

FACTORS FACILITATING MILITIA GROUPING AND ATTACKS IN NIGERIA AS IDENTIFIED BY PUBLIC UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ACROSS SELECTED GEOPOLITICAL ZONES

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Abstract

Using the Descriptive Survey research design, the researchers find out factors identified by university students as what facilitate the formation of militia groups and the ability of the groups to attack in Nigeria. The sample consisted of 360 students who were stratified on the basis of ethnicity (Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo) and were purposively sampled across purposively selected three geopolitical zones that had had preponderant militia attacks in Nigeria. Data were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire titled: Factor for Militia Grouping and Attack Questionnaire (FFMGAQ). The questionnaire was face validated and was found to have reliability coefficient of 0.72. Through statistically analyzed data, findings revealed that 59.1% of Hausa; 57.5% of Igbo and 74.1% of Yoruba students were of the opinion that youthful inactivity was the main factor facilitating formation of militia groups in the country. Other facilitating factors identified are religious incitement and poor economy. These were identified by 52.5% and 50% of respondents, respectively. On the other hand, 73.6% of the sampled respondents believed militia groups were able to attack because Nigerian security forces lapsed on their duties. Also, 61.3% blamed the opportunity to attack on government's indifferent attitude, while 59.4% blamed it on weak policies regarding regulations of weapons in the country. At the level of ANOVA analysis, respondents' opinions on reasons for militia formation were found not to significantly differ on the basis of ethnicity ($f\text{-cal } .161 > \text{Sig. value } .852$); just as their opinions on reasons for being able to attack did not significantly differ on the basis of ethnicity ($f\text{-cal } .017 > \text{Sig. value } .983$). Based on these, it was concluded that the identified facilitating factors for militia formation and attacks were common opinions of university students in the studied three geopolitical zones. It was therefore recommended that Nigerian government should minor its belief that the militias formed and attacked because of political sponsorship and rivalry and should rather emphasize solving the phenomenon with functional security forces.

Keywords: Unconventional militia, formation, attacks, factors, democracy

Introduction

An uninterrupted two decades of democracy (1999 to 2019) was officially celebrated in Nigeria on the 12th of June, 2019. In the official speech of President, Mohammed Buhari, certain facilitating factors for the current high incidence of insecurity were indicated. They were contained in the item 18 of his Democracy Day speech:

Most of the instances of inter-communal and inter-religious strife and violence were and are still because of sponsorship, or incitement by ethnic, political or religious leaders hoping to benefit by exploiting our divisions and fault lines.... (President Mohammed Buhari, www.punchng.com 13th June, 2019).

The above is Mr. President's opinion and possibly that of other political leaders in his caucus. The President's opinion cannot be undermined. He is a major stakeholder in Nigerian democracy and security. But there is need for more opinions from other stakeholders. This becomes important as militia grouping and attacks have become threats to Nigeria. There is need to sample, for example, the opinions of Nigerian youths who are closer to society and who are believed to be agile and dynamic. Closeness to society, agility and dynamism are identified as attributes of perpetrators of insecurity (Moris & Benjamin, 2009; Conklin, 2007). Asking the youths may help in securing Nigerian democracy.

Certainly, democratic governance predates 1999 in Nigeria. It rather started with British Colonial government that brought parliamentary system of government. The British's version was however weakened by January 1966 coup, the Eastern Region efforts to secede and become Biafra and the eventual civil war that lasted till 1970. In 1970, Biafra surrendered and the need to rebuild the nation became a challenge. Consequentially, the national threats from 1966 to 1970 justified emergence of military regimes that followed. This suppressed democracy for decades (David & Raymond, 2017). Except for the brief period of democratic governance between 1979 and 1983, democracy did not gain impetus until 1999. In 1999, Nigerians elected their first civilian president, in person of Olusegun Obasanjo. This marked the beginning of the current democratic dispensation which has been unbroken till now, 2020. But this did not come free of insecurity, agitations, and arm struggles. Nigerian democracy, like any other democracy, has been experiencing violent agitations, most in the form of militia attacks; on government forces and civilians (David & Raymond, 2017).

