**Containing Boko Haram's Transnational Reach:
Toward a Developmental Approach to Border Management**

Enia Bearzotti (Diplomatic Academy of Vienna)
Andrea Geranio (University of Vienna)
Vivien Kata Keresztes (University of Szeged)
Monika Müllerová (University of Economics in Prague)

Counsel: Alžběta Kuchařová

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List of abbreviations

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb	AQMI
Boko Haram	BH
European Union	EU
Internally Displaced Person	IDP
International Centre for Migration and Policy Development	ICMPD
Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant	ISIS
Multinational Joint Task Force	MJTF
National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons	NAPTIP
Small Arms and Light Weapons	SALW
United Nations	UN

1.   Introduction

Over the last two decades, terrorism has figured high as a security issue on the agenda of the international community. Against this backdrop, the Nigerian extremist group Boko Haram (BH) has attracted the attention of policymakers, scholars, journalists and the wide public. The latter has been kept more or less informed on the worrying increase of violent attacks carried out by this emergent radical sect on the Nigerian soil.

However, few words have been said and little ink has been spilled on the transnational ramifications and potential regional expansion of BH. What was born as an internal security concern of the Nigerian state is seemingly about to turn into a transnational threat for the wider West African sub-region. All this emphasizes the role that borders play – or should play – in the containment of this menace. As Spencer put it, "the border is the first line of defence against terrorism and the last line of a nation's territorial integrity."[1] Nevertheless, such renditions of borders as bulwarks against more or less defined foes betray a traditional understanding of border security, upon which also the official authorities use to rely. Yet in the African continent, borders are not just mere lines on the ground, but also strips of land across and along which straddle borderland communities made up of people.

The present paper seeks to insert these oft-neglected peripheral areas into the discourse on border security. Does border control necessarily equate border management? Our working hypothesis is that an alternative, more developmentally informed approach to border management should be devised. In the attempt to prove this claim, we will analyze the relevant secondary literature, as well as newspaper articles and official reports. The theoretico-conceptual foundations and the working hypothesis of the present work will be further elucidated in the next chapter, whereas the third chapter will offer a comprehensive overview of BH's cross-border activities. In the fourth chapter, the Nigerian approach to border management will be critically scrutinized and assessed. Furthermore, we will delve into the literature on Nigerian borderlands and border regions in order to identify, through specific examples, valuable insights. Upon the latter, our recommendations will be drawn and enumerated in the fifth chapter. Finally, the conclusive chapter will provide a brief appraisal and discussion of the research findings.

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[1] Cited in Freedom C. Onuoha, *Porous Borders and Boko Haram's Arms Smuggling Operations in Nigeria* (Al Jazeera Center for Studies, Doha, 2013), 3, http://studies.aljazeera.net/en/reports/2013/09/201398104245877469 .htm (Accessed on August 29, 2015).

2.   Theoretical and conceptual framework

The Islamist sect BH has undoubtedly gained momentum in the last years as a security threat for the Nigerian state. The scourge of violent bombing attacks, kidnappings of civilians, and fierce armed confrontations with national police forces are some of the worrying consequences brought about by the emergence and rise of this extremist group. However, many authors have pointed out that the analyses of BH set forth thus far are almost exclusively concerned with the Nigerian domestic security environment, thus neglecting the transnational significance of this phenomenon.[2] Only a few scholars have sought to shed light on BH's cross-border dimension. One good example is Oftedal's assessment of BH's transnational activities, which concludes that the latter "have contributed to strengthening BH in a number of ways."[3] Onapajo et al. go one step further and maintain that the Islamist sect has "advanced to the status of a transnational terrorist organization."[4] Finally, some authors have highlighted the significance of BH in a regional security perspective[5] or for specific neighboring countries, such as Cameroon.[6]

Although the aforementioned scholars present their findings from different analytical angles, all of them seem to identify unanimously Nigeria's border porosity as one of the most important root causes explaining BH's transnational reach.[7] The porous nature of the over 1,000 transboundary routes into Niger, Chad, Cameroon and Benin is indeed an old problem that can be traced back to Nigeria's colonial times.[8] Not only are these borders mere lines on the ground dividing different political entities, but along and across them also straddle and flourish numerous borderland communities. It goes without saying that such a state of affairs is a tempting incentive for terrorists to stretch their activities beyond the state's boundaries, for a

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[2] Emilie Oftedal, "Boko Haram: A Transnational Phenomenon?" (M.A. thesis, University of Oslo, 2013), 1, https://www.duo.uio.no/handle/10852/36925 (Accessed on August 29, 2015); Hakeem Onapajo, Ufo Okeke Uzodike, and Ayo Whetho, "Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria: The International Dimension," *South African Journal of International Affairs* 19, no. 3 (2012): 338; Freedom C. Onuoha, *A Danger Not to Nigeria Alone - Boko Haram's Transnational Reach and Regional Responses*, Peace and Security Series (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Regional Office, Abuja, 2014), 3, http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/nigeria/11066.pdf (Accessed on August 29, 2015).

[3] Oftedal, "Boko Haram," 60.

[4] Onapajo, Uzodike, and Whetho, "Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria," 351.

[5] Ayodeji Anthony Aduloju, Abimbola Opanike, and Lawrence O. Adenipekun, "Boko Haram Insurgency in North-Eastern Nigeria and Its Implications for Security and Stability in West African Sub-Region," *International Journal of Development and Conflict* 4 (2014): 106; Lysias Dodd Gilbert, "Prolongation of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria: The International Dimensions," *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences* 4, no. 11 (2014): 155; Onuoha, *A Danger Not to Nigeria Alone*, 12.

[6] Walter Gam Nkwi, "Cameroon. Too Much to Carry: The Perception and Ramifications of Boko Haram's Activities on Cameroon," *Conflict Studies Quarterly* no. 5 (2013): 83–84, http://www.csq.ro/2013/10/ (Accessed on October 30, 2015).

[7] Oftedal, "Boko Haram," 39; Gilbert, "Prolongation of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria," 154; Nkwi, "Cameroon. Too Much to Carry," 77–78; Onuoha, *Porous Borders*, 3–4.

