposes (Zenn, 2013). Initially, the conceptual idea was to implement Sharia across the country, however, the notion of education quickly became a trademark for the insurgency as a method to illustrate its resentment on Western education and girls’ enrolment in schools (“Threat Tactics Report”, 2015). In terms of tactical operations, Boko Haram kidnapped foreigners as a method to gain extensive funding through negotiations and extortion from the Nigerian state and other governments (Zenn, 2013). As mentioned in the introduction, the kidnapping of women and girls derived from a form of counter-response and message to the Nigerian government, who held Boko Haram family members in detention (Zenn, 2013). The captured women were according to the leader, Shekau, forced into marriage with Boko Haram fighters, sold into various forms of slavery and forced into religious conversion to Islam (“Threat Tactics Report”, 2015). This notion has further been confirmed in a report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which reveals that the women and girls “(...) have suffered forced recruitment, forced marriage, sexual slavery and rape, and have been used to carry bomb” (“2 years on from Chibok”, 2016). According to them, the number of women and girls who live in captivity and sex slavery is somewhere in between two-to-seven thousand (“2 years on from Chibok”, 2016).

Throughout the conflict, Boko Haram has instigated numerous violent attacks in Nigeria and approximately twenty-thousand have been killed and two million internally displaced (Wilson, 2018). However, despite killings and displacement, other damaging

actions have had an impact on the Nigerian citizens, namely, the abductions of women and girls, which were carried out by the insurgency. In April 2014, Boko Haram militants kidnapped 276 girls from a boarding school in Chibok in Borno, which generated global attention and a social media campaign called #BringBackOurGirls (“Who are Nigeria's Boko Haram”, 2016). Due to its attention, this can be recognised as one of the more noteworthy attacks that have brought attention to Boko Haram, however, the insurgency has continuously targeted various areas in Northern Nigeria, including other schools and institutions. The following timeline¹ illustrates some of the more violent attacks carried out by Boko Haram in order to provide an insight into the insurgency’s warfare from 2009 and forward.

July 2009:	The emergence of Boko Haram in Bauchi and expands to the states of Borno, Kano and Yobe. A joint military task force reacts, which causes the death of 700 Boko Haram members. Yusuf (current leader) dies in police custody.
September 2010:	50 Boko Haram insurgents attack a prison – 5 people killed and 700 inmates released.
May 2011:	Boko Haram detonates three improvised explosive device (IEDs) – President Goodluck Jonathan’s inauguration.
August 2011:	A car bomb kills 23 people and injures 75 near a UN compound.
November 2011:	Multiple attacks in the states of Yobo, Damaturu and Borno. More than 100 dies.
January 2012:	Boko Haram attacks the police, military and a prison in the state of Kano, where more than 200 are killed.
August 2012:	Boko Haram has allegedly begun peace talks with the Nigerian government.
April 2013:	President Goodluck Jonathan expresses that a team is established to investigate the possibility of Amnesty.
June 2013:	Boko Haram repeatedly targets churches (three Sundays) and more than 50 people are killed.
September 2013:	143 dies after Boko Haram insurgents stage fake checkpoints in Borno and execute travellers.
April 2014:	276 schoolgirls kidnapped in Chibok.
May 2014:	Boko Haram insurgents attack three villages in Borno, however, the residents resist and 200 fighters are killed.
June 3-4 2014:	Boko Haram raids villages in Borno – 4-500 people killed.
June 7-8 2014:	20 young women are kidnapped in Garkin Fulani (near Chibok).

¹ (“Boko Haram Fast Facts”, 2018) and (Matfess, 2018).

June 18-22 2014: 60 women and girls are abducted in Kummabza (Borno) and 30 men killed in the raid.

July 2014: 66 people killed and 15.000 have fled after Boko Haram attacks the town of Damboa.

January 2015: 100 of Boko Haram insurgents captures the town of Baga, neighbouring villages, and a military base – 2000 people are feared dead.

April 2015: 400 corpses of men, women and children are found in mass graves and on the streets of Damasak.

August-May 2016-2017: Around 100 Chibok schoolgirls are released after negotiations between Boko Haram and the Nigerian government.

February 2018: 110 schoolgirls from Dapchi kidnapped.

Sambisa forest

Boko Haram's consistent presence in Nigeria has had a significant impact on the women and girls in the exposed areas, as they have repeatedly been targeted by the insurgency, often through kidnappings, which has further lead to other forms of assaults. As previously mentioned, Boko Haram has gained a vast amount of territory in Nigeria through its warfare in the attempt to create a caliphate governed by Islamic law. The expansion of power thus meant an increase in kidnappings and other measures with the objective to target the Nigerian population and government. In addition to the territory expansion in the cities, Boko Haram has mainly operated from the 'Sambisa forest', where the male militants have created various camps and settlements for themselves and the women and girls who have been abducted (Kayode, 2014). The women and girls who are brought to the Sambisa forest are exploited in various ways, here amongst, sexually, through sex slavery, rape and marriage through forceful means (Nwaubani, 2017). This location was considered one of Boko Haram's strongest bases, to which the insurgents returned after their combats in the cities (Kayode, 2014). The Sambisa forest covers a substantial area, which is comprised of 60,000 square kilometres and is thereby considered a tactical placement for the insurgency due to its size (Kayode, 2014). It is assessed as tactical as it is vastly strenuous for the Nigerian government to dismantle the area since it requires knowledge, tactic and preparation (Kayode, 2014).

Throughout the years, the Nigerian army has initiated numerous operations in the Sambisa forest in the attempt to target Boko Haram. These operations have encompassed the rescue of women and girls while concurrently attempting to dismantle the area (Shaban, 2016). The actions and initiatives have gradually weakened the insurgency in terms of power

and territory, as it has somewhat become difficult for Boko Haram to maintain their hideout secretive (“Nigerian army captures”, 2016). However, in start 2018, the Nigerian army has commenced other measures to expose the insurgency and prevent expansion of territory through the construction of roads in the Sambisa forest in order to create an overview of the area, while attaining dominance of Boko Haram’s ‘safe haven’ (“Boko Haram: Nigerian military”, 2018).

This section on Boko Haram provides an insight into the insurgency and its motivations for the warfare. It is rather essential to gain an understanding of the organisation in order to examine the masculinities and masculine culture that is present, which relates to the male combatants but also the actions carried out towards the Nigerian women and girls. With contemporary conflicts, more scholars, institutions, and organisations gradually recognises rape and sexual violence as a weapon of warfare, here among, Amnesty International, who has acknowledged the following: “Rape, when used as a weapon of war, is systematically employed for a variety of purposes, including intimidation, humiliation, political terror, extracting information, rewarding soldiers, and ethnic cleansing” (Pankhurst, 2010, 152).

Methodology

This thesis strives to analyse how and why sexual exploitation and violence towards women and girls are exerted as a weapon of warfare by Boko Haram. The examination is conducted through a mixture of an explanatory and exploratory research design. The objective with this qualitative approach is to both describe and explore how and why women and girls are targeted and exploited by Boko Haram insurgents. The research has been conducted from a deductive approach, as the framework on sexual violence of a weapon of warfare was considered the commencement of this research, which was then further evaluated and explored through empirical evidence (Neuman, 2014, p. 69). Boko Haram’s utilisation of sexual violence as a weapon was the theoretical proposition initially, which thus has been narrowed down throughout the thesis to focus on how hegemonic masculinity is expressed when targeting women and girls in their warfare. The research has thus shed light on some patterns, namely, the utilisation of women and girls and how they are primarily targeted. The patterns have then been examined and conceptualised through theoretical frameworks in order to explain and analyse the gender dynamics between the insurgents, women and girls and the reasoning for why females are exploited as a weapon of warfare.

Interpretative framework

The research in this thesis is conducted through the framework of critical realism and social constructionism from an ontological and epistemological stance. Ontology and epistemology explain the researcher's choices and understandings to conduct the research by taken foundational philosophical thoughts and perceptions into consideration that are deemed relevant in order to answer the research question.

Ontology relates to the nature of social systems such as the fundamental notions of reality and of what exists (Neuman, 2014, p. 94). One stance within ontology is a realist position that categorises and understand the society as "(...) organized into pre-existing categories just waiting for us to discover. A realist assumes is that the "real world" exists independently of humans and their interpretations of it" (Neuman, 2014, p. 94). However, a critical realist thus adjusts this assumption and argues that reality cannot be seized directly as people's subjectivity, cultural interpretations and anticipated ideas pollute a person's contact with reality (Neuman, 2014, p. 94). According to critical realists, the world is not viewed as an absolute definition of reality, however, the reality and what exists within must be examined critically in order to gain understanding and these realities can constantly be critiqued and replaced (Morgan). Furthermore, critical realists in research need to examine and explore the relationship between existing political, economical and social relations and how it induces exploitation and creates inequality in order to be able to critique and analyse those relations (Cruickshank, 2003, p. 3). According to Cruickshank (2003, p. 3), one of the essential notions within critical realism is "that structure and agency need to be linked, and that we must avoid putting all the explanatory weight on structures or individuals, as this results in determinism and an inability to explain individuals' social relations, respectively".

Epistemology relates to knowledge and how the world is perceived and understood (Neuman, 2014, p. 95). Furthermore, it sheds light on how the social world is examined and "what we need to do to produce knowledge and what scientific knowledge looks like once we have produced it" (Neuman, 2014, p. 95). My epistemological position is social constructionism, which revolves around that the concepts, categories and understandings of the world that are portrayed derives from a historical and cultural standpoint (Burr, 2015, p. 4). Therefore, knowledge is correlated to culture and is considered as products of that specific culture and history "(...) dependent upon the particular social and economic prevailing in that culture at the time" (Burr, 2015, p. 4). The understandings and perceptions are thus socially constructed and it is argued that one's understanding is not

valued higher than another one (Burr, 2015, p. 4). However, people construct the knowledge and understandings through daily interactions and thereby, social interaction is deemed highly crucial from a social constructionist' perspective (Burr, 2015, p. 5).

My ontological and epistemological stances have each provided a philosophical framework to conduct the research in this thesis. In the analysis of sexual violence as a weapon of warfare by Boko Haram, I acknowledge that critical realism is relevant as I recognise that reality is constructed and perceived through an examination of the intersection between structure and agency, which relates to women and girls position in the Nigerian society and how the societal structures favours men. This critical realist' perspective thus links the former with how the societal structures are reflected and developed while shedding light on how social and gender dynamics have an impact on the notion of reality. In order to analyse how gender perceptions and dynamics are constructed, social constructionism is relevant and has been the foundational framework to explore how the knowledge of women and men's position in a society derives from a cultural perspective. I further acknowledge that knowledge is socially constructed and this has been analysed both within the Nigerian society, but also within the insurgency, as I have analysed how Boko Haram's knowledge is constructed through the ideology of Islam and the Quran. The gender dynamics and the masculinity that is expressed in Boko Haram's warfare has been scrutinised in order to analyse the reasoning for women and girls being targeted as a weapon of warfare and how these are socially constructed.

Empirical data collection

In terms of data collection, I have used qualitative data and to a limited extent, quantitative data. The qualitative data is the foundational basis of the project, as I have utilised personal statements and interviews of women and girls who have been victims of sexual exploitation and violence by the insurgency. Furthermore, statements derived from the Boko Haram leader, Shekau, has been employed in the analysis and to certain extent quotations from other insurgents. Whereas, quantitative data has been applied to a limited degree in terms of numbers and statistics to provide and support the number of women and girls who are affected by Boko Haram's warfare. These numbers derived from a report by UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ("2 years on from Chibok", 2016). The retrieved numbers are deemed credible as OCHA is an official organisation and therefore, would be held responsible for publishing incorrect or deceiving information. The institution must generate truth to maintain their integrity and credibility.

In order to delimit the extent of the gathered data, the timeframe is mostly the years of 2011-2014, as Boko Haram greatly targeted women and girls as a counter-response to the Nigerian government (“Boko Haram Fast Facts”, 2018). However, in the timeline created to illustrate some of Boko Haram’s attacks in Nigeria, I have included their activities until the beginning of 2018, as it is essential to emphasise that the insurgency is still actively present in Nigeria.

I have utilised both primary and secondary sources in this thesis. I have used primary sources to shed light on the conflict and problematic that occurs within this warfare through news articles, journals, and reports. Secondary sources have been utilised to interpret and analyse the findings of the primary sources, namely, through the contextualisation of gender perceptions/dynamics, societal structures and cultural elements in the Nigerian society. I am highly aware of the biases that occur when utilising secondary material as it has been generated within another framework than mine, however, biases are arguably inevitable. Nevertheless, I have strived to reduce the biases through triangulation, which revolves around examining the topic from various perspectives in order to improve the validity and reliability of the findings (Neuman, 2014, p. 166). I have examined sexual violence as a weapon of warfare through the women and girls’ perspectives, the insurgents take on women and correlated it to the secondary sources of the societal and cultural structures of the Nigerian society in order to analyse how hegemonic masculinity is expressed in the warfare.

