Article

Unable To Escape Societal Influence: Nigeria's Military in the Counterinsurgency War and the Imperative for the Securitization

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Abstract

The lethality of the insurgency against the Nigerian state by Boko Haram terrorists persists after a decade. Extant strategies by the military to defeat the insurgents have posed severe challenges, as the latter often find sympathetic cohorts among some military personnel. The universal theorization that the military institution is compact, cohesive, centralising, integrative, and functions under esprit de corps in its operations is challenged by the growing tension between balancing loyalty to the state and the ethnic origin of some military officers. This study departs from the poverty-centred narratives that predominate discourses on the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. The military is presented as the centre of gravity (COG) that warrants using critical factor analysis (CFA) in assessing its effectiveness in the insurgency war in Nigeria because infiltrations of cultural or other mundane issues can fracture its operational efficiency. Primordial and state fragility theories were used, and the data was generated through qualitative sources that also involved snowballing techniques. The study reveals the erosion of social capital and the unprofessional conduct of some military officers linked to their cultural influence. These social variables negatively impacted Nigeria's military successes in combating insurgency, hence the imperative for the securitization of the military institution.

Keywords:
Military institution, ethnic diversity, securitization, moles, insurgency.

Introduction

The characterization embedded in Finer (1962), Janowitz (1964), and Johnson (1962) that the modern army is a monopolistic organization characterized by a "centralized command, hierarchy, discipline, intercommunication, *esprit de corps*, and Huntington's insistence on the corporate character of the military and Lasswell's conception of the military as a specialist in the management of technical violence (Huntington 1957, Lasswell 1941, Finer 1962, Johnson 1962, Rapoport 1962, Janowitz 1964) is in influx within Nigerian military (Adekanye 1979, 2008). The military by its characterization emerges in the context of insurgency war as the centre of gravity and the only institutional mechanism through which the state can deploy an effective monopoly of the use of force within a given political community. They

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are serving not only as a unifying command that sustains other security agencies but also providing the kinetic energy that is usually deployed in the counterinsurgency war if the insurgents are driven ideologically.

Sufficient evidence abounds that political clientele, corruption, ethnicity and ethnic conflicts, communal conflicts, religious conflicts, economic failures, and lack of transformative education have seriously crippled Nigeria's political institution to build a united front (Kuper and Smith 1971, Joseph 1999, Osaghae 2002, Iwu and Ajisafe 2021, Osaghae 2018, Enweremadu 2012, Olomojobi 2013, Sani 2007). However, the identified variables are not sufficient to explain why the Boko Haram insurgency has remained resilient and why they find sympathetic cohorts within the military. The worry is that the military as a compact organization that functions under *esprit de corps* is in short supply in Nigeria, therefore posing a severe danger in the counterinsurgency war against Boko Haram.

The failure of non-kinetic and kinetic strategies to assuage or beat the insurgents into surrender or total defeat raises questions about their efficacy. The gap lies in finding an explanatory paradigm that weakens the kinetic strategy adopted by the Nigerian military in the counterinsurgency war. More worrisome is that military barracks are attacked, movement of personnel, and operational strategies are decoded by the insurgents including the attack on Kuje prison which shows that the seat of government at Aso Rock is within the radar of the insurgents.[i] This situation is worrisome and raises existential threats as competence, hierarchy, precision, and loyalty to the State, the *raison d'etre* for a military institution is affected. In this case, the military is no longer a neutral agency of the state and is a suspect lacking the monopoly of the legitimate use of force. We argue that a military institution is comparable to an airborne aircraft, where one faulty component will result in total malfunctioning of the other components resulting in air disasters and colossal losses.

This research is the first attempt to argue for the securitization of the military based on the observed moles in the military. It provides an analytical context in which securitization as a strategy is advocated to contain societal influence on the military institution. Certain questions emerge: How effective were the extant strategies used for the counterinsurgency in Nigeria? What circumstances provided the basis for arguing that socio-cultural and religious contexts have impinged the efficacy of the Nigerian military in the counterinsurgency war with Boko Haram in Nigeria? Can the securitization of the military institutions, contrary to earlier approaches, serve as an effective strategy for counterinsurgency in Nigeria's multi-ethnic society? Analogically, these questions are sufficiently unpacked. The rest of this research contains the methodological discourse, theoretical discourse, the military phenomenon and its implication in the counterinsurgency against Boko Haram, securitizing the Nigerian Military in the Counterinsurgency war with Boko Haram, discussions of the findings and conclusions and recommendations.