This seems to have increased since politics in the country became more polarized by religious and ethnic differences (Stephenson & Aron, 2015). There are even emerging speculations that cases of militia violence are taking more complex forms under the present democratic regime of President Muhammad Buhari (Shuaib & Gausu, 2016). Cases of insecurity are said to have spread across geopolitical zones that were not prone to violence before now (Wallace & George, 2016; Agboluaje & Makun, 2017). With the tempo of insurgency or attacks by militias, there is need for research-based understanding of the situation.

Militias are different from conventional forces or personnel in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Police and other paramilitaries. Technically, the former are unauthorized quazi-military groups of people who arm themselves and conduct quazi-military training, attacks, and insecurity, indiscriminately. Militia groups are not constituted by the state. Most time, they are anti-national security. They pose threats to government institutions, civilians, and international bodies. Government often labels them as terror group, bandits, guerrilla fighters, secessionists, militants, religious venoms, anarchists, and criminals. Militia groups are known to perpetrate attacks such as hijacking, bombing, kidnapping, banditry, secession, religious extermination, and all forms of unconventional warfare.

Proliferation of militia started in Nigeria with the emergence of Niger Delta Militants (Otobo & Eze, 2015). But things became more threatening with the emergence of other groups such as Egesu, Ooduwa People Congress (OPC) and Boko Haram; particularly in northeast Nigeria. The later started in 1995 under the co-ordination of one Mallam Lawal, though with no known violent engagements. It was initially named: *Shabaab Muslim Youth Organization* (SMYO), (Al-Habbeeb, 2014). With time SMYO came under the leadership of Mohammed Yusuf who transformed it to a religious militia (Otobo & Eze, 2015). In 2001, its name changed to *Jama'atu a Sunnah hlis Ladda'awatih wal-Jihad*, translated in English to mean *People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teaching and Jihad* (Al-Habbeeb, 2014; Ayorinde 2018). The name

'Boko Haram' is a mere alias it derives from its anti-western education stance. Yusuf died in 2009 and a new leader, Abubakar Shekau emerged. This militia has successfully carried out series of assassinations, murders, jailbreaks, random and coordinated bombings in the country.

Further still, in July 2018, the Nigerian Military reportedly discovered another militia called Hakika in North East Nigeria (Ayorinde, 2018). Hakika is said to be founded by one Yahaya Ibrahim. It operates around Ngwure in Yola South Local Government Area, Adamawa State and in Toto Local Government Area, Nasarawa State. The militia group is described to have controversial doctrines (Ayorinde, 2018). Though, no known incidence of militia activities has been attributed to Hakika.

The Niger Delta Avenger is another militia that was formed and operated in the Niger Delta region of the country. This group came at the close of President Ebele Goodluck Jonathan regime in 2015. The group fought economic war by destroying facilities for oil production and marketing, particularly in the region (Otobo & Eze, 2015). The Independent People of Biafra (IPOB) has also emerged as a militia group and has been declared a terror group by the Federal Government of Nigeria. IPOB has clear secession agenda and has kept its operation mostly in the South East geopolitical zone (Otobo & Eze, 2015). Most of the known members of IPOB are separatists of Igbo ethnic extractions. They have had military confrontations with Nigerian security forces and have made some political declarations and operations that present it as a potential threat to the nation.

There is a recent increase in the activities of the faceless Herdsmen Militia Group and bandits. These disorganized and unofficially named militia groups are allegedly said to be everywhere in Nigeria. They are faceless because there is no known official declaration by Nigerian government or otherwise that name them or profile them for identification, appraisal and tackling. Worst still, the activities of the militia herdsmen have been loose. They are allegedly carried out with no clear unit of command. However, there are series of claims of their presence and attacks across the country. Their alleged attacks have been terror-like and banditry in nature. They use irregular tactics marked by extreme brutality (Usman & Benjamin, 2018). Their activities have certainly brought worries for government officials.