Videos have been an essential element in Boko Haram’s communication, as the insurgency has propagated their message to the citizens and the Nigerian government through the release of videos. As previously mentioned in the introductory section about Boko Haram, the insurgency is affiliated with other terror organisations such as Islamic State and Al-Qaeda amongst others. Islamic State has prominently utilised videos to promote messages and to propagandise throughout their warfare (Dastmalchi, 2018). Therefore, it can be assumed that Boko Haram is adopting the other organisations’ methods, which include video releases. The released videos by Boko Haram have gained international attention and have resulted in translations of the messages promoted by Shekau through various news outlets, which have been used in my analysis. The purpose of the videos is to reach out to the Nigerian government and the citizens with messages. However, biases can occur as the statements that I have utilised is taken out of context, as entire videos are not translated, thereby, omitted parts of the message or statements. It is rather small segments of the videos that are translated, however, I argue that it is still valid and credible within the context of my thesis, as the statements provide an insight to Boko Haram’s motivations for targeting women

and girls, which thus can contribute to the analysis of how hegemonic masculinity and gender dynamics are expressed within the warfare.

Furthermore, in the analysis, the testimonies from both women and girl who have been targeted by the insurgency derives from news articles and reports. A report that is used repeatedly in regards to the women and girls is acquired from the Non-governmental organisation (NGO), Human Rights Watch. I am aware that the report is produced for several reasons such as shedding light on human rights problems, involves political bias and also does not represent all women and girls who have been affected or taken into Boko Haram's custody. Moreover, those who are represented is solely a fraction of the ones who has experienced sexual violence and rape. The quotes are taken out of its original context, as I will select a few statements and conduct an in-depth analysis, exclusively based on the quotation. This still portrays how the insurgents have exerted sexual violence towards the women and girls, which can shed light on why the actions are carried out and how masculinity is expressed in the gender dynamics between the women, girls, and Boko Haram fighters. The obtained data can still be employed to examine why Boko Haram utilise sexual violence as a weapon of war, and as Christian Lund (2014, p. 227) argues, we, as researchers "abstract and edit the data" by applying concepts in the process of reasoning the connection.

Social scientists do not discover new events that nobody knew about before. What is discovered is connections and relations, not directly observable, by which we can understand and explain already known occurrences in a novel way (Danermark et al. 2002, p. 91 as qtd. In. Lund, 2014, p. 227).

Therefore, the data provides the context to the research to a limited extent, however, the choice of concepts and theories by the researcher provides the framework for the analysis (Lund, 2014, p. 227). This consequently conveys that the obtained empirical data from reports by, for example, Human Rights Watch, can be utilised in this thesis, as I interpret and analyse the data through the theoretical framework and concepts on hegemonic masculinity and why sexual violence is used as a weapon of warfare from my perspective and approach, as a researcher. Lastly, Lund (2014, p. 228) argues that the understanding, questions and connections that are raised by a researcher in relation to specific data highly derive from one's knowledge and previous research.

Validity and reliability in qualitative research

The gathered data and findings are assessed by the conceptualisation of validity and reliability within qualitative research through four evaluating aspects: Credibility, Transferability, Dependability and Confirmability.

Credibility

Within qualitative research, the concept of credibility aims at evaluating the validity of the data being examined and whether if the results are deemed credible (“Establishing Validity”). Moreover, it relates to whether the results “(...) reflect the phenomena being studied” (“Establishing Validity”). The gathered material contributes to the exploration of the research question and can be deemed credible due to my methodological considerations in the selection process. The acquired data can be interpreted through different lenses, however, I have not analysed the data such as statement from women and girls and Boko Haram insurgents, as independent segments. I have rather created a connection between the actions exerted by Boko Haram, the experiences of women and girls, and statements from the insurgents in order to understand how the former correlates with gender perceptions and dynamics of the insurgents and the women and girls through my theoretical framework of hegemonic masculinity. Therefore, the phenomena of sexual violence as a weapon of war is examined from various angles, which arguably deems the findings credible due to the correlation made across the different groups that are involved in the warfare. Furthermore, the reports where some of the statements from women and girls are obtained, derives from acknowledged organisations such as Human Rights Watch and United Nations Children's Fund, and thereby, one can assume that despite the biases that these organisations carry a form of responsibility still dictates to gather and disseminate ethical and credible information. Lastly, in correlation to the statements acquired from the released videos, I have found the translations on various news outlet before applying them in the analysis in order to assure its credibility. These considerations combined thus deems my data collection as credible, accurate and can contribute to examining the objective of this thesis.

Transferability

In order to estimate the validity of the research outcomes, it is vital to take the notion of transferability into consideration and whether the findings can be conveyed and generalised into another setting or population (“Establishing Validity”). Sexual violence as a weapon of warfare by militant organisations has been recognised in other settings than Nigeria. The Islamic State have targeted Yazidi women and girls, who were enslaved, sold, and repeatedly raped (Otten, 2017). In addition to their affiliation, both Boko Haram and Islamic State share similar attributes such as the objective to create an Islamic caliphate, the resistance towards Western influence, and the targeting of women and girls as a weapon of warfare. It can be assumed that this research field of how hegemonic masculinity is expressed through the exploitation of sexual violence as a weapon of warfare can be employed in the context of

Islamic State in Iraq and Syria through an examination of the gender dynamics between the militants and the women and girls. Therefore, the findings, concepts, theoretical framework and motivations for exerting sexual violence can thus be transferred to the context of the Islamic States' warfare.

Dependability

In qualitative studies, concepts and phenomena that are examined are continuously changing and therefore, as a researcher, it is pivotal to describe and present the possible changes that occur within the research field and perspective ("Establishing Validity"). This contributes to the validity of one's research as it is consequential to study whether changes would interfere if the research were to be repeated ("Establishing Validity"). In regards to the dependability of this thesis, the findings are deemed reliable and if another researcher conducted the same study, similar conclusions would be reached. Boko Haram has through its warfare targeted women and girls and whether if these have been through raids, abduction or exploitation of them in their captivity, equivalent findings will be achieved as the gender dynamics have not changed throughout the years. Boko Haram has still actively targeted the Nigerian citizens and in February 2018, 110 schoolgirls were abducted in Dapchi in Nigeria, which gained media attention as it was compared to the abduction of the Chibok girls in 2014 (Matfess, 2018). The recent abduction of schoolgirls somewhat illustrates that Boko Haram continuously exploit women and girls as a weapon of warfare, which further confirms the reliability of this thesis. Therefore, the theoretical and analytical framework of how hegemonic masculinity is expressed in Boko Haram's utilisation of sexual violence as a weapon of warfare can be employed if the research were to be repeated, as the socially constructed gender dynamics between Boko Haram and the women and girls are seemingly the same.

Confirmability

The last evaluation criteria for deeming a research' validity is through the concept of confirmability, which indicates the extent of objectivity in the findings and whether other researchers would reach the same conclusion in the assessment of the collected data and outcomes ("Establishing Validity"). As previously mentioned, each researcher is to some extent biased based on the individual's knowledge, prior research, perspectives and connections established to a specific research field. If others were to conduct the same examination of the collected data, the findings would be highly similar, as Boko Haram exerts sexual violence towards women and girls in various settings such as through rape and forced marriage amongst others, and the actions serve different purposes. However, taken the

former into consideration, the actions derive from socially constructed gender perceptions, cultural attributes and societal structures in Nigeria. Therefore, I argue that the conclusive findings can be confirmed by other researchers, if the same data is employed such as statements from women, girls, and Shekau, the theoretical and analytical framework of hegemonic masculinity and the conceptualisations of sexual violence as a weapon of warfare through e.g. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), Manjoo and McRaith (2011), Lene Hansen (2000,2003), Ruth Seifert (1996) and Pankhurst (2010) to analyse how and why Boko Haram utilise sexual violence as a weapon of warfare. The data creates the foundational understandings of Boko Haram and their actions, whereas, the findings are self-explanatory when examined from the theoretical and conceptual framework. Therefore, on a general level, the main outcomes can be deemed similar, however, minor elements could defer as each research have different knowledge and interpretation methods, which could create a different perspective of what needs to be emphasised. My emphasis in the thesis has mainly been on why the actions have been exerted and on the collective outcome of the sexual violence, whereas, other researchers might emphasise on other areas.

Extended research framework

Throughout the research process, patterns and stories emerged from the data, which subsequently broadened the research framework. The initial focus was on the utilisation of sexual violence as a weapon of warfare towards women and girls, however, other forms of exploitation and violence have been exerted by Boko Haram. These include aspects such as forced labour, forced marriage, and the utilisation of women and girls as suicide bombers, which has been incorporated in the analysis in addition to the examination of sexual violence as a weapon. In the three aspects, hegemonic masculinity is highly expressed, which can contribute to the examination of the gender dynamics among the women, girls and insurgents. The extended framework thus broadens the research framework while concurrently supports the primary findings on how and why the insurgency exerts sexual violence.

Methodological limitations

In the writing process, various limitations have occurred. In this thesis, I have chosen to focus on Northern Nigeria, in order to delimit the scope of the topic. However, it is significant to highlight that the insurgency is not solely restricted to its origin, namely, Northern Nigeria, as the insurgency has spread to neighbouring countries such as Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. Additionally, another limitation was to obtain information and polling on how many Nigerian

that supported or have supported the insurgency, as the number is unknown. This number would have provided an insight into how many perhaps wants sharia in Nigeria or whether the insurgency had support before becoming violent. As mentioned in the introductory section regarding Boko Haram, the organisation split two-ways in 2016, however, I have decided not to focus on the split and its impact on Boko Haram's warfare in Nigeria, as the focus has been on sexual exploitation of women and girls and the masculinity culture expressed. Furthermore, the split also came after the examined timespan of this thesis, which was 2011-2014. Lastly, a limitation that is highly crucial is language barriers. As I do not speak or understand Hausa, I have solely relied on translation from news outlets such as BBC, CNN, Washington Post, New York Times and Sahara reports to translate quotes from the released videos and used it as data for the analysis. However, this limitation induces some biases, as often, the whole video that is released by Boko Haram is not translated or at least the whole transcript is not in the given article. Thereby, the biases that occur in the translations are factors such as context as we as an audience are not aware of what has been said before and after a given quote is translated.

State of the Art

The conceptualisation of sexual violence in warfare has been rather prevailing in the last two decades within academic research, more specifically, the field of international relations and conflict/war studies (Kirby, 2013, p. 1). As stated in the introduction, sexual violence such as rape as a wartime weapon has been pre-existing prior to Boko Haram's warfare. In the emergence of sexual violence as a warfare tactic, the motivations and objectives for exerting these actions have been researched and investigated. Sexual violence as a wartime weapon can be analysed and theorised from a variety of perspectives, however, in this thesis, the perspectives are utilised to analyse the gender dynamics in the exert of sexual assaults. The literature entails potential reasoning and motives for the actions carried out by insurgents, which amongst others, includes intentions such as humiliation, 'cleansing' or targeting a culture or community. These objectives for conducting sexual assaults can thus provide a foundational framework in the attempt to analyse and interpret Boko Haram's motivation to utilise sexual violence as a weapon in its warfare in Northern Nigeria. In the following sections, I will present, discuss, and theorise approaches to sexual violence and wartime rape through different conceptualisations. According to the International Criminal Court (ICC), rape as an action is recognised when:

The perpetrator invaded the body of a person by conduct resulting in penetration, however slight, of any part of the body of the victim or of the perpetrator with a sexual organ, or of the anal or genital opening of the victim with any object or any other part of the body (“Definitions of Crimes of Sexual Violence”).

There are various theories and research on why sexual violence and rape is exerted as a deliberate and strategic method in warfare. According to Bastick, Grimm, and Kunz (2007, p. 14-15) sexual violence is arguably utilised in order to humiliate and penalise the opponent, while simultaneously affecting the family and community structures. However, in order to explore and analyse sexual violence and wartime rape, it is essential to take other factors into consideration. These factors involve fundamental and social conditions in a society, which is referred to as collective dimensions, however, it is also crucial to examine these factors from an individual level, such as through an individual’s behaviour, as it stems from the environmental factors in a community (Henry, 2016, p. 45). In the context of this thesis, these conditions can to some extent reflect the gender perceptions and dynamics that are into play in Nigeria between the Boko Haram insurgents and the women and girls, as these perspectives are socially constructed in the environment. Therefore, in the examination of why sexual assaults are perpetrated, it is significant to take the societal conditions into consideration, more specifically “(...) the social and structural context of patriarchy and gender order or hierarchy – [which is] a historically constructed pattern of power relations between men and women and definitions of femininity and masculinity” (Henry, 2016, p. 49).