[8] Oftedal, "Boko Haram," 39; Onuoha, *Porous Borders*, 3–4.

variety of reasons. In fact, Onuhoa alleges that BH members often benefit from the borderland people's acquiescence or even outright complicity in smuggling ventures.[9]

The seriousness of these issues notwithstanding, the vast majority of the aforementioned body of literature glosses over the pivotal role played by these critical intersections in the geographies of terrorism and transnational crime, with a few exceptions.[10] Furthermore, the analyses of unwanted cross-border flows all end up calling for enhanced border controls. The same holds true for the United Nations (UN), which highlights in its Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy the importance of a strengthened border and customs control regime in the fight against terrorist threats.[11] It seems that tighter control at the border has been identified as the top priority within the security-related policymaking circles.

Yet, is border enforcement always coterminous with border management? This is the research question that guide our quest for an alternative, developmentally informed approach to the management of state frontiers. Our tentative answer and working hypothesis is that a different approach to border management is required, one that involves a different understanding of border areas. The latter need not be exclusively conceived as security hotspots that need to be protected through heightened law enforcement measures. Instead, they must be viewed as critical areas of transnational cultural, social and economic interactions, whose conduciveness to unwanted flows is to be addressed through a far-sighted and developmental approach.

Our theoretical outlook will be informed by the work of authors such as Brunet-Jailly, who claims that "[b]orders are not just hard territorial lines – they are institutions that result from bordering policies – they are thus about people."[12] Bearing that in mind, our intention here is to assess both how borders are managed and how borderlands are governed in Nigeria, in order to put forward alternative approaches to the management of state frontiers. Our assumption is that strictly securitized borders are neither tenable in the long term nor are they particularly effective. Even though we do recognize the importance of having secure borders from a politico-military standpoint, we also maintain that this security-oriented approach needs

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[9] Ibid., 5.

[10] See Constanze Blum, *Cross-Border Flows between Nigeria and Benin: What Are the Challenges for (Human) Security?*, Peace and Security Series (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Regional Office, Abuja, 2014), http://www.fes-westafrica.org/cross-border-flows-between-nigeria-and-benin-what-are-the-challenges-for-human-security/ (Accessed on September 3, 2015).

[11] United Nations General Assembly, *The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy* (A/RES/60/288, New York, 2006), 6, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/60/288 (Accessed on September 3, 2015).

[12] Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, "Special Section: Borders, Borderlands and Theory: An Introduction," *Geopolitics* 16, no. 1 (2011): 3.

to be mitigated and gradually substituted by a more comprehensive outlook toward the management of borders. In turn, an efficient and effective border management in itself is not sufficient and must therefore be framed within broader and all-encompassing policies aimed at the development of borderland societies.

Thus, the main concern of this paper is to present alternative solutions to the management of Nigerian borders. As mentioned earlier, it is very common in post-colonial states – especially in the African continent – that boundaries drawn by former colonialist powers have ended up dividing homogeneous tribes and ethnicities. For this reason, the idea of fixed and non-permeable borders is not always applicable to the African context. We therefore agree with House's rendition of the frontier as "an international meetingplace and, as such, potentially a launching-pad for international cooperation to mutual benefit."[13]

Another issue at stake here is the peripherality of border regions. In many countries and many situations throughout history, there have been and still are regions that are neglected by central governments, not only in terms of policy-making but also from an economic and financial point of view. As House put it, "[o]n the whole, the effects of peripherality and boundary location have been mutually reinforcing, compounding dislocation and a sense of deprivation."[14] In order to counter these undesirable effects of peripherality, it is of the utmost importance to improve the borderlands' socio-economic conditions. This way, the inhabitants of these areas on the fringes of the state could have viable alternatives to contraband and illicit cross-border practices, which oftentimes contribute to the strengthening and territorial expansion of terrorist organizations.

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[13] J. W. House, "The Frontier Zone: A Conceptual Problem for Policy Makers," *International Political Science Review / Revue Internationale de Science Politique* 1, no. 456–477 (1980): 457.
[14] Ibid., 458.

3.   Assessing Boko Haram's transnational reach

Nowadays terrorism is a global phenomenon that has an influence on everyone's life, as it threatens stability and public safety worldwide. Terrorist acts perpetrated by BH have damaged the liberty in Nigeria, caused the death of 17,000 people,[15] and harmed the national infrastructure. The Islamic organization ramped up violent attacks on various governmental and civilian targets. An illustrious example is BH's bombing attack on the UN building in Abuja on August 26, 2011.[16] It has become more and more common to hear news about terrorist acts committed by the members of BH in the neighbouring countries, such as Chad, Niger or Cameroon. Terrorist non-state actors are able to cross the borders without encountering much resistance. This phenomenon is extremely dangerous, since the group can gain primary commodities and provisions by looting goods from people living in border regions. The unprecedented violence and brutality entails fear and apprehension in the populace and, at the same time, it undermines the state's power. The Nigerian authorities seem incapable to bring the situation back to normalcy and are not able to protect the civilian populations. All in all, these problematic factors are leading to the destabilization of the entire West African region.

It is worth mentioning that BH mainly operates in North-Eastern Nigeria, close to the border with Cameroon. The sect leaders currently put their affiliates into action in Southern Nigeria too. The threat is spreading widely outside the state boundaries and along border regions. People living near the borders are particularly affected by the insurgency because the violent group needs to cross the borders to acquire arms, food and refuge away from the military. These borderland communities are in need of the state's protection and assistance as a guarantee for safety and stability in the area.

Border regions in Nigeria are either mountainous or located in the jungle.[17] Regardless of the economic and social aspects, a standard character of the Nigerian boundaries is porosity. Nigeria has porous borders with Cameroon (1,690 kilometers) in the east, Niger (1,497 kilometers) in the north, Benin (773 kilometers) in the west, and Chad (87 kilometers) in the northeast.[18] In these areas, people are seeking food supplies, health care, adequate education and appropriate information about the dangerous consequences of the insurgency.

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[15] The Guardian, "11 Chadian Soldiers Killed in Boko Haram Attack: Security Source," 2015, http://www.ngrguardiannews.com/2015/10/11-chadian-soldiers-killed-in-boko-haram-attack-security-source/ (Accessed on November 16, 2015).
[16] Onuoha, *Porous Borders*, 2.
[17] Ibid., 3.
[18] Ibid.