These series of attacks have not helped the country and has not been good for educational activities either. In June 2019, the Executive Secretary of the Benue State Teaching Service Board, Dr. Wilfred Uji, disclosed to journalists in Makurdi that about 200,000 students in post-primary schools and about 1,000 teachers have been displaced by the activities of Herdsmen militia across Agatu, Guma, Gwer East, Logo, Ukum and Katsina-Ala Local Government Areas (LGA) of Benue State (Benjamin, 2019). Similarly, Senator David Umaru, representing Niger East Constituency of Niger State reported to newsmen that armed bandits attacked and murdered several civilians in June 2019 across Niger State's Kwaki, Barden Dawaki, Ajatawyi, Gwassa, Ajayin, Bataro villages (Benjamin, 2019).

The attacks are not limited to North West or North Central Nigeria, in recent time; reports indicate that South West states are already having their dose of the terror. For example, during the courtesy visit of Governor Adegboyega Oyetola of Osun State to Chief of Army Staff, Lt. General Tukur Buratai, at the headquarters of the Nigerian Army in June 2019, the governor complained to his host about the rising spate of kidnapping, banditry and armed robbery in his state (Kingsley & Badru, 2019). Then, a report has it that the Governor of Ondo, Rotimi Akeredolu, escaped being kidnapped when his convoy was allegedly attacked by kidnappers

along Akure-Ibadan Expressway in June 2019 (Benjamin, 2019,). Definitely, formation and attacks by militia groups are problems for the country.

Certainly, some militia groups such as Boko Haram now boldly attack Nigerian Military formations. In June 2019, Boko Haram attacked a military formation killing the commanding officer at Kareto Village in Mobebur LGA of Borno, just as in May, 2019, the same militia attacked with improvised explosive device killing a commanding officer and others along Borgozo-Mauli Road in Borno State (Olaleye, 2019). Militia actions such as these are now rampant across Katsina, Zamfara, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Tarabba, Niger, Borno, Kogi, Ondo, Ekiti, Osun and others so much that some locations and highways have officially become black spots, (Daily Trust, March 30, 2019).

Conflict and insecurity will always happen in modern societies (Giddens, 2001). Conflict Theory emphasizes this assertion. One of the prominent Conflict Theorists is Ralf Dahrendorf. Dahrendorf saw conflict (violent agitations, attacks and insecurity) as what happen in relation to competition for power and authority over limited or restricted socio-political, economic and religious opportunities. He maintains that authority and power can be craved by persons in positions of domination and by those in subjection. However, those in domination (such as government authorities) are often able to take decisions legitimately and issue commands while people in subjection (ordinary citizens) are unable. These status of capable as against incapable often bring conflict between the categories of people. Corroborating Dahrendorf, Haralambos and Holborn (2008) opine that the desire for power/authority among persons of dominant and subordinate positions bring about divergent and competitive interests, whereby, those occupying dominant positions of authority would desire maintaining a socio-political structure that sustains their dominance and those in subordinating positions would want to change the domination. The competition bound persons of the same category against those of another category. Thus, it can be submitted, theoretically, that different quasi-groups or conflict group will emerge to protect in-house opportunity or desire and to counter challenges or suppression from the outside groups such as government. Such is the case for grouping of militias against government authorities and the counter suppression from the authorities by grouped militia (Dahrendorf, 1959). This provides the background assumption for this study that militia groups form to counter suppression or perceived suppression from government authorities.

Beyond these assumptions, one is concerned to ask: What are the motivating factors for this raise in militia actions? This is part of what this research was designed to find out. In the opinion of the United Nation Organization (UNO), some militias have obvious motives (Golstein & Pevehouse, 2007). First is the *territorial claiming motive* which manifest as attacks to express dissatisfaction about where borders are drawn or to take control of entire areas within existing national borders. Militia attacks with these motives often result in secessionists, guerilla, Jihadists and rebel grouping and attacks. Second is *unilateral economic motive* which manifest as attacks against government to agitate for economic relevance, passage of ways and land ownership (e.g. crisis between herdsmen and farmers) and the right to economic benefits (e.g. the Niger Delta Militants). Another motive is *ethnocentrism* which manifest as communal clashes, banditry, genocide, secession and mobbing. Also, there is the motive of *arbitrary economic gains* which manifest inform of kidnapping, banditry, armed robbery, hijacking and cohort smuggling. Then there is the *religious and ideological differences motive*. This often yields unconventional militia attacks inform of Jihad, religious cleansing, and all forms of mega terrorism.