Methodological Discourse

Secondary data were triangulated with interviews for this article. We adopted snowballing research techniques, because of the proverbial security problem associated with military operations and their study (Adekanye 2022: 435) in which case some retired and serving military officers involved in the insurgency war against Boko Haram including indigenes of Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe northeastern Nigeria were identified and interviewed. Critical factor analysis (CFA) that locates the Nigerian military as the centre of gravity (COG) in the counterinsurgency was used in the analysis. Identified as the centre of gravity (COG), inductively we illustrate that allowing societal variables to erode commitment to hierarchy, compactness, and *esprit de corps* of the military will seriously hamper its success in defeating Boko Haram in the counterinsurgency war.

Theoretical Discourse

Primordial and constructive including state fragility theories provided explanatory paradigms for this study. Primordialism which takes its origin from anthropology is known to emphasize primeval cultures (Geertz 1963), and this has implications in the phase of modernity where societies are expected to construct their beings and values to contain contemporary challenges. Primordialism therefore is challenged by scholars who argue that originality or autochthony of culture as emphasized by the primordial school is even constructed (Anderson 1983, Appadurai 1995, Cohen 2013, Ranger 1985, 1996, Lentz 1998). State fragility emerges as an explanatory paradigm because of the relapse to traditional institutions and other cultural organizations by citizens of third-world countries for social, economic, and psychological security in the absence of their states to respond to their needs. These failures rejuvenated their consciousness towards their primordial origins. So, the failure of African states to adequately provide for economic and social security has raised the relevance and search for alternative institutions in which case indigenous or local institutions emerge to fill the gap (Albert, Georges, & Wuyo, 1995, Zartman 2000, Iwu, 2015). There is a problem where societies insist on their primordial cultures and religion as having autochthonous existence and refusing to yield to changes. This in the context of postcolonial societies in Africa informed what Ekeh (1975) referred to in his work as two publics where he wrote about the primordial realm and public realm attributing morality to the primordial realm and the public realm as amoral public.

Those who insist on their religion and culture as more salient thereby refusing to yield to values constructed to build strong institutions, especially among the military personnel cannot but affect the military's cohesiveness and operational capacity. One major problem affecting the loyalty of the African military is divided loyalty with reverence to primordial beliefs that affect the unified command structure of the military. The primordial beliefs have successfully been challenged by the constructivist school (Anderson 1983, Appadurai 1995, Cohen 2013, Ranger 1985, 1996, Lentz 1998) on the ground that what is called tradition or culture is imagined or constructed to meet human emergencies in their historical evolution. This notwithstanding Africans hold their traditions as tenaciously autochthonous which often run counter to professional obligations and, therefore, create institutional weaknesses. The critique against the primordial theory is that it fails to tell us why those who kill and destroy in the defence of their primordial attachments sometimes revolt against resolutions made by their primordial institutions. The debate notwithstanding, people have asserted primordial cultures and customs as the basis for rejecting or accepting policies that have to do with their cosmologies. Insisting on aligning with primordial institutions as against modern institutions created to deal with contemporary challenges has obvious security implications as it weakens security structures. This context is understood against the background of state fragility which is often referred to as a state weakness that is argued could result in terrorism (Coggins 2015, King & Zeng 2001).

The relevance of state fragility theory emerges as we connect some of the cultural and religious dispositions of some members of the Nigerian army as creating moles in the military institutions. The resultant effect is the institutional weakness that manifests in corruption, lack of commitment to the state, betrayal, (Coggins 2015, King & Zeng 2001), and in the Weberian sense, affects the State's claim of the monopoly of the use of force within a given territory. State fragility theorists argue that states in Africa suffer legitimacy crises resulting in a shaky security structure regarded as the most critical political good (Holsti 1996, Rotberg 2004, Chomsky 2006). Being referred to as a soft state (Myrdal 1968), and lacking "stateless" (Fukuyama 2004) enforcing rules becomes problematic exemplified in the inability of uniform men to send someone with a uniform and a gun to force people to comply with the state's law. State fragility in the words of Kenneth Menkhaus is where there is a terrorist base, safe havens, terrorist financing, recruiting, transnational criminal bases, and spillover threats are widespread (Menkhaus 2013 cited by Mcfadden 2014: 2), and the state is largely crippled in tackling the problems.

State fragility theory is relevant in providing explanations for institutional weakness or failures in Nigeria (Osaghae 2007). It also raises the awareness that the compactness and *esprit de corps* needed can be eroded resulting in advantages for the insurgents in the counterinsurgency operations. This is against the background that the Nigerian state is constantly in a contest with the sub-state actors over the monopoly of the legitimate use of force. In some instances, the Nigerian government officially conceded by awarding contracts for the protection of critical infrastructures like oil and gas pipelines to militants that terrorize the Niger Delta region.[ii] This raises the question of who should claim successfully the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory as posited by Weber (1957:78), even though government action is understood as a negotiated pact. The import of these theories is that cultural or mundane issues are injurious to military cohesiveness which is an important variable in counterinsurgency war that manifests in state fragility.