The destabilization of the North Eastern states of has become critical for the local population. In the North-Eastern areas, the Sunni extremist group has demolished health facilities that were crucial because of the high number of injured civilians. BH members bomb channels, roads, bridges to dismantle the system of the infrastructure and destroy agricultural livelihood, thus adding the worsening of food security to the insurgency.[19] The number of BH's sophisticated weapons is growing due to the existence of thriving arms trafficking networks in the area. Since Nigeria's bordering countries put their military powers into action against BH, the extremist group constantly carries out attacks in and across neighbouring countries. The porous borders are allowing them to operate prosperously inside and outside of the Nigerian state

These are only a few examples of how BH has slowly transformed itself from a national into a regional threat. However, in order to grasp the seriousness and multifariousness of this menace, it is of paramount importance that we single out and analyze all the relevant cross-border activities carried out by the Islamist sect. The next sections will thus provide a comprehensive overview of BH's transnational operations, including arms trafficking, recruitment, training and human trafficking. This chapter aims to emphasize the multifaceted nature of BH's transnational activities and therefore, the irreducibility of such threat to the mere politico-military sphere.

3.1   Arms trafficking

BH has established connections with other terrorist groups and violent extremists in North, West, and East Africa. The 2,000 miles of border that Nigeria shares with Niger, Chad, and Cameroon host almost 1,500 illegal or unmonitored crossing routes.[20] Terrorist groups, like BH, take advantage of corrupt border guard operators and the porosity of the frontiers. Cross-border activities, such as arms smuggling and transnational attacks are resulting in the death of civilians. Thousands of Nigerians have been killed and many more will die in the hands of the Islamic sect due to the influx of weapons in the country, as smugglers continue their trading activities.[21]

Movements of guns, supplies, and young soldiers across the borders (as a result of the terrorists' successful recruiting operations in neighboring countries among the youth) have

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[19] Onuoha, *A Danger Not to Nigeria Alone*.
[20] Scott Menner, "Boko Haram's Regional Cross-Border Activities," *CTC Sentinel* 7, no. 10 (2014): 10–14, https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/boko-harams-regional-cross-border-activities (Accessed on October 23, 2015).
[21] Akinyemi, "Globalization and Nigeria Border Security," 2.

become an everyday occurrence in Nigeria. Onuoha argues that several illegal routes lead in and out of Nigeria. In the Adamawa state alone, there are about 25 illegal routes into Nigeria from bordering countries.[22] Terrorists and smugglers take advantage of the lack of willingness to close down these roads. As a consequence, small arms and light weapons (SALWs) are trafficked easily into Nigeria.[23]

However, smuggling arms into Nigeria is not as simple a task as it seems to be. BH still needs to be inventive in the methods of concealing its cross-border activities, especially regarding movements of weapons. Reportedly, weapons are often transported by nomadic shepherds or herders in various kinds of bags, which are usually attached to cattle and carried across the borders. Alternatively, arms have been smuggled by cross-border merchants who were hiding them inside their trucks among other legal types of goods.[24] On some other occasions, BH's members used women to carry weapons and explosive devices hidden under their cloaks.[25] These are some examples that show how BH exploits and possibly manipulates civilians to flout the letter of the law.

Anyway, there would not be any cross-border arms trafficking without a foreign source of weapons. It is often mentioned that one of the possible sources of the weapons in the region might be armories accumulated by the former Libyan ruler Muammar Gaddafi.[26] This source is particularly worrying, notably because of its unknown amount and composition. Further, as BH has claimed to be the Western province of the Islamic State,[27] it is thought that a collaboration with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) itself might exist. ISIS and other likeminded allies could be able to provide BH not only with training but also with weaponry. Besides these sources, there always exists the possibility of purchasing the arms on the black market, mainly from – according to known information –Russian or Eastern European sellers.[28]

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[22] Onuoha, *Porous Borders*, 3.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid., 5.
[25] See Megan Bastick and Kristin Valasek, "Converging Agendas: Women, Peace, Security, and Small Arms," in *Small Arms Survey 2014: Women and Guns* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 35–63, http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/?small-arms-survey-2014 (Accessed on December 5, 2015).
[26] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment* (Vienna, 2013), 33–37, https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/TOC-threat-assessments .html (Accessed on December 5, 2015).
[27] Adam Withnall, "Boko Haram Renames Itself Islamic State's West Africa Province (Iswap) as Militants Launch New Offensive against Government Forces," *The Independent*, 2015, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world /africa/boko-haram-renames-itself-islamic-states-west-africa-province-iswap-as-militants-launch-new-10204918.html (Accessed on November 19, 2015)..
[28] Steve Hathorn and Chris Abbott, "Intelligence Brief: Reducing the Supply of Weapons to Boko Haram," *Open Briefing* (2015), http://www.openbriefing.org/regionaldesks/africa/reducing-the-supply-of-weapons-to-boko-haram/ (Accessed on November 19, 2015).

Nonetheless, cross-border arms trafficking is not the only way in which BH enlarges its arsenal. Since many of BH's targets are of a militaristic nature, this terroristic group obtains its arms from military bases, soldiers, police stations, police officers, etc. This was probably the case for BH's attack on January 25, 2015 at the Monguno Barracks, where the 243rd battalion of the Nigerian Army resided at that time. Not only the barracks but also the weapons ended up under BH's control in that circumstance.[29] Furthermore, there is the possibility for BH to gain back their once-confiscated weapons in exchange for released hostages. This practice has been carried out mainly by neighboring countries' governmental officials in order to free their family members, foreign workers or their own citizens.[30] Furthermore, arms can be smuggled into the Nigerian soil also by air or by sea.[31]

Even though some of the weapons' sources and means of transportation are known, there are not exact figures as regards their amount. Only estimations are available. These are usually calculated by using known numbers of weapons present in military buildings before being taken by BH, by analyzing what kind of weapons BH used during their attacks and by calculating the quantity and types of arms seized by the soldiers or the police. The last method also helps the officials to discover the illegal flows and chains of arms trafficking, to estimate BH's size and power, and to assess the consistency of the threat. According to current estimations, BH has at its disposal an unspecified number of tanks and armored vehicles. Concerning the weapons themselves, BH possesses anti-aircraft guns, assault rifles, rocket-propelled grenades, mortars and improvised explosive devices (IEDs).[32]