While these motives may have international applicability, there is need to find those applicable to Nigerian militia experiences. Sociologists and security experts have argued that reasons for violent grouping and attacks are often relative to societal variables (Giddens, 2001; Haralambos & Holborn, 2008; Hanlon, 2009; Curry, 2009; Conklin, 2007). It is believed that facilitating factors for armed grouping and attacks can be peculiar to societies within which the actions and grouping take place. With this belief, this study is designed to identify what Nigerian university students believed to be factors that facilitate recent increase in militia groupings and attacks in Nigeria. The study however focused only on public universities students across the selected geopolitical zones.

Research Questions

The following research questions raised were to guide the study. Questions 3 and 4 were transformed to hypotheses.

- (i) What factors do Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba university students identified as facilitators for formation of militia groups in Nigeria?
- (ii) What factors do Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba university students identified as facilitators for the ability of militia groups to attack in Nigeria?
- (iii) Do the factors identified by Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba University students as what facilitate formation of militia group in Nigeria vary on the basis of ethnicity?
- (iv) Do the factors identified by Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba University students as what facilitate attacks by militia groups in Nigeria vary on the basis of ethnicity?

Research Hypotheses

Ho₁: The factors identified by Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba University students as what facilitate formation of militia groups in Nigeria will not significantly vary on the basis of ethnicity

Ho₂: The factors identified by Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba University students as what facilitate attacks by militia groups in Nigeria will not significantly vary on the basis of ethnicity.

Methodology

The study is a survey of factors identified by Nigerian public university students as what facilitate increase in formation of militia groups and the ability of the groups to attack in Nigeria. The population for the study covered public university students only; private university students were not included. To access respondents across the targeted geopolitical zones, the researchers delimited the entire ethnic groups in the country into three, namely: Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo ethnic groups. Thereafter, samples representing the three ethnic groups were purposively sourced across purposively selected geopolitical zones, i.e. North Central, (NC), South-South, (SS) and North West, (NW). These geopolitical zones were purposively selected because of their preponderant experience of militia activities. One state was randomly selected from each of the three zones, making three states namely: Niger State, Delta State and Kaduna State. From each state, purposive sampling technique was used to sample 120 respondents. This sampling technique was used to make sure that the sampled respondents were those of the targeted ethnic origins. The sampling yielded 360 university students (120 each from Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba origins). The clusters of students used in the research were accessed at lecture rooms of public universities located in the three states. Also, the researcher ensured, through *pre-responses orientation* that the samples were truly those from the needed ethnic backgrounds and states.

A researcher-designed questionnaire titled Facilitating Factors for Militia Grouping and Attacks Questionnaire (FFMGAQ) was used to collect data. The instrument has three sections. The Section 'A' elicited respondents' bio-data which include their ethnicity, and residence. The

Section 'B' consisted of structured items seeking respondents' opinions on factors that facilitate formation of militia groups in the present Nigerian societies. The response options for items in this section include: Certainly, a Facilitator (CF), Hardly a Facilitator (HF) Not a Facilitator (NF). The Section 'C' of FFMGQ consisted of items asking respondents to indicate, among the provided options, factors that facilitate attacks by militia groups in Nigeria. The response options for this section are as those for the Section 'B'. Only data relating to CF and HF are computed for statistical analyses that are presented under result. This reduced the summation of respondents' responses on each factor (either for formation or for attack) to figures below 360 that supposed to be the summation of the number of respondents or sample. The instrument, FFMGAQ, was validated using *Content Validity Approach*. In addition to this, a reliability co-efficient of 0.72 was derived for the questionnaire, using test-re-test approach. This was achieved through administering the instrument on selected sample of students at a public university in North Central Nigeria, twice (test-re-test approach) and the derived data were analyzed using Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient statistics to get the reliability coefficient. With the help of trained research assistants, copies of the validated questionnaire were distributed across public universities in the selected three states of the targeted geopolitical zones. Collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (simple percentages) and inferential statistics, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Results

Research Question One: What factors do Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba university students identified as facilitators for formation of militia groups in Nigeria?

