

**Suffering, Solidarity and Spirituality: The Lived
Experiences of Internally Displaced Women in
Northern Nigeria**

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ABSTRACT

Since 2009, the Nigerian state, has been under intense attack by an Islamic extremist group popularly known as *Boko Haram*. As a result of the insurgency, over two million persons have been internally displaced, 53% of whom are women. Previous studies on the insurgency have focused on the insurgents, and their abduction and use of women as sexual objects and suicide bombers, but none of those studies explored the perspectives of the women who were affected by the insurgency. In addition, women's experiences with displacement have been neglected whether or not they were abducted by *Boko Haram* at any time during the conflict. Previous scholarly literature on women in conflict and displacement settings have given much attention to women's experiences of sexual violence in conflict while neglecting other forms of suffering and hardship that women endure in such settings. This thesis utilizes a hermeneutic phenomenological approach located within the constructionist paradigm to explore the lived experiences of women who were displaced by *Boko Haram* insurgency. This approach allowed me to explore women's perspectives of their experiences, both with *Boko Haram* and with displacement, and the historical, socio-cultural and structural factors that have underpinned those experiences and how they interpret them.

I used semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to generate data with 52 women who had been internally displaced for an average of three years. The participants were recruited from camps and host communities in Jos and Abuja, Northcentral Nigeria. A critical thematic analysis of the participants' accounts was done using relevant literature and theoretical concepts from both continental African women's thinking and United States Black women's thinking as interpretive tools. Foucault's ideas on power were also used to make sense of some aspects of the data.

The study reveals that *Boko Haram* insurgency and displacement created an arena for different forms of gender-based violence against women and their families. It also shows that the participants in this study were exposed to serious situations of insecurity, suffering and struggle for survival. The women's suffering was compounded by a weakened socio-political system in Nigeria, and lack of tangible support from the government. While their experiences are similar to those of other internally displaced women and refugees in other settings, their living conditions were no different from

those of the poorest Nigerian citizens. In-depth analysis reveals that the women's suffering in displacement was part of a cycle of violence arising from culturally informed gender inequality, poverty and social inequalities, as well as structural violence at different levels.

Rather than cast the internally displaced women as helpless and powerless victims, this study foregrounds the women's strength and resilience, and projects them as the heroines of the *Boko Haram* insurgency. The study shows the women's commitment and determined effort to ensure the survival of their male partners, their children and their communities. Survival for the women in this study demanded a process of continuous negotiation with both humans and supernatural beings. They drew on their knowledge of their indigenous cultures, which includes African traditional religious beliefs, their Christian and Islamic religions and their personal spirituality, to resist different forms of oppression while they pragmatically supported their men in their struggles. Their culture, religion and spirituality also provided a framework for interpreting their experiences of violence, including sexual violence, and gave them the impetus for selfless service towards their collective survival as internally displaced persons.

The findings of this study suggest that in the midst of all the suffering and struggle of internally displaced women in Nigeria, religion and religious leaders are very relevant as sources of support. Yet, their problems can only be effectively addressed if there is renewed political will to address widespread poverty, social inequities and gender inequality. This will involve creating an enabling environment with appropriate infrastructure to support economic growth and creating equal educational and economic opportunities for men and women. It will also involve efforts to promote cultural reorientation towards cultures that recognize, appreciate and encourage the contributions of both men and women in family, community and nation building.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my Husband GODSPower AHAMEFULA CHIABUOTU, who encouraged me to make the hard decision of changing my career from Nursing to Public health, and also sacrificed everything he could to support me through this PhD journey;

And

My most cherished Seed of Hope, JOSEPH CHIMEMEJOGHIM (My God did not offend me) AHAM-CHIABUOTU, who was conceived during the course of this PhD, after thirteen years of trying. I looked forward to nursing him as my next project after this thesis, but the dream of having him was cut short at 19 weeks of gestation. The hope he brought into my life and that of my husband can never be taken away. Chimemejoghim will forever be part of this PhD story, not just because he was conceived during the course of this study, but because losing him brought me into deeper connection with the participants of this study, who lost many of their children during *Boko Haram* attacks and in displacement.

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PREFACE

Although *Boko Haram* (BH), an Islamic extremist group, has been in existence in Nigeria since about 2003, I became conscious of their multiple attacks in Northern Nigeria in 2009. Having spent part of my life studying and working in Northcentral Nigeria, inter-religious conflict marked by serial killing and arson was not particularly new to me. Hence before 2009, I felt BH insurgency was one of those uprisings and I hoped that things would settle down as in previous conflicts, but I was wrong. The conflict increased in intensity, bombs were detonated at different public places accompanied by mass destruction of lives and property, and Nigeria witnessed, for the first time, the use of suicide bombers and mass abduction of women and girls. Communities were displaced, both formal and informal camps were set up in Northeast and Northcentral Nigeria, and like most conflicts in Africa, women and children constituted the majority of the displaced persons.

None of the BH attacks which occurred between 2009 and 2015 attracted as much national and international attention as the one that involved the abduction of about 276 school girls from Chibok Local Government area in Borno State, Northeast Nigeria. Community groups, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Human rights activists and media houses came together to protest against the abduction and what they considered as government inaction towards the release of the girls. A number of women took the lead to organize an activist group known as *#BringBackOurGirls*. The group carried out daily protests, which involved sitting out in different strategic locations in the capital city of Abuja, for over a hundred days. They also launched online protests, which involved individuals and groups from different nationalities demanding the release of the girls.

I observe, however, that while most national and international media attention focused on the abducted schoolgirls, very little attention was paid to the experiences of over 2 million women and children who were displaced by the insurgency, and were languishing in formal and informal camps, and host communities. Scholars instead focused on BH activities and the government's response to the insurgency. But in late 2014 and early 2015 a few media reports were published about the conditions of Internally Displaced Women (IDW) and other BH abductees who had escaped captivity. One of them titled "Rape Cases in IDP Camps", published by an online

Newspaper (Babsol) in 2015 caught my attention as did another article by Sherwood (2014) in the Guardian Newspaper, which focused on the experiences of previous BH abductees . There were also anecdotal reports of transactional sex (sex for goods and money) in some IDP camps and host communities but there was no robust research on the situation (UNOCHA, 2015, 2016). Media reports of rapes and trafficking of women and children in IDP camps were dismissed by NEMA as mere misinformation (Obradovic, 2015), but in a report for Refugee International, Vigaud-Walsh (2016) insisted that there were serious protection issues and high risk of sexual and gender-based violence in IDP camps in Maiduguri. Nigeria is not the only country where there are no official records of victims of sexual violence in IDP camps. The same situation was reported in Haiti, where reports of such incidents were only recorded by humanitarian and grassroots agencies (Davis, 2010; Institute for Justice & Democracy In Haiti, 2011).

It is important to note that BH insurgency is not the first armed conflict associated with reports of sexual violence against women in Nigeria, but very few scholarly articles were published concerning the experiences of women in those conflicts. For example, during the Nigerian civil war (1967 to 1970) there were anecdotal reports of sexual violence, forced abduction of young women (married and unmarried) and forced marriages. At this time, a number of my relatives were abducted by Nigerian soldiers. Some of them returned home after the war, while others chose to stay with their abductors for reasons best known to them. My own mother narrated stories of how she narrowly escaped abduction and forced marriage to a Nigerian soldier. According to her, she had to sleep overnight in a shallow pit in order to hide from the soldier who was about to take her away in the presence of my father who was helpless at that time. So far, I am yet to read any published article on women's experiences during the Nigerian civil war.

Sexual violence was also reported in some of the militant operations that occurred in the oil-rich Niger-Delta area of Nigeria from the 1990s to 2009. During the conflict, women were raped by government soldiers, members of the Joint Military Forces, the Police, and some members of militant groups (Arieff, 2011; Odoemene, 2012). Odoemene (2012) argues that sexual violence was systematically used by the state (through the military) to humiliate and intimidate the Ogoni nation (the Ogoni people are one of the minority groups in Niger-Delta area of Nigeria).

From my previous knowledge about what had happened in past Nigerian conflicts, I considered any form of silence about the experiences of the displaced women, especially with respect to sexual violence, as unacceptable. Therefore I decided to undertake an in-depth study with a focus on the experiences of women who were displaced from their habitual places of residence, and were taking refuge in camps and host communities in northern Nigeria. I began the study with a primary focus on the women's experiences of sexual violence, but during the study progressive literature review and community consultation redirected my attention to broader issues relating to both BH attacks and displacement as they affected the lives of the women.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ATR	African Traditional Religion
BH	Boko Haram
CAN	Christian Association of Nigeria
CCEP	Centre for Caring, Empowerment and Peace Initiative
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of discrimination against Women
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
FBO	Faith-Based Organization
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender-based Violence
HIV/AIDS	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IAWG	Inter-Agency Working Group
ICPD	International Convention on Population and Development
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDMC	International Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IDW	Internally Displaced Women
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
IPOB	Indegenous People of Biafra
JTF	Joint Task Force
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger-Delta
MOSOP	Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People
MOSSOB	Movement for the Soverign State of Biafra
NCFR	National Commission for Refugees

NDHS	Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NHREC	National Health Research Ethics Committee
PTSD	Post-traumatic Stress Disorder
RHRC	Reproductive Health Response in Conflict Consortium
RUF	Revolutionary United Force
SLTRC	Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission
TRREE	Training Resources in Research Ethics Evaluation
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS
UNDR	Universal Declaration on Human Rights
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission on Refugees
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VAW	Violence against Women
WPS	Women Peace and Security
WHO	World Health Organization

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Sexual violence: The Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) (2005) defined sexual violence as “any sexual act, attempted sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances or acts to traffic a person’s sexuality, using coercion, threats of harm or physical force by any person regardless of relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work” (IASC, 2005, p. 9)

However, an operational definition, which clearly identifies specific acts that will be regarded as sexual violence will be utilized for this study. Thus, sexual violence will include acts or attempted acts of rape and gang rape; sexual harassment including forced stripping and tests for virginity; forced incest, forced marriage, or forced abduction for sexual slavery and prostitution; sexual exploitation including transactional sex; forced pregnancy, forced abortion, contraception or sterilization; and genital mutilation of any kind or threats of such, perpetrated against women of reproductive age in public and/or private life; which is likely to cause physical psychological or social harm to them (IASC, 2005; Megan, Grimm, & Kunz, 2007; RHRC, 2003; UNHCR, 2003)

Intimate partner sexual violence: This is any form of sexual violence, perpetrated against a woman by a person with whom she is currently or previously involved in an intimate relationship.

Non-partner sexual violence: This is any form of sexual violence, perpetrated against a woman by any person other than a current or previous intimate partner; whether the perpetrator is known to her or not.

Rape: Rape in this study will be defined as any forceful or coercive attempted or actual sexual contact with a woman, be it in form of a touch or penetration of the anus, mouth or vagina with any body part or object, without her “explicit and continual consent” (Ashmore, 2015, p. 6), that is likely to cause physical, psychological or social harm to her, irrespective of the woman’s relationship with the perpetrator.

Refugee: A refugee is defined as “someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion” (UNHCR, 2010, p. 3).

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs): According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), IDPs are “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” (UNOCHA, 2004, p. 2).

Sexual exploitation: “Any actual or attempted abuse of position of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purpose including but not limited to profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another” (UN, 2003, p. 1) and it includes all forms of transactional sex such as sex for money and protection.

Structural violence: Structural violence exists when there is inequitable and unjust social arrangements leading to exclusion, exploitation or marginalization of certain individuals or groups in a society, based on their race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or other social attributes or social positioning.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: CONFLICT-INDUCED DISPLACEMENT AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Simply, crisis exacerbates gender inequalities. While entire communities suffer the impact of armed conflict, women and girls are often the first to lose their rights to education, to political participation and to livelihoods, among other rights being bluntly violated... These are manifestations of deeper systemic problems. We need to better understand the social, economic and power dynamics which result in the continued enslavement of and use of violence against women, particularly in conflict situations (Kyung-Wha, 2015, para. 12-13).

Armed conflicts present several challenges for affected individuals, families and communities. The multiple armed conflicts that have occurred in different locations around the globe have generated a severe crisis due to the forced displacement of persons that accompany those conflicts. Reports from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reveal that one in every 122 humans was “either a refugee, internally displaced, or seeking asylum” in 2015 (UNHCR, 2015b, p. 1). Globally, the number of refugees and IDPs continues to increase but within the past few decades, IDPs have consistently outnumbered refugees (Hampton, 2014). According to the Norwegian Refugee Council International Displacement Monitoring Centre (NRC, IDMC), between 1989 and 2013, the number of IDPs ranged from slightly above 15 million to about 33 million, while the number of refugees rose from below 10 million in 1997 to 24 million in 2013 (NRC, IDMC, 2014). By the end of 2015, the number of persons who were internally displaced as a result of conflict and violence globally, had risen to 40.8 million, and 12 million of that number were displaced by conflicts in sub-Saharan African countries, which includes Nigeria (NRC, IDMC, 2016).

Refugees and IDPs often share certain characteristics but they are legally and politically different (Laurie & Petchesky, 2008; Phuong, 2000) (see section on definition of

terms). Both groups are technically protected by International Humanitarian Laws (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2010) and IDPs have been granted a legal status as a population with rights and humanitarian needs by the UN and other related bodies (Kidane, 2011). Yet, formal recognition of the needs of IDPs has not always been backed by commensurate actions, and thus have not translated to positive impacts on their lives (Austin, Guy, Lee-Jones, McGinn, & Schlecht, 2008; Laurie & Petchesky, 2008). IDPs also tend to receive less attention in terms of research and support than refugees. Hence they are likely to suffer more systemic abuse and deprivation than refugees.

Since 2009, the Nigerian state has been under intense attack by an Islamic extremist group popularly known as *Boko Haram*, and most of the attacks have concentrated in Northeast and Northcentral Nigeria. The Hausa expression, “*Boko Haram*” (BH) is arguably interpreted as “western education is forbidden” (Chothia, 2015; National Counterterrorism Center, 2016; Peters, 2014). This group, whose official name is *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad* (an Arabic expression for "People of the *Sunnah* [People who follow Prophet Muhammad's teachings and examples] for preaching and *jihad*¹ Group") (Chothia, 2015), aims at toppling the Nigerian government and setting up an Islamic State. As at December 2015, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) – Nigeria, reported that about 2,152,000 persons had been internally displaced as a result of the insurgency, 53% of the displaced persons were women, 13% of them resided in camps while 87% lived with host families (IOM – Nigeria, 2015).

Conflict induced displacements always represent a sudden turn in the direction of people's lives and they expose affected individuals to various risks and difficulties (Megan et al., 2007; Vigaud-Walsh, 2016; Zapata, 2017). As people are forced to move away from their habitual places of residence, they often lose their sources of livelihood, protection and social support (UNHCR, 2008). However, even though entire communities suffer in conflict induced displacement, women suffer in specific ways as a result of their gender, social roles and social positioning (Kyung-Wha, 2015; UNHCR, 2008). Displaced women are more likely to be female heads of households

¹ *Jihad* is literally translated as struggle or effort. It is used in three major contexts in Islam. First is the internal struggle of a believer to live out the Islamic faith, the second is their struggle to maintain a good Islamic society and the third is their struggle to defend Islam even if it is by force, usually referred to as the holy war. However whenever *Jihad* is called for in Nigeria, it implies war.

and they tend to lack access to education and medical care (Global IDP Project, 2004b in Alzate, 2008; Davis, 2010; Vigaud-Walsh, 2016). They often lack security (Alzate, 2008; Farr, 2009a) and are likely to live in extreme poverty with its associated problems such as overall poor living conditions, risk of infections, malnutrition, and mental health problems (Davis, Bamrah et al., 2013; 2010; UNHCR, 2008). Women in conflict and displacement settings are particularly vulnerable to all forms of violence including sexual violence (UNHCR, 2003). Although the World Health Organization (WHO), (2013) reports that physical, sexual and psychological violence against women can occur in the context of the family, the community, and the state, women in displaced settings tend to be disproportionately affected. Perpetrators of violence against women (VAW) in any setting can range from intimate partners (WHO, 2013) to family members and strangers (Alzate, 2008; Farr, 2009b; Kinyanda et al., 2010; UN, 1993; UNHCR, 2003; UNHCR, 2015a; WHO, 2002; WHO, 2013; Wirtz et al., 2014).

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly of December 1993 declared violence against women as a violation of human rights and freedom; a pervasive act that cuts across diverse cultures and social and economic classes. It is a global health emergency, requiring immediate and concerted effort for its mitigation (UN, 1993). Violence against women is defined as “any act of gender-based violence (GBV) that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation, whether occurring in public or private life” (UN, 1993, p. 2). The terms violence against women and gender-based violence have often been used interchangeably but the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) extended the definition of GBV to highlight men as possible victims of GBV (IASC, 2005; Okello & Hovil, 2007). However, it is known that women experience GBV more often than men in most settings, and its impact on them is far reaching (Atuhaire & Kaye, 2016; IASC, 2005; IDMC, 2014; Kheswa & Dayi, 2014; UN, 1993). Violence against women is often engendered by socially assigned role expectations and unequal power relations between males and females in diverse cultures (Bloom, 2008; Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2005; UN, 1993). Ertürk and Purkayastha (2012) however, challenge us to think beyond harm or injury meted against an individual woman in our conceptualization of violence against women, and begin to reimagine it as a systematic abuse emanating from both cultural and structural arrangements that deepen inequality between men and women and marginalize women.

Hence efforts to study violence against women in any setting, including conflict and displacement settings, should include a commitment to look beyond specific incidents or acts of violence in order to understand the complex interplay of cultural, socioeconomic and political factors in producing and reinforcing violence against women.

Of the different forms of violence that women experience in conflict and displacement settings, sexual violence, especially as a weapon of war has attracted the most policy and scholarly attention. This is evident in recent UN Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) which includes resolutions 1820 and 1888 (2009), resolution 1690 (2010) and resolution 2106 (2013). In addition, several studies on violence against women in contemporary conflicts, especially African conflicts (Alcorn, 2014b; Arieff, 2011; Blay-Tofey & Lee, 2015; Farr, 2009b; García-Moreno; Hossain, Zimmerman, & Watts, 2014; Kinyanda et al., 2010; Njiru, 2014; Steiner et al., 2009; UN, 1993; UNHCR, 2003; UNHCR, 2015a; UNHCR Donor Relations and Resource Mobilization Service, 2014; WHO, 2013; Wirtz et al., 2014; Wood, 2009), have also focused on the problem of war rape and its consequences. For example, studies on women's experiences in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda conflicts (Albutt, Kelly, Kabanga, & VanRooyen, 2017; Bartels et al., 2012; Bartels et al., 2011; Bartels et al., 2010; Csete, Kippenberg, & Human Rights Watch, 2002; Human Rights Watch, 2014; Kelly, et al., 2012; Kelly, et al., 2011; Kinyanda et al., 2010; Mukamana & Brysiewicz, 2008; Mukwege & Nangini, 2009; Nowrojee, Human Rights Watch, & Human Rights Watch Women's Project, 1996; Rodriguez, 2007; Steiner et al., 2009; Taback, Painter, & King, 2008) mostly focused on the systematic use of rape with extreme violence by soldiers and militants to intimidate and dehumanize women from opposing groups.

While there is much focus on sexual violence as a weapon of war, very little attention has been given to the sexual violence experience of women in displacement settings. The few studies on the experiences of displaced women such as Casey et al. (2011) and Bartels et al. (2011) report that non-military men (civilians) continued to sexually violate women and children after the war in DRC. It has also been reported that even influential IDPs tend to use their privileged positions as IDP leaders to exploit women and girls sexually (Alzate, 2008). Osita-Njoku and Chikere (2015) explored the

consequences of BH insurgency on women, and highlighted that women were victimized from both (the insurgents and the government) ends of the conflict.

Worthy of note in the literature is that the dynamics of sexual violence in displacement settings tend to differ from that of conflict settings. Intimate partner violence (IPV), sexual abuse of girls under 18, defilement and forced early marriages occurred more frequently than rape by strangers in IDP camps in Uganda (Henttonen, Watts, Roberts, Kaducu, & Borchert, 2008). IPV also occurs more than non-partner sexual violence or rape by strangers in displacement settings (Okello & Hovil, 2007; Wirtz et al., 2014). There appears to be a general agreement on the higher prevalence of IPV over rape by strangers, even for non-conflict settings (Blay-Tofey & Lee, 2015; Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts, 2006; Hossain, Zimmerman, & Watts, 2014).

Available literature also reveals differences in the level of occurrence of sexual violence at different stages of displacement and place of residence. Women are mostly violated when they flee from their homes (Ward & Marsh, 2006); when they leave the camp in search of food, water, fuel or other staples (Farr, 2009a); or when they reside in host communities (Colombia University Program on Forced Migration, 2010 in Buscher, 2010). However, these differences have not been thoroughly researched as it appears that no study has attempted to compare the experiences of victims residing out of camps to those living in camps.

Notably, most of the studies, especially in Africa, tend to present women's experiences of sexual violence as the all-important issue while other social problems that women encounter in conflict and displacement are not discussed. I found very few articles (Aroussi, 2017; Cardoso et al., 2016; D'Errico, Kalala, Nzigire, Maisha, & Malemo Kalisya, 2013; Njiru, 2014; Tiruneh, Chuang, Ntenda, & Chuang, 2017), which have given attention to household violence and the multi-level systemic and structural violence that affect the lives of women in such settings.

The situation is no different in the context of the ongoing BH insurgency in Nigeria. There is general paucity of data on the experiences of women who were affected and displaced by the conflict. The few available studies (Human Rights Watch, 2014; IOM - Nigeria, 2014; Maiangwa & Agbiboa, 2014; Maiangwa & Amao, 2015; Oriola, 2016; UNOCHA, 2015, 2016; Zenn & Pearson, 2014) focus on sexual violence against women by BH or BH's use of women in the conflict. The emphasis has been on BH's

abduction of women and girls, especially girls in schools, for gang rapes, Islamization and forced marriages; and their use of women and girls as suicide bombers (Human Rights Watch, 2014; IOM - Nigeria, 2014; Maiangwa & Agbiboa, 2014; Maiangwa & Amao, 2015; UNOCHA, 2015, 2016; Zenn & Pearson, 2014). To the best of my knowledge, no study has explored the overall experiences of women who were displaced by the insurgency.

Neither sexual violence as a weapon of war, nor sexual violence in itself, represents a holistic picture of women's suffering in conflict and displacement settings (Aroussi, 2017; D'Errico et al., 2013; Wirtz et al., 2014), especially in Africa, and Nigeria in particular. It is known that women's suffering in conflict and displacement settings, is always reflective of pre-conflict and pre-displacement social conditions (Kyung-Wha, 2015; UNHCR, 2008), some of which may have triggered the conflicts in the first place. Therefore, excessive focus on sexual violence in such settings tends to underplay the relationship between sexual violence and other forms of violence against women, and other socio-cultural and economic problems in the society. Such narrow focus also detracts from the structural violence meted against women by governments, and has been criticized by some scholars (Aroussi, 2017; D'Errico et al., 2013) as a distraction from the general health problems of women and their overall suffering beyond the conflict. The UN resolutions, which overly emphasized the problem of sexual violence against women in the form of war rape have been criticized as having "obscured the extent and multiplicity of women's suffering and led to a deprioritization of women's other needs during transition" (Aroussi, 2017, pp. 489-490). For example, in Colombia IDP settings, women's struggle with multiple displacements, forceful conscription of their young ones into militant groups, poverty induced transactional sex, intimate partner physical violence and reproductive control were reported as severe challenges whether or not they experienced sexual violence by militants (Wirtz et al., 2014).

Exclusive focus on sexual violence also casts women in such settings as mere victims. It tends to ignore the contributions they make to address the numerous challenges they face in such settings, and how they utilize indigenous knowledge and methods to provide support for themselves (Aroussi, 2017; D'Errico et al., 2013). A study by D'Errico et al. (2013) on the case of DRC conflict reveals how women, who were more concerned with the non-functional health care systems were able to form local

organizations to address their numerous vulnerabilities which they considered to be more pressing than war rape.

The problem of sexual violence in contemporary conflicts cannot be totally overlooked. Its use against women remains pervasive (Farr, 2009a; Marks, 2013; Megan et al., 2007; Ward & Marsh, 2006), and the effects of sexual violence are often severe, multifaceted and transgenerational. It has been associated with moderate to severe mental health problems, including depressive and suicidal symptoms (Alizadeh, Ravanshad, Rad, Khamnian, & Azarfar, 2015; Devries et al., 2013; Dossa, Zunzunegui, Hatem, & Fraser, 2015; Gelaye, Arnold, Williams, Goshu, & Berhane, 2009; Leithner, Assem-Hilger, Naderer, Umek, & Springer-Kremser, 2009; Pico-Alfonso et al., 2006); physical injuries, stress related diseases, chronic pelvic pain, high risk for sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS, unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions (Hassen & Deyassa, 2013; Singh, Sinha, & Jain, 2015; WHO, 2013). Victims often have to deal with social consequences such as stigmatization, family and community disintegration and economic problems, some of which are associated with raising children who are products of sexual violence (Farr, 2009b; Kohli et al., 2015; Mukamana & Brysiewicz, 2008; Nowrojee et al., 1996; Steiner et al., 2009; Trenholm, Olsson, & Ahlberg, 2011; Wirtz et al., 2014).

Yet, studying and addressing sexual violence in conflict and displacement settings as an isolated social issue, while neglecting other problems associated with conflict and displacement may be similar to treating one symptom of a disease while neglecting other symptoms as well as the root causes of the disease. It is therefore necessary to obtain a holistic picture of women's experiences in conflict and displacement while understanding how those experiences are connected with the broader social conditions surrounding the women before, during, and after the conflicts. In the next section, I review available literature with a focus on the links between sexual violence as well as other forms of violence against women in conflict and displacement settings, and structural violence and inequalities that exist in societies.

1.1 Violence against women, social inequality and structural violence

There is paucity of data, especially with respect to qualitative research, on the links between violence against women in conflict and displacement settings and broader

socio-cultural, economic and political factors. So far, only a few studies (Alzate, 2008; Burgess & Campbell, 2015; Campbell & Mannell, 2016; Ertürk & Purkayastha, 2012; Harcourt, 2015; Njiru, 2014; Oriola, 2016; Schuller, 2015) have discussed such links. Both Burgess and Campbell (2015) and Harcourt (2015) highlight the complex interplay of economic and political factors in driving IPV against women in settings they described as marginalized settings, which includes post-conflict and displacement settings. It has been shown that violence against women in such settings is associated with long standing poverty, inequalities, gender discrimination and the structural violence that exists in societies (Alzate, 2008; Aroussi, 2017; Burgess & Campbell, 2015; Harcourt, 2015; Njiru, 2014; Rylko-Bauer & Farmer, 2016). For example, in a study on GBV against displaced women in post-earthquake Haiti, Schuller (2015) emphasized the role of long-standing structural violence and gender inequality in women's vulnerability to different forms of violence and oppression after the earthquake. The multi-level violence and discrimination against women in such settings often manifests as lack of provision of basic needs, poor legal protection, and social and cultural norms that support and reproduce inequalities between men and women (Rylko-Bauer & Farmer, 2016; Alzate, 2008). Hence scholars are challenged to always locate violence against women within a web of inequalities that exist at local, national and global levels (Ertürk & Purkayastha, 2012). In a related argument Marks (2013) recommends that sexual violence against women in conflict be examined within the social context where it occurs.

In the context of BH insurgency, I found only one study (Oriola, 2016) which attempted an in-depth analysis of women's experiences with BH, while giving due consideration to the socio-cultural contexts in which the insurgency and violence against women occurred. Drawing on the work of Marks (2013), Oriola (2016) argues that BH's use of women was informed by the local culture that promoted gender inequality and objectification of women. While Oriola's (2016) study is very revealing of the socio-cultural drivers of violence against women by BH, it did not explore the perspectives of the women who were affected by the insurgency. His study also took a narrow focus on women's encounter with BH and did not explore the overall impact of the conflict and subsequent displacement on women. I, however, argue that analysing women's experiences without considering their perspectives will only present a very partial picture of their realities. A holistic understanding of women's experiences in a

conflict and displacement setting requires a gendered reading of their perspectives of their overall experiences in relation to the broad socio-cultural, economic and political factors that underpin and give meaning to those experiences.

In light of the paucity of research on the other aspects of women's experience of armed conflict and displacement, as well as the lack of women's perspectives on their experiences with BH insurgency, I set out to explore the lived experiences of IDW, in the context of the on-going BH insurgency in Northern Nigeria. While not ignoring the problem of sexual violence, the study takes a holistic approach to foster a nuanced understanding of women's perspectives on their experiences with BH attacks and displacement. Following the call made by Kyung-Wha (2015), the study explores the historical, cultural, and socio-economic factors, as well as the power dynamics that influenced the various forms of violence and oppression that affected IDW's lives during the insurgency and while they lived in different displacement settings. Such an approach promises to improve the likelihood of foregrounding the complex contextual factors that influence women's gendered realities and their agency in dealing with those realities. It is also by understanding women's perspectives of their experiences that we hope to close the persistent gaps between elite and academic interventions and women's everyday interpretations of their realities in such extreme settings (Campbell & Mannell, 2016) since social actors remain experts of their own experiences (Tracy, 2012).

1.2 This study's focus

In this study, I explore in-depth, the experiences of IDW who reside in and out of IDP camps in Northcentral Nigeria. The study opens up discussion on the plight of a population (IDPs) that has hitherto been neglected in scientific research in Nigeria. The aim is to provide a nuanced and contextual understanding of the lived experiences of women with BH attacks, displacement and sexual violence and how they interpreted and made meaning of those experiences. Such nuances in understanding are achieved by exploring how cultural, historical and socio-political factors continue to impact their lives even after they settle in displacement. The knowledge produced in this study will assist government policy makers, humanitarian agencies and health workers in developing policies and programmes that has potential to more effectively address the challenges of IDW. It will also provide insight on how to address some broader social

problems such as gender inequality, violence against women, armed conflicts and internal displacement which continue to affect the lives of women in Nigeria and Africa as a whole.

The study began by exploring IDW's experiences with BH attacks and displacement as an entry point to discuss the more sensitive issues concerning violence against women including sexual violence (Hussain & Khan, 2008). I explored both intimate partner and non-partner violence within the context of displacement without ignoring possible sexual violence experiences in the hands of BH. Even though it is recognized that females of all ages (from childhood to old age) are targeted for violence against women (Steiner et al., 2009), this research examined the experiences of IDW and girls, aged 15-49 years, an age group that has been particularly targeted in most war and conflict settings (Kinyanda et al., 2010). I also explored structural violence and factors that influence women's responses to the violence they experienced in conflict and displacement. In addition, in recognition of the inherent strengths and resilience of women in challenging situations (Megan et al., 2007), this study attempted to explore possible strengths and resources that could be harnessed for addressing the problems of both displacement and all forms of violence against IDW.

The key questions that this research seeks to address are as follows:

1. What are the lived experiences of IDW in Nigeria?
2. How do IDW interpret and make meanings of their experiences with both displacement and sexual violence?
3. In what ways have IDW in Nigeria supported or resisted violence and oppression in displacement?
4. What resources have IDW drawn on to address the problems of conflict and displacement?

1.3 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is organized in eight chapters with a post-script. Chapter two presents a contextual background to the study. It discusses the socio-political history of Nigeria, which includes a discussion of the previous ethno-religious conflicts that have occurred in the country, as well as a broad description of the on-going BH insurgency. It also presents a discussion on the importance of religion in the Nigerian culture.

Chapter three discusses the gender lens through which I interpret the data generated for this study. I begin by exploring the status of women in the Nigerian culture and then discuss the theoretical concepts I used as interpretive tools for the data analysis. I review a range of Black women's thought and Foucault's thought on power and governmentality. In chapter four I review the methodology and methods adopted for this study as well as my positionality as a researcher. The broad ontological and epistemological perspectives that underpin the study, which are constructionism and hermeneutic phenomenology, as well as the methods I adopted in data generation and analysis are discussed, alongside ethical issues that are relevant to the study. Chapters five, six and seven present the key findings of this study. Chapter eight is the discussion and conclusion chapter. The thesis ends with a post-script which is a reflection on the key lessons I learnt during the fieldwork and the entire research process.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL AND CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides some background to the structure and history of Nigeria, as well as the ethno-religious conflicts leading up to BH insurgency, which are of relevance to understanding the insurgency and the experiences of women who were displaced by it. The chapter is organized into five sections. I begin with a brief description of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, presenting an overview of its political structure and system of governance. I then go on to discuss the pre-colonial history of the country with emphasis on the religio-political history of two Northern Nigerian empires, namely the Kanuri-led Kanem-Borno Empire and the Hausa-Fulani Empire which later became the Sokoto Caliphate. The history of these two empires is important, firstly because they represent the major geographical areas mostly affected by BH insurgency, and secondly because of the link the insurgency has with some historical ethno-religious conflicts that occurred in them in pre-colonial times. In the third section, I discuss the impact of colonial political arrangements on post-colonial ethno-religious conflicts and the influence of religion and religiosity in the current Nigerian socio-political system. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the history of BH, the ideology undergirding the sect, and their attacks on Nigerian communities. I will also highlight the current gaps in literature on BH especially in respect to how the insurgency has affected women.

2.2 The political structure of the Nigerian State: An overview

Nigeria is a federal republic state, located at the central portion of the Gulf of Guinea, along the West African coast of the Atlantic Ocean, occupying a land mass of about 923,768 square kilometers (356,669 square miles) (George, Shadare, & Owoyemi, 2012). It is bounded by Cameroon from the southeast to some parts of the northeast, and Benin Republic to the west. Some portion of the northeast is bounded by Lake Chad, but all other parts of the north share borders with Niger Republic. Given the

population of about 182 million (UN, 2015), Nigeria is described as the giant of Africa. Nigeria is broadly divided into six geopolitical zones, namely Southsouth, Southeast, Southwest, Northeast, Northcentral and Northwest, but for administrative purposes, the country is divided into 36 states and a Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The 36 states of Nigeria are also divided into local governments for ease of administration. There are 774 local government areas, administered by locally elected chairpersons and councilors. The local government system was designed to bring the government as close to the people as possible, to enable grassroots' involvement in governance. Figure 1 is a map of Nigeria showing the six geopolitical zones the 36 states and the federal capital territory.

Over 250 tribes, often referred to as ethnic groups, occupy Nigeria, and over 200 languages are spoken by the different peoples. However, there are three dominant groups in present day Nigeria, which arguably account for 68% of the Nigerian population (National Geographic, 2017). The Hausa-Fulani ethnic group occupy most of Northern Nigeria with Hausa as the dominant language, the Yoruba ethnic group, the Southwest and the Igbo ethnic group occupy most of the Southeast (Jacob, 2012; National Geographic, 2017). Similar to Hausa language, Igbo language dominates the Southeast, while Yoruba language is spoken in most of the Southwest. Although the official language is English, most Nigerians use a Nigerian version of Pidgin English in everyday interaction, especially when they interact with people who do not speak their local or common language.

Nigeria is a secular state according to the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, (1999). The country adopts a presidential system of government with three arms, namely the executive, the legislature and the judiciary, both at the federal and the state level of government. The laws are made by the legislature, interpreted by the judiciary and implemented by the executive. However, Nigeria operates a tripartite legal system, consisting of the statutory laws, which were borrowed from the British, customary laws which operate mostly in the South, and Sharia² (Islamic) laws which operate in the North. The customary courts adjudicate on issues on local customs and

² "Sharia is a system of Islamic law based on four main sources: the Qur'an (Allah's revelation to the Prophet Muhammed); the Sunna, or actions of the Prophet, described in the Hadith; the Qiyas or process of analogical reasoning based on understanding of the principles of the Qur'an or the Hadith; and the Ijma, or consensus of opinion among Islamic scholars" (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

traditional norms. Given the multiple ethnic groups with their diverse cultural traditions and customs in Nigeria, the customary courts are highly contextualized in their operations. In the North, the customary courts are replaced by the Sharia courts which operate according to the tenets of Islam (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999).

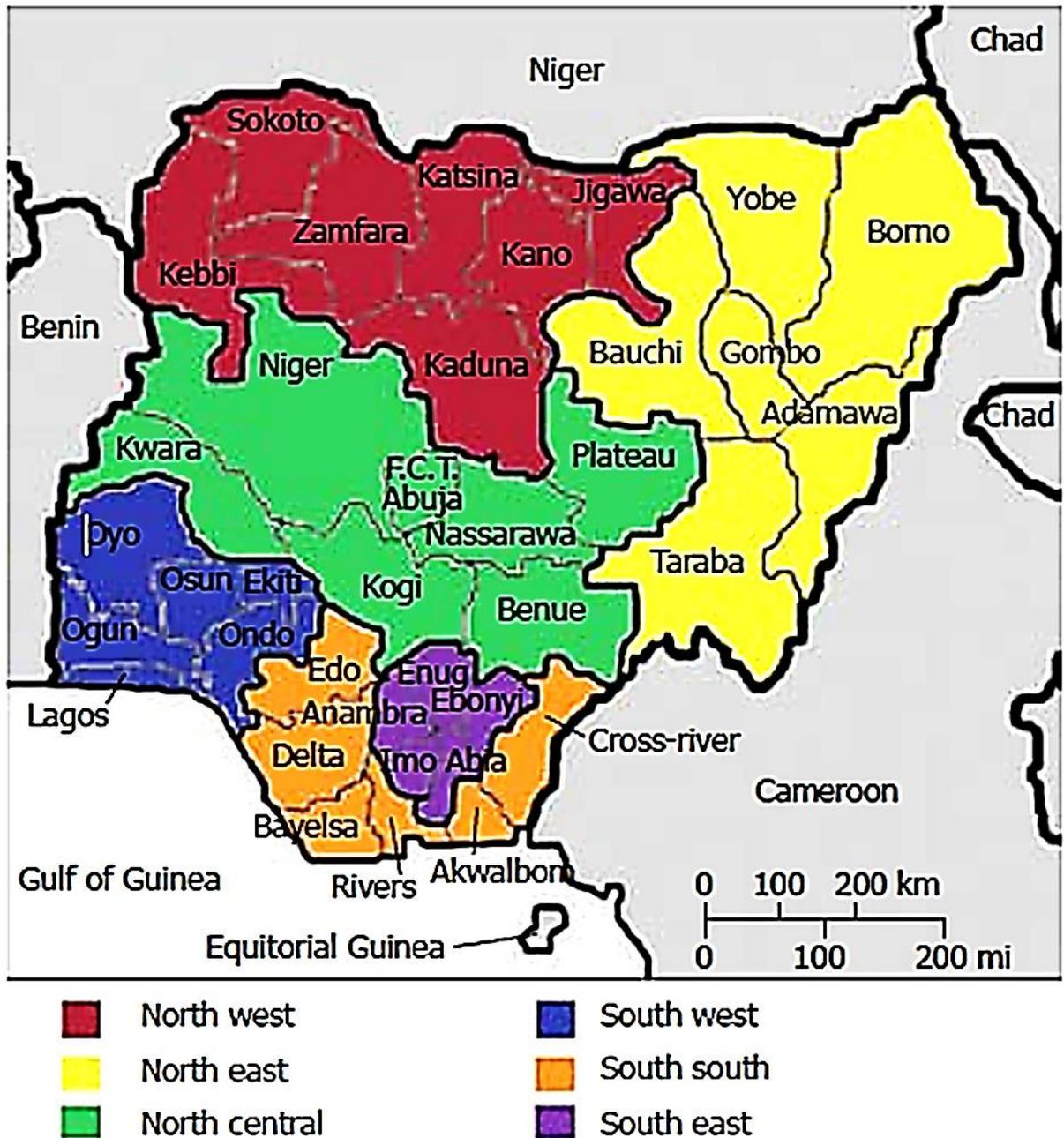


Figure 1: Map of Nigeria showing the 6 geopolitical zones and 36 states

Adapted from Current prevalence pattern of hypertension in Nigeria: A systematic review, by J. T. Akinlua, et al., 2012, PLoS One, 10 (10): e0140021 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4603956/>. Available via license: [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

2.3 Precolonial history of the Nigerian peoples

Before British colonization, the different peoples of Nigeria had their different political systems, which varied in their levels of organization (Falola & Heaton, 2008; Ogunrotifa, 2013). Two centralized political systems existed in the northern Sahel areas, namely the Hausa-Fulani kingdom, which later became the Sokoto Caliphate in the Northwest, and the Kanuri led Kanem-Borno empire in the Northeast (Falola & Heaton, 2008; Pieri & Zenn, 2016). Other centralized political systems were the Benin Empire in the Midwestern area, the mostly Yoruba Oyo empire in the Southwest, which operated from the city of Ile-Ife under various *Obas* (kings), and the Opobo kingdom in the Niger-delta or Southsouth region (Embassy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2016; Falola & Heaton, 2008). Figure 2 is a map of Nigeria showing some of the linguistic groups. The map also indicates the locations of the pre-colonial empires mentioned above.

The rest of the people of the South, especially the Southeast existed as decentralized groups, organized as small villages under elders or democratically elected chiefs (Falola & Heaton, 2008). The following sub-section presents a fairly detailed discussion of the religio-political history of Northern Nigeria. The two ancient kingdoms, namely the Kanuri-led Kamen-Borno Empire of the Northeast, and the Hausa-Fulani (Sokoto) Empire of the Northwest will be discussed, based on their contextual relationship with the current BH insurgency. The influence of Islam on other peoples of Nigeria and how it shapes the overall political environment of the Nigerian state will also be discussed briefly.

2.3.1 The religio-political history of northern Nigeria

The Kanem-Borno Empire, located in present Northeast Nigeria was a wealthy kingdom. According to Falola and Heaton (2008) the empire's central city of Kanem accumulated great wealth due to its strategic position on the trans-Sahara trade route. The empire operated a centralized monarchical system of government under the office of the *Mai* (traditional monarch) from the Saifawa dynasty, who administered the kingdom through some chiefs and well-trained security guards.

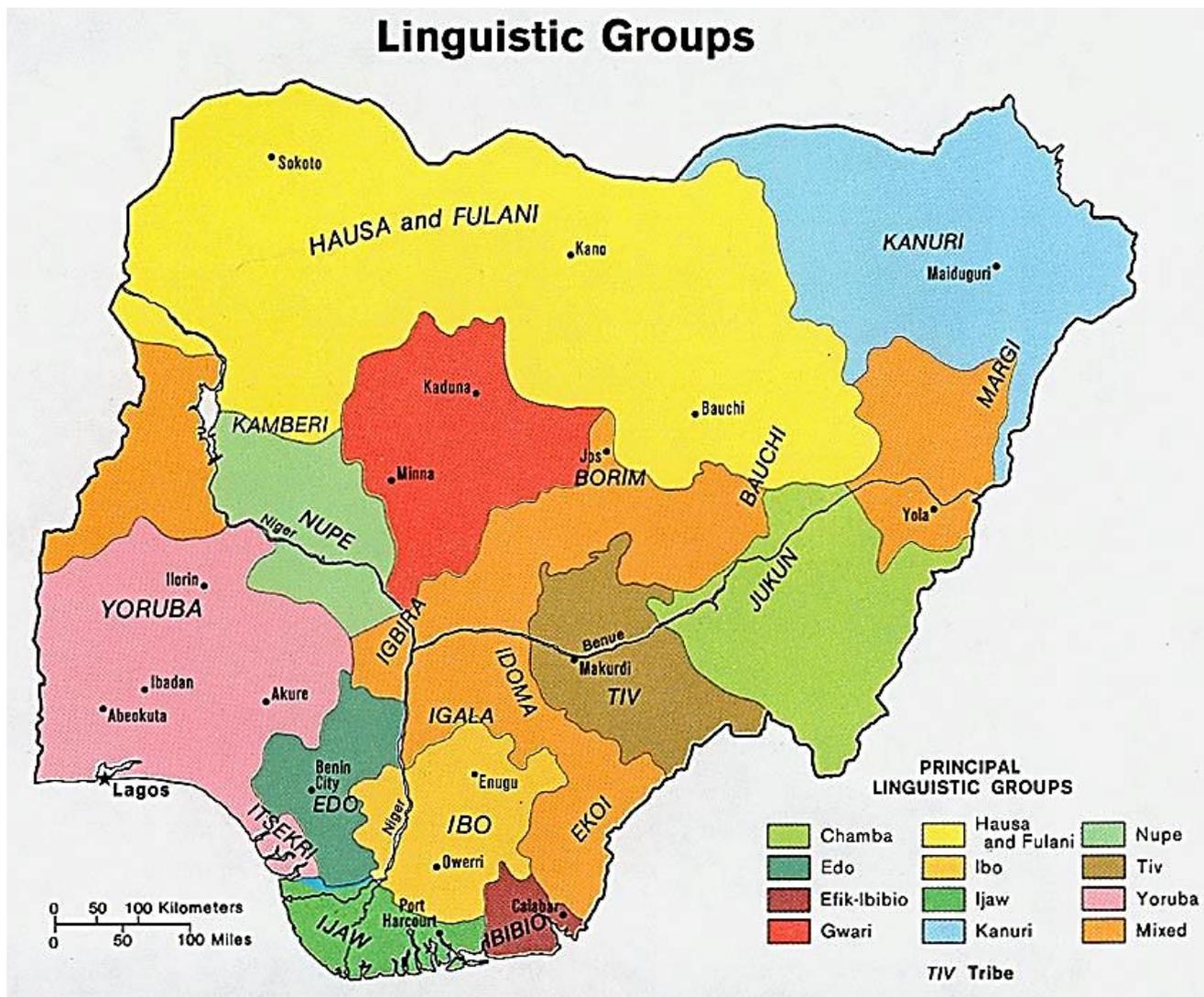


Figure 2 : Map of the ethno-linguistic groups of Nigeria

Reprinted from The University of Texas in Austin, Univeristy of Texas Libraries, by Central Intelligence Agency, 2006, retrieved from. https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/nigeria_linguistic_1979.jpg. "Courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin."

Despite internal political intrigues and struggles the Kanem-Borno Empire extended and sustained its authority for a fairly long period of time, falling and rising, losing territories and reacquiring them (Falola & Heaton, 2008). The kings and merchants of the Kanem-Borno empire established trade links with Arab and Berber merchants as early as the 11th century, and were thus the first to convert to Islam, while the Hausa-Fulani Kings followed in the 15th century (Comolli, 2015; Harnischfeger, 2008). Their business associates who introduced them to Islam also established schools where the

children of the kings and elites were trained in Islamic studies (Falola & Heaton, 2008; Harnischfeger, 2008).

For the Hausa and Kanuri rulers, Islamic religion was a way of gaining power, prestige and trade relationships with the wealthier Islamic civilizations, especially Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Thus the rulers' practice of Islam was superficial as they still held the beliefs and practices of their animist indigenous religions (Falola & Heaton, 2008). Islam was mostly a courtly religion with very few converts outside the kings' palaces, hence the kings accommodated 'heathen' fertility cults and animist practices in their kingdoms (Comolli, 2015; Harnischfeger, 2008). Although Islam gained more followers in those areas over a period of time, the nominal Islamic practices and tolerance for animism continued until the early 18th century when Shehu Usman Dan Fodio, an Islamic scholar of Fulani extraction, began an Islamic revivalist movement (Harnischfeger, 2008; Pieri & Zenn, 2016).

Usman Dan Fodio's ancestors were said to have migrated to Nigeria from present day Senegal but he spent most of his early years in the Hausa land of Gobir (Comolli, 2015). His studies exposed him to Sunni Islam and other mystic aspects of Islam. Thus his Jihadist movement started in the Hausa land of Gobir, where he preached against the ruling class, condemning their permission of animist traditional practices in their courts. He also condemned the ruling class' non-conformity to the Sharia, greed, corruption, and other forms of social injustice such as heavy taxation of the poor nomads, exploitation, and enslavement of the lower class, who were mostly his Fulani brothers, (Fulbe, 2017; Pieri & Zenn, 2016).

Usman Dan Fodio's preaching was acceptable to the masses. He attracted a good following from both the Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups, and his followers consisted of both genuine Muslims and those who did not really share his passion for Islamic orthodoxy but felt marginalized and oppressed by the Hausa kings (Falola & Heaton, 2008; Fulbe, 2017). He was however forced to go on *hijira* [emigration] with his many followers when his life was threatened by the Hausa king of Gobir in 1804. He utilized his period in seclusion to organize his group for a *jihad* against the Hausa rulers and all other 'infidels' in 1908, during which he conquered the entire Hausa-Fulani Empire. He also made attempts to overrun the Kanuri-led Kanem-Borno Empire but was resisted. He succeeded, however, in acquiring some portions of the kingdom and established an

Islamic state known as the Sokoto Caliphate (Agbiboa, 2013b; Falola & Heaton, 2008; Fulbe, 2017; Harnischfeger, 2008; Pieri & Zenn, 2016).

On establishing the Sokoto Caliphate, Dan Fodio replaced the Hausa rulers with his Fulani kinsmen. He handed over the political authority to his son, Mohammed Bello, and his brother, Abdulahi. Mohammed Bello became the first Sultan of Sokoto, which is a religio-political office, but Usman continued his Islamic preaching and writing. Inadvertently, an initial search for religious purity was turned to a search for political kingdom. Usman Dan Fodio practiced the same nepotism he condemned the Hausa rulers for following, and political authority in the Caliphate was acquired not by qualification but by birth and belonging to the Fulani ethnic group (Agbiboa, 2013b; Harnischfeger, 2008). To date, the Hausa traditional culture has been subsumed in Islam, whereas the Fulani people, especially the nomadic (*Bororo*) Fulani, tend to maintain their unique ethnic identity, including their animist traditional practices. The urbanized Fulani ruling class controls the religio-political office of the Sultan which is otherwise referred to as the *Sarikin Islamiya* or the ruler of Muslims.

In order to protect the Kanuri-led Kanem-Borno empire from being overrun by Dan Fodio's jihad, a prominent Muslim, Al-Kanemi, took over the leadership of the kingdom to prove that they were not infidels and thus should be spared in the *Jihad* (Pieri & Zenn, 2016). Al-Kanemi, under the guise of protecting the kingdom dethroned the traditional kings or '*Mai[s]*' and ruled the kingdom with his slaves, but it was reported that Al-Kanemi was neither committed to orthodox Islam nor the Kanuri cultural heritage (Harnischfeger, 2008; Pieri & Zenn, 2016). General disaffection and internal struggles within the kingdom brought about progressive weakening and loss of prominence of the Kanem-Borno Empire, and consequently, the loss of prominence of the Kanuri Ethnic group, both in Islam and in political power. Although both empires remained separate entities, the Sokoto Caliphate grew stronger and expanded and enjoyed total control of the Northwest until 1903 when the British conquered the Caliphate (Falola & Heaton, 2008). Islam however remained a major influence in the two kingdoms, but the Islamic political authority remained in the hands of the Sultans of Sokoto, whereas the people of Kanuri ethnic group expect to have the pre-eminence in Islamic matters since they were the first to accept Islam as a religion in Nigeria (Alozieuwa, 2012; Pieri & Zenn, 2016). Although there have been ethnic and political struggles for pre-eminence among the peoples of the two kingdoms, Islam remains

their only shared identity and rallying point against other minority ethnic groups in the North as well as other regions of the country (Harnischfeger, 2008).

The people of the middle belt (Northcentral zone) and all of the Southern region continued their indigenous cultural and religious practices until the Hausa-Fulani Muslims, in their continued quest for territorial and Islamic expansion, carried the jihad to Northcentral and Southwest Nigeria. They also established trade links with other ethnic groups, and migrated to other places in the process of their nomadic living. For example, they traded with the Yoruba people of the Southwest, during which they exchanged hides and skin for kola nuts, and with the trade, introduced them to Islam (Falola & Heaton, 2008; Harnischfeger, 2008; Peel, 1967). Islam was also introduced to the people of the Benin Kingdom who shared boundaries and often intermingled with the Yoruba people, but the majority of the people in both Benin and Yoruba-led Oyo kingdom maintained their indigenous religious practices. It was reported that early converts to Islam in Yoruba land carried out their religious practices in secret and it was not uncommon for people to practice both Islam and the African traditional religion (ATR) (Peel, 1967).

According to Nkwoka (2000) “Islam... kept knocking unheeded at the tightly closed religious doors of Igboland [Southeast Nigeria] until Christianity came and met with an open flood gate of acceptance” (p. 326). This was largely because the emir-led, hegemonic Islamic religion did not appeal to the highly democratic and independent minded Igbo people. The early translation of the Christian Bible into the Igbo language gave general access to religious information, thus affirming their individual rights to question and evaluate the new religion (Nkwoka, 2000). Eventually the animist Southeastern traditions were largely abandoned for Christianity. Thus Nigeria became divided into mostly Muslim North, mostly Christian Southeast, and mixed religious Southwest, and central zones. The ethno-religious divide in pre-colonial Nigeria, significantly influenced the colonial organization of Nigeria, and subsequently the political organization of present day Nigeria. In the next section, I discuss how the British built on the pre-colonial political organizations in forming the political structure of the Nigerian state and how such formation continues to impact the socio-political organization of present day Nigeria.

2.4 Colonial organization of Nigeria and post-colonial ethno-religious conflicts

When the British conquered present day Nigeria in the early 19th century, they initially organized the people into the Northern Protectorate, the Lagos Protectorate, and Niger Coast or Oil River Protectorate. However, in 1914, the Northern Protectorate and the two Southern Protectorates were amalgamated to form the entity known today as Nigeria (Embassy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2016). For ease of administration, the colonial administrators utilized an indirect rule system, where they controlled the central and regional governments but appointed some indigenous people as warrant chiefs, in-charge of taxation and other government activities. The organized political system of the Sokoto Caliphate, with their operational Sharia courts and written laws, was easy for the British to adapt. Hence the Sokoto Caliphate was allowed to maintain their religio-political authority in Northern Nigeria and the Sultans were permitted to use the Sharia in their courts (Falola & Heaton, 2008; Harnischfeger, 2008; Ogunrotifa, 2013). Thus Sharia law became embedded in governance in Northern Nigeria until Nigerian independence on October 1, 1960, and subsequently, the drafting of the Nigerian constitution, when it appeared to have lost its significance.

There appeared to be general stability and progressive economic development immediately after Nigerian independence in 1960 but that phase of Nigerian history was short-lived. By the divide and rule system, amalgamation of the North and South, and British support for the Northern prime minister, in the person of Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Belewa, a seed of ethnic/religious conflict that would take several years to uproot in Nigeria was planted (Alozieuwa, 2012; Jacob, 2012; Saka, Amusan, & Jegede, 2017). Within a short period, the Nigerian struggle for independence degenerated to a struggle for ethnic/religious interests and a spiral of cataclysmic events ensued (Jacob, 2012; Okoli & Iortyer, 2014). The country experienced her first bloody military coup d'état on 16 January 1966. The Major Nzeogwu-led coup overthrew the government of Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Belewa, and installed Major Aguiyi Ironsi of the Igbo extraction (George et al., 2012). A counter coup on 29 July in the same year, led to the assassination of Aguiyi Ironsi, and the installation of General Yakubu Gowon from the North (McGowan, 2003).

Following the coups, there were multiple power tussles within the military (in line with Ibo-Hausa-Yoruba ethnic divides) which eventually spilled over into civil unrest in the Northern part of the country. While the military was plotting and executing coups and counter coups, the Muslim Hausa-Fulanis massacred the Christian Igbos who lived among them in Northern Nigeria. Eventually, Major General Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu called a retreat and declared the Republic of Biafra (consisting largely of the Igbos in the Southeast and other minority tribes in the Southsouth) a sovereign state. When diplomatic moves to reclaim Biafra by the central Nigerian government failed, the Nigerian civil war broke out on 6 July 1967 and lasted for three and half years, ending 15 January, 1970 (Jacob, 2012; Stremlau, 2015). From 15 January 1966 until 1979, when General Olusegun Obasanjo handed over power to Alhaji Shehu Shagari, the military was in control of Nigeria. Civilian rule of the second republic did not also last for long. On December 31, 1983, General Muhammadu Buhari led another military coup and usurped power from Shehu Shagari. That marked the beginning of another long phase of military dictatorship in Nigeria. That phase of the Nigerian history lasted until May 29, 2009, when General Abdulsalam Abubakar handed over power to General Olusegun Obasanjo, who had retired from the military and was democratically elected as president.

Nigerian democracy as we have today, which is popularly referred to as the third republic, has also been characterized by political instability and dissatisfaction, with ethno-religious unrest. There is also widespread poverty, social inequity and unequal socio-economic development. The socio-economic realities of the Nigerian state are as multiple as its ethnic and cultural realities. To a very large extent the ethno-religious divide influences the overall socio-economic development (Salawu, 2010). The predominantly Christian South accepted western education even though they retained their indigenous cultural identities, largely as a result of their prolonged contact with the British during the Atlantic Slave Trade prior to colonization. The mostly conservative Islamic North resisted western education for a long time (Agbibo, 2013b; George et al., 2012). Even though western education is now more acceptable to some people in Northern Nigeria, current data reveal disparities between the North and South. The Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) of 2013 shows that 61.1% and 62.8% of citizens in the Northeast and Northwest respectively had no formal (western) education, compared to 18.7% in the Southeast, 13.0% in the Southsouth and

17.1% in the Southwest. Similarly, only 2.9% and 1.4% of the citizens had more than secondary education in the Northeast and Northwest respectively, compared to 8.8% in the Southeast, 9.1% in the Southsouth and 11.0% in the Southwest (NPC & ICF International, 2014). Danjibo (2009), citing a news item in Al Jazeera, described Nigeria as the 5th largest oil producing state, but having the majority of its population living below the poverty line of \$1 per day. The Northern region is significantly poorer in comparison to the South (NPC & ICF International, 2014) despite the fact that the post independent Nigeria has been mostly ruled by people from the North. A combination of the ethno-religious divides, differential exposures to western education and ideologies and gross social inequalities have resulted in a country that is not cohesive. In addition, some religious and ethnic groups are marginalized, misrepresented, or underrepresented in political appointments and resource distribution (George et al., 2012; Jacob, 2012). Several minority ethnic groups that traverse the North, middle belt, and Niger-delta areas have also been subsumed in the dominant ethnic groups and sometimes forced to adopt dominant identities. While there has been an effort to remain united as a nation, the very diverse worldviews of the different peoples of Nigeria generate multiple conflicts. Lack of good governance with overtly malfunctioning social systems in Nigeria compounds the problems. The result is a sense of general dissatisfaction among the people; distrust for people of different religious and ethnic groups; widespread corruption; and pervasive national and religious militancy and conflicts (Danjibo, 2009; Salawu, 2010). More often than not, ethno-religious interests outweigh national interests and commitments to nation building (Salawu, 2010). When loyalty to the state is placed against loyalty to religion, Nigerians are more likely to stand on the side of religion (Onapajo, 2012).

It is important to note however that, taken as separate issues, the multi-ethnic identities in Nigeria have not engendered as many problems and crises as the religious (Christian-Muslim) divide (Adesoji, 2010; Danjibo, 2009). In essence, in the multi-ethnic country of Nigeria, religion appears to be both the most important binding and dividing factor, and hence no social issue can sufficiently be discussed without making reference to religion (Danjibo, 2009). In the next section, I present a focused discussion on religion in present day Nigeria, followed by a discussion on BH insurgency in relation to previous religious crises that have occurred in Nigeria.

2.5 Religion and religiosity in present day Nigeria

Argument about the definition of religion and related terms, such as spirituality and faith, is still ongoing in literature but for this study, I adapt Roberts and Yamane's (2012) conceptualization of religion and Woodhead's (2011) proposal on the major concepts of religion. Robert and Yamane (2012 p. 12) conceptualized religion as an "interdependent system by which a community of people are bonded

- by a shared meaning system (a faith or a worldview);
- by a set of myths (beliefs), rituals, and a symbol systems that sacralise the meaning for the members;
- by a sense of belonging to a reference group;
- by a system of ethics or values that is directive in the lives of the members; and
- by a set of routinized expectations and patterns".

In a related argument, Woodhead (2011) proposed five major concepts of religion, which according to Cipriani (2011) are actually dimensions of religion, and they include: religion as culture, religion as identity, religion as relationship, religion as practice, and religion as power.

Roberts and Yamane (2012) discussed the differences among faith, religion and spirituality. From their perspective, religion is a social phenomenon involving grouping of people around a faith perspective or a world view, shared meanings and belief systems whereas faith is an individual phenomenon. It involves trust in a being, or object, as essentially valuable above all other things or beings. On the other hand, spirituality is an individualized system of beliefs often portrayed by people who, though rejecting organized religion, believe that their inner lives are oriented towards God, the sacred or the supernatural (Roberts & Yamane, 2012). However, they observed that individual spirituality has been an integral component of most organized religions in the form of prayer, meditation, piety, obedience and so on, and as such, spirituality in itself, cannot be divorced from religiosity.