3.2 Recruitment and training

The recruitment and training of BH's militants is another clear proof of the terrorist organization's transnational reach. During the initial phase of BH's activities, it was its first leader Mohammed Yusuf's Islamic school that provided the "recruiting ground for jihads."[33] Many poor Muslim families across Nigeria, mostly in the North-East, as well as from

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[29] Sahara Reporters, "Boko Haram Sacks Monguno Barracks, Fate Of 1400 Soldiers Unknown," *Sahara Reporters*, 2015, http://saharareporters.com/2015/01/25/boko-haram-sacks-monguno-barracks-fate-1400-soldiers-unknown (Accessed November 5, 2015).

[30] Jacob Zenn, "Boko Haram: Recruitment, Financing, and Arms Trafficking in the Lake Chad Region," *CTC Sentinel* 7, no. 10 (2014): 5–10, https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/boko-haram-recruitment-financing-and-arms-trafficking-in-the-lake-chad-region (Accessed on November 5, 2015).

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.; Hathorn and Abbott, "Intelligence Brief."

[33] Farouk Chothia, "Who Are Nigeria's Boko Haram Islamists?," *BBC*, 2015, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13809501 (Accessed on October 25, 2015).

neighbouring countries, enrolled their children there due to their resistance to Western education. The school pursued the dual objective of both indoctrinating children according to Yusuf's particular version of Islam and introducing them to the criminal activities of the terrorist group. Over the years, the number of students gradually increased, as many youngsters withdrew from various local universities and technical schools to join Yusuf's Koranic school.

Yet, apart from ideological or religion-driven motivations, scholars agree that the main factor that contributed to the rapid enlargement of the group is the feeling that predominantly-Muslim areas have been disregarded by the political leadership, thus resulting in economically and socially disadvantaged and underdeveloped, yet very populous, regions compared to the predominantly-Christian ones. In other words, it was argued that the degree of ideology's spread – or voluntary recruitment – substantially depended on the lack of economic and social programs aimed at lowering the discrepancy in living standards between Christian and Muslim areas, thus fostering the obvious resentment harboured by the latter toward the former. Consequently, Yusuf's teachings became especially appealing to disaffected youth, unemployed high school and university graduates, and poor people, who believed that finally BH could bring about a change in the Nigerian society first, and then in the whole Sahel region.[34]

Although little is known about the identity and total number of BH's affiliates, Cameroon's Defense Ministry approximated that, as of July 2014, the terrorist group accounted for 15,000 to 20,000 members.[35] However, Ahmad Salkida, a Nigerian journalist with longstanding contacts with BH, stated it had "up to 50,000 people in their camps" all over the Sahel sub-Saharan region.[36] According to Zenn, the higher estimate may be correct if the term "members" included also individuals who cooperate, either intentionally or not, with the group. Among the affiliates, BH enumerate businessmen, arms traffickers and kidnappers whose role consists in financing the group's activities. Apart from this category of criminals, BH used to recruit men in areas fallen under their control; however, since the Chibok kidnapping of 276 girls in April 2014, BH's targets have been preferably children, teenage boys, and young women. As reported by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, teenage boys and girls are first kidnapped and re-educated at

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[34] Ibid.; Onuoha, *A Danger Not to Nigeria Alone*, 4; J. Peter Pham, "Boko Haram's Evolving Threat," *Africa Security Brief*, 2012, http://africacenter.org/2012/04/boko-harams-evolving-threat/ (Accessed on October 25, 2015).
[35] Zenn, "Boko Haram:" 5.
[36] Emmanuel Elebeke, "Boko Haram Has 50,000 Members in Its Camp - BBOG," *Vanguard*, 2014, http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/08/boko-haram-50000-members-camp-bbog/ (Accessed on October 25, 2015).

Koranic schools often located outside Nigeria, and then used in support roles and in combat as human shields, checkpoints, intelligence gathering, transporting guns, etc. Young women are mainly abducted to marry BH fighters with the scope of giving birth to the new generation of fighters and believers in the group's view of Islam; some, instead, are used as suicide bombers in populated urban areas.[37]

Proofs that BH is in tight connection with other similar jihadist organizations are given by the fact that there is absolutely no doubt that the group received help in terms of training by such other groups. The certainty in this evaluation stems from an observation of a de-facto change in BH's tactics, strategies in conducting attacks, employment of new weapons, capabilities, etc. Such novelties resulted from the change in leadership following Yusuf's death during the July 2009 revolts in Bauchi, Borno, Kano, Katsina, and Yobe states. Under the new leader, Abubakar Shekau, BH fighters were reported to have joined the training camps of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQMI) in Timbuktu, Mali, as well as those of the Somali jihadist group named Al Shabaab. Likewise, it is alleged they run an international network of recruitment, training and indoctrination camps even in Niger, Cameroon, Chad, Sudan and Central African Republic.[38]

3.3 Human trafficking and smuggling of migrants

Legally, the concept of trafficking in persons means "the recruitment, transportation, transfer […] by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion […] for the purpose of exploitation [which is defined as] the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery […], servitude or the removal of organs."[39] According to the latest statistical report conducted by Nigeria's National Agency for Prohibition of Traffic in Persons (NAPTIP), out of the total number of cases in 2014, 44.5% are boys, 24.3% are girls, 25.3% are women, and only 5.9% are men. Moreover, the report highlights that in 2014 both child labour and external trafficking for sexual exploitation had

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[37] Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflicts, "Nigeria," 2015, https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/nigeria/ (Accessed on October 25, 2015); Human Rights Watch, "Nigeria: Boko Haram Abducts Women, Recruits Children," 2013, https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/11/29/ nigeria-boko-haram-abducts-women-recruits-children (Accessed on October 25, 2015); Zenn, "Boko Haram:" 5, 7, https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/boko-harams-regional-cross-border-activities (Accessed on October 25, 2015).
[38] Onuoha, *A Danger Not to Nigeria Alone*.
[39] Article 3(a), United Nations General Assembly, *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* (New York, 2000), https://treaties.un.org/pages/viewdetails.aspx?src=ind&mtdsg_no=xviii-12-a&chapter=18&lang=en (Accessed on October 25, 2015).