Table 1 Respondents' identified factors that facilitate formation of militia groups in Nigeria

Facilitating Factors	*Respondents/Responses							
	Hausa		Igbo		Yoruba		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1. Youth Restiveness	53	44.2	48	40	61	50.3	162*	45*
2. Technology (Social media)	27	22.5	41	34	29	24.5	97	26.9
3. Ethnocentrism / Incitements	36	30	72	60	21	17.5	129	35.8
4. Religious incitement/ Bias	76	63.3	49	40.8	64	53.3	189	52.5
5. Economic depression/ Frustration	59	49.5	63	52.5	58	48.3	180	50.0
6. Youthful Inactivity	71	59.1	69	57.5	89	74.1	229	63.6
7. Political sabotage/ Sponsorship	33	27.5	28	23.3	31	25.8	92	25.5
8. Favourably policy	19	15.8	36	30	23	19.5	78	21.6
9. Culture violence	25	20.8	34	28.3	18	15	77	21.3

* Note that only data relating to CF and HF on the questionnaire, (FFMGAQ) are summated, computed, analyzed and presented here. Responses indicated as NF (Not a Factor) were not computed. This reduced the summation of the number of responses below the supposed 360.

As indicated on Table 1, not less than 63.6% of the sampled university students across the geopolitical zones believed that youthful inactivity facilitated formation of militia groups, the most. Another 52.5% and 50% of the respondents, respectively, identified religious incitement/bias and economic depression as potential facilitators. Only 25.5% of them believed that militia groups formed in the country as a result of political sabotage or sponsorship. In addition, only 21.3% attributed the formation to presence of culture of violence in the nation.

Research Question Two: What factors do Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba university students identified as facilitators for the ability of militia groups to attack in Nigeria?

Table 2: Respondents' identified factors that facilitate attacks by militia groups in Nigeria

Facilitating Factors	Hausa		Igbo		*Respondents/Responses Yoruba			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1. Weak weapon regulation	74	61.6	69	57.5	71	59.5	214*	59.4*
2. Lapses of Nigerian security forces	82	68.3	96	80	87	72.5	265	73.6
3. Poor migration policies	54	45	52	43.3	65	54.6	171	47.5
4. Government indifference	65	54.5	73	60.8	83	69.5	221	61.3
5. Political instability	43	35.8	55	45.8	37	30.8	135	37.5
6. Unguided land areas	75	62.5	63	52.5	70	58.3	208	57.7
7. Militia expertise	37	30.8	21	17.5	28	23.3	86	23.8

* Note that only data relating to CF and HF on the questionnaire, (FFMGAQ) are summated, computed, analyzed and presented here. Responses indicated as NF (Not a Factor) were not computed. This reduced the summation of the number of responses below the supposed 360.

On Table 2, a good percentage of Nigerian university students, 73.6%, said militia groups were able to attack in Nigeria because of lapses from the national security forces. Similarly, 61.3% of the sampled students blamed the attacks on government being indifferent to the situation of insecurity. Yet, another 59.4% said the attacks were facilitated by weak policies that regulate circulation of weapons in the country. In another vein only 23.8% of the samples believed the militia groups were able to attack because of their military expertise.

Hypotheses Testing

Ho₁: The factors identified by Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba University students as what facilitate formation of militia groups in Nigeria will not significantly vary on the basis of ethnicity.