Religiosity, either as organized religion, personal faith or spirituality is important in the lives of most Nigerians. As already shown in previous sections, the history of Nigeria is

intimately connected with a continuous process of religious expansion and transformation. In fact religion and religiosity are framed as omnipresent in Nigeria (Hock, 2008), and some assert that God has become a Nigerian (Adogame, 2010) or that Nigeria is God's country (Griswold, 2008). Griswold (2008) conducted research on religious influence across Nigeria, and reported that some of her research participants believed that despite the bold claim that the United States of America is a nation under God, that God is merely tolerated in America, while He is celebrated in Nigeria.

Religiosity among Nigerian peoples pre-dates the introduction of the Abrahamic religions. Before the introduction of Christianity and Islam, African peoples, including Nigerians, believed that they inhabited a world that was simultaneously "God-made", because it transcends them, and human-made, because they could neither understand nor relate to the world outside of human relationships (Adamo, 2011; Lugira, 2009; Onwubiko, 1991). People of different ethnic groups and communities engaged in communal worship of different deities, including worship of ancestors. Sacred practices embedded in worship constituted the pivot around which all other human interactions were built (Ezenweke & Nwadiolor, 2013; Lugira, 2009). With the introduction of Christianity and Islam, those traditional belief systems were not totally eliminated. Rather, they were, to a greater or lesser extent, transformed and refined to accommodate the new religions. Many communities, therefore, still retain some ATR practices alongside Christianity and Islam.

While religious divides in Nigeria follow along ethnic divides, it is not uncommon to find communities where adherents of Christianity, Islam and ATR live together and intermingle with one another, especially in Northcentral and Southwest Nigeria. Notably, the interaction of the indigenous traditional cultures with Christianity and Islam often produce religious world views and practices which are mostly unique to each region or ethnic group in Nigeria. Hence the religious landscape of Nigeria is highly complex (Adogame, 2010). For example, Christian women in Northern Nigeria are more likely to dress in long maximally covering attire than Christians in the Southeast or Southwest. After a detailed analysis of Christianity among one of the ethnic groups in Northcentral Nigeria, Elawa (2015) argues that the existence of Christianity is limited to the specific way it is embodied in particular cultures. Likewise, a Muslim in Southwest Nigeria is likely to be influenced by the Yoruba

cultural heritage and adopt religious practices that can be seen as anti-Islam to a Muslim in Northern Nigeria. For example, while Muslims in Northern Nigeria are more or less rigid in terms of association with other religions and accepting their practices, Muslims in Southwest Nigeria display what Turner (2014) described as elasticity in their religiosity. They are more likely to explore and combine religious beliefs and practices according to what suits them, and are also more tolerant of people from other religions (Adogame, 2010; Janson, 2016). Rather than resisting western education, as is typical of fundamentalist Northern Muslims, they celebrate it (Griswold, 2008). Some Muslims in the Southwest have gone as far as openly combining Islamic and Christian practices in a novel religious practice known as *Chrislam* in order to appropriate the power of both religions (Janson, 2016). Similar to Elewa's (2015) assertion about Christianity, Adogame (2010) reports that West Africa has a brand of Islam that is significantly African. The new age movements, Christian science and different indigenous and imported cultic groups are also finding their own niche within the religious marketplace (Adogame, 2010; Soares, 2016), all of which interact with ATR to produce unique religious worldviews.

In recent times, the proliferation of charismatic/Pentecostal religious groups has generated a new boost in the religious landscape (Janson, 2016; Meagher, 2009; Ukah, 2011, 2016; Van Gorder, 2012) both for Christians and Muslims (Griswold, 2008). Christian Pentecostal teachings which often take the form of marketing religion as not just a means to salvation, but also as a means to political and economic power, are particularly attractive to Christians who previously attended Orthodox churches (Griswold, 2008; Meagher, 2009; Ukah, 2011, 2016). Revivalist Islamist movements that seek to address temporal/material needs as well as the issues of salvation have also arisen and are equally attractive among those professing Islam (Adogame, 2010; Janson, 2016; Obadare, 2016). ATR has also experienced a revival, as increasing cultural awareness that marked the post-colonial era also brought about increased assertion of religio-cultural identities and revival of indigenous traditional practices in some places (Lugira, 2009).

Revivalism in the three major religions is also accompanied by a spirit of competition geared to attract as many members as possible to each of the groups. Through competition, religious groups (Christians, Muslims, and ATR) inadvertently transform, reshape and expand one another (Adogame, 2010; Griswold, 2008; Janson, 2016;

Larkin, 2016). For example, some Islamic groups have decided to expand their days and style of worship to include Sundays and introduce charismatic mode of prayers and worship in order to keep their members busy on Sundays while Christians attend Churches (Adogame, 2010; Larkin, 2016; Obadare, 2016). This is to prevent the likelihood that Muslims would be attracted to attend Christian churches. Some scholars have also argued that the upsurge of Pentecostal revivalism, especially their heightened focus on warfare against supernatural powers, is born out of the resilience of the ATRs, and that ATR acts as a silent voice that propels Pentecostal prayers and miracles (Biri, 2012).

Much of the growth in religious revivalism in Nigeria have been attributed to decline in the country's economy (Adogame, 2010; Griswold, 2008; Janson, 2016), and a disconnection between the government and the people (Onifade, Imhonopi, & Ugochukwu, 2013). There is perceived failure of the colonially introduced capitalist economy to satisfy the needs of the people, hence the people return to religious beliefs and practices for both spiritual and material solutions (Griswold, 2008; Meagher, 2009; Ukah, 2011, 2016). Thus religion in whichever sphere is portrayed as the answer to all life's challenges from poverty to childlessness, ill-health, and oppression from evil spirits, which are often believed to be the cause of most misfortunes (Janson, 2016).

Revivalist Pentecostal churches tend to preach what is popularly known as the 'prosperity gospel'. The prosperity gospel includes teachings about work ethics and appropriating spiritual power for material gain, and victory over poverty and other social deprivations. It also emphasizes the principle of giving to churches or to charity in order to achieve financial prosperity. With rise in the prosperity gospel, religion contributes significantly towards economic transformation, socio-political change and urban development in Nigeria (Adogame, 2010; Afolabi, 2015; Lanz & Oosterbaan, 2016; Meagher, 2009; Ukah, 2016). Establishing churches or other religious outlets is one of the most lucrative businesses, if not the most lucrative business, in Nigeria because of the 'freewill' or tactically coerced donations that members make to the churches. Griswold (2008) reports that an interviewee in her research asserted that banks in Nigeria would collapse if prosperity-gospel Pentecostal churches closed down. This is because, they generate a large amount of money at every church service.

Although religion has been instrumental in conflict resolution and peace building (Basedau & De Juan, 2008; Ilo, 2015) in Nigeria, ethnic and religious bigotry are also central to all forms of nationalism and conflict in Nigeria, especially when theological ideas are politicized (Adogame, 2010; Basedau & De Juan, 2008; Basedau, Vüllers, & Körner, 2013; Salawu, 2010; Shehu, Othman, & Osman, 2017; Van Gorder, 2012). There are no reliable data on the number of ethno-religious conflicts in post-independence Nigeria, but it has been documented that 40% of such crises have occurred between 1999 and 2016, and they have contributed to Nigeria's worsening economy (Salawu, 2010). The BH insurgency, is a typical example of a religious crisis with an ethnic and political undertone. The next section presents a review of relevant literature on the BH insurgency, which covers the history of the group, their ideology and their modes of operation.

2.6 The Boko Haram sect and insurgency: Origins, ideology and attacks on the Nigerian state

Presently, Nigeria has three major conflict areas: the Boko Haram (BH) insurgency in the Northeast; the intermittent uprising by secessionist groups known as the Movement for the Sovereign State of Biafra (MOSSOB) and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the Southeast; and persistent attacks on local agrarian communities by nomadic Fulani herdsmen in most of the Northcentral and some of the Southern regions. However, the BH insurgency appears to be the most devastating of all Nigerian conflicts, with fatalities that are only second to the fatalities of the Nigerian civil war (Okoli & Iortyer, 2014).

The time and circumstances behind the genesis of the BH sect is not very clear in literature (Alozieuwa, 2012; Onuoha, 2012b). One assumption is that the group has been in existence since 1995 when an Islamic fundamentalist sect, named Ahlulsunna wal'jama'ah hijira was established by one Abubakar Lawal at the University of Maiduguri, Borno state, but that the sect remained non-violent until Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf assumed its leadership in 2002 (Onuoha, 2012a; 2012b). A second assumption is that the group started in one mosque known as Alhaji Mohammed Indimi Mosque in Maiduguri in 2001. It was reported that some members of the mosque who were disenchanted with the government decided to leave Maiduguri for Kanamma village in Yobe state where they created a base and named it 'Afghanistan' (Onuoha, 2012b). The

name Afghanistan was chosen because of the Islamic revivalism that characterizes the country of Afghanistan. ‘Afghanistan’ was meant to be a place of seclusion and indoctrination, outside the ‘corrupting influence’ of western civilization. However, the sect began to have clashes with the villagers over fishing spaces and the security forces responded by raiding the base, killing scores of its members (Weeraratne, 2017). It was further reported that the surviving members of the group returned to Maiduguri, reorganized and formalized the group under the leadership of Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf, to launch concerted attacks on the Nigerian state, mostly targeting the security forces in 2009 (Weeraratne, 2017).

Other accounts trace the origin of the sect, primarily to Yusuf. Yusuf is reportedly a secondary school drop-out who received Islamic religious education in some cities of the former Sokoto Caliphate, as well as in Chad and Niger Republic, where he perfected his Islamic fundamentalist and anti-western ideologies (Danjibo, 2009; Okoli & Iortyer, 2014; Pieri & Zenn, 2016). His Islamic ideologies were reported to have been influenced by the Islamic fundamentalist teachings of Ibn Teymiyyah, a Turkish born, 14th century legal scholar (Okoli & Iortyer, 2014). Yusuf³ was said to have begun an Islamist anti-westernization movement which he named *Yusufiyya* (after himself) shortly after his return to Nigeria in 2001, but at some point the group was also referred to as the *Taliban* (Alozieuwa, 2012; Danjibo, 2009). He subscribed to the *Salafist*³ ideology and believed that Islam was superior to both the western and the African traditional cultures, and intended to establish an Islamic state under Islamic laws or Sharia. To him, the Sharia law, which is believed to be based on the principles of equity and human justice, is the solution to the pervasive corruption and bad governance that characterize the secular Nigerian state. (Pieri & Zenn, 2016).

He propagated intolerance to western education, and specifically prohibited mixed schools (Okoli & Iortyer, 2014) because, in his opinion, co-education exposes young people to sexual immorality and engenders girls’ equality to boys. He believed that equal opportunities between boys and girls results in delayed marriages among the girls and non-submissiveness among wives. It is also the sect’s belief that agriculture and trade are the only legitimate economic activities and Islamic education is the only education that is devoid of corruption (Adesoji, Adesoji, 2010; Danjibo, 2009; 2017).

³ Salafism is a highly conservative form of Islam that calls for a return to the historical Islam as practiced in the days of Prophet Mohammed.

They blamed the problem of bad governance and the poor socio-economic development in Northeast Nigeria on the devaluation of Islam and Islamic education in favour of western education, and the imposition of western culture over their indigenous values, since the political class tend to obtain their governing tools and skills from western education (Danjibo, 2009; Pieri & Zenn, 2016).

It is alleged that the sect attracted membership from illiterates, vagabonds, *Almajiris*⁴, drug addicts or unemployed youths, some of whom were university graduates.

Educated members of the group were required to destroy their university certificates in order to prove their allegiance to the group and one of the government officials, who was an ally of Yusuf, had to resign from his political office (Agbiboa, 2013b; Danjibo, 2009; Pieri & Zenn, 2016). As part of his *Salafist* economic revolution, Yusuf established an Islamic complex, an Islamic school and some microfinancing programs that made loans available to young people and some women, who would trade and give certain amounts of the profits as well as their *Zakat*⁵ to him. Thus Yusuf and his Islamic fundamentalist ideology and call for the reinstatement of Sharia was widely accepted, and he attracted a strong following among the poor and socio-economically impoverished people of the North (Agbiboa, 2013b; Pieri & Zenn, 2016). The school later became a training and recruiting ground for terrorists (Agbiboa, 2013b).

Notably, the Yusuf-led Islamic fundamentalism and call for the recognition of Sharia law is not without a precedent. Inspiration towards Islamic fundamentalism and Islamization of a constitutionally secular state like Nigeria, runs from the Usman Dan Fodio's Jihad of the 1800s, which has been discussed in the section on the religio-cultural history of Northern Nigeria, through to the Shiite movement of the late 1970s, and the Maitatsine uprising of 1980s (Adesoji, 2010; 2011; Agbiboa, 2013b). Sharia debates began at the federal level in the constituent assembly of 1979-1980, with the Islamic North's demand for the provision for a Federal Sharia Court of appeal in the 1979 constitution (Adesoji, 2011; Comolli, 2015). During the period of military dictatorship (between 1985 and 1988) both General Ibrahim Babangida and General

⁴ *Almajiri* is the Hausa way of pronouncing the Arabic word "*Al Muhajirin*" (Plural of Muhajirin). Literarily, they are emigrants, for the sake of Allah and His Messenger. *Almajiris* in Nigeria are young children who are sent out of their parents' homes to live with an Islamic cleric who is supposed to be their teacher. These children are left to fend for themselves by begging on the streets and more often than not, they are homeless. In Nigeria, *Almajiri* is synonymous to a beggar.

⁵ *Zakat* is the annual payment of a portion of a Muslim's income or property for charitable purposes according to the Islamic law.

Sani Abacha made unilateral decisions to register Nigeria in the Organization of Islamic states and Development-8 (D-8⁶) respectively (Agbiboa, 2013a).

In 1999, shortly after Olusegun Obasanjo became the president, an uprising occurred in Northern Nigeria, which demanded the expansion of the jurisdiction of the Sharia courts to include criminal law. After much debate, twelve states in Northern Nigeria, including Zamfara, Borno and Yobe States, where BH mostly operates, implemented Sharia law (Adesoji, 2010; Agbiboa, 2013b; Comolli, 2015; Harnischfeger, 2008; Human Rights Watch, 2004). This development threatened the integrity of the secular Nigerian state (Harnischfeger, 2008). Resistance to Sharia in the Northwestern state of Kaduna, which has a large Christian population resulted in a clash, leading to the death of over 2000 people (Ekot, 2009 in Agbiboa, 2013b). The most contested issues within Sharia law were enforcement of a dress code (especially Hijab for women and wearing of long beards for men), prohibition of sales of alcohol, and alleged inhuman and degrading capital punishment for people condemned for stealing, adultery, speaking against the prophet or any other civil or religious offence. Some of such punishments for offenders include flogging, amputation, or a death sentence and killing by stoning or beheading. Such extremist punitive measures were condemned as a breach of fundamental human rights, which neither conformed to the Nigerian constitution nor to Sharia law as interpreted by many non-fundamentalist Nigerian Muslims (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

Both mainstream Muslims, and, later, the BH sect believed that the implementation of Sharia law in the 12 northern states was a politicized and a deceitful tool for politicians to secure votes and popularity. They believed that even though Sharia, as implemented by political office holders, meddled with criminal law, it did not deliver the expected socio-economic dividends recommended in the law (Adesoji, 2010; Human Rights Watch, 2004). Hence most Muslims in Northern Nigeria demanded the implementation of Sharia that is devoid of political of interest (Harnischfeger, 2008). This further explains why BH's call for Islamic fundamentalism was widely accepted by those who believed it was the answer to economic deprivation in Northern Nigeria (Adesoji, 2011; Pieri & Zenn, 2016). However, while most of the Northern Muslims share BH's belief that the western ideology of secularism has failed, some of them disagree with

⁶ Development-8 is an organization for cooperative development of 8 major Islamic developing nations namely Bangladesh, Pakistan, Egypt, Iran, Malaysia, Indonesia, Turkey and Nigeria

BH's extreme and violent means of pursuing the agenda (Adesoji, 2010, 2011; Harnischfeger, 2008; Pieri & Zenn, 2016). Mainstream Muslim's disillusionment deepened when BH started killing fellow Muslims who refused to join the group after the initial attacks in 2009.

The reason for the intensification of violent attacks by the sect from 2009 is unclear as there are conflicting reports on Mohammed Yusuf's stand on religious violence. While Alozieuwa (2012) opined that Yusuf was reportedly against all forms of violence because, to him, acts of violence were against the teachings of the Islamic religion, Maiangwa and Agbiboa (2014) reported that Yusuf clearly stated in his teachings that his sect was out for a *jihad*. There is also evidence that Yusuf's followers and members of the Nigerian police engaged in a violent clash over the former's non-conformity to the law on compulsory use of crash helmets, a clash that claimed the lives of over 800 members of the group (Adenrele, 2012; Agbiboa, 2013a; Brock in Okoli & Iortyer, 2014). The arrest and death of Yusuf in police custody were also aftermaths of that clash. Although the extent of Yusuf's involvement in the clash is unclear, it is possible that his anti-government teachings may have caused members of the sect to disobey authority. Yusuf's death is believed to have played a key role in the radicalization of the sect (Agbiboa, 2013a; Onuoha, 2012b), and its evolution into full-blown terrorism under the leadership of Abubakar Shekau in 2009 (Agbiboa, 2013b; Pieri & Zenn, 2016). Weeraratne (2017) attempted to theorize the radicalization of the group between 2009 and 2011. He attributed such expansion to the growing fragmentation of the movement, development of strategic ties with Al Qaeda affiliates, and the strong-armed counterterrorism operations by the Nigerian military and the International Joint Task Force (JTF). He also posits that the group's exploitation of the porous border areas between Nigeria and her northern neighbours for fleeing, recruitment and smuggling of weapons has also aided its radicalization process.

In recent times, contending factions and several cellular splinter groups and leaders have been observed within the sect (Agbiboa, 2013a; Forest, 2012; Weeraratne, 2017). Some splinter groups are ill disposed to the killing of fellow Muslims and unarmed civilians, some are open to negotiations with the government, while others are against anything western and those who ascribe to western ideologies in any way (Forest, 2012; Weeraratne, 2017). A major splinter group from BH is popularly known as Ansaru. The Ansaru sect openly denounced BH's brutality, especially their killing of fellow

Muslims and defectors, and they appear to be solely concerned with foreign interests in Nigeria (Zenn, 2013).

Ethnicity, power and quest for control also seem to play significant roles in the fragmentation of the sect. While the majority of the members of BH are from the Kanuri ethnic group, which dominated the pre-colonial Kanem Borno Empire (Adesoji, 2010; Alozieuwa, 2012; Danjibo, 2009; Okoli & Iortyer, 2014; Onuoha, 2012b; Pieri & Zenn, 2016), the Ansaru sect is mainly composed of members from the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group which dominated the pre-colonial Sokoto Caliphate (Zenn, 2013).

According to Forest (2012), local observers tend to draw distinctions between the Kanuri BH, Hausa-Fulani BH and even Kogi BH. In addition, while the Hausa Fulani Ansaru is focused on restoring the lost dignity of the Sokoto Caliphate (Zenn, 2013), the Shekau-led Kanuri BH appears to be concerned with restoration of the lost glory of the Kanem-Borno empire (Pieri & Zenn, 2016). Therefore, while the insurgency appears to be primarily motivated by religious fundamentalism, struggle for ethnic supremacy and power is also an important undertone. In fact Alozieuwa (2012) argues that BH insurgency is driven by a complex interplay of religious fundamentalism, socio-economic problems or needs; frustration and aggression due to long standing ethnic bigotry and distrust of the secular state; political feud; and internal and external conspiracy against the Nigerian state. I now turn to a discussion on the nature of BH attacks with an emphasis on their attacks on women.

2.6.1 Boko Haram attacks

The exact number of BH attacks to date is unclear. Mantzikos (2014) reported about 262 violent attacks in connection with the sect between 2003 and mid-2014, while Zenn (2013) reported 700 BH attacks between 2010 and 2013. Initial attacks were made with knives, machetes, and bows and arrows, but that changed significantly with time (Solomon, 2012). They progressed to planting and detonating bombs and improvised explosive devices (IED) alongside armed violent attacks, and, later, the use of suicide bombers (Adesoji, 2010, 2011; Agbiboa, 2013b; Okoli & Iortyer, 2014; Onuoha, 2012b; Weeraratne, 2017). They also underwent a strategic expansion from a traditional hit-and-run approach to full military operations involving the use of sophisticated weaponry, and territorial occupation (Weeraratne, 2017). Some of the tactics of BH are not unique to them. Okoli and Iortyer (2014) identified ten major violent tactics of

terrorists, some of which have been utilized by the sect. These include arson, mass killing by gunfire, suicide bombing, use of improvised explosives and high-jacking of aircraft, ships, etc., and hostage-taking (kidnapping). They also engage in media propaganda and advocacy, piracy, jail breaking and forceful enlistment/recruitment of combatants.

Violent attacks started in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State, spread into the local governments and rural areas in the state, and later extended to other parts of the Northeast and Northcentral. Some attacks were also reported in Sokoto and Kano in Northwest Nigeria as well as neighbouring Chad, Niger and Cameroon, (Mantzikos, 2014; Weeraratne, 2017). Eventually BH overran and captured major towns and local governments in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states. Notable among the captured territories and local governments are Gwoza, Bama, Damboa, Gujuba, Ashigashia, Michika, Buni Yadi, Puka, Madagali and Uba, upon which they proclaimed their Islamic Caliphate (Agbiboa, 2013b; Centanni, 2014; Pieri & Zenn, 2016; Weeraratne, 2017). Figure 3 is a map showing the major areas of BH attack and operations.

Between 2011 and 2015, the group continued to expand, not just in the geographical area of operation but also in the frequency and intensity of violent attacks, target selection, and strategies (Pieri & Zenn, 2016; Weeraratne, 2017). In the earlier stages of the attacks, the sect was very specific in its target selection. In a leaflet message, distributed in Kano by suspected members of the sect, they listed their prime targets as “government officials, government security agents, Christians loyal to Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and whoever collaborate in arresting or killing us even if is [*sic*] a Muslim” (Eme & Ibietan, 2012, p. 16). Several of their earlier raids were on police stations and army barracks, prisons, other government institutions such as schools, hospitals, radio, newspaper and television houses or offices, and whatever they perceived as ‘infidel’ outlets, especially beer parlours (Agbiboa, 2013b; Mantzikos, 2014; Weeraratne, 2017). They also attacked international institutional offices like the UN building in Abuja and perpetrated a number of jail breaks, freeing their detained members and other prisoners (Adenrele, 2012; Agbiboa, 2013b; Aghedo & Osumah, 2012; Alozieuwa, 2012; Mantzikos, 2014; Ogunrotifa, 2013).

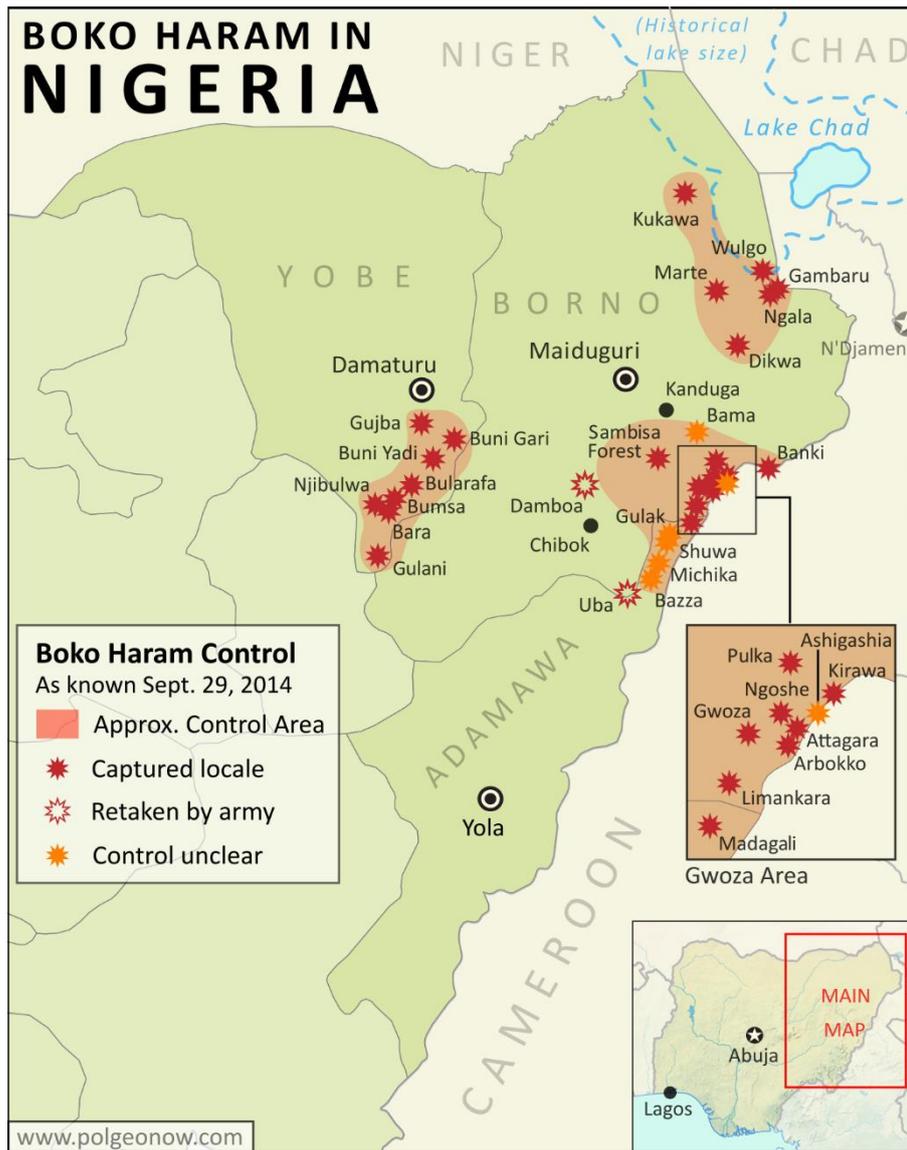


Figure 3: Areas of major Boko Haram activities in Nigeria as at September 2014

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Christians, Christian communities and churches were also targeted but the attacks became very confusing when they also included mosques and Muslims, especially Muslim clerics, and later extended to traditional rulers, expatriate workers, and political party leaders and stalwarts (Adenrele, 2012; Comolli, 2015; Ogunrotifa, 2013; Pieri & Zenn, 2016; Weeraratne, 2017). Traditional rulers were targeted for not supporting their ideologies and violence, expatriates were targeted partly because of BH anti-western ideology and also because they used them as bait to negotiate for payments from their governments in the form of ransom. Eventually, BH attacks extended to the general populace. Kidnapping and abduction of women and girls for forced marriages and

gang-rapes, and even use of women as suicide bombers became common place (Human Rights Watch, 2014; IOM – Nigeria, 2015; Pieri & Zenn, 2016; UNOCHA, 2015, 2016; Weeraratne, 2017; Zenn & Pearson, 2014). The group received international attention after they attacked Chibok town and abducted over 250 school girls in April, 2014.

Recent studies (Oriola, 2016; Oriola & Akinola, 2018) reveal that BH's use of women borrows from the patriarchal cultural reservoir of Northern Nigeria. Even before the insurgency, early and forced marriage was a common cultural practice in Nigeria, especially among Northern Muslims (Adeyemo, 2013; Braimah, 2014; Itebiye, 2016). Median age at first marriage has been recorded to be 15.2 years in the Northwest and 15.6 years in the Northeast (NPC & ICF International, 2014). It is not uncommon for female children to be betrothed to adult men as early as age 5, waiting for puberty for the official marriage (Agha, 2009). These practices have persisted, despite Nigeria's enactment of the Child Rights Act in 2003, identifying forced early marriages as illegal (Braimah, 2014). Human Rights Watch (2014) reported that a BH commandant pointed to his five year old daughter, who was reportedly married a year before, as justification for forcing a 17 year old girl to marry one of the insurgents. The insurgents' abduction and forced marriage of girls can be seen as resistance to imminent social change, especially in terms of delayed marriage associated with girl child education. However, gang-rape of women is alien to both the Islamic culture and the indigenous cultures in Northern Nigeria.

Ironically, the BH insurgency has created more socioeconomic and humanitarian crises than it sought to eliminate. Both the insurgents' attacks and counterterrorism operations are reportedly characterized by inhuman activities and pervasive war crimes (Comolli, 2015; Human Rights Watch, 2014; Okoli & Iortyer, 2014). The insurgency created widespread public insecurity due to frequent sudden attacks and human massacres, as well as entrenchment of poverty due to the disruption of business activities in the affected areas, destruction of farmlands and infrastructural damage (Eme & Ibieta, 2012; Okoli & Iortyer, 2014). Government-imposed curfews, fear of attacks, and temporary closure of borders also paralyzed business activities and worsened the economic conditions of the Northeast (Comolli, 2015). This is in addition to the negative security signal the insurgency sends to foreign investors and tourists. The insurgents have reportedly forced the Islamization of non-Muslims, recruitment of

militants and committed atrocities against non-combatant civilians (Human Rights Watch, 2012 in Okoli & Iortyer, 2014). The future economic survival of the affected communities is also uncertain due to the impact of the insurgency on children. In addition to jeopardized educational opportunities and uncertainties about their lives and future, children have often been targeted for recruitment as foot soldiers or suicide bombers (Comolli, 2015).

To date, sporadic attacks and fatalities have been reported in some Northeastern communities. While there are no exact records of human casualties in the insurgency, it is estimated that 6664 persons, 77% of whom were civilians, have been killed by BH, which qualifies the sect as the most deadly terrorist group in the world (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2015). The actual number of civilians killed by the military and JTF is unknown. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) – Nigeria (2015), about 2.1 million persons have been displaced in the current conflict and 53% of them are women. A more recent media report by the governor of Borno state estimates the death toll to be about 100,000 persons, and 2,114,000 persons were recorded as internally displaced as at the end of 2016 (Tukur, 2017).

Much of what is known about BH attacks are gathered from media reports, secondary data sources and anecdotal reports. Most of the information on the sect as well as theories that seek to explain the phenomenon are speculative, due to the lack of reliable data sources (Alozieuwa, 2012; Comolli, 2015). Very few studies (Comolli, 2015) have attempted to explore the attacks from the perspectives of the victims. The public health impact of the insurgency is still underreported as most of the studies (Ogunrotifa, 2013; Okoli & Iortyer, 2014; Onuoha, 2012a; 2012b; 2014; Pieri & Zenn, 2016; Rogers, 2012; Tonwe & Eke, 2013; Uzodike & Maiangwa, 2012; Yusuf, 2013) have focused on explaining the insurgency, state security issues and how the government ought to respond to the insurgency. Although a few studies (Maiangwa & Agbiboa, 2014; Oriola, 2016; Osita-Njoku & Chikere, 2015; Zenn & Pearson, 2014) have attempted to discuss the impact of the insurgency on women in Northern Nigeria, the data for these studies also relied on media and other secondary sources. So far, it appears that no in-depth study has been carried out on the lived experiences of women who have been displaced as a result of the insurgency. In addition, no study has explored the impact of the insurgency and displacement on gender relations and how women have responded

to or adapted to the displacement experience. The present study provides an opportunity to explore these issues.

The next chapter begins with further background discussion on the socio-cultural issues affecting the lives of women in Nigeria with regards to their social positioning, gender roles and socio-political responsibilities. This is followed by a discussion of relevant theoretical concepts in relation to gender and power, which I have used as additional interpretive tools to make sense of the experiences of IDW in Nigeria.

CHAPTER 3

THROUGH A GENDER LENS: CULTURAL AND THEORETICAL GROUNDING

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present further background discussion with a focus on the status of women in the Nigerian culture. This is followed by a discussion of theoretical and conceptual ideas that I have used as interpretive lenses for understanding the lived experiences of IDW in Nigeria. Even though displacement presented a unique challenge to the women in this study, they were first Nigerian/African women before they became IDW in Nigeria. Hence understanding and interpreting their experiences as IDW in Nigeria, is contingent on understanding them as Nigerian women. However, the traumatic experience of armed conflict is not only oppressive, but sets in motion a spiral of events and relationships through which IDW must navigate in order to survive and live productive lives. I decided to adopt theoretical concepts that would help me to understand the women's struggles, and how they defined themselves within the context of their struggles. It was also important to use theoretical concepts that would shed light on the participants' experiences within the context of their history and culture. I therefore used a range of black women's thinking, with particular emphasis on womanism as the overarching interpretive lens in analyzing the findings of this study. I have also used some of Foucault's thought on power to make sense of some aspects of the data.

The first section of this chapter discusses the status of women in the broader Nigerian society. I took a critical approach in exploring the literature in an attempt to paint an image of what it means to be a woman in Nigeria in the 21st century in terms of social positioning, gender roles and socio-political responsibilities. Such discussion will shed light on the cultural and contextual grounding for my decision to use concepts from black women's thinking to analyze their experiences. The second section focuses on the theoretical concepts I used in the analysis. I begin with a discussion of the key issues and assumptions in black women's thinking beginning from black feminist thinking to indigenous African women's thought. I then turn to a discussion on womanism, which I

see as a major bridge between US black feminism and continental African feminism. This will be followed by a discussion on black women and power, which leads me to a discussion on some of Foucault's thought on power, as I find this relevant to some of the experiences of the IDW in Nigeria. I conclude the chapter by highlighting how black women's thought and Foucault's work on power connects to the overarching constructionist approach that underpinned this study.

3.2 Nigerian women: Status, responsibilities, and social identity

The term 'status' encompasses a wide range of characteristics used by social scientists to classify individuals and groups. One's status in a society is influenced by the social structure, culture, and power dynamics within the society in which the person lives and interacts (Lindsey, 2015). It determines how individuals are defined or treated in society. Omonubi-McDonnell (2003, p. 1) identified the following characteristics as key dimensions of an individual's status:

“economic development, political involvement, level of responsibility in policy decisions, degree of literacy, profession, remuneration, discernment of one's position in the family and in the neighborhood, opportunity for self-determination, limitations placed on one's preferences, liberty, [and] autonomy”.

Goffman (1990) preferred the word social identity to social status in describing how societies categorize people. He emphasized the importance of both personal attributes such as honesty and structural factors, such as occupation, in shaping people's social identities. The following discussion will focus on structurally ascribed categories, and how they affect women, but I will highlight how personal attributes intersect with structural categories in shaping the social positioning of women in Nigeria.

There is no unified 'status' of women, in any given context, and definitely not in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural country like Nigeria. Even though national studies reveal that the status of women and girls is much lower in Northern Nigeria than other parts of the country (British Council Nigeria, 2012; NPC & ICF International, 2014), that does not suggest that there are no women with high social status in Northern Nigeria. However, there are certain experiences that women in Nigeria share, albeit to

varied degrees. One of these experiences is the reality of living within a patriarchal social structure (British Council Nigeria, 2012; Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development, 2006; NPC & ICF International, 2014; Omonubi-McDonnell, 2003). Patriarchy has been defined as "a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" (Walby, 1989, p. 214). Specific patriarchal practices such as the mostly patrilineal mode of inheritance, confining women to domestic roles and the tolerance of polygamy do negatively affect the health of women and hinder their social development (Omonubi-McDonnell, 2003).

Omonubi-McDonnell (2003) asserts that in comparison to their male counterparts, Nigerian women tend to have lower levels of education, are politically powerless, and economically disadvantaged. While this assertion may be correct to some extent, it assumes a monolithic view of Nigerian women's experiences and thus neglects the complexities and contradictions of patriarchy and cultural diversities in Nigerian society. In order to reveal some of the complexity of patriarchal practices in Nigeria, I have adopted a life-course approach to show how Nigerian women's social status and social identities change across their life spans and within different social situations.

I will discuss how gender intersects with age, personal appearance, family structure, religion, ethnicity/tribe, educational status, and other complex factors to determine women's social status. I will consider some of the patriarchal practices that subject women to positions of subordination at different stages of their life, and then discuss some significant complexities and contradictions within the Nigerian patriarchal social structure, while highlighting some historical changes in the social structure. I will conclude with some perceived benefits of the Nigerian patriarchal social structure and women's general response to it. It is important to first underscore the fact that patriarchy in Nigeria is premised within an idealized social environment where every woman is expected to marry a man, and bear children, and where divorce is a very rare exception (Ojua, Lukpata, & Atama, 2014).

3.2.1 Patriarchy in the birth family

Being born as a female in Nigeria has serious social implications for the child, because it marks the beginning of a life of social role ambiguity and hard labor. Even though most families prefer to have both male and female children, because of the different roles they are expected to play in families (Ndu & Uzochukwu, 2011), there is often a

preference for boys as first children (Inyang-Etoh & Ekanem, 2016; Milazzo, 2014; Nnadi, 2013; Norling, 2015; Olaogun, Ayoola, Ogunfowokan, & Ewere, 2009; Oluduro, 2013; Otiye-Igbuzor, 2014). There is also a tendency to receive the birth of male children with greater joy and celebrations than female children (Oluduro, 2013). Depending on the specific culture, families are, however, more likely to tolerate an inability to have female children over not having males. As a result, Nigerian women with female first children are more likely to have more children, be in a polygamous relationship, or be divorced (Milazzo, 2014). Being born with a deformity or being perceived as not beautiful enough further complicates the way a female child is received and treated in a family. Most people believe that deformities tend to reduce a female's chances of getting married. The impact of disabilities on women in developing countries has been well documented (Muthukrishna, Sokoya, & Moodley, 2009).

Gender roles, especially with respect to lineage and inheritance, are well differentiated in many Nigerian cultures. Because Nigerian society is largely patrilineal, males carry on the family name and have entitlements to the family inheritance (Arisi & Oromareghake, 2011), while female children are often regarded as temporary family members who will eventually marry and move to another family (Azuakor, 2017). They are valued for their supportive roles in household labor and their roles as future mothers and caregivers for the elderly. Female entitlement to family inheritance varies between different ethnic groups. While females are totally excluded from their paternal family property inheritance in most of the Southeast, they have equal rights with their brothers in the Southwest, and can inherit up to half of what their brothers are entitled to in the North (Azuakor, 2017; Otiye-Igbuzor, 2014). However, in the Southwest, where women have equal rights to share inheritance with their brothers, they often do not have any customary rights to inherit their husbands' properties (Aluko, 2015).

The socialization of male and female children within the family setting is also different. This is mostly evident in the sexual division of labor and what is considered acceptable and unacceptable behaviors of boys and girls in families. Families are more likely to send their boys to school, be it western or Islamic schools than girls. Boys are also at liberty to wander far and engage in rough play (Omadjohwoefe, 2011), and are only expected to be available to do the "masculine" duties (Dogo, 2014) such as splitting firewood or digging up yams. On the other hand, girls are more likely to stay away from school and engage in labor to support the family income, especially in Northern

Nigeria. When they attend schools, they are often disproportionately burdened with school work and household labor in comparison with their male counterparts (Audu, Geidam, & Jarma, 2009; Otive-Igbuzor, 2014; Para-Mallam, 2010; Usman, 2010). Adverse economic situations in the family, the death of a mother, or a mother's ill health automatically qualifies a girl to take up adult roles. Usually, labor at home and, sometimes, hawking on the streets to make money are seen as a form of preparation for self-reliance and the responsibilities of marriage. Among the Hausa-Fulanis, a girl is required to work in order to earn money to support her wedding, which occurs quite early in life (Usman, 2010). Thus, a girl is prepared for a life of responsibility and caring for others from childhood. Although girls are expected to be hardworking and self-reliant before marriage, they are not expected to be rich or appear so. Being wealthy as a young unmarried lady is often interpreted as a signal that the lady would not submit to her husband in future, and such impressions tend to reduce rich young women's chances of getting married (Ntoimo & Isiugo-Abanihe, 2014).

Guarding the virginity of girls is equally very important. Protection of girls' virginity stems from a belief that getting married as a virgin influences the kind of prestige a bride would receive from her husband and his family (Akintunde & Ayantayo, 2008; Ojua et al., 2014; Omadjohwoefe, 2011). Strict monitoring, restricted association with males and exclusion from co-educational schools are common strategies to protect girls' virginity. Any 'careless' association with boys warrants harsh treatment which could involve a beating (Ayodele, 2016; Meinck, Cluver, Boyes, & Mhlongo, 2015). Pregnancy out-of-wedlock is mostly unacceptable. Among Northern Muslims, pregnancy out of wedlock is an offence warranting death by stoning in sharia law (Weimann, 2009). Although pre-marital sex is never the norm, boys do not receive as much censure as girls for engaging in premarital sex. Most often girls are pressured or even forced to marry early, especially in the Northeast and Northwest Nigeria (Adedokun, Adeyemi, & Dauda, 2016; Otive-Igbuzor, 2014; Weimann, 2009).

A girl's ability to navigate through patriarchal demands in her natal family, determines her social identity as a marriageable woman or not. This is very important, considering the fact that a girl is usually under close monitoring by her immediate and extended family, as well as her community members, who will be responsible for recommending or disqualifying her for the next stage of womanhood.

3.2.2 Patriarchy in the marital family

To a large extent, marriage is not optional for the average Nigerian woman (Ntoimo & Isiugo-Abanihe, 2014); it is nearly universal, and women are expected to marry much earlier than their male counterparts (NPC & ICF International, 2014). This is because women's honor, dignity, and most times, access to property inheritance depend on their marriage and marriage partners. The cultural norm is that married women become part of their husbands' families as daughters, while their husbands become sons, with heavy responsibilities, to their natal families. With the exception of a few ethnic groups, especially the Yoruba ethnic group, women regain the inheritance they forfeit in their natal families in their husbands' families. However, inheriting property from a husband's family is contingent on a number of factors, especially the woman's ability to bear male children. Technically, women do not inherit anything from their husbands, inheritance is the preserve of the children, especially the boys, depending on the particular culture (Eze, 2006).

For some women, marriage marks the beginning of another phase of labor, or worse still, "slavery", and the expropriation of their labor by their husbands (Walby, 1989) and his family. However, much of a woman's status after marriage depends on how her family handles her marriage ceremony. Sometimes, the bride price custom is exploited by both brides' and grooms' families to disempower new brides (Nwoke, 2009). For example, some brides' families might be inconsiderate of the groom and demand much from him without using the money for the benefit of the bride. This amounts to sending a bride away to an indebted husband and an empty house. In such cases, the groom and his family sees the bride as their purchased property, and she is required to do their bidding. The common belief is that a woman does not just marry a man, but his entire family. Even though seniority precedes gender in some Nigerian cultures (Udegbe, 2004), especially the Yoruba culture, and people are required to show respect to those who are older than themselves, some communities require a married woman to show deference to all males and females that have been born in her husband's family before her marriage. It is often believed that those males, whether old or young, are equally the woman's husbands while all those born afterwards would relate to her as a mother (Ogbomo, 1997).

Irrespective of how marriage is contracted, men are culturally the head of the home (Omadjohwoefe, 2011) and as such, are in control of women's lives and decisions (Duru, 2011; Omadjohwoefe, 2011). Hence issues concerning a woman's empowerment, family finances, sexuality and reproductive decisions and rights, including the desired number of children, are often subject to her husband's decision and approval (NPC & ICF International, 2014; Weimann, 2009). One way of keeping women under sexual control, especially among Northern Muslims, is to keep them in seclusion (Weimann, 2009). Another way is to ensure that they have many children (Mairiga, Kullima, Bako, & Kolo, 2010) as the more children a woman has, the less likelihood there is of her leaving a relationship, even if the man takes more wives (Izugbara, Ibisomi, Ezeh, & Mandara, 2010). Irrespective of other economic roles women play in their families, their biological child bearing, as well as child care are not negotiable (Dimka & Dein, 2013; Ibisomi & Mudege, 2014). A woman's failure to have children often legitimizes her husband's demand for a second wife, and might lead to her eviction from the matrimonial home, whether or not she is the one with the infertility problem (Nwoke, 2009). Sometimes, women end up having more children than they would have wished to, in a bid to prevent their husbands from marrying more wives (Izugbara and Ezeh, 2010).

It is often expected that women be married to, and engage in sexual relations, with one man for life. Men, on the other hand, are at liberty to marry as many wives as they wish to in some cultures, and a maximum of four in the Islamic North, and while extramarital affairs among men is not applauded in most cultures, it is often winked at (Ntoimo & Isiugo-Abanihe, 2014; Weimann, 2009). Current data show that 33% of Nigerian women are in polygamous relationships (NPC & ICF International, 2014), and due to indiscriminate divorce and remarriage by some men, it is common for some Northern women to marry several times in their lifetime (Weimann, 2009). In some cultures, men's control over their wives' sexuality also gives them the liberty to instruct them to engage in sexual relationships with their special guests (Arisi & Oromareghake, 2011; Otive-Igbuzor, 2014).

Although men are the customary breadwinners in families, and are more likely to work outside the home (NPC & ICF International, 2014), women are not expected to be economically dependent on men (British Council Nigeria, 2012; Otive-Igbuzor, 2014). Women's economic roles in families are often in addition to their roles as mothers and

caregivers. Hard work is associated with the feminine gender, and praise and prestige are accorded to hardworking women (Amadiume, 2015). Women constitute 60-79% of the rural labor force in Nigeria (British Council Nigeria, 2012) and they also engage in private businesses and entrepreneurship (Mordi, Simpson, Singh, & Okafor, 2010). Even among the Northern Muslims, where men are expected to provide either money or ingredients for their secluded wives to cook at home, women still engage in income generating activities from their homes (Schildkrout, 1986).

Women who work outside the home also combine such jobs with household chores. If a woman earns more than her husband, or if he does not earn any income, it is often the case that he fails to provide support by undertaking the “feminine” household chores (Asiyanbola, 2005). He is still, however, seen as the owner of the woman and as such the owner and controller of all she earns (NPC & ICF International, 2014). It is culturally unacceptable for a woman to reveal, either through her words or through body language, that she earns more money than her husband does. Spending her money without consulting with her husband is seen as a form of disrespect and lack of submissiveness. It is only when a woman’s income is negligible compared to that of her husband that she is at liberty to use her earnings as she likes (NPC & ICF International, 2014). Hence, education and other social status or economic empowerment does not necessarily change a woman’s subordinate position. According to Para-Mallam (2010), educated women often face the challenge of negotiating the paradox of educational empowerment and religio-cultural disempowerment. Education and economic power, however, enable women to adjust and negotiate gender roles and sometimes provides them with the wherewithal to pay for help. It also enables them to negotiate for greater control over their earnings (NPC & ICF International, 2014).

Both the penal code (Sharia law) and criminal codes in Nigeria contain laws that are permissive of sexual violence in marriage (Ola & Johnson, 2013). Men’s control over their wives gives them the authority to “discipline” them when they “misbehave”. Like many other African countries, IPV and domestic violence are treated as private affairs (Abeid, Muganyizi, Olsson, Darj, & Axemo, 2014). In the words of Arisi and Oromareghake (2011, p. 370), “[i]n Nigeria, a man will beat his wife and nothing will happen, instead they will expect her to go on her knees and beg him.” One in three Nigerian women and one in four of men still believe that wife beating is justifiable

under some circumstances, such as burning food, denying him sex or neglecting the children (NPC & ICF International, 2014).

Monitoring of married women in families and communities is as common as monitoring of girls. Women's prestige as respectable persons in their communities depend on whether or not they are judged as successful in their roles as mothers, wives, daughters-in-law or sisters-in-law in their husbands' families.

3.2.3 Patriarchy in the community and religious organizations

This section focuses on the social positioning of women in their wider communities and social networks, especially in religious and community gatherings. It is not always acceptable for women to assume direct leadership over men. In community meetings, women are expected to cook and serve the men, and then go back to the kitchen, and can only appear in the men's assembly when they are invited (Arisi & Oromareghake, 2011). However, women are able to take leadership roles in women's groups, especially among traders, because often dominate the local markets, which are the most powerful economic hub in most Nigerian communities (Amadiume, 2015).

Similar restrictions on women in leadership roles is also evident in religious organizations. Among Muslims, it is totally unacceptable for women to lead prayers or even pray among men. Women are expected to stay at the back in mosques. This segregation is also extended to other public places such as public transport in Sharia states, where women can only take the back seat (Weimann, 2009). The patriarchal structure of the society is also reflected in the churches (Oluwaniyi, 2012; Omonubi-McDonnell, 2003). It is only recently that women started taking up roles as pastors and church leaders, despite the fact that they are often very active and committed in Christian churches. One exceptional case is that of Her Royal Majesty, the *Omu* of Anioma Kingdom, Delta State, Nigeria. The *Omu* occupies a throne and has a double role as the leader of women and the mother or spiritual leader of the kingdom, and as such cannot be the wife of any man. At the point of coronation, she acquires male rights, hence, the *Omu* is culturally male and female put together, a status that no man can ever attain. She is entitled to marry two wives or more but her relationship with the wives is not sexual. She also has her own chiefs (males), just as the king of the kingdom, but her chiefs are often lower in rank than those of the king are. Her throne, however, is not inferior to that of the king.

Generally, the status of a woman in her community either declines or changes dramatically when she becomes widowed. Sometimes, losing one's husband leads to a woman's categorization as a failed woman (Akujobi, 2009) because it is a woman's responsibility to look after her husband and ensure that he lives long. Widowhood in Nigeria, has been conceptualized as an institution, rather than a state of being (Ezejiofor, 2011). According to Akujobi (2009), in widowhood, women are the silent victims. Widows are often mandated to observe humiliating and often dehumanizing rites and ordinances (Akujobi, 2009; Ezejiofor, 2011; Nwogu, 2015), but this also depends on the particular ethnic group and, sometimes, family.

Different cultures perform widowhood rites for diverse purposes. Oyenyim and Ayodeji (2010) reported some of the reasons for widowhood rites in the Yoruba culture. According to them, widowhood rites are ways of proving the widows' innocence in relation to the death of the husband or to ascertain whether they were pregnant before the death of the man. Others are used as ritual cleansing for spiritual separation or protection from their deceased husbands, without which they would not be free to marry or engage in sexual relationships with other men (Oyenyim & Ayodeji, 2010).

A few examples of widowhood rites include: complete shaving of the hair (Durojaye, 2013); sleeping on a mat or bare floor for the entire period of mourning, which ranges from three to six months or more; wearing a particular white or black cloth for the period of mourning; and eating from broken plates (Ezejiofor, 2011; Nwogu, 2015). In some extreme circumstances, a woman is forced to drink the water that was used in washing the husband's corpse and other humiliating practices to prove her innocence with regard to her husband's death (Akujobi, 2009; Idialu, 2012). Akujobi (2009) argues that the primary motivations behind the inhuman treatment of widows in many African societies are economic interests and the desire of relatives to gain access to the deceased's property. Such economic interests might explain why men, are not usually subjected to the same stringent cleansing rituals and other widowhood practices as women, even though it is a cultural expectation for them to mourn their wives for a stipulated period.

In addition to the widowhood rites and rituals, widows may also be subjected to levirate marriages (Akujobi, 2009; Durojaye, 2013; Ezejiofor, 2011), where they are forced to

marry their husbands' brothers or run the risk of losing the family inheritance. In some cases, their husbands' relatives confiscate the deceased's property but refuse to take responsibility for the children (Ayodele, 2016; Ezejiolor, 2011; Ezer, 2016). Current demographic and health data show that 15% of Nigerian widows receive maltreatment, including physical violence, from their husbands' relatives (NPC & ICF International, 2014).

It is important to note however, that the kind of treatment a woman receives following the death of her husband also depends on a variety of factors, and some ethnic groups are more strict with widowhood rites and disinheritance of widows than others (Akujobi, 2009; Nwogu, 2015). For example, a woman's age, level of education and employment status are important factors in shaping her experience in widowhood (Oyenyim & Ayodeji, 2010), so also is the age of her children. Educated women and those in formal employment tend to have fewer challenges with widowhood rites because they can only stay at home as long as their employments permit (Oyenyim & Ayodeji, 2010). Widows who have passed reproductive age are generally more respected than younger widows are, but having grown-up children in a family also confers more respect and protection. Another important factor that shapes how a widow is treated is the type of marriage contract (Ezejiolor (2011). According to Ezejiolor (2011), marriages contracted purely under customary laws are more likely to result in dehumanization in widowhood than those contracted under Islamic and Christian/statutory laws. Nevertheless, neither the Christian/statutory marriage, nor the Islamic marriage is deemed complete without the customary marriage. Thus, there is always a fusion of religion and indigenous traditions, and the indigenous traditions often influence the widowhood experience.

3.2.4 Nigerian women and statutory laws, national politics and formal employment.

The Nigerian tripartite legal system, ostensibly promotes equality of gender. However, customary laws (especially those that exclude women from property inheritance), and sharia law, are "used to promote patriarchy and disempower women" (Ezer, 2016, p. 66). The tripartite legal system is perceived as particularly problematic to women, as it limits "their access to social justice and human rights" (Para-Mallam, 2010, p. 469).

Women's participation in state and national politics in Nigeria is often limited. It is only recently, specifically in 2011, that women started advancing in the country's political arena, but they are still grossly under-represented in political office (Anigwe, 2014; Ntoimo & Isiugo-Abanihe, 2014). In the current political formation, which is the 8th national assembly of Nigeria, only seven out of 109 senators are women and six of those senators are from the Southeast and Southwest (Jimoh, 2015). It is common for women in politics to be addressed as 'harlots' and irresponsible women and they are often sidelined from mainstream political activities by creating a women's arm of the polity (Para-Mallam, 2010). Thus the women eventually have very little input in the overall political arena. In a very recent development, the senate voted against a move to ensure that 35% of all federal and state cabinet appointments are allocated to women (Aziken, 2017). On the same day, they also voted against the rights of women who married outside their states of origin to adopt their husband's states of origin when in pursuit of a political appointment (Aziken, 2017). This implies that most women who marry outside their natal state would stand little chance of election into political office, since the Nigerian culture does not generally permit women to return and rule from their parents' home (Fyanka, 2016).

However, despite limited representation in public/partisan politics, the assertion that women are regarded as second class citizens in Nigeria (Ezejiolor, 2011), and thus lack political power (House-Midamba & Ekechi, 1995; Para-Mallam, 2010), is still debatable. Women in Nigeria are perceived as powerful forces, who must be tamed, lest they become too powerful for the men to handle. They have a long history of political activism (Agbalajobi, 2010; Amadiume, 2015), which often result in radical changes in the society, and they have remained the most powerful force in local market places (Amadiume, 2015; Dogo, 2014; Iyam, 1996). One historical example of Nigerian women's inherent political power is the Aba women's war of 1929. During the war, thousands of women came out to protest colonial officers' imposition of taxes on market women and their exploitation by warrant chiefs. According to Amadiume (2015), Nigerian women, especially Ibo women of the Southeast, are universally recognized as the most militant women.

Another example of women's militant appearance in public politics is the very recent "#Bring Back our Girls#" campaigns, which were launched in response to BH abduction of over 200 school girls. Despite apparent political intimidation, Nigerian

women and men of different social classes, under the leadership of women like Oby Ezekwesili, Hadiza Bala Usman, Maryam Uwais, and Saudatu Mahdi, persisted in daily protests against the government's indifference to the abductions until they gained international attention (Mark, 2014). Those protests arguably contributed towards the ruling party's loss in the 2015 general elections in Nigeria, as the women's protests cast doubt on the integrity and capability of the then ruling party. Historically, Nigerian women do not always appear in the open political arena unless there is evidence that their silence would bring about a total collapse in the system. After studying gender relations in one Southeast Nigerian community, Iyam (1996) adds another insight to women's political power in Nigeria. He concludes that women are more powerful when they act collectively than when they act individually. Hence, even though a woman may be very powerful at the household and local community level, such power hardly elevates her social status in the wider political arena, unless she acts in connection with other women.

Para-Mallam (2010) observed that Nigerian women's exclusion from public/partisan politics is as a result of their total commitment to home making and childcare. According to her, women who participate in politics usually bear the triple burden of production, reproduction and community development activities. Hence, the question is not whether or not Nigerian women possess political power, but rather that their political powers are not fully recognized because of the limited political spaces they control, and the intermittent nature of their political expression. This situation persists, despite Nigeria's endorsement of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the availability of a National Gender Policy (Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development, 2006; NPC & ICF International, 2014).

Although there are equal numbers of men and women in the overall labor workforce in Nigeria, women are marginalized in their access to, and advancement in formal employment (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016a). They are often excluded from well-paid jobs (Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development, 2006; National Bureau of Statistics, 2016a). Only 10% of employable young men and women in Nigeria secure jobs in the formal sector each year, and only one-in-three of those employed are female (British Council Nigeria, 2012). This is partly because women often lack the requisite educational qualifications. Employers are also reluctant to hire

women into certain positions because of the belief that they may not be effective in the jobs due to possible distractions from home and family responsibilities. As a result, women tend to opt for informal and under-regulated employment, and small scale businesses where their participation is flexible enough to accommodate work in the household (Fadayomi & Olurinola, 2014; Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development, 2006).

Even when women are employed in the formal sector, they may be subjected to gender discriminatory policies. For example, unlike their male counterparts, women applying for jobs with the Nigerian police force are required to sign an undertaking stating that they would neither marry nor get pregnant within the first three years of their employment (Ntoimo & Isiugo-Abanihe, 2014). The marriage restrictions also include detailed security checks on their intended husbands when they eventually decide to marry. In some cases, women earn less than their male counterparts, and sometimes they earn less than men with lower qualifications (British Council Nigeria, 2012).

Women are also denied tax benefits related to childcare because tax officials automatically assume that men are solely responsible for providing for children's care as the breadwinners of their homes. This ignores the work of female breadwinners, female heads of households and single mothers (British Council Nigeria, 2012; Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development, 2006). Problems with tax exemptions are typical reflections of the persistent tension between the statutory laws, which create spaces for women in the public arena, and cultural practices which limit them in the informal sector and their homes. Such tensions produce situations where women are constantly pulled between the demands of traditional/religious expectations, and the realities of modernity (Para-Mallam, 2010). They are also under pressure to adapt to some inevitable social changes that occur from time to time. In the next section, I will discuss the complexities of patriarchal practices in Nigeria and how they have evolved over time. I will also discuss the apparently beneficial aspects of the Nigerian patriarchal structure, as well as how Nigerian women define their social identities within the context of patriarchy as they navigate through its demands.

3.2.5 Complexities of patriarchy in Nigeria, changes over time and the response of women

In contemporary Nigerian society, patriarchal practices are very complex. Aside from the *Omu* institution, it is possible for masculine attributes to be ascribed to a female depending on the circumstance. Owing to the complexity of patriarchal practices in Nigeria, both Amadiume (2015) and Oyewumi (2002) have argued that the simplistic categorization of individuals as male or female; husband or wife, dominant or subordinate, is problematic because in some Nigerian cultures, such categorizations are highly ambiguous and contextual. For example, Oyewumi (2002), asserts that a woman's status in her family and community is determined by her relative position within a hierarchy of complex relationships. Thus, the concept of being a 'wife' is context dependent especially in the Yoruba culture. A married woman is often a wife in her matrimonial home, but a husband in her natal family (Oyewumi, 2002; Udegbe, 2004).

In line with Oyewumi's (2002) argument, Amadiume (2015), who carried out an anthropological study of the Nnobi Community in Southeast Nigeria, presented a complex system of power relations within the traditional patriarchal system that unsettles the dual gender social structure. She described a traditional practice where some daughters in a family are accorded male status by virtue of their contributions in the family, and are referred to as male daughters. Male daughters could hold male titles, become heads of their fathers' households and even marry wives. In addition, wealthy married women in the same community could marry wives and obtain children by those wives, because they culturally qualify as female husbands. Sometimes, some female husbands acquire more wives than their own husbands. She cited the example of a female husband, who had nine wives whereas she was the second of her husband's two wives (Amadiume, 2015, p. 124). Female husbands' relationships with their wives are similar to that of the *Omu* and her wives. Unlike lesbian marriages, the female husband pays the dowry for other women and she allows them to engage in sexual relationships with either her husband or other men of their choice in order to raise children (Nwoko, 2012), but those other male partners remain anonymous. In addition, while extra-marital affairs are generally unacceptable, some women are permitted to engage in trans-marital relationships among the Ibo ethnic group and some other tribes in Northern Nigeria (Smith, 1953; Undie & Benaya, 2008) which gives them a level of

sexual autonomy. Women could also have the liberty to engage in sexual relationships with other men when an older partner cannot satisfy the younger wife sexually or when there is a clear case of male infertility (Undie & Benaya, 2008).

Traditional patriarchal practices are often double-edged swords, which can be exploited for good or evil, depending on who is using them and against whom they are being used. Ojua et al. (2014) argue that despite the shortfalls of the traditional value systems, they served the purpose of keeping order in society and eliminated both rancor and disorganization that is present in modern African societies. In addition, within the apparently patriarchal and “male-dominated” Nigerian societies, there are cultural checks and balances, as well as loopholes to accommodate individuals who would ordinarily be disadvantaged by the patriarchal system. Most of those checks and balances are tied to the extended family system, the authoritative positions of parents-in-law, and the rigorous marriage rites (Ojua et al., 2014).