The military phenomenon and its implication in the counterinsurgency against Boko Haram

Highly worrisome is that the Nigerian military is recruiting from an environment where less educated segments of society are exposed to cultural and religious stimuli. The importance of education was downplayed in the recruitment into the military[iii] during the colonial era especially in some parts of northern Nigeria when the colonial administrators considered martial dexterity or "warrior tribes" more dependable. This situation continues as it is not downplayed in the recruitment of the rank-and-file of the Nigerian army and other security agencies today (Adekanye 1979: 153). Sufficient evidence suggests that the Nigerian military operates in extreme patrimonialism (Dudley 1973, Siollun, 2013). For Weber, cited by Linz and Stepan (1996: 51), patrimonialism, and in the extreme case, sultanism tends to arise whenever traditional domination develops an administration and a military force which are purely personal instruments of the master…… Domination is primarily based on the discretion of the ruler and, therefore can be distinguished from every form of rational authority. Patrimonialism creates opportunities for extremist elements in society to infiltrate the security institutions in Nigeria. This is seen against the background of the reaction by retired General Alani Akinrinade to the penetration of religious influence as a serving soldier in the Nigerian military in the 1970s. Responding to the question of whether the army has been destroyed just like other significant institutions in Nigeria said:

all the time when I was in the armed forces, I felt like I was in a family setting. Ethnicity, religion, and so on, merely crept on us. The most atrocious thing that I noticed suddenly was an Army Officer talking about religion, about going to pray, about not drinking beer, and not drinking alcohol. It was a shocker to most of us. As Chief of Army Staff under President Shehu Shagari, I discovered that some people suddenly realized they could use influence outside the army to get whatever they wanted. We were not used to that. That was an anathema to the army (Akinrinade 2019: 10-22). Adekanye (2006: 151), quoted a similar statement made by David Ejoor, a retired Major. General saying, "Today, the North seems determined not only to dominate the Army but also the political and economic life of the nation."

This idea was raised by Morris Janowitz in an analytical manner that is highly convincing. He explained the phenomenon of political-military elites using an aristocratic model. Writing on the classic pattern of the aristocratic family he shows one family supplying one son to serve in politics and another to the military. Therefore, birth, and family connections, ensure that the military will embody the ideology of the dominant groups in society. Political control is civilian control only because aristocratic and military groups have a common interest. In this case, the military obeys the order of the government because it is a part of the government (Janowitz 1964: 111), or as Finer (2017: 4) said, the military often works on government from behind the scenes. This subtle romance can be gleaned from when a former chief of army staff, Maj. Gen. Hassan Usman Katsina was turbaned the new *Ciroma* of Katsina by his father, Sir Usman Nagogo, the Emir of Katsina, on November 22, 1974, before his retirement in 1975 (Adekanye 2006: 177). This is what Pye (1962: 69) refers to as "images of the politicians in uniform."

The circumstances described above cannot but erode the discipline, hierarchy, centralized command, *esprit de corps* (Finer 2017: 7-12), and its corporate entity (Huntington 1957: 10) that create a sense of organic unity and consciousness in the military. Morris Janowitz had argued clearly that the social structure of the new nations predisposes their military to political activism (Janowitz 1964: 2). The way B. J. Dudley presents the consequences of the erosion of the hierarchy of command in the Nigerian military warrants being quoted extensively.

He argues that we might expect two possible outcomes should the military be unable to maintain its organizational boundaries: first, the military is unlikely to be capable of cooperating as an institutional whole: second, and conversely, the different strata would react differently to the stimuli making for boundary fragmentation. Whether the military would be able to maintain its boundaries or not would depend on the cleavage - stratificational pattern of the military and the impulses from the surrounding environment – and principally the nature and structure of political and economic conflict found in the society (Dudley 1973: 92).

This problem was raised by Risa Brooks in her critique of Huntington's postulation of the objective control of the military which affirms an apolitical military that to her raises more problems than it seeks to solve (Brooks 2021). The critiques notwithstanding, a professional soldier is conscious of meddling in politics as that would affect their combat readiness therefore military professionalism remains the trust of civil-military relations in advanced democracies though largely lacking in Africa (Shulman 2012). Nigeria's first military coup of 15th January 1966 interpreted as an ethnic struggle for hegemonic over-lordship resulted in a counter-coup of 29th July 1966, referred to as a "return match" (Dudley 1973: 134). Dudley (1973: 164) argues that in many respects, the two coups were the outcome of the unbridled competition between the rival élite groups…. which sees politics as zero-sum and not positive-sum terms, with the players drawn at any given time in a set of binary opposition. In each instance, the interests of the élite were generalized by its members to be congruent with the interests of the collective groups with whom they are identified. As argued by Dudley (1973: 96), the introduction of the quota system as the basis for recruitment into the Army helped to raise this consciousness of separate identities.