Table 3: Mean Scores of percentages for summated responses on formation factors

Ethnic Groups	*Identifiable formation	*Mean Scores on		Std. Deviation
Std Error	Factors	formation factors		
Hausa Students	*9	36.96	17.49	5.83
Igbo Students	9	40.71	13.27	4.42
Yoruba	9	36.45	20.58	6.86
Total	27	38.04	16.81	3.23

*N = Please note that the 'N' is not the number of respondents but number of itemized militias facilitating factors for the formation factors

**Mean = Means score of summation of percentages of respondents' opinions for formation factors

Data on Table 3 show statistics of the mean scores of the percentages of respondents' opinions on factors that facilitate formation of militia groups in Nigeria. As indicated on the Table, the sampled Igbo respondents have the highest mean score of 40.71 on the identified factors

among the 9 factors listed as capable of facilitating formation of militia groups in Nigeria. This is followed by the Hausa respondents (36.96) and the Yoruba respondents (36.45).

Table 3.1: ANOVA analysis of respondents' identified formation factors: H01

ANOVA	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Group	97.17	2	48.58	.161	.852
Within Groups	7250.85	24	302.11		
Total	7348.02	26			

Data on Table 3.1 indicate ANOVA analysis of respondents' opinions on the potentiality of facilitating factors for formation of militia groups in Nigeria. Based on the data, the f-value, .161 is less than the Calculated Significant Value (Cal. Sig. Value) .852. As a result of this **H0₁** was accepted as true. That is, the factors identified by Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba University students as capable of facilitating formation of militias groups in Nigeria did not significantly vary on the basis of ethnicity.

H0₂: The factors identified by Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba University students as what facilitate attacks by militia groups in Nigeria will not significantly vary because of ethnicity.

Table 4: Mean scores of percentages for summated responses on factors facilitating attacks

Ethnic Groups Std Error	*Identifiable Attack Factors	*Mean Scores on attack factors	Std. Deviation	
Hausa Students	*7	51.21	14.32	5.41
Igbo Students	7	51.05	19.10	7.22
Yoruba	7	52.64	18.70	7.07
Total	21	51.63	16.62	3.62

*N = Please note that the 'N' is not the number of respondents but of the itemized militia facilitating factors for attacks

**Mean = Means score of summation of percentages of respondents' opinions on the formation factors

Data on Table 5 present mean scores of the percentages of respondents' opinions relating to factors that facilitate attacks by militia in Nigeria. As shown on Table 5, the sampled Yoruba students have the highest mean score (52.64) on their opinions of the viability of the itemized 7 factors as capable factors facilitating ability of the militia groups to attack in country; this is followed by the Hausa respondents (51.21) and the Igbo respondents (51.05)

Table 4.1: ANOVA analysis of respondents' identified attack factors: H02

ANOVA	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Group	10.68	2	5.34	.017	.983
Within Groups	5520.44	18	306.691		
Total	5531.13	20			

On Table 6, the data show that the f-value .017 is less than the Calculated Significant Value (Cal. Sig. Value) .983. Based on this, H0₂ was accepted to be true. That is, the opinions of

Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba University students on factors that facilitate increase in the attacks by unconventional militias groups in Nigeria did not significantly vary on the basis of ethnicity.

Discussion

This study was conducted to find out what public university students identified as factors that encourage formation of the militia groups that perpetrating series of terrorism, banditry and criminal acts in the country. From the findings of the study, it was discovered that, the militia groups formed because youths of the country are not adequately engaged in positive activities such as employment or academic programs that would have keep them busy and made them shun criminality. This opinion was held by 63.6% of the sampled respondents. Perhaps, the respondents thought more employment opportunities and other opportunities that help self-development would have taken the time of Nigerian youths away from the business of militia formation and crimes. Steinberg (2002) describes youths as creative and agile set of people who have potentials for bad and good. As human beings, youths have needs – education, economic, social and intellectual needs. In situations of inadequate positive opportunities to meet these needs, youths, like any social beings, can improvise alternatives. The alternative may however be negative, most especially in society where crime deterrence is weak and economic is depressed (Gidden, 2001). This is a possibility as another 50% of the sampled respondents also identified economic depression and its consequences as potential reason why forming militia groups is lucrative and attractive in Nigeria.