Sexual violence as a weapon of war

Donna Pankhurst (2010, p. 149) acknowledges the notion of utilising ‘rape as a weapon of war’ and argues that sexual assaults are exerted for two potential reasons: firstly, it is an attempt to weaken the counterpart, by concurrently targeting the male fighters and their inability to ‘protect’ their women. Secondly, it is an attempt to encourage the fighters who perhaps interpret rape as a form of reward, which additionally creates a closer bond between the combatants (Pankhurst, 2010, p. 149). Pankhurst (2010, p. 153) further argues that despite the formerly mentioned outcomes for the fighters, the sexual violence can further induce another type of reward such as material gains. Here, she draws on Meredith Turshen’s notion that the material gains can encompass women’s labour or situations in which women are obligated to provide the men with what is requested along with the rape and other forms of sexual assaults and violence (Pankhurst, 2010, p. 153). Pankhurst’s research can be employed

as a conceptual framework to examine and interpret potential motivations for Boko Haram fighters to rape women and girls. The research can further be utilised as a tool to reveal other areas where the women and girls can be functional. This is relevant in the examination of gender dynamics between the male fighters of Boko Haram and the women and girls, as the insurgency exploit them in other areas aside from rape. The exploitation of women and girls is significant to examine in order to analyse how masculinity is expressed in the conflict.

In this thesis, Boko Haram's actions, the systematic targeting of women and girls, and its impact are examined from a collective dimension rather than an individual one. Rashida Manjoo and Calleigh McRaith argue that the sexual assaults can be viewed as a form of assault on the security of the citizens in a community, as it to some extent instate fright within a population (2011, p. 14). The consequences of sexual violence contribute to the intentional humiliation, degradation and destabilisation of a population (Manjoo and McRaith, 2011, p. 14). Manjoo and McRaith (2011, p. 14-15) argue that gendered violence can be assessed as a form of statement and retaliation towards the opposing forces, as it jeopardises the power structure of the military force, which in the context of the thesis is the Nigerian government, as they arguably 'fail' in protecting their citizens who are being targeted. Throughout their article, the focal point is in the aftermath of the sexual violence and its consequences rather than the direct sexual act. The consequences might entail stigma of the women and girls in their reintegration into the society after the sexual assaults, as they might be exposed to stigmatisation by the community (Manjoo and McRaith, 2011, p. 17). The sexual violence could further encompass economic and emotional consequences for the victims as the stigmatisation could generate obstacles in terms of future marriage or even divorce by their partners as an outcome of the happenings (Manjoo and McRaith, 2011, p. 17). This conceptualisation of stigmatisation is further acknowledged by Pankhurst (2010, p. 151), as she also argues that women and girls who have been raped by combatants from the 'enemy' are often excluded by the family and community. As a consequence of the former mentioned, women and girls often do not explicitly state that rape and sexual violence have occurred, which further creates an underestimation of the actual number of sexual violence and assaults (Pankhurst, 2010, p. 150). Gender structures and hierarchy is essential in the context of stigmatisation, as the women and girls are stigmatised through socially constructed norms. Therefore, it is pertinent to examine the masculine and patriarchal culture present in the warfare in order to scrutinise the utilisation of sexual violence as a weapon, while concurrently taken stigmatisation as a 'side-effect' into consideration.

Despite that the research and focus in this thesis do not revolve around the aftermath of the women and girls' lives, stigmatisation, emotions and consequences that are encountered but rather the act of sexual violence, it is essential to recognise and acknowledge the repercussions. However, it can be argued that the conceptualisation of stigmatisation can be utilised in the analysis to portray the consequences that are prompted by Boko Haram's actions, which can be a deliberate strategy in the attempt to target the 'enemy'. This can thus be utilised as an indication and tool to examine the masculinity culture, power structures and the mechanisms in the gendered violence, which is relevant in the scrutinisation of the gender relationship between the Nigerian women and girls and the Boko Haram combatants and their implementation of sexual violence as a weapon.

Ruth Seifert's research focuses on sexual violence and wartime rape of the former Yugoslavia, however, the concepts and patterns can to some extent be employed in the context of this thesis, as it revolves around sexual violence, more specifically, rape, as a weapon of warfare. In Seifert's article "The Logic of Sexual Violence in War" (1996, p. 37), the following question is examined: "What function does rape fulfil in wartime and what strategic purpose is served by sexual violence against women?". Rape studies have confirmed that rape does not derive from a sexual perspective but rather an aggressive one, which illustrates that it does not satisfy the perpetrator sexually (Seifert, 1996, p. 36). However, the satisfaction is fulfilled through the humiliation that is forced upon the women and girls, which include power and dominance over another individual (Seifert, 1996, p. 36). Seifert (1996, p. 38) emphasises highly on the impact and consequences of sexual violence, more specifically rape, on a community and its culture, while recognising that the prominent motive is not to defeat the counter-part but rather target and dismantle the culture. Seifert's conceptualisation can to some extent be correlated to Manjoo and McRaith's approach to sexual violence and rape in warfare, as in both instances, the focal point evolves from a collective dimension rather than from an individual one. The conceptualisation of exerting sexual violence from a collective dimension in the attempt to target and destroy a certain culture, population, or community, is highly relevant in this thesis, as it can create an understanding of Boko Haram's motives for exploiting women and girls.

Moreover, Seifert (1996, p. 39) argues that when the majority of a population supports the government and the contemporary political system, the combatants aim to assault the identity of the supporters by targeting their culture and sense of self. Thereby, sexual violence against women and girls can potentially dismantle an entire culture as one's identity is associated with one's sexual identity (Seifert, 1996, p. 39,41), which means that

rape and sexual violence is an attack on an individual's perception of themselves. This has an impact on the victim's identity and dignity (Seifert 1996, p. 41).

Another concept that is highlighted in Seifert's article is 'pollution' within wartime rape. This concept can be interpreted in two ways: "First, the racist idea of contaminating the other community's blood and genes. Second, pollution is referring to dissolving a group's spirit and identity (Seifert, 1996, p. 40). These forms of pollution in correlation to rape has arguably an impact on a nation's culture, which further supports the idea that the rape of women and girls of a society can be perceived as an assault of the 'body' of the given community and culture (Seifert, 1996, 39). Therefore, Seifert (1996, p. 41) conclusively argues that rape as a weapon of war is exerted strategically to destroy a nation's culture and create instability through gendered violence, while emphasising that the fact that women and girls are raped by male perpetrators, the mistreatment and sexual assaults can be perceived as an element in the male communication in a conflict.

As Ruth Seifert, Lene Hansen also address the notion of wartime rape and sexual violence in the context of former Yugoslavia. The systematic rape of Bosnian women is arguably a turning point in the research of sexual violence as a weapon of war (Ten Benschel and Sample, 2017, p. 2). Despite wartime rape occurring repeatedly in the past, the sexual violence utilised as a weapon in the Bosnian context is highly referred to in the research of this topic. Hansen (2000, p. 27,60) argue that throughout history, rape has been recognised as soldiers gain, success, reward and a mean to destroy a certain population and that "[r]aping 'the nation's women' is not only an act of violence against individual women; it also works to install a disempowered masculinity as constitutive of the identities of the nation's men". Sexual violence in warfare humiliates both men and women: the women can be excluded from the family and community due to the actions exerted to them, whereas, men are somehow regarded as someone who cannot provide protection to their women (Hansen, 2003, p. 27). Parallels can be drawn to Pankhurst's research (2010) on rape as a weapon of war, as she also emphasises how women can experience exclusion and how the male masculinity is targeted. Both Hansen's (2003) and Pankhurst's (2010) research can be utilised to examine the gender mechanisms and dynamics in the Boko Haram warfare in terms of how masculinity is expressed in the actions carried out towards the women and girls. This sheds light on the scope of this thesis, as the notion of masculinity is highly present in this context, while concurrently taken women, sexual violence, and rape into consideration.

Hansen's focuses on wartime rape and securitisation through the proposal of a new conceptualisation of the connection between the two concepts. According to her, the

securitisation debate creates a deceptive separation of the mechanisms that are relevant within wartime rape. Hansen (2003, p. 29) proposes that one cannot divide and understand security in the context of rape as individual or collective terms and gendered security issues without taking the nation and state into consideration, which is often portrayed and separated in the debate. However, one should examine these as a combination of both in order to create an understanding of how it affects each other. The argument is that despite that the action of rape targets an individual and simultaneously creates a security risk for the specific person, it provides meaning within a collective framework as it has a purpose and reasoning for the sexual violence and assault (Hansen, 2000, p. 60). This is due to that “Rape happens, not as a consequence of thoughtless, provocative or unfortunate behaviour, but as a question of national warfare” (Hansen, 2000, p. 59). This leads to her second argument, namely, that gendered security matters have a connection to the nation or state, as the women are firstly targeted based on religious, ethnic or national identity, and afterwards because of their sexual features (Hansen, 2000, p. 59). Conclusively, the interrelations between the formerly presented can be exemplified through women and girls who are impregnated through rape as it can be viewed “(...) as a passive ‘national’ container of a child imagined to be the future bearer of the rapist’s nationality (Hansen, 2000, p. 60). The latter can be correlated to Seifert’s (1996) concept of pollution and how the women and girls that are impregnated are ‘contaminated’ with the fighters’ blood, genes and nationality.

A typology for the examination of wartime rape

Elvan Isikozlu and Ananda S. Millard (2010, p. 7) have created a typology for wartime rape as an approach to analyse sexual assaults in warfare. There are different dynamics and motivations in the act of sexual violence as a weapon that can be employed in the analysis of Boko Haram’s warfare and actions. There are allegedly no universal encounters or causal factors of wartime rape, as the how and why it is perpetrated and its consequences can be explained and examined differently depending on the context (Isikozlu and Millard, 2010, p. 25). However, it is crucial to emphasise that despite conflicts and acts of sexual violence can not be generalised, one can identify patterns across the different conflicts (Isikozlu and Millard, 2010, p. 25). The typology can be described as a ‘myriad of dynamics’ that seemingly presents various motivations and conditions for the utilisation of rape as a weapon in warfare (Isikozlu and Millard, 2010, p. 27), which can create a foundational framework for understanding Boko Haram’s actions towards women and girls.

I will elaborate on three of the six aspects and themes of the typology, as the focus of this thesis is on the actions of sexual violence exerted by Boko Haram and not on the structural mechanism of the conflict or organisation or the perpetrator as an individual, but rather sexual violence as a collective action. The three aspects that can be deemed fruitful in the analysis can enhance the understanding of why women and girls are targeted and the gender dynamics that are present in terms of sociocultural constructions and power relationships between them.

1. Motivations for the rape: In the examination of the motivations for rape, the intentions and purposes can be scrutinised from an individual and organisational perspective (Isikozlu and Millard, 2010, p. 27). This includes whether the sexual violence derives from a “(...) result of peer pressure (...) group solidarity, their own individual reasons, sexual desire or a desire for power domination over another individual, or because they were ordered to do so, here the objectives of the war is also considered” (Isikozlu and Millard, 2010, p. 27).

2. Characteristics of the raped person: It is crucial to take the raped individual’s background data into consideration, when examining wartime rape (Isikozlu and Millard, 2010, p. 27). These include data such as ethnicity, religious affiliation, age, sex, livelihood, educational background etc. (Isikozlu and Millard, 2010, p. 27). Additionally, it is essential to consider other aspects of the rape such as where it is exerted, in what way, by whom and the physical consequences such as pregnancies and injuries (Isikozlu and Millard, 2010, p. 27).

3. Characteristics of the rape: When analysing rape, it is significant to identify the means that are employed to perpetrate the rape such as location, utilisation of weapons or other objects to carry out the rape, whether it is executed individually or collectively, and lastly, if the rape is systematic and supplemented with other types of violence (Isikozlu and Millard, 2010, p. 28).

By taken the former typology into consideration, I am able to examine the masculine culture and the hegemonic masculinity that is expressed in the warfare, through gender dynamics and socially constructed gender norms. The three aspects contribute to a potential comprehension of the mechanisms that are existing in the warfare, which is arguably the foundational structure for why women and girls are targeted. The typology is employed implicitly throughout the analysis, as I will utilise the three aspects throughout the entire analysis in order to examine why wartime rape is occurring in Boko Haram’s warfare.

Motivational factors and the emergence of insurgencies

The different research on sexual violence and wartime rape are highly essential in this context of this thesis, namely, sexual violence as a wartime weapon. Conclusively, the different research within the topic revolves around the motives and consequences of the utilisation of sexual violence in warfare. The focus is not on the specific action itself, but rather on the consequences and aftermath of the actions carried out by Boko Haram. The actions are aimed at targeting a specific population, community or culture on a collective dimension rather than on an individual one, and sexual violence thus becomes the ‘weapon’ to achieve the desired goal.