The customary marriage, which is often accorded more value than statutory or church weddings (Ubong, 2010), involves both families and sometimes entire communities who witness the two families’ commitment to one another in love and kinship (Ojua et al., 2014). In the Ibo culture, this kinship is usually depicted by a proverb “*ogo madu bu afo nne ya*” (someone’s in-law is his/her sibling). In some ethnic groups like the Yoruba ethnic group, kinship ties between in-laws are of equal value with blood ties, and marriage between brothers or sisters-in-law or their siblings are regarded as incest. Some of the customary marriage rites are used to teach an intending groom and his family that the bride’s parents are to be revered (Ojua et al., 2014; Omobola, 2013), while some rites are used to teach the bride how to be a ‘good wife’ (Ojua et al., 2014; Omobola, 2013; Ubong, 2010). The rites provide opportunities for training an intended bride on how to negotiate with her future husband, and be able to convince him to provide for most of her wishes, even though ostensibly he is in “absolute control”. Marital rites also create opportunities for older women or senior wives in a family to train an incoming bride on how to survive in her new family. Although controlling women’s sexuality through the veneration of virginity and other restrictive sexual norms, as well as the domestication of their roles, are central to women’s insubordination across Africa (Tamale, 2005), women’s sexuality and their confinement to domestic roles, as it relates to food preparation, are equally their domains of power (Arnfred, 2007). “[B]ehind a certain façade of wifely

submissiveness, power relations of sexuality may well be different from what patriarchs in power might want to believe” (Arnfred, 2007, p. 143).

I note however that the Nigerian post-colonial social structure has undergone, and is still undergoing changes, especially with the influence of western education (Ojua et al., 2014; Omobola, 2013). Families and communities are becoming more and more egalitarian and urbanization is fast eroding the communal and extended family system (Ntarangwi, 2012; Yusuff & Ajiboye, 2014) within which patriarchy was deeply entrenched. Customary laws, often based on oral traditions, are also constantly evolving and are subject to multiple interpretations even in the same culture (Ezer, 2016). The level of acceptance of the western lifestyle in a particular region, the level of socio-economic development, as well as the influence of Islam and Christianity further shapes how different groups practice their local customs and adapt customary laws. The level of assimilation of other local cultures and inter-cultural interactions, brought about by intermarriages and other social interactions, also tend to dilute some indigenous cultures, making them less distinct and less dogmatic. More people are beginning to write wills that include their daughters, and women can now sue their brothers for not including them in the family inheritance (Azuakor, 2017). Even polygyny, which was hitherto institutionalized among Northern Muslims, is being challenged by some newer Islamic congregations (Harris, 2012). Like many other African nationalities, changes in the modes of production and economic independence among young people in Nigeria have limited the control of adults over the sexuality of young people (Smith, 2000; Smith, 2004; Spronk, 2005; Undie & Benaya, 2008). Because of these changing social realities, the average Nigerian woman today, occupies a highly ambiguous and contradictory social position.

Given their socialization as hardworking, and caring wives and mothers, women are constantly torn between the realities of modernity and a desire for self-actualization on one hand, and a commitment to build stable families and communities on the other (Para-Mallam, 2010). The social environment that confounds their role through patriarchal double standards also challenges their effort to maintain the self-family-community balance. Most times they subordinate their personal care to caring for others (Basikoro, 2016). On one hand, they are hailed as “the pillars of production and the bedrock of the family” (Omonubi-McDonnell, 2003, p. 10) and on the other hand, they

are suppressed, repressed, and exploited (Para-Mallam, 2010). The British Council Nigeria (2012, p. 1) identified them as “Nigeria’s hidden resource”.

It is however relevant to appraise how women perceive themselves in the midst of the contradictory social roles and apparent patriarchal oppression. For most women, the patriarchal social structure is accepted as the norm, based on their cultures and religious beliefs (Omonubi-McDonnell, 2003; Para-Mallam, 2010). Some authors (Apusigah, 2008; Ilika & Ilika, 2005) have argued that the patriarchal institutions that oppress and suppress women are often maintained, sustained and reinforced by women. For example, Chukwu-Okoronkwo (2012), reports that most of the widowhood practices that dehumanize widows are spearheaded by sisters-in-law. Other times, other wives in the marriage family take charge of reinforcing widowhood rites. In addition, most Nigerian women still perceive the patriarchal social structure and its associated practices as protective of their cultural and religious identities and to a very large extent, empowering (Udegbe, 2004). Usually, both indigenous culture and religion are integrated in the average Nigerian’s thinking (Ezejiolor, 2011) and according to Dogo (2014), Nigerians are often conditioned to view things in terms of their ‘gendered’ social positions. Hence women are often willing to be submissive to men, provided their contributions are recognized and acknowledged, and they are given the necessary psychological and material support. Even though there is no single factor that enhances the status of women in Nigeria (Para-Mallam, 2010), it is normal for an individual woman’s status to increase with her age, and climax at old age when she becomes a matriarch and an authority figure in the immediate and extended family/community (Omonubi-McDonnell, 2003). Thus to most women, “patriarchal oppressions” are time bound, relative, and necessary obstacles to be surmounted as part of the growing process towards becoming fully-fledged matriarchs.

Although factors such as particular ethnic culture, age, education and social class, intersect to shape the experiences of Nigerian women, there are still specific ways in which the experiences of IDW in Nigeria may differ from those of other women, even though they live in the same society. In addition, any discussion of gender must also attend to the ways in which gender is analyzed theoretically. Feminism in its broadest sense is the major theoretical interpretive tool for analyzing gender issues. It is a movement as well as a set of beliefs and ideas, which challenges gender inequality and subjugation of women in various societies. It is both theory and practice with a political

commitment towards social change for the emancipation of women (Letherby, 2003). However, most Eurocentric/western forms of feminism have been relatively silent on the issues of race, ethnicity/impact of indigenous cultures and class. Therefore, other ways of thinking are needed to make sense of the experiences of women in Nigeria. Hence, I used a broad range of black/African women's thinking in analysing data on the experiences of IDW in Nigeria. I included bodies of thought from both US black women and African women living in Africa. In the next section, I discuss the main arguments and propositions of these theoretical ideas, highlighting the ways they intersect and overlap, and their relevance for this particular study.

3.3 African women's thought

US black women such as Collins (2000); Crenshaw (1989); hooks (2000) and Hudson-Weems (1995) were amongst the first to criticize western feminists' approaches as focusing on the experiences of middle class, white women, and failing to capture or address the realities and needs of women of colour. Rather than focusing purely on gender, they adopt the concept of intersectionality (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989) in their critical approaches to both knowledge production and activism for the empowerment of women. Intersectionality looks beyond the effect of gender, to capture how ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, education and social identity contribute to women's marginalized or privileged positions (Crenshaw, 1989). As a result, US black feminists take women's lived experience as the legitimate point of departure for analysing and producing knowledge about women of colour, thus recognizing the heterogeneity of women's experiences (Collins, 2000; hooks, 2000). They also challenge the disparaging images of black womanhood, which are often propagated in dominant discourses and scholarship (Collins, 2000).

There is considerable overlap between continental African feminist thinking and black feminist thinking. Indigenous African scholars (Aidoo, 1998; Amadiume, 2015; Nnaemeka, 2004; Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994; Ogunyemi, 1985; Oyewumi, 2002; Oyèwùmí, 1997; Steady, 1981, 1987) took on most of black feminists' critique of western feminisms. A major unifying position for both traditions is the fact that they eschew antagonism towards men, seeing men as partners in their struggle for their liberation (Aidoo, 1998; Collins, 2000; Hudson-Weems, 2000; Mekgwe, 2008; Nnaemeka, 2004; Steady, 1981). Both continental African and US black women

challenge what they described as western feminisms' tendency to reproduce dominant knowledge without giving African women the privilege of "speaking for themselves" (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994, p. 2). They believe that western/Eurocentric feminisms misrepresent African women as the powerless without recognizing the power of African women through their motherhood and relational roles (Amadiume, 2015; Chilisa, 2012; Chilisa & Ntseane, 2010; Collins, 2000; Hudson-Weems, 1995; Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994; Ogunyemi, 1985; Oyewumi, 2002; Oyèwùmí, 1997). Both traditions also eschew the essentialization of the African/black woman (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994). Continental African scholars agree with black feminists on the point that colonialism and racist global economic conditions contribute immensely to the widespread poverty among women of African descent (see (Amadiume, 2015; Collins, 2000; Dogo, 2014; Hudson-Weems, 2000; Lewis & Ogundipe, 2002; Omonubi-McDonnell, 2003; Oyèwùmí, 1997; Steady, 1981). However, both traditions slightly differ in their emphasis on the impact of racism, and continental African scholars such as Ogunyemi (1995) and Sotunsa (2009) do recognize differences between the experiences of US black women and those of women living in Africa. While racism against black people in the United States constitutes a key issue in US black feminist thought, the impact of colonization, neo-colonization and economic domination of African people, is central to continental African feminist thinking (Chilisa, 2012; Chilisa & Ntseane, 2010; Mekgwe, 2008; Nnaemeka, 2004; Steady, 1981, 1987; Taylor, 1998).

Continental African women are not silent on the issue of patriarchy and male domination of women in Africa. They acknowledge the existence of pre- and post-colonial local customs that permit subjugation of women through practices such as child marriages, exploitation of girl child labor and genital mutilation (Arndt, 2000; Dogo, 2014; Udegbe, 2004). But, in analysing the problem of patriarchal oppression, they reiterate the fact that African women's social positions cannot be solely defined by their relationships with their husbands, as wives (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994; Ogunyemi, 1985; Udegbe, 2004). Continental African scholars such as Amadiume (2015); Ogunyemi (1985) and Ogundipe-Leslie (1994), also argue that patriarchy as practiced in contemporary Africa, is different from that in the pre-colonial era. Using some Eastern Nigerian cultures as an example, Amadiume (2015) asserts that gender ideologies and constructions were more flexible in Nigeria before the advent of the

colonial masters, and that some of those gender-flexible practices are still ongoing in contemporary Africa. African women played significant economic and religious roles (Amadiume, 2015; Dogo, 2014; Omonubi-McDonnell, 2003). An example of such roles were older women's entitlement to priesthoods and chieftaincy titles which empowered them and granted equal rights over resources (Omonubi-McDonnell, 2003).

Such relative gender equality in pre-colonial Nigeria also existed among the Hausa speaking Northern ethnic groups before their conquest, first by the Islamic Fulanis, and subsequently the British. Some of their gender-egalitarian practices are still carried on among some traditional Hausa communities popularly known as the Maguzawa (Salamone, 2007). For example, female seclusion and total covering of women in public places, which is a common practice among the Islamic North is never practiced among the Maguzawa (Salamone, 2007). Some African scholars believe that the advent of the colonial masters brought about a change in the social order and mode of production, and invested absolute power and authority on male heads of households (Ezer, 2016; Harris, 2012; Omonubi-McDonnell, 2003; Osha, 2008; Udegbe, 2004). Thus it is believed that the status quo in Africa, in terms of patriarchy is a product of colonial distortion and exaggeration of the existing African patriarchal system, as well as the introduction of the patriarchal Abrahamic religions (Christianity and Islam) (Alexander & Welzel, 2011). Because of the complicated patriarchal and other social oppressions that women in Africa often contend with, Obioma Nnaemeka described African feminism as nego-feminism, which means no ego feminism or feminism of negotiation. She asserts that African women often challenge or resist patriarchal oppression through negotiation and compromise (Nnaemeka, 2004).

Some black women, both continental and US black women, such as Dove (1998), Hudson-Weems (1995), Ogunyemi (1985), Walker (1983), and more recently, Karenga and Tembo (2012) have subscribed to womanism, as opposed to feminism, as representative of how black women address women's oppression. Walker was the first to use the term womanist or womanism in her literary work. It is a term that is inclusive of all women that are not of European or American descent (Sotunsa, 2009). According to Walker, a womanist is committed to the survival and wholeness of an entire people, whether they be male or female and as such see men as partners against racist, classist and sexist oppressions (Walker, 1983).

Chikweneye Ogunyemi, proposed African womanism which she believed would address the specific needs of continental African women. She defined African womanism as

a philosophy that celebrates Black life, while giving a balanced representation of black womandom. It concerns itself as much with the black sexual power tussle as with the world power structure that subjugates blacks. Its ideal is for black unity where every black person has a modicum of power, and so can be a “brother” or a “sister”, a “father” or a “mother” to the other (Ogunyemi, 1985, p. 72).

She argued that continental African women should be self-defined and should not be defined from ‘outside’ or those who are ‘aliens’ to their specific experiences (Ogunyemi, 1985). Yet she did not reject US black feminist thought. She rather highlighted some additional challenges such as religious fundamentalism, ethnic and tribal skirmishes, problems with in-laws, and gerontocracy which she believed were areas of difference between the experiences of continental African women and US black women (Arndt, 2000).

Other African womanists, such as Hudson-Weems (1995), and Karenga and Tembo (2012), also argued for self-definition in relation to African women’s experiences but they worked towards a more unifying agenda for all women of African descent. They criticized Walker’s usage of womanism for its leaning towards feminism. Hudson-Weems (1995), in particular, argues that Walker’s definition of a womanist as a feminist of colour subordinates womanism to feminism. Thus in her argument for self-naming and self-definition, Hudson-Weems (1995), proposed Africana⁷ womanism as a self-consciously developed body of thought, which is distinct from feminism, and that addresses the issues of all women of African descent, whether they be continental African women or African women in diaspora. Even though Hudson-Weems’ (1995) Africana womanist agenda was quite ambitious, not just because of the diversity in Africa but also because of the continued influence of European and other cultures on the African peoples, she proposed an approach to addressing women’s challenges that

⁷ Africana implies all people of African descent whether or not they live within the African continent. This includes African Americans, Africans in Brazil, Barbados, Haiti and other places.

is very important. Her approach to women's empowerment and addressing gender inequality involves the interrogation of the African culture. She asserts that the African woman's approach to liberation is family centred, and that solutions for gender inequality are already embedded in the African philosophical world view, but that such solutions can only be discovered if Eurocentric gender ideologies are eschewed (Hudson-Weems, 1995). Drawing from Hudson-Weems' thought, Dove (1998) sees the African culture and philosophical worldview as a weapon of resistance and a tool for both analysis and understanding of the experiences of African women. Chilisa and Ntseane (2010) expounded on this African philosophical worldview as a worldview that recognizes individual's autonomy within a cooperative relationship, where one person's existence is intricately connected to the existence of others. This is popularly expressed as the African *Ubuntu* (*I am we, I am because we are, we are, because I am*), or the *maat* in Black American *Kwanzaa* (*Kwanzaa* is an annual weeklong festival observed by Black Americans and other blacks in diaspora to celebrate their African heritage) (Karenga, 2007, 2008, 2012; Karenga & Tembo, 2012). Such a worldview emphasizes harmony among humans, and between humans and nature, commitment to group survival, and inclusiveness, which engenders collective responsibility, complementarity and understanding (Kambon, 1996).

Karenga and Tembo (2012) drew heavily on the work of Hudson-Weems in their critique of Walker's womanism. Although they labelled their own form of womanism as Kawaida womanism, they equally insist on the centrality of culture in womanist ethics and practice. They see culture as "the totality of thought and practice by which a people creates itself, celebrates, sustains and develops itself, and introduces itself to history and humanity" (Karenga, 2008, p. 5). This definition of culture is all encompassing, its core is founded on religion and spirituality, but it also includes socio-political organization and creative production (Karenga, 2008, 2012; Karenga & Tembo, 2012). Based on its rootedness in ATR and African mythology, Kawaida womanism extends the African women's culturally defined role and ethos. Karenga and Tembo (2012), argue that African women bear a divine and dignified identity as *eniyan* (the chosen ones). *Eniyan* in the Yoruba language stands for people or human beings. However the *Odu Ifa* tradition, which is a major cultural grounding for Kawaida womanism, has it that African women are specially chosen by culture and history as co-creators, mothers and sustainers of the world, who are indispensable in all projects of

importance and common concern in the world (Karenga, 2012; Karenga & Tembo, 2012; Lewis & Ogundipe, 2002). Therefore, in addition to bringing wholeness to herself, her family, her community and black people as a whole, it is believed that the African woman has a role to bring good, to heal, and transform the world around her, and in that process heal and transform herself. As a result, Karenga and Tembo (2012) argue that African women are not just defined by their oppression and resistance to racist, classist and sexist oppressions, but by their creative acts of defining and asserting themselves.

The role of religiosity and spirituality in African women's ethics is worth further exploration. Hudson-Weems (1995) appears to limit African women's religiosity and spirituality to Christianity and women's involvement with black Churches and black Music, a position that Collins (2000) equally alludes to. But, Karenga and Tembo, (2012) as well as Dove (1998) see African women's religiosity and spirituality as rooted in ATR and African mythology. Womanists' (Dove, 1998; Hudson-Weems, 1995; Karenga & Tembo, 2012) thought on African women's religion, however, appears to assume that religion is a singular unifying factor in African women's experiences. Such thinking fails to account for the multiplicity of religious practices, even within ATR, and the numerous challenges associated with multiple religious ideologies and religious fundamentalism in Africa. In addition, none of them recognized Islam as a popular religion in Africa, and as such, did not articulate how Islam could influence African women's ethics and definition of themselves. They also seem to overlook how African indigenous cultures/ATR interact with both Islam and Christianity in shaping the experiences of women in Africa and how they interpret those experiences.

In this study, I take the experiences of the IDW in Nigeria as a legitimate standpoint, as I began the study by exploring their perspectives and understandings of their own experiences. Then I draw on the thought of both US black women and continental African women, as deemed relevant to those experiences, in order to make sense of the stories the women told me. Although the core theoretical concepts used for this study are drawn mainly from what I understand as womanist thinking, I am reluctant to use the term womanism as my core interpretive tool. This is because some of the black women such as Collins (2000) and Nnaemeka (2004), whose works are equally relevant to the experiences of this study's participants, did not clearly identify themselves as

womanists. In my decision to use both US black women and continental African women's thinking, I also considered and acknowledge the subtle ways in which the experiences and life opportunities of US black women and the continental African women differ. Yet, I see thought from the two related traditions as particularly relevant to the experiences of IDW in Nigeria because BH attacks and displacement positioned the women as aliens, though they were Nigerian citizens living within the national borders of Nigeria.

At the heart of every movement for the benefit of women is the issue of women's empowerment, which often involves both empowering knowledge production and social activism (Collins, 2000). In the next section, I discuss black women's thought on African women's power and empowerment.

3.4 African/Black women and power

The issue of power and empowerment of black women and African people as a whole is central to both US black women and continental African women's thinking (Collins, 2000; Hudson-Weems, 1995; Ogunjide-Leslie, 1994; Ogunyemi, 1985). To Ogunyemi (1985), power for all black people as an outworking of black unity is the ideal for African womanism. This does not imply that black women are completely powerless, as I have highlighted how black women scholars construct African women as powerful through their motherhood and relational roles in the family and the community (Chilisa & Ntseane, 2010; Collins, 2000; Dove, 1998; Hudson-Weems, 1995; Mekgwe, 2008; Steady, 1981). Ogunyemi (1995) rather calls for a balanced view of black womandom, which helps to reveal both African women's power and the systems that oppress and suppress them.

Collins (2000) proposed two apparently conflicting approaches to understanding and theorizing power, which she believes are both relevant and complementary in Black women's lives. One is the dialectical relationship, which links oppression and activism. In the dialectical relationship of power, power is seen as a tool in the hands of the powerful to oppress the less powerful. A typical example of such oppressive power relationships is revealed in the BH insurgency where the insurgents utilized their power and weapons to intimidate and oppress other members of the society. She asserts that the multiple oppressive forces that work against black women tend to produce

concomitant resistance and activism. As such, subverting authority and resisting oppression is more of a lived reality for most black women (Collins, 2000). Collins (2000) further argues that dialectical power relationships give rise to group solidarity and collective resistance to oppression.

The other approach, which she terms the subjectivity approach, views power as “an intangible entity [,which] circulates within a particular matrix of domination, and to which individuals stand in varying relationships” (Collins, 2000, p. 276). A matrix of domination, to Collins, is a distinctive oppressive system, produced by the intersection of gender, race, class, and sexuality for individual black women. When power is viewed as an intangible entity that circulates within a particular matrix of domination, the emphasis is on “how individual subjectivity frames human actions within a matrix of domination” (Collins, 2000, p. 274). It shows how individual black women, through their efforts to grapple with various intersecting oppressions, shape and are shaped by the very matrix of domination, and the consciousness they develop as a result of their lived experiences

Collins (2000) further argues that irrespective of the approach taken to understand power, four domains of power work together to organize black women’s oppression. These four domains of power she identifies as the structural, disciplinary, hegemonic and interpersonal domains. The structural domain she identifies as operational at the socio-political level where black women’s oppression is organized by setting up social institutions that oppress them. An example of such is the establishment of discriminatory housing policies. The disciplinary domain of power includes operations in ordering schools, hospitals, workplaces, and other institutions that provide services for black women. The disciplinary domain of power, orders and monitors black women through rules and bureaucracies in order to manage their oppression. The hegemonic domain of power includes both community culture, religion and dominant ideologies, which justify black women’s oppression, while the interpersonal domain of power exists in the day-to-day interaction of black women with others. The interpersonal domain, influences black women’s everyday lived experiences and their consciousness about their conditions. Therefore, analysing the experiences of African women involves approaching power from the dialectical relationship perspective and the subjectivity perspective and paying attention to the various domains of power that organize their oppressions. Although Collins (2000) sees community culture and religious beliefs as

constitutive of the hegemonic domain of power, which justifies Black women's oppression, she, alongside other womanists (e.g. Hudson-Weems (1995); Karenga & Tembo (2012); Dove (1998)) equally sees them as double-edged swords that could be used as sites of resistance and women's empowerment.

The subjectivity approach to power in black feminist thinking is reflective of Foucault's conception of power, and I find some of Foucault's thought on power to be specifically relevant to the experiences of the women in this study. Foucault sees power as not something that is centralized and possessed by certain people over others, but something that is diffuse, and located 'everywhere' in different degrees, even though some people tend to exercise more power than others. It is the capacity to act upon the actions of others who are in and of themselves, free and acting subjects, capable of producing a wide variety of responses, and reactions to power (Foucault, 1982). In fact, Collins (2000) drew her concept of the disciplinary domain of power from Foucault's thought on disciplinary power. From Foucault's perspective, power is neither suppressive nor coercive (Douglas, 1999), but what power does is to discipline individuals' bodies and consciences, thus making them act or behave in particular ways. In order to achieve that discipline, power produces certain forms of knowledge about what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate conduct, and such knowledge is often produced and reproduced through discourses (Douglas, 1999). Such application of power is seen as a specific form of 'government' that Foucault called governmentality. Government refers to techniques and procedures designed to direct human behaviours or "any attempt to shape with some degree of deliberation aspects of our behaviour according to particular sets of norms and for a variety of ends" (Dean, 2010, p. 18). Put in simpler terms, government represents the various techniques of using power in power relationships and it involves governing of both self and others. In Collins (2000) explication of the influence of the disciplinary domain of power on black women, she focused on bureaucracies in employment institutions and social welfare organizations, but did not refer to pastoral power, which is equally a form of disciplinary power, according to Foucault. Pastoral power exists and operates in organizations and institutions that provide support for others, be it material or redemptive support (Foucault, 1982, 2007; Garmany, 2010). Such organizations may include religious organizations, humanitarian organizations and even the state in the form of state welfare systems. In pastoral power relations, supportive organizations or

religious leaders utilize specific techniques and rationalities to produce particular types of religious subjects, who then act as free subjects in accordance to the norms and acceptable behavioural patterns. Hence, while pastoral power is not particularly coercive or obviously oppressive, it controls individuals from a distance through the rationalities it puts in place. Such rationalities provide rules or guidelines that individuals draw on to govern themselves. Such interplay between external norms or rationalities, and self-rule in producing specific behaviours in individuals is what Foucault described as governmentality. I find Foucault's thoughts on pastoral power to be relevant to the experiences of the women in this study who mostly relied on religious leaders' support at different stages of their displacement.

African women's thinking as discussed in this chapter as well as Foucault's thoughts on power, sit comfortably within the constructionist paradigm. Both traditions acknowledge the relative nature of truth and negate the essentialization of human experience (Collins, 2000; Foucault, 1982, 2007). Most importantly, African women's thinking, acknowledges the importance of context, culture and history in shaping human experiences and their interpretations (Collins, 2000), and this position is central to the constructionist argument (Green & Thorogood, 2014). African women's thinking has been considered relevant for studying and analysing problems of African refugee women in the United States (Abdullah, 2012; Haffejee & East, 2015) as well in the analysis of female characters in African women's literary studies. However to date, little has been written about the experiences of women who were affected by the BH insurgency. The majority of the studies have focused on women's experiences of sexual violence at the hands of BH and women's involvement in the insurgency (Human Rights Watch, 2014; IOM – Nigeria, 2015; Matfess, 2017; Oriola, 2016; Oriola & Akinola, 2018; Pieri & Zenn, 2016; UNOCHA, 2015, 2016; Weeraratne, 2017; Zenn & Pearson, 2014)). None has explored the women's overall displacement experience through a gender lens, specifically, Black/African women's thinking. Hence, the application of African women's thought in this analysis creates a space for using women's lived experiences as legitimate points of departure in making interpretations about their lives and the issues that concern them. In the next chapter, I discuss the methodology and methods used for this study. I will show how constructionism as the overarching paradigm of the study informed the use of both contextual and theoretical concepts as interpretive lenses for the data analysis.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

4.1 Introduction

The overarching aim of this study was to explore the lived experiences of IDW in Nigeria and the meanings they made of those experiences, which might include sexual violence. I sought to carry out research that would enable IDW to present their own perspectives on their experiences. I anticipated that such experiences would be complex, and that understanding them would demand much more than description and quantification. I therefore adopted a methodological approach that would reveal the complexities and embeddedness of what the women had gone through.

Qualitative methods were adopted because of their ability to enhance a “contextual, in-depth understanding of phenomena, from the participants’ perspectives” (Green & Thorogood, 2014, p. 3). They give room for flexibility (Melia, 2010; Padgett, 2012) and they allow the exploration of individual experiences within social and cultural contexts. They enable the researcher to uncover relationships between individual experiences and other institutional and structural factors that affect the societies and communities in which those experiences occur (Melia, 2010). I adopted a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, which sits within a constructionist paradigm.

This chapter provides a detailed explanation of the methodological approach and methods used in carrying out this study. The first section discusses constructionism as the underpinning paradigm, with emphasis on its ontological positioning and application in research, and how it relates to the hermeneutic phenomenological perspective. I discuss hermeneutic phenomenology as a philosophical perspective and a research methodology. I then discuss how hermeneutic phenomenology informed the methods used in this study.

The second section presents a discussion of the methods I used for the study. I begin this with a brief description of the study location, and the ethical issues I considered and addressed as I approached the research field, including strategies I adopted to ensure my safety and that of the study participants. I also discuss how participants were

recruited. I then turn to a brief description of the study participants, outlining some of their demographic characteristics.

I then discuss processes of generating data for the study followed by how my pre-knowledge, identity and skills influenced the research process and how these were managed and optimized to enhance the quality of data generated. The reflexive discussions also include the ethical principles underpinning the study, giving due consideration to the cultural context in which it was conducted. Finally, I discuss how the data were analyzed.

4.2 Methodology

4.2.1 Constructionism

There is an understanding within constructionism that reality is subjective, fluid, relative and socially constructed (Armour, Rivaux, & Bell, 2009; Bryman, 2016). Constructionism posits that there is no single objective reality out there that can be discovered, described or explained. Rather, both reality and knowledge are co-constructions between the researcher and the participant, or the social phenomena under investigation as mediated by the researcher (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2005; Tracy, 2012).

When researching within the constructionist paradigm, it is not the role of the researcher to discern what is or what is not, but the researcher is one who possesses, as it were, effective lenses through which he or she can view the world and make useful interpretations about the phenomena of interest. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) described this researcher as a *bricoleur*, a creative and resourceful individual, with a unique ability to adapt a variety of interpretive tools to address research problems. However, the usefulness of a researcher's interpretations solely depends on how closely he or she engages with the participants. This engagement involves active listening and immersion in the participants' stories. Such prolonged engagement and immersion in data brings about a transformation in the way the researcher thinks about the participants' stories, and facilitates the construction of nuanced meanings and understandings about their experiences (Crotty, 1998). Thus, the constructionist paradigm embraces the concept of *verstehen*. *Verstehen* implies an empathetic understanding of another person's point of

view based on the understanding that social actors are the experts of their social experiences (Tracy, 2012).

It is based on this constructionist ontological position, that hermeneutic phenomenology was adopted for this study. In using hermeneutic phenomenology it is assumed that reality is subjective and dependent on human interpretations, and that knowledge about human nature is achieved “through interpretation or understanding” (Armour et al., 2009, p. 106). In the next section, I present a brief discussion on hermeneutic phenomenology and its principles.

4.2.2 Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Phenomenology was considered suitable for this study because very little is known about the experiences of IDW in Nigeria, especially with respect to the broader socio-political and the historical contexts within which those experiences occur.

Phenomenology lends itself to research questions that seek understanding and interpretation of a phenomenon (Green & Thorogood, 2014; Padgett, 2012). The approach is particularly suitable for research that explores sensitive issues among vulnerable populations due to its utilization of interactional methods that give voice to the study participants (Padgett, 2012).

Hermeneutic phenomenology is credited to the work of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) who followed after Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). These scholars differed in their propositions about the focus of inquiry and method of apprehending or understanding phenomena. While Husserl focused on understanding *beings* or phenomena as something the conscious mind could uncover, Heidegger focused on ‘Dasein’ (Being-there) (Aspers, 2010; Lavery, 2003) or existence. Husserl believed that the essence of reality could be uncovered by bracketing pre-understandings or phenomenological reduction. Heidegger, on the other hand, argued that it is impossible to bracket off, or suspend pre-knowledge and assumptions, and deflected towards interpretative understandings (Crotty, 1998). He argued that pre-understanding, pre-knowledge and personal assumptions are valuable and, sometimes, indispensable tools for the interpretive process (Crotty, 1998; Holroyd, 2007; Kafle, 2013; Lavery, 2003; Wilcke, 2002). Other scholars such as Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1955), Maurice Merleau Ponty (1908-1961), Hans-George Gadamer (McWilliam, 2013), and most recently, Max Van Manen expanded Heidegger’s ideas, leading to the development of hermeneutic

phenomenology from a philosophical standpoint to a research methodology. In the next few paragraphs, I will briefly discuss the ideas of Gadamer and Max Van Manen, who contributed significantly to the development of hermeneutic phenomenology as is relevant to this study.

Hans-Georg Gadamer refocused hermeneutic phenomenological studies towards understanding of historical meanings, as constructed through language, and the effects of those meanings on individual and social levels, both in the developmental and the cumulative sense (Crotty, 1998; Gadamer, 2008; Holroyd, 2007; Lavery, 2003; Sloan & Bowe, 2014; Wilcke, 2002). He asserted that history is indispensable in shaping a subject's understanding, and that understanding involves translating past meanings into present situations (Gadamer, 2008). To him, history is a medium that encompasses both the subject and the object she or he intends to apprehend, and that understanding is only possible through language (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). Gadamer also emphasized the necessity of critical understanding, a process that not only acknowledges a knower's pre-knowledge and prejudices, but also opens them up to the possibility of transformation, through what he described as "fusion of horizons", as mediated by dialogue (Crotty, 1998; Sloan & Bowe, 2014). When the knower's prejudices and present positions are critically reflected upon,

... the knower's present situation loses its status as a privileged position and becomes instead, a fluid and relative moment in the life of the effective history, a moment that is indeed productive and disclosive, but one that, like all others before it, will be overcome and fused with future horizons... understanding... can now be seen ...[as] the formation of a comprehensive horizon in which the limited horizons of the text and the interpreter are fused into a common view of the subject matter - the meaning - with which both are concerned. (Gadamer, 2008, p. xix)

Recent extension of hermeneutic phenomenology by Max Van Manen is also important to this study. He focused on practical ways of researching lived experience (Van Manen, 2016). Van Manen (2016) concurred with Gadamer's propositions on the importance of language in giving meaning to human experiences but he also argued that language is limited in its ability to give full expression to private experiences. To Van

Manen (2016), language itself is inherently social, and experiences can only be framed within the limits of the provisions made by a given language. Thus, while language and understanding are inextricably connected, such connection or relationship is functional within specific historical and cultural contexts (Sloan & Bowe, 2014; Van Manen, 2016). As such, from a hermeneutic phenomenological stance, a researcher must bear in mind that what is said may not necessarily reflect the ‘truth’ about experience but what is made available through language. Van Manen also suggested practical ways of applying hermeneutic methods in analysis of data through the process of writing and re-writing, and development of themes (Dickinson, Smythe, & Spence, 2006). I have used the word, ‘suggested’, to describe Van Manen’s ideas in hermeneutic methods because even Van Manen himself (Van Manen, 2016) admits that strict methodological guidelines in hermeneutic phenomenology are elusive. So far, there is agreement among scholars (e.g. see (Armour et al., 2009; Dickinson et al., 2006; Goble & Yin, 2014; Holroyd, 2007; Kafle, 2013; Smythe, Ironside, Sims, Swenson, & Spence, 2008; Van Manen, 2014)) that there are no fixed methods for conducting hermeneutic phenomenological studies.

Hermeneutic phenomenological studies are more concerned about presenting rich texts that uncover the life worlds of participants and less interested in accuracy (Kafle, 2013). In fact, they question the very concept of accuracy. Therefore, the researcher’s goals are to illuminate and reflect upon the lived experience of a phenomenon in individuals or groups. The researcher then uses participants’ stories as the foundation for further theorization, interpretation, explanation or abstraction (Goble & Yin, 2014). At the same time, researchers acknowledge that both knowledge and interpretations given to such phenomena are often subjective, tentative and incomplete (Armour et al., 2009; Dickinson et al., 2006; Goble & Yin, 2014; Smythe et al., 2008). Thus, methodology in the hermeneutic phenomenological sense is “a creative approach to understanding” (Laverly, 2003, p. 16), an ever-evolving learning process (Holroyd, 2007), and a complex endeavor (Sloan & Bowe, 2014), which is capable of transforming the very theories and aims that guide it (Schwandt (2000) in McWilliam, 2013). It is “a journey of ‘thinking’ in which researchers are caught up in a cycle of reading-writing-dialogue- which spirals onwards. Through such disciplined and committed engagement insights ‘come’” (Smythe et al., 2008, p. 1389).

Participants for hermeneutic phenomenological studies are chosen to include only those who have experienced the phenomenon of interest (Merriam, 1998 in Kafle, 2013) and interactions between the researcher and the researched are expected to be open in order to come as close as possible to the lived experience (Kafle, 2013). Smythe et al. (2008) propose that researchers should allow themselves to ‘fall’ into purposeful conversations with participants and allow each conversation to flow according to its own uniqueness. Lavery (2003) also recommends that researchers working from this perspective are required to pay attention to both the spoken and unspoken communication while interacting with the participants. Non-verbal communication, such as silence or pauses between sentences, can be as meaningful as the spoken words (Lavery, 2003).

The absence of fixed methods tends to engender disagreements on specific criteria for judging the quality of studies conducted from the hermeneutic phenomenological perspective. While such problems associated with quality criteria are not unique to hermeneutic phenomenology, some of such issues are worth mentioning. For example, the construct of validity as applied to other research paradigms may not sit very well with a hermeneutic phenomenological approach and constructionism, likewise the quality claims of credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Kafle, 2013). Both rigor and quality are contextual and a function of the researcher’s adaptation to the research context, ability to think and re-think, rather than their ability to abide by a set of rules (Armour et al., 2009; Goble & Yin, 2014; Smythe et al., 2008). Researchers are thus required to adapt methods in a manner that enables the research to address the research questions. They thoroughly investigate the phenomena as it is lived by the participants; apply appropriate interpretive strategies that aid the understanding of meanings within the participants’ stories, with due consideration for parts and whole; and then write and rewrite those experiences to reveal nuanced understandings (Armour et al., 2009; Kafle, 2013; Smythe et al., 2008; Van Manen, 2016). In the words of Goble and Yin (2014), such researchers must possess the phenomenological eyes to perceive realities as they are lived and expressed by the participants, and “phenomenological pens” to express those realities as they appear to the participants.

Van Manen, (1997) in Kafle (2013) recommends “orientation, strength, richness and depth as the major quality concerns” (Kafle, 2013, p. 195) in hermeneutic phenomenological studies. These four quality criteria can be summarized as the

researcher's ability to produce texts that reveal deep involvement in the participants' world; convey the researcher's commitment to his or her intention to understand meanings in the participants' stories, and succinctly express the meanings that are conveyed by the participants' stories in such a manner that invites the reader to enter the life-world of the participants (Kafle, 2013). Kafle (2013) adds that adopting appropriate writing and reporting style for this kind of study, is key to the maintenance of its quality.

While I acknowledge my pre-knowledge and personal assumptions about the experiences of IDW, I approached the research field with an open mind, having no intention to uncover any objective truth but to generate discourses that would be useful for understanding how IDWs in Nigeria interpret and make meanings of their experiences. I was intimately involved in the research by engaging with the participants, assuming the position of the researcher as the instrument (Tracy, 2012). I also paid close attention to the socio-cultural contexts, within which the participants lived, interacted and made meanings of their experiences. I was flexible in adapting methods to capture those contexts. Such adaptations were necessary, since I was not just interested in capturing the lived experiences of a single individual but the collective account of a group of individuals (Bisogni, Jastran, Seligson, & Thompson, 2012).

4.3 Methods

4.3.1 Study location

I traveled from New Zealand to Nigeria, and spent 16 weeks between October 2016 and January 2017 for the fieldwork of this study. The fieldwork was carried out in two major cities and a rural area within the Northcentral geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Although there are over 200 ethnic groups with multiple languages within the region, the common language of communication is the Hausa Language. However, a good number of people also speak English or the Nigerian version of Pidgin English. About 20 IDP camps are located in Northern Nigeria (Ayansina, 2015), yet IDPs are scattered all over the region in camps, informal camp-like settings and host communities. It is reported that the majority live with host families (IOM - Nigeria, 2015). Participants for this study were drawn from the different settlements in the selected study locations. I maintained flexibility in the choice of the exact study location due to the continued

socio-political instability in the area, and the high risk of violent eruptions. Hence, participants were selected from mostly host communities and camp-like settlements in Jos (Plateau state) area, and around the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) – Abuja. Figure 4 is a map of Nigeria showing the location of Jos and Abuja in the Northcentral region of the country. Participants were selected from different displacement settings in order to give room for maximum variation in data (Creswell, 2007) with regards to those settlements.

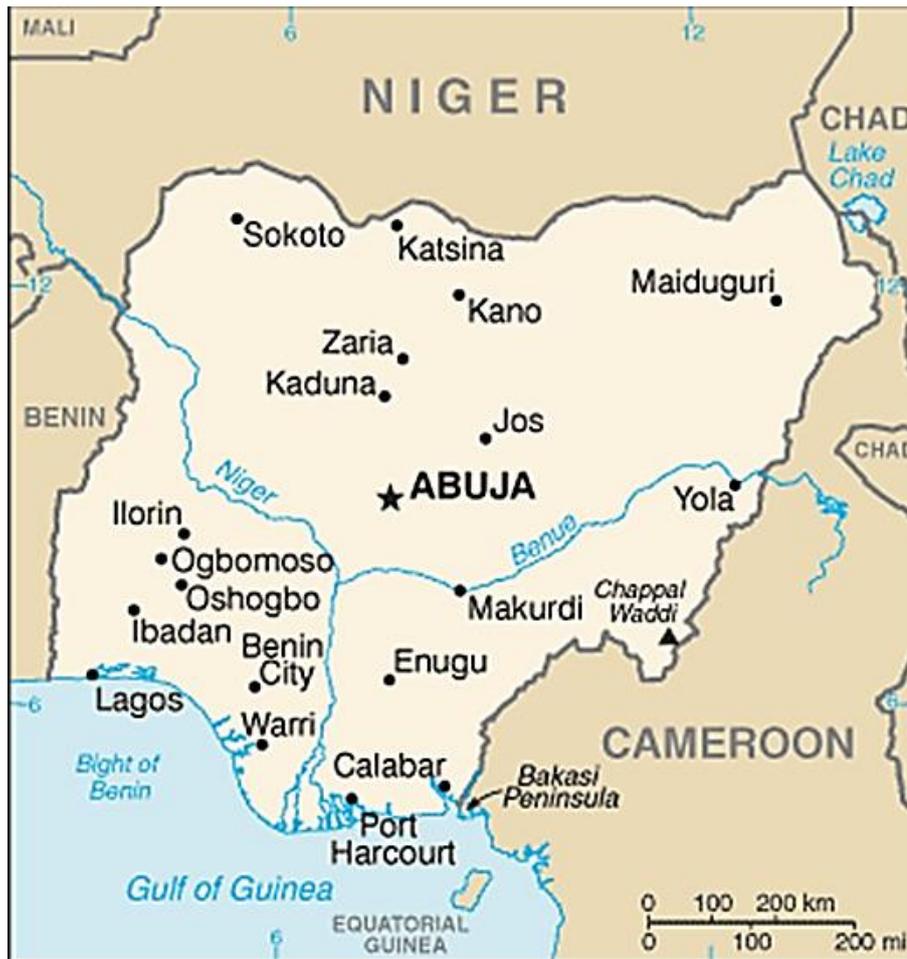


Figure 4: Map of Nigeria showing Study locations (Jos and Abuja)

From The World Factbook by Central Intelligence Agency, 2019, retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html>. Image in the public domain.

In Jos, participants were selected from two major locations. Some participants were selected from an NGO-organized camp located in Bukuru, Jos South Local government area, and the rest were selected from urban host communities (Alheri and Ultan areas) in Jos North Local government area. In Abuja, participants were selected from two

different informal camp-like settings located at Durumi and New Kuchingoro (also referred to as the Galadimawa area), as well as a rural host community, known as Pegi in Kuje Local government. Attempts were made to select participants from another rural farm settlement (Guruku settlement), where IDPs were housed in low-cost buildings, but I was unable to gain access to the IDPs who were often busy with their farm work. It was also difficult to organize a meeting with the coordinator of the settlement.

It is important to clarify at this point that the two informal camp settings had some slight contextual differences. Durumi camp was mostly occupied by IDPs but the camp is located in a portion of the capital city that accommodates a good number of artisans and informal businesses, and they often intermingle with one another in their day-to-day activities. New Kuchingoro camp is located in an urban slum, and it is occupied by both IDPs and other individuals and groups of lower socio-economic status. Both IDPs and other slum dwellers constructed and lived in similar tents and it was difficult to differentiate IDPs from those other ghetto dwellers without the assistance of the camp leaders.

I organized interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) at safe venues of participants' choice. This was in line with my commitment to assuring participants' safety and affirming participants' autonomy and more egalitarian relationship (Schreiber & Tomm-Bonde, 2015) between the participants and myself. However, most of the participants did not have much choice in terms of venue outside their homes or camps, as they were in a relatively new environment. Hence most of the interviews and FGDs were conducted in camps, some were conducted in a neutral location, while others were conducted in the participants' homes. I had initially planned to conduct the interviews in cafes if the participants were willing, but it was difficult to find quiet cafés where we could discuss without interference. Participants who did not want to be interviewed in camps or in their homes were interviewed in school buildings after normal school hours. I had to obtain permission from the leadership of one of the schools in Bukuru (a suburb in Jos) to have access to one of the classrooms after school hours.

4.3.2 Ethics and safety strategies

I adhered to ethical principles for researching vulnerable populations, while respecting their unique culture and worldview. Ethical approval for the research was sought and obtained from the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee as well as the National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC), Nigeria. I also undertook an online ethics training course from the Training and Resources in Research Ethics Evaluation (TRREE) e-learning website. This training covered the general ethical expectations for research involving human subjects, obtaining informed consent, and ethical expectations for research in the Nigerian context. I engaged in cultural consultation with the Māori Research Manager at the University of Otago, Christchurch to discuss the relevance of this research to the Māori community. While in the field, relevant authorities and institutions were consulted and their approval obtained before the field work began. Participants were given an equivalent of 20 New Zealand dollars in recognition of their contribution to the study.

Strategies to safeguard my physical and emotional safety were embedded in the fieldwork and data generation process. Liamputtong (2007) identified possible risks for physical harm and assault, psychological and emotional distress associated with repeated close encounters with individuals who have had horrific experiences, as well as exhaustion from prolonged working hours. She advocates for high level sensitivity to the needs of the researcher alongside those of the researched. Therefore before embarking on the field trip, I made concrete plans to ensure my personal safety. A detailed safety management plan was developed and this was approved by the Dean of the University of Otago, Christchurch and the Pro Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences (see Appendix 1 for a copy of the Safety Management Plan). Part of the safety plan was to establish contact with the international SOS for regular international safety updates and alerts, and potential emergency response.

While in the research field, I also took practical steps to protect myself. Even though I paid regular visits to IDP settlements, I was careful not to reveal my identity with respect to the research unless it was necessary in the process of recruitment or formal introduction to officials/camp leaders. This was to avoid undue attention to myself, especially because of the sensitivity of the issues of the research. Every chosen venue was assessed for possible security threats before commencing the interviews or FGDs,

as recommended by Hossain, Zimmerman, Kiss, et al. (2014). Most importantly, it was due to safety considerations that I limited this study to the Northcentral zone as even though many displaced persons still resided in government-operated camps in Northeast Nigeria, the Northeast was still very unstable, with erratic BH attacks at the time of field work. In order to ensure my emotional safety, I drew support from both formal and informal relationships. I talked to my supervisors, family members and friends about my feelings and emotional responses to the participants' accounts.

4.3.3 Recruitment of participants

The participants of this study were IDW of reproductive age (ages 15 to 49). This age group was selected because it is generally accepted as the prime age bracket for marriage, sexual engagement and productivity among women in Nigeria. Participants were purposively recruited for the study to ensure that participants had experience with the issues being explored (Green & Thorogood, 2014). My focus was to recruit those who had experienced BH attacks, displacement and possibly sexual violence.

I had anticipated working with organized displaced persons' camp officials in order to gain access to the displaced women but I realized that most of the camps were not 'organized' or run directly by government officials. I engaged the leaders of those camps in informal consultations before proceeding with participant recruitment, but the actual recruitment process varied among the different study settings. In the next few paragraphs, I discuss how I recruited participants in each of the study settings.

In Jos, my first point of call was the NEMA office in Bukuru, but at the office, I was informed that NEMA office had no direct link with the IDPs. However, the officer in-charge assigned one of the workers to accompany me to the two NGOs that worked directly with IDPs in the city. Those NGOs were Stefanos Foundation and the Centre for Caring, Empowerment and Peace Initiative (CCEP). Stefanos Foundation ran a fairly organized camp in Bukuru, while CCEP functioned as a training and support centre for IDPs in diverse displacement settings. Interactions with officials and IDP leaders enabled my familiarization with the local system and also helped establish linkages to potential focus group participants and, subsequently, in-depth interview participants. Mistrust has been identified as a major barrier to recruiting research participants in both urban and rural areas (Friedman, Foster, Bergeron, Tanner, & Kim, 2015) but direct engagement with community groups has been recommended as a

valuable way of finding hard-to-reach participants (Green & Thorogood, 2014). I found that engaging with those familiar organizations and leaders as linkages to the participants smoothed the recruitment process.

At the camp site in Jos, I engaged IDP leaders to assist in recruiting participants. The leaders assisted with displaying the research information sheets containing my contact details at strategic positions within the camp. Some information sheets were also personally handed out to some of the IDW. I later discovered that even though a number of the displaced women could speak some English, they were not particularly interested in reading. Hence the IDP leaders volunteered to talk to the women about the research and referred them to me for further information as I regularly visited the camp.

The officials of CCEP were instrumental in linking me up to the IDW in Jos's host communities. They allowed me access to their database which contained the contact details of most registered IDPs in Jos, and its environs. They also introduced me to a prominent female IDP leader. On some occasions I contacted the women personally and discussed the study with them through the contacts I received from the organization. Other times, the leader introduced the study to the women and linked me up with them and some of them decided to participate in the study. Information sheets were then given to the women as I met with them. Those who could read did so, while I read the sheet to those who could not read.

I was not able to get access to any government or NGO official at Abuja since the camps were mostly informal settings. The assistant chairman, the women's leader and the assistant women's leader were in-charge. I was directed to the chairman in most instances and they redirected me to the women's leaders. The women's leaders often gave authorization for me to recruit participants in the camps and one of them also volunteered to take part in the study. Fewer camp residents in the Abuja camps could read in any language, hence the women's leaders spoke to them about the study and also introduced me to those who wanted to know more about the study. Some of the camp residents were recruited because they had assumed I was a humanitarian worker who had come to share food or other gift items during one of my visits in camp. However, when they approached me and I clarified my mission in the camp and established rapport with them, they gave their consent to participate in the study.

Participant recruitment in the rural host community (Pegi), which is located at the outskirts of Abuja was also organized through the chairman of the IDPs in the village. When I arrived in the village, the villagers directed me to the house of the chairman of the displaced persons as he was very popular in the village. All the IDPs in the community were known to the chairman and he introduced me to some of the women who, after explaining the research to them, consented to participate in the study.

In each of the settings, interviews and FGDs were scheduled according to the women's convenience after they agreed to participate in the study. At each scheduled meeting, the contents of the information sheet were further discussed and questions answered in order to ensure participants' full understanding of the research process before they were required to sign consent forms. A good number of the women were not able to sign their names, hence I obtained verbal consent from them (see Appendix 2 for Information Sheet and Informed Consent Form).

Only women who were identified to be affected by the BH insurgency, had lived in any of the displacement settings for at least two months, and had given their informed consent to participate in the study and have their voices recorded were included in the study. It was expected that women who had spent two months in displacement, would have had significant experience to be able to discuss issues related to it. Girls between the ages of 15 and 18 were excluded from the study if they had never been married, had never been pregnant or had never had children, unless they were living in displacement without parents or guardians, or served as heads of their households. This decision was made because girls between the ages of 15 and 18 are still regarded as minors in Nigeria, but are considered emancipated if they are married, have had children or are playing adult roles as heads of households.

Initially, I planned to exclude participants who could not understand and communicate in English or a level of Pidgin English. This was to eliminate the need for interpretation, as the use of interpreters could have compromised participants' confidentiality. However, I realized that very few women in the camps and host communities could communicate in either English or Pidgin English. I also realized that excluding women who could not communicate in English or Pidgin English would have privileged the more educated IDW. I therefore made the decision to include women who could communicate in Hausa Language. After spending a few weeks in Jos, I was

able to strengthen my Hausa speaking skills, and gained enough confidence to use Hausa in some of the interviews and discussions. The participants were permitted to express their thoughts in English, Hausa or Pidgin English, depending on their abilities. They also had the freedom to begin a sentence in one language and end it in another. Such adaptation of languages is common in everyday conversation in Nigeria, and it enhanced my interactions with the participants by minimizing the language barriers between us. Some groups of women were left out of the study because they could only communicate in their local languages.

4.3.4 Data generation

Some participants were engaged in in-depth interviews, others participated in FGDs, while a few of them took part in both. In the next few paragraphs I discuss FGDs and in-depth interviews as methods of data generation and how I utilized them in this study.

4.3.4.1 Focus groups

I organized four focus groups for this study, two in Abuja, and two in Jos. Focus groups generally consist of four to ten individuals alongside a moderator, engaged in an in-depth discussion on a specific theme (Green & Thorogood, 2014). Each of the groups for this study, consisted of 5 to 7 participants. Small groups are recommended when participants are likely to have more to say about an issue and when they are likely to have an emotional connection with the issue (Bryman, 2016). The rural host community was excluded because less than five women gave their informed consent to participate in the study, and considering the remoteness of the setting, it was more feasible and cost effective (Namey, Guest, McKenna, & Chen, 2016) to engage the participants one on one than to organize a focus group.

There appears to be no clear guidance as to the number of focus groups and the exact number of participants to be recruited in a study involving focus groups (Carlsen & Glenton, 2011; Guest, Namey, & McKenna, 2016; Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016). A methodology assessment study by Guest et al. (2016) reveals that a sample size of 2 to 3 focus groups produced about 80% of the themes on their topic while 3 to 6 groups produced 90% of all the themes. Guest et al.'s (2016) study has however, been criticized for making realist assumptions, which supposes that participants are able to produce themes, independent of the researcher (Sim, Saunders, Waterfield, & Kingstone, 2018). Sim et al. (2018) argue that themes are co-productions between

researchers and the researched and as such not solely dependent on the number of the focus groups.

For this study, I considered both cultural and contextual imperatives in the composition of the focus groups. Two groups were composed of younger unmarried women (ages 15 - 25) while the other two groups were made up of married women (ages 26 to 49). This separation of participants according to their age brackets and marital status was to allow for a level of homogeneity in the groups while ensuring that unmarried women would be free to discuss sexuality issues, which they may not have been able to talk about in front of the older married women (Liamputtong, 2013). I also included participants from diverse native ethnic groups, and pre-displacement communities in order to improve the richness of data and allow for potential variation of opinions and perceptions (Abeid et al., 2014). In addition, I was cognizant of the possibility of difference between the experiences of women who lived with their partners in displacement and those who lived without their partners. Therefore, the older women's groups were organized to include women who lived with their husbands, widows and those who were living apart from their husbands in displacement. In all, 25 women participated in the focus groups. Three out of the 25 women participated in both the individual interviews and the focus groups.

The use of focus groups in this study was advantageous in several ways. First of all, informal gatherings and group activities are common ways that women naturally relate with one another and generate ideas for actions in most parts of Africa. Such gatherings foster and reinforce their social and cultural connectivity with one another (Chilisa, 2012). Hence focus groups were useful starting points in my engagement with the women and they served as contact points for identification and recruitment of participants for in-depth interviews. They were also useful for generating ideas that would require further exploration in the in-depth, one-on-one interviews (Hussain & Khan, 2008). This was particularly important because part of my study's aim was to explore experiences of sensitive issues (Liamputtong, 2007) such as sexual violence as well as other issues about their gender relations. I therefore needed an interactive group setting to uncover how women in that culture, and particularly the IDP communities, talked about such issues in terms of their language use and the manner in which such topics were approached in discussions (Bryman, 2016; Hansen, 2006). In addition, the heightened sensitivity of religion, within the context of BH insurgency demanded a

careful assessment of the most appropriate ways to approach religious discussions through informal group discussions.

Focus groups are also useful for capturing the dynamics of interactions among group members, their expression of shared meanings, and their co-construction of meanings (Barbour, 2010; Bryman, 2016; Hansen, 2006; Liamputtong, 2007). Barbour (2010) reports that focus groups are particularly useful for motivating participants to discuss issues, which they may have generally taken for granted, and had not thoughtfully analyzed in the past. They also help to minimize power imbalance between the researcher and the participants by eliminating the feeling of being ‘put on the spot’, often associated with individual interviews, and by ceding more control to the participants who would have a choice over which topic they wish to talk about, even though they are part of the group discussion (Barbour, 2010; Liamputtong, 2007). Hence participants who might feel intimidated by face-to-face interviews can be included in focus groups (Schulze & Angermeyer, 2003 in Liamputtong, 2007, p. 107). Focus groups are also valuable for researching vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations, and for opening up discussions about sensitive issues (Barbour, 2010).

However, focus groups also have certain limitations. Green and Thorogood (2014), identified specific problems with accessing marginal views, and problems with accessing in-depth narrative accounts. Depending on the skills of the researcher or the focus groups moderator, some dominant voices in focus groups may overshadow others and act as mouth pieces for the entire group (Barbour, 2010; Green & Thorogood, 2014). However, I specifically considered the importance of focus groups with respect to the aims of this study, the sensitivity of the issues in question and the cultural context of the study, and found ways of ameliorating some of the identified limitations. In the next few paragraphs, I discuss in practical terms, how the focus groups were organized and some of the steps taken to minimize the effect of some of the disadvantages of focus groups.

The focus groups were pre-planned events which sometimes involved the gathering of women from different locations to a safe and convenient venue. Three of the focus groups were held in a quiet location in, or very close to, the camps, while the fourth group was held at an arranged location in the urban host community. Arrangements were made for the transportation, refreshment and comfort (seating arrangements and

privacy) of the participants. Meetings were generally scheduled for the evenings in order to prevent the meetings from disrupting the normal daily routines of the women. The decision to hold the meetings in the evenings is also in line with a common cultural practice in most of Nigeria, where evenings are often used for relaxation, and social/other informal gatherings.

Although the women had significant input into arranging venues, it was customary for me to arrive at the discussion venues at least 30 minutes before the set time to ensure that everything was in place as planned, and to be able to personally receive the participants as they arrived. Each participant was welcomed and offered a comfortable seat. Refreshments were served once all the participants had arrived. It is a common cultural practice to share food and drinks before or after a meeting, but serving the refreshments at the beginning of the meetings was a way of creating an informal atmosphere that encouraged mutual interactions.

The initial welcoming exercises and refreshments were followed by formal introductions, selecting of pseudonyms and setting of ground rules. I asked the participants to choose pseudonyms so that they could remain anonymous. However, sign-in sheets were used to collect relevant demographic information which included age, state of origin, previous occupation (before displacement), current occupation, marital status, length of stay in displacement and type of residence in displacement. The participants had the opportunity to suggest the ground rules for the meetings, but I ensured that pertinent rules such as taking turns to speak, speaking up so that the recorder would clearly pick up the voices, mutual respect and confidentiality of discussions were included. The main discussions began after the participants were fully settled, and they lasted between one to three hours.

A focus group guide/agenda was used to ensure the smooth running of the focus groups (see Appendix 3 for focus group discussion guide). However, most times, I allowed the discussions to flow naturally without many interruptions except when there was a need to clarify an issue, probe further on an emerging idea, or introduce another theme for discussion. I maintained a significant level of flexibility in moderating the discussions and the overall running of the groups. Fairly rich data were generated in the focus groups as members of the groups generally stimulated one another in active discussion. It is also possible that the group discussions facilitated recall of specific events, and

enabled group members to frame their thoughts in ways they may not have been able to if interviewed individually (Green & Thorogood, 2014; Nyamhanga & Frumence, 2014). Some participants were uninhibited in raising personal issues, despite being informed that such disclosures were not required. I observed that participants were more open to discuss sexual violence issues in groups than in the individual interviews. In the groups, some women discussed sexual violence as a general issue that affects ‘women’ in the camps while others were open to to share their personal experiences of sexual violence. One participant’s courage to speak up about her personal experience encouraged others to also share theirs, whereas, in the personal interviews, participants were more defensive or evasive about sexual violence issues. An opportunity for debriefing was created at the end of those discussions as recommended by Green and Thorogood (2014). Table 1 displays the composition of the focus groups.

Table 1: Characteristics of Focus Groups

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Number of participants	6	7	7	5
Age range	24-48	17-23	27-47	20-25
Displacement setting	NGO camp Jos	Urban Community Jos	Urban camp-like setting (Durumi, Abuja)	Urban camp-like setting (Kuchingoro Abuja)

4.3.4.2 In-depth interviews

An in-depth interview is a face to face interaction between a researcher and a participant that allows the researcher to obtain rich information (from an insider perspective) about the participant’s “thoughts, perceptions, feelings, and experiences” (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2009, p. 43). This method was considered for this study because of its known benefits for the exploration of sensitive and potentially divisive issues such as sexual violence and religion. It was expected that some women would feel more comfortable to discuss their personal relationships in private as discussions centered on gender and family relationships (Bryman, 2016; Liamputtong, 2007; Nyamhanga & Frumence, 2014). In-depth interviews often give voice to the voiceless and allow them to talk about issues that thereto they have been silent about, and allow the researcher to grasp the different meanings and varied interpretations that participants can make of the same issues or situations (Liamputtong, 2007). Like other data collection methods that

are dependent on spoken language, interviews produce participants' accounts of their world, which are not "direct representations of that world" (Green & Thorogood, 2014, p. 103). I was committed to establishing rapport with the participants, gaining their trust and ensuring that they were relaxed during the interviews. I had a few casual encounters with some of the potential participants at an early stage of the study, before the in-depth interviews took place. The interviews were semi-structured in order to cover topic areas while allowing flexibility in the direction of the discussions, so that participants could discuss other issues of interest them (Green & Thorogood, 2014). I made an effort not to appear intrusive and I consistently affirmed participants' control over what they chose to reveal (Campbell, et al., 2009).