Recruitment into the military has traditionally followed three-prong approaches such as the individual-nationalizing approach, the ethnic-pluralizing approach, and the ethnic-dominant approach. The individual-nationalizing approach common in developed countries which emphasizes the competence and professionalism of the individual to be recruited (Morgan 2001: 2) is downplayed in preference for an ethnic-pluralizing approach that seeks to prevent one privileged group from dominating others. This paper argues that the ethnic-pluralizing approach reinforces what Brubaker (2003: 166) refers to as ethnopolitical entrepreneurs that evoke diversities to call ethnic feelings into operational terms, thereby generating tension between societal decentralization that seeks to reflect and perpetuate dissimilarities of custom, language, and religion (Adekanye 2008: 20-23). Balancing the tension between loyalty to the State and ethnic variables like customs, language, and religion creates problems for the essence of the military organization, which is centralizing and possibly integrative.

B. J. Dudley raised this worry when he argued that "if the quota system was thought politically desirable, its feedback effect on the military was far from being integrative. Before the system was introduced, recruitment and mobility were thought to be dependent on the individual's ability. With the quota system, the suspicion soon grew that this mattered less than who was one's patron. The unintended consequence of the political decision to introduce a quota system was the politicization of the military (Dudley 1973: 96)." To ignore these historical developments in the analysis of the military cohesiveness and operational success in the counterinsurgency war in Nigeria in contemporary times amounts to academic error and must be avoided. This concern was raised by Finer's (2017: 71) argument that the military is imbued with the consciousness of a separate identity that is different from, and yet juxtaposed with civilians and politicians but does not remove it as a purposive instrument rationally conceived to fulfil particular objectives. Morris Janowitz, also argues that "because military orientation is not profoundly religious, it

presses for the elimination of religious conventions which thwart economic development (Janowitz 1964: 78)."

The obvious implication of both primordial attachment and state fragility as the theories argue is seen against the backdrop of a problem it raises in creating an institutional-driven army separate from religion and cultural influence with unflinching loyalty to the Nigerian state and *esprit de corps* required in the counterinsurgency war in Nigeria. The recruitment into the Nigerian army is different from American or British society, where recruitment into the army is not influenced by religious or ethnic considerations (Abrams 1962: 153). Objective control of the military by civilian government as espoused by Samuel P. Huntington is missing in Africa where there is a mixture of political-cum-religious-cum-economic-cum-social identities that combine and continue to shape military officers in Africa. The analysis of the retired military personnel as an emergent political class reveals that retired senior military officers retain military attachés and at the same time act as religious, economic, or political gladiators. This phenomenon that intertwines military and politics in Nigeria's political system is problematic. On the one hand, the retired military officer sustains his/her link in the military and on the other operates in a political system essentially used as an instrument of oppression, marginalization, looting of public funds, nepotism, favouritism, prebendalism, ethnic aggrandizement, and support for group's religion in Nigeria.

Unfortunately, research on insurgency in Nigeria has largely glossed over whether the corporate character and *esprit de corps* in the military shape its effectiveness in the counterinsurgency war. The first state-sponsored research on Boko Haram was published in 2015[iv] and in 2017, edited books that appeared as a gallant celebration of the military and the person of the Chief of Army Staff (Ibrahim, Bagu, and Ya′u 2017, Nzekwu 2017, Ashafa, and Jibrin 2017, Adejoh and Adisa 2017, Mohammed and Abdullahi 2017, Nwolise 2017). Though the edited books have other important information such as the economic-cum-poverty narratives, religious radicalization, human rights violations, civil societies, internally displaced persons, lack of motivation of the military officers, inadequate fighting weapons, child recruitment by the Boko Haram, girls' involvement in a suicide bombing, and vulnerable communities but the underlying motive gleaned from the books were largely to show the ineffectiveness of the previous regime to effectively counter the Boko Haram insurgents. Another deficiency was that none of the contributors attempted a study on whether there were internal contradictions arising from mundane issues like religion and culture within the military itself that could impinge on the effectiveness of the counterinsurgency war in Nigeria. Of course, it is expected that books sponsored by the Chief of Army Officers would present the military as a neutral agency of the state that has the technical competence to manage violence.