However, it is equally significant to further acknowledge research within insurgencies in wartime studies, in order to examine and analyse the development, reasoning and strategies of an insurgency. David Galula (2006, p. 5-6) argues that the development of an insurgency is a slowly process from peaceful conditions to conflictual, as the combatants require time to gain stability and expand its power. There are various conditions for a successful insurgency and Galula (2006, p. 12) argues that one of the more essential ones is the concept of having a cause. The notion of having a cause is rather significant, if the insurgency attempts to achieve an objective and gain supporters rather than merely create conflict (Galula, 2006, p. 12). A successful ‘cause’ can to some extent be exploited as an advantage in order to captivate attention and thus be transformed into strength in terms of attracting a significant amount of supporters (Galula, 2006, p. 12-13). In order for the cause to be recognised as ‘successful’, it is fundamental that it is a long-term one, as it needs to be a contemporary matter throughout the whole period, namely, during the warfare but also while the insurgents obtain power and strength (Galula, 2006, p. 13). Galula (2006, p. 14) argues that most issues can somehow be exploited in a profitable manner by the insurgents such as addressing social inequality and other social and political problems in the respective society. Throughout the uprising of the insurgency, the cause is highly emphasised and predominant, however, as the insurgents gradually gain power and strength, the importance of the cause decreases and the focal point is the warfare (Galula, 2006, p. 16).

Despite not conducting an insurgency-counterinsurgency analysis, it is vastly important to understand how Boko Haram has gained its supporters and what motives have driven the insurgency. Through David Galula’s insurgency theory, the notion of having a cause can be correlated to Boko Haram’s attempt to create social and economic equality while concurrently employing a religious aspect to the cause. The focus was thus on creating

a religious society and state through peaceful methods such as advocacy against Western influence in the attempt to gain supporters, however, as previously mentioned, throughout the years, encounters between religious groups and the government prompted the insurgency to resort to violent means. This theory can thus create an insight into the parameters for activities, tactics and motives of insurgents, which can be applied to the understanding of Boko Haram's origin and warfare throughout the years.

Theoretical framework

The previous section has provided an insight to the various approaches towards the concept of sexual violence as a weapon of warfare and the emergence of insurgencies, which has portrayed a variety of reasons for exerting sexual violence towards women and girls in warfare. However, in the context of Boko Haram's warfare, it is relevant to examine the concept of masculinity. Gendered violence has been prominent in this conflict as both Boko Haram and the Nigerian government have utilised women and girls as strategic means in the attempt to target the counterpart. The usage of women and girls as an object to serve a message portrays a masculinity that carries cultural traits which are socially constructed. Moreover, it is relevant to research the gender dynamics in the Boko Haram conflict, as the men hold leading and influential positions in the warfare. It is as such relevant to examine the presence of masculinity in Boko Haram's methods to conduct warfare in terms of the mechanisms that are utilised in the sexual exploitation and violence towards women and girls. The gendered violence can be scrutinised through masculinity theory, as it reflects cultures, dynamics in a region, poverty and power (Jewkes et. al., 2015, p. 114).

Masculinity theory

Masculinity theory has evolved throughout the last centuries, and the research field has been expanded from cultural studies, to the discursive construction of masculinities from a poststructuralist perspective, to the perception of masculinity in contemporary modern time (Connell, 2012, p. 5). Masculinities has been conceptualised through various fields and contexts (Connell, 2012, p. 7), and greatly within sociology and psychology in relation to how masculinity is socially constructed (Pfeffer, Rogalin, and Gee, 2016, p. 652). In the examination of masculinity as a socially constructed phenomena that is generated and reproduced through social interactions, the biological understandings of sex are challenged (Pfeffer, Rogalin, and Gee, 2016, p. 653). An individual's sex refers to biological elements such as chromosomes, whereas, gender relates to the characteristics that are deemed either

masculine or feminine in a given society or culture (Nobelius, 2004). Thereby, the attributes and behaviours that are associated with either masculine or feminine features are thus reflected and created through social processes (Pfeffer, Rogalin, and Gee, 2016, p. 653).

Some of the original work on masculinity within the research field of social science dates back to the nineteenth-century in terms of the relationship and status of men and women, and the male sex role (Connell, 2005, p. 21). This derives from a timespan where women were excluded from universities, which generated attention on sex differences, as the perception was that women's minds were highly delicate and could not comprehend academic work (Connell, 2005, p. 21). The notion of male role or sex roles correlates to gender perceptions and how some attributes and expectations are correlated to one's sex, namely, the cultural sex roles of male and female (Connell, 2005, p. 22). Masculinity and femininity are interpreted and recognised through sex roles and can be perceived as "(...) products of social learning" (Connell, 2005, p. 22). The research and conceptualisation on sex roles was highly developed around the 1970's concurrently with academic feminism being prominent (Connell, 2005, p. 23). The focus within the former mentioned research revolved around the assumption that women were subordinate to men and the female sex role was oppressive (Connell, 2005, p. 22). The research on sex roles suggested that the predominant fixed perceptions could be changed through institutional settings such as education, which could generate new expectations and role models (Connell, 2005, p. 23). Furthermore, the research of masculinity within sociology suggests that gender is not determined preliminary to social interactions, however, it is constructed through it (Connell, 2005, p. 35). Masculinities are not recognised as established categories but are developed, interpreted and reflected in a specific setting (Connell, 2005, p. 35). Connell (2005, p. 72) argues that social practice and gender are highly intertwined. Social practice revolves around the structure of a society and how situations and events are responded to and generated within the social relations of the setting in a community or culture (Connell, 2005, p. 72). Therefore, Connell (2005, p. 76) argues that:

In order to understand gender, then, we must constantly go beyond gender: The same applies in reverse. We cannot understand class (...) or global inequality without constantly moving towards gender. Gender relations are a major component of social structures as a whole, and gender politics are among the main determinants of our collective fate.

Definitions of masculinity

In the attempt to define and conceptualise masculinity, it is essential to assert that the concept solely exists in contrast with femininity (Connell, 2005, p. 68). Connell (2005, p. 68) argues that previously when masculinity has been defined and conceptualised, the cultural traits and elements have not been considered, however, four strategies have been employed in the attempt to define masculine features.

1. Essentialists: Masculinity is related to activity, contrary feminine passivity and this includes features such as “risk-taking, responsibility, irresponsibility, aggression (...) (Connell, 2005, p. 68). A critique that has been related to the essentialists approach is that the features comes forwards as arbitrary, which further portrays the notion that masculinity can be defined universally (Connell, 2005, p. 68).

2. Positivists: The definition of masculinity derives from logical grounds of masculinity and femininity (Connell, 2005, p. 69). The definition is based on statistical information of men and women in relation to for example, discrimination, or is based on ethnographic data in the attempt to create a pattern of men’s lives in a culture or society (Connell, 2005, p. 69). The critique within this approach is based on the fact that in the conceptualisation of masculinity, it is arguably impossible to have a neutral standpoint and thereby, the definitions carries traces of bias while implicitly posses one’s assumptions of gender (Connell, 2005, p. 69).

3. Normative: Masculinity is defined in terms of what is expected of individuals (Connell, 2005, p. 70). This refers to the previous research of sex roles in relation to what characterises the social norms for men’s behaviour and the expectation within (Connell, 2005, p. 70). This conceptualisation has been critiqued as it is believed that the attributes of masculinity does not relate to the individual on a personal level, but solely correlates to the social norms and sex role (Connell, 2005, p. 70).

4. Semiotic: Masculinity is defined through symbolic differences such as a contrast of masculinity and femininity (Connell, 2005, p. 70).

Masculinity can be conceptualised and defined through various perspectives and can be employed as a tool to examine the Boko Haram conflict. In order to limit the extent of this thesis, I will utilise the conceptualisation of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ as an analytical

framework to explore how Boko Haram utilises sexual violence towards women and girls as a weapon of war through gender dynamics and masculinities.

Hegemonic masculinity

Hegemonic masculinity was introduced in the mid-eighties and is centred around gender and power structure (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832). The framework can be defined and conceptualised diversely and is continuously reformed, discussed and interpreted in various ways (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 833). Hegemonic masculinity is an interdisciplinary framework and can be utilised in academic research fields such as cultural studies, criminology, educational studies, and media representation amongst others (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 833). According to Jewkes et. al. (2015, p. 113), a universal definition of hegemonic masculinity entails:

A set of values, established by men in power that functions to include and exclude, and to organize society in gender unequal ways. It combines several features: a hierarchy of masculinities, differential access among men to power (over women and other men), and the interplay between men's identity, men's ideals, interactions, power, and patriarchy.

Prior to defining hegemonic masculinity, is it essential to define 'hegemony'. Hegemony can be explained as power relations among groups and it is highly linked to ideology (Hearn, 2012, p. 590). The concept originates from the Marxist philosopher, Antonio Gramsci and his examination of class relations, cultural dynamics and how a group manifest and maintain a dominant stance in social life (Connell, 2005, p. 77). Moreover, it correlates to societal power, the perception of 'common sense', and attributes and behaviours that are considered 'normal' and 'natural' in a societal setting (Hearn, 2012, p. 590). Hegemony is dominance through consent as the power is implicitly embedded in the societal circumstances such as culture, however, if needed, the utilisation of force is employed (Hearn, 2012, p. 590). Culture is eminently crucial in relation to hegemony and is utilised in the process of constructing the 'common sense realities' in a society (Hearn, 2012, p. 591). Therefore, hegemonic masculinity can be examined through the scrutinisation of how gender dynamics and practices are reflected in a given society and how the patriarchy is legitimised through the subordinate position of women and the dominant stands of men (Connell, 2005, p. 77).

Jeff Hearn (2012, p. 591) argues that the concept of hegemony relates to both gaining and maintaining power, while concurrently, form and dismantle social groups in the procedure. Hegemony is not directly linked to violence, however, it can be reinforced through forceful means and power, which refers to domination through institutions,

persuasion and culture (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832). This domination and position of men and women through hegemony is a socially constructed cultural theoretical framework, and the relationship can be challenged among the social groups (Connell, 2012, p. 13-14). Therefore, in order to change the static presence of hegemonic masculinity in a society, it demands a transformation through revising ideals on a societal level and cannot be obtained on an individual level, as it is embedded in culture (Jewkes et. al., 2015, p. 113).

The theoretical framework of hegemonic masculinity derives from a social constructivist perspective. Social constructivism highlights the importance of learning and understanding through interactions with others (Draper, 2013). Therefore, culture and social processes are crucial from a social constructivist perspective as it is foundational for an individual's knowledge (Draper, 2013). Social interactions are the structure for all cognitive activities and culture and norms thus provide an individual with content and understandings (Draper, 2013). Hegemonic masculinity relates to the former, as it is embedded in societal settings and culture, which thus creates the foundational understandings of gender dynamics and sex roles. The cognitive functions that are taught and portrayed in a society are reflected in the thought pattern of the people of a given society. In the examination of Boko Haram's warfare and utilisation of sexual violence as a weapon of war, the focus is on the actions from a collective perspective that carries cultural traces in the perception of women and girls and the masculine cultures that are prominent.

R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt (2005, p. 846) support the common interpretation of hegemonic masculinity and argue that "(...) hierarchy of masculinities is a pattern of hegemony, not a pattern of simple domination based on force (2005, p. 846). It is further argued that hegemonic masculinity is not necessarily present in men and boy' everyday, however, the hegemony is rather existing through exemplars of masculinity such as through educational systems or other institutions, who provide embodiment to the male sex (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 846). Despite the former definition of hegemonic masculinity, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, p. 846) still argue that there is a necessity to reshape and reformulate the concept of hegemonic masculinity and take four areas into consideration in the conceptualisation of the theoretical framework. The following will provide an insight to the four areas: 1. The nature of gender hierarchy, 2. The geography of masculine configurations, 3. The process of social embodiment, 4. The dynamics of masculinity (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 846-847), and these are then utilised as an analytical tool to examine the masculinities present within the Boko Haram warfare.

1. The nature of gender hierarchy

It is crucial to recognise that gender hierarchy is pivotal in a society and masculinities that are constructed on a local level can have tactical purposes (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 847). The structured relations within masculinities exists in every local setting, however, the presence of hegemonic masculinity differ from each local context (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 847). Gender hierarchies and dynamics are eminently evolving as women and girls' identities are interchangeable, which induces a necessity for recognition of "(...) subordinated groups as much as the power of dominant groups and the mutual conditioning of gender dynamics and other social dynamics" (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 848). The nature of gender hierarchy can in this context be utilised as an instrument to examine the gender hierarchy and dynamics present between the Boko Haram fighters and the Nigerian women and girls. Furthermore, it can be utilised to shed light on the socially constructed masculinities present on a local and societal level.

2. The geography of masculine configurations

The construction of masculinity across borders is an aspect that should gain more focus as globalisation has a pivotal impact in contemporary time (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 849). It is further significant to understand hegemonic masculinity from a regional and local perspective, as these are generated by the given gender systems (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 849). Therefore, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, p. 849) propose a framework that is relevant to the study of the geography of masculine configurations from three levels:

Local: At the local level, hegemonic masculinity is constructed through interaction with organisations, communities, families etc. (2005, p. 849).

Regional: At the regional level, it is constructed through culture (2005, p. 849).

Global: At the global level, the main focus is on how it is constructed transnationally such as in world politics, media, and international business (2005, p. 849).

The regional hegemonic masculinity is greatly emphasised, as the cultural aspect somewhat creates the foundation for daily interactions, while it simultaneously is implemented and challenged locally through daily practices (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 849-50). In this thesis, the focal point is on the regional level, as Boko Haram's utilisation of sexual violence towards women and girls are scrutinised from a cultural perspective.