I selected 30 participants for in-depth interviews. Relatively small sample sizes are regarded as adequate for qualitative studies (Mason, 2010). While data saturation, which is that point in data collection when no new data are being generated, is a common criterion for determining sample sizes for interview-based qualitative research, (Green & Thorogood, 2014; Hennink, Kaiser, & Marconi, 2016; Malterud et al., 2016; Saunders et al., 2018), its usage as an overarching criterion has been criticized by a number of contemporary scholars (e.g. (Guest et al., 2016; Malterud et al., 2016; Saunders et al., 2018; Varpio, Ajjawi, Monrouxe, O'brien, & Rees, 2017)). As an alternative to data saturation, Malterud et al. (2016) proposed the use of information power, which is the level of information, relevant to the overall aim and purpose of a given study, held by a certain number of research participants. They proposed a model, consisting of five dimensions of information power. They argue that a study will require fewer participants if the aim is narrow, if the participants share very specific characteristics, if the data collection is anchored on an established theory, if the quality of dialogue between the researcher and the participants is strong, and if data analysis will involve in-depth analysis of a few cases or discourse analysis. On the other hand, a study would require a larger number of participants if the aim is broad, if the participants have more diverse characteristics, if it is not anchored on an established theory, if the quality of the dialogue is weak and if the analysis will involve a cross-case analysis. They posit that decision about the actual number of participants should be a progressive process as determined by the nature of the research and the actual interview processes. I selected 30 participants because the aim of my study was broad. In addition, while the participants were all IDW affected by BH insurgency, their

displacement contexts differed, and they varied in other characteristics such as age; marital and educational status; pre-displacement settings and conditions; and religion. Furthermore, even though I had fairly good skills in conducting interviews, my research was explorative, and as such not anchored on a pre-established theory. A total of 52 women participated in this study as focus group or individual interview participants. Table 2 displays the relevant demographic characteristics of the participants as obtained during the field work.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of this Study’s Participants

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency
Marital status	
Married and living with spouse	18
Married but lives separately	4
Widow	5
Single never married	21
Single teenage mother	3
Residence	
NGO camp	13
Urban Host community	14
Rural Host community	4
Informal urban camp-like setting	20
State of origin	
Borno	38
Adamawa	2
Yobe	11
Religion	
Christians	44
Muslims	8
Current employment status	
Petty trading (mostly food and food items)	10
Self-employed with recently acquired skills	5
Irregular engagement in menial household labour	10
Farming	2
Camp volunteering	3
Schooling	5
Unemployed	16
Pre-displacement employment	
Housewife	8
Schooling	17
Petty trading/bussiness	8
Farming	10
Civil servant	2
Unemployed	6

The majority were originally from Borno State, they were mostly single and most of them resided in informal, urban camp-like settings.

4.4 Reflections on my positioning and influence as a researcher

Within the constructionist paradigm, the researcher is seen as an integral part of the research, hence I acknowledge that my positioning as a researcher as well as my pre-knowledge and pre-conceptions would have had some significant impact on the quality of discussions I had with the study participants and the type of data I generated for this study. The extensive literature review I undertook before the field work also shaped my expectations, as I came to terms with experiences of IDW in other parts of Africa and the globe. This pre-knowledge, combined with my personal experiences, influenced the kind of interview questions raised and consequently the kind of data I generated (Green & Thorogood, 2014; Hair & Fine, 2012).

I also share some basic characteristics with the participants in this study, which may have enhanced the understandings I had and the interpretations I made about their stories. I am a Nigerian woman, within the age range (15-49), an age group that is most vulnerable to gender-based violence (GBV) (Heise, Ellsberg, & Gottmoeller, 2002). My gender, age and Nigerian citizenship certainly influenced my worldview about the women and the experiences of women in Nigeria (Liamputtong, 2007). Having lived and worked in Nigeria for most of my life, I have interacted with a number of women with direct experiences of GBV and I have also witnessed incidents of violence against women. I have also lived and worked in Northern Nigeria, and have been influenced by the socio-cultural ideologies within that region of the country. In addition, the diverse roles I have played as nurse, family planning and HIV counsellor, as well as community mobilization facilitator for health promotion in different geo-political zones in Nigeria, gave me significant exposure to the day-to-day experiences of Nigerian women.

Within the context of the interviews and focus groups, I occupied a dual position as 'insider' and 'outsider'. My familiarity with the local culture and gender gave me elements of insider status. Some of the participants presumed that I would naturally understand or relate with some of their experiences even when they did not express them. As a result, some participants intentionally failed to complete some of their

sentences, but ended them with phrases such as “they [I hope] you understand?” or “you know what I mean now”. I was intentional about avoiding assumptions about complete understanding of unspoken words or every aspect of the participants’ stories. I did not hesitate to ask for clarification where necessary. The fact that I introduced myself as an Ibo woman from Igbo-speaking Eastern Nigeria, but had the ability to communicate in Hausa language also had an influence on the interviews. In Nigeria, ability to speak in other Nigerian languages aside from one’s local language is best described as a potential ‘barrier breaker’ in social interactions. It communicates acceptance and a level of understanding of the culture of the other ethnic group, and goes a long way to minimize distrust, and thus enhance openness in communication. During the interviews and group discussions, it was common for the participants to refer to me as “my sister” or “aunty”, which communicated a perception of closeness and a shared bond of sisterhood. This generally enhanced rapport between us and the level of self-disclosure. For example, one participant felt comfortable enough to partially undress in order to show me a swollen area on her chest where a BH militant had hit her. On the other hand, my social position as an educated woman living outside Nigeria, as well as the fact that I did not share the experience of displacement with the women, may have placed me in an ‘outsider’ position. The ‘outsider’ positioning may have led some participants to either maintain a closed position, or provide socially desirable responses (Armour et al., 2009).

I also acknowledged the possibility of hierarchy and power imbalance (Ashton, 2014; Campbell et al., 2009; Campbell, Adams, Wasco, Ahrens, & Sefl, 2010; Green & Thorogood, 2014; Karnieli-Miller, Strier, & Pessach, 2009; Kendall & Halliday, 2014; Liamputtong, 2007) between myself, as the educated researcher from overseas, and my study participants as IDW, despite ongoing arguments about where power actually lies in the research context. For example, Karnieli-Miller et al. (2009) pointed out the shifting nature of power differences between the researcher and the researched at different stages of any research. They highlighted the fact that participants often have the power to control what is said and how it is said in interviews and as such, might be more powerful than the researcher at some points in the research. This is despite the fact that the researcher ultimately decides what is researched, how it is researched and what is reported. Issues of researcher vulnerability, even within the so called privileged power positions of researchers in interview contexts, have also been highlighted in

literature (Kendall & Halliday, 2014; Liamputtong, 2007; Råheim et al., 2016; Sivell et al., 2015), especially when the topic of discussion is emotionally disturbing to the researcher, or when the participants decide to introduce their own agenda.

These notwithstanding, I made personal efforts to reduce hierarchy between the participants and myself. I dressed like the average Nigerian student or a Northern woman and avoided clothes that portrayed membership to any given religion (such as wearing the Hijab) because of the sensitivity of religious issues in the region and the fact that my participants were likely to belong to different religious sects. I also tried to speak in simple language and communicated with my participants mostly in Pidgin English or Hausa Language. This was particularly important because speaking 'big English' is seen as a show of superiority in educational status in most parts of Nigeria. Part of my effort to reduce hierarchy also included coming into their rooms or whatever shelter they had and sitting on the mats with them, since most did not have chairs in their accommodation.

The sensitivity of the issues of the research also required a high level of sensitivity on my part to the emotional reaction of the participants (Campbell, Adams, Wasco, Ahrens, & Sefl, 2010). I anticipated emotional responses from my study participants, who had experienced both violence and displacement, as some studies have shown that traumatic experiences can be relived when victims/survivors attempt to narrate them (Campbell et al., 2009; Campbell, et al., 2010; Kendall & Halliday, 2014; Liamputtong, 2007). Hence I made efforts to accommodate and effectively respond to the participants' emotions. I prepared myself to take the role of an empathetic listener throughout my engagement with the participants. Kendall and Halliday (2014) have argued that both empathetic listening and therapeutic communication skills are necessary tools needed for the conduct of both ethical and productive research interviews. It is by being empathetic that the researcher is able to win the participants' trust so as to gain access to their stories (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009).

As part of being empathetic, I allowed participants ample time to process and construct their stories and paused to support them whenever I noticed some tears in their eyes. I provided tissues and handkerchiefs and waited until they were capable of continuing the discussions. As recommended by Campbell et al., (2010), I made efforts to provide relevant information to the participants concerning displacement, war-related trauma,

and sexual violence when necessary. I also encouraged the participants in their efforts to cope with their situations. I neither minimized their trauma nor responded to their stories as though their experiences were completely new. I informed them that women in similar circumstances tended to have similar experiences, and that I had both heard and read some stories about women in similar situations in the course of my study and practice. However, I was cautious not to communicate an assumption that their experiences should reflect other people's experiences, rather I expressed an openness to understand their unique experiences as they lived them. I also provided links to appropriate support services within their communities in case they needed to access further support following the interviews.

Drawing from my pre-knowledge and previous experience in working with vulnerable populations, I anticipated that the participants might have expectations of me. According to available literature, it is not unusual for vulnerable participants to expect a researcher to play the role of a health worker, a social worker, or a humanitarian agent (Mackenzie, McDowell, & Pittaway, 2007). Based on this knowledge I endeavored to clarify my role as a researcher from the onset of my engagement with the participants. While such clarifications engendered a level of understanding of my researcher role among the participants, it did not totally eliminate some of their expectations of me. Some participants specifically requested help from me for such things as getting a job, talking to the government, giving them money to start a business and always remembering them in my prayers. Some spoke of previous researchers who interviewed them without giving them any money and some who sold their information for their own gain. Although I had to repeatedly restate my position as a student researcher and the purpose of my engagement with them, I also carefully considered the cultural context within which those expectations operated. Such expectations were embedded in the local culture of communality and mutual support, and the African way of being. Hence, while I did not take up the role of social worker, health care practitioner or counsellor, I could not avoid taking the role of a 'sister' and a 'mother'. I also considered it my ethical responsibility to provide participants with links to available services that might be of benefit to them in their communities. For example, I introduced some of the participants to a NGO which was providing support services for widows in Jos.

4.5 Data analysis

All discussions were recorded with a digital recorder. Digitally recorded interviews and discussions were transferred to a password-protected computer only accessible by me. Digital recordings were personally transcribed and stored in a password protected file. I translated interviews that were conducted in Hausa Language into English after which I carried out an initial thematic analysis of the data.

A thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analyzing and discussing recurring themes or patterns in the data. It is characteristically flexible and can be adapted to a wide range of theoretical and epistemological frameworks (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I carried out a critical thematic analysis, following the hermeneutic cycle (Smythe et al., 2008; Van Manen, 2016). Such approach to analysis was taken because I did not aim to just present a descriptive account of participants' experiences. Rather both the meanings that participants made of their experiences and the broader socio-cultural and historical factors that may impinge on those meanings were explored (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The thematic analysis was contextualized, such that existing literature and social theories were used as interpretive tools in order to make sense of the data. Thus the "underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualizations" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84) that shape or inform participants' understandings and interpretations of their experiences were explored and examined in the context of existing theoretical concepts, while maintaining a focus on their primary accounts. Generally, the analysis involved a continuous and progressive process of immersion in data, reflexive writing, examination of literature and theory, interpretations, comparisons with previous interpretations, re-writing and re-immersion in data. In the next few paragraphs, I present an account of how I analyzed the data for this study.

I started the analytical process by thoroughly familiarizing myself with the data. This familiarization began with the transcription process, followed by several episodes of listening to the recorded interviews and reading through the interview transcripts until I gained sufficient understanding of the contents. I then developed appropriate codes that captured specific ideas, contained in the data. However, codes were not just representative of the semantic patterns within the data, but were latent codes, that I analysed as portraying the broader contexts, structures and meanings that underpinned

participants' constructions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Although there were subtle differences in terms of specific details uncovered and the dynamics of conversations between the focus group and in-depth interview data, similar codes and eventual themes were generated from the two methods of data collection. By the end of the initial coding exercise, over 200 different codes were used to depict specific ideas across the entire dataset.

I reviewed the initial codes in consultation with my supervisors, similar codes were merged into categories and subsequently themes. I came up with seven broad categories, namely: suffering under Boko Haram attacks; flights and displacement; suffering in displacement settings; gender issues; support systems; protection/resources; and opportunities. Some of these categories with similar ideas were also merged together to arrive at three overarching themes: suffering and struggle for individual and collective survival; negotiating gender relations; and negotiating religion and religious support. Three to seven sub-themes were identified within each of the themes (See Appendix 4 for the sub-themes identified).

The writing process began after the themes and subthemes were identified but in order to ease the continuous process of working in and out of the transcribed texts, I developed a thematic chart. The development of the thematic chart entailed working through all the interview transcripts and identifying and recording where each of the themes or subthemes reflected in each participant's account. The same was done for the focus group transcripts until I worked through the entire dataset. The thematic chart made it relatively easy for me to merge the data with my writing and also bring quotes into the write-up, without having to search the entire dataset again. The writing, reading and rewriting process of the analysis proceeded from an initial descriptive draft of what is contained in the data to a more in-depth critical analysis of the participants' accounts using scholarly literature and theories as interpretive tools. Contextual factors such as the history as well as the socio-cultural and political realities of the participants were also used to make sense of the data. I drew ideas from a range of Black/African women's thinking and Foucault's ideas on power as key theoretical tools for the analysis. The theoretical concepts have been fully discussed in chapter three. Key findings of the research are discussed in chapters five, six and seven. In the following chapter, I explore the suffering of the women in the study, and struggle they underwent to survive both BH attacks and challenges of displacement.

CHAPTER 5

CONTINUOUS SUFFERING AND STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL

5.1 Introduction

Similar to what happens in most wars and conflict situations (e.g. see (Alzate, 2008; Davis, 2010; Farr, 2009a, 2009b; Laurie & Petchesky, 2008; Mackenzie et al., 2007; Okello & Hovil, 2007; Taback et al., 2008)), BH insurgency exposed the women in this study to different forms of suffering and deprivation, some of which were gender-specific due to their culture, and the gendered nature of the insurgency. They suffered violent attacks at the hands of BH, during which they lost their loved ones, property and livelihood. They also suffered in displacement as they struggled to survive in new, and mostly hostile, environments. The women presented themselves as individuals who were suffering and struggling to survive. Yet, intermingled with their accounts of suffering and struggle were narratives of strength, resilience, sense of accomplishment, and both individual and collective resistance to oppression.

I have drawn on a range of African women's thought (see (Decosta-Willis, 1995; hooks, 2000; Hudson-Weems, 1995, 1998, 2000; Karenga & Tembo, 2012) to show that the women in this study were not just defined by their suffering and struggle, but by the creative ways through which they survived BH attacks and adapted to life in displacement. African women's thinking also shed light on the family centeredness, strength, and resilience of the women in this study, as well as their solidarity in struggle, sisterhood and selfless service. Such thinking is also used to show how the women defined and named themselves (Collins, 2000; Hudson-Weems, 1995, 1998; Karenga & Tembo, 2012; Ogunyemi, 1985) as dignified individuals, and as individuals with a sense of mission, committed to fulfilling their mission as mothers, daughters, daughters-in-law, wives, sisters, sisters-in-law and community members, despite the challenges they confronted (Decosta-Willis, 1995).

I have organized this chapter in two main sections. The first focuses on the women's experiences of BH oppression, their challenges with childcare, and how they utilized

their knowledge of indigenous practices to escape detention in BH Haram camps. The second section focuses on their living conditions in displacement, the antagonism and exploitation they experienced and how they named and defined themselves against disparaging images that were created by individuals and organizations, and reinforced by the government. I also show how as individuals and communities, they resisted oppression and in solidarity with one another, created a place for themselves in displacement.

5.2 Suffering Boko Haram attacks, abduction and escaping captivity

5.2.1 Initial attacks: “They just started shooting men”:

The participants in this study reported experiencing multiple BH attacks on their families and communities in the form of bomb-blasts, torture, sporadic gunshots and arson. They reported that the attacks were often sudden and unexpected, revealing the typical hit-and-run approach that most terrorists adopt (Okoli & Iortyer, 2014). The suddenness of the attacks and the destruction of human lives that followed was evident in most participants’ accounts.

As they came, we did not know... we did not... we were just staying like that not knowing that the Boko Haram people have come to us. We just heard “tatatatatatatatattata!!!” Gun shots. See men, they were just sitting. They just started shooting men and were just killing them. They were just killing people! They were just killing people!!

(Jenny).

Elizabeth reported how dead bodies littered their communities after major attacks associated with shootings, bombings and arson:

...in the morning like this everybody find way [found a way] to run. Come see people...people that they are die, they die, nobody carry their corpse ... [with emphasis] Nobody carry their corpse! Who will go and carry? Everybody is running for his life (Elizabeth).

It was not easy for Sansanatu to find words to express the massacre that followed the attack she witnessed in her community. With sighing and hissing, she managed to say:

*Kai!*⁸ *The very day that they start the thing [sighs]... Terrible! Many people [died]. If you are just passing eee... one railway... near my uncle house, [hisses] if you see dead body there! [Hisses] ... I don't want even to see that kind of a thing again (Sansanatu).*

Although it has been estimated that about 100,000 persons were killed by BH as at the end of 2016: an estimate made after consultations with village heads and traditional rulers in the communities (Tukur, 2017), such estimates are unreliable as some of the communities are still dispersed. Some of the study participants' relatives were still missing at the time of these interviews, and some reported how they had recently reunited with their families after giving up hope of seeing them again.

In addition to human losses, the women also lost their livelihoods, as the insurgents robbed them of their valuables such as clothes, food items, and household animals. They also looted shops, burnt homes, churches and mosques. Houses that were not destroyed were eventually occupied by the insurgents, and were used as lodgings, storehouses for looted property, or prisons for their captives.

Available literature and media reports suggest that insurgents commit robbery, looting and vandalization of victims' properties to serve economic (Adesoji, 2010, 2011; Agbibo, 2013b; Aghedo & Osumah, 2012; Mantzikos, 2014; Onuoha, 2012a), retaliatory (Walker, 2014; Zenn, 2013) and ethnic cleansing purposes (Mann, 2005). However, the participants in this study believed such activities purely served economic purposes for BH. They reported that BH members depended on their abandoned crops, animals and homes for food and shelter. Participants also confirmed previous reports by Onuoha (2012a) and Mantzikos (2014) that the insurgents robbed banks during some of their violent attacks. However, the reasons behind the bank robberies, and the extent to which the insurgents utilized the money obtained from the operations was unclear. One of the participants, who witnessed a BH bank robbery in Yobe reported that the insurgents scattered several bundles of Naira⁹ notes along the streets immediately after the robbery. According to her, money littered the streets until the next day as some people refrained from touching the money, which they tagged "blood money".

⁸ *Kai* is a common exclamation used to express intense emotions related to anger, disgust, pain, or surprise. In this context, it expresses deep emotional distress.

⁹ Naira is the major unit of the Nigerian currency.

They carry that lomoozene [limousine] two... two of the lemozine... They pack money inside the bank. They come to that police station, with money, even the following day, see money for ground. See money! Around four o clock they stop shooting, they carry the money dey go. As they go I tell the children [young people that hid in my shop]. I say, "Let none of you touch this money"... some pack... some did not touch, because they throway [threw away] plenty! A lot of money there. (Gigime)

Scattering money on the streets could have meant one of two things. It is possibly an extravagant show of victory which is a common practice observed among high-profile armed gangs in Nigeria whenever they successfully rob a bank. On that same day BH reportedly overpowered the security forces and killed many policemen, including Gigime's husband. For them, that was a huge success. On the other hand, it could have been a way of making money available to the poor. BH claims that their attack on the government is a fight for the rights of the poor and the socially deprived (Langer, Godefroidt, & Meuleman, 2017; Oriola & Akinola, 2018). However, the rejection of the money by the so-called poor and socially deprived is in line with an African ethical principle of truth and justice (Karenga, 2012; Karenga & Tembo, 2012). Collecting the money would imply complicity with BH's atrocities and by instructing young people around her not to touch the money, Gigime asserted her authority as a community mother (Collins, 2000), who believed that she had a responsibility to enforce moral principles in her community.

The insurgents were particularly successful in their attacks and robbery because of the way they dressed and presented themselves. The women reported being deceived by the insurgents' appearances. One woman said:

Honestly we were staying in peace at home...Boko Haram just entered. We thought that it was soldiers that entered but we did not know that they were the ones... We were even happy that they have increased soldiers for us, not knowing that they were not soldiers.

They were Boko Haram (Rahab).

BH members were mostly identified by their long beards and by the red or black head scarves they often wore (Agbiboa, 2013a). Their appearance in Nigerian military

uniforms was particularly deceptive to the women. Such camouflage also tended to blur the line of demarcation between BH's activities and those of the security forces, at least from the perspective of the victims. This is especially important, considering reported allegations of human rights violation against both the security forces and BH members (Human Rights Watch, 2014; Zenn & Pearson, 2014). Except for some very clear cases, such as the extra-judicial killings of civilians in police custody (Human Rights Watch, 2012 in Okoli & Iortyer, 2014), the identities of the perpetrators of many random violent attacks that occurred during the insurgency could be misinterpreted. It has also been reported that opportunist criminals generally exploited the insurgency situation to perpetrate crimes (Weeraratne, 2017), thus making it more difficult to pin-point perpetrators. An example of what appears to be a confusion of attackers' identities is revealed in the following account by one participant who reported that a military patrol team arrived when a passenger vehicle she travelled in was attacked by BH.

They [Boko Haram] attacked us there on the road...They even, shoot... shoot ... shoot...So we came down, we lie down, they now stop another car behind us, they stopped one car coming towards us again from Maiduguri town. They killed the driver and they killed one lady there... Then we saw a military mens... coming with ...with their... this thing [van]... they taught that it was accident, when they saw that it was Boko Haram, they now left us there and go. (Maryam)

The military men's inaction and the fact that the insurgents neither attacked nor fled from the military men is unusual, judging by BH's avowed hatred for the security forces (Agbibo, 2013b; Eme & Ibieta, 2012; Mantzikos, 2014; Weeraratne, 2017). The above scenario however suggests that the 'military men' were either members of the sect or accomplices in their mission. Nevertheless, from the perspective of the participants, there were two groups of actors during the insurgency, and they were, the attacking BH and the defending or inactive security forces.

Nonetheless, the identity of the attackers was important to the participants, especially because of the religious undertone of the insurgency. While there had been intermittent religious crises involving Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria (Adesoji, 2010, 2011; Danjibo, 2009; Salawu, 2010), the majority of participants reported that Christians and Muslims in their communities generally cohabited peacefully. One

participant compared the peaceful coexistence of Muslims and Christians in the Northeast to the separatist arrangement that existed in Jos:

We are doing our things together...In Jos now, they are separate, Muslim they are ...in this side, Christian they are...in their side...but in Yobe and Maiduguri it's not like that. We are mixed up. Like in this compound you will see Muslim you will see Christians. It's not like that in Jos because of this [the previous] crisis that happened
(Elizabeth).

Some participants, especially Christians, however reported a level of tension in their relationships with their Muslim neighbours, which was understandable due to the previous crisis. Yet, their accounts about their Muslim neighbours reflected a level of ambivalence. In one of the focus groups, the participants, who were mostly Christians, reported that they preferred their “kind and compassionate” Muslim neighbours in the Northeast, to the “pretentious and selfish” Christian neighbours they met in their current displacement setting. But they also expressed their uneasiness with their Muslim neighbours, making reference to a popular Hausa adage:

But you know...Hausa say, sabo de kaza, baya hana yanka¹⁰.
[Familiarity with a chicken does not prevent you from slaughtering it]
E hen, they are good but when it comes to religion that is where they have problem (Laraba).

The participants believed that the majority of their attackers were close relatives, former friends, school mates or neighbours, and that even when they were not directly involved in the attacks, they served as informants to the attackers. One woman, whose husband and church secretary were killed on their way to a hospital, narrated how she later realized that it was her very close neighbour who had called the insurgents to come and kill them. Another participant narrated how they could decipher the attackers' closeness to them through the specific questions they asked during the attacks.

Most of these people, Boko Harams, they are from Gwoza, they are Muslims, from Gwoza, they know us, but we don't know. They will

¹⁰ This is a popular adage used by Muslims in Northern Nigeria. It implies that friendship, closeness or fondness does not hinder them from killing a person during a jihad or religious crisis.

cover themselves but they know us because some of them, they are even calling the Christian's em...name. They [will say] "where is this person? Where is this person?" They know us because we are living with them and we don't know that they are Boko Haram (Cynthia).

Available literature (Adesoji, 2010; Alozieuwa, 2012; Danjibo, 2009; Okoli & Iortyer, 2014; Onuoha, 2012a; Pieri & Zenn, 2016), as well as some narratives from the study participants revealed that the majority of the BH members were from the Kanuri ethnic group. Yet their recruitment of both overt and covert members from other ethnic groups and countries like Chad and Niger Republic (Forest, 2012) appears to have aided their identification and access to specific civilian targets in both rural and urban communities in the Northeast. In addition, the presence of both Ansaru and core BH members dispersed in the communities (Zenn, 2013) further complicated the security situation in those areas. Some participants expressed their reluctance to return home, even if the insurgency ended, because they felt betrayed by close acquaintances and thought that they may never be able to trust them again.

"They will not handle you the way you handle them. Because if you are planning good for them they will be planting evil for you"

(Aisha)

Christians in this study generally believed they were attacked for their faith in Jesus Christ, but Muslims equally believed they were attacked for their faith, which in their opinion, was the true Islam that propagates peace. This is one unique feature of the Boko Haram insurgency. Previous religious crises in Nigeria had been purely along the Christian-Muslim divide, hence BH attacks on fellow Muslims and Islamic institutions (Adenrele, 2012; Comolli, 2015; Ogunrotifa, 2013; Onapajo & Usman, 2015; Pieri & Zenn, 2016; Weeraratne, 2017) was unprecedented. Pieri and Zenn (2016) attributed this twist to the fact that politicians and religious leaders have often exploited Islamic fundamentalists' ideologies to secure votes and win elections, only to abandon them and their ideologies thereafter. According to Eme and Ibietan (2012) the insurgents appeared to have realized that their Muslim leaders [and elites] were no different from the 'infidels' (Christians or Pagans) they were groomed to hate and exterminate. Earlier in the insurgency, they included those who "collaborate in arresting or killing us even if is [sic] a Muslim" (Eme & Ibietan, 2012, p. 16) as their targets. However, in a

recent video released by the insurgents, after a successful attack on Maiduguri on June 10, 2017, the faceless spokesperson denounced Muslims who followed the Nigerian constitution, those who accepted democracy, those who attended schools, and those who worked with the government as infidels (Sahara TV, 2017).

Despite the general suddenness of the attacks, some participants reported anticipating attacks after seeing and hearing what was happening in neighbouring communities and states. Thus, they were able to make some emergency preparations and develop safety plans. As part of their emergency preparedness, they sent the men and boys away from their communities and then they harvested most of their crops. They also sold some of their farm produce and carried their money on their bodies at all times, so that they could flee from any point of attack. One of the participants recalls:

My husband, when the thing started, his father told them that “this thing that is happening will not be better for us, you people should go away. I don’t want to see any man in the house with my eyes, because if they enter village it is men, men, men, they are killing. I don’t want to see you people in the house”. That is how he pursued all the boys [and men]... (Esther)

Some of these safety plans and emergency preparations corroborate what Baines and Paddon (2012) reported as indigenous-knowledge-informed strategies towards civilian safety, in their study of displaced persons in Uganda. Yet, Esther’s account further revealed the gendered nature of the insurgency (Maiangwa & Agbiboa, 2014; Oriola, 2016; Zenn & Pearson, 2014), as well as the gendered response to it by families and communities. It also brings to the fore, the women’s respect for their elders, concern for their husbands’ safety and their capability to adopt flexible gender roles (Hudson-Weems, 1995, 1998, 2000). It is culturally expected that young, energetic men will send their wives and children away to safety, while they remain at home to guard and protect their properties and community. However, Esther and her sisters-in-law allowed their father-in-law to over-rule, believing that it was in their best interest, even though they would be left alone to look after themselves, the children and the elderly. The decision to send the young men away was also in tandem with the culture of male supremacy and male preference (Inyang-Etoh & Ekanem, 2016; Milazzo, 2014; Nnadi, 2013; Norling, 2015; Olaogun et al., 2009; Oluduro, 2013; Otive-Igbuzor, 2014), which

exists in that society. Sending the men away was a way of securing the family heirs with very little consideration of how that decision affected the other members of the family even though the men were most at risk of being killed. Esther reported that the decision to send the men away eventually resulted in a situation where she and her sisters-in-law had to bear the responsibility of burying their father-in-law when he was eventually killed by BH, since none of the men were available to bury him.

After they kill... our father [father-in-law] there... all of us we come run comot¹¹ [before we ran and left the place]. We come stay for bush. This man have many children. She [he] has eight boys, but woman ... bury the man because no men... No any boy touch the man na women bury the [man]...The daughter, the man first daughter... we join hands together [to] bury the man... As ...as we no fit run dey leave the man like that... that's why we say make we try to hide the man, as we hide the man, we come run, go stay for mountain [as we could not run and leave the man like that, we decided to try and bury him. It was after we buried him that we ran to the mountain] (Esther)

It is a gross cultural anomaly for women to bury someone, much less a man, in most Nigerian cultures. However, with coordinated action, the women were successful in carrying out a task they could not have accomplished otherwise. The importance of united effort in accomplishing difficult tasks is often expressed in a popular Hausa proverb “*Yawa shi kan sa zarre ya ja duchi*”, literally translated as “*quantity makes the cotton draw a stone*”. The practical meaning is that there is strength in unity. However the absence of the men, either because they were killed or sent away, resulted in many other difficulties for the women as they increasingly combined their traditional female roles with male roles. Some of the challenges they had with child care in the absence of male or other family support are discussed in the next sub-section.

5.2.2 Women have suffered and suffered and suffered: Flights, displacements and challenges with childcare

BH attacks were often repeated, as such the participants experienced multiple attack-flight and displacement cycles until they arrived at the displacement settings where I met with them. Every attack-flight episode, brought with it a phase of suffering and

¹¹ Comot means leave, left, go or gone, depending on the context in which it is used.

hardship and potential risk for further attack and displacement. Some participants reported that they resided in mountains, caves and bushes for periods ranging from a few weeks to 11 months after the initial attacks.

We left our town... in the fifth month [month of May]. And we climbed the mountain [rocky mountain]. We spent...one month in the mountain, and they [Boko Haram] came and pursued us from the ground, so we climbed higher up the mountain and we spent eleven months (Ladi).

It was also common for the insurgents to attack them in those mountains and bushes. Although the mountains and caves generally provided havens for them, such that it was difficult for the insurgents to find them once they were hidden, the insurgents had to develop a strategy for discovering where they were hiding among the multiple caves and mountains.

We were staying there and they looked for one of their containers and they put some pepper and ash and they mixed them together. If we hide in the rocks, they will do like this, like this, like this [Demonstrating a sprinkling action] and then [coughs repeatedly to indicate the effect of the substance on victims]. [And the insurgents will say] You! Come out”, and they will catch you and you will enter their hands and they will take you away (Adah).

The mixture of pepper and ash served as improvised tear gas which induced coughing and sneezing. Tear gas as a non-lethal but significantly irritating chemical weapon has often been used by the military or police to disperse rioting crowds. It is possible that BH militants had been victims of chemical weapons from the JTF or had learnt such practice from other international jihadist movements.

When chased from the mountains and bushes, or whenever they considered it safe, the participants fled to neighbouring communities, cities, states or even to Cameroon. They often covered long distances on foot, under very harsh weather conditions and being exposed to dangerous animals, hunger and continuous fear of attack. Sometimes they fled without having proper clothing for themselves and their children.

When these insurgency started... They all chase us, and we flee to Mubi, from Mubi, and they still attack us at Mubi, that's our neighbouring state, Adamawa... Then we moved to Cameroon from Cameroon we moved to to...Yola. Then to Taraba from Taraba to here (Aisha).

Some of the participants arrived in the displacement settings dressed in rags or half naked. Some of their children were completely naked because they had lost everything.

Some people came in here with just under skirts. Some children did not have any clothes at all...some people spent three months without bathing. It is as we came here that people started contributing things for us (Jenny).

Similar experiences of multiple attacks, protracted displacement cycles, and taking refuge in the bushes were reported about victims of the DRC conflict. According to IDMC (2015), the implications of such multiple attacks and displacements is that “every time people are displaced, they lose more of their assets and have to start again from scratch, eroding their ability to cope and increasing their poverty, needs and vulnerability” (p. 26). Such multiple displacements and flights also had significant adverse effects on family and community relationships as they became more dispersed, leaving the women with very little or no support systems (Jacobsen, 2014; Westhoff et al., 2008).

Ordinarily, dressing in rags or just undershirts would have been the height of indignity for the women in this study. Culturally, women's bodies are expected to be guarded and covered from public view at all times. However, while faced with a life or death situation, clothing mattered less to them. To express the paradox of shamelessness without clothing, one woman exclaimed:

No cloth! No Shame!! (Asabe)

During the flights and displacements, as well as in the displacement settings where I met with them, the women's suffering was often compounded if they were pregnant or had very young children to care for. It was common for them to link their suffering with the difficulties they had with childcare. Moreover, their personal needs, were often subsumed under the needs of their children in their narratives.

My children could not run, all their legs have been cut in the bush. They were just crying. Even me I was just managing to walk, only God was helping us all. They had no slippers on...the cactus plant had severely cut their legs... they were just crying. They were also crying as a result of hunger, for two days they have not eaten ... No food, no water. Children will be crying, and some children were dying as a result of hunger. If you are staying with the children in the caves, they will be saying, "Mama give me food" No food! "Give me water to drink". No water! We were just like that (Adah).

Another participant said:

Womens have suffered and suffered and suffered and suffered! Auntie let me tell you the truth that they have suffered and suffered and suffered... Honestly it was so difficult. When you see what happened to us... sincerely speaking you will say "Kai! This woman has tried". We have to carry pikin¹² [children]. Children from this hand to the other hand, you have to carry two children, and one at your back. It's like person like me I have four children and the time we were running my husband was not with me. (Alheri).

These accounts reveal the women's struggle with, and their commitments to their mothering roles and the nurturing of their children (Hudson-Weems, 1995, 1998, 2000; Karenga & Tembo, 2012), even in adverse situations. Their accounts also re-echo the assertion that "while entire communities suffer from the consequences of armed conflict and terrorism, women are particularly affected because of their sex and status in the society" (UN, 1995, p. 57). In this context, their role as the children's primary care givers exposed them to severe physical and psychological pain in not being able to adequately meet their children's needs. However, the women expressed a sense of pride and great accomplishment for being able to stay committed to their role as mothers in spite of the hardships they endured. The expression, "you will say, Kai! This woman has tried!" was an indirect demand for praise and appreciation by Alheri. Her faithfulness in her motherly role, even without the support of her husband, culturally

¹² Pikin is Pidgin English for child or children

qualified her as a 'good mother', who was worthy of respect and honour from the community.

Having surviving children in displacement was a source of pride for some of the participants because of the overall impact of the insurgency on children. Many children were lost to BH, sickness, accident or hunger. Children of either sex were targeted by BH. Teenage girls were mostly abducted for marriage (this will be discussed in detail in the next section), while any male over the age of 14 was killed. One of the participants showed me photographs of two beheaded bodies. The bodies belonged to her pastor's 16 year old twins (two boys) who were slaughtered on the same day. Younger boys were often abducted, indoctrinated into the BH sect, and trained as child militants. Males over the age of 14 were regarded grown-ups who could not be easily indoctrinated.

Saving the boys from death and abduction was often the women's primary concern as they fled from their homes. Most women dressed their boys in female clothes, packed them in sacks with clothes, or wrapped them up like dead bodies as they fled. Some of the women almost lost their lives in their effort to save their sons. A Muslim participant narrated how she was almost killed by the insurgents on the same day her husband was killed because she resisted the abduction of her ten year old son. Her punishment for resisting the abduction was the destruction of her house:

When my own child was ten years old, they come say if I didn't give them the boy, they will shoot me. I say make una shoot me now... I will not go to give you this pikin, unless you kill me. ...they come carry ... bomb...rocket launcher? They come carry rocket launcher to my house [They said they will kill me if I don't give them my son. I told them that they will have to kill me because I will not give them my son. They destroyed my house with bomb]. (Saadatu)

Another participant reported how her mother was almost killed while making efforts to save her son (the grandson). The boy was eventually captured and taken to an unknown destination.

My mother try [tried]! She run with my pikin, go hide for bush. They come see my mother, with my pikin they say they go [will] collect the

pikin, my mother say “no oo, I no go give una” [I will not give you people]. They say they must collect [him]..., they carry gun, beat my mother two for [twice on her] chest. My mother fall for ground, she faint, they carry my pikin run. Up till now they dey for them [he is with them]. They never kill am, I no know the place where him dey now. He don... fifteen years [They have not killed him. I don’t know where he is now. He is now 15 years old] (Benedict)

Another woman who reported that the insurgents temporarily incarcerated her in their Sambisa forest camp, narrated what the insurgents did with the abducted boys:

...the children, they are not yet wise...they will enter with the children and be teaching them how to read, the type of reading they do when they want to go and kill people... the children will join them and be learning, they will give them training on how to kill people and you cannot say anything...their teaching is how to kill, and it is of evil. That is what they teach the children. Whatever you teach your children afterwards, no more, the children will no longer accept. Anyone that accepts [what the parents say], he will be killed (Adah).

It is not clear the exact kind of texts the children were made to read but a number of video recordings by the insurgents (Sahara TV, 2017) suggest that they misinterpret qur’anic verses that recommend Jihad and killing of “infidels” as a surety for going to heaven. It is likely that the children are both intimidated and brainwashed to participate in terrorism.

Escaping death by hunger, injury or BH abduction did not always guarantee safety or survival for the children. A number of children were reported to have died as a result of ill health, either in the bushes and mountains, or in the displacement camps. Some of the participants reported that some children died because they were overwhelmed by the sounds of gunshots and bomb blasts. Others became ill and died for lack of health care. Another group of children died in crowded camps in Cameroon, Maiduguri and other transit camps due to cholera outbreak. Some of the women reported that they moved away from camps in Cameroon and the northeast because of such disease outbreaks.

Before here, as we ran away and people came to Maiduguri, sickness really came... because of the so many people that were staying in one place. Disease came and killed a lot of our children...vomiting and diarrhoea..., there is no toilet and there is nowhere you will go and pass stool. People are passing stool in plastic bags and they will go and throw away. And flies will go and touch it, and will come and touch the food of the children... That is how disease came and caught the children and was killing children a lot. Even here, it also caught our children and really disturbed them (Salome).

The enormous impacts of conflict on children is well documented in Graça Machel's study (UN General Assembly, 1996) and other studies (e.g. (Mendelsohn & Straker, 1998)). However, these women's stories, reveal the silent suffering of women who were at the centre of multiple losses, and those of women whose boys had been forcefully abducted, killed or conscripted into terrorism. The impact of BH's abduction, killing, forceful conversion and utilization of boys as militants has not received as much attention as their abduction of girls. Despite media reports of BH's killing of 59 school boys in Buni Yadi (Oriola, 2016), and the awareness that the majority of BH militants are young boys (Adesoji, 2010; Alozieuwa, 2012; Danjibo, 2009; Onuoha, 2014; Pieri & Zenn, 2016; Weeraratne, 2017), who are often forcefully conscripted (Al-jazeera, 2015), the impact of such abductions and conscriptions on families and communities seems to have been ignored. The psychological, social and economic impact for women of losing male children, especially in Nigeria's mostly patriarchal culture is often worse than the impact of losing female children. Having male children is seen as a woman's primary security in her matrimonial home (Izuagbara, 2004) as family inheritance is obtained through them. In Northern Nigeria, male preference, and the status of a woman without a male child is often expressed in a common adage, "*Ba ayi komai ba, macce ta haifi mace*, meaning that nothing is gained by a woman giving birth to a woman" (Oluduro, 2013, p. 1). Thus, killing a woman's husband and taking away her male children is as good as killing her culturally. This cultural value probably intensified the women's willingness to sacrifice their lives to save their sons.

Nevertheless, some women had to make a choice between saving their own lives at the expense of their children, and dying alongside their children, and a number of them

chose the former. Some of the participants narrated, often with a sense of horror, how they witnessed infanticide and child abandonment among their fleeing companions.

So, now like we womens that come here some of the womens ... they lost their children. There is one woman that she has...five children, it's only two that she escape with them. Because this time if you are running, even pikin wey dey [that is at] your back, no time to comot¹³ it. And sometime you, you go tire¹⁴ ...tire ooo! Tire with the pikin ...just comot it...leave it ...go [you will be tired of the child and just remove it from your back and leave it to die]...Because of the wahala¹⁵. Some ... the [their] pikin go fall, just fall, rolling ...rolling ...rolling for...for mountain...just die. Some they born, leave the pikin there... (Mary)

Another participant reported that she assisted in the delivery of four different babies, who were eventually abandoned in the bush.

Ah! Ah!! I even see three, about four... yes about four women that delivered on my presence when we were sleeping in the bush...Delivered and throw away the children...[with raised voiced] Yes! And throw away the pikin. I used something like this [pointing to a sharp stone] to cut the navel [umbilical cord] (Alheri).

Infanticide is tied to human history, as a common sacrificial practice in ancient civilizations (Demaue, 2009). Within the landscape of war and conflict, children born as a result of wartime rape are often subjected to infanticide (Seto, 2015; Theidon, 2015) but sometimes, desperation and destitution drive women to infanticide in those settings (Bechtold & Graves, 2010). Oriola, (2016) reported child abandonment or infanticide in BH camps as events associated with women's desperate attempts to escape. However, these accounts reveal that child abandonment and infanticide occurred within different contexts of their displacement, especially when the women became overwhelmed with childcare or feared for their own safety.

¹³ *Comot* in in this context means remove.

¹⁴ *Tire* means tired, in the above usage, "you go tire" means you will be tired.

¹⁵ *Wahala* means trouble or problem.

Bechtold and Graves (2010), interpreted infanticide as an expression of women's agency in challenging their victimhood and exerting their control over their lives and future in desperate situations. Yet, it is associated with long term psychological and emotional trauma. In some Nigerian ethnic groups, infanticide is practiced for religious superstitious reasons, such as twin birth, death of a mother within three months of birth, and the eruption of an upper tooth before the lower tooth, but in such cases, the mothers of those children, if alive, are never involved (Adeyemo, 2013). Children with deformities have also been abandoned. However, it is not very common for legitimately married Nigerian women, or African women in general, to commit infanticide for economic motivations in response to suffering (Bechtold & Graves, 2010). In Nigeria, women who intentionally abandon their children for whatever reason are stigmatized as failed, weak or irresponsible mothers who are unable to endure hardship or make the necessary sacrifices for the sake of their children.

Nevertheless, loss of children for whatever reason was regarded as a collective loss by the participants. Expressions such as “we lost our children”, and “many of our children died” (e.g. see Salome's account above) were commonly used by the participants, some of whom were still single and had no biological children. Such was an expression of their sense of collective motherhood (Chilisa, 2012; Chilisa & Ntseane, 2010; Collins, 2000; Hudson-Weems, 1995, 2000). It is believed that children belong to the entire community. Hence women who witnessed, and could not prevent infanticides could be seen to have equally failed in their roles as community mothers. Therefore they were quick to communicate their own sense of helplessness in the face of the infanticides.

[Raising voice] *I can do nothing. Cause...you know... everybody on his own... The only what I can do is to cut the navel [umbilical cord] for her, to help her, to raise her up, and start moving. Cause they were... we were running helter shelter and they [Boko Haram] were running after us. (Alheri)*

The expression “everybody on his own” reveals how BH insurgency both literally and symbolically challenged the women's sense of collective responsibility towards one another. Yet, while communicating her helplessness in saving a new born baby, Alheri drew attention to what she did to help the mother. She stressed the fact that she did what was humanly possible for her to do in that situation, especially as the insurgents

were pursuing them. In so doing, she revealed her consciousness of the fact that other people's survival in that struggle, depended on her as a woman (Karenga, 2007; Karenga & Tembo, 2012). Some of the women were eventually captured and taken to BH camps. In the next section, I discuss some of their experiences in BH captivity and how they interpreted BH's utilization of women.

5.2.3 Direct encounter with Boko Haram: Abduction, Islamization and forced marriage

Some of the participants reported spending days and weeks as hostages in BH's camps. Younger women were abducted for marriage and sexual purposes while older women were often used as labourers until they were either released voluntarily by the insurgents or rescued by soldiers. All the women were forced to fetch firewood or serve as cooks or general household servants. They were also forced to serve as caregivers to wounded insurgents. Older women were not particular targets of the insurgents. The following account by Rifkatu, a 48 year old woman reveals BH's preference for "younger persons":

...like me, they caught me and we were taken to Sambisa [Sambisa forest] they also left us. They said, "it is not ... women that we are looking for, it is children andmen". (Rifkatu)

Young women who had never been married were forcefully converted to Islam and forced to "marry" their abductors, while married Christian women who were judged as young, were often used as sex slaves and were repeatedly gang-raped. As a result of the gang-rapes, some women died in captivity. The following narrative from Mary whose daughter escaped captivity presents a picture of the gang-rapes:

...my daughter tell me say... if they aaa...started sleeping [raping] with the womens [with emphasis] see how the womens they are crying and everybody there get wound. [With raised voice] One woman, ten men! They will use one woman. As they spend like ten days there, e say [she said] like four womens die (Mary).

These participants' accounts corroborate previous reports on differential treatment of women in BH camps (Human Rights Watch, 2014; Mutton, 2018; Oriola, 2016). Oriola, (2016) reports that BH categorized women into girls under age 14, young

women and girls of reproductive age, and older women; and that fecundity was a major factor in the different treatment the women received in captivity. But, the accounts from participants in this study, reveal both complexities and contradictions in BH's segregation and utilization of women. From the participants' accounts, women were first 'workers', but for a number of complex reasons, some would remain workers, whilst others would become "wives/brides", fighters or sex-slaves. Similar complexity in segregating women was also observed by Matfess (2017) in Mutton (2018). While Oriola's (2016) findings suggest that married women with children were generally spared sexual violence in BH captivity, this study's findings suggest that all women of reproductive age, whether or not they had children, could be subjected to some sort of sexual violation. The treatment the women received was however shaped by the stage of insurgency at which they were abducted, whether or not they were judged as attractive, and the particular camp they were taken to. The following accounts by some of the participants reveal such complexities:

If you have male...marry... they are not touching you. But if you have just one children two children, they will force you let you marry them [But even if you are married, but have just few children, they will still force you to marry them](Saratu).

Esther's account below shows the importance of physical appearance or looking young in BH's segregation of women.

If you are still young like this, they will kidnap you go, but as you are old, they will not carry you. They don't kidnap woman that is pregnant, they will not kidnap old woman. If you are young like this, they can kidnap you, go, that's what makes us... we women are running. If not we cannot run, but if they see you, you are still young like this, they can kidnap you go (Esther).

Mary highlighted BH's preference for Christian women:

They say Christian womans are beautiful..., they know how to dress well...if they carry a Christian women, they will marry her. (Mary)

Generally, there was differential treatment of Christian and Muslim women in the camps. Christian married women were more likely to be gang-raped and forced into

marriage than Muslim women. Such differential treatment is a reflection of BH's perception of Christian women and girls as slaves, and 'infidels' (Human Rights Watch, 2014; Maiangwa & Agbiboa, 2014; Oriola & Akinola, 2018) or 'prostitutes'. Mary's statement, which alludes to BH's belief that Christian women are "beautiful and know how to dress well", is a Northern construction of Christian women as those who expose their beauty and dress in sexually stimulating manner. This is in contrast to Muslim women who are framed as morally pure because they cover themselves (Renne, 2013a). Thus they were more likely to engage Christian married women in forced marriages or gang rapes than the 'respectable' Muslim women.

However, in some instances, even what appeared to be forced marriage was actually coerced agreement to have multiple "husbands"/sexual partners. What gave the arrangement some semblance to marriage was the offer of a dowry to the woman, without which the marriage would be invalid according to both Islamic law and traditional marriage customs. The following narrative from Saratu, reveals the complexities and contradictions in the forced marriage arrangements:

They come give me one man...tou¹⁶ that he will marry me. You will have like two husband, [Raising her voice] you alone! Even three... will sleep with you if you have already...already agree to [with] them
(Saratu).

Forced 'marriages' were often accompanied by forced impregnation. The participants reported that the insurgents would spare no effort to retain or retrieve the babies born as a result of the forced impregnations even if their mothers escaped the camps. Salome narrated her family's experience in respect to her sister-in-law who was abducted and impregnated by BH.

They catch my sister [sister-in-law] in Boko Haram...they took her to the mountain. Then they give her pregnant... [when she escaped and] come back home, they are searching for her every day... They killed my father in law, they kill my mother in law... they say if she born that pikin, she will bring the pikin back to us [them]. Then... then they

¹⁶ *Tou* is an expression that could imply a range of feelings including helplessness, satisfaction. It can also be used as a direct expression of words such as well, yeah, or so. In this context, it is used in the same manner as "Yeah" would be used in spoken English.

follow her to Maiduguri. Then we carry her back to Jos. They never see her again. And the girl born the pikin, baby boy. (Salome)

Rape as a weapon of war for systematic intimidation, dehumanization and destabilization of communities, as well as a pervasive way of relieving pent-up frustration and an expression of militarized masculinities is well documented (Arieff, 2011; Baaz & Stern, 2009; Farr, 2009b; Mullins, 2009a, 2009b; Oriola, 2016; Trenholm et al., 2011). A number of reasons have been given for the sexual violence and forced impregnation by BH. Oriola (2016) reports that the forced impregnations and insistence on taking custody of the children as a result of the forced impregnations are BH's way of breeding future terrorists. There are also reports that abduction, forced marriage and forced impregnation by BH is a form of punishment for girls who attend school (Human Rights Watch, 2014; Maiangwa & Agbiboa, 2014; Oriola, 2016; Philip, 2016). Zenn and Pearson (2014) add that sexual and gender-based violence against women by BH is also a retaliatory act against people they label as infidels, as well as an attack on government forces, who arrest their members' wives and family members. Philip (2016) also reports that "sexual prowess is believed to have mystical powers" (p. 2) among most jihadists. His article reveals an obsession with erectile function and sex among BH militants who are reportedly dependent on Viagra and other sex stimulating drugs in order to sustain their sexual activities with multiple women. He reported that repeated raids on BH camps and hideouts uncovered stockpiles of Viagra and sometimes condoms used by the insurgents.

None of the study's participants, including those who were temporarily married to the insurgents, reported any personal experience of rape or other forms of sexual violence at the hands of the insurgents. Only one participant reported that her sister-in-law was forcefully impregnated. I therefore attempted to explore why they or their direct family members were not raped alongside other women. Some of them reported that they escaped shortly after abduction. One woman reported that her sister was not raped because her son's name was Yusuf¹⁷. Another woman, whose 16 year old daughter, was

¹⁷ One participant reported that the elder sister was neither raped nor sexually violated even though her husband was killed and she was given some dowry for marriage, because her baby bears the name Yusuf. Yusuf was the name of BH's founder, thus BH members were said to have respected the woman and the child in honor of their leader.

in BH's captivity for ten days said that her daughter was not raped because she was considered to be under age by the insurgents.

I ask her say... "Why...they no give you a husband?" They say that the place that they dey, na the Amir tell them that this girl, she is a small girl, and ...if anybody touch this girl, if they go to capture...a town like this, they want fire...people, they will catch the[m]... the medicine that ...dey for their body, the thing go fail, they will capture the person. They will kill him, sharply. So if to say she reach twenty years or 18 years, they will give her husband but this one is only sixteen years [I asked her why they did not give her husband and she

said that the leader of the camp they took her warned other BH members not to touch her because she was a small girl. He warned them that touching an underage girl sexually will make their protective charms to fail if they go to attack or capture a town, leading to them being captured and killed. If the girl was 18 or 20 years, they would have given her husband but she was only sixteen]

(Mary).

It is possible that Mary's daughter was small in stature, which gave her the appearance of a younger girl, which may align with Oriola's (2016) report that young girls below the age of 14 were not engaged in sexual relationships in BH captivity. However, tagging the marriageable age at 18 or 20 years, contradicts both popular culture and findings from previous studies (Human Rights Watch, 2014; Oriola, 2016). Puberty is more important than age for ascertaining the sexual maturity of girls in that culture. Therefore it is possible that these participants were unwilling to disclose personal experiences of sexual violence or that of their close relatives in BH captivity because of the stigma associated with it. Women's involvement in any form of sexual activity outside marriage is a highly sensitive issue in most Nigerian cultures (Moyo, 2004). There is greater stigma attached to being labelled as a "Boko Haram wife". Human Rights Watch (2014) reports that women whose abduction and marriage to BH were known to other members of their communities were stigmatized and labelled BH wives. Mary's account suggests, however, that efforts to avoid sexual engagements with girls, judged to be underage was related to BH's beliefs and use of protective charms. BH's

commitments to maintaining the potency of their war charms is therefore an additional explanation for how they segregated and used women. BH's charms and mystical powers, according to Mary, were believed to confer a level of invincibility to them. Maintaining the potency of those charms partly depended on how they treated women.

Before the Amir [the overall leader]...the first Amir [Yusuf], tell them that if you kill a woman or if you touch woman [have sex with woman or harm women] ...your traditional medicine is fall [will fail]. Before they are not touching women. As the thing come do anyhow, scatter ...scatter anyhow that is why they are killing womens. If not they are not ...even they are not touch woman. (Mary)

Gigime told how BH members almost beat one of their members to death for inflicting injury on her because they believed that he was "spoiling their work" by attempting to kill a woman. She intervened to stop them:

As they [he] hit me I fall down, ... all the Boko Haram they start to beat the boy...beat the boy...beat the boy [they said]...if they comot for their work he use to beat...spoil their work...beat women, and if you beat women, their work will be spoil. As I see like blood is coming out of the boy, I now wake up, I fall on top of the boy. I say, "please, make una forgive am [please you people should forgive him]". [And] the oga [the leader] say "see, the woman you want to kill, see, she is the one that saving you" (Gigime)

It has been reported that military raids and arrest of BH militants uncovered widespread use of charms, amulets and talismans, as well as practices involving the drinking of human blood and cannibalism among the militants (Philip, 2016; Pieri & Zenn, 2016; Sotubo, 2016). The purpose of these practices and the sect's overall employment of mystical powers in their operations has not received much attention in scientific literature. However contemporary literature (Chan, 2014; Farrer, 2014; Farrer & Sellmann, 2014; Jokic, 2014; M. Roberts, 2014) has highlighted the significance of war magic, including war sorcery and warfare religion in terrorism and warfare. Sometimes, war magic involves rituals that are said to enhance invulnerability in fighters and also transforms the fighters into 'becoming-animal' as against religious ideas of civilization and being human (Farrer, 2014). Farrer and Sellmann (2014) reported how Chamorro

indigenes evoked their magical cultural heritage and used such magical powers to fight wars in resistance to colonization and Spanish domination, a picture that enhances the understanding of BH's employment of such powers in their quest to resist westernization. Use of protective charms and magical powers among the insurgents is a contradiction to their acclaimed Islamic fundamentalism. Their previous leader had denounced those practices as paganism (Orioloa & Akinola, 2018). However, their use of charms further reveals the syncretism embedded in the Islam of many Hausa groups (Salamone, 2007), and continued influence of ATR in Islamic practices in Northern Nigeria.

Intermingling of traditional practices and Islamic fundamentalism further explains the complexities and inconsistencies associated with how BH treated women. This study's findings and other similar reports (Human Rights Watch, 2014; Oriola, 2016) suggest that BH initially utilized physical violence against women sparingly, usually to threaten or intimidate them to accept forced marriage or forced conversion to Islam. Hence, while subscribing to a form of Islam that subjugates women, and dehumanizes non-Muslim women, the insurgents' dependence on charms from ATR demanded that they adhere to ATR principles, some of which were protective of women, especially those considered to be mothers. Older women are revered as community mothers (Chilisa, 2012; Omonubi-McDonnell, 2003), and as such should not be subjected to violence in any form. It is possible that a consciousness of that traditional motherhood role propelled Gigime to fall on a boy who would have killed her in order to prevent him from being killed by his fellow BH members.

However, the participants' accounts also reveal that criminality among the insurgents progressed with progressive breakdown of law and order as well as the change in their leadership. The insurgents' conduct in relation to women varied in accordance to BH encampments. From the participants' perspective, BH progressed from not touching women to killing women. Earlier studies (Oriola, 2016; Weeraratne, 2017; Zenn & Pearson, 2014) also reported the evolving nature of the insurgency, radicalization under Abubakar Shekau, and factionalization of the sect, leading to multiple ideologies, strategies, and practices. As such the extent to which they adhered to both Islamic rules and ATR rules cannot be ascertained. Such general breakdown of law and order is characteristic of war and conflict situations (Arieff, 2011; Farr, 2009b; Trenholm et al., 2011). What was important however, was that the women's beliefs or knowledge about

BH's use of mystical powers was essential for their escape from captivity. In the next section I discuss how the participants related to BH due to their indigenous knowledge about BH's charms.

5.2.4 Wisdom for escape: "If you eat their food, your head will turn"

The participants reported that abducted persons were often given specially prepared dates and *Zobo drink*, a popular non-alcoholic drink in Nigeria, made from the Roselle (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) leaves. Sometimes they were also given specially prepared meats or other concoctions which they believed were mixed with human blood or human flesh. They believed that escape and freedom from BH largely depended on how an abductee handled BH's food.

Yes my daughter she is a small girl but she is wise girl. As they give her this...eee...debino [dates] she just put it under her tongue and they give her the...the...the...drinks like zobo she just drink and hold am in her mouth like this... as she go like this...she put am for ground. She just relax she no even drink [she gently dropped the food on the ground, she did not drink] (Mary).

By holding the dates in her mouth in a pretence that she had eaten them, Mary believed that her daughter demonstrated that she was wise, even though she was small. In other words, eating BH's food would have been a demonstration of lack of wisdom. Pretending to have eaten the food in the presence of the insurgents was the easiest way to escape from the camps. They believed the insurgents were less strict in monitoring those captives who had 'eaten their food'.

They bring meat for us that we should eat, as they have already put that medicine inside. We collect and we say thank you. As they go, we come put it in the toilet. They are coming [they came], they say that, have we eaten? We say yes. They say okay. They were happy that we eat this thing that our mind will turn [They were happy because they believed that we had eaten the food and that our minds will be controlled by it]. We just [spent] one day and the two [second] day we climb wall. We escape we go and meet our people in Cameroon

(Sratu)

BH's reasons for giving human blood to their abductees is not clear. However, there is a popular belief in Nigeria that eating specific foods and drinks or exchange of blood is very important in cultic initiations and covenants (Oha, 2000). It is believed that blood covenants are the strongest of covenants which are rarely broken without dire consequences. Giving blood concoctions is possibly a way of bringing people into a covenant relationship or permanent allegiance to the sect. It was a general belief among the participants that whoever ate the food would no longer be in his or her right mind, but would automatically convert to BH's version of Islam, marry the militants, and also do their bidding without much resistance. They also believed that enchanted persons would refuse to be rescued from BH camps and would often require special prayers by pastors or Islamic clerics, in order to be freed from BH's entanglement. Otherwise, such persons would always seek opportunities to return to the camps or other BH hideouts. As a result, avoiding BH's food was of paramount importance to them. Saratu described her understanding of the impact of BH's food on her friend.

There is medicine that they put with debino¹⁸ ... If you take that thing [with emphasis]... your mind... [Will be captured]. They will put it... they will cook it with the blood, the blood of this thing ...like pikin¹⁹ like today you born am [cooked with the blood of a day old baby]... There is my friend that she take it baa²⁰, she didn't come out. She married them, the time that she is coming to born, she can't born because she is small and she come die [she died] (Saratu).

Keziah described what they gave her sister-in-law. She attributed her sister-in-law's ability to escape to the fact that she refused to eat BH's meat.

They say make she take the blood and the girl refuse. They ... they go cook meat of somebody... and they go bring for her, and she no go agree... [She did not agree] (Keziah).

Recent studies (Matfess, 2017; Mutton, 2018; Oriola, 2016; Oriola & Akinola, 2018; Zenn & Pearson, 2014) have raised concerns and attempted to explain abductees' attachment to BH, especially among women and girls who eventually marry the

¹⁸ *Debino* is the Hausa name for dates.

¹⁹ *Pikin* in pidgin English means child or baby.

²⁰ '*Baa*' is a colloquial expression in Hausa language used to denote 'right?'

insurgents and sometimes participate in the insurgency as fighters and suicide bombers. Oriola (2016) and Oriola and Akinola (2017) admitted that the mechanism by which women transform from being primarily victims to violent perpetrators is poorly understood, but they attempted to explain women's eventual alliance to BH as a result of psychological torture or motivation for economic security. Oriola (2016) also alluded to "Stockholm syndrome" a psychological condition in which victims of abduction develop an alliance with their abductors. Matfess (2017) and Mutton (2018) interpret such alliances as women's search for empowerment in a culture that limits their freedom and subjugates them. However, the participants in this study believed that such alliances were effects of eating BH's food. The women also believed that the dowry given to the young women to seal the forced marriage contracts were also enchanted, but that the charms were often neutralized by urinating on the money.