Notwithstanding, just as the President pointed in his Democracy Day speech on 12th June, 2019, the sampled respondents, 52.5% of them, also believed that formation of militia groups in the country is energized by availability of pro-violence religious sentiments and incitements at every quarters. This has been emphasized in literatures such as Hallon and Tijani, (2017); Otobo, and Eze, (2015). This is applicable to the two major religions in the country. Historians have emphasized that religion is an impactful instrument of violent mobilization since the Middle Age (Beck, Black, Krieger, Naylor & Shabaka, 2003). Religious incitement breeds sentiments easily as it appeals to human's sense of reasoning and feelings. Religion is potentially a social phenomenon that can raise prejudice and stereotype, easily. This is because it works on believers' convictions (Lindsey, 2011). Thus, with presence of religious incitement and weak religious regulations by government, Nigeria can be prone to formation militia or terrorist groups.

Further still, the sampled university students across North Central, South-South and North West Nigeria where the activities of militias are preponderant (Haron & Tijani, 2017) believed the formed militia groups wouldn't have been able to operate if the Nigerian national security forces did not lapse in their duties. A substantial percentage of the respondents, 73.6%, of them, supported this opinion. Like this is the fact that 61.3% of the sampled youths believed the government was indifferent to the situation of insecurity in the country and the militias capitalize on this. The two reasons expressed here as reasons for attacks are complementary. Lapses in the efforts of the security agents can be a product of government indifference too. But this is unfortunate in a democratic state. The lapses and indifference factors may be why a militia group, the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) had the effrontery to over ran (attack) one of the Nigerian military formation that is located at Damasak and Katero areas of Mobbar Local Government Area of Borno State in June, 2019 (Hassan 2019, 5th, June).

No doubt formed militia groups would be able to operate when there are also no functional policies that regulate circulation of weapons in the country and when the country's landed areas are unguided, adequately. These were the opinions of 59.4% and 57.7% of the respondents

respectively. Sovereignty is important in national development and part of being able to sustain sovereignty is to be able to secure the nations' borders within and without; with functioning military and immigration forces. When these are weak, militia groups can operate unchecked and some can even threatened, or attempt secession. Perhaps this was part of what motivated the activities of a militia group called the Network for Niger Delta Republic Fighters (NNDRF) that threatened to declare a sovereign Niger Delta Republic in the mid of 2019 (Amaize, 2019).

Findings in this study established the fact that militia groups are being formed because of inadequacies in the socio-economic indices of the country. A situation of high incidence of unemployment is a socio-economic inadequacy. When citizens are not employed and there are political and religious experiences that are incisive, there is bound to be unused time for anti-social behaviors much of which easily transform to wiliness to engage in violence and terrorism (Goldstein, & Pevehouse, 2016). Certainly, it is one thing to form a militia group it is another thing for the group to be able to operate or carry out an attack. This study points to the fact that much of the formed militia groups in the country are able to attack because of inadequate security networking by the government conventional forces. This is can be improved with policies and actions from governments across levels.

Conclusion

Acts of insecurity that are perpetrated by militia groups, be it by known or faceless ones, can disturb development of democracy in any nation. Nigerian democracy cannot afford a grossly insecure society because preponderance of insecurity is a justification for military government. The opinions of stakeholders on issues relating to insecurity can go a long way in helping to improve the situation. The identified facilitating factors for formation and attacks by militia groups that are reported in this study are reliable and applicable in solving the problem.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- (i) The Nigerian government should come up with policies and programmes that can make Nigerian youths gainfully and positively engaged to shun opportunities for militancy and crimes.
- (ii) Government and stakeholders should make more inputs into mobilizing, motivating and challenging the personnel of the Nigerian security forces. They need to be more committed at decimating the formation and operations of unconventional militias in the country.
- (iii) Government and concerned stakeholders should be more proactive in implementing policies regulating circulation of fire arms and immigration in the country.

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