3. The process of social embodiment:

Masculine embodiment is arguably pivotal in relation to identity and behaviour (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 851). The body generates social practice and therefore it is significant to understand embodiment in a social context: practices and activities such as ‘taking risks’ and ‘eating meat’ are correlated with masculine identities (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 851). Embodiment and hegemony are intertwined as “among dominant groups of men, the circuits of social embodiment constantly involve the institutions on which their privileges rest” (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 852). The conceptualisation of social embodiment within hegemonic masculinity can be employed as a tool to examine Boko Haram’s behaviour that correlates to the societal understanding of male sex roles and the masculinity culture present within this warfare.

4. The dynamics of masculinities:

Masculinities are a construction changing throughout time, whereas, hegemonic masculinity relates more to specific patterns and emotional conflicts, as they are associated with gendered power and dynamics (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 852). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, p. 852) argue that any attempt to seize or maintain power involves a form of dehumanisation of another individual or group. Within the dynamics of masculinity, change over time is a crucial matter, as societies evolve and deconstruct gender binaries, which has an impact on masculinities and gender relations: “A given pattern of hegemonic masculinity is hegemonic to the extent that it provides a solution to these tensions, tending to stabilise patriarchal power or reconstitute it in new conditions” (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 853). The dynamics of masculinity can be utilised to analyse how the masculinity elements dehumanise or subordinates another group, namely, women and girls in the context of Boko Haram warfare.

In this thesis, I will utilise the conceptualisation of hegemonic masculinity as a theoretical and cultural framework in order to analyse the masculinity culture that dominates in the Boko Haram warfare. Furthermore, I will analyse the masculine culture and the hegemonic masculinity that is dominant through a collective lens rather than analysing the fighters from an individual perspective. The collective focus on the gender dynamics between the fighters and the women and girls thus portrays the societal and cultural traits that are embedded in the Nigerian society, which can shed light on why sexual violence as a weapon of warfare is exerted.

Masculinity, rape and warfare

As the focal point of the thesis is sexual violence as a weapon of war, this section of the theoretical framework sheds light on the correlation of masculinity, rape, and warfare through Eileen Zurbriggen's theory on how the conceptualisation of masculinity is connected to rape and warfare. The focus in her theoretical framework revolves around why rape occurs throughout armed conflicts and the research is based on male perpetrators (Zurbriggen, 2010, p. 539). Zurbriggen (2010, p. 538-40) creates a connection between hegemonic masculinity and warfare that is present in social contexts and has further divided the framework into two sections, namely, 'Masculinity and Rape' and 'Masculinity and War', each with different dimensions that are essential elements in rape perpetration and warfare. In the examination of Boko Haram's utilisation of sexual violence as a weapon of war, some of the components are not accounted for, as they are not applicable in the context of the thesis. These are dimensions such as: feminine avoidance, restricted emotionality, and self-reliance. However, those that are pertinent in this scrutinisation of Boko Haram's actions are 'Status and Achievement', 'Toughness and Aggression', 'Nonrelational Sexuality', and 'Dominance/Power/Control'.

Within 'Masculinity and Rape', the element of 'status and achievement' entails the perception that in many cultures, the notion of having an 'appropriate' woman has an impact on one's male status. The elements and characteristics that are preferred varies from culture to culture, but despite the differences, it portrays women as objects and dehumanise them (Zurbriggen, 2010, 540). This can be correlated to the gender dynamics in a given society and how males and females are expected to possess expected attributes. The dimension of 'toughness and aggression' refers to how, often, traditional masculinity, necessitates men to be aggressive, tough, and perhaps practice violence if required (Zurbriggen, 2010, p. 540). Another element that Zurbriggen (2010, p. 541) correlates to traditional masculinity is the perception of 'nonrelational sexuality', as it arguably implies that men demonstrate their 'manhood' by initiating frequent and impersonal sexual encounters with women while treating them as conquests rather than individuals. Lastly, within masculinity and rape, the component of 'dominance/power/control is elaborated, which entails a necessity to dominate others and maintain power, which thus increases the risk for exerting assaults, specifically, rape (Zurbriggen, 2010, p. 542). The former concept is further repeated in the 'Masculinity and Warfare' framework, which is the only section that is included in this thesis. However, the 'dominance/power/control' in this context refers to

combatants with a powerful motivation or belief system that involves someone's domination over another, are arguably more triumphant (Zurbriggen, 2010, p. 544).

Zurbriggen's theoretical framework portrays an insight to the dimensions on how masculine socialisation can lead to rape and warfare, and how these are interrelated. This framework can arguably be utilised as a supplementation to the main framework of hegemonic masculinity, as it can to some extent intertwine and correlate the three conceptualisations: hegemonic masculinity, rape and warfare in the analysis of Boko Haram's warfare.

Analysis of gender dynamics in Boko Haram's warfare

Analysis strategy

The preliminary sections in the thesis provide an insight to the origin of Boko Haram, their warfare and objectives, to create a foundational understanding of the conflict while simultaneously shed light on the fundamental characteristics of the insurgency. However, it is significant to emphasise that I have in a simple manner briefly presented the historical and political conditions in Nigeria, leading up to the establishment of Boko Haram. The socio-economic circumstances and the political structure of Nigeria are highly complex, which is why I have delimited the extent of background information.

The analysis examines motivational reasons for exerting sexual violence as a weapon of warfare with each section explaining potential reasons for why Boko Haram exploit women and girls through e.g. rape, aside from recognising it as a counter-response to the Nigerian government. The different sections thus scrutinise themes such as:

- Why women and girls are targeted
- Motives for conducting rape
- Implications of sexual violence from a collective perspective
- The utilisation of women and girls in other areas such as through forced marriage, forced labour, and the exploitation of women and girls as suicide bombers

Statements from women and girls who have been exposed to sexual violence, and the Boko Haram leader, Shekau, is examined in order to analyse the masculinity culture and gender dynamics within Boko Haram's warfare.

The various statements are analysed and discussed in continuation of the theoretical framework of masculinity and hegemonic masculinity. The two former are utilised as an analytical tool to understand, examine and identify the gender mechanism that drives the insurgents to exert sexual violence towards the Nigerian women and girls as a weapon of warfare. The theoretical framework can thus provide as an interpretive tool to analyse how hegemonic masculinity is expressed and socially constructed in terms of power and gender dynamics and mechanism between the insurgents and the women and girls in the Boko Haram warfare. Additionally, secondary material on the Nigerian society, norms and culture that carries patriarchal characteristics, is further used in the analysis to shed light on the socially constructed gender perceptions and hierarchy in Nigeria. This can thus explain and support the analysis of the gender mechanisms that are existent in the relationship between the male combatants and the women and girls in the actions carried out. Hegemonic masculinity is employed as an analytical framework, as it is relevant to examine how societal structures, institutions and social processes implicitly shape a masculinity culture, which is reflected in Boko Haram's warfare and actions carried out.

Hegemonic masculinity is my primary theoretical and analytical framework in this thesis, as masculinity and gender dynamics are pertinent to examine in the Boko Haram warfare. This is relevant as it is women and girls that are repeatedly targeted. However, I will, in addition, support the findings of the analysis with the conceptualisation of why sexual violence is used as a weapon of warfare in the conflict through the presented perspectives in the 'State of the Art' section.

Throughout the analysis, parallels are created between the Boko Haram leaders' statements and some paragraphs in the Quran. I am highly aware that religion and Islam can be interpreted differently and especially in contemporary time. I have utilised Immanuel Al-Manteeqi's (2016) interpretation, who has interpreted based on the 'Sahih international', which is the international translation of the Quran. However, I have verified his descriptions and interpretations by reading the paragraphs in order to ascertain the credibility of the content.

Patriarchy and victimisation of women and girls

Boko Haram's tactics and methods of conducting warfare has arguably changed throughout the years. In the emergence of the insurgency, kidnappings of women and girls were not recognised as a specific tactic correlating to Boko Haram's warfare. However, as previously mentioned, this method was adopted as a counter-response to the Nigerian government's

actions, which sparked the abductions of women and girls. Hereon, the abductions of women and girls rose immensely, and in a video released by Boko Haram in 2013, Shekau stated: “We kidnapped some women and children... including teenage girls (...) this was payback” (Pearson and Zenn, 2014). In this relationship between Boko Haram and the Nigerian government, masculinity and power are distinctly present as both parts utilise women and children as a form of communication device between each other to target and reach out to the counterpart. Their masculinities, ideals and power are somehow negotiated through these women and girls, as it is expressed through the abduction and detainment of them. The former actions are embedded in cultural gender perceptions that carry traces of a patriarchal society in Nigeria.

Patriarchy can be defined as social dynamics and gender relations that empowers men, while enables them to dominate women (Igbelina-Igbokwe, 2013, p. 2). A patriarch society thus provides advantages to men, while restraining women in terms of activities and expected gender roles (Igbelina-Igbokwe, 2013 p. 2). Patriarchal societies and cultures are: “(...) institutionalized through a rigorous socialization process in which every member of the community is aware of what duties, responsibilities and roles are expected from them which is perceived as the correct order crucial for family and communal harmony” (Igbelina-Igbokwe, 2013 p. 2). The Nigerian society is arguably patriarchal and carries traces of a traditional society, where women’s structural position in families and societies are dictated by men (Makama, 2013, p. 116). This highlights a thought pattern where men are considered the ‘head’ of the family and household, with women and children as subordinates. These perceptions thus reflect the social practice in Nigeria in terms of the socially constructed cultural gender perspectives and norms, where women are considered a second-class citizen (Makama, 2013, p. 115).

The patriarchal gender perceptions are portrayed throughout Boko Haram’s warfare in the attempt to target the Nigerian government through women and girls. In another video from 2013, Shekau stated that the objective was to aim at the women who were considered the ‘enemy’, namely, those who does not support the insurgency’s ideology: “Since you are now holding our women, (laughs) just wait and see what will happen to your own women, to your own wives according to Sharia law” (Zenn and Pearson, 2014, p. 47). With the recognition of Nigeria as a patriarchal society, this statement somehow targets the masculinity of the Nigerian government, as they are unable to protect its women and girls, which can to some extent represent them as weak, insufficient, and perhaps less masculine. This can further be correlated to Hansen’s (2000, p. 60) perception on how rape of a nation’s

women does not singly affects the individual but disempowers the identities of men, which in this context, seemingly is the Nigerian government.

Boko Haram's comment concerning [Sharia law] relates to the objective of the insurgency, namely, achieve and implement Sharia throughout the country. Since the commencement of the insurgency, the objective revolved around the advocacy and implementation of Islam and Sharia throughout Nigeria. The Islamic religion and the Quran are evidently interpreted differently amongst people and especially in contemporary societies, however, examining the Quran from a conservative point of view, women are not regarded to be equal to men, both from an ontological or jurisdictional perspective (Al-Manteeqi, 2016). The former statement is somewhat a threat towards the Nigerian government regarding the abducted women and girls while implying that something will happen to them. In relation to the Chibok girls ("Who are Nigeria's Boko Haram", 2016) who were abducted, local sources expressed that Boko Haram considered the girls to be 'infidels', as they were enrolled in Schools where English was taught and was further impacted by Western education: "They were warned they would have to pay jizyah, a form of tax from non-Muslims, or be raped as compensation. Just weeks after these threats, the girls were taken" (Pearson and Zenn, 2014). This ideological assumption can be deemed as a motivation and potential reasoning for the insurgency to conduct rape. The rape of the women and girls are both being justified by drawing parallels to the Quran and that it is exerted to create justice, according to the insurgents. According to the Quran, fighters are allowed to capture women or 'infidels' and utilise them for sexual satisfaction (Al-Manteeqi, 2016). Thereby, women as slaves is somehow acceptable from the Quran's perspective (Al-Manteeqi, 2016). This perception of men/women and believers/infidels explains Boko Haram's perception on women and can provide explanation to the motivation of some of their actions. In relation to gender dynamics, I assume that based on Boko Haram's recognition as an Islamic organisation, the conservative interpretations of the Quran can conceivably constitute the foundation for the insurgency's ideology and beliefs. Moreover, these interpretations of the Quran and Sharia law seemingly create the realm of understanding gender perceptions supported with the patriarchal social structure of Nigeria. It thus influences the culture amongst the combatants, which carries traces of a highly masculine one with women as subordinates and men in a dominant position.