*They come give ten thousand for her. But she ... hold am for her hand
she come piss [urinate] inside that money and that neutralized that
medicine... And she come come [returned home] with that ten
thousand (Saratu).*

Belief in the existence, and sometimes, utilization of mystical powers or witchcraft for good and evil is an integral part of most African traditional cultures and religions. These beliefs have been carried on in contemporary African societies, permeating all aspects of social and economic life (Sanou, 2017), irrespective of the influence of the monotheistic (Islamic and Christian) religions in Africa (Bauer, 2017; Nyabwari & Kagema, 2014). Different communities tend to hold beliefs of specific practices that can either potentiate or neutralize mystical powers and the belief in the reality of such powers often deepens with personal experiences and perceived encounters with them (Bauer, 2017). While it is difficult to determine how exactly these powers operate, there is evidence that a belief in their potency has a way of psychologically inducing fear amongst people and this enables those believed to be in possession of those powers to manipulate and control their victims (Bauer, 2017; Nyabwari & Kagema, 2014). African women are known to be grounded in their culture, and therefore are knowledgeable about how things operate within their cultures (Hudson-Weems, 1995, 1998, 2000; Karenga & Tembo, 2012). Such knowledge often includes knowledge of myths, superstitions and operations of supernatural powers. Thus the women utilized their indigenous knowledge to ensure their escape from BH's captivity. However, as

Collins (2000) pointed out, beyond knowledge, practical wisdom is indispensable especially in the presence of their oppressors.

Escaping captivity and moving away from the mountains and bushes, opened up another phase of their displacement experience, a different phase of suffering and struggle for survival. In the next section, I discuss the women's experiences of poverty, government neglect and oppression, antagonism from other poor citizens, as well as exploitation and dehumanization from humanitarian agencies. I highlight how the women resisted oppression, defined and named themselves against different dehumanizing labels, and mutually supported one another to survive and retain their place in displacement.

5.3 Living like beggars

5.2.1 Not really beggars but strong women begging for work

Experiences of poverty and hardship were common themes in the women's accounts, irrespective of their displacement contexts. They reported that they suffered extreme hunger, deprivation and overall poor living conditions. In the informal camps the participants lived in shacks, made of tarpaulins without windows and concrete floors. They also lacked adequate sanitation facilities. Those in NGO organized camps lived in proper concrete buildings and had better access to water and sanitary facilities, but were given one room per family. Those in urban host communities lived in dilapidated buildings in slums, while those in rural settings shared houses with host families. Sometimes up to ten family members including parents and young adult children, slept in a single room which also accommodated their household items, including cooking utensils. Most of the IDP families lacked access to quality healthcare, including maternal and child health services.

A major challenge that compounded their problems was lack of gainful employment. Prior to displacement, the participants were either students, housewives or employed in informal settings. They reported that they were all involved in some form of crop or animal farming as their primary or secondary source of income. This was probably because most women in Northern Nigeria lack formal education and associated skills which are often prerequisite for employment in the formal sector (Oriola, 2016;

Fapohunda, 2012). In displacement, neither government employment nor private farming was available to most of them, especially those who relocated to the cities

...Over there [in our hometown], most of us do not do government work. Our work is... [Crosstalk with another participant] farming. Tou!²¹ If we get some of our produce, we could sell them to meet our needs. Even if it is cow like this, even goats, we had them. Tou!, we ran to this place, there is no government work, there is no place to farm, [with emphasis], we are sitting down, dum! In one place. We are looking at what God will do for us (Adah).

Adah's narrative reveals how displacement brings about a disruption in people's lives and uproots them from a world they are used to (Zapata, 2017), but her statement, "we are sitting down, dum! In one place", which could be interpreted as idleness or inactivity, was not a literal expression. To her, they were not fully engaged in gainful employment and thus were barely surviving with irregular jobs. Such irregular employment was as good as doing nothing, and the aftermath was chronic hunger and food insecurity. Although lack of gainful employment among IDPs in Nigeria and elsewhere is well documented (Brun, 2015; Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2012b; Haysom & el Sarraj, 2013; Landau, 2014; Roberts et al., 2009, p. 29; Schuller, 2015), there was also widespread unemployment in Nigeria at the time of this study. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2016b), the overall unemployment rate was as high as 14.2% in the general population.

Due to the high unemployment rates, those in camps depended on food and other donations from humanitarian agencies, Faith-based Organizations (FBOs) and philanthropists. However, sometimes they waited for weeks and months before food donations arrived. The women mostly used expressions like "it is not easy", "it is difficult ooo" and "it is really tough" to describe their life in displacement with respect to hunger and food deprivation. Hauwa expressed their difficulty in getting food, highlighting how the children were affected.

It's not easy! Sometimes to even get one times [one meal] to eat a day, it's very difficult. Sometimes we have to give to the children, you

²¹ *Tou* in this particular context, it is an expression of helplessness or confusion.

adult can manage yourself but children cannot hold their self. If they are hungry, they will cry ... they want to eat. ...if you have little that it will not be enough for all of us ...we have to give to children...So we the adult we can hold ourself [endure] (Hauwa).

In order to survive and prevent their children from going hungry, the women resorted to different forms of ‘begging’ depending on the displacement setting they settled in. Ruth lived in an urban host community, and she talked about how her family had to beg for food before they ate.

“Before we eat, we must beg before we get food to eat” (Ruth).

Another participant talked about how they lived like beggars in the camp:

[It] is what happened that make us to come and sit here and we look like beggars. We look like beggars, we look like some people that will beg before they eat. So it's because of what happened. If not, in our homes we have it. More than what they are bringing to us... but what happened make us to become as if we are orphans, we are beggars, we don't even have... we don't have hope....(Naomi)

Street begging has been reported among IDPs in Colombia (Carrillo, 2009; Hayes-Conroy & Sweet, 2015), and Kampala, Uganda (Sundal, 2010) and it is often shameful and disempowering to them. Begging engenders a feeling of being an underclass among displaced persons (Brun, 2015). The emphasis on begging in the participants’ accounts was a communication of shame and embarrassment. Naomi’s statement was a way of making an excuse for appearing like beggars and a way of distancing herself from the position of a beggar. Even though Ruth, in her own narrative, admitted that they begged for food, her tone and body language revealed the sense of indignity she felt and she was also quick to add that she could only beg from her friends, church members and neighbours.

Begging was particularly shameful to these participants because African women are socialized to be strong and economically independent (Amadiume, 2015; Collins, 2000; Hudson-Weems, 1995, 1998, 2000; Usman, 2010). In Northern Nigeria, begging for food or money is a dehumanizing activity, reserved for the extremely destitute and *Almajiris* or street children. *Almajiris*, who are often young boys between the ages of 4

and 14, usually depend on begging for every meal (Onuoha, Adenrele, 2012; Aluaigba, 2009; Omeni, 2015; 2014; Zakir et al., 2014). Girls, let alone women, are never involved in the Almajiri practice. Instead, girls are sent to hawk on the streets to augment their family income (Aluaigba, 2009; Usman, 2010). Even secluded Muslim wives engage in entrepreneurial activities from their homes (Schildkrout, 1982; Zakaria, 2001). To portray the embarrassment of begging for food during their flights, one woman described how they lived “like Almajiri”:

... we were like Almajiri [street children]. Any house we see, we will enter and they will give us whatever. Even if it is Kanzo²², if there is, they will give us and we will drink. (Salamatu)

Some women, especially those living in NGO organized camps and rural host communities, distanced themselves entirely from the idea of begging. They emphasized that they begged for work not for food. They reported that they moved from house to house in search of household chores, which they did for money, food, clothing, or toiletries. One focus group participant said:

What we are doing, we will go and [with emphasis], up to Jos..., anywhere we know, we will just go. We will be knocking from house to house, we will say “is there work?” if he says there is no work, we will go to the next house. We will look for where we can wash dishes, or pull weeds, or sweep the house, any kind of work they give us. That is how we go. Yeah, we will be going from one house to another. (Rifkatu).

Another participant said:

It is compulsory for you to go out and beg inside the town, we are begging “please help us with any work that we can do so that we can provide for the needs of our families. We don’t have money for soup ingredients, we don’t have money for charcoal that we will use for

²² *Kanzo* is a slurry of starchy food particles that is derived from soaking the burnt pot used in cooking the starchy food, especially corn meal with water, over a period of time. Ordinarily, *Kanzo* is meant to be thrown away but these women had to eat it because that was the only option they had.

cooking the tuwo²³. Even up till now, among us the women, there are some that do not have pots for cooking, that is how we are sharing.

(Asabe)

Begging for work is more honourable than begging for food. However, those in the rural host community also begged for farmland where they cultivated crops to support the feeding of their families. They worked in the farms during the rainy seasons and begged for work in the dry seasons. One thing that was common among the women that begged for work or engaged in manual labour to support their families was the way they indirectly called attention to their physical strength and resilience despite their suffering. Gigime talked about how she struggled to get cooking fuel for her family. She emphasized that I would not be able to climb the rock she climbed to find the firewood.

If I carry you [if I take you along] now for you to go that place you can't climb that hill... You can't climb that hill. But I will climb, see me... see mark all over my body... See mark.... All my body, my hand, all, mark. See am, all mark, everywhere, mark. I climb that hill. See the firewood now from the hill... Sometime we will see snake. Hei! E get the day wey [there was a day that] snake pursue me... pursue me I climb tree... I was praying until it left before I came down. That day... I no [did not] come back with firewood (Gigime).

Rather than present an account of the absolute suffering victim (Agier, 2010), Gigime called attention to her strength and resilience. It is known that people who have experienced hardship are more likely to, and are better equipped to withstand adversities than those who do not experience the same level of adversity (Bollig, 2014). However, such resilience is often situated in their history, and elaborated by their cultural backgrounds (Scheper-Hughes, 2008). Nigerian women are socialized to be tough and enduring, as such it is culturally unacceptable for them to be lazy or weak (Aluaigba, 2009; Usman, 2010), even though they are equally expected to be submissive and unassuming before men. As a result Nigerian women can alternatively

²³ Tuwo is a solid meal, which can be prepared with different kinds of grinded whole cereals and eaten with special soups often referred to *miya*. Tuwo masara (maise tuwo), and tuwo shikafa (rice tuwo) constitute major staples in Northern Nigeria

activate and celebrate their hardiness and resilience; and their submissiveness and respect for men, depending on the context and social situation.

Due to the women's hardiness and resilience, they tried to present a bold front in the face of their suffering in displacement. Sometimes, they put up appearances suggestive of enjoyment and self-sufficiency which triggered antagonism and IDP policing from other poor citizens and even potential donors. In addition to the antagonism from citizens, the women did not also receive the support they expected from the government. They were also exploited by apparently supportive organizations. In the next section I present an account of the women's experiences and response to antagonism and exploitation.

5.3.2 Resistance and Self-definition: When dress speaks louder than voice

With the exception of the participants in Jos host community, most of the participants in this study reported that they had a very poor relationship with the government. At the time they arrived in the city, the participants in Jos host community were received, given temporary accommodation and fed by the government for a period of three years before they were asked to move out of the accommodation. Zainab said:

The governor of Plateau state...give us place here, three Storey building...for refugee camp. The state governor ... give us food in the morning...afternoon [and] night. Give us Omo...milk... [and] cloth to wear. [They] Give us [with raise voice] most of the thing. We [stayed for] three years...They were feeding us, free. Yes... for that three years. [After] they give us notice, say make we comot [After three years they gave us notice to leave the place]... Tou, we the widows, that they kill our husbands we gather ourselves, to talk to him...He now give us money. They share ...fifteen thousand [about NZD 75] to us. Say... we should look for house. (Gigime)

Although the government only provided temporary support for the women with no concrete plans for a more durable solution, the women appreciated the gesture of giving them a place. Having a place is important for engendering a sense of belonging (Antonsich, 2010). The place the participants had for three years also served as a springboard from where they landed on other 'places' of security.

Unlike some of the settlers in Jos, those who resided in informal camps or what has been described as self-organized refuges, (Agier, 2010; Redclift, 2013) were not 'known', or recognized by the government. They reported social exclusion and a lack of a sense of belonging in their new environment.

The government does not know us. They are not helping us at all.

(Bilikisu)

They did not enjoy the luxury of what Agier (2010, p. 36) depicted as the "politics of welcome". This is probably because, unlike the Jos settlers, they did not go 'knocking' at the government house when they arrived in the city. They quietly created a 'place' of their own by erecting tents in slums with the hope that their growing numbers would attract the attention of the government to eventually give them a better 'place'.

However, rather than attract the sympathy of the government, their influx and development of informal camp settlements in slums was perceived as a security threat to the city by the security officials. The women reported that they were mistaken for BH members, thus the soldiers periodically raided the camps and made mass arrests and detained IDPs. Two young men were reportedly shot and killed as they attempted to escape arrest during one of the raids. Their tents were also demolished a number of times, but they kept on reconstructing the tents after each demolition exercise. During one of the focus group discussions, the women narrated some of their ordeals with the security officials and government agencies.

We were staying here until when the soldiers came to us. They came around 12 to 1. They said that all of us...that we are Boko Haram. They arrested us ... about one hundred and one persons. They came and arrested us... with our children and our men... They went away with us to the Barrack..., they were keeping us in the sun, they kept our men in the sun and they were telling them to lie down. If they say they want to urinate, they will tell them to urinate on the ground there

[on their bodies] (Zuriya)

Thus in addition to their overall poverty and poor living conditions, the participants in camps reported that they were arrested, tortured, humiliated and dehumanized by the security agencies. Despite the fact that they were technically recognized as full citizens of Nigeria, their experiences were reflective of a state of in-betweenness described in

Agambien's (2005), *State of Exception*, in which 'vulnerable' individuals, mostly refugees, and by extension IDPs (Redclift, 2013), are neither in (as in full citizens) nor out (non-citizens), and inevitably both in and out at the same time (Agamben, 2005; Redclift, 2013). Similar to what aliens might experience, they reported suffering intermittent threats of eviction and demolition of their tents by government agencies and were not recognized as IDPs until after one year of their stay in the camp.

[With raised voice] *Every day, patrol. Every day, you will be running in the bush. This demolition people they come to [with emphasis] demolish the bacher, all! [They demolished all the tents]. "Ah ah! We are IDP! Where will you go? Before they start advertising in TV that IDPs is here, [and] NGOs are coming... [Raises voice], one year, we are suffering here! [It was after one year of suffering here that NGOs and others knew that IDPs were here] (Mary)*

Non-recognition and intimidation of IDPs, and demolition of informal camps has been reported both in Africa (Branch, 2008; Kamara, Cyril, & Renzaho, 2017; Sundal, 2010) and Europe (Agier, 2010). For the women in this study, the treatment they received from the government constituted another form of violence and threatened displacement by authorities they expected to protect them, in addition to the violence which BH insurgents meted against them. Even though the government eventually allowed these participants and their families to remain in the camps, they reported that the eviction threats had not completely ceased as at the time of the interviews. Most of the participants complained about the governments' plans to send them back to their pre-displacement communities even though they were not ready to return. They believed that they needed to remain in the camps in order to remain visible to those who might want to support them, pending the time peace would be restored in their pre-displacement communities.

While they remained in the camps, private organizations and groups often supplied food and non-food items. Some of the participants in the rural host communities also benefitted from periodic donations from such organizations. NGOs also provided skills acquisition training and workshops in dress making and other handicrafts, including beadwork and soap making. After the training, the NGOs provided them with either raw materials or appropriate machines, and, sometimes, a small amount of money to

start up a business. Workshops on how to begin and successfully grow small scale businesses were organized by NGOs. Overall, the NGO support loosely reflected resiliency humanitarianism, informed by neo-liberal government ideology (Anholt, 2017; Ilcan, 2018; Ilcan & Rygiel, 2015; Pascucci, 2017; Sandri, 2018; Welsh, 2014). In resiliency humanitarianism, camps and similar spaces are reimagined as sites for community development, empowerment and entrepreneurial development where resilient and neo-liberal subjects are supported towards self-government and personal transformation (Ilcan & Rygiel, 2015; Welsh, 2014).

Despite the apparent success achieved in helping the women towards earning an income, many of them were not able to use the skills they acquired to earn any reasonable income. Easton-Calabria and Omata (2018) have argued that promoting self-reliance through skills acquisition in humanitarian settings has consistently failed. Low patronage was a concern among those participants who engaged in trade or handcraft. They were often unable to transport their goods to the city, hence they depended on fellow IDPs and some artisans who worked around the camps for patronage. They were also forced to sell at a cheaper rate than what was obtainable in the city because people around them could not afford to pay much:

I am cooking food. I believe that if I cook food I will get something from there...they don't buy the food! No market [there is low patronage]! Now in the town, [a] plate [of food] is it 250? [But] here, hundred naira. (Bilikisu)

The support the women received from NGOs and other organizations and groups was often paradoxical. Certain groups either treated them like beggars, while others exploited their predicament for personal gain. Yet, even in an apparently dependent condition, they found ways of resisting or navigating through humanitarian dehumanization and exploitation. Mary personally stood against what is best described as 'dehumanizing almsgiving' which masqueraded as humanitarian service:

And now it's an opportunity for the people now. Because we are hungry, they are giving us the expiry date something [expired things] here in this camp. I'm telling you, expiry food...expiry medicine...they are just giving us. ...We loss our childrens in Wasa. They give them drugs, the children starting vomiting ...punge

[purge]... vomiting. Eight children died in Wasa because they give us the expiry date medicines. Even ...hotels, food that people eat and ...scatter them anywhere [leftovers from customers' plates]...they come pack it for take away [They pack it in take-away packs] come give to IDPs. It is not good. Are IDPs not human beings? ... Sometimes, if you get chance if we want share cloth here, or we wan share food items, I will... I will invite you to come and saw some cloth that people are bringing it here. Some they will just...eee...eee... wrapper wey their children shit, and urine on top of the wrapper, they will just pack it, put it in the Ghana must go, carry to IDP (Mary)

Mary's account above not only reveals that there were no external safety and quality control mechanisms implemented to protect IDPs from expired and low quality materials, it also reveals the women's ability to recognize oppression and stand up for themselves against it. By raising the question, "Are IDPs not human beings?" Mary not only questioned the inhuman treatment they received as IDPs but also defined and names (Hudson-Weems, 1995, 1998, 2000) herself as well as other IDPs. She calls attention to the fact that they were not just IDPs but human beings (*Eniyan*), who deserved respect and dignity (Hudson-Weems, 1995, 1998, 2000; Karenga & Tembo, 2012). She also laid claim to their human rights to be protected (see Ilcan, 2018). Huseina's description of the donated clothes as 'rags' also implies that they deserved something better.

Some they use to bring only rag [hisses]. Old cloth that you cannot wear. (Huseina)

The participants also reported how they perceived and had to resist several forms of exploitation from NGOs. According to them, 'support' of IDPs had become a 'big business' for a number of NGOs and organizations. Those who had been directly under the care of local NGOs talked about how the NGOs manipulated their contact with external donors, and systematically controlled what they said in interviews and discussions so that neither the women nor the external donors knew how money was generated and disbursed by the NGOs. They also reported that some NGOs engaged in excessive media propaganda about their support for IDPs, where they often exaggerated

the amount and quality of assistance IDPs received. They reported that their stories and experiences were being exploited to raise money from the public and other donors without giving them anything tangible in return. Basira narrated her perception of exploitation and how she resisted it:

They will be putting our name in Facebook,[and] WhatsApp. They will be doing it anywhere so that they will get money with us and they don't use to pay school fees for us. They use to do interview with me ...and they don't use to give me anything... That's why I'm not happy because, people will come and did interview with us...but they will not... ever give us anything. I didn't feel good. They use to make money with us IDPs. That is why anybody that come to do interview with me I don't use to do it. (Basira)

By refusing to participate in interviews, Basira demonstrated her agency and refused to participate in her own exploitation even though she was still looking for a philanthropist who would send her to school. Thus she relied on her own sense of judgement to decipher which interviewer would be beneficial or exploitative.

Despite the challenges they faced in the process of receiving support, other poor but non-displaced Nigerian citizens in their neighborhood were suspicious and antagonistic to the IDPs. They believed that IDPs received undue attention and support from different groups. The participants reported verbal abuse and taunting from some of the people they encountered in the course of their daily activities, especially when they 'begged for work' or any other assistance. With the exception of those in the rural host community, participants in all the displacement settings experienced antagonism from other poor citizens in their neighborhood. Maryam, who resided in a camp in Jos recounted how some people insulted and abused them on the streets and in the market places:

If someone comes out from the camp and said " ahh I am from the camp", they will start comment on you, that [with emphasis] " You, these people... live [stay] in your camp!". That's what people normally say... Even if you go out they will harass you or abuse you...insulting. And even inside market, I went to the market with one woman, I saw her there. Then she now said [to the seller] "Ayah

[Please], *we are from camp, please reduce it [reduce the price] for us*” Then the woman now said, “ *You! You are telling me that you are from camp. Can’t you come out and wash something or can’t you come out and start selling something? You are telling people that you are in camp. You that you are not even grateful that people are taking care of you*”. (Maryam)

Ruth who resided in Jos Host community also reported how her family was policed by her neighbors and how their neighbors abused her mother for ‘wearing clothes’.

Since when we came to this area, they was...abusing our mother that she normally wear clothes [They have been abusing our mother because she dresses well], [They say] that she went out to go and sleep with men...It’s one man in this area, [Mentions the man’s name] that normally understand us. We even stopped going to the church again, anytime, we will be in the house...so that they will not accuse us of anything again. (Ruth)

Minima who resided in a camp in Abuja talked about how people in the market often discussed the enjoyment of IDPs.

If they see us [giggles] outside...they say... Hijirah²⁴ dey...enjoy [Refugees are enjoying]. No wahala for Hijirah [Refugees don’t have problem]. If they see us track [trek] to the market ...to buy pepper... groundnut, or to find firewood there to come and cook food... [They will] say “Hijirah! Hijirah, they are enjoying”. (Minima)

‘Wearing cloth’ among the ‘displaced and poor’ women is both culturally and historically situated. It is known that dressing decently or being fashionable, often transcends women’s economic status in Nigeria. Fashionable dressing in Nigeria has been framed as a performative act, towards proper self-packaging, used to enhance self-image and public acceptability (Bastian, 2013). Hence it is common for poor Nigerian women to dress fashionably as a way of masking their poverty. It is also common for women to be competitive about their dressing as better dressing confers better prestige.

²⁴ Hijirah is the Hausa way of pronouncing the Arabic word for emigration Hegira or Hijrah. It is used to depict a people on the move or refugees who fled from persecution, mostly religious persecution in northern Nigeria.

Therefore other poor citizens policed the IDPs and were often disappointed by the women's physical appearance and decent dressing. They expected them to conform to what Agier (2010) described as the "humanitarian picture of the human [which is often represented as]...a suffering woman or child...*stripped bare* in the degradation of suffering" (Agier, 2010, p. 31), or the voiceless and naked victim (Branch, 2008). Through such images IDPs and other vulnerable persons are represented as humans whose humanity has been diminished (Agier, 2010) and as such are expected to act in ways that are reflective of their diminished humanity. By 'wearing cloth' or 'dressing fairly decently', the women were seen as dressing above their 'class'. Such unexpected appearance of 'enjoyment', created an impression that the IDW had an extra source of income, not available to other poor citizens. Hence they were often criticized as lazy women who were idly waiting to be supported, or those who engaged in sex work to make quick money.

'Wearing cloth' also suggested that they rejected the donated 'rags' and used only the best, or what they considered decent, from the materials they were given. In so doing, the women contravened dominant images of displaced and wretched victims, thus resisting oppression and derogatory labelling. Even though they did not have the resources to buy dresses for themselves, they demonstrated their agency by selecting and using only what they believed would be dignifying. Hence for naming and defining themselves (Hudson-Weems, 1995, 1998, 2000), as dignified and respectable women, they utilized decent dressing as a tool.

Notably, it was not only the 'poor citizens' in the IDP neighborhoods that had issues with the women's non-conformity to the acceptable IDP/Humanitarian image (Agier, 2010). Some potential donors also expressed disappointment with the women's appearance.

... There is one woman that she bring cloth here... As she saw me like this she say "Ah!! [Hisses]²⁵ those people they are enjoying...ooo... This one [is] like eee...like eee... Buhari wife²⁶ ...This one na IDP?"

[Is this an IDP?] (Mary)

²⁵ Hissing here indicates her feeling of being insulted or demeaned

²⁶ The current president of Nigeria is Mohammadu Buhari. Because Mary dressed decently, the woman, who came to donate materials that were of inferior quality to what Mary was wearing, exaggerated her appearance to resemble the elegance expected of the president's wife.

While there could be several reasons why the women in the rural host communities were not harassed like those in other settings, their engagement in farm work along with other members of the community may have masked the difference in their conditions. This is because they were connected with the rural community members in their daily struggle to survive. As such, they did not appear to be enjoying free donations like those in camps and other settings.

The women in informal camps reported a peculiar challenge with other poor citizens who had erected tents alongside the IDPs in the slums. Some of them already resided in the slums before the arrival of the displaced persons, while others came after the IDPs. The participants reported that, in addition to stealing from them, soliciting their husbands and ‘corrupting’ their girls, the other poor slum dwellers sometimes, engaged them in fights over food and other donated materials. Those other slum dwellers often claimed entitlement to the donated materials alongside the IDPs and threatened to uproot them from the camps for refusing to share those materials with them.

There was a time we fought with Ihubach here [name changed] here. They sent us away and we went and slept on the road...They said they came here before us...that they must get their share from the food that people donated to us. With all our children, we went and slept on the road, and they entered and packed the rice in our store. Honestly in this place, there is problem, we just need help so that we will go home. (Bilikisu)

It is known that camps often provide a safe haven for people who lack adequate resources for their daily survival (Sigona, 2015) but the above accounts reveal how such ‘safe havens’ can be transformed to conflict zones, especially when the displaced persons are perceived as having more privileges than other poor citizens. In such situations providing support for displaced persons yields an unexpected result of fostering perceptions of injustice and social inequity among other poor people who do not receive support.

Thus the women in this study were hardly free from oppression as they experienced violence, antagonism, abuse and exploitation from different quarters. The social realities in their displacement settings were a constant reminder that they did not belong in the new environment. The government denied their rights as Nigerians by not

‘helping them’, evicting them or attempting to send them back to their unsafe pre-displacement communities. The donors affirmed the government’s position and treated them as people who deserved less. Other poor Nigerians and citizens in their neighborhood stigmatized and labelled them ‘*Hijirah*’ or refugees in their own country. As *Hijirah*, they were only welcome to stay for a short period of time, and they were not entitled to ‘enjoyment’, hence by receiving ‘help’ from organizations, they were getting more than they deserved. Such experiences engendered feelings of distrust towards ‘outsiders’. As a result, they erected selectively permeable barriers, which demarcated them from those ‘outsiders’. In the next section, I discuss how the women, in solidarity with other IDPs, created mutually supportive IDP communities to enhance their sense of belonging and chances for survival. I also highlight the complexities and contradictions embedded in those mutually supportive communities.

5.3.3 “We get strength now!”: Empowerment through community building and mutual solidarity

As a defense against antagonism and exploitation, as well as a means of maximizing the ‘benefits’ of their IDP status, the women aligned with other IDPs. Their identity as IDW became the basis for their social solidarity in displacement. In their construction of a shared identity, they formed a community of belonging, which enabled them to perform a collective form of resistance to exploitation. This is in line with Collin’s (2000) assertion that oppression and activism are intricately linked and that when power operates in a dialectical relationship, it gives birth to collective action and mutual solidarity. Solidarity for collective survival is embedded in the African philosophical worldview (Collins, 2000; Kambon, 1996; Kaoma, 2010; Karenga, 2007; Karenga, 2012; Karenga & Tembo, 2012). The women understood that they would not be able to resist the government on their own, so they organized themselves alongside their men, and worked through their ‘big people’ to secure their place in displacement. The big people in this context were rich men and political office holders who were living in Abuja before their arrival.

As IDP communities, they established a more ‘inclusive’ alternative to the government’s exclusionary leadership, and devised ‘equitable’ processes of resource distribution. This is similar to what De Waal (2009) reported about IDPs in South Sudan. The appointed leaders often engaged with donors and inspected donated items before they were accepted. They also established rules and promoted cultural norms,

which were supposed to protect the women from sexual violence. They were also in charge of distributing donated items to ensure that every family received a ‘fair’ share. The participants who lived in informal camps established connections with some Human Rights Activists and politicians, who in turn made a case for them to the government, for them to be recognized as IDPs and be allowed to retain their place in camps until a durable solution was found for them. Zuriya talked about how they established connections that prevented complete demolition of their camp by government agencies.

They [Our big people], went and spoke to them about this place. They came to understand that we are displaced persons... So we came and discussed and they put our sign board for us, and wrote... Gwoza...Bama and even Gwoshe. They wrote it there. Even after they kept the sign board here, they also came and started demolishing our houses. So our big people also went and spoke to them that “See the sign board that is here and you have come to demolish our house again. See, we were sent away from our homes. How will they drive us away from our homes, and we came here, we are not received? That will not work”. That is why we made our sign board and sent it there [further ahead]. You will see our signboard there... we wrote it. So that is why if they come to demolish, they will not come here, they will go back. (Zuriya)

Through collective action, the IDP communities earmarked and demarcated their own ‘territory of belonging’, in political terms, from the larger society by placing sign boards on which the names of their pre-displacement communities and towns were boldly written. The sign board served as both physical and symbolic barrier against potentially invasive and exploitative ‘outsiders’ to the IDP experience. Their organization and place demarcation also enabled them to arrange for camp security guards (vigilantes). Young men who were members of the IDP community volunteered to do the job and they were regularly compensated with extra food rations. They also demanded external security from the government. These acts of collective resistance and demand for their rights attest to the fact that camps, are not always apolitical spaces inhabited by docile and helpless victims (Agier, 2010; Branch, 2008; Häkli, Pascucci, & Kallio, 2017; Ilcan, 2018; Ilcan & Rygiel, 2015; Redclift, 2013; Sigona, 2015).

Rather such sites are often inhabited by politically intelligent, as well as cultural, and historically embedded individuals (Branch, 2008).

Mary talked about the sense of empowerment that came as result of their united action to technically win the struggle for a place and security, her emphasis was on the sense of power in the collective:

We get strength, we strong now [we are powerful now]. They give us security and they are coming ...everyday in the night. That is why now we just balance [That is why we are relaxed and settled]. If not, the time that I'm here, before them come, ma , no be small wahala [Before we got the security, it was a huge problem] (Mary).

Another source of empowerment was the women's decision to create functional units for mutual support. In each of the settlements, people utilized their skills for the benefit of the entire community. Some of the women served as community midwives, others volunteered to become teachers for the children, while others trained fellow IDW in crafts. Hence, while the women struggled to meet the needs of their family members, their relationship with other women constituted a safe place from where they could both resist their oppression and contribute to the common good (Collins, 2000; Hudson-Weems, 1995; Karenga & Tembo, 2012). Among the women, a commitment to collective survival tended to transcend age, tribal and religious boundaries. Saadatu, a Muslim woman who lived in an informal camp in Abuja talked about how she was encouraged by a Christian woman to become a midwife for the good of other women and everybody in the camp:

This my mum, she put me in a good way. She say my daughter, let us go and do this course [community midwifery training]. It is better for us. It is more [very] important for the womens, and it is more [very] important for everybody. Because, if you deliver women or take care of new born babies, na only God go save you [it is only God that will pay you]. It is not human being that going to give you money or anything. (Saadatu)

I happened to find out that the woman Saadatu addressed as 'mother' was actually younger than herself. However she still addressed her as mother because of the positive

influence she believed the woman had had in her life. Such a relationship is reflective of what Ogunyemi (1995) envisaged in her definition of African womanism, one that “[i]ts ideal is for black unity where every black person has a modicum of power, and so can be a “brother” or a “sister”, a “father” or a “mother” to the other” (Ogunyemi, 1985, p. 72). In the face of the multiple oppressions and survival needs, what mattered to the women was that they and their families were supported and that God (be it the Muslim Allah or the Christian God) would reward them.

In one of the focus group discussions, the women in Jos NGO camp narrated how, they unanimously decided not to go to hospitals again, but mustered courage to assist their ‘sisters’ with delivery even though they had no formal training in midwifery.

Some of our women in our midst, if they want to deliver and you go to the hospital, it is from twenty thousand Naira [about NZD 80], fifteen thousand Naira [about NZD 60], ten thousand naira [about NZD 40] that you will pay for admission if you deliver. Tou!, we don't have it.

That is why we said ... “tou, since it is like this, God is giving us health. He is the one that tied, He will also loose. Let us try”. That is how we started assisting our sisters with delivery. We cut the cord and tie the cord and she will just lie down and we will bath our sister.

That is all. (Asabe)

Through mutual solidarity and a bond of sisterhood, the women worked for the collective survival of not just their IDP communities, but their ancestral communities whose survival depended on the women’s ability to deliver and raise more children. However, the solidarity and mutual support which most of the women talked about did not guarantee the equal and equitable IDP communities they expected to build. There were varied interests which often conflicted with group norms and interests. They also represented multiple identities even as members of ‘united’ IDP communities. Such differences often shaped the specific ways in which individual women lived and interpreted their experiences, suffering and oppression (Collins, 2000). As a result of the differences, not all personal interests were met, some community leadership arrangements excluded some individuals and groups, and some women had more privileges than others because of their own social status.

For example, some of the women who could communicate in English had an advantage over those who could not. They could communicate directly with donors and they were the ones that were likely to be included in training and other empowerment programs. As such, there were big people and small people in the IDP communities. Unlike the ‘big people’ described earlier, ‘big people’ in this context, refers to camp leaders and other powerful IDPs, both men and women, who were often in charge of material and opportunity distribution. A similar situation was reported in Dafur camps where individuals described as ‘camp sheiks’ literally controlled everybody and everything in the camps (De Waal, 2009). Salamatu complained about how their ‘big people’ did not distribute donated materials and opportunities equitably.

So many free gifts that have been coming to this place, but they have never remembered me... we are all displaced women but why is it that all the good things that came they have never said to me “take this one thing... it will help you?” Instead they will give some women that are my sisters. And it is not only me that they are doing this kind of things to, there are many women that are crying because of this kind of thing. And honestly, this kind of thing should not be. They are not doing justice ... that is just it aunty... They are our big people, our big people. Aunty the way it is supposed to be is , “this one, if you get today, tomorrow that one should get”. But they are not doing like that here. One person only, all the time you will see all the good things, will be coming to the person. It is not that the good things do not come, but they only give to some people. (Salamatu)

Studies (Manzo, Kleit, & Couch, 2008; Pascucci, 2017) have shown that communities that are apparently mutually supportive are often complex, with potential for conflicting interests and exploitation of the most needy members. Some of the participants’ narratives reveal such complexities associated with support and solidarity against oppressive ‘outsiders’. Salamatu’s, and some other participants’ dissatisfaction and complaints, raises questions about the reality of cohesion within those communities (Barrett, 2015). However, while Salamatu expressed her dissatisfaction with what she perceived as inequity in their community, she did not deny her sisterhood with those who received the ‘good things’. Belonging to those IDP communities and benefitting, even though differently, from the mutual solidarity that existed there was less

problematic than living as isolated individuals. This is because the forces working against the community as a collective were perceived as more problematic than the differences that existed among them. As such, survival of individuals was intimately connected to the collective survival and liberation from oppression (Karenga & Tembo, 2012). Typical of African women, (Collins, 2000; Hudson-Weems, 1995, 1998, 2000; Karenga & Tembo, 2012; Nnaemeka, 2004), those who were dissatisfied, made the best of the community and relationships they formed while they patiently waited and hoped for a better future and a better community, which would be characterized by equity and social justice. While narrating all the injustice and difficult situations they faced, one participant sighed and said:

I affected in my life but just I dey patient [I am seriously affected but I am just patient] (Kenipi)

It can be said that such ‘patience’ characterized the attitude of most of the participants in this study. While they did their best to change the circumstances around them, they expressed their patience and endurance for the things they could not readily change. Such patience, was equally manifested in their relationship with their men, who did not always meet up to their expectations in terms of support in displacement.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter foregrounds the multiple intersecting sites of violence, and oppression as well as the suffering experienced by IDW in Nigeria. The chapter shows that while BH insurgency and subsequent displacement presented serious challenges for the women in this study, multi-level antagonisms and neglect from the government compounded their suffering. Yet, through their narratives, they projected themselves, not just as poor victims of BH insurgency but as heroines of their families and communities, deserving of respect, honour and appreciation. The women in this study were self-conscious and knowledgeable of who they were with respect to their culture and cultural responsibilities (Hudson-Weems, 1995; Karenga & Tembo, 2012), as well as their rights as Nigerian citizens. They utilized such knowledge to navigate through the challenges of BH attacks, captivity and displacement. They also asserted themselves as culturally embedded political subjects, who knew and were capable of demanding their rights, albeit in unique and non-conventional ways.

The women derived a sense of achievement and empowerment from their abilities to survive and also contribute significantly to the survival of their families and communities. Generally, their quest for survival was not centred on themselves: they were part of a community where an individual's survival is connected to the survival of others (Karenga & Tembo, 2012; Chilisa, 2012; Collins, 2000; 2012; Ogunyemi, 1985). They continued to make personal sacrifices for the collective survival of members of the IDP community, transcending both religious and tribal barriers, while working together for a common good. The women's sense of empowerment in the collective reflects Ogunyemi's (1995) ideal for African womanism, which sees black unity as the source of black power. Yet, the women's individual abilities to creatively resist oppression at different levels, gives support to Collins' (2000) assertion that both individual agency and collective activism are relevant and complementary in black women's resistance to oppression.

However, there were differences in the women's experience of displacement as engendered by differences in social class and educational status. Such differences placed some women in more privileged or underprivileged positions than others and continues to threaten the stability of the IDP communities. Yet the need to stay connected in order to resist the oppression from 'outside', while they patiently wait and hope for a change in the oppression from 'within' remains a matter of expediency. Such expediency also characterized their relationships with their men, who were not always as supportive as they would expect. In the next chapter, I will discuss how the women negotiated gender relations, positioning themselves as men's pragmatic partners in struggle and oppression.

CHAPTER 6

PRAGMATIC PARTNERS IN GENDER OPPRESSION

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the gendered nature of BH insurgency, highlighting the fact that men, women, boys and girls were targeted, killed or abducted for different purposes, affirming the findings of previous studies (Human Rights Watch, 2014; IOM – Nigeria, 2015; Oriola, 2016; Pieri & Zenn, 2016; UNOCHA, 2015, 2016; Weeraratne, 2017; Zenn & Pearson, 2014) on the insurgency. It was evident from that chapter, that BH attacks were attacks on families and communities where the women played central roles in assuring the survival of all.

In this chapter, I discuss the impact of BH insurgency and displacement on the women's immediate families, especially with respect to gender relations and gendered social roles. The chapter also highlights the women's experiences of sexual violence at the hands of other actors besides BH insurgents, and how they interpreted and made meanings of their sexual violence experiences.

I have drawn on a range of Black women's thinking to reveal the complexities embedded in the relationships between the women and their men. In particular, I draw from Hudson-Weems (1995) and Karenga and Tembo's (2012) thoughts on the family centeredness of African women and their cultural groundedness, and how they utilize their culture as a tool to address gender inequality. Continental African women's thinking (Nnaemeka, 2004; Ogunyemi, 1985) also sheds light on factors influencing women's apparent tolerance of oppressive gender relationships, highlighting how broader structural violence and social inequality reproduce oppressive gender relations. I also draw on Nnaemeka's (2004) ideas which present African feminism as a feminism of negotiation, where women know when to negotiate with oppressive gender relations and when to negotiate around them.

The chapter begins by discussing how gender inequality and unequal gender socialization shaped the pre-displacement experiences of the women in this study and

how the insurgency threatened the gendered social order. I will show how the women as flexible role players (Hudson-Weems, 1995) combined culturally ascribed feminine roles with masculine roles, thus affirming their ability to alternatively activate their meek and submissive selves, and their tough and hardy selves. The second section focuses on the tensions in the women's relationships with their husbands, and how they functioned as pragmatic partners to their living and dead husbands in their struggles against BH and challenges of life in displacement. I highlight the ways the women either remained 'patient' in their oppression in order to obtain a long-term goal or challenged their oppression using the available cultural script. Finally, I discuss the women's experiences and their interpretations of sexual violence, and show how the prevailing culture, shaped the ways the women interpreted and narrated their sexual violence experiences.

6.2 “If it is a girl, they don't send her to school”: Pre-displacement gender ideologies and gendered displacement experiences

Prior to the insurgency and displacements, most of the study participants lived in patriarchal communities where women had limited social privileges. Girls were often devalued and regarded as lesser members of their families. In those communities, their value as women was tied to their social roles as wives, mothers and home makers. The preference for sons as opposed to daughters (Inyang-Etoh & Ekanem, 2016; Milazzo, 2014; Nnadi, 2013; Norling, 2015; Olaogun et al., 2009; Oluduro, 2013; Otive-Igbuzor, 2014) was the norm, and there was unequal access to education between males and females in those communities. Even when girls were sent to school, they were often not permitted to attain the same level of education as their brothers. Aisha spoke about how gender discrimination affected her in her birth family and how such childhood experiences had shaped her interpretation of, and emotional response to, BH insurgency:

Sometimes, I say, people are crying for Boko Haram, me I am not crying for Boko Haram. Because I have already cry [cried] my Boko Haram since [I have already cried because of painful childhood experiences]. I have already cried [because] of what happened to us since, because since I was little, I grew up with tears in my eyes so I

don't have anything to cry more... Our father, he is a polygamous man... He have wife. He left us since we were very small. All of us are girls, we are six. Which in [hisses]... in our areas, they use to look down on girls, so I think that [is] what pursued him... [he] went to Cameroon, he got another wife. So now that we are grown up and we don't want to be useless, my sisters are in school... Then you know, our uncles ... they didn't care about female education. They didn't care about that. So, we have to struggle and ...at least seeing people who are developing and then seeing that yes, female education is good. (Aisha)

Rukaiat also spoke of the educational discrimination between boys and girls in her community:

In our village, if it is a girl, they don't send her to school... only boys. That is how they do in my family. All the males have finished... up to their university level...they have finished, they finished from the University of Maiduguri. We the girls... four of us, they did not send us to school. (Rukaiat)

Another participant narrated how after the death of her father, her uncle threatened to withdraw his support for her brother's education if her mother sent her to school, and as a result, she could not continue her education after high school.

You see me, my father is soldier before ...soldier man. That is why I do small school. As I'm in secondary school ...my father [died]. My uncle say ... I will not go forward oo. They will train the ... the men. So me ... if I finish secondary school, I will leave... I cry. No be [it was not] small cry [ing]. Even my mother she want [ed] to do for me [send me to school], but my uncle [said], "If you do school for your daughter, I will comot [remove] my hand for the remaining children make you do am all" [If you send your daughter to school, you will have to be responsible for all others, I will not assist you]. (Mary)

In addition to limited educational opportunities, girls were often pressurized by family members to get married at an early age. As a result of the combined threats of forced

early marriage and denial of girl child education in their ancestral communities, the participants in this study were generally ambivalent about returning home even if the insurgency was to end. Some of the younger participants in this study saw the displacement as an escape from extended family pressure to get married.

They don't care about us. I know that if they see us now... because we cannot go to them as our uncles because when we go to them, they will tell us to... get married. (Aisha)

The new environment had challenged the women to aspire to things that were beyond the ordinary quest for daily bread, to more self-actualizing goals and personal achievements such as higher education for themselves and their children. Concerns about education permeated all their discussions, and the potential educational opportunities presented by the displacement confounded the women's desires to return to their ancestral homes. Some of them were not willing to return home until they or their children had finished their education.

So, our own plan ma, if these our children they are going to school, we believe that in our future, they will help us...it [is] because of these children, that's the reason why even when some people go back, me I say I don't want to go back to that place. Because if we go back there now our children will not go to school. (Sansanatu)

Child marriage and resistance to western education especially for girls in Northern Nigeria has been a recurring issue in national discourse. Compared to other geopolitical zones in Nigeria, educational attainment of girls in the Northeast and Northwest Nigeria is low (NPC & ICF International, 2014). Child marriages often take precedence over female education in Northeastern communities. It belived to be useful for reducing or eliminating the occurrence of premarital sex, prostitution and teenage pregnancy, and thus prevent the 'shame', stigma and other social problems that would arise from sexual behaviors that are deemed culturally inappropriate (Adedokun et al., 2016; Otive-Igbuzor, 2014; Weimann, 2009). Prevention of girl-child promiscuity through prohibition of western education and child marriage is also central to the BH ideology and agenda (Adesoji, 2010, 2011; Oriola, 2016; Weimann, 2009; Zenn & Pearson, 2014). Hence BH's attack on women, especially the kidnapping of school girls, typically draws on the existing cultural milieu and is said to be an effort to

'restore social order' and punish those who dare to resist women's subjugation and their confinement to domestic roles (Oriola, 2016, p. 112).

Sansanatu's decision, and those of other women, to remain in a displacement setting because of the educational opportunity it created for them and their children is a reflection of how displacement can be both disempowering and empowering/liberating (Ganguly-Scrase & Vogl, 2008). It also adds evidence to African women's ambition and commitment to provide their children with opportunities that they could not get for themselves (Collins, 2000). Such decisions also interrogate their culture (Hudson-Weems, 1995, 2000; Karenga, 2007; Karenga & Tembo, 2012), and constitute a form of resistance to culturally imposed subjugation of women and their lack of educational opportunity.

Denial of girl-child education is also connected to the culture of male preference. As sustainers of family names and lineage, inheritance and occupation (Arisi & Oromareghake, 2011; Salamone, 2007), boys are often given the 'best' opportunities to develop to their maximum capacity. Male supremacy is perpetuated in African proverbs and oral traditions (Ezeifeke, 2017; Hussein, 2005; Labeodan, 2015). Traditional gender ideologies associate maleness with strength, hardiness and fearlessness, while being female is associated with meekness, 'dependence', frivolity, indignity, inconsistency, powerlessness, and lack of leadership ability (Hussein, 2005; Labeodan, 2015; Reeser, 2011). However, women are also expected to be hard working and economically productive despite those 'feminine attributes' (Amadiume, 2015). Contrary to expectations of traditional masculinities, however, men appeared to be emasculated by the BH attacks, especially because they were the primary targets during the insurgency. As shown in the previous chapter, most of the men went into hiding in the rocks and bushes, or travelled to different regions for safety. One woman narrated how she came home after escaping an attack to discover that all the men in the family had disappeared, which left her and the children stranded.

*As we got home, we found out that the men have all been sent away.
There was no male at home. All the men had ran away to the
mountains. That is how we were staying auntie... we and the
children, we were about seven... we were staying like that... nothing
for us to eat (Salamatu).*

Other men who were not able to escape were apparently helpless and unable to make prompt decisions to protect their families due to intense fear. Hence the women had to take the lead in organizing their families' escape. Elizabeth said:

I use to fear well...well ooo, but that day, you see how God is doing His own, it is me that [was] strong, in that compound... in that our home. [it] is I that [with emphasis] [was] strong! ...My husband, you know what he just carry? [Laughing] Only his documents. Only his document he no fit [he could not] carry anything. He just go draw his documents, only. It's I. I just run, climb upstairs, I just go and carry my children Ghana must go, draw it down. He said I should leave everything ... I said "we don't know where we are going to stay, we have children". (Elizabeth)

When they eventually escaped, and some of them hid with their families in the mountains and bushes, it was the women that made daily journeys from those places to their homes for several weeks in order to obtain food for the men and children. Those journeys were often made at the risk of death and abduction. One participant reported that her mother was killed during a trip from the bush to her village. She said that she would have also died the same day, but for the fact that she had managed to escape:

At that time we were in the bush, but she [my mother] got home before us and was waiting for us to come to cook food. They came and arrested her and other girls, but we escaped and ran back to the bush... They killed her. (Rukaiat)

These accounts underscore the fact that traditional masculinities may not always be practicable in real life (Reeser, 2011), and that gender and gender roles are socially constructed, shifting in different contexts and circumstances (Lindsey, 2015; West & Zimmerman, 1987). The accounts also enhance understanding of the family centeredness of the women in this study and their capability to adapt to flexible gender roles (Hudson-Weems, 1995, 2000). The women, in the dire situation of the insurgency, 'activated' their strong and brave selves, and courageously did what men should have done but could not do. Most importantly, the women's accounts project them as women who were in concert with their men in struggle (Hudson-Weems, 1995, 2000). They reveal the women's sensitivity to the needs and safety of their men. They were as

protective of their men, as they were of their boys. As such, the survival of men during the insurgency, and by extension the survival of entire communities, depended on the women's bravery and self-sacrifice (Hudson-Weems, 1995; Karenga & Tembo, 2012).

The women's commitment to the survival of their husbands, families and communities continued as they settled in displacement but not without tensions in their relationships. In the next section, I discuss the women's struggles with their men, the complexities of their relationships and how they responded to what they perceived as lack of support from their male partners.

6.3 “Our men don spoil”: Tensions in gender relations

The women gave accounts that suggest that men's feelings of emasculation extended beyond the critical period of the insurgency and attacks. They reported men's general inability to adapt to the displacement conditions and inability to live up to their role expectations as fathers and husbands, and therefore breadwinners, even after an average of three years in displacement. Unemployment among men and their lack of involvement in income generating activities constituted a major concern for the women. During one of the focus group discussions, the women narrated how difficult it was for them to cope with their husbands' unemployment.

You cannot imagine that the time you were at home, the man will go and bring, and give you and the children to eat, but here, it is not like that. He is also in need of help. So what will you do? You will just be thinking all the time... what will you do? (Rifkatu)

Another participant, who lived in a host community, but served as a volunteer teacher in one of the IDP camps so as to be able to get a share of donated food and other materials in the camp, narrated her frustration with her husband's unemployment.

Before my husband is working, and now he is no more working, he is at home. When I do some business, I use to help my husband or I use to buy food stuff and cook for us and I have three children now... because my husband is use to work before and he use to have money... but now...he don't use to kuma [he does not even] go out... me I'm...I'm telling you the fact now, I'm sad because my husband

don't have work...I'm praying, if my husband have work I cannot suffer to come here.... Me I'm sad now. If my husband have a job now I could have cool down [I would have relaxed]. (Huseina)

Most of the women believed that the men's unemployment was not always as a result of inability to find work, but as a result of their unwillingness to do the menial jobs the women did, as well as their inability to accept the realities of the change in their situation.

*Some of them, if you search for a farm, and you call them, ... during the farming season if you call them to go, no [They will not go]. Them, it is like they are ashamed to go and do [demonstrates door knocking] *konkon*. [They are ashamed to beg for work] (Adah)*

From the women's perspectives, the men were being idle, unrealistic, and unable to adjust to the realities of the displacement and as such were failing in their roles as bread winners. In one of the focus group discussions, one participant demonstrated how the men wasted time playing cards while the women went out to "beg for work".

*If you say to them, "what are you doing? See work!" Tou if you tell them, they will say to you " aiya [an Hausa expression that could connote self-pity] if not for problem, but the time we were at home together, was I doing like that to you? There is nothing [we don't have money], but I am not the one that caused it. It is problem that caused this". You see, the woman is the one going out. Inside here, you will see our men sitting. None of them goes so that they will be employed as labourers like this. Their place of stay is there. In the mornings, they will be there and they will be [gestures with hand to signify motions of playing cards] *one... two...* [They will be playing cards all day]. *They are idle.* (Asabe)*

As a result of the men's idleness, the women bore almost all the burden of providing food for their families. It is not the cultural ideal for men to be dependent on their wives' income in Nigeria. However, the fact that women worked to earn money for their families did not change their role as homemakers, caregivers and cooks. This pattern is common in most Nigerian families; most men still hold onto the tradition that

women should be responsible for household chores even when they take up the role of bread winner (Asiyanbola, 2005; Omonubi-McDonnell, 2003; Para-Mallam, 2010). Inability to prepare food on time was often a reason for quarrels in the women's homes. While we were in the focus group meeting, one participant signaled her intention to leave earlier than others, so I inquired to find out her reason for leaving earlier. Another participant said:

Because her husband is present in their house... You know... if she never cook for her husband to time.... Problem will come... (Asabe)

As a follow up to the above statement, I inquired about the possibility of their husbands cooking for their families since they had to work all day outside their homes while the men stayed at home. In response, all the women in the group laughed very loudly, and Asabe continued:

Tou, who will cook for us? [Participants still laughing] We don't do that in our place... Only women, if you are not well, your husband will help you but if you are well, with your strength, it is your work.

(Asabe)

Asabe's statement "it is your work" and the women's assent to her opinion as demonstrated in their general laughter over my assumption, suggest an acceptance of being used, according to Hurston (1937) in Collins (2000, p. 45), as "the mules uh de world". This expression is used to capture a situation where black women are made to do the jobs that no other person wants to do (Collins, 2000), like begging for work in this context, irrespective of how much they already have to do. However, their responses to oppressive gender relations were rather complex, and were shaped by several other factors in their relationships as well as factors that were external to their relationships. Their responses to oppression in gender relations reflects Obioma Nnaemeka's thinking of how her nego-feminism or no-ego feminism operates. According to Nnaemeka (2004), "it knows when, where, and how to detonate patriarchal land mines; [and]... when, where, and how to go around patriarchal land mines... it knows when, where, and how to negotiate with or negotiate around patriarchy in different contexts" (Nnaemeka, 2004, pp. 360-361). Specific details on how the women either negotiated with or negotiated around oppressions in gender relations will be discussed later in this chapter.

Previous studies on internally displaced persons (Amirthalingam & Lakshman, 2012; Ganguly-Scrase & Vogl, 2008) in Sri Lanka and India have shown that internally displaced women are more likely than men, to seek informal employment in order to sustain their families in displacement. Amirthalingam and Lakshman (2012) further assert that women have better adaptive mechanisms than men in displacement. However, while it is common for researchers (for example, Amirthalingam and Lakshman (2012), Marlowe (2012), Sawhney and Mehrotra (2013) and Zin Mar and Kusakabe (2010)) to report change in gender-roles or adaptation to new social roles among both internally displaced persons and refugees, the women in this study expanded their roles to include both male and female roles even when they had their husbands with them.

The women's experiences underscore the fact that while single female headed households in displacement often have serious survival needs (Amirthalingam & Lakshman, 2012), the presence of an unemployed male partner in a household where the woman becomes the primary breadwinner, may generate unique tensions which might be absent in a single female-headed household. For the women in this study, having their husbands with them meant that they had one extra adult to feed under severe economic hardship, while the men also demanded submission and services which are culturally accrued to 'breadwinners'. The women's roles as 'cooks' were not negotiable even though the men failed in their own roles as 'breadwinners'. This situation adds to the evidence that social attributes such as wealth or the ability to make money and feed the family "do not spontaneously confer culturally valued authority and prestige equally to both sexes" (Iyam, 1996, p. 390). The same breadwinner's role that elevates men to a revered position of authority, deepened the servitude of these women and placed them in a more precarious situation.

Ganguly-Scrase and Vogl (2008) report that assuming the role of breadwinner was empowering to displaced women in India. Studies in Uganda (Branch, 2013; Kamara et al., 2017) also revealed that pre-displacement gender-role division and male supremacy posed a significant challenge for men in displacement and created differential meanings of displacement among young men and women on the one hand and older men on the other. While young men and women interpreted displacement as an empowering experience, older men believed it had robbed them of their traditional authority and privileges. However the situation of the women in this study was not that

straightforward. Similar to what has been reported about Nigerian women in previous studies (Amadiume, 2015; Omonubi-McDonnell, 2003; Para-Mallam, 2010), assuming extended gender roles intensified existing role ambiguities for them and it created a site for identity contestation. This is also similar to what was reported about IDW in Colombia, where changing gender roles in displacement, rather than increasing women's agency to leave violent relationships, instead intensified the violence they experienced in those relationships (Hynes et al., 2016).

Even though it has been reported that IDW tend to adapt to new social roles as part of their displacement response strategy (Zin Mar & Kusakabe, 2010), these women's ability to cope and adjust to displacement in contrast to their men might not be unrelated to their childhood socializations. It is very likely that the adaptability of the women in this study was not necessarily a reactionary response to displacement. Rather, the gendered division of labor in their families may have prepared them to adapt to the hardships of displacement. More often than not, girls are made to take multiple responsibilities as they grow up, sometimes under highly unstable circumstances, whereas boys perform well defined roles that do not require much adaptation (Audu et al., 2009; Otive-Igbuzor, 2014; Para-Mallam, 2010; Usman, 2010). Hence the displacement created an avenue for the women to exercise their adaptability, and express their latent, suppressed or largely unacknowledged selves, while it was a complete change for the men, who appeared emasculated and disempowered by the change.

It is important to note however, that while Nigerian women have always been flexible in their gender roles, and have often combined productive, reproductive and community development roles (Amadiume, 2015; Omonubi-McDonnell, 2003; Para-Mallam, 2010), the women in this study found their expanded roles to be particularly stressful because of the general lack of extended family support in household chores. One newly married woman described how women, prior to the displacement, naturally accessed both material and labor support, especially from their side of the extended families, in order to fulfil their multiple responsibilities in their matrimonial homes.

If there is none [no food at home], she [a woman] can send to her parents and her parents will give... Her parents can never watch their daughter, and their daughter is suffering,[and] they will not help her.

That is how it works. If not for this problem, there is enjoyment...Honestly...you have your younger ones and they will work for you. Tou, here it is just you and your God. Tou, where will you see help? You only have your husband with you... [But before], if you want to do anything at home they [your younger ones] will do it for you... [with emphasis] They will do... they will help you with the work... they will sweep for you, they will wash plates for you. They will cook for you and help you to fetch water... that is just it. It is like that... If you deliver, your family will stay for 12 days, they will do what they are supposed to do... Work, right? They will get items for bathing, they will buy your make-ups,[and] wrapper, ... [they will be] bathing you with hot water... and... even one of your sisters will not go. Your elder sister...she can come and stay with you and be doing everything for you. After forty days, she will go. (Rahab)

Although these women had always been responsible for most of the house chores, they did not necessarily work alone, and marriage did not always sever the tie a woman had with, and the support she received from, her natal family in Northern Nigeria (Schildkrout, 1986). This adds evidence to the assertion that women's subordination in gender relations in Nigeria, is relative to the various positions they occupy within a web of other complex relationships (Oyewumi, 2002). As such, one woman who is subordinate to her husband may 'enjoy' the subordination of several other persons such as her younger siblings or even younger wives in her husband's family.