increased since 2013, by 9% and 4.4% respectively. The data presented by the NAPTIP gives a representative overview of the phenomenon and of its trends, since it accounts only for the cases reported to the agency, thus implying that the real number of incidents may be much higher. Even though it is not possible to verify how much BH's activities influence this trend, there is no doubt that the organization plays a crucial role in the market for human beings in West Africa. BH is selling children as young as 12 years old to force labour or, as already mentioned early on, using them as child soldiers; whereas abducted women and girls are forced into domestic servitude, forced labour, and sex slavery through forced marriages to militants.[40]

As to the smuggling of migrants, it refers to the practice of "[procuring], in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident."[41] The smuggling of fighters to conflict zones, which involves a large network of recruiters, producers of forged documents and escorts to such areas, is a necessity for BH as it recruits fighters throughout the whole Sahel region and send them where needed. Not to mention, West African countries are countries of origin of a great number of illegal migrants (or 'refugees' if this status will be granted by host countries) into Europe, among which Nigerians and Malians rank among the top first.[42] Moreover, Nigeria is dealing with a humanitarian crisis since June 2015. 1.4 million people, over 1 million of whom only in Borno state, are still internally displaced (IDPs) in north-eastern Nigeria and are living in host families in other states. In both situations, BH may use these movements of migrants, refugees, and IDPs to collect significant sums for allowing safe passage.[43]

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[40] Paul Adepelumi, "The Root Causes of Human Trafficking in Nigeria," in *High-Level Event on the UN Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, 13th UN Crime Congress* (Doha, Qatar, 2015), https://www.unodc .org/documents/congress//workshops/workshop2/Presentation_P_Adepelumi_African_Center_.pdf (Accessed on October 25, 2015); United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* (Vienna, Austria, 2014), https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/GLOTIP_2014_ full_report.pdf (Accessed on October 2015, 2015); National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons, *Data Analysis* (Abuja, 2014), http://www.naptip.gov.ng/docs/2014 DATA ANALYSIS FINAL.pdf (Accessed on October 25, 2015).

[41] Article 3(a), United Nations General Assembly, *Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* (New York, 2000), https://www.unodc.org/documents/southeastasiaandpacific/2011/04/som-indonesia/convention_smug_eng.pdf (Accessed on October 25, 2015).

[42] The Economist, "Europe's Boat People," *The Economist*, 2015, http://www.economist.com/blogs/graphicdetail/ 2015/05/graphics (Accessed on October 25, 2015).

[43] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Humanitarian Bulletin Nigeria" no. 3 (2015), http://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/humanitarian-bulletin-nigeria-issue-03-june-2015 (Accessed on October 25, 2015); United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Threat of Terrorists Benefiting from Transnational Organized Crime* (S/2015/366, New York, 2015), http://www.refworld.org/docid/5587 db984.html (Accessed on October 25, 2015).

4.   The need for a different approach to border management

As the previous chapters have shown, on the one hand BH increasingly poses security threats that entail transnational implications; on the other hand, the authorities tasked with the monitoring of borders appear to be unfit to properly tackle and contain this menace. More precisely, the prevalent and official approach toward the management of borders has been almost exclusively informed by a traditional understanding of security. According to the latter, borderlands are critical spots that need to be securitized through border shutdowns or increased policing, rather than areas that require to be managed.[44]

As Blum suggests, border management should be understood and carried out with a more holistic approach, one that takes also into consideration the human and developmental dimensions of security.[45] What is called for is therefore a shift from border control to border management. The latter, if properly implemented, may become an "enabler for development," as elucidated by Pluim and Hofmann in their working paper for the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). The two researchers further claim that the so-called "integrated border management" – a concept popularized in the 1990s within the European Union (EU) context – seeks to harmonize "the traditional modes of border control and protection of state security with those processes at the border that would facilitate the exchange of goods and services and the transfer of people with the neighbouring states."[46]

Such a comprehensive approach to the management of international boundaries would be highly beneficial for the nations compounding the African political mosaic. In the narrower context of the geographical area covered by this study, Nigeria and its neighbors share thousands of square kilometers of borderlands, which are inhabited by people who struggle with poverty through expedients such as smuggling and other illegal practices.[47] Unsurprisingly, this situation is easily exploited by illicit non-state actors, who often find in the local populations

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[44] Blum, *Cross-Border Flows*, 8; Martijn Pluim and Martin Hofmann, *Integrated Border Management and Development*, ICMPD Working Paper 08 (International Centre for Migration and Policy Development, Vienna, 2015), 1, http://www.icmpd.org/index.php?id=2664 (Accessed on October 30, 2015).

[45] Blum, *Cross-Border Flows*, 3.

[46] Pluim and Hofmann, *Integrated Border Management and Development*, 11; such concept is termed differently by other institutional stakeholders, for a review and a more detailed conceptualization of this notion see Mariya Polner, "Coordinated Border Management: From Theory to Practice," *World Customs Journal* 5, no. 2 (2011): 49–64.

[47] The widespread illegality of Nigerian cross-border trade practices is masterfully illustrated in Akin Fadahunsi and Peter Rosa, "Entrepreneurship and Illegality: Insights from the Nigerian Cross-Border Trade," *Journal of Business Venturing* 17, no. 5 (2002): 397–429; see also Dauda S. Garuba, *Trans-Border Economic Crimes, Illegal Oil Bunkering and Economic Reforms in Nigeria*, Policy Brief Series, no.15 (Global Consortium on Security Transformation, 2010), 9, http://www.resourcegovernance.org/news/economic-reforms-unfinished-nigeria-remains-exposed-oil-bunkering (Accessed on October 30, 2015).

convenient accomplices for their traffics.[48] Hence, an effective and efficient border management is pivotal if we are to contain BH's trans-regional spread. However, a focus on the borders alone is not sufficient. Borderlands are indeed not only "security hotspots," but also peculiar locales of "historically fostered cultural and socio-economic exchange."[49] In this regard, the management of borders cannot be separated from the development of the borderlands. A truly developmental approach to border management is required.