Gender expectations and perceptions of women and girls is a recurring theme in the Quran, which further emphasises on the notion of female slaves. In the Quran, there is a distinction between female slaves and married women (Al-Manteeqi, 2016). In Boko

Haram's warfare, women and girls have evidently been abducted and exploited as sex slaves (Leithead, 2016). According to Zara, a 17-year-old girl who was formerly held in Boko Haram's captivity: "They gave us a choice – to be married, or to be a slave. I decided to marry" (Leithead, 2016). This grants the males the power to decide the destiny of the women and girls through forced marriage or sexual slavery. According to Ako-Nai (2013, p. 38), the gender expectations of men and women are taught in the early stages of an individual's childhood in most Nigerian societies. It is implicitly imprinted in the children's gender perception that "(...) men should be in control while women submit to the authority of men" and "[w]hile male children learn that aggression and violence constitute appropriate male behaviour, female children are trained to tolerate men's violence and yield control over sexual relations to them (Ako-Nai – 2013, p. 38). The former ultimatum presented by Boko Haram fighters illustrates a presence of social embodiment (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 852), as the insurgent's actions are thus affected by their social context and practices that are exercised within the community. The social practice is allegedly articulated within the Nigerian communities and the culture, which is further reinforced by ideology and beliefs of Islam and the Quran in Boko Haram's instance. In this context, it evidently revolves around the belief that infidels are assumed to be raped or utilised as slaves, or overall, that women are subordinate in relation to men. These gender dynamics and perceptions are socially constructed and further constitutes what the insurgent's regard as 'common-sense', which refers back to the conceptualisation of hegemony. The social practice and the ideology of Islam influences the insurgent's perspective of reality. Therefore, sexual slavery or rape of women and girls who are not married might be perceived as normal or natural according to the beliefs and norms that is generated based on the Quran. Moreover, if a male considers himself to be entitled to conduct the given actions, the masculinity culture thus grants men to recognise women as subordinate, while providing them with the entitlement to rape as a result of the gender dynamics and mechanisms.

The hegemony of men is eminently present in Boko Haram's actions and within social embodiment, the men's privilege rest on this configuration of the dominant position of men contrary to women (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 852), which thus created the foundation for the actions exerted. Whether the women and girls' destinies are slavery or marriage, they are somewhat under dominant male control.

Women and girls as means of communication

In the examination of how Boko Haram for one utilises women and girls as a form of communication to reach out to the Nigerian government, dynamics of masculinities are present (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 852). Women and girls are employed as a method of communication and negotiation object between Boko Haram and the Nigerian government. The women and girls are taken into arrest, abducted, and some of those in custody of Boko Haram, are exploited to sexual violence (Pearson and Zenn, 2014). The sexual violence and rape are arguably exerted to serve various purposes, however, these will be elaborated and discussed later in the analysis. The gender dynamics and power relationship with males in the forefront of the warfare from both perspectives reflect two representations of masculinities in the communication process, however, these share common features. Both parts operate based on a socially constructed gender perception where women are subordinate to men, as they attempt to utilise women and girls as means to achieve power. Additionally, the counter-parts manifest their masculinity through the conceptualisation of dominance/power/control (Zurbriggen, 2010, p. 542), in the attempt to dominate and obtain more power than the opponent.

In relation to the Nigerian government, the societal structure is highly patriarchal and it is evident in the way that the masculinities within the government reflects the cultural embedded structures in Nigeria. The masculinity culture that is present is installed through various aspects of the Nigerian society, here amongst, juridical. Section 55(1)(d) in Northern Nigeria's penal code that states "(...) that an assault by a man on a woman is not an offense if they are married, if native law or custom recognizes such "correction" as lawful, and if there is no grievous hurt" ("The Penal Code"). This exemplification illustrates the government's gender perception and thus exemplifies the juridical implications of men and women and the gender dynamics in the Nigerian society. This can seemingly provide an explanation for the Nigerian government's actions of utilising women and girls, as they are not considered equals but rather subordinate to men. In relation to Boko Haram, the insurgents arguably derive from the same patriarchal society and culture as the Nigerian government, however, their masculinity is expressed through several notions. In Boko Haram's actions, toughness and aggression are present (Zurbriggen, 2010, p. 540), as the insurgents practice violence and come forwards as tough, which reflects the masculinity in warfare. Boko Haram seemingly attempts to exceed the government and their actions by applying more extreme measures towards the abducted women and girls such as sexual violence, forced marriage, forced labour and utilise them as a weapon of warfare,

which will be elaborated and exemplified throughout the analysis. The societal structures create the foundation for the gender perceptions in the Boko Haram warfare, which thus reinforce that women and girls are dehumanised in the communication process between the two counterparts rather than being acknowledged as equal citizens and human-beings.

Another example where women and girls are dehumanised is through a statement from Shekau that derives from another released video, where he stated: “I abducted your girls. I will sell them in the market by Allah. There is a market for selling humans (...) Allah says I should sell. He commands me to sell. I will sell women. I sell women” (Abubakar and Levs, 2014). In this statement, women are portrayed as objects and somewhat as a negotiable item that possibly can and will be sold. This statement can be interpreted to serve two purposes, namely, as a threat towards the Nigerian government regarding the fate of the women and girls and through the correlation to religious texts and beliefs originated from the Quran. The notion of dominance/power/control (Zurbriggen, 2010, p. 542) is repeatedly present as Boko Haram’s belief system, namely, Islam, as Shekau refers to [Allah], is the main motivational factor in the attempt to gain and expand their power. Moreover, the ideology is seemingly utilised as an attempt to legitimise the actions in the power expansion with women and girls as means to promote its message in Nigeria. According to Zurbriggen’s (2010, p. 542) framework on masculinity and rape/warfare, there is a higher risk of exerting sexual assaults such as rape through the process of power expansion. Therefore, through domination and warfare, sexual assaults can be employed as means to manifest presence in e.g. the Nigerian society in the attempt to implement Sharia across Nigeria.

The notion of ‘selling women’ can further be parallelised to the Quran as there is a narrative of how the Prophet sold women who were held captive in return for horses and weapons (Al-Manteeqi, 2016). Women are thus treated as commodities in order to gain more value. Therefore, it illustrates that men’s capabilities and status are highly superior and dominant in relation to women. The masculine configurations (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 849) is embedded in the culture and the gender perceptions in the Boko Haram warfare is not solely shared amongst the fighters but also from the government’s perspective. From both parts, women and girls are used as means of communication, which derive from social processes through the hegemony of men in Nigeria. Connell (2005, p. 72) argues that social practices reflect how a society respond and react to a certain situation or event based on social relations and norms within a culture. This perception can be correlated to the

former, as the masculinity is embedded in the objectification and actions exerted towards women and girls are deemed natural in order to target the opponent.

Motives for why Boko Haram exerts sexual violence as a weapon

There are various explanations for why Boko Haram utilises rape as a weapon in their warfare. One assumption that explains the insurgents' action of rape towards the Nigerian women and girls are through the belief of 'contamination' by impregnating them and perhaps impact the descendant's ideology. This warfare method can be recognised as a process of 'cleansing' through the systematic rape of perhaps, what Boko Haram fighters identify as infidels. The former has been repeatedly encountered in history, where rape has been exerted as a form of ethnic cleansing and as a technique to create ethnic homogeneity in for example, former Yugoslavia between the Bosnian and Serbs, the Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda, and the recent happenings with Rohingya women in Myanmar (Morse, 2018). Borno's governor, Kashim Shettima expressed that "Some of them [Boko Haram fighters], I was told, even pray before mating, offering supplications for God to make the products of what they are doing become children that will inherit their ideology" (Nossiter, 2015). This thought pattern can arguably be a motivational factor for the insurgents as the aim is to obtain caliphate and create a Muslim Nigeria under Sharia law. Thereby, by impregnating women and girls, the children can thus inherit the father's ideology, as it is often believed in Nigerian communities that a father's blood immensely has an influence on its children (Sieff, 2016). The hegemonic masculinity culture is greatly present in this context, as the perception of a father's blood influencing a given child is somewhat embedded through culture, which grants men more influence than women on its offspring.

The idea of contamination through sexual assaults can be explained through Seifert's (1996, p. 40) conceptualisation of pollution within wartime rape relating to the contamination of a community's blood and genes. The rape of women and girls can be an attempt to ensure that the future children inherit the ideology of Islam, which thus can enhance the aim to create a caliphate in Nigeria. This assumption is further recognised by Hansen (2000, p. 60) as she emphasises that a motivational factor for exerting rape as a method of warfare, is to pass on the rapist's nationality to the child. In this example, the insurgents, women and girls share the same nationality, however, the attempt is to pass on the ideology, which is believed to be plausible through the father's blood. This socially constructed perception is embedded in the culture where men are granted more influence on the child, and therefore, it can be a strategy by the insurgency to obtain more power.

Additionally, it can to some extent ‘spread’ the ideology of Islam to e.g. Christian women, ‘infidels’ (according to Boko Haram), and mainly everyone who does not support the insurgency. According to Human Rights Watch (“Those terrible weeks”, 2014, p. 28), Christians have been targeted by Boko Haram, which thus can confirm the notion of disseminating the Islamic ideology to Christians:

Most appeared to have been targeted because of their religious affiliation. Many were threatened with death if they refused to convert to Islam. Most of those interviewed described either Christian women and girls being singled out for abduction.

Thereby, Boko Haram arguably both propagate its ideology and additionally targets the counter-part through the utilisation of women as an object in order to achieve power.

Furthermore, examining it from a perspective where Boko Haram’s objective is to contaminate or pass on its ideology and beliefs, the assumption can be supported with a statement from Shekau where he expressed “These girls; these girls you occupy yourselves with...we have indeed liberated them (...) These girls have become Muslims. They're Muslims” (Jones, 2014). In the former quote, Boko Haram’s motivations are arguably transparent as the aim is to convert the religion of the [girls]. It can be assumed based on the two previous quotes that Christians are the main objective, despite the fact that Boko Haram has expressed that the insurgency targets everyone who does not support the implementation of sharia throughout Nigeria. The notion of converting the girls to become Muslims can be correlated to the motivation for exerting sexual violence and rape. Whereas the conviction that they have [liberated them] to [become Muslims] can thus be further correlated to the notion of forced marriage that some women and girls have experienced. The correlation is identified through the perception that the women are forced into marriage and therefore are considered Muslims as the women comply after the man’s religion, and the children that are conceived are thus Muslims as well. However, the notion of forced marriage will be elaborated later in the analysis. The idea of converting them to Muslims arguably lies in the rape and it is somehow divided between ‘pure rape’ or forced marriage with rape exerted forcefully with no consent from the women and girls. To some extent, it depends on the context, however, rape is still occurring both ways. Therefore, the utilisation of sexual violence as a weapon of warfare in relation to ideology and religion can serve two purposes, namely, cleansing, but also, according to Boko Haram, liberation, as they consider it to be the rightful path.

Consequences of sexual violence from a collective perspective

In the previous sections, I have argued that Boko Haram's targeting of women and girls have been a counter-response to the Nigerian government. In addition to aiming the Nigerian citizens, the insurgency further creates security problems and insecurity in the country, while concurrently questioning the government's capabilities and competencies for protecting its population. These kidnappings and attacks exerted by Boko Haram somewhat question the effectiveness of the Nigerian government and armed forces, as they are unable to protect its citizens. This notion is supported by Manjoo and McRaith (2011, p. 17), who argues that gendered violence can be recognised as a form of statement towards the counterpart while challenging its power structure. This can to some extent be viewed as an attempt to discredit the Nigerian government and perhaps enhance themselves and coming forwards as powerful, successful with the ability to 'defeat' the government. Despite the former, the kidnappings and sexual exploitation have also been exerted to serve other purposes such as creating internal conflicts on a local level in the different communities as a consequence of their actions. In addition to shedding a negative light on the government's capabilities while concurrently represent themselves (Boko Haram) as victorious, the sexual violence towards the women and girls induces different implications in the utilisation of them as weapons. Boko Haram attempts to target a great majority of women and girls with the objective to get their own relatives released. However, the implications that occur for the women and girls in the aftermath, can solely be viewed as an advantage in the warfare.

The conceptualisation of status and achievement (Zurbriggen, 2010, p. 540) can be identified in Boko Haram's targeting of women and girls through sexual encounters. This revolves around how in some cultures, having, what is considered an 'appropriate woman' reflects and influences a man's status in a society. These conditions for what is defined as 'appropriate' vary from culture to culture and are thus created through social processes, which further reflects the expectations and attributes a female should possess in order to be considered appropriate. However, regardless of the conditions that varies, women are dehumanised into an object that can enhance a male's status. Stigmatisation is highly present in the Nigerian communities and therefore, a raped woman is arguably not considered 'appropriate' and especially, the women and girls who have been affiliated with Boko Haram. In the Nigerian society, people are highly prejudiced against rape victims, which further

generates stigma (Aborisade, 2014, p. 2). In a report by Human Rights Watch, a 19-year-old woman reported on her experience in the captivity of the insurgency and stated the following:

(...) I could not tell anyone what happened, not even my husband. I still feel so ashamed and cheated. The other woman told me she was also raped, but vowed never to speak of it again as she was single and believes that news of her rape would foreclose her chances of marriage (“Those terrible weeks”, 2014, p. 34).