Even though the women in this study generally tolerated the men, their unemployment status, their negative behavioral changes, and their persistent inability to support their families, they were not completely accepting of their behaviors. They saw those behaviors as problematic and some of them described their men as 'spoilt men', in the sense that they were damaged. The 'spoiling' of the men is mostly attributed to the fact that they tend to mask their failings as breadwinners with excessive alcohol intake, similar to what has been reported among men in other displacement settings (Roberts et. al, 2014; Roberts, Ocaka, Browne, Oyok, & Sondorp, 2011; Weaver & Roberts, 2010). Benedict said:

...Now, some ... our men don spoil [have spoilt]. No money, no work. Like me, totally now my husband, I never understand which kind character hin²⁷ be [is]. Before, he get [has] money, hin dey sell fish. ... people use to bring fish from Cameroon for him.... But now, he has no money. Wahala don dey [problem has come] [claps hands in exasperation]. Hin de drink [He is drinking], doing somehow! [Misbehaving]. So this condition we dey [are in] no be [is not] good condition. Na [it is] Bad condition. (Benedict)

While Benedict recognized the failings and misbehaviors of her man, she was also quick to point out what damaged her man. She located the source of his damage in their social situation. As such she displayed sensitivity to how BH insurgency with the attending problem of unemployment, which is a combination of religious and classist oppression, damaged the ego of her man (Hudson-Weems, 1995) and as a result, was willing to keep supporting him. Njiru (2014) reported a tendency of women in IDP camps in Kenya to make excuses for their husbands' misbehaviors. She attributed this to a patriarchal culture that compels women to be wives, who should be silent to their men's oppression, even though she acknowledged how structural factors shape women's tolerance of men's oppression. However, the women in this study were not necessarily silent to men's oppression or misbehaviors. While they tolerated the men, they continued to emphasize the cultural ideals for normal masculinities especially the ability to provide money, which invariably pressurized the men and increased the tensions. The following report of one woman's experience of physical violence from her unemployed, dependent husband is an example:

Even the day before yesterday... the woman come call me... The husband walk[ed] out since morning. He didn't give her anything and she has five children. As he come, he is just asking about food and the woman [had] fever. She no [did not] wake up quickly to bring the food for him, he just started insult her anyhow. And the woman just ...talk to him say "...you no bring anything... you didn't give me any kobo²⁸, how do you know that I cook food? Who [did you] send...to give me money? And you are just in...insulting me...He just beat

²⁷ Hin in pidgin English can be used as a masculine or feminine pronoun, that is, he or she

²⁸ Kobo is a monetary unit in Nigeria. One hundred Kobo is equal to one Naira

her... hold her neck... like he wan kill that woman [As if he wanted to kill the woman]. [It was] the neighbor that come catch am, tight am well...well... beat am... just push am, before the woman come come out... [His neighbor came and fought him, and pushed him out so the woman could escape]. Tou, if he has work ...he can't do that. It is because this problem. (Mary)

Gender is a social accomplishment, a performative act to be done according to pre-defined socio-cultural norms (Lindsey, 2015; C. West & Zimmerman, 1987). To be a 'real man' requires the capacity to provide food and money for the family, and only 'real men', have the rights to forcefully demand food. However, such pre-requisites for achieving the status of 'real men' in the African context, are often challenged in adversity (Lwambo, 2013; Muchoki, 2013; Schindler, Schindler, & Brück, 2011). Most often than not, real African masculinities do not "withstand adverse economic and social stress,...[and they] are often lost under unfavorable conditions" (Lwambo, 2013, p. 52). The man's abuse on the woman while failing on his own gender role, compelled the woman to stand up to him and to demand respect even though it entailed what Hudson-Weems (1995) described as verbal castration of a man. This turn in events as a result of the displacement, re-echoes the assertion that men's power does not simply dominate women, but that such dominance also creates opportunities for women to either dominate men or modify their domination (Spronk, 2005). For example, attaching men's dominant positions to their responsibilities as bread winners and protectors, also enables women to dominate men should they fail to live up to those responsibilities. As such, women's agency to subvert men's dominant position is seen as a capacity for action which is often created and enabled by specific relations of subordination (Spronk, 2005). However, the level and mode of utilization of such agency to subvert men's dominant positions, can be dependent on a wide range of factors, often governed by the women's presumptions of the social outcomes of such subversive actions in the near or distant future, especially with respect to future inheritance.

The response of the beaten wife above, demonstrates how women simultaneously challenge, and give 'conditional' support for masculine violence. Even though her ill health was the primary reason for her inability to serve her husband on time, she minimized her health condition while emphasizing the man's inability to provide money. Her emphasis on his lack of economic power suggests that his aggression and

verbal abuse would have been justified if only he had provided money for her to cook. After studying gender relationships among IDPs in DRC, Lwambo (2013) reports that women's "idea of empowerment is to demand respect, rights and liberties within a patriarchal system" (Lwambo, 2013, p. 53), but the above accounts show that even such demand for rights and respect are sometimes prioritized by the women in such a way that their 'rights' to food and money supersede their rights for love, care and respect. Such prioritization could be explained by the widespread poverty and food insecurity in Nigeria. It also adds to the evidence that structural factors such as poverty and social inequalities, and oppressive gender relations are mutually reinforcing (British Council Nigeria, 2012; Campbell & Mannell, 2016; Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989; Ertürk & Purkayastha, 2012; Hynes et al., 2016; Mekgwe, 2008; Njiru, 2014; Nnaemeka, 2004; Steady, 1987; Taylor, 1998). Poverty equally plays a significant role in sustaining certain patriarchal practices and women's economic dependence on men also exposes them to increased risk for IPV (Burgess & Campbell, 2015).

Two participants reported that their husbands' lack of support had been a long term issue which preceded the displacement. Yet, in their narratives, they were both protective of, and determined to stay with, the men. They told me that they would not normally tell other people what they told me about their husbands. Bilikisu said:

Honestly, there is nothing I will hide from you. I will not say that my husband is what he is not. I will tell you my problem but I will not tell some people. I have a problem... He does not help me. If I tell him to go and work to help, he will not go anywhere. Eating and drinking... It is on my head, everything is on, my head [I am the one carrying all the family responsibilities]. Since the time I got married...up till today, I am the one providing for the family. Your husband will not help you? If you ask your husband for something, even if people come to give him something, he will not say "my wife, take something so that we can eat and drink?" No. He will keep it and he will eat it alone... he will eat pepper soup [hot and spicy meat soup]... he will drink, shikenan!, Ya kaare! [That is it! it has finished!]. Is that good? Is this not a problem? (Bilikisu)

Sansanatu was in a polygamous relationship. She narrated how her husband, who had never been able to sufficiently support his large family of two wives and six children, took another wife while living in an IDP camp:

And our husband is not a strong person. He does not have any strength to provide for us.... I will not hide anything from you. Since I got married, today, at least I am five years in marriage. Aunty, ... that a husband brought like soap for you, he brought body cream, or he will say, let him solve this problem for you, me, honestly, me, he does not do for me... Even soap for bathing...And ...it is not like I am the only one, even my rival [co-wife]. He is not doing for us... He has married four times, including me. He married one in this town, the other one was in Gwoza, in our village. He divorced them... he just separated from them. He got married here! [Laughing]. Even the marriage, aunty, I am telling you, they did not last for three months [laughing]. (Sansanatu)

While the women cited above were uncomfortable about their husband's continued lack of support and exploitation of their loyalty, they chose to remain in the relationships, keep their husbands' non-supportive behavior secret, and suffered in silence. Enduring hardships in marriage is not unique to IDW in Nigeria, and suffering in silence or "suffering and smiling" is a common behavioral pattern for most women of African descent (Arisi & Oromareghake, 2011; Ogunsiji, Wilkes, Jackson, & Peters, 2012). Although such silence is often used to prevent social embarrassment and stigmatization, other social utilities of such silence within the ambiguous legal and poorly organized government social welfare systems (see (Olaore, Ogunlade, & Aham-Chiabuotu, 2016) of most African communities, have been largely ignored. The following narrative from Sansanatu, reveals some of the reasons for such silence and willingness to stay:

You know, aunty, it is not every woman that will be able to endure the problem in marriage. You see, some are patient, and some are not patient. You see us, because we have started having children with him, we have to be patient. If we don't stay, even when our children grow up, we will have to come back. Tou, they [his other wives], they

*have not started having children with him. They said honestly they
will not be able to take the trouble (Sansanatu)*

Sansanatu's narrative indicates that women who leave their marriages are often regarded as impatient, which is contrary to the meek and submissive wives (Abubakar, 2015) society expects them to be. This can be seen as an example of how culture and societal construction of gender roles influence women's acceptance of violence and oppressive gender relations (Hynes et al., 2016). Allusion to the term "patience" however highlights the temporal nature of women's oppression in marriage, especially in Nigeria (Omonubi-McDonnell, 2003). Schildkrout (1986) reports that it is normal for women in the North to be 'patient' and wait for the death of their husbands, who are mostly much older than themselves, in order to gain their freedom from a bad marriage. However, as shown in Sansanatu's account above, such 'patience' is often a product of whether or not the woman has a child with the man (Schildkrout, 1986).

Divorce and re-marriage is a common practice in Northern Nigeria (Schildkrout, 1986; Weimann, 2009) but it is at the risk of severing all contact with their young children that women opt for divorce in that region, especially among the Hausa/Fulani Muslims (Hamid & Sanusi, 2016; Schildkrout, 1986). As a result, men often exploit women's unwillingness to leave their children to keep them in unhappy marriages (Izugbara, Ibisomi, Ezeh, & Mandara, 2010; Mairiga et al., 2010). Women who perceive that they do not have any option but to remain in unhappy marriages, tend to utilize the power of silence or patience as a survival tool. Such silence helps the women to fit into an acceptable social category. Since flippancy, talkativeness and complaining are often attributed to the feminine gender (Hussein, 2005; Labeodan, 2015; Reeser, 2011) women who talk or complain less are perceived as strong and self-controlled like men. Hence some women in this study tended to utilize 'patience' or silence as a show of strength and exceptional womanhood, which further enhanced their self-worth and social acceptability within the patriarchal system. Once they were perceived by others as "good and patient wives", it would be easier for them to gain sympathy and support from other extended family members and the community at large.

The importance of patience is perpetuated in a popular Hausa proverb, *Hakuri maganin zaman duniya* and it means that patience is the medicine for living in the world as it will see the end of every problem. 'Patience' and endurance are also important virtues

in both Christian and Islamic religious beliefs. As will be shown in the next chapter, religion was a very important aspect of these women's lives. Framing themselves as 'patient' women was a form of identity construction as faithful adherents to their religion, deserving of rewards and blessings from God, both in this life and in the life to come, and from other members of the community.

Another source of tension in gender relations was related to their husbands' sexual desires. Some of the participants, especially those residing in camps reported that their men demanded sex without due consideration for their living conditions, especially as they shared rooms with their children. The women expressed feelings of humiliation. They also believed that 'men's lack of shame' had resulted in widespread sexualization of children in the camps, and a resultant loss of parental authority. They reported that men who did have 'shame', but were not patient, had resorted to extra-marital affairs to meet their sexual needs. During one of the focus group discussions, Asabe said:

You see, men they don't have shame. Yes! Even in the midst of his children, even before them, those that do not have self-control will do it with their wives there. Yeah, they are teaching children iskanci [extremely bad behaviour or irresponsibility]. (Asabe)

Another woman in an individual interview said:

It is not easy ooo...some people do not have patience... that is why they just do what they want to do and you now see children coming up with some behaviors...If they see their mothers, there is no respect...even their fathers, no respect. (Angela)

Mary introduced herself as the women's leader in one of the camps. She spoke of how she had confronted a woman whose daughter of about five years was caught arranging sexual partners for other children as part of their play. The following data excerpt shows the response of the girl's mother, who attributed her daughter's behaviour to the husband's "lack of patience".

I say how comes, how comes this your girl know man and woman sleep? [I asked her how her daughter learnt about sex] She say "Tou, I don't know what am going to tell you..., see the room...if I tell him [my husband] to go and sleep inside old motor for night [at night], he

will not agree. He sleeps in the house, we sleep together. Even [before] the children...sleep, he will started disturb me anyhow [Even while the children are still awake he will be demanding for sex]. Tou, I don't know. How can I do? Maybe, she is looking [watching] me and him [her] father... I am telling him that, "don't do this thing in front of this children, wait, let them sleep". He will not agree. ... see..., he beat me because I said no" (Mary)

It has been reported that men generally control their wives' sexuality in Nigeria (NPC & ICF International, 2014) but the displacement created a situation where the women could not freely engage in sexual intercourse with their men because of their living conditions. Women's attempt to control their sexual life in displacement was interpreted as a challenge to men's authority and as such, a trigger for gender-based violence among IDPs in Uganda (Okello & Hovil, 2007; Stark et al., 2009). However, none of the participants interpreted men's forceful engagement in sexual relationships with their unwilling wives in the presence of their children as a serious form of sexual violence that was worth reporting. To them, it was simply an act of 'shamelessness', and a show of impatience on the part of the men, which had resulted in the 'spoiling' of the children. These women's minimization of their husband's sexual behaviour reflects a general belief that there is no such thing as sexual violence or rape in marital relationships in many African communities (McCleary-Sills et al., 2016; Muchoki, 2013; Ola & Johnson, 2013). The women expressed more concern about the impact of their husband's behaviours on their children than on themselves. This has been reported to be characteristic of mothers in Africa, where children's needs are placed above their own (Acholonu, 1995; Chilisa, 2012; Chilisa & Ntseane, 2010; Collins, 2000; Hudson-Weems, 1995).

I observed during my visits to the camps that a number of women either had very young children, or were pregnant. This was despite the participants' narratives about poverty, hardship and lack of comfortable accommodation. I attempted to explore the reason behind their decision to continue having children despite their poor living conditions. Their narratives suggested that they were under pressure to have more children. They reported that some of their men were against artificial birth control methods. One woman reported women's suffering in raising children without the men's support:

Men doesn't like women to do the family planning... some of the womens that do it, I can remember... plenty fighting between husband and wives. You know, the problem is that womens we are the ones suffering with the children. The men duty is to give us the belle²⁹, that's all. If you deliver a child, you can do this....do that... [you will be the one responsible] for the children. Them they will fold the hand and be looking at you. But when you say okay, let me rest now, let me do the family planning, it will cause problem between you and your husband. (Alheri)

While Alheri's account appears to suggest that it was only men who were against artificial birth control, it also reveals that the case at issue was not necessarily whether or not the women wanted to have more children but men's lack of support in raising the children. Other interviews revealed that the pro-natal ideas were equally shared by both men and women in the camps and other settlements, giving further evidence that the women were not just the victims of the men's desires for more children. According to the women, they needed to give birth to more children in order to replace their family members who were killed during the BH attacks. They believed it was their duty to reproduce and replenish the population of their communities. As a result, the women themselves, were ambivalent towards accepting family planning services, which had been introduced to them by visiting health workers.

Some of the women, they are complaining. They [health workers] want people to take family planning [but] they [The IDW] don't want to take family planning because they say "our people wey plenty [many of our people], the... the Boko Haram kill them. We want to born plenty. Because that people wey we lose, we go return am... before we are...we are agree to...to carry family planning"... [We will replace the people we lost before we accept family planning]. That's why we are... we are borning pikin [we are having babies], and some, they are dying without eee... no... no hospital here. (Benedict)

²⁹ Belle in pidgin English is literally translated as stomach or abdomen but it is also used to depict pregnancy. In this context, it depicts impregnation by men.

This finding is similar to what was reported about post genocide Rwanda, where there was a decline in the use of birth control and slight increase in fertility rate among the women (Schindler et al., 2011). The study (Schindler et al., 2011) also revealed that women were more likely to have another child after the genocide if they lost a son or a brother in the conflict. Although these participants did not specifically mention the influence of gender on their choice to continue procreation in displacement, it is possible that desire to replace the males may have been a significant factor, since men and boys were specifically targeted for killing and/or conscription into BH militancy.

Benedict's narrative above, also reveals the complexity of some of the gender issues raised in this study and shows that while the women recognized the burdens of having to care for children with minimal support, they were also in concert with their men (Hudson-Weems, 1995; T. Karenga & Tembo, 2012) in the struggle against BH's ethnic cleansing agenda. While they could not fight with arms to resist the killing of their men and boys, or abduction of their girls, they chose to use their reproductive capabilities to counter BH's plans, even though they were aware of the possible consequences of their decisions.

Spronk (2005) argues that women take the responsibility for reproducing patriarchal social structures. Apusigah (2008) also argues that women's actions, inactions and reactions, as custodians of the oppressive patriarchal systems, stem from their need to be trusted gatekeepers and not necessarily as a result of conviction. However, these arguments might represent oversimplification of complex problems. These participants' willingness to undergo high risk pregnancies in order to repopulate their communities suggests something more than a mere need to act as trusted gatekeepers. It is an example of how African women indirectly put up resistance against an external oppression even when they appear to be participants in their own oppression (Collins, 2000). It is also an expression of a life lived beyond the self, in solidarity with both the living and the dead (Dillard, 2008), and their active involvement in ensuring community survival (Muwati & Gambahaya, 2012). There is a popular Hausa proverb that says, "*Arzikin jamaa ya fi arzikin wadata*", which is literarily interpreted as "to be rich in people is better than to be rich in material possessions". The women's priority was to have more people.

Although the women did not make explicit their reasons for wanting to have more people, it might not be unrelated to their understanding of the cultural norms regarding patrilineal inheritance which women could only obtain through their children (Eze, 2006). In a country with poorly developed public social welfare systems (Olaore et al., 2016), having large families, constitutes an important form of both immediate and old-age social security. This is reminiscent of an analysis of the black women's cycle of poverty in the Caribbean, which revealed that women are not poor because they have large families but tend to have large families because they are poor (Antrobus's, 1995 in Collins, 2000, p. 244). It is also possible, that women's cooperation in the pronatal arrangement was tactically employed to control men's sexuality and limit the likelihood of them marrying more wives under the guise of wanting more children (see (Izugbara & Ezeh, 2010)). In addition, in most African cultures, the period of pregnancy and nursing a baby provides opportunity for women to receive a level of personal care and support, both from their men and their community, which they may not receive at any other time in their lives. Hence in whichever way the issue is examined, having more children, even in that dire situation of poverty, promises to be more advantageous to the women in the long run, than not having children at all.

Even though this study neither focused on the experiences of men, nor explored their perspectives on the gender issues that were raised, the women's overall accounts, revealed differences in the responses of men and women over the loss of their partners during the insurgency. While men, according to the women, were quick to remarry after the death of their wives, most of the women chose to remain single. The next section briefly highlights participants' perspectives about how men responded to the death of their wives. The section also discusses how the widows in this study interpreted and made meaning of the combined experiences of displacement, widowhood and poverty.

6.4 “You are not up to my husband”: Making sense of widowhood in displacement

All the participants who were widowed during or before the insurgency were still single as at the time of the study and none of them expressed any desire to re-marry in the near future. However, they reported that some of the men who lost their wives during the insurgency remarried after a short time, and sometimes started a new life without

the children they had in the previous marriages. One 18 year old participant narrated her experience after her mother's death and father's remarriage.

Boko Haram killed my mother, but it was after her death that he [my father] came and married again in Cameroon... That is why we also left Cameroon and came back to Nigeria alone. Before then, our father was not paying attention to us. He just left us like that. He was not giving us money for feeding, he was not giving us anything for upkeep or anything like that. So we heard that there is a camp here... and we came here (Rukaiyat).

There is ample evidence in the literature which suggests that widowers are more likely to re-partner/remarry, and sooner than widows (Bennett, Arnott, & Soulsby, 2013). While it is possible that prompt remarriage among widowers could minimize depression or be a response to poor adjustment to widowhood (Lee & DeMaris, 2007), there is inconsistent evidence on the impact of gender on depression in widowhood. Sasson and Umberson (2013) report no significant difference between men and women in terms of widowhood-induced depression, but their study shows that women are more likely to remain unmarried even in very difficult conditions. It is possible that the men were unable to cope with a combination of domestic feminine roles and their own role as breadwinners in displacement. As has been shown in this and previous studies (Amirthalingam & Lakshman, 2012; Lwambo, 2013), men are more likely to be unemployed and they adopt less effective adaptive measures than women in displacement. Hence prompt remarriage among the men could be a means of gaining the material, emotional and social support they need to cope with displacement. It is also possible that they abandoned their children because it might be difficult for their new partners to effectively care for the men and their children from previous marriages.

The widows in this study, however attributed much of their suffering and hardship to the loss of their husbands. Economic hardships, pressures for sexual relationships and challenges of raising children without extended family support were specifically reported as major challenges among the widows. Some women reported that their extended family members, who would have been in a position to support them, were also struggling to survive. Others reported being blamed for their husbands' deaths and as a result, were persecuted by their husbands' family members. Some of them were

dispossessed of their husbands' property and were left without support. One of the widows narrated how she had to share her late husband's death benefit with his relatives and how her husband's family took away all her deceased husband's property, and only allowed her to take his enlarged photograph.

When my husband money [death benefit] come out... my husband people they come out for the money. My...pastor advise me, [to] share the money...for peace to reign. I now share the money... As they collect that money, they are not calling me talkless of say "how about the children?" You see me with his...load? You see any load here? The thing I carry inside my husband thing... [pointing to the late husband's enlarged photograph that was hung on the wall of her sitting room] see am [See, this is the only thing I got out of my husband's property]. It's only this one. His picture. Madam, let me tell you, if I say I will drag with this people, they will kill me, they will kill my children...I don't want anything to happen to that children. I don't have husband, and I lose that children? [Will I also lose my children after I have lost my husband?] (Gigime)

As reflected in Gigime's account above, the widows valued their their children over property, which is typical of African motherhood (Acholonu, 1995; Hudson-Weems, 1995). This is despite the fact that they were uncertain about how to raise the children without support. Gigime's perception of suffering in widowhood re-echoes what has been written about the experiences of many widows in Nigeria (Akujobi, 2009; Durojaye, 2013; Ezejiolor, 2011; Nwogu, 2015; Oyenyim & Ayodeji, 2010). Property grabbing by the deceased's relatives, who would not support the widow in raising the deceased's children, is common in some cultures (Ayodele, 2016; Ezejiolor, 2011; Ezer, 2016). Such maltreatment further disempowers the widows, making them more vulnerable. The following narrative from one of the widows shows the deep sense of loss and disempowerment portrayed in most of the widows' accounts, and reveals how unique, complex and multilayered they perceived their situations to be:

It's more better when ...even though he [your husband] is not doing anything to [for] you, you are together, [it] is more better. Even though he is beating you, you are together, [it] is more better than

[when] *you people are not together. You know, the way you are seeing your husband that you are together with him, is a joy.* [Pause and reflectively] *But immediately one is not there, it's a problem. You, you can't experience [imagine or understand] it. It is we that enter that shoes that we know the importance of staying together with our husbands. Even though he is not providing [with emphasis] anything to you.* (Hajara)

The widows' perceptions of their vulnerability suggests that widowhood in displacement is much more complex than losing financial and emotional support. Widowhood implies a multidimensional loss of security, which creates a perception of vulnerability that outweighs that of other displaced persons. Although Hajara's narrative expresses extreme tolerance for women's oppression by men and IPV, it largely reflects the value attached to having a husband in Nigeria. It also provides insight into some of the socio-cultural foundations for the apparent absence of antagonism towards males in African feminist thought. Instead, they challenge men to be aware of those aspects of women's subjugation which differ from the generalized oppression of all African people (Mekgwe, 2008). Juxtaposing Hajara's account with that of Gigime, one may conclude that for these women, the external oppressions that arise as a result of losing one's husband, are much more challenging than the oppressions within their relationships. A cursory analysis of Hajara's narrative, and in fact most of the widows' accounts, would suggest that having the companionship of their husbands had become more important than any form of material support they could receive from them. Nevertheless, the widows' stance on remarriage, which will be discussed in the next few paragraphs, reveal further complexities and ambiguities about how much they really valued marriage and the companionship of men.

The women's decisions to remain single and live for their children, and the efforts they made to resist all forms of romantic relationships, confounds their claims that being in a bad marriage is better than not having a husband, even though I could not ascertain the extent to which they would maintain such commitments in future. They took such decisions despite knowing that widows in Northern Nigeria are culturally eligible for re-marriage after the initial mourning period (Schildkrout, 1986). In fact, more often than not, widows are pressurized by their families to remarry in their cultures, or at least be under the 'protection' of a man even without formal marriage. Otherwise it is

presumed that they are involved in *karuwance* or prostitution (Adedokun et al., 2016; Schildkrout, 1986).

Their accounts about why they decided not to re-marry revealed complex interconnection between a commitment to the welfare of their children, solidarity with their late husbands, assertion of agency and old-age social security plans. The following account by 40year old Hajara, who was widowed with five children, revealed her commitment to her children as a reason for not remarrying.

You know this our issue, to get married with somebody is a problem. You know, nobody will want to take care of your children so [Hisses], I only think of my children now, because these men of nowadays even though they marry you, they will maltreat your children...As far as they are looking for a wife, they will just come with their sweet...sweet mouth, sweet...sweet words to confuse you and immediately you marry them it's a problem to you. (Hajara)

Mary's account below, reveals an interconnection between a commitment to her motherly responsibilities to her children and solidarity with her late husband who was killed in the insurgency. She talked about the last telephone conversation she had with her late husband, just before his death. That conversation was her motivation to remain single to look after her children.

...he is [was] telling me that ... "I want you... to exercise patience. I know, I am not going [coming] back... If I reach that place I am not going back because many people are going that village and they are not coming back. Please and please, I beg, if I lose my life, I couldn't tell you say you can't marry, you will marry, but please hold my children. Tell the person, as I have already finish building my house ... beg him well...well... that my husband tell me that if he is not around...if he dead...I should not leave him [his] children. If he want [to] marry me, [that he should] just help me and leave me with my children in my husband house. And if the husband like to join to...to...sit [live] with me, just let him enter the house, just let him gather...let him control the house as his own house". (Mary)

The above account adds evidence to the family centeredness (Chilisa, 2012; Chilisa & Ntseane, 2010; Collins, 2000; Dillard, 2008; Hudson-Weems, 1995, 2000; Karenga & Tembo, 2012; Mekgwe, 2008) of the women in this study. For Mary, that family included the living and the dead, as well as the living and non-living things that mattered to the dead (Chilisa, 2012; Chilisa & Ntseane, 2010), that is; her husband's children and his house. Customarily, children belong to men (Schildkrout, 1986) and men attach a high level of importance to the continuation of their names through their children. However, they often depend on the women for such continuity. Therefore, remarriage which could lead to neglect of the 'man's children' could be perceived as an act of disloyalty or betrayal of their deceased husband. Such disloyalty or betrayal could be costly in a social sense especially in terms of property inheritance. Although some families tend to dispossess widows of their husbands' property, even if they do not remarry (Akujobi, 2009), it is often the case that the women's children would fight for their father's property when they grow to maturity especially when they are men, and become financially successful. At such time, the children are very likely to have the support of more distant relatives and the wider community. However, the chances of raising children who will have the capacity (in terms of influence and money) to reclaim their inheritance tends to reduce if a woman remarries, especially when the children are neglected and abused in the new marriage. Providing support for one's children is also seen as an important guarantee for an entitlement to their support in old age.

Another way of interpreting the women's decision to remain single is that it might be connected to the quality of relationships they had with their deceased husbands or their previous experiences with non-supportive husbands. It has also been reported that widows prefer the companionship of their children over remarriage because they believe their children to be more loving than men (Schildkrout, 1986; Spronk, 2005). Further discussions with some of the widows also revealed that remaining single was a way of demonstrating their agency, as widowhood presents an avenue for women to exercise their power of freedom and choice. Some of the widows reported that widowhood created opportunities for personal growth and development through independent decision making and greater engagement in income generating activities. One of the widows talked of the lessons she had learnt and the ways she had improved

in her personal life, including her spirituality and relationship with God, as a result of widowhood.

Honestly I learnt so many things. Because I have learnt how to live alone. Before now I cannot stay alone but I have learnt how to stay alone. Also now, [with emphasis] I don't want anything concerning the word of God to pass me by. This is the biggest one...I will turn this way and turn that way [I am independent]... I am used to it now. I have gotten used to drawing my children towards the word of God and teaching them... [With emphasis] Before, since it was two of us [my late husband and I], he will just say, "You people should sit down" [with emphasis] me and my children. And he will say "you people should not do this..., you people should not do that". But now it is I that is teaching them ...it is I that use to tell them "don't do this, don't do that" ... I have even learned how to do business because before I could not make this tofu...I could not do business. But now I can do some of those things. Honestly I have learnt... (Liatu)

Schildkrout (1986) suggests that widowhood is often a medium for social and economic liberation for women, especially among the secluded Hausa Muslims, as widows tend to regain the freedom to engage in economic activities outside the home. While widows tend to bear heavier financial responsibilities than married women, they are often more economically successful than married women in the same age group (Schildkrout, 1986).

In order to cope and make sense of the hardships associated with their widowhood and single status in displacement, the women in this study created idealized images of perfect pasts with perfect husbands who could never be replaced by other men. Gigime narrated how she almost went into a physical fight with a man who she felt was berating her and her late husband by showing off his money as an inducement for her to accept a marriage proposal.

The man say... "you don't have husband, I don't have wife, what is bad deal ... for me to marry you". I say ... "nothing, please I don't want you. I don't want to marry you please". He say, I no thank God... he have money [I should even thank God that he wants to

marry me, because he has money]. *I say “hold your money! I don’t want your money!” This man just hiss at me...Haa! [Giggles] That day! That day!... if you see...the annoyance that come out... inside of me...[hisses] people rush [ed], they hold me ...I say, “you are not up to my husband! You are no up to my husband!” [you are inferior to my late husband] (Gigime)*

Another widow and mother of eight children said:

I’m not going to [marry]. I am not going to see...the person who will hold me [care for me] like my husband ... Because...the remainder men, they even want you to buy something and give them, [then] you [will] also encourage [provide for] your own children and find food for your children ...it doesn’t matter [there is no need]...I don’t know the person wey he go [that will] feed me... [Pause and soberly] like my husband [starts crying]. (Saadatu)

The tendency to exaggerate the good qualities of deceased husbands, idealize them, and construct them as superior to other men, even to the point of sanctification has been described by Lopata (1981). Sanctification of the deceased spouse and creating idealized images about them has also been reported to some degree among widowers (Bennett et al., 2013; Brimhall & Engblom-Deglmann, 2011). ‘Husband sanctification’ for the women in this study is a historically and culturally mediated enterprise that is ultimately purposeful and goal directed. It can be utilized to a lesser or greater degree by widows in a variety of contexts, provided it serves the specific needs of the widow, be it psycho-social or economic. For the widows in this study, ‘husband sanctification’ helped them to justify their choices to remain unmarried (Bennett et al., 2013; Lopata, 1981) and they used it to cope with feelings of uncertainty about getting involved in new relationships (Bennett et al., 2013) while taking advantage of other socio-cultural benefits of remaining unmarried.

Another factor that may have influenced the use of ‘husband sanctification’ to justify their singlehood could be the women’s age and marriagability within the Northern Nigerian culture. Nigerian men often prefer to marry younger women (Akujobi, 2009; Ntoimo & Isiugo-Abanihe, 2014; Schildkrout, 1986). While these widows could still marry, they stood a chance of being second, third or fourth wives, whose co-wives

might be much younger than themselves. In a culture where wives are expected to show deference to the senior wives, the women would be subordinate to women much younger than themselves. Living in a situation where they would show deference to younger women as senior wives could be humiliating to them.

Studies on widows in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa have largely focused on their vulnerability (Akujobi, 2009; Durojaye, 2013; Ezejiolor, 2011; Korang-Okrah & Haight, 2014; Nwogu, 2015; Oyenyim & Ayodeji, 2010) and destitution (Babafemi & Edoni, 2015). However, the findings of this study add voice to the assertion that there is no such thing as a typical African widow who suffers more than other women in Africa (Cattell, 2003).

Nevertheless, the widows in this study generally questioned the motives of men who came to seek their hands in marriage. Some of them believed that the men merely used marriage proposals as openings to have sexual relationships with them.

It is not easy ooo because, unless, you hold your integrity, if not, you will fall into temptation because, you will see that always the male are rushing to meet you. They want to have relationship with you. Eheen, some...some... want to marry you, some they just came for their own... That is one of the suffering that we are suffering...Some may come in form that they want to marry you ...they come with their different motive. (Hajara)

Although widows felt particularly pressured with phony marriage proposals, such pressures were not unique to them. Other women, single and married, also reported similar encounters with men. One 23 year old woman narrated how she was constantly pressurized by a humanitarian worker who was exploiting the vulnerability of other IDW to engage in sexual relationships with them.

I was staying with him, and he used that opportunity. [He said] that since I am in his house and I am a hard working person, he is going to marry me. I said no. It doesn't mean that I am here for crisis, then you took that advantage for yourself. I refuse... he try...try...try I refuse... He said "you are not even grateful that you want to marry a man like me? I said I will take you to school, why didn't you

[agree]” ... I said... “what you are doing to us is not right... why are you doing this?... We did not slept together [have sex] but what you ask me to do is beyond sleeping [sex]” (Maryam)

Using marriage proposals as a means of obtaining sex is understandable because it is the norm for sex to occur only in marriage, especially for women (Ojua et al., 2014; Omadjohwoefe, 2011), and some men also expect women to freely engage in sex with them once there is a serious marriage proposal. However, the participants in this study believed that they would have had less of those pressures if they were not displaced and poor. A twenty-five year old woman said:

Some, they use the advantage, because you are a refugee, they will use the advantage to use you. They will say, “this girl does not have anything [is poor], if I go, she will agree”. So what we do we try to keep ourselves, because if you will say you will tolerate them, you will end up getting pregnant and nobody will help you (Laraba)

Another married participant who lived with her husband in displacement narrated her experience with a man who wanted to take advantage of her poverty to engage her in extra-marital affairs and how she invoked Holy Ghost fire to consume the man. To her, engaging in such a behavior would be paramount to aligning with the man to dishonor her husband because he was poor.

One man come meet me say...hin go [he will] give me money, five hundred (about NZD 2), make I [so that I will] enter motor... hin go put me inside motor carry me... go another one place hin go go [and] sleep with me... Hin tell me say hin go give me, this kind house [points to a nearby one storey building], upstairs. Hin go open business place for me, because hin see my husband no get anything [just because he saw that my husband is poor]. I tell am say “God forbid bad thing. The time wey I dey for village, my husband get work. Hin dey do business... every problem ...I get hin dey solve for me but now as we enter condition, my husband no get work, me I no

*get money you come tell me say you wan come sleep with me". I tell
am say, "Holy Ghost fire³⁰! I no go go". (Benedict)*

While discussing her resolve never to engage in sexual relationships with men for the sake of getting money, one of the widows narrated how other displaced widows engaged in prostitution and survival sex.

*Let me tell you, most of our women... they are doing something wey
suppose not to do [something they are not supposed to do], but
because they don't have [they are poor]. But me, I make up my mind
I will not do it. I will not follow any man, and I will not! I say... my
God will feed me...I stand in that covenant. No man will climb on top
of me because of money. I tell my children, I say ... I will not become
hailot [a harlot] because of money to feed you people, and I will not
steal but any work that I will use my strength to do, I will do it.
So...most of our women...these our widows.... About four to five of
them. They can't do this kenkere [concrete] work³¹. That is why they
force theirself to do it [sex work]. But me, I thank God I have my
power...to do the work. [Gigime]*

The relationship between lower socio-economic status and sexual relationships, especially in Africa is well documented in literature (Barnett, Maticka-Tyndale, & the HP4RY Team1, Baba-Djara et al., 2013; 2011; Stoebenau, Heise, Wamoyi, & Bobrova, 2016), showing that women with economic difficulties are more likely to engage in sexual relationships as a form of income generation. Similarly, in this study, poverty was a major factor in shaping participants' experiences of being pressurized for sexual relationships, either directly or under the guise of a marriage proposal.

Gigime's account above however is an enactment of how she intends to triumph over the ordeal of displacement without sacrificing her family, culture or her character (Hudson-Weems, 1995). Her account was also a way of distancing herself from what is considered socially and culturally unacceptable behavior for women, as it reflects a

³⁰ Holy Ghost fire is a common expression used in Pentecostal Christianity. This is based on the Christian belief that God is a Spirit, as well as a consuming fire. Using the expression is a way of invoking fire from God to consume an oppressor or an enemy.

³¹ Concrete work is working as a labourer in a construction site. The major work is to assist the builders in carrying mixed concrete.

general cultural belief about women who get involved in sex work in Nigeria. Irrespective of poverty, displacement and the challenge of widowhood, women who engage in sex work are believed to be lacking in both moral and physical strength, and as such, are living contrary to normative social expectations of sexual morality and hard work (Amadiume, 2015; Ojua et al., 2014; Omadjohwoefe, 2011; Usman, 2010). Such cultural prescriptions of sexual morality shaped the way the women interpreted their experiences of sexual violence and those of their daughters. It also shaped the ways the younger women interpreted their vulnerabilities and engagement in transactional sex. In the next section I discuss the women's interpretation of their sexual violence experiences in displacement. The section focuses on rape, sexual violence that occurred outside committed relationships, and transactional sex.

6.5 God forbid! I cannot do that kind of thing: Participants' interpretations of sexual experiences

It is important to clarify at this point that the concept of sexual violence was relatively strange to most of the participants in this study. During the interviews, it was common for the participants to become very defensive, each time the issue of sexual violence was raised. They tended to interpret and discuss sexual violence in terms of sexual morality or sexual behavior. The following data excerpt is an example of how many of the participants responded as soon as the issue of sexual violence was raised.

Interviewer: I have heard that sometimes, if women find themselves in this kind of condition that some men will use the opportunity to want to have sex with them anyhow, to sleep with them... or even rape them. How has it been with you?

Esther: No ooo! God forbid! I can't do that kind one. If I no get I go, go beg I no... I go go help you eveni wash your... pikin shit. I go go wash am and do kind work make I get my own... what they say na my sweat. But to do kind that kind thing... I can't fit [hisses]ma. [No ooo! God forbid! I cannot do that kind of thing. If I don't have money, I will go and beg. I will go and help you wash your baby's poo. I will wash it, and do any kind of work to get my own. Anything

that can be said that it is my sweat. But that kind of thing, I cannot do
madam]

While these responses appeared to be mostly defensive, geared towards proving their non-involvement in any form of “immoral sex”, especially transactional sex, they also revealed their sense of personal responsibility over their sexuality. Involvement in any form of sexual encounter, irrespective of the circumstances surrounding the sexual acts, was mostly a question of what they did, rather than what was done to them. Such defensiveness and internalization is a reflection of the restrictiveness of their sexual socialization (Ayodele, 2016; Meinck et al., 2015). Even though a number of participants in this study presented accounts that I interpreted as sexual violence, only a few of those cases were interpreted as sexual violence by the participants. Sexual violence was reserved for instances of rape or attempted rape, and such cases were mostly reported among the participants that resided in host communities and the informal camp settings.

During one of the focus group discussions the women reported how the initial period of their settlement in an informal camp was marked by a high level of insecurity. They reported several incidents of gang rapes by criminals and drug addicts, popularly referred to as “area boys”, who lived close to the camps.

We suffer well, well. And you, woman, you don't have right, like six o'clock to comot here to go down the [street]. Who give you that right? Na so them go catch you... go enter bush... [Claps hands]. Na area boys... all these place, it's just people that they are taking [drugs]... they are drinking...they are joking [swearing and cursing]... there... they full here [snaps fingers and raises voice] Even presently now, they are here. (Mary)

Participants described the ill-treatment some women received from the men who raped them, even though none of them disclosed any personal experience of rape by the “area boys”. Three participants were trying to talk over one another as they explained how the women were raped. The following data excerpt captures the discussions:

See that time if you wan go shit [if you want to go to the toilet], if you go inside bush they go [will] catch and force you [rape you]... And

force you... by force! If you wan run, they go hold you. If you go [will] cry, they go put your mouth with ee.... [crosstalk] with wrapper... and put inside your mouth and you no go cry... and somebody go hold ee... your hand... hold eee your leg and fuck you by force [They will force a piece of cloth into your mouth and some of them will restrain your hands and legs, and they will rape you].

(Salome)

Other participants added that the rapists also forced pieces of bread into their victims' mouths in order to prevent them from shouting. Benedict said:

They go catch you, fuck you...Hold you ... tight you... [Crosstalk] They go carry bread put for your mouth and carry bread put for your mouth... [They will force bread into your mouth] (Benedict)

Mary added that the rapists would tell them to eat the bread:

[Crosstalk] "Begin chop am! Chop the bread! [The rapists will say, start eating it! Eat the bread!]" (Mary)

Such detailed accounts of the rape events suggested that someone very close to the women or even some of them may have had the experience, but most importantly, they seemed intentionally tailored towards convincing me that there was nothing the victims could have done to prevent the rapes. Hence they were careful to include facts that showed that the victims were often held down and overpowered by many people, who also prevented them from shouting. A similar scenario, suggestive of victim helplessness, was also created by another participant, who reported that she was raped by two strangers on her way to her friend's house:

As for me ...I was going to my friend place...Because she called me that she is not feeling fine...and it's already dark. So when I'm going, I pass this GJ [an area in her neighborhood], that place is very dangerous as people was saying it. And I don't know the place. That's my first time here... So I was going to her place, I saw two guys like that... they are standing. So they... they say I should wait, I now say, "what happened?", because I don't know them. [they said] I should give them my phone...because they hold some objects, sharp

objects, so that they will not injure me, I carry the phone and give them. They collected my phone, they beat me up, so, they now slept... they now raped me. (Cecilia)

In addition to establishing her helplessness in facing her molesters, the above account also reveals the participant's effort to justify going out that evening and the path she followed. She attempted to account for everything she could have done to prevent the rape. It is known that most sexual violence victims do not report their experiences, delay reporting or become critical or selective of who to disclose their experience to, for fear of victim blaming or secondary victimization; stigmatization, ostracism; or other negative reactions (Ahrens, 2006; Ajuwon & Adegbite, 2008; Masterson, Usta, Gupta, & Ettinger, 2014; Onyejekwe, 2008; Steiner et al., 2009). However, these participants' accounts suggest that such social factors may also have significant influence on how victims construct their victimization accounts and tell their stories. The combined influence of Islamic, Christian and local indigenous cultural norms about women's sexuality, as well as rape myths, which may demand proof that a woman's claim of sexual violence is not actually an act of adultery or fornication (Adameczyk & Hayes, 2012; Akintunde & Ayantayo, 2008; Azam, 2013; Barnett, Sligar, & Wang, 2016; Franiuk & Shain, 2011), often create avenues for victim blaming and sometimes punishment. Therefore, even though the women were not facing any judgement, they intentionally emphasized their helplessness when facing sexual violence. They enacted as it were, socially acceptable norms and religio-cultural conditions under which claims of rape would be considered as legitimate. Thus, rather than discuss sexual violence as crimes perpetrated against themselves, they took a defensive stance and tried to prove their innocence.

Three of the study participants fell pregnant in displacement and were single mothers because the men that impregnated them denied responsibility for their pregnancies. This is a common experience of teenage mothers in most parts of Nigeria (Micah, Joy, Chris, & Halimat, 2013). One of the participants was reluctant to provide details about the circumstances surrounding her pregnancy but she reported that she was impregnated and abandoned by a soldier in a previous host community where she lived with her family. The other two, who were siblings, reported that they were impregnated by their boyfriends who later abandoned them and the babies. The following excerpt shows the younger sister's account of the circumstances surrounding her pregnancy.

He invited me as in... to a club like this...with my friend, we went there. I don't know what he put in the drink, so I was drunk that day, so he took me to his house, in the morning when I wake up, I just see myself in his house... that is what happened...When I wake up I did not see him inside the room. I saw myself naked inside the room, I wake up I did not see him... (Ruth)

Ruth's elder sister, Martina, gave a similar account about how she fell pregnant, even though their pregnancies occurred three years apart.

I ask him for money of junior WAEC³². He told me that tou, I should come to his house, so that he will give me the money. After I came to his house, he give me water. I drink that water, from there, I don't know myself again. I don't know what happened, but I know I was in his house. After that, I wake up, I see myself naked. I say "what happened?" He told me... "but I has told him that I need money ba [right?]" I say yes... He say that daama [even], "if I want to give you money, you will give me yourself". I say I don't use to do something like that... I say tou, now you have already do your worse, then give me the money.... He told me I should [with emphasis] wear my cloth and go back to my house. That's what happened. He didn't give me the money till I left. After one month, I know that I'm pregnant.

(Martina)

The sisters attempted to portray their innocence by emphasizing that they were drugged by their boyfriends before the sexual intercourse which led to the pregnancies, and that they never had any intention of engaging in sex with the men. They did not label the incidents as sexual violence. Instead, they described the sexual encounters and the ensuing pregnancies as 'mistakes' on their part which they did not intend to repeat. Martina reported that she could not explain why she entered the relationship in the first place.

³² WAEC stands for West African Examination Council but the expression junior WAEC is often used to represent the Junior Secondary Certificate examination, often taken at Junior Secondary School, class 3 or 9th grade. The exam is organized by WAEC.

One guy inside of pack, told me that he want me to be his friend. I say no, I'm not interested. From there I don't know what came into my mind, I change my mind, then we are into a friend with him, from that we have sex, I was pregnant. He told me that he is not responsible for the baby. (Martina)

Whether or not the participants were drugged before the sexual encounters, their stories reflect a complicated process of accepting and rejecting the normative cultural script on premarital sexuality (Simon, 2017). The cultural script places the responsibility for any premarital sexual encounter on a woman (Akintunde & Ayantayo, 2008; Ojua et al., 2014; Omadjohwoefe, 2011; Salami & Ayegboyin, 2015). This provides an explanation as to why they accepted the sexual events as 'mistakes', but at the same time distanced themselves from that responsibility by emphasizing their confusion and the effect of the drugs. Such simultaneous acceptance and rejection of the cultural scripts could be a form of identity management (Goffman, 1990) as they dealt with a highly stigmatizing situation like teenage pregnancy.

The siblings' mother, who also participated in the study, presented a different version of the circumstances that led to her daughters' pregnancies. The following data excerpt is her own version of Martina's story

[Martina] *She win...as they go for competition ... in Abuja. ...She come first for maths [mathematics] then they give her scholarship... Tou she don near to write her final exam [she was about writing her final exam]... One Ibo boy...This boy come dey follow [was dating] my daughter. From there now, as they come go for the... interview [competition] in Abuja again. He follow [he followed her], I don't know, he come follow her, book hotel for her, as they meet [had intercourse], shikenen! [That was it]. She just take in [got pregnant]... that is the boy [points to the daughter's child]. She deliver him. Tou, now he wan [wants to] marry her, but she, ... she say she ... must finish her school before. Even yesterday...the parents of the boy, they come here, they come greet the boy [their grandchild]. They come dey tell us say they no get the money oo, make we be patient.... They remove 200 [Two hundred naira], they give the boy. [Gigime]*

First, Gigime presented her daughter as one who was smart enough to win a scholarship suggesting that after all, she was not worthless. Although she also labelled the incident as a ‘mistake’, she did not allude to the narrative of date rape. She believed that the pregnancy of her two daughters occurred as the aftermath of their engagement in poverty-driven transactional sex. However, she took responsibility for her daughters’ pregnancies, while indirectly shifting the blame on the economic situation of the family.

I can't blame them... I can't blame them. Because, e get the time wey, I sidown I think think think [There was a time I was very worried]... Tou, I call my children, I sit them down. I say “why are you people doing me this?” [why are you people doing this to me?]. They say mama they will tell me the truth, the food that we are cooking here, no be the food wey they dey eat, the time wey their father dey alive... Now wey their father no dey, [the food we are cooking in this house is not the type they ate when their father was alive and now that their father is not alive] I don't have to give them what... they need... If I blame them, I blame myself! ... I blame myself, I don't have! If I have I will give them! If I have, I will give them, if I have! It's what I have I will give them, if I don't have, I don't have! (Gigime)

Similar to what Collins (2000) reported about black mothers in the US, Gigime saw her daughters’ pregnancies as a disappointment. She also internalized her daughters’ failures and presented them as a personal failure. In Nigeria, parents, especially mothers, often share in the shame and stigmatization associated with their daughters’ out-of-wedlock pregnancies (Micah et al., 2013). Sometimes, the fathers and other members of the community blame the mothers, labelling them as failed mothers who could not raise their daughters well, or they accuse them of modelling immorality for their daughters. Such mother-blaming could explain why Gigime simultaneously accepted the blame for her daughter’s pregnancies and also shifted the blame to her economic conditions.

However, a combination of assuming responsibility for the daughters’ pregnancies and presenting them as worthwhile individuals was her effort to minimize the stigma on her daughters. Their pregnancies had truncated their education and had resulted in them

being cast as sexually immoral women. Casting women as sexually immoral could reduce their marriageability in future (Akintunde & Ayantayo, 2008; Ojua et al., 2014; Omadjohwoefe, 2011; Weimann, 2009). Hence by emphasizing their intelligence, Gigime attempted to create conditions that would, at least, improve their chances of getting sponsors to further their education which may in turn help her to realize her initial dreams for them. As part of her effort to reduce stigma on her daughters she presented accounts that suggest that the men who impregnated them had been planning to come and marry them officially, but that they had been hindered by their lower economic status. In so doing, she presented her daughters as still marriageable, despite their mistakes. However, her account about the marriage plans contradicted those of her daughters who denied ever having anything to do with the men after their pregnancies.

Such daughter-protective stance was commonly displayed by most of the older women in this study, especially mothers who had their grown-up daughters in camp. In the older women's focus group discussions and interviews, the participants were often quick to talk about how well-behaved and cooperative their daughters had been in displacement, and how they had put everything in place to protect them from sexual violence or any form of sexual immorality. However, there were contradictory accounts about the conduct and protection of girls between women who had grown-up daughters and those who did not, and between older women and younger women in the study. For example, in the following data excerpt, one focus group participant narrated how protective they had been of their young women and girls, in the context of several gang-rapes that had occurred in their camps:

We are staying here with them [our daughters], we don't allow them to be moving about. They do not go out at night and we don't send them on errands. We are the ones that go on errands. (Zuriya)

However, another woman in the same group, who had no grown-up daughters said:

So some our girl... here, they don grow [they have grown]...eighteen years, reach nineteen years. All of them they din [didn't] finish secondary school. They like... move, [they move about], they [are] careless. They Just dey sidown for house, dey tie this thing..., groundnut.... Everything they sell am... for head... they go carry am dey go sell for head [They don't go to school. They are just hawking

peanuts on the streets]. *They supposed to go school, no money. They [their] life come careless [they are living carelessly]. They no get money to go school, so their life come dey careless, they dey follow men*³³ [they are following men] (Benedict)

Besides attempts to avoid the social stigma of being labelled as failed mothers, the women may have also taken the daughter-protective stance in order to mask their own roles as accomplices in the younger women's sexual behaviors. Some of the younger participants presented accounts that suggested that sometimes, older family members directly or indirectly encouraged or supported young women's involvement in transactional sex. For example, one 18 year old participant said:

If some girls didn't hold their selves, the girls that need money, ... men will now come and gave them money and say, "if you sleep with me I will gave you some...money, one thousand, two thousand" they will now follow them...That is what brought problem in this camp [that is the problem we have in this camp]... many mens are spoiling girls. Girls that are thirteen, fourteen years. And there is girls that they use to live with their uncle [and] sisters here, and their sisters don't use to care with [care for or about] them ...all these sisters and their uncle...they [also] need money. If the girl brought money to them, they will not ever ask the girl, "Where do you get this money?" ... They will just collect. (Basira)

Contrary to older women's rhetoric about protection of younger women in camps, and other displacement settings, the accounts of the younger women often revealed their personal vulnerabilities to sexual violence, especially transactional sex. Most of them talked about the persistent pressures they faced from their boyfriends to give sex for money, food or other items. In the data excerpt below, a 25 year old focus group participant recounted her experience with men:

When you demand for anything, they [the men] will tell you that you must sleep with them before they will assist you, if not, they will not assist you. So it's not easy at all. When you have one, to assist you is

³³ Following men as used in this account implies promiscuity

a problem. When you demand of something, he will not give you [giggles] he will tell you that, “give me, I give you”. If you didn’t give him he will not give you... if you are not doing anything [If you have no source of income], you have to go and do what he told you to do with him. But if you have something good doing, you will not do it.

(Abigail)

Although transactional sex is a common occurrence in displacement settings (Henttonen et al., 2008; Maclin, Kelly, Kabanga, & VanRooyen, 2015; Okigbo, McCarraher, Chen, & Pack, 2014) exchanging gifts, be it money or other items for sex, in romantic relationships is a common practice among young people in most parts of Nigeria. Barnett et al. (2011) reports that poverty is an important motivational factor for such exchanges among girls and that such exchange often aligns with the accepted cultural script for premarital sexuality which positions sex as a sacred and expensive commodity, which must not be given for free. Such exchange was not totally new to the young women in this study, but what they contested was the manner in which the demand for sex was made by the men. In the following data excerpts, the young women discuss how exchanges occurred in boyfriend-girlfriend relationships in Northeast Nigeria:

[There] you can tell [a guy your problem] and he can assist you... some guys can even further your education...They can...They can even assist your parents and everybody in your house will know that this is the guy you are going out with. But here it’s different.

(Abigail)

Laraba said:

And for there, when a guy is dating you there, your cream, your make up, your everything, he will provide for you...may be every month, when he collect his salary, he will come and give. Things that you cannot ask your parents, he will come and give you. But here if you ask, it’s a different thing they will ask, before they provide it for you

(Laraba)

Through these narratives, the younger women in this study, similar to the older women, idealized provider masculinities. As Bhana and Pattman (2011) point out, love and romantic relationship is intermingled with money and materiality in such a way that reproduces men's privileged positions and gender inequality. Sometimes women's demand for money or gifts from men is interpreted as demand for sex, especially when there is no commitment in the relationship (Barnett et al., 2011). A cursory read of these accounts suggests that the men gave their money to the women, while the women gave nothing in return. But further probing of the participants revealed that such gifting assures the women of the men's commitment to a long term relationship/marriage, as marriage is often the end-goal for the young women, making them willing to give sex in return. Martina said:

*Ma, you will see that kind guys ba? [Right?]... [Guys that are]
Helping your family and trying to help you,... Just put your mind that
side [be rest assured]... just relax that this guy is your husband.
(Martina)*

Explicit demand for sex in exchange for money, food, or other favors was attributed to prostitution, a stigmatized occupation that most women would like to distance themselves from. Hence while they may eventually give sex in exchange for money and gifts, the notion that gifts were to be received as direct exchange for sex and nothing more was repulsive to the women. After studying the various ways that young women negotiated sexual and romantic relationships in Nairobi, Spronk (2005) reports that young women's resistance to sexual advances is not necessarily an expression of aversion for pre-marital sex but an indirect demand for a more committed relationship and that they often play hard to get in order to gain sexual prestige and respect among men. She also notes that exchange of gifts between young men and women in relationships are often symbolic expressions of appreciation of the relationship, not necessarily a form of reciprocity. While sex is not always given for free, there are subtle and culturally acceptable manners of demanding an exchange, which differentiates it from overt transactional sex and prostitution. The manner of exchange as expressed by the participants in this study, mostly reflects gender prescriptions which casts men as breadwinners who need sex, and as such the giver of money and other gifts in order to obtain sex, while women asserted their agency and control over

their sexuality by delaying sex and giving it when they deemed it emotionally and socio-culturally 'safe' to do so.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter revealed the complexities of gender relations between the women in this study and their men. In-depth analysis of the women's experiences shows that the gender inequality they experienced in their relationships was part of a cycle of gender inequality, gender-based violence and widespread structural violence which has a very long history in their families and communities, and reinforced by structural violence and social inequities in Nigeria. As a result, the problem of gender inequality and discrimination cannot be sufficiently addressed if the focus is on women's relationship with their husbands or other intimate partners. Central to the problem of gender inequality is the problem of poverty (Sotunsa, 2009) which both produces and reproduces gender inequality and different forms of violence against women.

BH insurgency, however, simultaneously deepened women's oppressions and created opportunities for women to either dominate or challenge men's dominant positions. Subverting men's dominant positions would have been possible since the women coped better with the insurgency, and eventually took over the men's roles as the breadwinners for their families. The women were, however, in solidarity with their men, both the living and the dead, in their struggle against BH, poverty and unemployment. The accounts of these women, including the roles they adopted from the beginning of the insurgency, re-echo Amadiume's (2015) assertion about some African communities, which, though possessing some characteristics of patriarchal societies, are actually matricentric or matrifocal. Yet the women in this study utilized their power as the central forces in their families in highly pragmatic ways, which acted to maintain the status quo in gender relations.

The women were not necessarily docile in their subordination to men. They were both agentic and calculative, knowing when to stand with their men and when to stand up to them (Hudson-Weems, 1995; Nnaemeka, 2004), while armed with the cultural scripts (Hudson-Weems, 1995; Karenga & Tembo, 2012) of ideal masculinities and womanhood. In addition, their subordination to men was seldom without long term goals. Chief among such goals was securing a better future for themselves either by

obtaining the family inheritance or raising children who would be capable of supporting them in old age. They also knew how to make the best of their widowhood experience as a period of freedom from subordination to men, independence and of self-discovery.

Overall, this chapter speaks to the family centeredness and commitment to motherhood (Acholonu, 1995; Chilisa, 2012; Chilisa & Ntseane, 2010; Collins, 2000; Hudson-Weems, 1995) as well as the cultural groundedness (Hudson-Weems, 1995; Karenga & Tembo, 2012) of the IDW in Nigeria. Their family centeredness and cultural groundedness was not only revealed in their relationships with their men and their children, but also in the ways they understood and interpreted sexual violence experiences. The prevailing culture which includes religion, shaped both their understandings and their narratives of their sexual violence experiences. It also shaped how the women as mothers, both managed and responded to issues regarding the sexuality of their daughters in ways that differed from the narratives of the younger women. In the next chapter, I will discuss further, how the women combined their groundedness in both the African indigenous cultures, including ATR, and Abrahamic religion to build an additional religious support base beside the mutual support they rendered to one another as members of the IDP community.

CHAPTER 7

WORSHIPPING AND 'USING' THE SUPERNATURAL

7.1 Introduction

In the previous two chapters, I discussed how IDW's groundedness in culture shaped their response to BH insurgency and problems of displacement; their response to unequal gender relations, as well as their understandings and interpretations of sexual violence experiences. This chapter expands the discussion on the complex interplay of the women's identity as practitioners of Abrahamic religions (Christianity and Islam) and their rootedness in the ATR/ indigenous cultural practices, and how this interplay shaped both their experiences and their response to BH attacks, displacement and displacement-induced problems. Identity has been defined as a range of physical and social characteristics and attributes, used by individuals and groups to express themselves or differentiate themselves from others (Fearon, 1999). Examples of identity markers include attributes such as gender, religion, ethnicity, and sexuality. Like other social constructs, identity is not fixed. It is fluid and contextual, and individuals often embody different identities which can be performed or enacted differently in different social contexts (Goffman, 1959).

First the chapter reveals the distinct roles religion played in shaping the women's experiences, the meanings they made of those experiences and the additional support systems they drew on to cope with the challenges of displacement. This discussion will include the various roles religious leaders played in providing support and guidance for the participants in this study. Then I highlight how the women's practice of the Abrahamic religions was influenced by their rootedness in the African culture and the influence of the ATR.

Earlier in this thesis, I presented an extensive literature review on religion among Nigerians, highlighting how Christianity, Islam and ATR/indigenous cultural practices often intermingle to shape the worldviews of the majority of Nigerians. Such literature and the tenets of Kawaida womanism as proposed by Karenga and Tembo (2012) will be used as analytical tools for this chapter. I focus specifically on the work of Karenga

and Tembo in interpreting the data in this chapter because, more than other womanist thinking, Karenga and Tembo's (2012) Kawaida womanism places emphasis on the intersections between culture and religion in Black women's consciousness and struggle for liberation. Their work described an intricate connection between the African culture, spirituality and ethics.

They argue that African women utilize knowledge and practices within their culture and religion, including the spiritual and ethical dimensions of their culture, for their personal emancipation, transformation and enrichment of themselves and the world around them (Karenga & Tembo, 2012). The definition of culture as used in this thesis has been provided in Chapter 3. As discussed, culture by Karenga's (2008) definition is expanded to include religion, socio-political and economic organization and creative production among other things (Karenga & Tembo, 2012)..

I also draw on Foucault's thought on power and governmentality (Dean, 2010; Foucault, 1982) to provide additional insight into how the women in this study performed their identities as religious subjects, as receiving support from religious leaders placed them in relationship with what Collins (2000) depicted as the disciplinary domain of power, specifically, pastoral power from Foucault's perspective.

The chapter begins with a discussion of how the women's religious identifications influenced both the nature of their experience and their initial response to BH insurgency. The influence of pastoral power at the beginning of the insurgency and prior to the women's flights, as revealed by the religious leaders' efforts to ensure the safety and 'spiritual fortification' of some of the women, are also discussed. I also discuss the ways the women, as independent religious subjects, drew on their personal faith and religiosity in dealing with the problems of displacement. The second section highlights the religious struggles the women experienced and how they negotiated with God and gods in order to address the challenges they encountered in displacement. I conclude the chapter by discussing how the women reconstructed their battered religious identities and forged a sense of belonging in religious organizations where they also negotiated pastoral power as self-governed religious subjects.

7.2 “It is only God”: Defining the source of power

7.2.1 Pastoral power versus personal power: The influence of indigenous cultures

Drawing ideas from the pre-reformation Roman Catholic religious system, Foucault (1982) depicts the relationship between religious leaders and their parishioners as a disciplinary form of government which he termed pastoral power. Foucault (1982) described the pastoral technology of power as representative of a shepherd-fold relationship in which the priest acts as the guardian and guide to a flock of ‘the faithful’. He adds that such pastoral power rests on the triad of responsibility, obedience and knowledge, and that mortification is its goal. Thus, while the priest/shepherd will be responsible for the ‘sins and merits’ of each and every member of his flock, the flock must reciprocate by being obedient and dependent on the shepherd. The flock must also ensure that the shepherd has a complete knowledge of them as individuals and a group, including knowledge of their private sins and trespasses. Like other disciplinary forms of power, pastoral power is never coercive (Foucault, 1982), but is aimed at producing particular forms of religious subjects, who act in accordance to the rationalities of the pastoral power. Because of its non-coercive nature, it is also capable of producing a wide range of responses from the subjects, some of which might be contrary to its expected outcomes. Hence within the relations of pastoral power, the subjects have the capacity to act in ways that either subvert or counteract pastoral power.