The next sections will provide the empirical basis to support a much-needed shift in border management. The Nigerian borderlands will be assessed firstly in terms of border management and secondly in relation to the overall socio-economic conditions of their inhabitants. By so doing, this chapter aims to highlight the necessity to put in motion all-encompassing policies directed towards the societal improvement of the borderlands under consideration.

4.1   Everyday transnationality: managing borders on the fringes of the state

The African continental context offers innumerable instances of thriving borderland cultures. As Miles put it, local conceptions of boundaries in Africa exhibit "an overall penchant towards fluidity, permeability, and porosity, as opposed to obstruction, obstacle, and interdiction."[50] The people living on either side of borders often share a host of ethnic, linguistic and cultural affinities, which explain their tight cross-border socio-economic relations. Paradigmatic examples at the Nigerian-Benin borders are the Beriba, Fulani, Hausa and Yoruba societies. The latter have even established long-standing solidarity networks to cement their commercial relationships.[51] The same holds true for the border areas in the proximity of Cameroon and Niger, where bottom-up economic micro-regions have been identified by scholars and policymakers alike.[52]

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[48] Onuoha, *Porous Borders*, 5.

[49] Blum, *Cross-Border Flows*, 3; to understand borderlands on a deeper and more theoretical level, it is worth reading Willem van Schendel, "Spaces of Engagement: How Borderlands, Illicit Flows and Territorial States Interlock," in *Illicit Flows and Criminal Things: States, Borders, and the Other Side of Globalization*, ed. Willem van Schendel and Itty Abraham (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 43–47.

[50] William F. S. Miles, "Development, Not Division: Local versus External Perceptions of the Niger–Nigeria Boundary," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 43, no. 2 (2005): 298.

[51] Blum, *Cross-Border Flows*, 3-4; Gabriel Lanre Adeola and Fayomi Oluyemi, "The Political and Security Implications of Cross Border Migration between Nigeria and Her Francophone Neighbours," *International Journal of Social Science Tomorrow* 1, no. 3 (2012): 6; Adetunji Musilimu Adeyinka, "Trans-Border Movement and Trading Activites across Nigeria – Benin Republic Border," *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 5, no. 1 (2014): 415–16, http://www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/mjss/issue/view/35 (Accessed on October 30, 2015).

[52] See Mohamadou Abdoul and Marie Trémolières, "Cross-Border Cooperation Between Niger and Nigeria: The Case of the Maradi Micro-Region," in *Micro-Regionalism in West Africa: Evidence from Two Case Studies*, ed. Fredrik Söderbaum and Ian Taylor (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2007), 23–32, http://nai.diva-

However, borderlands are also known for being peculiar locales whereby "informal, underground, parallel, unrecorded or second economies thrive alongside the official economies," as Bonchuk rightfully points out.[53] Against this backdrop, Nigerian border regions are highly problematic, for many of them are flourishing transnational hubs and transit points for smugglers and traffickers. The inventory of contraband goods is extensive and includes household provisions, agricultural produce, textile materials and foodstuff.[54] More worrying yet is the trafficking of petroleum, stolen cars, drugs, arms, and people.[55] Such activities could indeed be directly carried out or exploited by terrorist groups, hence the official worries of the possible outpouring of BH's violence into Benin.[56]

The Nigerian frontiers are undoubtedly security hotspots that require an efficient management of the international borders lying therein. The latter have indeed been repeatedly shut down for security reasons in the last decades.[57] Yet such blockades are just symptoms of an inadequate outlook toward border management, modeled on ad-hoc and reactive responses, rather than pro-active and preventive initiatives.[58] Such draconian measures do not hide the fact that the overall approach of the competent authorities to border management has been thus far highly unsatisfactory.

Firstly, it must not be forgotten that the borders separating Nigeria from its neighbors are not completely and thoroughly demarcated. This, of course, has given rise to frequent border clashes and international legal litigations between Nigeria and its neighbors.[59] It goes without saying that, more often than not, such incertitude over border demarcation entails organizational

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portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A240826&dswid=5804 (Accessed on October 30, 2015); M. O. Bonchuk, "Nigeria - Cameroon Borderland: Prospects of Economic Cooperation and Integration," *American Journal of Social Issues and Humanities* 4, no. 2 (2014): 99–111, http://www.ajsih.org/index.php/ajsih/article/view/142 (Accessed on October 30, 2015); Waisu Iliyasu, "Toward a Regional Integration along Nigeria-Niger Border: A Case Study of Katsina-Maradi Crossing," *The Business & Management Review* 4, no. 3 (2014): 134–142, https://abrmr.com/index.php?view=conference_proceedings&cpd_id=22&pagenum=3 (Accessed on October 30, 2015).

[53] Bonchuk, "Nigeria - Cameroon Borderland," 102.

[54] Adeyinka, "Trans-Border Movement," 419; Adedoyin J. Omede, "Nigeria's Relations with Her Neighbours," *Studies in Tribes and Tribals* 4, no. 1 (2006): 10, http://www.krepublishers.com/02-Journals/T & T/T & T-04-0-000-000-2006-Web/T & T-04-0-000-000-2006-Contents/T & T-04-0-000-000-2006-Contents.htm (Accessed on October 30, 2015).

[55] Blum, *Cross-Border Flows*, 5; Aluko Ola, "The Effects of Arms Smuggling in Trans-Border Planning and Business Activities: The Nigeria – Benin Borders Experience," *International Journal of Asian Social Sciences* 2, no. 1 (2012): 26–27, http://www.aessweb.com/journals/January2012/5007/1138 (Accessed on October 30, 2015); James H. Adams, *Improving Nigerian Border Security - A Comprehensive Approach* (Research paper, Naval War College, Newport, RI, 2012), 9–10, http://www.dtic.mil/docs/citations/ADA570198 (Accessed on August, 29 2015); Adeola and Oluyemi, "The Political and Security Implications," 6–7.

[56] Blum, *Cross-Border Flows*, 7.