The former quote clearly illustrates how the sexual violence can have an impact and affect a woman’s future in terms of marriage in Nigeria. By using sexual violence as a weapon of warfare, Boko Haram dismantles the culture while generating stigmatisation. The women can somewhat be considered ‘less of value’ as a result of the actions exerted by the insurgency, such as rape. Therefore, Boko Haram arguably achieves some form of power by manifesting these consequences to the women and girls. The perceptions of the women and girls exposed to sexual violence and rape are thus socially constructed and embedded in culture, which provides Boko Haram with a powerful mean. The social practice in the communities create the cultural understandings and perceptions on how rape is responded to in the society, which creates more inequality amongst the men and women. The stigmatisation and humiliation of the women and girls can be recapitulated to serve two purposes or perspectives. One is that it is a ‘positive’ side effect of the actions carried out, if the purpose is ‘cleansing’ and enforcing their ideology to the future children of Nigeria, or secondly, that the main objective of the utilisation of rape and sexual violence as a weapon is exerted to dismantle and destroy the culture and communities.

The culture and communities are dismantled through having an impact on societal structures in terms of gender dynamics in Nigeria, especially, the expected gender roles of women are affected. Women in Nigeria are highly dependent on men from an economic perspective, despite women making up around 80 percent of Nigeria’s agricultural labour force (Ako-Nai, 2013, p. 37). Women do not have access to land or the ownership, and therefore solely rely on the land of their husbands or brothers (Makama, 2013, p. 121). Therefore, if women and girls are excluded in the society due to stigmatisation, the economic status is consequently affected, which has an impact on the society and the lives of the women and girls from an overall perspective. Moreover, it can to some extent have an impact on the women’s future in relation to marriage as, the institutional concept of marriage in Nigeria is the prime feature to the “(...) production and reproduction at household levels. It prescribes and reinforces the gender division of labour with clear delineation of authority, responsibility, invisibility and superiority” (Igbelina-Igbokwe, 2013, p 7). In Nigeria, men are

throughout their lives being prepared for activities with them in the dominant positions and women are in contrary restricted to the domestic roles, which are socially constructed and attributed to them through culture (Makama, 2013, p. 116). Thereby, if these socially constructed gender perceptions of women's role and aspirations in the society, including marriage are destructed by Boko Haram's actions and making it impossible to reach, the societal structure and culture is thus affected. Moreover, the gender roles, division of labour and reproduction are impacted, which can dismantle the structural elements from a collective perspective. This provides Boko Haram with a powerful mean as they are able to dismantle the societal balance and structure.

The motivation to conduct rape and other sexual assaults in order to target and destroy a population or culture is explained by Manjoo and McRaith (2011, p. 14-15), who focuses on the consequences that the population collectively endures rather than on an individual basis. Thereby, by targeting women and girls, a security matter is evolved, which Boko Haram can take advantage off. By installing fear in the Nigerian population through the abductions of women and girls, the insurgency to some extent gains more power by intentionally humiliate, degrade and destabilise the women and girls in the culture and communities they belong to. Thereby, the sexual assaults somewhat represent and enforce a message and statement to the counterpart. The statement illustrated by Boko Haram clearly relates to the power and capabilities of the Nigerian government and its armed forces, while concurrently, questioning its methods. Seifert (1996, p. 41) also supports the notion of how rape and sexual violence has an impact on a community and culture while emphasising that the purpose is not to defeat the counterpart, but rather destroying the culture. One aspect of Seifert's (1996, p. 41) conceptualisation of 'pollution' can be correlated to the former, namely, how rape has an impact on a nation's culture while recognised as an assault on the 'body' of the community. Thereby, it is the whole population that is being violated, which can be referred back to Manjoo and McRaith's (2011, p. 14) notion of targeting collectively.

What is considered a powerful mean in this context is that Boko Haram is able to utilise their power to destroy the culture and target the Nigerian citizens to a large extent through targeting the societal gender structures and dynamics. The revenge and payback to the Nigerian government thus lay in the dismantling of the culture and society in terms of societal structure, gender perceptions, divisions of labour and reproduction. This will on a larger scale affect the functionality of Northern Nigeria in relation to division amongst communities and destroying the social circle. These socioeconomic implications will at the end reach the Nigerian government. Boko Haram generates instability in the Nigerian

society, as the insurgents appears to be cognisant with the communities' recognition and respond to sexual violence and rape. The aim to create instability is somehow successful as the former president, namely, Goodluck Jonathan declared 'state of emergency' in three states in Northern Nigeria, due to Boko Haram, namely, Borno, Yobe and Adamawa (Campbell, 2013).

It is pivotal to emphasise that the utilisation of rape and sexual violence as a weapon of warfare and its impact, is not solely confined to women and girls, as men are affected as well. The actions somehow disempower the masculinity that is constituted in a specific nation, community or culture and it targets the men's ability to identify themselves with the characteristics that evaluates and assess an individual's 'manhood' (Hansen, 2000, p. 60). In a patriarchal society such as Nigeria, with the male as head of the family and household, it can be assumed that the sexual assaults of the women in the family can thus spark a sense of disempowerment. Therefore, despite the stigmatisation of the women and girls in the aftermath of the sexual violence, men are also affected. However, the women and girls are evidently more affected as they are the one experiencing the violence physically and psychologically while being the one excluded from the society afterwards. Those who have been rescued from Boko Haram's captivity has experienced exclusion and other forms of disassociation from both family and community members. In Maiduguri's Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp, women and girls who were either abducted, raped, or enslaved by Boko Haram are socially secluded and identified as 'Boko Haram wives' and 'Sambisa women' ("Nigeria: Women", 2016).

Given the societal structure and norms, which considers sexual encounters outside marriage as socially unacceptable, it prompts a situation where family members and community members reject the women and girls as part of the society ("Nigeria: Women", 2016). The stigmatisation of the victims is immense and it further creates distrust in the communities in the return of women and girls: "A recent Unicef report documented the distrust, quoting a community leader who called the babies fathered by fighters "hyenas among dogs"" (Searcey, 2016). Additionally, the victims are sometimes not acknowledged as survivors of the insurgency due to the presence of stigmatisation in the society (Klapper, 2016). These perceptions of the returned women and girls thus disband the spirit and identity of the culture and community (Seifert, 1996, p. 41).

The perception of having an 'appropriate' woman (Zurbriggen, 2010, p. 540) is highly significant in this context, as some of the women manage to maintain the sexual violence secretive, as it can foreclose their chances of marriage in the future. Hegemonic

masculinity is expressed through the power dynamics between the women/girls and men in Northern Nigeria, where male possesses the power to determine women and girls' future in a community. The power is constructed through norms and practices, which thus grants men the option to select and deselect women and girls according to their perceptions of an 'appropriate' woman. In Northern Nigeria, the culture that is constituted based on traditional gender norms expects women and girls to preserve their virginity and do not acknowledge premarital sexual encounters (Ityavar and Jalingo, 2006, p. vi). Therefore, adolescent marriage is prevalent in the society (Ityavar and Jalingo, 2006, p. vi). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), adolescents are defined as people between the age of ten and nineteen ("Recognizing adolescence"). Thereby, "[i]f virginity is what makes women honourable, rape is an easy weapon to permanently damage them" (Brigneti and Egbonimali as qtd. In Achunike and Kitause, 2014, p. 37). These actions exerted by Boko Haram thus have a collective effect in the aftermath of the sexual violence, which has an impact on the communities, families, and society. As Seifert (1996, p. 36) suggests, rape studies confirm that the actions are exerted from an aggressive perspective where the satisfaction is obtained through the humiliation that is forced upon the individual, which further reinforces the power and dominance over another human being. Boko Haram's actions can be assessed based on the former notion, as the sexual violence allegedly does not derive from sexual satisfaction, but rather the implications it induces. Additionally, the insecurity that is caused by Boko Haram's actions further creates enemy groups within the society, as the women and girls are socially excluded by other community members. The creation of enemy groups can be considered a tactic to divide the community and somehow weaken them, which consequently represents Boko Haram as victorious for having that impact.

The traditional gender dynamics and power relations amongst male and females in Nigeria have generated a 'culture of silence' where subjects such as discrimination, inequality and abuse towards women are suppressed and not addressed in the public sphere (Ako-Nai, 2013, p. 37). The expectations for men and women, which assess, whether a woman is considered 'appropriate' further creates a culture of silence in regards to rape and sexual violence exerted by Boko Haram. It is estimated that the number of sexual violence and rape by Boko Haram is crucially underreported (Megaloudi, 2015). As the stigma of rape is highly existing, many women and girls did not acknowledge or report that they had been physically or sexually assaulted (Megaloudi, 2015). Musa Baba, a programme analyst from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), who provides the women and girls in IDP

camps with mental health counselling and psychological support in Borno, stated the following:

People are deeply traumatised of what they have gone through in the hands of Boko Haram. (...) If you talk to the women they will tell you they have heard about sexual violence. But if you ask them to whom that has happened they will not talk. (...) People prefer to settle their cases individually and let the survivors to bear their burden. This is what we are working on to change (Megaloudi, 2015).

This quote highly illustrates the stigma that is present in Nigerian communities, which thus confirms the reason for why sexual abuse is underreported. Within rape as a weapon of warfare, Pankhurst (2010, p. 15) argues that as a result of stigmatisation, there is often an underestimation of the actual numbers of women and girls exposed to sexual violence, which correlates with the former. The gender dynamics and mechanisms express a hegemonic masculinity through the perception that men somewhat possess the power and dominance to influence women and girls' lives in Nigeria through the assessment of their value after being exposed to sexual violence. This represents a gender hierarchy where women are subordinate to men and the power dynamics are thus embedded in the socially constructed norms and perspectives on rape and sexual encounters outside marriage.

Gendered security matters such as the targeting of women and girls are greatly connected to the state and nation (Hansen, 2003, p. 29), which is evident in the context of Boko Haram's warfare. As the abductions of women and girls were initiated as a counter-response to the Nigerian government, the state is affiliated, which thus creates security risks within the collective framework. Therefore, the sexual violence and assaults are thus exerted in order to provide meaning within the collective framework (Hansen, 2000, p. 59), namely, through a dismantling of the culture, create disputes in the Nigerian societies and humiliate both men and women.

Forced marriage

There are various reasons for why Boko Haram utilises rape as a weapon of warfare, which is portrayed throughout the analysis, however, in the exploitation of women and girls, other dynamics are present between them and the insurgents. The abducted women and girls have been exposed to various circumstances such as sexual slavery, forced marriage, forced labour and as explosives. Nonrelational sexuality (Zurbriggen, 2010, p. 541) conceptualises a correlation between masculinity and rape, which can be identified in Boko Haram's consistent rape of women and girls. One of Boko Haram's victims, a 17-year-old girl, Esther,

who was held in captivity in the Sambisa forest, stated the following: “I cannot count how many men raped me. Every time they came back from their attacks, they would rape us... defile us...” (Lowry, 2018). Therefore, I argue that the women and girls in Boko Haram captivity are treated as conquest, which further reinforces the insurgents’ masculinity. Based on the former quote, it is transparent that the insurgents utilised the women and girls as sexual objects. This assumption is based on the understanding that the combatants have ‘conquered’ the women and can have repeatedly frequent and impersonal sexual encounters with them, with disregard to them as human beings (Zurbriggen, 2010, p. 541). Additionally, the conquered women and girls can be perceived as a victory towards the Nigerian government’s attempt to target Boko Haram by taking their families into police custody. The victory thus expands their power and manifests the organisation’s influence. The women and girls thus become objects and weapons of warfare and are utilised to promote and establish Boko Haram’s power and influence in Nigeria, while concurrently install fear and humiliation. However, incidents have occurred where the insurgents, despite recognising the women and girls as conquests, have created a ‘personal’ relationship with them through marriage. Shekau stated that the Chibok students’ destiny was to be married off to the fighters: “We would also give their hands in marriage because they are our slaves (...) (“Those terrible weeks”, 2014 report”, p. 31). Nevertheless, despite the initiation of marriage, the women and girls were forced into it and as previously stated, some of them were presented with the option to either get marry or take part in sexual slavery.

The notion of being [married off] to another male vastly sheds light on a masculinity culture and a socially constructed perception where women are somewhat ‘given’ to men and furthermore, the men possess the power to retrieve the women and girls as an object. In the Nigerian society, the commencement of marriage emphasises the dominant male position as “[c]ourtship and eventual proposal are expected to be undertaken by men. Women are less dominant and encouraged to be chaste to promote the culturally expected facade of future good wives and mothers” (Igbelina-Igbokwe, 2013, p. 7). Thereby, the societal gender perceptions and norms are carried on from childhood and into adulthood and marriage (Igbelina-Igbokwe, 2013, p. 7). This indicates that the abducted women and girls are objectified and have no voice in the matter. A 15-year-old girl, who were abducted by Boko Haram and held in captivity for four weeks stated the following:

After we were declared married I was ordered to live in his cave but I always managed to avoid him. He soon began to threaten me with a knife to have sex with him, and when I still refused he brought out his gun, warning that he would kill me if I shouted. Then he began to rape me every night. He was a

huge man in his mid-30s and I had never had sex before (“Those terrible weeks”, 2014, p. 33-34).