Interrogating the social backgrounds of the military officers in counter-insurgency in multi-diverse societies is essential because, as shown by Huntington (1957) and Finer (2017), the military in developed countries, mainly the USA and Britain, is erected upon a foundation that respects the rule of law and is devoid of internal cleavages primarily defined by religion and ethnicity such as Nigeria (Sani 2007, Olomojobi 2013). In what appears like an appeal, Mamdani (2002: 774) advised that "Islamic organizations will have to consider the separation of the state from religion seriously. Political governance in Nigeria before 1999 was dominated by a direct rule model of civil-military relations under northern dominance (Liebenow 1986: 250-254), yet the military has not pretended since the return to democracy in 1999 to show that it is the ultimate guarantor of democracy or what is known as watchdog model of civil-military relations (Liebenow 1986: 250-254, Sanusi and Olatunji 2023: 8),[v] that is showing in actions that anything done against them (albeit to the top hierarchy) can lead to a coup d'etat.

Display of an extremist posture by some military officers in Nigeria is documented (Mazrui 2006, Olomojobi 2013, Hill 2010). This type of case has been found in other climes only that they have robust institutional mechanisms to identify and checkmate the development of extremism in the military. Bleuer (2012) highlighted instances of extremism in conventional military institutions in the Soviet Union, America, and India, in her article titled "Muslim soldiers in non-Muslim militaries at war in Muslim Lands." For example, in the article, she pointed out that Soviet Muslim soldiers, particularly those from

the Central Asian republics, were performing poorly and were unreliable or prone to desertion in the fight against the *Mujahideen*. This resulted in the withdrawal of troops from Central Asia from Afghanistan. In the case of America, the author stated that the Muslim members of the American military after 9/11 felt compelled or motivated to state their loyalty as American citizens to the extent that one Muslim chaplain in the US Army, Captain Muhammed Adgur-Rashid anticipating a mobilization and further deployment of the US forces to Muslim countries, sought advice from a prominent American Muslim scholar and a Qatar-based Islamic scholar, Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, that approved his participation in the upcoming military campaign. However, the author further showed that through a hyper-vigilance of the US military, charges of treason were brought against two Muslim converts on board a United States Ship Ranger during the Operation Desert Storm era in 1991. The author showed that two American soldiers who converted to Islam murdered two fellow service members at the beginning of the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Both men had previously exhibited discontent regarding Muslims serving in the US military in a war against Muslims.

A similar issue resulted in a shortfall in Indian army recruits meant for a war against Pakistan. As a result, the first Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, instituted an investigation into the underrepresentation of Muslims in the Indian military, the findings revealed a significant number of Indian Muslims declining to remain in the army or rejecting to fight in a war against Muslim dominated Pakistan "in the years after partition and the emergence of India and Pakistan as independent states" (Bleuer (2012: 499). Great challenges emerge in the Nigerian situation that does not have a surveillance strategy like the United States of America. We argue that the military constitutes the hob in the kinetic approach to counter-insurgency war and a singular act of circumventing the corporate and intergroup communication by a disloyal soldier can cause a defeat of a nation in a counterinsurgency war. Therefore, cultural influence on military personnel and institutions should be treated as an existential threat and the need for securitization. As would be shown later there is compelling evidence of erosion of the corporate character of the Nigerian military in the counterinsurgency war.

Securitizing the Nigerian Military in the Counterinsurgency War with Boko Haram

Securitization emerges because of the strategic nature of the military institution, in which case default from the military can pose an existential threat. Unfortunately, securitization as a strategy in counterinsurgency operations has not received attention from the bourgeoning literature on insurgency war in Nigeria (Onuoha, 2014, Olukolade 2015, Nwolise 2017, Pate and Joseph 2017, Usman 2017), except Njoku (2022) whose article raised concern for the securitization of the funds from civil societies and individuals in northeastern Nigeria.

Securitization, as a concept emerged during the Cold War when even conversations supporting liberal ideology championed by the United States of America were seen as posing existential to Eastern Europe that was inclined towards state socialism and authoritarian rule (Wæver 1995: 58-62). Its reemergence as a Post-Cold War construction by the Copenhagen School in Denmark centred around the work of Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver (McDonald 2013: 71). These scholars extended the study of security to include cultural, religious, social, and political issues even when expressed as a "speech act" (Buzan, Wæver, De Wilde 1988, Wæver 1995: 55, Williams 2003). Speech acts as a concept in communication theory (Entman 1993: 53) enabling political leaders to frame security problems to appear more salient. In this case, non-military security concerns began to be examined as they can constitute an existential threat. Securitization provides political leader(s) an avenue to label a particular issue as posing existential threats even if it does not attract universal appeal. In other words, social issues including religion are measured against the backdrop of whether (1) they are a threat; (2) the threat is potentially existential; and (3) there are the possibility and relative advantages of security handling compared to non-securitized handling (Wæver 2011: 473). It is argued that securitization would not have been possible if the existential threat did not reach "a point of no return" (Buzan, Wæver, De Wilde 1988: 25). Wæver (1993:

23) was clear in his position that "the main unit of analysis for societal security is thus politically significant ethnonational and religious identities.