[57] Adeola and Oluyemi, "The Political and Security Implications, 7; Nkwi, "Cameroon. Too Much to Carry," 79; Miles, "Development, Not Division," 301–304.

[58] Adams, *Improving Nigerian Border Security*, 8–9.

[59] A brief overview can be retrieved in Omede, "Nigeria's Relations with Her Neighbours."

confusion among different national and local border agencies on their respective prerogatives and competences.[60]

The quality and professionalism of the personnel is indubitably another source of major concern. Corruption is rampant and bribery of border and customs officials aimed at skipping controls or evading taxes and tariffs is an infamously well-known routine.[61] According to a study conducted in the Ogun state, at the Nigerian-Beninoise frontier, it is precisely the wish to avoid these vexations that induces border dwellers – who often do not even possess the required travel documents – to privilege unmanned routes through jungles and other unchecked transit points for their border crossings.[62] The foregoing brings into sharp focus another acute institutional weakness of the Nigerian border regime: The posts are unevenly distributed and understaffed. These problems, together with "poor vehicles, bad equipment, substandard office and living space, and supply and money shortages" easily explain the low morale of border officers.[63]

4.2   A look at the big picture: borderland societies

A well-functioning border management regime alone, however, would only bring about short-term successes in terms of security, without guaranteeing a durable peaceful environment along the Nigerian state frontiers. If we enlarge our view from the borderlines to the polities settled in the surrounding areas, it is immediately evident that border security and management must be complemented with a host of different policies aimed at improving the overall societal contexts of the border regions.

One of the most pressing social problems is poverty, a stigma that is further aggravated by the neglect of local and national authorities exhibited toward these peripheral areas. According to the aforementioned study related to the Ogun state, 79% of the borderlanders interviewed earned less than $1.25 per day, the official UN threshold below which poverty is defined.[64] As noted by Blum, the profitability of illegal cross-border activities is indeed a powerful incentive for border-dwellers "desperate to make quick money" to get involved in them.[65] In turn, such profitability is often the unintended consequence of the Nigerian

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[60] Adams, *Improving Nigerian Border Security*, 6–7.
[61] Blum, *Cross-Border Flows*, 7; Fadahunsi and Rosa, "Entrepreneurship and Illegality," 421-22
[62] Adeyinka, "Trans-Border Movement," 418; Fadahunsi and Rosa, "Entrepreneurship and Illegality," 418.
[63] Adams, *Improving Nigerian Border Security, 7-8.*
[64] Adeyinka, "Trans-Border Movement," 413.
[65] Blum, *Cross-Border Flows*, 3; Ola, "The Effects of Arms Smuggling," 31.; Bonchuk, "Nigeria - Cameroon Borderland," 100.

government's protectionist and short-sighted fiscal policies, whose high customs duties tend to discourage cross-border traders to abide by the law.[66]

Poverty does not materialize in a vacuum. It is, instead, both cause and effect of underdeveloped societal contexts. The Nigerian border areas are unfortunately not well equipped to provide its inhabitants with hope for a better future. From an infrastructural point of view, the condition of roads is evidently a hindrance for a successful developmental agenda in the region. Unpaved roads and impervious trails are frequently the only option for cross-border traders to transport goods from town to town.[67] Infrastructural deficiencies also include electricity supply, dams, telecommunications and bridges.[68] Economic infrastructures are not the one and only indicators of a society's well-being. The provision of healthcare and education are equally important for the development of human communities. Regrettably, the lack or uneven territorial distribution of schools and hospitals represent yet another serious concern for the Nigerian borderlands.[69]

It is clear from the foregoing that the management of borders cannot be separated from the management of the surrounding areas. A highly efficient border infrastructure alone would not suffice for border areas to become less porous. Border management needs to be implemented within the framework of broader and all-encompassing policies aimed at the development of border regions. Only by making borderland societies less permeable to the lure of illegal cross-border activities, we may render borders truly impermeable.

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[66] Fadahunsi and Rosa, "Entrepreneurship and Illegality," 423; Abdoul and Trémolières, "Cross-Border Cooperation," 29.

[67] Gambiyo Suleiman Purokayo and Soon Jan Jan, "Road Infrastructure and Border Trade in North-East Geopolitical Zone in Nigeria," *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development* 5, no. 13 (2014): 148, www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEDS/article/view/14277 (Accessed on October 30, 2015); Adeyinka, "Trans-Border Movement," 419.

[68] Bonchuk, "Nigeria - Cameroon Borderland," 108.

[69] Ibid.; Adeyinka, "Trans-Border Movement," 419-420.

5. Recommendations

The establishment of a new approach related to border management has thus become necessary to contain the spread of BH's activities outside of the Nigerian boundaries. At the national level, the government and the police should be tasked with the patrolling of borders and the protection of the citizens in the proximity of national frontiers. There are signs that terrorist groups have found their way through porous borders, and can easily smuggle drugs, arms and people. For effective border management – which would allow the borderland communities to live their lives again under secure and ordinary circumstances – it is necessary to improve four independent but correlated developmental areas:

- Social development.
- Economic development.
- Securing the frontiers.
- Cooperation with neighbouring countries.

The involvement of security agencies is indispensable for the improvement of the national borders. An independent department would have to strictly scrutiny the crossing of goods and services. The set-up of an immigration office close to the borders is crucial too. They can look into the movement of people while the armed forces are to guard the territorial integrity of Nigeria.[70] They have to bolster the defense along the frontiers, especially in those areas where the porosity of borders cause major problems. These steps would help to strengthen the boundaries.