The participants in this study identified as Christian and Muslim women. Their religious identification played a role in their initial response to BH attacks on their surrounding communities, as well as the kind of support they received from their religious communities at the early stage of the insurgency. It was generally believed that Christians were the main targets of BH. Hence, Christian communities were mutually supportive, and were proactive in anticipation of imminent attacks. Pastors and other church leaders took charge of their congregations and were committed to playing their role, as ‘shepherds’ of their flock (Foucault, 1982). Such shepherding involved careful attention to different aspects of the women’s lives, but much of the attention was given to their spiritual lives. The pastors organized prayer and fasting programs for their communities. Esther’s account below reveals the prominence of fasting and prayer in their preparation for the attacks.

We start praying, fasting and praying, fasting and praying... after that, we hear the thing dey come near us like this [we heard of the approaching crisis]... we say “ahh! This thing [will] reach us oo” we start dey pray and fasting. From their ... they enter Chibok, kidnap all these girls...we start fasting and praying... fasting for two weeks, we did not go anywhere, we [were just] in the house. Dey pray, dey fast, dey pray. (Esther)

Religious traditions provide both discourses, through which people can articulate their everyday experiences, and embodied practices and performances such as prayer and fasting, which shape everyday life experiences (Tavory & Winchester, 2012). Religious performances tend to influence the thoughts, feelings, and modes of attention of the performers (Tavory & Winchester, 2012). In Christianity, especially among recent revivalist groups which have become very popular in most of Nigeria and West Africa (Adogame, 2010; Griswold, 2008; Janson, 2016; Larkin & Meyer, 2006), these practices are framed as powerful weapons used to fight spiritual battles. Such spiritual weapons are necessary because real life challenges are religiously imagined as visible or tangible manifestations of invisible or supernatural operations (Währisch-Oblau, 2009). The embodied practices of prayer and fasting are not just symbols of communication with a supernatural being, but are symbols of power (Roberts & Yamane, 2012) for the practitioners. In Christian, especially Pentecostal, movements, expressions such as prayer warfare, prayer warriors and prayer militants are often used to depict a prayer-power motif (Marshall, 1993, 2010; McAlister, 2016).

Engaging church communities with prayer and fasting programs could be seen as religious leaders' way of shepherding the women through a process of self-denial for spiritual empowerment. The major expected outcome of such shepherding was to produce 'powerful' religious subjects, who would rather die than deny their faith in Jesus Christ. An eternal life of bliss, even after death, is taught as a reward for faithfulness and steadfastness in one's beliefs: accepting death instead of denying their faith, was thought to guarantee them a place in heaven. Part of the process of that shepherding was to lead the women to a conviction that they were powerless in and of themselves, and could do nothing without prayer. Hence prayer and fasting were offered as spiritual weapons without which they could not withstand the spiritual

‘warfare’ ahead, and the uncertainties of the times they lived in. Such processes and goals were echoed in the following narrative from one of the participants:

Without prayer [pause] you can do nothing. You can do nothing [I can recall, some children], as they are praying in the morning, the small child just ask the father and say “daddy this thing that is happening, what ... if these people come and meet us and they ask, are you going to deny Christ or you will stay with your Jesus, what are we going to tell them?” The father [said] “tell the person that I will not deny Christ... if they kill you, by the grace of God, you will make heaven”. And that very day, as these children go school, these Boko Haram people just enter their village and that is how they killed these children. I believe that they will make heaven. (Sansanatu)

In addition to organizing prayer and fasting programs, pastors also exercised their pastoral power and shepherd’s responsibilities by taking practical steps to ensure the safety of members of their church communities. Most of the participants who were Christians belonged to protestant and Pentecostal churches. Pentecostal church pastors tend to portray their authority as superior to all other human systems, and all human solutions to the problems created by those systems (Katsaura, 2017; Währisch-Oblau, 2009). Gigime recalled how a phone call from her pastor saved her from BH attack.

My pastor call me “mummy where are you?” I say am in the shop. He say “shop?” I say yes, my shop. He say “...Close that shop immediately! Close that shop and go house!” He say, “Boko haram, don enter [Boko Haram is in town]”. From my house to the shop is not far. I just close shop, I go inside... Small time, papapapapa!!! [Shortly after I got home Boko Haram started shooting]. (Gigime)

Pastoral power is often characterized by asymmetrical power relations and reciprocity (Foucault, 2007). However the cultural context within which the pastoral power operates can influence the nature of the power dynamics (Dean, 2010), as well as that of reciprocity. Gigime’s account reveals how culture mediates the asymmetrical power relations and reciprocity in pastoral power. Although the pastor was the authority figure to be obeyed, by addressing Gigime as ‘Mummy’, her pastor reciprocated the woman’s respect for him. In most of Africa, motherhood and seniority are acknowledged as

symbols of power (Chilisa & Ntseane, 2010; Collins, 2000; Hudson-Weems, 1995; Oyewumi, 2002). Reciprocity is also one of the seven cardinal virtues associated with Africans' spirituality and ethics (Karenga & Tembo, 2012). In most pentecostal and revival churches in Nigeria, the pastors are often referred to as 'fathers' or 'daddies' (Akanle & Adeogun, 2014; Währisch-Oblau, 2009), but it is not uncommon for the same pastors to address the older women in those churches or even younger women who are perceived as being worthy of respect, as 'mothers' or 'mummies'. As such, the honor, and respect is not always unidirectional. In line with Dean's argument, (Dean, 2010), while the pastors are revered as authority figures, they exercise their authority within the limits of their culture and the Protestant/Pentecostal religious philosophies.

It is important to note, that the Muslim women in this study did not report receiving any prayer or other similar support from their religious leaders. This may be because of an assumption of safety. BH, during the early stage of insurgency, did not attack Muslim women (see chapter five). As a result of the unprecedented attacks on Muslims, Muslim women often fled their homes unprepared, and finding supportive religious communities was more difficult for them. Rather than receive support, they were often the object of suspicion by BH, other non-BH Muslims and Christian communities. One Muslim participant narrated her experience as she fled through communities where she was not known:

I was looking for the way to go back to Ukpa, I couldn't see. I even tried and came up to Bazza, I came up to that place and Boko Haram came and met us, they said we should go back that we are coming to spy for the soldiers so that we will tell them whether they were on the road or not.... We started going back and wanted to go to Cameroon. On the way to Cameroon, we climbed the mountain... We climbed seven mountains... until we entered Cameroon. Even there, some people caught us in the mountains aunty. They said they will never believe us that they will kill us. They said we are wives to Boko Haram. We said to them that we do not have any relationship with Boko Haram...that we are also running for our lives... We later escaped. (Amina)

The strategic use of women as spies, suicide bombers or bait for male targets by BH (Maiangwa & Amao, 2015; Nnam, Arua, & Otu, 2018; Onuoha, 2015; Oriola, 2016; Zenn & Pearson, 2014) may have contributed to the Muslim women's experiences of public suspicion as they fled from their homes. BH members may have been distrustful of the women in Hijab because they had deployed women in Hijab for some of their attacks, while other members of the society who were aware of BH's strategy of using women in Hijab for attacks also did not trust the women. Hence the Muslim women who refused to align with BH were often in more precarious situations than Christian women. They could only find refuge in communities where they had previous contacts. However, despite the difficulties the Muslim women faced on every side, they also reported conducting themselves as religious subjects, choosing to suffer along with, and sometimes more than, Christians rather than support BH's agenda. This implies that even though they did not receive the same level of pastoral shepherding as the Christians at the onset of the insurgency, they had been groomed to become particular forms of Muslims prior to the attacks.

The complete dispersal of communities isolated all the women, Christians and Muslims alike, from their primary religious communities. Pastors and other religious leaders alongside other affected individuals fled their communities in different directions and some of the religious leaders were even killed. As a result, the women were all left to perform their religious identities as self-governed religious subjects. Thus their personal faith and religiosity replaced collective religiosity as a resource for support and a system of values and meanings, as they dealt with the problem of displacement. In their narratives, the women talked about God /Allah as a personality that is both immanent and transcendent, a personality from whom they could directly access and receive guidance, protection and other resources. They also evoked their identities as religiously and spiritually grounded beings (Karenga & Tembo, 2012) who could harness spiritual resources for their benefit. Expressions such as "it is just God", "God protected us", "God covered us, God is covering our secrets", "it is only by the grace of God" were commonly used to depict God/Allah, as a being, who was intimately connected with them in all their experiences.

However, it was evident that the women's identifications with Christianity or Islam as their primary religion, influenced the way they presented themselves as religious subjects. While the Muslim women also narrated their experiences with respect to what

Allah did, none of them gave a detailed narrative of a personal encounter, or what they were able to accomplish with their personal ‘religious powers’. The following data excerpt is an example of how most Muslim women framed their accounts to reflect their relationship with Allah. Sa’a, a Muslim widow with eight children said:

I am going to say I am thanking of God because God save my life and some of my children. He is the one that He is giving me food, every day, every time, because I didn’t have the person that [is] going to take care of the remaining children, only God. (Sa’ a)

On the other hand, some Christian women included narratives of how they deployed their ‘personal religious power’ at different stages of the insurgency. They told stories about how prayer provided them with protection and enabled their miraculous escape from BH. In the next data excerpt, Saratu talks about her encounter with a snake in a cave as BH was pursuing her.

Boko Haram pursue me and I enter a cave. My classmate was one of them. He called my name, he know my name he said, “come out, I see you, if not I will shoot the gun inside and you will die inside”. I’m not talking, I just sit. As I sit down...I see one snake...big snake! We just sit down with the snake. I just put my leg like this and snake come pass [crawled over] my leg like this [demonstrates how snake crawled over her leg] and he [it] didn’t do anything like...ee... the snake like he like a human being [as if the snake is a human being]. E come sit down, I sit face to face with snake. I prayed and say God, if I will die let this snake bite me instead of Boko Haram to come and kill me with gun... They shoot gun inside, it didn’t touch me and the snake did not bite me. They say [said], “she has already die. Let us go, and leave her”. (Saratu)

Another participant narrated how, in answer to prayer, God hid her from Boko Haram’s view, even though she was standing at the door, right in front of the insurgents when they invaded their house.

We were on fasting and prayers, then they [Boko Haram] now came. If you see them, they come in [with emphasis] multitude! Ahhh! They

came and entered into our house. I was watching them. I was just standing like that...like this ... at the door side. They enter [entered] they do [did] everything that they want. They came out... they didn't even see me. I was in the house. I was just standing like that...I was watching them. They search all our rooms. Everywhere, they search [They searched everywhere]. I [was] praying...praying...praying...praying. After praying... they left the place. They enter to the other house, that's my brother's house. They search there, search there, they say "Ahhh! They have gone ooo, if not, we would have slaughtered them". (Maryam)

Saratu also reported how her sister who was abducted by Boko Haram prayed and God answered her prayer and she was able to open a locked door with a single stick taken from a bunch of broom before escaping from the room in which they locked her.

And they [Boko Haram] locked her inside a room. And she just take ... broom. One of the broom, and she say "in the name of Jesus, make this thing open now [In the name of Jesus let this door open now]. Big ee...padlock! One stick of broom like this. E say God make you open this thing for me. She just it and so it like this... like key and the thing come open [She just used the broom stick as if it was a key, and the thing opened]. She say thank God. (Saratu)

Parsitau (2011) and Naidu (2016) reported similar dependence on personal faith and religiosity for coping and survival among displaced persons in Kenya and Zimbabwe but neither of them reported narratives of miraculous/supernatural encounters. It is very likely that the women's religious affiliations as mostly evangelical Protestant or Pentecostal Christian, as well as that the religious undertone of the insurgency had influenced how they deployed religious practices and their narratives about their personal faith and encounter with God or the supernatural. Cohen and Hill (2007) theorized that Protestant Christians are more likely to be individualistic in their approach to God and religiosity than Catholics and Jews. The prevailing religious revivalism in Nigeria and most of Africa also emphasizes personal relationships with God, and the laity's capacity to appropriate the power of the supernatural (Adogame, 2010; Griswold, 2008; Larkin, 2016; Marshall, 1993; Meagher, 2009).

While being African may have explained their inclination towards religion as a resource (Karenga & Tembo, 2012), it was their Abrahamic religious affiliation that shaped the particular ways they deployed the resource and performed their identities as religious subjects. Even though religious leaders are often believed to hold extraordinary powers that might not always be accessible to the laity (Katsaura, 2017), protestant Christians believe that other believers can have direct access to God in time of need. Hence for the Christians, the attacks and displacement constituted a site for them to exercise the powers they ‘tapped’ from their religious leaders as well as a site for personal religiosity testing. It created an occasion for most of the women to independently live their religion (McGuire, 2008). By combining their beliefs with appropriate practices (e.g. prayer and fasting), they believed they produced their most powerful resource, which was a supernatural power that rendered wild animals harmless, made them invisible to the insurgents and opened locked doors without keys. Hence among the participants, personal religiosity was as much about power (Woodhead, 2011) and invincibility in the face of danger and uncertainty as it was about beliefs and practices.

It is possible however, that the above accounts of supernatural encounters may have been the women’s way of presenting themselves as deeply religious people because such supernatural manifestations are believed to occur only for those who are truly dedicated to God. However it is difficult to offer an explanation for what the participants believed. Stolz (2011) attempted a sociological explanation of miracles but his thesis focused on miraculous occurrences in the context of Pentecostal church services and as such could not explain the occurrence of supernatural manifestations in the natural world. Roberts and Yamane (2012) report that such occurrences are beyond empirical investigation. However, there is an understanding among scholars that religiously mediated supernatural experiences often reflect the prevailing socio-cultural and religio-historical worldview of those experiencing them (Jensen, Barosky, & Rogers-Cooper, 2017; Woodhead, 2011). Nevertheless, when it comes to religion and religious experiences, Martin (2006) counsels that those who experienced them should be allowed to speak for themselves.

7.2.2 Personal Religiosity as motivation for life, meaning and positive relationships in displacement

The women also drew on their personal faith to help them make sense of their suffering and find meaning in an apparently meaningless situation (Berger, 2011; Roberts and Yamane, 2012; Woodhead, 2011; Wortmann & Park, 2009). Such meaning-making however occurred in a relational context. Drawing on the African worldview of interconnectedness of human experiences (Chilisa, 2012), the women processed their suffering by examining their lives in connection with the lives of other women, especially those who had had worse experiences than themselves.

What of these girls that they packed them in Chibok...? Two hundred girls... [What of the 200 girls that were abducted from Chibok?]...Did they offend God? Or do you pass them? Or did I pass them? [Or are we better than them?] In everything of your life, just tell God, thank you. [Elizabeth]

Elizabeth pointed out some ways her situation could have been worse, and convinced herself that she had reason to show gratitude to God. In so doing, she reframed her suffering so as to render it sufferable (Roberts and Yamane, 2012).

Other women made sense of their situation by making comparisons between their overall status before displacement and what they had become or achieved in displacement. In that process they constructed their suffering and hardship as God's blessings in disguise. From their perspective, God had transformed the apparently bad situation to work for their good. In chapter five I highlighted how they saw the displacement experience as an opportunity to acquire education. Most importantly, they saw the displacement experience as an opportunity to grow spiritually and learn total dependence on God. A combination of the challenges, their survival and the opportunities they got in displacement helped them to develop spiritually and to put their trust in God. Liatu, a 23 year old woman who was living in an NGO organized camp, talked about her deepened trust in God and her resolve to wait patiently for God who would always turn every bad situation for good:

I've learnt to wait on God patiently. Because no matter what... it is good to wait on what God has planned for you. Sometimes the devil may work against you... but it will turn to good for you. God turns

circumstances for good. From my experience... the reason why I said God turns it for good... [is] when the evil ones are pursuing us... they thought that we are going to die, we will not find a shelter, we will not find food, we will not find anything, but glory be to God for where we are now. Some of us, we don't [did not] have a safe place, like the one we have here. Some are living in remote area some are been depressed [oppressed] by other people, some are facing a lot of challenges, but in these things, it turned for our own good. (Liatu)

According to Dillard (2008), spirituality is the “very essence of the African people, regardless of where we are in the world” (p. 83). It constitutes the relational force that binds the African people to others, it adds value to every human life, and propels African women to self-less service (Dillard, 2008; Karenga & Tembo, 2012; Ngunjiri, 2016). For the women in this study, faith-mediated interpretations of their circumstances engendered feelings of hopefulness and resilience to deal with the challenges and they attributed every opportunity they got in displacement to God and their relationship with God.

There is sufficient theoretical and empirical evidence which supports the thesis that people turn to religion to find meaning in life and to make sense of difficult and traumatic life experiences, uncertainty and social exclusion (Aydin, Fischer, & Frey, 2010; Currier, Mallot, Martinez, Sandy, & Neimeyer, 2013; Hogg, Adelman, & Blagg, 2010; Roberts and Yamane, 2012; Woodhead, 2011; Wortmann & Park, 2009). Violent losses are more likely to trigger higher perceptions of growth in relationships, religiosity and personal spirituality (Currier et al., 2013). Norenzayan and Lee (2010) reported that Christians often explain difficult circumstances as things that were meant to happen or predestined, but such was not necessarily the case for the participants in this study. In their interpretation of their experiences, they pointed out tangible benefits and opportunities that came to them as a result of the displacement. Hence the meanings they made of their displacement were located in the material realities of their lives in displacement even though the meaning making process was mediated by their religion.

The women's faith also provided them with a system of values with which they dealt with negative emotions associated with BH attack and displacement. As I interacted

with them, I noted an apparent lack of bitterness and anger towards BH, irrespective of their reported suffering and losses. Some of them verbally expressed their forgiveness for BH and their allies, while others reported positive character changes in themselves, especially in terms of being more patient and tolerant of others. During one of the focus group discussions, one of the participants began her story by calling on God to forgive BH for the numerous atrocities they committed against them.

What happened! God should just forgive them. Honestly, these Boko Haram people, honestly, God should just forgive them. (Tulu)

I note that the expression, “God should forgive them” can also be interpreted as rhetoric in Nigeria. Such expression is often used when someone has done something that might be difficult for others to forgive. In such situations, people tend to defer forgiveness to God who is believed to have the capacity to forgive all kinds of evil. However, another participant, Hajara, presented an account of how she was enabled to forgive her neighbor. She reported that she was reliably informed that it was her neighbor who informed the insurgents, who then came and killed her husband. She narrated how she prayed for the capacity to forgive her neighbor and believed that God had answered her prayers and enabled her to live in peace with her neighbor until the civilian-government task force eventually discovered his alliance with BH and killed him without her having to report to anyone.

[Hisses] you know, just as I told you, it is our neighbor that phoned them [Boko Haram], to meet them [My husband and his secretary] on the road. So... on that day that it happens, I really feel bad, as if am going to revenge. But I just prayed, and I ask God to help me to forgive that man. And from that time... this man is our neighbor, he use to come to our house, collect something, my husband use to provide him with something that he needs. Even after the death of my husband he use to come to my house, stay together as we are discussing with you, talk with him, eat with him and I didn't show him anything that I think it is the one that called them to kill my husband [I did not do anything to make him know that I believed that he was the one who organized the killing of my husband]. I didn't change my

face to him, I just look up unto God. [Now] he is no more alive, he was killed too. (Hajara)

Although the participants in this study attributed both their ability and motivations to forgive to the power of God through prayer, their forgiveness accounts or their choice to forgive their offenders may also be examined in the light of the social and cultural context. The prevailing power dynamics within their social environment at the time of the events should also be considered. For example, in the case of Hajara, her situation as a Christian widow living in a Muslim dominated area, which was undergoing progressive breakdown of law and order, would have made it difficult for her to seek justice. Hence she had to find a way of living closely with someone who organized the murder of her husband without seeking justice. If the neighbor in question was actually a BH ally, any attempt by her to reveal her knowledge of the man's identity would have jeopardized her life and well-being in that community. Thus, her forgiveness could as well be a resignation to fate in the face of helplessness. However, while she could not seek justice from human social systems, she drew on her religion to address the problem of anger and need for vengeance. She looked "up to God" for divine justice. A similar resignation of fate in the hands of God was reported by survivors of the war in Liberia (Nyarko & Punamäki, 2017). Hajara's expression "he is no more alive, he was also killed" could be an expression of fulfilment, as one whose faith has been rewarded by the God of justice or God of vengeance.

There is also a relationship between the women's choice to forgive their offenders, their (Abrahamic) religious beliefs, and their cultural responsibilities as women who are divinely and historically chosen to bring good into the world (Karenga & Tembo, 2012). Religion/spirituality is positively related to traits of forgiveness across relationships (Davis, 2013) and the salience of forgiveness, especially among practitioners of theistic religions is well documented (Escher, 2013; Kidwell, Wade, & Blaedel, 2012; Nussbaum, 2016; Rye et al., 2000; Schneiderman, 2014). In theistic religions, forgiveness is often sanctified as divine. Thus by forgiving, individuals imitate God and are brought into closer relationship with Him (Escher, 2013; Rye et al., 2000). Kidwell et al. (2012) explored motivations and strategies of forgiveness among highly religious people and concluded that religious people could have both religious and secular motivations and strategies for forgiveness. Their conclusion on religious and secular motivations and strategies for forgiveness appears, however, to ignore the

pervasiveness of religious beliefs and practices in practitioners' thoughts, feelings and everyday life decisions and activities (Roberts & Yamane, Agbiji & Swart, 2017; 2012). It is possible that what they described as secular motivations and strategies such as 'forgive to be forgiven by others', 'decrease anger', 'developing empathy towards the offender' and focusing on the positive qualities of the offender were also directly or indirectly informed by the forgivers' religious beliefs. In a related study, Escher (2013) attempted to explain the link between religion and forgiveness. She argued that religious individuals are likely to forgive to the extent that they have a relational disposition towards God, the extent to which they imitate God in their activities and the extent to which they believe their religion.

Death (2013), writing in the context of victims/survivors of childhood sexual abuse, alludes to Foucault's (1994) argument which states that as much as forgiveness is empowering, it also has a power effect of silencing victims/survivors. He also argues that forgiveness narratives, especially among religious people, may be a way of constructing the self in line with religious norms. However, rather than express a perception of being silenced, disempowered, or pressured to forgive, the women in this study actively utilized religiously mediated forgiveness as their only option for effective emotional functioning. They perceived it as their power to receive freedom from the burdensome desire for vengeance and retribution, which they could not afford. This is in line with previous findings on the benefits of forgiveness to self and society (Kidwell et al., 2012; Nyarko & Punamäki, 2017; Oliner, 2009; Philpot, Balvin, Mellor, & Bretherton, 2013; Worthington & Scherer, 2004). Forgiveness has been framed as essential to the process of healing of pain and emotional freedom for those who have experienced traumatic life events such as war and other conflicts (Kidwell et al., 2012; Nyarko & Punamäki, 2017; Oliner, 2009). It has also been described as a victim/survivor's way of constructing a survivor identity which replaces a victim mentality and frees the victim from the perpetrators' continuous victimization (Death, 2013).

It is such survivor identity that is most relevant to the women's cultural roles as mothers (Karenga, 2012; Karenga & Tembo, 2012), and as emancipators and healers of society (Karenga, 2007). The women's accounts of forgiveness, though framed in religious terms, are not completely dissociated from the African worldview or way of being in the world. Forgiveness is central to the African *Ubuntu* (I am because we are),

a philosophy that emphasizes human relationships and interconnectedness as the essence of being human (Chilisa, 2012; Krog, 2008; Ngunjiri, 2016; Sulamoyo, 2010). Such ways of being and the need for forgiveness and self-healing are also expressed in some of the major ethical commitments embedded in the Kawaiida womanist philosophy; namely *Umoja* (unity) and *Kujichagulia* (self-determination). It is by willingness to forgive that the women will be able to foster unity in their families and communities, which can eventually give birth to black unity and also enable them to be of service to others (Karenga & Tembo, 2012; Ogunyemi, 1985). It is also possible that they applied that forgiveness principle in their relationships with their men and their children, who did not always live up to their expectations as shown in the previous chapter. The following accounts from the participants reveal such relationships between their willingness to forgive, their relationship with God and the good work they would do for the benefit of others. Elizabeth spoke as though she was advising me:

Don't hold somebody... in your mind [Don't hold grudges against anybody]. Because if you hold that person in your mind you fit [you can] die today. If you don't ask for forgiveness where will you go? You don't know where you will go. So try and do what is good in life... Try and show what God did to you for your life... This thing that happen to us... [Should draw us] closer to God... God love you for a purpose. ... This thing [that] happen[ed] to me, let it be a preaching to others. (Elizabeth)

Forgiveness and doing good to others, for Elizabeth, was an act of gratitude to God for sparing her life. Sansanatu also expressed a similar idea, even though she was speaking in terms of the personal transformations she had experienced as a result of the BH insurgency and displacement. According to her, she would express her gratitude for God's love by loving and doing good to others in need.

I learn how to... love anybody I see passing through challenges. I learn how to love people even if I don't know that person. if I can be able to love that person, and help that person in any how [way] that I fit [can], I will do so because God show me love when this thing happen to us... if it is not God, I don't know what will happen to us by now. (Sansanatu)

African women are culturally expected to serve as agents of healing, forgiveness and reconciliation in their families and communities. Their healing and reconciliatory roles as community mothers are often performed at the expense of their personal comfort (Collins, 2000; Ngunjiri, 2016). They are represented as wounded physicians who must heal themselves in the process of healing and transforming the world, and as such must rise above their own feelings of victimhood (Karenga, 2008). Hence, the women's forgiveness accounts represent a fusion of their religious and indigenous cultural identities. What is obvious from their accounts however, especially those of the Christians, is that they utilized the 'power' obtained from Christian religion through prayer, to accomplish their traditional roles as mothers. They also relied on religion and prayer for protection against sexual violence from others. In chapter six, I highlighted how the women were more concerned about the sexualization of their children by their husbands than their own experiences of sexual violence. I also highlighted how both religion and culture influenced how they interpreted and narrated their experiences of sexual violence. The next section further examines the religious grounding for some of the sense of confidence the women had concerning their protection against sexual violence by strangers.

7.2.3 Religious values as protection against sexual violence by strangers in displacement

The participants' drew on their personal religiosity and cultural values to prevent sexual violence from strangers. Their strategy for preventing sexual violence largely entailed prayers for protection, dressing according to the social norms and limiting social interactions. Naomi, who was widowed in the insurgency, talked about how a combination of prayer and dressing modestly protected her from attracting sexual advances from men.

It is as a result of the prayers ... that He [God] is covering people's eyes that they have not come to me to ask me how [for sexual relationships]... Because all the time, I walk around with my head tie [I always cover my head] so they always look at me as if I have a husband... I don't always move about with a small scarf, . I walk around with big...big... ones that are bigger than this one... I don't do those things... that people turn themselves to... something else...

*that is why the entire neighborhood, when they see me they will say
“good morning Mama³⁴”. That is how they address me. (Naomi)*

Naomi believed that it was her prayers that ‘covered people’s eyes’ so that they would not notice that she was widowed and single. Yet she believed that her mode of dressing significantly contributed to the respect she earned in her neighborhood. To her, not “turning herself to something else”, which implied dressing not to call attention to herself, was the reason why men who might approach her to engage in a sexual relationship would rather address her as ‘mother’. Elizabeth also talked about how a woman’s mode of dressing determines whether she would be sexually harassed or not.

*The way you live your life. The way you present yourself is the way
you are asking somebody to come to you... There is a way that you
will dress, you are the one that will call men to come to you. You see
some women they will dress like this [Hisses]³⁵, the way they dress,
even you as a woman you will not like it. So some men, you see men,
they are not like women. Some men they just see woman like this...*

*[with emphasis] Piam!³⁶ Their body will start... ehenn, you
understand what am saying³⁷. But when you dress normal, you do
your things normal, some men they will fear to even come near you.*

*But sometime you will see woman, she will dress something like
this... you ma... what do you mean by that? [Laughing] (Elizabeth)*

The above accounts further reflect the complex intermingling of Islamic and Christian religious traditions and the local cultures in Northern Nigeria. Both Christian and Islamic religions, as well as the indigenous cultures, agree in promoting women’s covering and ‘modest’ dressing (Bastian, 2013; Mahdi, 2009; Pereira & Ibrahim, 2010), but what sometimes differs is the extent of covering and the type of covering a woman uses. As Pereira and Ibrahim (2010) state, all arguments on religious and cultural differences in Nigeria are settled on women’s bodies. Moreover, there are complex

³⁴ Mama means mother

³⁵ Hissing here is an expression of disgust

³⁶ Piam: This is an expression to indicate the suddenness of an action. In this case, she is referring to how sudden a man will have penile erection if he meets a woman who did not dress according to the socio-cultural norms.

³⁷ She intentionally did not finish the sentence because it is generally considered indecent or vulgar to explicitly discuss sexual issues.

historical and socio-political undertones to the wearing of the veil or other types of head covering (Mahdi, 2009; Pereira & Ibrahim, 2010; Renne, 2013b). In addition to being a sign of modesty, veiling and head covering has also become a sign of ethnic identity and glamorous dressing for ‘responsible women’ in Nigeria (Bastian, 2013; Renne, 2013b). That notwithstanding, the women’s accounts also reflected the sexual objectification of women’s bodies and the social construction of sexually-out-of-control masculinities in Northern Nigeria (Pereira & Ibrahim, 2010).

I also observed in my discussions with the women, that their professed personal faith or trust in God/Allah, as well as their belief and reliance in the power of prayer and positive behaviors to meet every need and solve every problem was not static. They experienced high and low faith moments during which there were ruptures in their reliance on the perceived power of prayer and fasting to obtain supernatural deliverance. Sometimes, the core of their religious reliance shifted from God to gods. In the next section, I discuss how the women moved beyond their personal religiosity and even stretched across religions in search of both spiritual and material resources, while maintaining their autonomy in making decisions relating to their religious beliefs, sexual violence and survival strategies in displacement.

7.2.4 Negotiating with God and gods: Displaced faith in displacement

Despite the women’s professed faith in the monotheistic religions, there were times that they reached outside of their Christian/Islamic faith boundaries to try to protect themselves against BH’s detection and possible abduction, obtain support in uncertainty or for healing. Saratu, a Christian woman, narrated how she and other displaced persons depended on a native spiritual priest’s intervention to become invisible to BH during one of their flights. According to her, the native priest instructed them to lie down while he took his gun and his native medicine to inflict temporary blindness on BH members who were standing at a distance from where they lay. They believed that the medicine worked on BH, and that while they could see BH, BH could not see them. Afterwards, he instructed them to pass through BH’s blockade, but that they must not look back as they crossed or the medicine might fail and they would be caught.

Boko Haram came to arrest us... There is a man inside us, like a magic... Booka³⁸. Him come, make us sleep, we just sleep [There was a spiritual priest among us and he asked us to lie down and we lay down]. He come stand with him gun. He have gun. He say baa, make anybody no see back, just see your front, if you see back if Boko Haram catch you no be him fault [He stood up and took his gun and said that nobody should look back, if you look back, and Boko Haram catches you, it is not his fault]. We say okay. We come sleep, he come do... rufe ido³⁹. If he put that medicine ...you can see them but they cannot see you. E come put that thing... like ...blind folder. He come put it and the eyes of Boko Haram, they did not see us again. As we, we dey see them but them they are not see. As we come pass they are just there, they cannot see us as we come pass. We enter Cameroon. (Saratu)

Saratu had previously described how she prayed in a cave when she was pursued by BH, and how God protected her from BH's gun shots into the cave, and also protected her from being bitten by a snake that crossed over her legs and remained with her in the cave. But in the above account, when she and other displaced persons were close to being captured by BH, rather than pray for God's protection, they relied on a native priest's spiritual power to make them invisible to BH. This shifting of faith from the Christian God to the gods of ATR in times of intense threat or uncertainty seems to support the idea that while religious profession might remain stable, faith, which is more individualized than religious profession, often shifts (Roberts & Yamane, 2012). However, it is worthy of note that the shifting of faith in this context was more a collective act than an individual decision. All the people in Saratu's group depended on the native priest's power. Even assumptions about mutual reinforcement of religious faith and beliefs among religious people (Roberts & Yamane, 2012) can be context dependent.

³⁸ Booka is a Hausa expression used for a spiritual priest. They are usually practitioners of the ATR and are believed to be in regular consultation with diverse spirits depending on the particular god they worship. They are believed to combine cosmic powers with other material mediums including roots and herbs to heal diseases or address other problems.

³⁹ *Rufe ido* is a magical spell that is believed to make someone invisible to anyone he or she intends to hide from.

Tavory and Winchester (2012) attempted to explain why people lose faith or experience fluctuations in their religious faith. They theorized that religious activities such as prayer tend to lose their initial enchantment once they are routinized and incorporated into activities of daily living. However, their theory cannot sufficiently explain why people who reported experiencing physical manifestations, which they believed to be of religious origin, would still drift into contradictory religious practice in moments of uncertainty. However, Beckford (2003) argues that expressing personal religiosity or maintaining stable faith may involve subtle complex choices which are partly influenced by the perceived situation, actions of significant others, and actors' stock of religious resources. Therefore, it is possible that a combination of their dire situation of uncertainty, and the influences of other people in the group would have contributed to their eventual turn to ATR.

I observed that shifts in the women's faith were not only manifested in relation to a possible fear of death at the hands of BH. Other displacement-induced hardships, especially sickness in their families, which was often compounded by poverty and lack of access to orthodox health care, also compelled some participants to seek help from native priests. Yet, visiting ATR priests was not always a pleasant experience for the women; it was often marked with faith struggle and fear. One possible explanation for such fears is that some shrines and sacred groves where native priests operate are often located in thick forests, which are never exploited for hunting or logging (Jegade, 2015; Nwankwo & Agboeze, 2016), or other isolated places. More often than not shrines are designed to invoke awe and wonder, as well as an aura that signals the presence of other-worldly inhabitants, since they are supposed to be the abode of the spirits (Jegade, 2015). Elizabeth talked about her fears and faith struggles as she moved from one native priest to another in her desperation to find healing for her child. Elizabeth was three months pregnant when Boko Haram attacked her community in Yobe. She and her family fled to Jos and lived in an IDP camp for three years. She went into labor while in the displacement camp, but could not afford to pay for skilled attendance at her delivery. Following a prolonged and very difficult labor, she delivered her first and only son with multiple health complications, including an inability to achieve most of his developmental milestones such as sitting, walking, talking and using his hands by the age of three and half years.

We will go [to] Yobe, we go [to] Bauchi⁴⁰, we go everywhere [we went to Yobe and Bauchi and everywhere]. If you see the place we enter with this child, you will fear. If you see the bush that I go, if you see native doctors that I go, you will pity me. Sometime if we go, they will tell my husband, let him go, let me sleep there [They will tell my husband to go while I sleep there]. I never know anybody there, I will sleep with the child there. I will be crying. I say “God, make a way for me with this child. If the child will go [will die] let him go, if this child will stay... God make a way for me let me see something doing to help myself... I will continue staying like that? [Will I continue staying like that?] I cannot worship my God the way I want it?

(Elizabeth)

While Elizabeth’s account reveals the fear and struggle she underwent in her search for support from ATR priests, it also reveals a form of negotiation with God and gods and a form of tension between her Christian faith and ATR. This negotiation is shown in the paradox of accessing a native priest’s shrine for healing and at the same time, praying to God to make a way for her by either allowing her son to die or healing him.

However, she presents her desire to worship her God the way [she] wants, i.e worshipping God without having need to visit native priests, as a reason why God should make a way for her.

I have discussed how ATR is often intertwined with most indigenous African cultures, and as such may be one explanation for participants’ shift to a faith in ATR in difficult situations. Consulting native ATR priests to solve personal problems is also a common practice in most parts of Africa (Biri, 2012; Janson, 2016; Kitause & Achunike, 2013; Larkin, 2016; Soares, 2016) even among professed Christians and Muslims. This is despite the fact that both Christianity and Islam condemn ATR practices as idol worship, which is totally forbidden in both religions. Bauer (2017) attributes this apparently dual religious allegiance to a common belief that some mystical powers, believed to be inherent in the ATRs are good or useful, and can still be accessed for solving everyday life problems. Thus for the same group of people, religion can be simultaneously intrinsic **and** utilitarian, rather than being intrinsic **or** utilitarian as some

⁴⁰ Yobe and Bauchi are two north eastern cities. Yobe is located 396 kilometres away from Jos, where the participant was resident, while Bauchi is located about 103 kilometres away from Jos.

sociologists might assume (Roberts & Yamane, 2012). When the utilitarian expectations of religion outweigh intrinsic convictions, people can reach across religions or different sets of belief systems to meet their needs. In addition, agency in religiosity can be demonstrated in both compliance and resistance or even instrumental compliance, depending on how people perceive their situations and what they are capable of doing for themselves in those situations (Burke, 2012).

While the participants in this study struggled with their faith and engaged in activities which could be seen as inconsistent with their religious beliefs, they retained their belief in God/Allah as supreme. To them, God had the final say in the ultimate issues of their lives and afterlives, whereas, other gods and supernatural powers served as a back-up for utilitarian purposes. They were not necessarily “free riders”, that is, those who subscribe to a set of religious beliefs without being fully committed to them (Ammerman, 2006). This is also not the same as what Carlson (2003) described as dialogical religious double-belonging, in his analysis of Buddhist-Christian religious affiliations. He described dialogical religious double-belonging as a situation where individuals maintain two religious traditions within themselves and there may be more or less communication between the two (Carlson, 2003). In the case of my study participants, there was no real belonging to ATR. They expressed no feeling of attachment, and sense of security which often characterizes belongingness (Antonsich, 2010; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Rather, borrowing from Ammerman’s (2006) conception of religious negotiation, their performance of religion, reflects continuous negotiation with religion. They negotiated with the ‘ultimate/ transcendental meanings’ and material realities; with ‘God/Allah’ and ‘gods’ in the ATR sense. While the God/Allah of salvation, meanings and eternal life remained static, other gods of ATR could be consulted in times of emergency. In other words, the God/Allah that saved may not always be the god that served. Relating this negotiation to the thoughts of Carlson (2003), such negotiation can be said to be part of the process of religious becoming or ‘traditioning’, which is hardly ever fixed. It also represents what Avishai (2008) described as a process of doing or performing religion, in search of an authentic religiosity.

Neither the women’s dependence on their personal faith resources nor their utilitarian use of gods precluded their need for religious belongingness. In an inside-out fashion, personal religiosity was transformed to collective religiosity, and drawing from their

personal faith and spirituality, they built communities around shared beliefs, where individuals' faith, spirituality and gratitude to God were expressed and reinforced. In the next section, I discuss how the women in this study reconstructed their battered religious identities and negotiated belonging in religious groups.

7.3 Reconstructing religious identities and negotiating belonging in displacement

7.3.1 Religious identity reconstruction through collective performance

Soon after their settlement in displacement, the women either organized new religious groups or became integrated into existing ones, some of which were affiliated to their previous religious groups. The Christian participants who resided in camps erected churches while the Muslims created prayer grounds. Each group appointed pastors or Imams and thus created structure for their religious practices. In the rural host community, a new church building was erected for the use of IDPs, whereas those in urban host communities were integrated into existing religious groups. Regular religious programs constituted a core aspect of the daily lives of the participants. Thus, through religious place-making and performance, they fostered a sense of religious identification and community building (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2009). Asabe, a Christian woman, talked about how singing and praising God and communal worship constituted their most satisfying set of activities in displacement.

*We form singing groups and we gather together to praise our God.
On the days of worship, we go to church and worship our LORD...
We are just glorifying our God, we praise our LORD that He gave us
life and good health so that we can walk about in the midst of the
living. That is what we do, and we are satisfied. (Asabe)*

Another participant said:

*It's through this crisis that I get [got] to know, that there is power in
song... ..These worship songs... Christian songs... There is power in
song. (Maryam)*

Creative production in the form of music, art and dance is an integral part of most African cultures (Karenga & Tembo, 2012). African women often find their voices in

music, and derive a sense of empowerment from it (Adedeji, 2012; Collins, 2000; Onyeji, 2004; Repar & Reid, 2014). Through music, secular or religious, they express their suffering, assert their identities and resist their oppression (Adedeji, 2012; Collins, 2000). They also use music to cope with difficult situations (Repar & Reid, 2014), transact social solidarity and express or transmit social values (Onyeji, 2004). In the context of suffering and multiple hardship in Nigeria, Adedeji (2012) observed that gospel music in particular has become “an outcry of the helpless, the groaning of the oppressed, the voice of the ‘voiceless’, and the protest of the marginalized” (p. 413). Within the context of their displacement, both Christians and Muslims asserted their religious identities and worked hard to impart those identities to their children, and through such shared embodied religious practices the women and their children reconstructed and performed their religious identities (Avishai, 2008). I witnessed an intriguing performance of organized singing, drumming, and choreographed dancing by IDP Christian children during one of my visits to the camps. Part of the Hausa song is translated thus:

“ if I will lie down, I will lie down with Jesus, if I will rise up, I will rise up with Jesus, If I will walk, I will walk with Jesus, anything I do, I will do with Jesus” (IDP Children, Singing).

Muslim children were engaged in Islamic schools where they read and recited Koranic verses. Rather than lose their religious fervor and live as religiously disintegrated communities, as scholars like Bruce (1999) and other secularization and modernization theorists would expect, the women demonstrated religious resilience, and regrouped around shared religious ideologies. Thus their internalized religious worldviews and battered religious identities were reconstructed and enacted in social interactions (Berger, 2011). A similar trend of religious resilience was also reported in China, Burma, Kenya and Zimbabwe, where under religious or political persecution, religion thrived and in some cases, formed the basis for identity reconstruction (Chau, 2008; Horstmann, 2011a; Naidu, 2016; Parsitau, 2011; Yang, 2011).

Reconstructing religious identities is particularly salient for the participants in this study because of their unique displacement experiences. They were challenged by a combination of faith struggles and negotiations with religion on one hand, and BH’s labelling on the other. BH referred to all those who differed in religious ideology from

what they subscribe to as infidels expressed as *Arni* or *Arna* in the Hausa language (see chapter five), and it is literally translated as pagan or a person/persons without a religion. Thus while they believed they obtained power and coped emotionally through religious performances, they also used those performances as a form of resistance to present themselves as ‘authentically’ religious people.

Their resistance to BH’s labelling helps to extend the argument of Avishai (2008), who posits that religiosity in a secular world is often performed in conversation with a secular ‘Other’, as a means of maintaining symbolic boundaries between the religious and the secular. The participants in this study, however, demonstrated different modes of religious performance even among those who subscribed to the same religion. When religion is performed in a highly religious context, it can be performed in a dialogue with a presumably inauthentic, persecuting, stigmatizing or even hyper religious ‘Other’. In my participants’ case, they performed their religion in dialogue with ATR against BH. They actively constructed a religious image against BH’s rhetoric.

7.3.2 Being(s) to belonging(s): Negotiating religious belongingness in displaced spaces

While Christians and Muslims maintained their distinct religious identities and affiliations in displacement camps, such religious identifications were often loosely associated with external religious bodies and as such, they could not maintain the structural and institutional rigidity that characterizes other organized religious bodies. Moreover, their religious identification and performances, did not automatically confer a sense of religious belongingness, especially among the Christians. Thus, those who lived in camps often expressed a need to belong to an institutionalized religious group. The following account from Asabe, whose contact with her primary religious group was restricted by the camp authority, illustrates the need for institutionalized religious belongingness.

The time that they were not preventing us from going to church outside, if you can go... if you worship with them...like before, my church is Redeem [Redeemed Christian Church of God]. If I were to be going there, if they give me a ride to church, they will also bring me back and give me food. But now, that has reduced. They told us that nobody should go out for service again. [Pointing to a Chapel in

camp] *See where we go to church here. They say that the church we do here is the general body of Christ. It is a chapel. That is what we do here. There is no way that people will be able to see what problems somebody is having. (Asabe)*

While religious identification in camps met their immediate social and spiritual needs, it was limited in meeting their material needs. Even though Asabe had earlier expressed a sense of satisfaction from singing and worship groups, belonging to “the general body of Christ”, which was a multi-denominational religious space, did not suffice. They still experienced what can be described as a sense of religious loneliness, isolation or displacement (Antonsich, 2010; hooks, 2009) and wished for a deeper religious belonging.

This yearning for a deeper religious belonging could be explained by the longstanding competition among the three major religious traditions (Adogame, 2010, 2015; Griswold, 2008; Janson, 2016; Larkin, 2016; Mang, 2014; Odumosu, Olaniyi, & Alonge, 2009; Ukah, 2008b; Vaughan, 2017) as well as among the different Christian denominations in Nigeria (Mang, 2014; Odumosu et al., 2009). Each denomination has its unique ideological, theological and liturgical specificities that differentiate it from ‘others’. Hence the ‘general body of Christ’ lacked the institutional, structural or cultural boundaries that are requisite for defining the place of religious belongingness (Antonsich, 2010; hooks, 2009; Poe, LeCompte, McLain, & Hurley, 2014). To them, it did not represent that “symbolic space of familiarity, comfort, security and emotional attachment” (hooks, 2009 p.213 in Antonsich, 2010 p. 646) in religious terms. As such, belonging to the ‘general body of Christ’, meant belonging to nowhere in particular. Moreover, that ‘general body of Christ’ lacked the material resources they needed for their survival in displacement. Those resources, they believed, could be obtained by belonging to a more organized religious group, whose membership is predominantly non-displaced persons.

Such desire to belong to specific religious groups persisted, despite the fact that they received numerous donations from Churches, Mosques and other NGOs.

People are helping us. Churches, Muslims and Christians, come and help us with food. This water in ...sunlight [solar powered water supply], they help[ed] us. Thank God for... for people for [in] this

Abuja. We thank God. God will bless [them]. Both Muslim and Christian. We thank God for this our life (Bilikisu).

We thank God for life of missionaries...if I say that missionaries didn't help us, I tell lies. Missionaries really help [with emphasis] any part [every aspect] of our life. They bring us food..oooo soap ooo, everything that you know that person use to use, they bring for us. This oyibo⁴¹ they come, maybe [in] 2014, they came, this una people outside country [this your people from overseas], they came and give every person fifty thousand [fifty thousand is approximately NZD 200] (Elizabeth)

Faith-based organizations are known for the numerous humanitarian works they do in refugee and displacement settings (Horstmann, 2011a, 2011b; Miller, 2015; Orji, 2011; Parsitau, 2011; Snyder, 2011). Odumosu et al. (2009) reported that they are often more prestigious than secular NGOs in Nigeria. They were particularly active in Jos, providing relief materials for displaced persons irrespective of their religious affiliations (Orji, 2011). But, it is also important to note that there is a possibility that not all the donors were missionaries as Elizabeth assumed in her account. It is very common in Nigeria to assume that any light skinned person who is involved in humanitarian service in Nigeria, is a Christian missionary. This is often related to how Christianity was introduced to Nigeria, and the continued use of humanitarian services as a means of gaining access to converts by overseas Christian missionaries (Achunike, 2017). It is also common for aid and preaching to be intertwined in modern faith-based humanitarian services (Horstmann, 2011a). Elizabeth also assumed that I was one of the missionaries, in that she referred to the supposed missionaries as “this your people”. Having introduced myself as a student from overseas she concluded that I must be working with, or for, the missionaries. Hence from the women’s perspectives, religiosity and humanitarianism or pro-sociality is intricately connected.

The women were, however, not satisfied with the ‘generalized’ support from churches, Mosques, and the ‘missionaries’. In all the displacement settings, faith communities who were not serving as pure humanitarian organizations believed they had obligations to meet the social, spiritual and material needs of IDW who belonged to their

⁴¹ Oyibo is a common expression use to describe any foreigner that is light skinned.

congregations. Both Orji (2011) and Horstmann (2011a) reported how even faith-based humanitarian organizations struggle with prioritizing the needs of members of their faith communities while also upholding the principle of impartiality, or separating their faith perspectives from the humanitarian service.

Belonging to organized religious groups reintroduced the Christian women to a system of pastoral power where they were both cared for, and shepherded (Dean, 2010; Death, 2013; Snyder, 2011) according to specific protestant/Pentecostal rationalities. Their pastors, in addition to praying and bible teaching, facilitated their access to material support from within and outside their immediate religious groups. The pastoral roles also extended to counselling, family support and arbitration in cases of sexual violence. One of the participants who fell pregnant in displacement reported how her pastor and church members took care of her and her baby after her boyfriend denied responsibility for the pregnancy and abandoned her with her child.

[When I delivered the baby] my mother went to our pastor..., so he help us with money...The hospital I delivered in is inside our church. So they help us. They buy cloth for the baby, they give us food, corn to make akamu [gruel] in the morning and some of the things that the baby need. (Ruth)

Another participant, whose son was severely injured after he stepped on and detonated a bomb, reported how her pastor connected her to a faith-based organization that took responsibility for her son's medical bills.

Some missionaries from UK. They come for...seminar for [in] Jos. They later talk [ed] to my pastor...reverend pastor, and the reverend pastor call[ed] me, "mummy D⁴², there is some organization that need women that they lost their husband and the... Affecting of bomb blast ["D's mother, there is an organization that is looking for widows and those affected by the bomb blast]...So I came to the seminar in Jos... I spend one week there, at the last day, they [said] "mummy, D, now, what do you want this organization to do for you?

⁴² D' as used in this quote is an abbreviation of the participant's son's name in order to maintain anonymity. However she was addressed as Mummy D by her pastor and others because married women are addressed as either the wife of somebody or the mother of somebody as a sign of respect in most Nigerian cultures.

I say, the only thing that I need from you is, just take the responsibility of my son. They say by the grace of God... we will take the responsibility for the bill... And here... we stay[ed] good two years [we spent two years here]. They are [were] doing skin grafting for D. And ...now, he survived. He is alive. I give thanks to God, to almighty God. It is a miracle. [Mary]

While religious leaders constituted a major support for the women who belonged to organized religious groups, as they took up responsibilities that would have been performed by the government or extended family members, the women saw them as representatives of God who served as His channels of blessings. For example, even though Mary acknowledged her reverend pastor as the link to the organization that paid the medical bills, she directed her gratitude to God, and framed the scenario of provision of medical bills and healing of her son as a miracle. Thus, God is framed as the chief Shepherd, while the pastor served as his representative (Dean, 2010). Such demarcation between the glory due to God and the gratitude due to the pastor is informed by the women's religious knowledge.

Belonging to a 'fold under a shepherd', however, implied belonging to a system of power relations, with its complex possibilities for subjecthood and subjection; power and resistance; and conduct and counter-conduct (Antonsich, 2010; Dean, 2010; Foucault, 2007). It also opens up possibilities for disillusionment associated with unmet personal interests, discriminatory norms and exclusion (Antonsich, 2010; Barrett, 2015; Biebricher, 2011; Dean, 2010). As expected there were asymmetrical power relations within the religious groups where the women belonged. The religious systems could be described as involving a relationship between the 'feeder' (religious leaders and established, non-displaced religious communities) and the 'fed' (the IDW). The IDW were often reliant on the pastors' and religious leaders' benevolence, and as such, subject to their terms and conditions. Sometimes, the quality of support received was dependent on the 'moral conduct' of the women and their compliance with the norms. Also, while the pastors and other religious leaders made personal sacrifices to support the women, unequal power relations, combined with limited availability of resources, created situations where they simultaneously provided and undermined support.

It was common for religious leaders to over-promise and then under-deliver on their promises. They often attempted to solve all the IDW's problems with meager resources, without making concrete plans to sustain such gestures, and this led to a sense of disillusionment among the women. Some religious leaders, in their bid to exercise their pastoral power (Dean, 2010), over-stepped their professional boundaries and attempted to solve problems beyond their field of training. Some of them spiritualized every challenge that the women presented to them and proffered spiritual or religious explanations and 'solutions', which hindered the women's access to professional medical care or support from social workers and security agencies. For example, some of the women who reported sexual violence were kept under the care of the pastors who prevented them from involving the police and the social workers. The next two data excerpts were taken from the account of Ruth who fell pregnant in displacement. Ruth, who was abandoned by her boyfriend, needed to involve the police and the social welfare services in order to strengthen her support base. She needed additional support, not just for raising her child as a single teenage mother, but also to be able to return to school after delivery. She reported that her pastor prevented her family from involving the police.

It's our pastor that say we should just leave it. That we should not just go and report to the police that we should just leave it. Pastor say that we should just leave it for him. That he is going to take care of the baby. (Ruth)

Shortly after delivery, things began to change as the pastor was transferred to another station. She had a benefactor who had sponsored her education and following the pregnancy refused to continue this. Her church did not have the resources to help her:

So ... the woman said that she is not going to pay again for the fees. That we should look for somebody that will pay for the fees. We start asking people, begging people..., people was just telling us they don't have money. We went to our church, they tell us that they do not have money for paying anything. That they will not pay our school fees... But our church, it's only one pastor that use to help us but they transfer him to another parish... So we are suffering of food and health and money for school fees. (Ruth)

Christianity (as well as Islam) endorses values such as hospitality, care of the stranger and all forms of altruistic behavior (Miller, 2015; Snyder, 2011) but it is not unusual for religious communities to become overwhelmed and run out of resources in their attempt to meet the needs of displaced persons in their community (e.g. see Horstmann, 2011b). Snyder (2011) reports that engaging in humanitarian services out of mere sense of duty also has the potential to engender paternalism among religious leaders, which further disempowers already disempowered populations and fosters dependency. However, it is possible in the case of Ruth, that the pastor had not allowed her family to contact the police in order to avoid further stigmatization and exposure to victim blaming (I have discussed stigmatization of single mothers and their families extensively in chapter six). Yet, the women's deference to religious leaders in matters of sexual violence reveals their recognition and assent to pastoral power. It equally highlights the blurred boundaries between the responsibilities of the state and other social institutions, and those of religious institutions in Nigeria.

It is important to note that the participants in this study were not passive recipients of the pastors' or other religious leaders' orders and instructions. While, as members of the 'fold', they were being led or 'conducted' (Dean, 2010; Foucault, 2007), as it were, by the pastors, they weighed the pastors' opinions against their personal beliefs, needs, resources and social realities; and conducted themselves (Foucault, 2007), in ways that worked for their own good. As such, within the same relationships of pastoral power, they were able to perform their identities as both governed and autonomous religious subjects. They made judgments about their social environments and accepted and rejected their religious leaders' counsel based on how they perceived the availability, accessibility and effectiveness of alternative social resources. For example, Elizabeth, rejected a religious leader's advice and also decided to be selective about the prayer programs she would attend.

Since that woman [a prophetess] tell me that this thing is not a child..., [Since the prophetess told me that my baby is not a normal human being, but a snake in human form] [hisses], some prayers, I don't want to be going. Because, like say they are making me to sins against God. I better stay on my own. You go prayer [you will go for a prayer meeting], instead of them to encourage you, they will make you to come and be thinking. So they didn't encourage me my sister.

That one is encouragement? [Is that an encouragement?] Person will tell you that this is not a child that you are just suffering yourself. Is this a prayer? It's not a prayer. So I just decided ...I should better prayer on my own. (Elizabeth)

Elizabeth's account is another example of how the women's religious knowledge influenced the dynamics of pastoral power. She could tell when 'prayer' ceased to be prayer and resisted pastoral authority.

What seemed to be dependence on pastors' advice was, instead, selective obedience to the extent that it suited the women's needs and agreed with their personal judgements of the situation. For example, evidence from other interviews and discussions suggests that most of the participants who experienced sexual violence would not have reported to the police even without any pastor's advice. One example is Ruth's sister, Martina, who also fell pregnant in displacement. Even though she was the first to be impregnated and abandoned by her boyfriend, she did not report her case to the police, even though she did not report being advised by any pastor not to tell the police. The following comments from Martina during one of the focus group discussions, shows that the pastor's advice to their family only reinforced a decision they would have made in the long run. In the focus group discussion, the young women talked about the places they could go and report sexual violence cases, and Martina, narrated the challenges associated with reporting sexual violence to the police:

The only place is ... police barracks. That is the only place they normally go and report. But, if they report that kind [of] case...the police use to say that they don't have nothing [anything] to do about it. They use to say that it's the girls [that] use to carry theirselves to them. If you didn't carry yourself to them, that thing will not happen to you. [The police will say that the girl is at fault by visiting the men. If you did not visit the men, you will not experience sexual violence].
Tou [claps hands]⁴³ that is why, normally, if it happens, you will just... think very careful, you will know what to do for yourself.
(Martina)

⁴³ Clapping hands is an expression of helplessness

In a personal interview, another participant, whose seventeen year old daughter eloped with a twenty-one year old male IDP, talked about her experience of frustration when she tried getting the police involved to help search for, and bring back her daughter.

We went to report ...at the police station ... They did not do anything. They did nothing. They said we should come back again. The oga [the man that accompanied me] had the phone number of the head of the police, so he called him but he said there is nothing they can do. That we should just go and look for the girl. "You people should give me her picture, if I see her anywhere, I can look for the boy. Go and bring the pictures of the two of them". They never did anything on it... I suffered! (Bilikisu)

The above accounts show that irrespective of the religious leaders' opinion, the women had had very little or no trust in the law enforcement agencies. It is also possible that they were disillusioned about the morality of the policemen and other law enforcement agencies. This could be related to the fact that the third participant who also fell pregnant in displacement was impregnated by a soldier. The IDP community knew about her case, and it was also a pastor who rallied support for her and her family because the soldier abandoned her as well. Another participant also reported that her daughter, who escaped from BH's camp, barely escaped rape from a policeman who was supposed to protect her and return her safely to the family.

It is just the police, the mobile police man that they handed her over to, it is them that they want to rape for my daughter. Na only one save her [it was one of them that saved her]. One of them, if they are sleeping, he will touch her body...touch her breast...because the girl get [has] small small breast. He say let her sleep with her [She should sleep with him]. And the girl, she wan shout like this, if she wan shout [The girl wanted to shout but if she tries to shout] he will say "if you shout I will shoot you" (Mary)

It is therefore possible to conclude that religion and religious leaders stood as the women's only 'reliable' support in the absence of any reliable social service from the government. Meagher (2009) connects the weakening of the state to the proliferation of the informal economy as well as religious revivalism, and argues that religion appears

to provide solutions to economic problems in the absence of a functioning economy and political systems. This assumption was also expressed by Ukah (2008a) in his analysis of the influence of Pentecostalism in Nigeria. He recounts:

As the official state shrinks due to poor management of resources, rampant corruption, and misappropriation of state funds, church activities have stepped in to fill the gap. In Nigeria today, the so-called “mega churches” have become an alternative society providing all the services usually expected of a working state, including security, education, water supply, housing, and banking services. (Ukah, 2008a, p. 136)

It can be said that the participants in this study generally shared their religious leaders’ sentiments about state-delivered social services and that they united with them in finding alternatives to the failing or non-functional systems, even though their alternatives were less than ideal. Assuming a clear-cut power-resistance, or conduct-counter-conduct relationship (Foucault, 2007) between the participants and their religious leaders, therefore, fails to capture the complexities of their experiences. Rather, the women were engaged in a pragmatic cooperation, (Chilisa, 2012; Collins, 2000; Ngunjiri, 2016; Nnaemeka, 2004) with their religious leaders, and negotiated with them in order to fully appropriate the material and spiritual benefits of that relationship. This is similar to the way they negotiated with God and gods. The subtle subversion of pastoral power among the women, was drawn from the core tenets of the protestant/Pentecostal ideology which allows individuals to access God and make religious decisions for themselves without necessarily seeking the mediation of the pastor. As such, both the pastoral power and the women’s resistance, were mutually constitutive and contemporaneous within the power relations (Foucault, 2007).

It is important to note however, that the women’s pragmatic cooperation with the pastors or their negotiations with them was not just informed by the broader social realities of the Nigerian state. Their immediate social circumstances and survival needs as IDW were major factors in their decision making. While their religious identities and belonging were important to them, they were also faced with the realities of difference. They recognized the ways their circumstances differed from those of their pastors and other members of their religious groups. They also realized that the religious groups and leaders could not possibly meet all their material needs, especially their need for ‘place’ within the material and socio-political space of their displacement environment. Hence the women’s religious belonging typifies the fluid, flexible, multiple, processual

and situational nature of belonging (Cuervo & Wyn, 2014; Lähdesmäki et al., 2016). While they submitted to their pastors' shepherding, as it were, they pragmatically navigated that space of religious belonging so as to be able to fit in, and appropriate the benefits of the wider IDP community, where they could mutually support one another, across religious boundaries (see chapter five). Thus it can be said that the women in this study consistently utilized their practical wisdom in negotiating and managing relationships with both humans and supernatural beings in order to ensure their survival in an apparently hostile society.