Securitization focuses on individuals, groups, and society, even as members of a military organization making it remarkably different from the earlier conception of security. Using the Israeli attack against Hamas in Lebanon as an example Mutimer (2008: 34) argues that our common expectation of war has always been that it is waged by states against another state, but in this instance, Israel waged war against Hamas, a non-state group in the territory ostensibly belonging to another state. It was in this idea that Walt (1991: 212) had written that, "Security studies may be defined as the study of the threat, use, and control of military force. It explores the conditions that make the use of force more likely, the ways that the use of force affects individuals, states, and societies, and the specific policies that states adopt to prevent, or engage in war." Bello (2017: 59) in her studies of how migrants pose security threats identified symbols, languages, and facts that are translated into the perception of threats. The work recommends the securitization of migration and the role of non-state actors in the management of borders. As international borders and the environment can be securitized so also individuals whose strategic role in the military can cause a collapse of the military institution. Operationally, Wæver in Buzan et al, 1998: 54) stated that in naming a certain development a security problem, the "State" claims a special right, one that will in the first instance, always be defined by the State and its elite…...which enable power holders to use the instrument of securitization of an issue to gain control over it. By definition, something is a security problem when the elites declare it so. Just as Major General Qassem Soleimani, the Iranian top military commander's actions were rationalized as posing existential threats to the USA and hence were securitized, President Donald Trump justified his action by ordering his elimination (Kjær 2020).[vi]

One critique against securitization is that it raises legitimacy, social capital, or credibility questions against the government's claim to security as survival (Balzacq 2011: 35), especially in Third-World countries. This conjecture cites violations of human rights by political leaders from the developing world. On this, this article argues that the critique failed to acknowledge that absolute freedom is a mere philosophical principle that loses its tenacity when such freedom causes harm to others. Humanity is individually or collectively permitted to interfere with the liberty of any member of the society for self-protection and the State has the prerogative to protect her citizens against any action inimical to collective existence (Mill 1991: 14). Seen against this backdrop, the Canadian authority embarked on the securitization of the Muslim civil societies perceived by some as suspect communities (Ahmad 2020).

It is based on the evidence that supports that the unique character of the military as an institution with a hierarchy of command is affected by mundane issues thereby largely eroding its *esprit de corps* that necessitates using critical factor analysis (CFA), as illustrated by Mcfadden (2014), to analyse the Nigerian military as the centre of gravity (COG). The paper argues that the military is the hub upon which countering insurgency depends. It is the point against which all energy will be directed to bring about an enemy's defeat (Mcfadden 2014: 6). Mcfadden argues that proper analysis of an adversary must be based on the best available knowledge of how adversaries organize, fight, and think, make decisions and understand their physical and psychological strengths and weakness. CFA as expounded by the author shows that the State actors try to understand an adversary's critical capabilities (CC), critical requirements (CR), and critical vulnerabilities (CV). CC draws attention to what strategically should contain the context of a given scenario, situation or mission to be identified as a COG. CR is the essential condition, resource, and means for the critical capability to be fully sustained. CV is the critical requirements or components that are deficient or vulnerable to neutralization, interdiction, or attack to achieve decisive results. We argue that the Boko Haram insurgents can use CFA to study the military having seen it as COG. The moles in the military and the defections after military training are evidence that the Boko Haram insurgents have some successes in gathering strategic information from Nigeria's military organization. So, infiltrations into the Nigerian military institutions through information gathering and sponsoring of members who later defect after military training is evidence that Boko Haram insurgents understand the military as COG and target it to reduce risk and cost.