Alongside these safety and security-driven measures, the management of state frontiers should also be concerned with social issues. We need to look at borders not as mere lines on the map, but rather as specific locales made up of all the people straddling along and across them. These borderlanders need to be supported and provided with the antibodies against the terrorist spread in the area. This is the social dimension of development. The growing violence has led to humanitarian crises, and triggered a great migratory wave too. The destabilization has led to economic crises; the insecurity has affected the cost of transportation, and foreign companies have imposed their charges.[71] The additional expenses increased the cost of doing business in the whole region (food prices, healthcare supplies etc.). Not to mention the ruination of tourism as an industry. These factors deepened the poverty in Nigeria. Penury is one of the

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[70] Akinyemi, "Globalization and Nigeria Border Security," 2.
[71] Onuoha, *A Danger Not to Nigeria Alone*, 8.

reasons why young men join these terrorist organizations. Economic decline, poverty, starvation, unemployment, illiteracy, and weak family structures contribute to the radicalization of young men.[72] They are susceptible to extremist ideologies and when the terrorists offer financial support, a community and a chance for revenge, the youngsters are willing to believe and endorse extreme renditions of religious teachings. BH members are conveying a narrative of the government as weak and corrupt.[73] Using the desperation of these young and vulnerable men, Abu Bakar Shekau's armed troops can recruit and train new members for activities ranging from errand running to suicide bombings.[74] Since the borderland communities are struggling with the above-mentioned problems, creating jobs for young people, improving security, protecting human rights in the region, deepening regional and international cooperation would all be decisive factors to complement effective border management strategies.

Presumably, nearly everyone has heard about the "Bring back our Girls" project, which was promoted by public personalities such as Michelle Obama. The program is trying to draw attention to the sect's barbarous action in 2014, when its affiliates attacked a school in Chibok, Borno State, along the border with Cameroon. They kidnapped more than 200 female students. On May 5, 2014, the leader of the group Shekau had announced that the girls will not be released and will be sold to traffickers. This was the point when the terrorist threat posed by BH attracted local and international indignation, including from the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Israel. All these countries have offered financial, technical and advisory support.[75] It is extremely important that such aid did not diminish in the next months and, if possible, that other members of the international community joined forces to support the Nigerian state in the containment of the terrorist threat.

Recently, BH has perpetrated several crimes in Cameroon, thus laying bare the dysfunctionality of border management related to security issues. At the border with Chad, local communities are dealing with problems similar to those mentioned above – poverty, lack of security, etc. In order to find effective, long-term solutions related to the porosity of Nigerian borders, it is necessary that all the neighboring countries in the region established an effective cooperation at their borders. The fact that contiguous countries have also mobilized their armies

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[72] Freedom C. Onuoha, *Why Do Youth Join Boko Haram?* (United States Institute of Peace, Washington, DC, 2014), 1, http://www.usip.org/publications/why-do-youth-join-boko-haram (Accessed on October 23, 2015).
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Onuoha, *A Danger Not to Nigeria Alone*, 5.

and launched attacks against BH further raises the chances that the frequency and the extent of cross-border attacks will increase.

Recently Nigeria, Chad, Niger and Benin engaged in joint activities, with a focus on security enhancement along borders by means of a Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTF)[76] dispatched in the Lake Chad region.[77] The MJTF was made up of soldiers from Nigeria, Niger and Chad to guarantee public security across their common boundaries.[78] In April 2012, the member countries launched the mandate of the MJTF again, after the operation had almost been abolished in the previous years. The participants' aim is to set up counter-insurgency operations against threats in their countries. [79] Nigeria has a military-led organization too which was established in 2009, to defend the country against armed attacks. This military-led Joint Task Force operates distinctly from the MNJTF, but their aims are common.[80] Both forces are fighting against terrorist militias, and they are committed to protect the boundaries and the people living in borderland regions.

Military joint initiatives are obviously a good first step toward the securing of border areas. However, more cooperation is required also in the field of developmentally and socially oriented joint policies aimed at ameliorating the overall socio-economic conditions of the borderlands. A more cooperative effort is paramount at any policy-making level: from the local/national, wherein the everyday cross-border interactions occur; through the regional, whereby neighboring states can strengthen and coordinate their joint efforts; up to the supranational, as embodied by the member states of the UN General Assembly. If cross-border terrorism is to be properly contained, cooperation must be the defining keyword of the next operational phase.

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[76] "In 1998, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria established the MJTF in the region primarily to address transboundary crime and secure border communities in the Lake Chad Basin. The MJTF comprises troops contributed by Nigeria Chad and Niger," see The National Human Rights Commission, *The Baga Incident and the Stituation in North-Eastern Nigeria: An Interim Assessment and Report* (The National Human Rights Commission, Abuja, 2013), 29, https://www.premiumtimesng.com/wp-content/files/2013/07/NHRC-Baga-Report.pdf (Accessed on October 25, 2015).
[77] Onuoha, *A Danger Not to Nigeria Alone*, 10.
[78] Ibid.
[79] The National Human Rights Commission, *The Baga Incident*, 29.
[80] Ibid.

6.   Conclusion

As made evident throughout the present work, Nigeria's border porosity is one of the most important root causes explaining BH's international reach, thus justifying the need for tighter control at the borders. BH is taking advantage of the poverty widely spread in borderland regions to set up their own commercial trade of arms, drugs, people, and the like as locals are in desperate need for quick money. The inadequate response and management of borderland areas by the Nigerian government, more specifically the insufficient infrastructures, economic barriers, poor healthcare and education services, have only helped BH spreading their activities with the support – or at least with less resistance – of locals in such border areas. It shall not be indeed forgotten that Nigerian boundaries are merely lines separating political entities, and thus do not take into account the fact that along and across them live numerous and large communities which BH exploits to stretch its activities far beyond national frontiers.

It follows that it is required a different approach to border management which takes into consideration also such border communities as they could be made more resistant to BH and therefore play a fundamental role in preventing them from expanding their reach to other Sahel countries. We debated whether border enforcement is coterminous with effective border management and we came to the conclusion that, although border security is an extremely important pillar of border management, it shall not be the sole. On the contrary, we highly regard that an effective approach by the government should comprehend policies aimed at developing the border community. Firstly, there is the need for developing the society from both a wealth and economic perspective and therefore the government should focus on the protection of human rights, law enforcement, creation of jobs for the youth, as the latter are the most easily radicalized. Secondly, security of border regions remains a top priority but it should involve for example independent security agencies for scrutinizing the traffic of goods and services as well as in immigration office responsible for the safe movement of people. Last but not least, we recommend Nigeria to increase the cooperation with neighbouring countries for a common action plan.

In other words, we call for an approach to border management that do not only views frontiers as lines demarcating territorial sovereignties, but as a holistic, comprehensive and developmental approach that considers in the first place the wealth and safety of border communities. This is key, according to us, for weakening BH's transnational reach.

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