7.4 Conclusion

The main argument this chapter makes is that although the women were attacked because of their religion, they survived through their religion. It was a combination of religiosity, with respect to the Abrahamic religions and their cultural groundedness that served as the key apparatus for their physical survival, identity reconstruction, self-less service and agency in resisting oppression in displacement. While the God/Allah of the Abrahamic religions was the center of worship and meeting of spiritual needs, African traditional religious values, beliefs and practices were intermingled with their Abrahamic faith, in creating a hybridized religious resource for meeting material needs in displacement. It was that hybridized resource that they drew on for survival, service and self-transformation, instead of purely ATR and cultural traditions or Christianity as Karenga & Tembo, (2012), and Hudson- Weems (1995) have proposed. It is evident in this chapter that the women utilized religion pragmatically as the most readily available resource for carrying out their roles as mothers and individuals who have a conscious commitment to the continued survival of their families and communities (Huston-Weems, 1994; Karenga & Tembo, 2012). They saw their spirituality as a unique source of power and identity marker. Even though they were placed more directly under pastoral power at various stages of the insurgency, their perception of their direct connection with the supernatural enabled them to successfully negotiate with pastoral power without losing their autonomy as culturally embedded subjects.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATION FOR THEORY AND PRACTICE

8.1 Introduction

BH insurgency has resulted in widespread displacement in Nigeria and over 50% of those displaced have been women. Yet, studies on the insurgency have been relatively silent about the experiences of displaced women. This led me to undertake this research to understand the issues that matter to IDW, how BH insurgency and displacement had impacted their lives, and the meanings they made of the experience of being displaced. My aim in doing this was to provide knowledge that may inform potential solutions to the issues IDW face. To my knowledge, this is the first in-depth social research from a gender perspective, with a primary focus on IDW in Nigeria. This is also the first study to explore women's perceptions of BH and their operational tactics.

I took a constructionist approach to this study, and explored the historical, cultural and structural factors that had shaped the women's experiences. Rather than focussing on individual women's accounts as truths in themselves, such accounts were interpreted based on the understanding that they were members of families, communities and a collective social system, which influenced both their understanding and their interpretations of events in their lives. Theoretical concepts from both continental African women's thinking and US Black women's thinking were used as key interpretive tools for this study. Black women's thinking emphasizes the ways that gender intersects with race/ethnicity, social class, religious identities and other factors in shaping the experiences of women of African descent. Foucault's work on power was also used to shed light on how the women, though oppressed, were able to negotiate power in helping relationships with their religious leaders, who were their major support at different stages of their displacement. The focus of this chapter is to discuss the key findings of this research, highlight implications for theory, and make recommendations towards the support of IDW and IDPs in Nigeria.

8.2 The experiences of IDW in Nigeria: Suffering, struggle and solidarity

BH insurgency created an arena for different forms of GBV against women and their families and the participants in this study were exposed to serious situations of insecurity, suffering and struggle for survival. In a region of the country already affected by poverty, and unequal educational and formal employment opportunities between men and women (NPC & ICF International, 2014), the insurgency entrenched poverty, and reinforced gender inequality and the objectification of women. From the time their homes and communities were attacked, through to the time they settled in different displacement settings, the women continuously suffered human and material losses, to the extent that their dignity and humanity was challenged. Most painful of the losses was the loss of their husbands and children, some to death at the hands of BH, some to BH abduction and some to hunger, diseases and accidents. Some of their children were subjected to infanticide at the point of delivery or during the course of the flights.

The women's suffering was compounded by weakened socio-political systems in Nigeria, and lack of tangible support from the government. For example, lack of access, be it for financial or physical reasons, to healthcare was a persistent challenge for the women both during their flight and after three years of settlement in displacement. With the exception of those in Jos who reported temporary support from the state government, participants in other settings felt abandoned or oppressed by the government. Having lost most of their usual family and community support systems, they generally presented themselves as 'a people on their own', who were invisible to the government. Although Nigeria is a signatory to the African Union Convention for Protection and Assistance of IDPs in Africa (Kampala Convention 2009) and had developed a National Policy on internally displaced persons (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2012a), the policy was yet to be fully adopted as at January, 2018, and that is the most current update on the issue. The policy draft has also been criticized for not identifying any specific government institution as responsible for addressing the needs of IDPs, and for inadequate funding for IDP issues (Ezeanokwasa, Kalu, & Okaphor, 2018). Hence as at the time of this study, there was no clear legal framework for government support of IDPs. As a result, NGOs, religious organizations and other

private individuals and groups were at the forefront in providing support and relief materials for IDPs.

The experiences of the women in this study were similar to those of other women who have experienced conflict-induced displacement either as refugees or IDPs in other settings (Akinsulure-Smith, 2014; Brun, 2015; De Waal, 2009; McKay, 1998; UNHCR, 2012), but their living conditions were no different from those of the poorest Nigerian citizens. This is despite the fact that the poorest citizens suffered neither BH attacks nor forceful displacement. Unemployment, lack of access to social amenities, overall poor living conditions, and social exclusion characterize the lives of the poorest citizens in Nigeria. The presence of non-displaced poor citizens in camps, who struggled to get some relief materials alongside IDPs, is testament to the fact that the displaced persons share some commonalities with the extremely poor in Nigerian society. The insurgency and the creation of informal camps where organizations occasionally sent relief materials, created an opportunity for the extremely poor citizens to find some relief, even though it generated conflicts between them and the IDPs.

In the absence of relief materials, the women's strategies for coping with poverty and hardship also reflect the coping strategies of the poorest people in Nigeria, who often rely on self-help and involvement in the informal economy. The reliance on religion and spirituality as a resource for survival is also common among Nigerians, especially the poor. There are no social welfare systems available for the poor in Nigeria, and the rich-poor gap continues to increase (Appleton, McKay, & Alayande, 2008). BH insurgency simultaneously compounded and exposed the structural violence, gender inequality and other social inequities which already exist within the Nigerian socio-political system. While it is important to address the immediate survival needs of IDW, durable solutions to their challenges will involve a progressive and systemic approach to addressing the fundamental issues of poverty and poor social infrastructure. Addressing these issues will create an environment where both displaced persons and non-displaced poor persons can earn a decent livelihood and live up to their full potential.

This study, however, goes beyond uncovering the struggles and problems of the IDW in Nigeria. It brings to the fore, the women's strength, and resilience. Despite all the losses they experienced, their accounts show that they were determined to survive,

transform their lives and craft a better future for themselves, their families and their communities. Such determination did not wane, despite their poor living conditions and uncertainty about their future. The study has positioned IDW in Nigeria as the heroines of the BH insurgency, who, adopted creative measures and made sacrifices, sometimes at risk of losing their lives, in order to ensure the survival of their families and communities. They did not present themselves as helpless or powerless victims. Due to their conscious awareness of the various sacrifices they made for their entire communities' survival, they demanded appreciation and recognition, even though they also recognized their need for material assistance. I saw them as women with great potential to contribute significantly or even drive positive change towards gender equality, poverty alleviation and peaceful co-existence in their communities and Nigeria as a whole. Their ability to adapt gender-roles and their sensitivities to the needs of their men, as well as their understanding of the broad issues that affect their lives position them as potential drivers of equity. Their predisposition towards forgiving their offenders and their ability to cross religious boundaries to become mutually supportive to one another, suggest that they can champion peace-building, if given the right social conditions.

Having presented the overall experiences of the women in this study, which encompasses their suffering and struggle to survive, as well as the powerful ways they contributed to their family and community survival, I now turn to a discussion of their gendered experiences as women and men's partners in struggle. This will be followed by a discussion of the issues arising from women's perceptions of their experiences of sexual violence.

8.3 IDW as men's partners and the complexities of gender relations

BH insurgency and displacement created a site for complex gender relations, simultaneously characterized by tension and solidarity. The women's continued support for their families, communities and their men even when BH attacks, displacement, and changing gender roles created opportunities for them to subvert men's authority, challenges us to rethink gender issues in our efforts for women's empowerment. The women's cooperation and submission to men in this study was a demonstration of their agency in decision making, which was partially shaped by their cultural understanding

of gender roles and their social reality. It is very tempting to assume that the women were tolerant of oppressive gender relations as a result of their lack of knowledge of what their rights as women were, but the study shows that they knew what their rights were in cultural terms. The analysis shows that the women acted not just based on their cultural knowledge, but based on practical wisdom. That wisdom however, was shaped by their commitment to build a better future for themselves and their children within a multi-level oppressive system that had very little or no plans for their future. It would be simplistic to assume that they reproduced oppressive patriarchal systems without paying attention to the structural factors that shaped and informed their apparent support for male domination. Such assumptions might represent censorship of what could be seen as an essential survival strategy. A popular Nigerian proverb says that *“wise people build bridges in times of crisis while the foolish ones build dams”*. In the midst of multiple oppression and systemic violence, the women in this study, as it were, built bridges in order to remain connected with their men and other members of their communities. Building dams, which would imply pursuing separatist agenda, would have isolated them and exposed them to further violence and oppression.

The fact that widows in this study maintained some sort of solidarity with their deceased husbands further reveals the complexities of gender relations in this study population. It shows that while women may not necessarily enjoy the oppressive gender arrangements in their relationships with men, their connection with the deceased, especially through their children, against wider structural violence and oppression, remains their most important social security. However, this study provides fresh insights that invite us to begin to think differently about widowhood in Nigeria. Rather than being a situation of complete victimhood and vulnerability, widowhood can also be enabling, as it can create opportunities for women to assert their agency and autonomy in decision making.

Although this study was focused on the experiences of women, it opens up a window through which we can see the negative impact of gender inequality on men and also begin discussions on more progressive ways of involving men in supporting and promoting gender equality at all levels. A critical analysis of the aftermath of gender inequality within the context of BH insurgency reveals that gender inequality eventually produces dead or otherwise incapacitated men, and suffering women. BH's targeting and killing of men and boys because of their gender roles as family heirs,

heads of households, and symbols of community strength raises concerns about the survival of men if both conflicts and gender inequality are allowed to continue in Nigeria and other African countries. The question of who is most affected by gender inequality becomes even more complicated if one considers that, more often than not, African women outlive their men (Cattell, 2003) even when there are no armed conflicts. While women suffer as a result of gender inequality, it is far better to live with difficulties and hope for a better future, than to be dead. The women in this study also presented themselves as being able to cope better with the challenges of displacement than their men. I conclude that while men appear to benefit from gender inequality, unfair gender arrangements do not serve the best interests of either men or women.

8.4 IDW and sexual violence

Interestingly, personal experiences of sexual violence did not appear to be a major concern for the participants in this study. While this may be reflective of a culture of silence around sexual violence issues in Nigeria, it was evident that other issues especially with regards to their survival needs took pre-eminence over concerns about sexual violence. Moreover, a combination of cultural and religious values provided the women with clear norms and prescriptions about women's sexuality and sexual protection. Rather than demonstrate concern for their own sexual violence experiences, the women in this study were more concerned about the sexualisation of their children by their men/husbands.

Sexualisation of IDW's children by exposing them to parental sexual acts constitutes additional trauma for the women who had already been traumatized and humiliated in different ways. It is general knowledge in most Nigerian cultures that children tend to lose respect for their parents if they observe their sexual acts. The norm is that parents should appear asexual before their children in order to model the sexual purity they expect of them. Hence, exposing children to parental sexual acts translates to modelling of 'bad behaviours' to them and by implication teaching them to engage in socially unacceptable or risky sexual behaviours, such as was reported in this study. Most mothers in Nigeria, make efforts to protect the sexual purity of their children since the outcomes of their sexual behaviours impact many other aspects of their lives especially their education, marital prospects and social mobility. Therefore, it creates a sense of

guilt, helplessness and a sense of failed motherhood among women when children's engagement in socially unacceptable sexual behaviours can be linked directly or indirectly to their own sexual behaviours.

What deserves attention however, is that the women blamed their children's sexualisation on their poor housing and poor living conditions. Although normal family life is often disrupted in displacement, interest in the sexual violence experiences of IDW or refugees seems to override interest or concern over their sexual needs and desires as well as those of their men. In the provision of housing for refugees and IDPs, there seems to be an unwritten assumption that adult displaced persons, or those who experienced traumatic events, are asexual beings or should remain celibate for the time they are in displacement. Hence very little attention is given to their need for sexual privacy. In addition, children's sexualisation in displacement settings has often been discussed in terms of child trafficking for prostitution, and sexual abuse by other persons outside their immediate families (Pittaway, 2008). The influence of camp living conditions such as housing on adult sexuality and the indirect impact of parental sexuality on the sexual behaviours of young people in camps has been largely overlooked. In fact, one systematic review on interventions aimed at preventing violence against women and violence against children (VAC) in humanitarian settings (Asghar, Rubenstein, & Stark, 2017) shows that while several interventions had focused on changing social norms on gender, few interventions gave attention to strengthening the household economy and improving livelihoods of affected families. Only one of the reviewed interventions considered the importance of the built environment in preventing household violence.

Such dehumanizing assumptions about displaced persons' sexuality and a neglect of IDP's sexual needs and desires, also seem to inform the ways in which issues of family planning and birth control are articulated and promoted. There seems to be a heightened interest in providing family planning services (Kidman, Palermo, & Bertrand, 2015; McGinn et al., 2011; Palmer & Storeng, 2016; Tunçalp et al., 2015; West, Isotta-Day, Ba-Break, & Morgan, 2017) in displacement settings, as a way of controlling birth rates because of the economic strains on families, and reducing high risk pregnancies in order to increase the likelihood of better maternal health outcomes. However the impact of living conditions such as housing on overall maternal outcomes seem to be ignored. Some scholars such as Palmer and Storeng (2016) have also interpreted pro-natal ideals

among IDW, who desire to procreate in order to replace dead or lost family members as cultural pressure for procreation. Such interpretations seem to ignore how structural factors, such as lack of old age social security, and therefore reliance on children to provide in old age inadvertently promotes such ideals in conflict and displacement settings. The findings of this study call attention to the way in which lack of sexual privacy due to poor housing in displacement settings increases tensions between IDW and their men in the context of their desires to express their sexuality and also procreate, and how such tensions sometimes degenerates to physical and sexual violence. Therefore, while reproductive health services, including family planning services and services for victims of sexual violence should not be neglected in displacement settings, both physical structures and living conditions that promote healthy adult sexual expression, and socio-political structures that create access to long term social security are equally important for improving the health and social outcomes of both women and children.

8.5 Empowerment of IDW

Another major contribution of this study lies in its adoption of an empowering approach to studying the experiences of IDW. It is very tempting to focus attention on the apparently abject situations of poverty, and overall poor living conditions of the women as well as the oppression and abuse they face, while neglecting their contributions towards their survival. It is also tempting to focus on problems while neglecting the opportunities that the insurgency created. Such a narrow focus would have produced misleading results, which could be both stigmatizing and disempowering to the participants.

Interviews and discussions were able to generate data which highlighted the women's definition of themselves as worthy human beings who have equal rights with other members of society. Even though such positive perceptions of themselves did not automatically translate to a general perception of empowerment by individual participants, they were necessary as building blocks for self-efficacy and confidence for future accomplishments. Their recognition of their human rights to life, space and protection indicates that they are able to significantly contribute towards finding solutions to their own problems.

This study also highlights the possibilities and opportunities that displacement created, which government and health care professionals can leverage on to improve the conditions of IDW. One important opportunity that displacement created, was the opportunity for both formal and informal education in the form of skills' acquisition for the women and their children. Displacement uprooted them from communities where female education was either prohibited or suppressed, and placed them in communities that were more favourable to female education, and where they could witness the benefit of education for women.

However, the opportunities created by displacement, especially in terms of 'women's empowerment' through skills' acquisition were not without their problems. A major shortcoming was the women's inability to use the skills they acquired to generate much needed income for their families. This is largely because such vocational training was often built on the women's weaknesses rather than their strengths. Because it was known that the women lacked formal education, they were trained in vocational skills so that they could be self-employed in the informal economy. However, it appears the trainers gave no consideration to the market, and the competitive advantage that established businesses in the city would have over IDW with new skills. Generally, the participants in rural host communities coped better than those in urban settings. This might be because they had access to farmland where all the members of their families could work together to produce food to support themselves, in addition to whatever they could generate with their new skills or through begging for work. On the other hand, those in urban settings, despite acquiring new skills, either struggled alone to use their skills or begged for work alone without the needed support from their men. An intervention that leveraged on their agricultural and farming skills may have yielded better results in the short term rather than relying on teaching them entirely new vocational skills which they would take time to develop. Building on their agricultural skills may have also increased the likelihood that their husbands would be more supportive of their families since most of them were farmers before they were displaced.

8.6 Implication of findings for theory

The findings of this study support both indigenous African women's thinking and black American women's thinking on the cultural groundedness of African women. They also

add evidence to the creative ways that African women resist oppression, either through individual agency or in solidarity with other women and men in struggle. This study also foregrounds the self-determination of women as portrayed in black women's thinking and the centrality of religion/spirituality in shaping their worldviews and impetus for selfless service. However, the intermingling of African indigenous values and Abrahamic religions in shaping these women's worldview reveals that the two distinct traditions have come to exist side by side, albeit in varied proportions in the women's consciousness of what it means to be both African and religious. Hence, any attempt to formulate theories that present the Abrahamic religions and African indigenous religion and culture as antithetical traditions will fail to capture the lived realities of women in Africa. This study shows that while the IDW's religious identities were built around the Abrahamic religions, their values and resources for daily living and social interactions were drawn from a combination of both Abrahamic religions and the ATR/indigenous values and worldview. What this implies is that the women pragmatically drew on whatever they judged as good and useful from each tradition in order to enrich their lives. What is also pertinent is that with the exception of the God/gods worshipped, Abrahamic religious values and the ATR values as utilized by the women in this study were complementary. Efforts to eschew everything western and foreign in a bid to develop Afrocentric theories for African women (Hudson-Weems, 1995) may not work. The position of some African feminist scholars such as Gqola (2008), Mekgwe (2008), Nnaemeka (2004) and Omolara Ogundipe in Lewis and Ogundipe (2002) is still pertinent. They propose the adoption of every meaningful, useful and progressive way of thinking that will aid understanding of contemporary African women's experiences, and give impetus for social action.

Appropriate social action for women's emancipation and empowerment however depends on the extent to which gaps between elite understandings and women's interpretation of their own experiences are closed. This can only be achieved through a focused research inquiry with the aim of understanding African women's perspectives and definitions of themselves, especially in relation to their power in motherhood. The findings of this study highlight a possible disparity between how African women might perceive themselves in terms of power and how they are presented by black women scholars such as Amadiume (2015), Karenga and Tembo, 2012, Collins (2000), Acholonu (1995), Hudson-Weems (1995) and Acholonu (1995). African women have

been presented as powerful through their motherhood and relational roles (Amadiume, 2015; Chilisa, 2012; Chilisa & Ntseane, 2010; Collins, 2000; Hudson-Weems, 1995; Ogun-dipe-Leslie, 1994; Ogunyemi, 1985; Oyewumi, 2002; Oyěwùmí, 1997) but the women in this study did not attach any sense of personal power to their motherhood or relational roles or the various roles they played during the insurgency. Their contribution towards their family and community survival, their mutual solidarity and sisterhood, as well as their resistance to oppression were presented as part of what they knew, and what they had to do to survive. Although they had a sense of accomplishment for not ‘failing’ in their roles, the wider impact of their actions and their potential as powerful women who could drive social change did not come through in most of their accounts. Some of the participants presented themselves as ‘small people’ in comparison to ‘big people’ in displacement. Even though the small-big demarcation signifies an acknowledgement of difference in experiences and circumstances, it speaks more to the perception of self with respect to power and influence. I argue that it is possible that IDW or women in Africa may not always see themselves as powerful in the same ways they are presented in black women’s thought. Personal perception of power in socio-political terms among African women is shaped by class and educational opportunities. As shown in this study, women without higher educational opportunities and higher social class and privileges are not likely to see themselves as powerful, just by virtue of their motherhood and nurturing roles. On the other hand, some of this study’s participants, who had the ability to speak English, saw themselves as more privileged, and more influential than those who could not. Hence a generalization that assumes that all African women are powerful through their motherhood and family roles may reflect an act of speaking for the generality of women, which is the same thing that white, Eurocentric feminism has been accused of. Over motherhood and relational roles, power for individual women in this study, was located in religion and spirituality, which includes their knowledge about the workings of, and their connection with the supernatural. They also found a sense of empowerment in their collective resistance to oppression. Simply put, they locate their power in religion, spirituality and connectivity or unity.

Another finding in this study that questions the assumption of power for African women through their roles as mothers and community healers is the persistence of gender inequality in families. Judging by the contributions the women in this study

made in their families and their efforts towards sustaining their communities, it may be understandable that scholars tend to position African women as powerful. However, in this thesis, I have shown how gender inequality is often rooted in birth families through unequal gender socialization and privileges, and how such inequalities negatively affect both men and women to varying degrees. Unequal gender socialization in families where women are often the primary socializing agents suggests that through their motherhood roles, women inadvertently establish gender inequality by socializing their daughters for survival and independence (Amadiume, 2015; Arndt, 2000; Collins, 2000) without giving the same level of attention to their sons (Collins, 2000). Unequal gender socialization also suggests that the women are either unaware of their power to change the status quo, or they are comfortable with it. The family, which is believed to be African women's domain of power, is the most basic of all social institutions, and any meaningful activism for social change has to begin with the families. Therefore, Black women's thinking should be able to carefully articulate the ways in which African women inadvertently disempower their sons while setting up their daughters, especially the poor and uneducated ones, for lifelong suffering and struggle through their motherhood roles.

Another issue that questions African women's power in motherhood is the persistence of armed conflicts in Africa, leading to the killing of men and boys, who technically represent women's most important old-age security. African women's motherly roles distinguish them as family and community binders, reconcilers and healers (Chilisa, 2012; Chilisa & Ntseane, 2010; Karenga & Tembo, 2012), but the extent to which they, utilize their healing roles in prevention as against cure in relation to conflicts is not clear. I note however, that while it is possible that some women are not fully aware of their power or how to use such powers to address the problem of gender inequality or prevent violent conflicts which continue to threaten the peace and unity of communities in Africa, this study underscores the fact that multiple factors work together to hinder or undermine women's contributions towards more equitable and peaceful societies in Africa. Such factors, as has been shown in this study, operate at all levels, beginning from birth families and communities, to the broader social political systems, both at national and global levels. Hence, at best, the women struggle to survive and make multiple personal sacrifices amidst multiple oppressions to craft a better future for themselves and their families and communities.

8.7 Recommendations

1. The findings of this study suggest that the problems of IDW in Nigeria can only be effectively addressed if there is renewed political will to address widespread poverty and create an enabling environment where everyone, including women, can grow and thrive. A key strategy is to promote both formal and informal education and vocational skills acquisition for both men and women and to develop infrastructure that would support small and medium scale enterprises, including agricultural enterprise. It is also by addressing the problem of poverty that Nigeria stands a chance of curbing BH insurgency. A recent study on ex-insurgents (Botha & Abdile, 2017) reveals that young people are mostly motivated to join the group because of poverty, as they are often promised large financial rewards. If young people are gainfully employed, poverty induced militancy may be less attractive to them.
2. In planning specific support and empowerment programmes for IDWs, those who are still married should be viewed as still having partners. Hence the government and other humanitarian organizations should emphasize household empowerment over individual women's empowerment. This will be more likely to foster cooperation between men and women and increase the likelihood that members of households would work together to support one another and reduce some of the tensions that arise as a result of men's unemployment. However, support should build on existing culture and praxis while new skills are introduced gradually over time.
3. Support for IDW should also include opportunities for them to share their stories especially the contributions they have made towards the survival of their communities. Their state and local governments should celebrate them for the sacrifices they made to save their families and communities. This holds potential to enhance their sense of self-worth and self-efficacy.
4. Humanitarian and government efforts to promote sexual and reproductive health among IDW should be holistic and should foster healthy sexual expression. This could include constructing IDP shelters to cater for the sexual privacy of adults.

This will not only promote cohesion among couples but also reduce the risk for sexualisation of children.

5. Religious leaders and groups played significant roles in providing support for the IDW and their families at different stages of their displacement. Therefore, efforts to provide continued support for them should be in collaboration with their religious leaders. Such collaboration should include information sharing among the different supporting organizations so that best practices will be deployed in meeting their spiritual and material needs.
6. Even though the recognition of the power of women, especially mothers, in Africa is a positive step, efforts to raise their awareness about their power at all levels, and their potential to contribute to positive social change is much more important. Women's conscious awareness of how their roles as mothers can potentially influence positive changes in the society is likely to spur them to more proactive actions towards gender equality and conflict resolution. To accomplish this, women and human rights activists should foster women's support groups across religious and class boundaries. Such support groups will create opportunities for information sharing, which will in turn begin to close the gaps between elite understandings and the realities of non-elite women in Africa. Fostering support groups will also increase the likelihood of collective action and activism, which has been shown to be a source of power for the women in this study
7. For a balanced understanding of the gender dynamics in displacement settings, there is need for in-depth research on the experiences of men in such setting.

On a final note, while there is an acute need to ensure physical protection, food security and accessible health care for IDW in Nigeria, there is also need to recognize and address the socio-political and structural problems that continue to create and reinforce hardship among women. In addition, studies on gender inequality, especially in Africa should not only focus on women's sufferings and disadvantaged positions, but they should be able to reveal or emphasize how gender inequality creates conditions in which men are killed indiscriminately, or incapacitated in times of difficulty and change. Such balanced approaches to studying gender and women's difficulties is likely to generate knowledge that will be applied for more holistic and gender inclusive interventions.

POST-SCRIPT

LESSONS LEARNT DURING AND FROM THIS STUDY

Introduction

This research project was first of all, a self-transforming experience for me. The field work in particular, presented several learning opportunities, as well as a series of ethical dilemmas which challenged my ability to make prompt decisions in keeping with the research ethics. Most importantly, I left the research field with a baggage of emotions, ranging from anger to frustration and helplessness, and I have come to believe that researching humans, especially vulnerable populations, may often call forth the humanness in the researcher, unless the researcher attempts the difficult, if not impossible task of ‘bracketing’ her or his humanness in the face of human suffering. In the next few paragraphs, I will share some of the ways in which I have been personally transformed by reason of carrying out this study, the lessons I learnt and some of the ethical dilemmas I had to work through. I will begin with my journey into and through constructionism and hermeneutic phenomenological research and the faith challenge that ensued.

My journey through constructionism and hermeneutic phenomenology

Before applying for the PhD, I thought I had adequate knowledge on how to carry out qualitative research, but it was not long before I realized that I had very little knowledge. However, the challenge I had with my research methodology did not so much arise from what I needed to learn in order to use it, but how such a methodology as well as its ontological positioning agreed or disagreed with my Christian faith. My very first challenge was accepting an ontological position on the relativity of truth and reality. That assumption was totally against my strong Adventist Christian worldview, and making such assertion, to me at that time, meant denying my faith. It took a series of readings and support from my supervisors for me to be able to understand the perspective from which that assertion was made. However, even though I gained

understanding of constructionism as an epistemological position, another challenge surfaced when I had to apply hermeneutics in analyzing some of my participants' stories, which dwelt on their religion. The participants talked about their faith in God as their major support and sustainer in their displacement experience. They also talked about miraculous answers to prayers, which are largely common and taken-for-granted narratives within my faith perspective. I could not imagine how I would not present those accounts simplistically as truths. Hence I had a difficult time in trying to strike a balance between analyzing those stories, purely as a Seventh-day Adventist Christian, or as a Seventh-day Adventist hermeneutic philosophical researcher. However, I was able to pull through that difficult journey by acknowledging that the research and the analysis was neither about my faith, nor about proving the truth or falsity of the participants' claims of faith and religiosity, but about using the hermeneutic principles to make sense of the stories they told about their experiences.

A thorough reflection on my experiences during the interviews equally enabled me to come to terms with the fact that interviews do not necessarily generate truths or objective realities. I also learnt, by experience, that both the interview context and the language of discussions influenced the type of data I generated. For instance, I had the opportunity of interacting with participants in different interview contexts and I observed a number of inconsistencies in their accounts. Some women who participated in both the individual interviews and the focus group discussions presented different versions of the same stories in the two interview contexts. They were more likely to provide some additional details, which often contradicted the accounts they had presented previously. For example, in a personal interview, one woman narrated that she was sent out of her brother-in-law's house because her children had a fight with her brother-in-law's children but during the focus group discussion she narrated the same story of being sent away but the reason she presented then was that another man gave her money to pay for her child's hospital bills. Contradictions were also common when members of the same family participated in the study and had to present the same story about their experiences.

Participants also contradicted themselves within the same interview contexts. For example, a woman narrated how her father was killed and burnt to ashes by Boko Haram, and as a result, her family could not find the dead body. But later, in the same interview, she narrated how her immediate family had a clash with her father's relatives

who were Muslims, because those relatives insisted that the father's corpse should be buried the Islamic way (burial without clothing or coffin). Another participant who repeatedly told me that she kept to herself and never socialized because she wanted to protect herself from sexual violence, also ended up narrating stories about her popularity in her new environment. Such contradictions in participants' accounts affirmed to me that interviews do not uncover truths in themselves but they are reflections of how participants decide to present themselves in specific contexts.

I also learnt that participants' perceptions about the identity of the researcher might also influence the kind of accounts they present during interviews or FGDs. In one of the interviews, the participant consistently emphasized that she would tell the truth, and would never lie or make false claims of things that did not happen to her because of what she would receive. This suggested to me that some IDPs might exaggerate their stories if they assume that the researcher is a humanitarian worker in a bid to evoke sympathy from the interviewers, and thus increase their chances of receiving more substantive support from the presumed humanitarian worker.

Transformed gender ideas

Another aspect in which I have been radically transformed through the conduct of this research is in terms of my ideas around gender. I started my PhD with a personal prejudice against men. I felt that women are always at the receiving end of gender inequality while men enjoy all the privileges that unequal gender arrangements can afford. However, while I still believe that gender inequality is highly disadvantageous to women, this research gave me several insights into some serious negative impacts of gender inequality on men. For example, my participants' stories consistently revealed that while women suffer because of gender inequality, men eventually kill their fellow men because they are perceived to be of superior gender and therefore the most valuable human resource in families and communities. Thus I take a position that while it is important to protect women from the consequences of gender inequality, men should also not be neglected. A concerted effort is needed to bring men to an understanding of what they stand to gain if there are equitable gender relations, especially in Africa.

My emotional struggles during and after the fieldwork

This research challenged my perspective about myself as a Nigerian woman. During the field work, the act of listening to multiple stories about some horrific experiences of fellow Nigerian women was particularly distressing. But while in the midst of those discussions with the women, I devised ways of coping and maintaining stable emotions so that I could provide the calm support the participants needed to complete the discussions. For example, each time I felt that a participant had spent a significant amount of time narrating the negative aspects of her experience, I tended to refocus the discussion by asking her if there was any positive thing she had learnt, or any positive experience she had had since the beginning of the crisis. This gave some women opportunities to process and direct their minds towards more positive themes, especially about the unexpected help they had received or the opportunities the displacement had presented to them. Such re-focusing relieved my own tension as well as that of the participant.

During the transcription and analysis phase of the research, it was very difficult to cope with the negative emotions generated by the women's stories. Because I repeatedly listened to the stories and became, as it were, immersed in their world, I was vicariously traumatized. Also, being a Nigerian woman, I personalized the women's experiences and felt angry and helpless most of the time. I also had an increased sense of personal vulnerability and defencelessness because I felt I was at risk for most of those experiences. I cried a lot during the transcription period and the initial period of the analysis. But I found so much help in talking over my feelings with my supervisors, family and friends. Presenting my initial research findings and experiences to different audiences also created an important avenue to express some of the negative emotions I carried as I worked through the transcripts. During those presentations, I felt as though I had invited other people to walk in my shoes, and sometimes, standing in front of the audience, and seeing some tearful faces as I shared the women's stories, gave me a sense of satisfaction because at those moments I felt I was not alone in the feelings I had concerning the problems of the IDW

Bonding with participants and ethical dilemmas

The very fact that I came to talk to the IDW made them feel recognized. A number of the participants, especially those in host communities, who did not receive frequent visits from humanitarian workers and the press, reported feeling honored by my visit. According to them, they had generally felt lost and forgotten in the society, but my visit and interest in their situation brought a ray of hope to them and a feeling that they were not totally forgotten. However, their gratitude and appreciation for my visit was also accompanied with a plea for help and a call for support. After repeated interactions with them, I realized that I had unconsciously developed a bond with most of the participants, and the memories of my encounters with them were not going to leave me in a long time. In fact, I do not think that I have really left the research field because, every transcript I read, every story I analyzed, and every news item about IDW in Nigeria, seems to invite me to do something to alleviate the suffering the women expressed in their stories.

While in the field interacting with and listening to the women's stories, I felt that it would be hypocritical to simply link or direct the women to available social services, because most of them already knew where to go for the services they needed but they told me that none of the services were affordable to them. Therefore, even though I often reiterated the fact that I was a student researcher without the wherewithal to solve most of their problems, and also refrained from making promises to them, I secretly sought out job opportunities for them. While I recognized my responsibility to maintain my boundaries as a researcher, I worked with a personal conviction that participating in research ought to be more beneficial to vulnerable individuals beyond compensation for time and transport. Based on that conviction, I was able to improve the source of income of one of the participants who was a hairdresser. After learning about her skills, I introduced her to all the ladies around me and she eventually became their permanent hairdresser. She made some good money from that connection and she still retained those customers even after I left.

However, there were times I left interview sessions feeling extremely guilty for not being able to do something to help a situation. One case in point was my last interview in Abuja. The participant was a twenty-five years old primigravida in her 36th week of pregnancy. She had never had any antenatal care or check-ups, she had no plans for her

delivery, and she had not been able to buy anything for the new-born she was expecting. According to her, she was just going to wait until she went into labour and hope for the best. I thought of several ways I could be of help but I could only give what we agreed upon as compensation for her time. I knew that the women in camps had generally relied on other displaced women to assist in their deliveries, but I was particularly worried about this woman because it was her first pregnancy. With my experience in midwifery, I knew all the possible complications that could arise during a primigravida's labour and the delivery, but I was helpless. For several days after the interview, thoughts kept flashing into my mind, "what if she dies during childbirth? You know that something could go wrong, why didn't you take her to the hospital?" I knew it was not my responsibility to take her to the hospital or pay her bills, but my emphasis here is that sometimes, it is very difficult to keep the professional line drawn and walk away from human suffering. Although it might not be humanly possible to address all the problems that one might encounter in a research field, my experience reveals how researchers can be drawn to the needs of participants despite acknowledging and clarifying to research participants that the research purpose does not include addressing such needs.

The extent to which I was drawn to the participants was however influenced by my embeddedness in the Nigerian culture. Hence most of the ethical dilemma I faced hinged around the struggle between responding to the participants' needs in a detached and official manner or responding according to what the culture demanded from me as a Nigerian woman and mother. For example, I encountered a situation during one of my visits to the camps, during which I was caught up in a struggle to restore a pack of food to a girl of about three years old. I happened to be in the camp on that day, when a family donated some takeaway packs of rice to the displaced persons. Because the quantity of the food was small, the leaders of the camp decided to distribute the food among the children but it was also obvious that the food would not be sufficient for all the children in the camp. Although the person in-charge decided to give to the very young children, it was difficult for him to organize the children and determine who was actually eligible for the food. As a result, so many children were struggling to get the food. Some of them ended up fighting over the food and pouring most of it away in their struggle. While I stood to take some photographs and get video coverage of the drama, I noticed that some bigger children had forcefully collected the food that was

given to a little girl, and the girl was crying and asking them to return her food which they were already sharing amongst themselves. I could not bear watching the child cry, so I went after the bigger boys and struggled with them over the food until I could return it to the child. At that moment it was difficult to determine how much involvement in the lives of the research participants and their families was appropriate, and how much of my own safety should be considered in a bid to meet the needs or address issues of concern to the research participants or their family and community members. Collins (2000) emphasized the application of the ethics of care which is rooted in African humanism, and personal accountability as central to the knowledge validation process. While Collins' (2000) ethics of care involves capability to show empathy, it did not address the extent to which empathy can drive action towards addressing human needs, which may arise in the process of generating knowledge.

My experience led me to a total agreement with the assertion that research ethics ought to be adapted to suit specific cultural contexts (Moosa, 2013). Some things might be ethically acceptable but culturally unacceptable in specific contexts. In the incidence I cited above, my role as a researcher did not include personal involvement to protect an oppressed child but it was culturally expected that I should take action to defend a child irrespective of the risks it posed to me as a person. Ethical principles are often developed based on the cultural perspectives of those proposing such principles, hence what is ethical in one culture can be totally unethical in another. Holliday (2013) argues that ethical prescriptions for conducting research which were developed in the west, may not always work in non-western cultures. Such cultural differences in what passes as ethical raises questions as to whether or not there should be any such thing as universal ethical principles. Kendall and Halliday (2014) observe that ethics in qualitative research is an ongoing iterative process. They further argue that issues surrounding the research paradigm, research context and individual participants, further blurs the line between what is considered as ethical and non-ethical research.

During the research, I encountered specific situations that challenged the universal principle of anonymity in research. Some of the research participants demanded that I take their photographs as part of the data because they believed they were presenting truths which they were ready to defend. In a previous study, by Wiles, Charles, Crow, and Heath (2006), some study participants wanted their names to be included in the study because including their names would give evidence to their boldness and

willingness to defend whatever they said in the interviews. Therefore, as Moosa (2013) pointed out, uncritical adherence to strict ethical standards without paying attention to the cultural and situational contexts of the research and the participants may actually hinder participants' rights to make a choice. Kendall and Halliday (2014) recommends an approach to ethics that recognizes the moral agency of the researchers and their capabilities to respond to the various ethical issues as they surface during the conduct of the research. This does not however negate the need for basic ethical standards in research but it calls for the development of ethical principles that allow a level of flexibility and researchers' freedom to make situational judgements.

Disempowering the vulnerable through research

My interactions with the participants and their indirect demands for help also gave me another insight about how the situations of the displaced persons have been overly problematized to the point of stigmatization and disempowerment. Despite all my explanations about the aim of my research, many of the participants still assumed that I had come to find out, or know 'their problems'. Hence when they volunteered to tell 'their problems', they automatically expected a solution. To them, efforts to find out IDP's problems implies a plan to find direct solutions to those problems. Based on my experience, I argue that research with vulnerable populations should intentionally explore for the strengths and achievements of victims which will serve as building blocks for future empowerment programs.

During the field work, I was intentional about redirecting the participants' minds to their strengths. I also took time to show interest in the things that really mattered to them and while refraining from flattering them, I was careful to admire their children, their clothes, and their creativity in making a home out of the few resources they had. I also bought some of the things they produced with their newly acquired skills, such as their beadwork. I accepted any gifts they willingly offered. One of the women offered to make an art design on a calabash for me and I accepted the offer. That was my way of appreciating their efforts and most of them expressed a sense of gratitude and self-worth afterwards. My understanding about how to relate to the participants with respect to receiving gifts was also born out of my rootedness in the Nigerian culture on giving and receiving. There is a popular cultural belief that it is only the dead that are unable to give or share things with others. It is expected that exchange of gifts between the rich

and the poor can flow in either direction. Rejecting gifts from the poor or socially deprived can be interpreted as condemning them to a state of death or worthlessness.

When to keep the boundary drawn

Although I believed it was my ethical responsibility to address some of the participants needs and interests as much as it lay in my power, I also recognized and refrained from getting into situations that placed me in the position of making decisions for them. For example, one of the participants who was under pressure from family, friends and even religious leaders to abandon or kill her child with special needs sought my opinion about her decision not to do what they said. She appeared to struggle with her decision to keep the child, probably due to the limited support she had for his care. I gave a listening ear, affirmed her decision and encouraged her without giving any advice. But it was a struggle for me not to give her my firm opinion which was for her to keep and continue to support her child. I had a premonition that she might eventually give in to the pressure to abandon the child. I felt, however, that giving her a firm opinion to not give in to the pressure of abandoning her child was making a decision for her, which would have implied insensitivity, knowing there were no publicly funded social services for her, and that I was not going to be there to support her in that decision.

Additional lessons for personal safety

My field work made me rethink safety and be proactive in adding additional safety plans in case of unforeseen circumstances. Although I had a detailed safety plan before going to the field, I got to know that unforeseen safety issues could often arise in the course of the field work. I had to go from Abuja to Pegi, a rural host community to conduct interviews. I lost my way to the community and it was very late at night before I returned to where I stayed in Abuja. That was a frightening experience for me, it also brought anxiety to my hosts because no one could contact me.

Part of my safety plan was to arrange for a single commercial driver to convey me to all the camps and interview locations but that arrangement was not feasible in Abuja. I also did not have access to maps in Abuja, hence I relied on people to give me directions to where the camps and other IDP settlements were located. Unfortunately, the person who gave me directions to Pegi underestimated the distance of the village from Abuja

city. The person thought that the camp was located in Kuje, a town located at the outskirts of Abuja, not knowing that the settlement was in Pegi village, about 20 kilometres away from Kuje. I had already started the journey from Kuje to Pegi on a commercial motorcycle before realizing that I was undertaking a very long journey away from town. In fact, the motorcyclist that carried me had also assumed that he knew the direction to Pegi, but I later realized that he did not know the way, when he started asking for directions from people along the way. It was late in the afternoon before we eventually arrived at Pegi village, and because I did not want to undertake a second journey to that village, I conducted interviews till evening. My phone powered down while I was there, and there was no power in the village to charge my phone. When it became dark, the villagers called my attention to the fact that the road to Pegi was very unsafe at night, and that was very scary. Even though I had the option of sleeping in the village to avoid travelling at night, I could not do so because sleeping over without informing my hosts at Abuja would have caused serious panic in the house. I therefore had to take the risk of returning to Abuja in the night. The few lessons I learnt from that experience are:

1. Always carry extra cell phone batteries or power bank when going to the field for research.
2. Have a time limit beyond which you cannot schedule or begin interviews if you are not sure of the safety of the interview venue. For example, do not schedule or begin an interview after 5pm if you know that the sun will set at 6 or 6:30 pm.
3. Make efforts to identify a research location before setting out for data collection or interviews and where the interview location is far, make prior plans to stay overnight to avoid dangerous night travel.
4. If you are not sure of the distance to a particular research location, leave early in the morning so that you can at least, arrive there before it is late.

In conclusion, I must state that I find it difficult to articulate and write all the lessons and experiences I gained during the course of this PhD research. It is a journey that challenged me to draw on every piece of previous knowledge and life experience I have had. It also challenged and transformed my self-understanding and my understanding of the realities that are external to me. It brought me to a point of humility, where I looked back and realized how much I have learnt but at the same time, realizing how much I

need to learn. If I have the opportunity to step back in time, to when I started this PhD journey, or repeat the process all over again, there are a number of things I would do differently. While I lack all it takes to repeat this study, I feel satisfied to be able to share some of the lessons I learnt with those who will undertake a PhD journey after me. Perhaps, they may benefit from my experiences and be better equipped for the journey.

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APPENDIX 1

SAFETY MANAGEMENT PLAN

SAFETY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR RESEARCH FIELD WORK IN NIGERIA

**Title: Exploring Internally Displaced Women's experiences and resources for
sexual violence prevention and response**

PERSONAL DETAILS	
Name	Aham-Chiabuotu Chidimma Beloved
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Level of Study	PhD
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Project Duration	16 weeks

STUDY LOCATION	
Study Population	Internally Displaced Women in Northern Nigeria
Country of study	Nigeria
Study Location	Jos Plateau State and Abuja
Nearest city	All study locations are in the city
Nearest Hospital (Jos) / Hospital Contact	Bingham University Teaching Hospital Jos Zaria Bypass, Jos, Nigeria +234 818 160 0465
Nearest Hospital (Abuja)	Wisehealth Services

	41, Adetukunbo Ademola Crescent, Wuse 2, Wuse, Abuja, Nigeria Phone Number: 094612463
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CONTACT PERSONS				
	Name	Address	Phone number	Email
Otago University Contact Person	Associate Professor Gillian Abel	Department of Population Health University of Otago, Christchurch	+64 (03) 3643619	Gillian.abel @otago.ac. nz
Field Contact Person	Mrs. Gloria Amara Njoku	Office of the Director, Center for Continuing Education, University of Jos. Gangare Rd, Jos, Nigeria	+234 8036096055	njokug@uni jos.edu.ng

FIELD ACTIVITY

This is a qualitative research using interviews and focus group discussions. During the period of the research, Four focus group discussions involving 24 internally displaced women will be organized in two different locations namely Jos and Abuja depending on the safety conditions of the area at that time. In addition, 30 internally displaced women and 2 internally displaced persons' camp officials will be engaged in interviews.

POSSIBLE HAZARDS AND RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH THE STUDY

The major risk associated with this study is that it is being undertaken in one of the most sensitive regions of the country in terms of violence and potential for armed conflicts. However, there are other risks associated with the travel and life in a developing country.

Hazards	Associated risks
Physical hazards	Risks for bomb-blasts and gun shots

Bad roads and risks associated with air travel	Risk for road traffic accidents
Social hazards	Robbery, loss of items, kidnapping, physical violence
Biological hazards (mosquito bites, food poisoning, Scorpion bites)	Risk for malaria, cholera, other infectious diseases and allergies
Extreme temperatures (Heat)	Dehydration, skin irritations

SAFETY PLAN

I have already secured health and travel insurance cover from Studentsafe international. I have also established contact with international SOS, and I have downloaded the iSOS assistance app to my mobile phone, which will enable me call for assistance and receive instant security alerts. I also have the security assistance number (44-208-762-8008) which I can call when I need to.

However, I intend to do the following, in order to ensure my personal safety during the period of the field work.

1. Critically observe my physical environments and assess for possible hazards before settling down for meetings or interviews.
2. Make every effort to keep away from areas with high risks for violence and insurgency attacks.
3. As much as possible, keep away from crowded areas such as market places.
4. Ensure that someone is aware of all my movements especially when I have appointment for interviews and notify my field contact person when I enter or leave a particular location.
5. Give the iSOS assistance details and my supervisor's contact details to my contact person in case of emergency
6. Use a specific driver whose contact details are known by my field contact person for all inter-city movements and appointments.
7. Send text messages containing vehicle registration numbers and departure location to my field contact person if I have any need to use a different vehicle/driver for my appointments.
8. As much as possible, prepare my own meals or only eat from restaurants with adequate hygiene practices.
9. Obtain necessary insect repellents and keep an emergency kit within reach at home.
10. Assess any lodging place for availability of clean water and sanitary facilities.
11. Ensure proper dressing for the weather conditions.
12. Display my students' ID at all times except when displaying it will result to any disadvantage.
13. Avoid unnecessary arguments, conflicts and meddling.

14. Stay in touch with my supervisors and provide weekly reports on safety issues.

IMMUNIZATION/PROPHYLAXIS AND PREPAREDNESS

Requirement	Status
Cerebro-spinal Meningitis Immunization	To be obtained in Nigeria
Malaria Prophylaxis	Available
Anti-histamine (Loratydin) tablets	Available
Adequate food and water supply	Arranged
Water purification solutions (Water guard)	Available
Sun shades	Available
Appropriate Clothing	Available
Emergency Kit	Available

EMMERGENCY RESPONSE

In case of any emergency situation such as injuries, sudden ill-health or security threat, I will call the iSOS for assistance where I am able to. I will also expect my contact person to initiate a response where I am not able to. She will be required to call the hospitals I listed above to send an ambulance or send my driver to convey me to hospital if need be. She will also be expected to call iSOS for assistance on my behalf, and notify my supervisor about the situation. If I am on transit, she will contact the nearest health facility for emergency care before while she activates an emergency response with iSOS.

If my arrival to New Zealand is delayed beyond one week, I will notify my supervisor about the situation but where I am not able to, my local contact person should be notified and emergency response should be activated.

ITINERARY AND RESIDENCE

I will take off from Christchurch international Airport to Muritala Mohammed International Airport, Lagos-Nigeria. I will board a local flight to Jos airport from

where I will be conveyed to the Jos residence – last building behind Rivers of Joy Church, Utan lane, Off Rukuba Road – Jos.

Most of the research activity will be coordinated from Jos but a 4 weeks' research visit will be made to Abuja and its suburbs. Arrangement for temporary accommodation in Abuja will be made while in Nigeria.

I am not certain about the actual venues of the focus group discussions, however, if I find convenient locations within the IDP camps I will use them, otherwise, I will arrange for venues in a convenient café or a park.

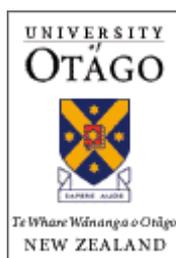
APPENDIX 2

INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

Information sheet

[Reference Number: 16/117]

[19 August 2016]



EXPLORING INTERNALLY DISPLACED WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES AND RESOURCES FOR PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

This information sheet is for you to read and decide whether you want to participate in the study or not. If you don't want to take part there will be no disadvantage to you and I thank you for thinking about it.

What is the Aim of the Project?

I want to understand what it is like for you to be a displaced women in Nigeria. There hasn't been any study yet which has looked at the conditions and the problems you face. I want to know what it is like to have been forced out of your homes and what your experiences have been, including any experiences of sexual abuse. The findings of this study may help our leaders and health workers to make plans on how to protect women in these conditions. I'm doing this study for my PhD.

What Type of Participants are being sought?

- Only women who are between the ages of 15 and 49 years can take part in this study.
- But, if you are between 15 and 18 years you can only take part if you are married, if you have had at least one child, or if you are living here alone without any of your parents or any adult that is looking after you.
- Only people who can speak English or Broken (Pidgin English) can take part in this study.

What will Participants be Asked to Do?

I will start out by having a group discussion. There will be four group discussions with different women. There will be between six and 8 women in each of the groups and I will be there to guide the discussions. This will last between 1 and 3 hours. I will ask everyone who takes part to not talk about what other people have said outside of the group discussion and to keep everything said confidential, but you should be aware that it is possible that someone may break confidentiality.

You will then be invited to take part in interviews where it will just be you talking to me. You can bring a support person if you want to. You don't have to tell me in front of anybody that you want to do the one-on-one interview. You can phone or approach me later. You don't have to take part in the interviews if you don't want to.

I would like to interview up to 30 women: 15 from your location and 15 from another location. You can be living in a camp or in a host community. You can choose where you want to be interviewed as long as it is in a safe place and every attempt will be made to preserve your anonymity.

You will be given 4000 Naira (approximately NZ\$20) as an appreciation for your involvement in the research.

The interviews will last for about 1 to 2 hours.

You are free to stop the interview or leave the group discussion at any time if you want to. You don't have to take part in this study and you can leave at any time with no disadvantage to yourself.

What Data or Information will be Collected and What Use will be Made of it?

All the discussions and interviews will be recorded. You will not need to use your real name for this study and you may choose another name to be used in the interviews. However, we will need to collect the information about where you came from (that is your State and ethnic group [*Yare*]), the kind of work you were doing before you became displaced, whether you are married and staying with your partner in displacement, your age, your length of stay in displacement and whether you live in the camp or another place in the community.

The discussions will be about your experiences as an internally displaced woman, what you think about your displacement, how your body as a woman has been protected or abused in displacement and what you or your current community can, or is doing to protect you from all kinds of violence or abuse, especially sexual violence in displacement. There are no set questions, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops. Consequently, although the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee is aware of the general areas to be explored in the interview, the Committee has not been able to review the precise questions to be used.

If you don't like any of the questions or you feel uncomfortable you can refuse to answer and also you may withdraw from the research at any stage without any problem or disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

The recorded interviews will be stored on a computer but will be deleted at the end of the study. Before then, they will be transcribed (i.e. typed out). The transcribed materials will be stored in a file on the computer. Both the file and the computer will have passwords that only I know. Sometimes I may need to print the transcribed materials but any printed information will be kept in a locked cupboard. The typed papers will be kept for a period of 10 years after the study has been completed.

The results of this study may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to make sure that your name does not appear anywhere.

If you wish to receive a report on the findings of the study you can indicate so on the consent form and this will be provided once the study has been completed.

Can Participants Change their Mind and Withdraw from the Project?

If you change your mind about anything you tell me in the interview and you want that thing to be removed from the transcript (or typed documents), you should let me know within one month of the interview. I will remove that portion of the interview without any disadvantage to you. My name is at the bottom of this form, and I will be coming to your community every two to three weeks within the next three months. During the interviews, I will tell you where you can find me to talk to me about what you want to remove. You can also phone me to let me know.

What if Participants have any Questions?

If you have any questions about this project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact me:-

Chidimma Aham-Chiabuotu

Department of population Health

University of Otago Christchurch

07088874500 or 08162003098

Email Address: ahach096@student.otago.ac.nz

You can also contact my supervisor for the research if you want to:

Associate Professor Gillian Abel

Department of Population Health

University of Otago, Christchurch

Ph: +64 (03) 3643619

Email Address: Gillian.abel@otago.ac.nz

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee, and the National Health Research Ethics Committee, Nigeria, Federal Ministry of Health, Abuja, Nigeria. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committees through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph +643 479 8256 or email gary.witte@otago.ac.nz). OR [email-deskofficer@nhrec.net](mailto:deskofficer@nhrec.net); info@nhrec.net; phone number: +2348065479926. Any issues

you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.



EXPLORING INTERNALLY DISPLACED WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES AND RESOURCES FOR PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

Consent form for participants

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:-

1. My participation in the project is entirely voluntary;
2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;
3. The recordings of the interview will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but the transcripts on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for at least ten years;
4. The questions will include your experiences as an internally displaced woman, what you think about your displacement, how your body as a woman has been protected or abused in displacement and what you or your current community can, or is doing to protect you from all kinds of violence, especially sexual violence in displacement. There are no set questions, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops.
5. I will be given 4000 Naira (approximately NZ\$20) as an appreciation for my involvement in the research.
6. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve my anonymity.

I agree to take part in this project.

.....
(Signature of participant)

.....
(Date)

.....
(Printed Name)

.....
Name of person taking consent

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee, and the National Health Research Ethics Committee, Nigeria, Federal Ministry of Health, Abuja, Nigeria. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committees through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph +643 479 8256 or email gary.witte@otago.ac.nz). OR [email-deskofficer@nhrec.net](mailto:deskofficer@nhrec.net); info@nhrec.net; phone number: +2348065479926. Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.

APPENDIX 3

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Consent process

Express gratitude to the participants for turning up and discuss the issues on the information sheets and consent forms again. Ensure that everyone understands what the study is about and emphasize their voluntary participation and confidentiality. Answer questions on any issues raised and obtain written or verbal consent as the case may be.

Begin with:

- *Thank you for agreeing to talk to me. I am really interested in hearing your stories of leaving home and surviving in this place. The reason why I am talking to you today is that I want to understand what it is like for you to be a displaced women in Nigeria. There hasn't been any study yet which has looked at the conditions and the problems you face. The findings of this study may help our leaders and health workers to make plans on how to protect women in these conditions. This study is part of what I have to do as a PhD student.*
- *Anything you tell me today will be kept secret, I will not tell anybody. All the things we are going to say will be reported as a group discussion so no body's name will be attached to any information.*
- *However, I will like to collect information about where you came from, where you live now, whether you are married and living with your husband and what you do for a living.*
- *I will have to tape the discussions because I need to be sure I get all the information and still listen to you. When we finish the discussions here, I will copy the taped information to my computer and store the information in a file that only I can open. I will later type the information out so that I will be able to read them but nothing will have your name at all. However, I may send the typed document to my supervisors (my teachers) so that they will be sure I am doing the right thing. Apart from that, all the typed documents will be kept in a locked cupboard that only I have the key. The voice records will be deleted as soon as I finish the study but the ones I typed will be stored for up to 10 years after my study*
- *Please it is not compulsory (Do le) for you to answer any question, and if you feel uncomfortable at any point in the study, you can stop the discussion and leave. Your refusal to join the discussion or termination of the discussion will not be used against you in any way.*
- *I know that it is very important to keep the discussions here secret so I ask everyone here to keep other people's stories secret.*

- *If you have any questions now or after the discussions, please feel free to ask me or call me on the phone number I have given you. I will also be working in your community for the next three months so any time you see me around, you can talk to me. Also, if there is anything you said and you no longer want me to include in the study, please let me know within a month of our discussion so that I will take it out.*
- *Also, after this discussion, I will want to talk to some people alone, it is also part of my study. So if you think you have some more things to tell me about your experiences on the things we will discuss today, just write “Yes or E” at the back of the consent form and I will arrange to come and talk to you later.*
- *When I finish collecting all the information I need, I will put them together and write up my findings. If you want me to send the result of my study to you, just write ‘SEND’ at the back of the consent form and also write the address you want me to send it to.*
- *You will be given 4000 Naira in appreciation for the time you spent in talking to me today*
- *Kindly check the consent sheet again. You can sign to show that you have agreed to take part in the discussion.*

1. Welcome

Introduce yourself with your first name (Chidimma) stating that who you are and why you are talking to them and say, *“I will like you to spend a few seconds to think of a beautiful name (not your real name) that you will want me to call you as we discuss today, then you will tell me that name. I will start from you (Point to the participant sitting directly in front of you) and we will move in a clockwise manner until the person sitting on your left has introduced herself. After that, I will like you to fill the sign-in sheet or I will help you to fill it, if you tell me what to write (sheets are to be used to collect demographic information as stated above).*

2. Explanation of the process

Ask the group if anyone has participated in a focus group before, listen to their responses and then offer explanations on what focus groups entail. Emphasize that participants are experts in their own experience and that the discussion is a learning experience for you.

Logistics

- Tell participants that the group discussion will last between one and three hours depending on what they want to tell you
- Inform them of their freedom to move around and show them the bathroom and exit points if you know or ask for it from those who know and show everyone.

- Serve the refreshments and allow everyone to relax then set the ground rules.

Ground Rules

Allow the group to set the ground rules but ensure that the following are included:

Ask the group to suggest some ground rules. After they brainstorm some, make sure the following are on the list.

- Everyone should participate.
- Only is allowed to talk at a time
- No one is allowed to shut anybody down or use abusive language
- Anything we discuss here must not be carried outside. Let us keep our secrets.
- There must not be any side-talk, anything you want to say should be said to the group not to one person.
- Turn off cell phones if possible or put them in silence

Ask the group if there are any questions before you get started, and address those questions.

3. Turn on Tape Recorder

- 4. Discussion begins.** Make sure that participants have ample time to think before talking and avoid making them feel pressured to talk. Also give each participant time to express herself in her own pace. Use the probes to make sure that all issues are addressed, but move on when you feel you are starting to hear repetitive information.

Questions:

1. Tell me what it is like to be displaced?
2. Tell me more about your experiences as displaced women?
3. Let us talk about violence, how often do you see women being hit or abused in any way in this place?(Probe for general and personal experiences of common types of violence either physical or sexual violence)
4. What would you do if anyone was violent towards you?
5. How would you protect yourself from violence?
6. What are some of the things that women in this place do to protect themselves as a group?

Probes for discussion

1. Meanings and interpretations of displacement and its impact on their lives
2. Socio-cultural influence on their experiences, perspectives and interpretations.
3. Inherent strengths and resources within the group to aid in survival in displacement

4. Sexual violence in different contexts (Home/intimate partner, and non-partner violence) and how they are responded to
5. Factors influencing sexual violence reporting and service uptake
 - a. *Availability of services*
 - b. *Attitudes of authorities and service providers*
 - c. *Socio-cultural influences*
 - d. *Characteristics of perpetrators*
 - e. *Type of violence*
 - f. *Personal interpretation of violent acts, etc.*

Ending

That concludes our discussion today. Thank you so much for coming and sharing your experiences me. If you have additional information that you did not get to say in the focus group, please feel free to call on me and tell me about it later.

Materials and supplies for focus groups

- Sign-in sheet
- Consent forms (one copy for participants, one copy for the facilitator)
- Extra biro pens for participants to sign with
- Ink pad for thumb printing (if necessary)
- Focus Group Discussion Guide for Facilitator
- 1 recording device
- Batteries for recording device
- Notebook for jotting down notes if necessary
- Refreshments

APPENDIX 4

WORKING THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

1. SUFFERING
 - a. Initial violence and extent of loss
 - b. Displacement including flight and refuge in mountains and bushes, survival in mountains, transportation, hunger, encounter with wild animals, infanticide, sickness and death, child care, repeat attacks and continued flights
 - c. Direct encounter with Boko Haram especially abduction, sexual violence and proselytization (bewitchment and forced marriage) and escape/rescue
 - d. Life in current settlement- Deprivation, unemployment, exploitative labour, Accommodation, educational challenges, emotional pain, health care including maternal health and delivery services, sanitation issues and personal dignity, social shock
2. Gender issues
 - a. Loyal wives and committed mothers (status of women before displacement including issues about female education, widowhood, employment, self-sacrifice, changing roles, pregnancy and delivery)
 - b. Unemployed polygamous men (men as the endangered species, prenatal ideas, unemployment, drugs and sexual behaviours including sexualisation of children, drug use and non-supportive behaviours)
 - c. Sexual violence (teenage pregnancy, date rape and abandonment, pressure for marriage, boyfriends and transactional sex)
3. SUPPORT
 - a. Church/religious organizational support
 - b. NGO support
 - c. The role of government and government officials
 - d. The role of the extended families
 - e. Support quality and perceived exploitation/dehumanization
 - f. The role of ordinary individuals and communities (Individual philanthropy, Contentions with other poor Nigerians including IDP policing and intimidation, host community support)
 - g. Personal and social protection issues and resources, including the opportunities presented by the displacement