Discussion of the Findings

Nigeria has relied on kinetic and non-kinetic operational strategies for counterterrorism. Deploying a kinetic operational strategy, the Nigerian army adopted Operation Restore Order (ORO 1, 11, and 111) in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states in sequential tactics. Unable to achieve its aim, the government declared a State of Emergency in 2013 and 2014, code-named Operation *Boyona,* to flush out Boko Haram from the urban cities. Later, Operation *Zaman Lafiya* (Operation live-in-peace) was introduced, which sought the assistance of other security agencies in the fight (Minimah 2015, Abdulhamid 2017). The strategies were based on what was known as the Army's Responsive Offensive Doctrine (ROD).[vii] ROD was considered ineffective because it was not suitable to handle unconventional warfare as its preparedness to respond to emergencies was far below 20 percent (Adegbamigbe, Adebisi, Osoba, Oluokun, and Ipaye 2017). Introduction of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in late 2014 and early 2015 and local vigilantes and hunters known as the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) to protect rural areas, routes, and supply of intelligence to facilitate information gathering about the Sambisa Forest that remains elusive to the Nigerian military (Adegbamigbe 2017, Nwolise 2017), relocating the command centre to Maiduguri, the appointment of an indigene of Borno state as Chief of Army Staff, and establishment of the Operation *Lafiya Dole* (A compelling peace) anchored on an operational strategy known as Decimate, Dominate and Occupy (DDO) marked the first phase of the operational strategy. The second phase came with the introduction of robust non-kinetic operational strategies. The non-kinetic strategies include Operation Safe Corridor, established in 2015 to actualize the Deradicalization, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration (DRR) of the repentant or surrendered Boko Haram members, and the establishment in 2017 of the North East Development Commission (NEDC) to address the economic challenges in Northeast Nigeria. The non-kinetic strategy shows a succumb to the pressures from civil society organizations and the academia who argue that poverty and lack of education are responsible for insurgency in the North East and therefore government should target providing such needs. This debate was countered by the former governor of Borno state, Alli-Modu Sheriff accused of founding Boko Haram, who argues that "he has no blame because only less than five percent (5%) of indigenes of Borno state were literate (Oluokun 2014: 22).

Unemployment and poverty are common buzzwords in Africa (Iwu 2015). This Marxist's perspectives on the 'haves' and 'have-nots', are reinforced by citing the Arab Spring of 2011 linked to the wider spread of poverty and discontent which upturned Tunisian, Libyan, and Egyptian governments. Also, the three poorest regions in Syria (Deir Ezzor, Hassaka, and Raqqa) were cited as the cradle of ISIS's consolidation (Wickham 2013, Alexander 2015). The Marxist perspective was justified by citing that Utz Muhammad Yusuf, the leader of Boko Haram leader who before his capture had an 80-kilometer farm used for charitable works to provide employment and benevolence to the poor to the extent that his activities were regarded as a 'state within a state (Oyegbile and Lawal 2009: 68, Nzekwu 2017: 85-86) and even drew from a stronghold of 540,000 followers in which he struggled for control of those children with their parents. Those who emphasized poverty as a causal factor have blamed it on the inability of the Nigerian state to provide for the well-being of its citizens. Anchoring on state-fragility theorization, institutions of the state are attacked and undermined because they failed to curtail or eradicate sources through which resources meant for the common good are mismanaged. Two important points explained by state-fragility theory are first that the Nigerian state is unable to provide for the economic well-being of its citizens and protect them against attack by non-state actors. Secondly and most importantly are unable to contain corruption and subversion within security organizations. These have provided opportunities for Boko Haram to deploy primordial links to penetrate and cause moles within the military known as the centre of gravity in a counterinsurgency war.

The military is aware that unequal power between it and insurgent groups creates an advantage for the government forces; therefore, social capital is a fundamental tool in countering insurgency. But the question is why some military members chose to corrode social capital by looting monies meant to purchase weapons to fight the insurgents. Is it, not a concealed motive to place the insurgents in a more

advantageous position and to demoralize the armed forces fighting the war? To the extent that some of their leaders have openly been charged with the looting of funds meant for the purchase of military weapons. These unprofessional behaviours within the military in the face of counterinsurgency should be seen as existential threats. More worrisome is that the looting has been reoccurring. These reoccurrences would have necessitated the securitization of the Nigerian military. A more recent case show that Lieutenant General Tukur Yusuf Buratai, Chief of the Army Staff who took over the command of the military in 2015 to decimate Boko Haram was also accused of looting money meant for the execution of the counterinsurgency war.[viii]

Social capital is very germane in a military institution. Its shortfall is seen against the backdrop of "the lamentation by some soldiers charged for mutiny who appealed to Nigerians not to let them die, accusing their officers of being brutally corrupt, making them work under dictatorial regimes of generals operating as a bunch of thieves (Adegbamigbe 2008: 19 and 24). The rank-and-files of the Nigerian military refusing to fight Boko Haram was blamed on the lack of motivation and weapons (Odebode, Soriwei, and Chiedozie 2014: 12, Suleiman, 2014: 16-23). Refusal to fight means allowing to be captured by the insurgents. There is no other thing than to see the consequences as an existential threat. The charges against Air Chief Marshal Alex Badeh, the Former Chief of Defence Staff, for N3.97bn fraud (Adesomoju 2019), Adesola Amosu, a former Chief of Air Staff, for N50 billion fraud (Ezeamalu 2016), and Kenneth Minimah ex-Army chief for N13bn arms fraud (Nnochiri 2021), and the recent report that Nigeria spent over eleven (11) trillion on insecurity in the last twelve (12) years (Onyedinefu 2022) without decimating the insurgents raises the need to reexamine counterinsurgency strategy adopted, and as argued by Petirin, an ex-Defence Chief, the war requires "total defence" (Bamigbola 2023: 10).