Based on the former statement, the exercise of dominance/power/control (Zurbriggen, 2010, p. 542) is immensely present, as the desire to dominate another individual and possess the complete power of them leads to forceful measures and assaults, more specifically, rape. The girl’s rejection in terms of avoidance and not conforming to the insurgent’s requests, to some extent affects the masculinity of the insurgent. The masculine social embodiment effect’s an individual’s behaviour (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 85) and thereby, when the counterpart does not comply those expectations requested or anticipated, it can undermine one’s masculinity.

The gender dynamics are negotiated and challenged in the patriarchal social setting, with males as front figures and women as subordinates. A male’s privileges and masculine features depend on the social embodiment (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 85), and thereby, by denying the insurgent sexual encounters, it thus has an impact on his behaviour to utilise violent measures as rape to obtain his desire. These exerted actions are nevertheless still considered rape, as the sexual encounters and marriage are often forced upon them. In the given context, the sexual violence derives from a form of entitlement in the male perspective, as sexual encounters somewhat can be considered a given in a marriage, despite it being initiated forcefully. This perception is arguably generated based on the cultural perception and social practice of married people and the expectations that it features such as sexual encounters.

The exploitation of women and girls through other measures

The women and girls who have been abducted by Boko Haram have been utilised for other purposes beyond being exposed to forced marriage and rape. Throughout the analysis, I have exemplified women’s role and position in both the Nigerian society and within the Boko Haram conflict. These have included different objectives such as utilising them as messengers to the Nigerian government or as a method to dismantle the Nigerian culture, and lastly, for the purpose of reproduction and pass on the Islamic ideology to future children. However, despite exerting sexual violence such as rape of the women and girls, the insurgents have exploited them in other areas such as through forced labour and as suicide bombers in their warfare.

Forced labour

Some of the women and girls in Boko Haram's custody have been forced to perform household chores. According to a report by Human Rights Watch, women and girls who either escaped or were released from captivity in the Sambisa forest reported that they had been forced to execute household chores such as cleaning, cooking, and washing clothes in the camps and settlements ("Those terrible weeks", 2014, p. 25-26). Pankhurst (2010, p. 153) argues that sexual violence can further prompt other types of rewards for the insurgents such as material gains. These gains can be related to the women and girls' labour, where they provide and serve for the insurgents in addition to the sexual violence that they are exposed to.

In the Sambisa forest, there is a hierarchy with men in the dominant position, which is reflected through the enforced chores of women and girls. However, in addition, the Boko Haram insurgents to some extent initiated an internal hierarchy among the women and girls in captivity. A victim reported to Human Rights Watch that some of the Chibok girls were "(...) forced to cook and clean for other women and girls whom the insurgents had chosen for "special treatment because of their beauty" ("Those terrible weeks, 2014, p. 27). In this context, the fighters arguably create a dominant and subordinate group among the females. The hierarchy created is within the same gender, however, the women and girls' identities are thus interchangeable and are reflected and evaluated through the treatment received from the insurgents. According to Makama (2013, p. 135), in the Nigerian society women's

(...) roles as mothers and wives have also been culturally influenced and predetermined. Expectation thus is for them to be gentle, providing care for their husbands and children. On the other hand a lot of women have come to see themselves as subjects, which must be provided for, or an object of beauty which must be maintained, which must look good all the time.

The masculinity culture identified within the Sambisa forest is to this extent reflected in the Nigerian society as well. The masculinity is implicitly indicated through the societal structures that entail expectations for each gender and thus expresses a hegemonic masculinity with men as superior. There is a presence of a masculine culture, as the males evaluate the women and girls in order to decide whether or not they should be exempted from the chores. The women are therefore viewed as objects that are assessed based on appearance, which thus determines whether they are viewed as a prize or as a slave. The objectification of women suggests a culture where the male perceptions of specific women can heighten the female status. Nevertheless, it is crucial to emphasise that despite the

hierarchy within the women and girls, it still carries traces of subordination of women, as the ‘selected’ ones do not share the same position as men, but are solely superior to the ‘slaves’.

Women and girls as explosives

Boko Haram has been notorious for employing women and children as suicide bombers and is considered to be the first terrorist organisation to utilise more women than men to carry out these actions (Kriel, 2017). There are various reasons for why females are considered advantageous to carry out the attacks. Women and girls can conceal explosives under their clothing or through accessories, namely, inside handbags (Kriel, 2017). In the examination of why women and girls are employed as suicide bombers, it is pivotal to take a societal perspective into consideration as females “(...) are often viewed as being inherently innocent or non-threatening, [and] thus arouse less suspicion than men” (Warner and Matfess, 2017, p. 28). As women infrequently possess leadership positions indicates that females are inclined to avoid being searched (Warner and Matfess, 2017, p. 29). This expresses a masculinity culture, where women perhaps do not carry the same attributes as men, which thus prevents them to be able to exert the attacks. This derives from a thought pattern that signifies expected gender roles, which can be referred back to how women in the Nigerian society thus are recognised as mothers and wives, who are caregivers for their husband and children. This socially constructed gender perception revolves around that it is not anticipated that a woman is affiliated or able to conduct these attacks and bombings, which can be considered ‘masculine actions’.

Boko Haram has exploited women and sent them to universities, IDP camps and markets with explosives, however, what is noteworthy, is that the utilisation of women and girls highly increased after the kidnappings of the Chibok girls in 2014 (“Why Boko Haram uses female”, 2017). A former Boko Haram insurgent stated that women “are cheap and they are angry for the most part ... using women allows you to save your men” (Warner and Matfess, 2017, p. 29). Thereby, Boko Haram to some extent preserve the male combatants for conventional attacks (“Why Boko Haram uses female”, 2017). This portrays a subordination of women, as it is recognised that men are somewhat valued higher than women and thereby, it is strategically beneficiary to employ women and girls for suicide bombings while retaining men for the actual raids.

Moreover, a vast majority of the women and girls had been selected as suicide bombers as a consequence of denying to marry an insurgent (Searcey, 2017). Aisha, a 15-year old girl, who survives after Boko Haram strapped explosives to her, stated that the insurgents provided her with an alternative: “They said to me, ‘Are you going to sleep with

us, or do you want to go on a mission?’’ (Searcey, 2017). Therefore, some of the women and girls decided to conduct the suicide missions in order to evade being raped by the ‘husbands’ and to avoid being faced with the stigmatisation that occurs in the aftermath, as previously portrayed in the analysis (“Why Boko Haram uses female”, 2017). It can be assessed that whether the females decide to either commit to bombing missions, which includes killing innocent Nigerians or ‘agrees’ upon marriage and face stigmatisation from communities or families, Boko Haram generates fear and division (“Why Boko Haram uses female”, 2017). This further correlates to the way of how Boko Haram’s actions to some extent dismantle the culture. The division that is created has an impact on the culture and the strategic utilisation of females as suicide bombers thus constitute a form of mistrust in the Nigerian society, as the women and girls are feared at checkpoints, universities and crowded areas (Searcey, 2017). Therefore, in the aftermath of the Boko Haram conflict, the suspicion and stigma around women and girls, as either Boko Haram wives or suicide bombers “(...) will make the process of post-conflict reconciliation and redevelopment all the more difficult” (Kriel, 2017). Women and girls are used as explosives by Boko Haram and perform as messengers through the utilisation of their bodies as a weapon of warfare, which has an impact on the culture and society. Hegemonic masculinity is expressed through the subordination and objectification of women and girls and how they are employed as an object to carry out the bombings and further, how the socially constructed gender dynamics do not recognise them as being able to execute the attacks, which thus provides Boko Haram with a successful strategy in the beginning, until a pattern emerges.

Conclusion

Boko Haram’s motivations for conducting sexual violence as a weapon of warfare through women and girls derive from an organisational perspective, in which, the insurgency attempt to target the Nigerian government and the citizens with the objective to create an Islamic caliphate in Nigeria. Boko Haram attempts to install fear and humiliation in the society through power domination, however, this is embedded in dominance over the society and its structures from a collective perspective. Boko Haram’s warfare and dominance over the citizens have an impact on the society and culture, as it dismantles the structural relations through stigmatisation, fear and distrust among the community members. The actions carried out in the warfare such as rape, forced marriage, forced labour and the exploitation of women and girls as suicide bombers thus carries traces of a masculinity culture.

The hegemonic masculinity expressed in the warfare is embedded in cultural and societal structures, which subordinate women and girls in the Nigerian society. In the examination of why Boko Haram utilises women and girls, it is evident that they are used to promote a message through various actions. Initially, females were taken into captivity as a counter-response to the Nigerian government's arrestment of Boko Haram relatives and families in order to prompt cooperation and negotiation with the insurgency. However, the exploitation of women and girls thus reflect their position in this warfare as an object of communication. This correlates to women and girls' societal position, as I argue that the gender perception and dynamics thus portray women as objects in different cases by Boko Haram and this thus carries traces of a patriarchal social structures. The rape of women and girls manifests several messages: the passing on the insurgents' ideology of Islam, the impact the insurgency can have on the culture, namely through stigmatisation as a consequence in the aftermath of the actions that are exerted by Boko Haram, and lastly, discrediting the Nigerian government's actions towards the insurgency through the abduction of women and girls. Moreover, the forced labour, forced marriage and the exploitation of women and girls as explosives expresses power structures and dynamics of Boko Haram. The power structures relate to the insurgent's capability to exert this form of power towards the women and girls, which evidently demonstrate the power dynamics and hierarchy that is existent between women, girls and the male Boko Haram insurgents. In all these elements, women and girls are objects for something else, which thus devalue and dehumanise their position in the society. Boko Haram have thus assessed women and girls to be advantageous in their propaganda in Nigeria, as the insurgency received great attention for their actions carried out, here amongst, with the Chibok girls.

In the Boko Haram warfare, it is assessed that the power dynamics between the Nigerian government and Boko Haram is constantly shifting in the attempt to achieve power. Initially, Boko Haram expanded its organisation and this thus meant more insurgents, which then forced the Nigerian government to target them through their relatives. However, Boko Haram regained power through several abductions of women and girls, raids of cities and towns in Northern Nigeria and ambushing public institutions. A counter-response was thus the systematic raids of the Sambisa forest by the Nigerian military, which attempted to dismantle one of their larger bases while rescuing women and girls. This form of power dynamics that are negotiated back and forth arguably represent two masculinities, namely, Boko Haram and the Nigerian government and it have for the most parts been exercises and expressed through the utilisation of women and girls as a marginalised group.

It is however, crucial to emphasise that although the victims of sexual violence are women and girls, men and boys are also targeted in other areas of the armed conflict. Men and boys have been taken into detention, killed in raids, and been victims of disappearances (“Missing men and boys”). Some have survived in Boko Haram’s custody, as they have been captivated and taken to the insurgency’s bases, here amongst, the Sambisa forest to be trained as fighters and become part of the organisation (“Missing men and boys”). However, the male victims in this warfare have not been portrayed in this thesis, as the focus has been on women and girls.

Further research

Sexual violence in relation to the Boko Haram warfare has been existent in other areas aside from the insurgency’s captivity. Women and girls have been exploited sexually in camps for internally displaced persons by soldiers, policemen, and camp leaders, amongst others. It could be interesting to further research and examine the gender dynamics and structures in the relationship between the perpetrators and women and girls and how masculinity is expressed through the former. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are arguably a vulnerable segment as the decision to relocate is somewhat ‘obligatory’, which exposes them to deprivation, additional displacement and protection risks such as the unavailability of essential services, sexual and gendered violence, discrimination, trafficking and family separation (“UNHCR Emergency Handbook”). According to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR Emergency Handbook), an IDP is:

Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border.

It is a government’s responsibility to protect IDPs (“UNHCR Emergency Handbook”), however, criticism has been raised concerning the Nigerian government’s part in maintaining the IDP camps safe with acceptable conditions. The conditions in the IDP camps are greatly inadequate and the people are challenged in various aspects of their lives (“Nigeria Situation”, 2017). The living conditions are eminently poor as a consequence of the scarcity of food, water, sanitation and in most instances, shelters, due to the overcrowding (“Nigeria situation”, 2017). The women and girls who are in the camps have either fled their homes due

to the conflict or have been situated there after being saved from Boko Haram's captivity ("Nigeria: Officials abusing", 2016).

According to Human Rights Watch, various methods are utilised in the exploitation: there have been incidents where women have been drugged and raped, some are pressured to sexual encounters through fallacious marriage promises, while others are assured material and financial assistance ("Nigeria: Officials abusing", 2016). The gender dynamics between the women, girls and the perpetrators could be examined through the theoretical framework of hegemonic masculinity and how it is expressed and relates to societal structures. An analysis of the power dynamics in the camps and within the sexual violence would thus be relevant to analyse as these vulnerable women and girls are arguably taken advantage of as a consequence of their situational circumstances. Lastly, I could have done a comparative analysis of the gender dynamics and perceptions that are existent within Boko Haram's actions and the ones carried out in the camps.

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