What creates moles in the military is not limited to corruption but extends to the recruitment pattern in the army. Alade and Kilete (2014: 64-65), wrote that Boko Haram has spies in the military and other security agencies. The retired Generals in Nigeria's military for this reason called for a crackdown or surveillance in the military. The moles in the military resulted in the killing of over 700 soldiers in 18 months (Ajala, Odeniyi, Tolukolawole, Afolabi, Ojo, Abraham, and Bamigbola 2022: 3). Surprisingly, Suleiman (2014: 20) also reported that soldiers jump out of armoured personnel carriers, (APCs) when confronting insurgents because they want to donate the APCs to Boko Haram. In some cases, some soldiers outrightly refuse to fight Boko Haram. An example is reported of a soldier who escaped from detention in Kogi state after he was arrested for refusing to fight Boko Haram (Odogun 2022: 7). These problems are seen against the recruitment pattern into the military. Ojuroungbe (2023: 3) writes:

When you build a mansion on a very weak foundation, it is like you have not built it all…...the recruitment pattern of Nigeria's security forces is very weak, rotten, and unhealthy. There is nothing good in the recruitment process of our Nigerian security men and women. In Nigeria when you want to do recruitment, they will not even do any profiling, they will just go to one politician and he will give them someone for the vacant position. The politician will bring some of his political thugs. It is politicians that just give the list of criminals that have worked for him before and those will be recruited into our security forces.

We can see religion, culture, and ethnicity infiltrating a military institution (Kilete 2017: 4), influencing even posting in the military (Ibrahim 2009: 14-25). This issue was raised by Senator Bala ibn Na'Allah who represented Kebbi South under the All Progressive Congress (APC) in 2021 who argued, "any person who knows the recruitment process into the armed forces will know that …. the people recruited based on consideration other than the established procedure are the ones causing problems" (Bilasanmi 2021: 33). Flawed recruitment was mentioned by one of the respondents to this study who stated that *"even after the so-called ethnic pluralizing model adopted and the quota system, at the end of the official recruitment exercise, the Chief of Army Staff usually bring in his persons undermining any procedures, to the extent that their academic and ethnic origin are not considered. Some of these people disappear after military training, and such issues are not reported to the public."*

A study by Raji (2017: 359) in 2010 reveals that the insurgents who were attacking Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state, ran to Damaturu, the capital of Yobe state, under the protection of the security forces, arguing that it was like a "live and let live" arrangement between the security forces and the insurgents. Similarly, the soldier who killed himself, having been discovered to be collaborating with ISWAP in Yobe in April 2022, is another serious problem if confidentiality is considered necessary in the fight against Boko Haram (The Nation 2022: 2). Kilete (2017: 13) wrote a statement by the Director of Army Public Relations, Brigadier General Sani Usman saying that the people of Magumeri village connived with Boko Haram to attack their village. The attack on Metele military base in Borno state by Boko Haram, where over 100 soldiers were killed, was blamed on the role of the "fifth columnists" within the Nigerian army (Nigerian Tribune 2018: 2). Badeh (2015), a former Chief of Defence Staff posits that the activities of the fifth columnist in the military and other security agencies which Tade (2018: 20) refers to as "the moles in the military" who leaked operational plans and other sensitive military information to the terrorists, combined to make the fight against the insurgents particularly difficult. Another respondent expressed worry that *"it appears that Nigeria's military is now the one that is running away from Boko Haram, which should not be."* The respondent's worry is not farfetched because, as Baiyewu, Morgan, George, Ayantoye, and Abraham (2022: 3) wrote, terrorists attacked 16 military bases in 18 months, killing 800 soldiers including the ambush to dislodge and disarm Nigeria's military of their important vehicles like seizing of two Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles.

Conclusion and recommendation

We argue that adopting an ethnic-pluralizing approach in the recruitment of the army in ethnically segmented societies reinforces the primordial theory that asserts ethnic origin and mundane issues above cross-cutting cultural symbols that create unification and common loyalty. The state fragility theory is further reinforced by evidence of moles, and refusal of the military personnel to act as a unified command. The critical factor analysis that locates the military as the centre of gravity we argue requires the total securitization of the military even if it infringes on the religion, culture, or personality of the military since its infiltration raises obvious existential threats to the Nigerian state because as posited by Nzekwu (2017: 26), "Even before the introduction of Operation Lafia Dole in 2015, some soldiers had indirectly begun to dabble into politics."

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