The Nigerian Red Cross Society, The Nigerian Youth, and security consciousness:1999-2022

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Abstract

Nigeria's Fourth Republic has been inundated with deplorable security challenge on incremental scale, leaving in its trail, humanitarian concerns. The youth and women are vulnerable components of the Nigerian population. Thus, this paper examines the security consciousness of the Nigerian youth under the auspices of the Nigerian Red Cross Society given the security challenges in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Granted that the Nigerian youth alongside women constitute the most vulnerable group in every conflict, it is considered expedient to interrogate the youth, who are both victims and purveyors of insecurity. Relying on secondary sources, this study contends that the Nigerian youth within and beyond the context of the Nigerian Red Cross Society have significant role in combating the security challenges in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Thus, the conscious involvement of the youth is imperative in the national security discourse.

Key Words: Fourth Republic, Nigerian Red Cross, Nigerian Youth, Security Consciousness

Introduction

While the incidence and severity of interstate war declined, collective security responses were inadequate in resolving many internal conflicts, and this remains a serious problem today. Conflicts today are majorly intra-state with the emergence of non-state actors. During the 1990s and in the first two decades of the twenty-first century, new international security problems have emerged: ethnic cleansing; pandemics; global economic instability and inequality; massive flows of refugees and forced migrants; gendered sexual violence in conflict; mass-casualty terrorism; cybercrime and war; transnational crime; and climate change and ecological degradation.[1] Thus, a security agenda previously focused on weapons and military conflict has expanded to include a range of new threats and processes, and the political and governance landscape of security has changed in complex ways. Similarly, Stean Jill et.al contend that,

> However, it is no longer just the spectre of war that is perceived to threaten the peace, security and stability of the world. The agenda of world politics has changed radically: population has grown exponentially; poverty has increased dramatically; technology has advanced in rapid and unexpected ways; economic relations have become

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1 A. Burke. Beyond Security, Ethics and Violence: War Against the Other. (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 398.

globalised to the extent that recession in one country can reverberate across the world, as the recent global economic crisis (2008–9) attests; sea levels have risen as a consequence of global warming, while pollution and the rapid and indiscriminate use of the world's natural resources threaten environmental catastrophe unless coordinated and effective action is taken.[2]

Security has been a major focus of national policy and global governance since the end of World War II, although its origins date back to the Renaissance.[3] In modern political thought, security is associated with the perpetuation of a social order and constellation of power controlled and guaranteed by a sovereign – which, by the twentieth century, meant the government of a sovereign nation-state.[4]Kingsley Ezemenaka argues that, "in recent times, the study of security has undergone a paradigm shift and emphasis previously focused on issues of national security and state sovereignty is currently centred on the issues of human security".[5] The implication of this, is that, the security of the citizens is the security of the country,- the country is measured by the condition of life of the citizens. The multifaceted nature of security explains the tilt from the traditional realm that is militarily based to other spheres- economic, environmental, social, ethno-religious, nationalist identities among others.[6] Thus, the military and non-military components of security.

Nigeria is more divided and insecurity than ever in her history. No day passes without the hues and cries of Nigerians to the alarming rate of insecurity. From the militancy in the Niger Delta, religious conflagrations, secessionist agitations, the menace of farmers-herders, kidnapping, insurgencies/terrorism, to the marauding unknown gunmen and bandits. These have a regular trademark like Fela's "Sorrow, Tears and Blood" song. Like their trademark, the demography is the same- the youth. The youth have been disempowered politically, exploited economically, and ruined socio-culturally by the manipulative elite population. Violence, becomes a ripple effect of bad leadership, reaction to the accumulated grievances, as demonstrated in the October 20, 2020 #ENSARS Protest, the IPOB agitations and other ethnic militia groups, among others. Evidence has shown that the prevailing insecurity in Nigeria having the youth as both tinder and victims, makes it only imperative to mainstream the youth in the security discourse.

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2 J. Steans, et.al. An Introduction to International Relations Theory Perspectives and Themes (Third Edition). (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2010), p. 5.
3A. Burke. Beyond Security,…p.398.
4 A. Burke. Beyond Security,…p. 398.
5 K. E. Ezemenaka. "Youth Violence and Human Security in Nigeria". Social Sciences10: 2021, p. 1. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10070267. Accessed 25th August, 2022.
6 D. Francis. "Peace and Conflict Studies: An African Overview of Basic Concepts" Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies in West Africa, edited by Best Shedrack Gaya. (Ibadan: Spectrum, 2006), p. 23.

Conceptual Clarifications

This paper attempts conceptual clarifications of some operations concepts like society, youth, and security. Sociologically, "a society is typically presumed to be a sovereign social entity with a state at its centre which organizes the rights and duties of each societal member".[7]By this, the human components possess rights and duties as citizens, hence, "to be human has meant that one is unambiguously a member of a particular society".[8] Society is derived from "Latin "*Societas*" which in turn was derived from the noun '*socius*', meaning companionship which means sociability.[9] This aptly captures the sociability evident in every human group, in line with the Aristotelian "Man is a social animal". Sociologists conceive society from two angles: "In abstract terms, as a network of relationships between people or between groups. In concrete terms, as a collection of people or an organization of persons".[10] Thus, society is about the inherent relationship between people within a social milieu towards the growth and development of their immediate group and the larger community. It is in this light, that this study views the Nigerian Red Cross.

The "concept of youth has primarily been understood in the same manner as the concept of childhood: as trans-historical, trans-cultural, and universal".[11]The United Nations for statistical purposes, defines 'youth', as the group of individuals within the age range of 15 and 24, without prejudice to other definitions by member states.[12] Thus, the definition of youth,

> perhaps changes with circumstances, especially with the changes in demographic, financial, economic and socio-cultural settings; however, the definition that uses 15-24 age cohort as youth fairly serves its statistical purposes for assessing the needs of the young people and providing guidelines for youth development.[13]

The United Nations argues that "nearly half of the people in the developing world and 30% worldwide are under 25 years of age. One in five people is

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7 J. Urry. "The Concept of Society and the Future of Sociology" Dansk Sociologi Special Issue,
1998, p. 32.
8 J. Urry. "The Concept... p. 33.
9M. Sukamal. "Concept of Society" www.narajolerajcollege.ac.in Accessed 30th August, 2022.
10 M. Sukamal. "Concept....
11 United Nations Human Settlement Programme. Young people, Participation, and Sustainable
Development in an Urbanizing World: A Working Paper. Nairobi: United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat), 2012, p. 7.
12 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Human Development Report Nigeria. Lagos:
UNDP, 1998, p. 1.
13 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Human Development Report Nigeria. Lagos:
UNDP, 1998, p. 2.

between 15 and 24 years old".[14] Also, an estimated 80% of global youth live in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.[15] However, there is a stark disparity in their geographical distribution within and between continents, regions, and countries as well as between rural and urban areas.[16] Youth as a stage of life is seen differently in different societies. The social and cultural meanings ascribed to youth vary extensively historically and geographically. The most conventional but less acknowledged forms is *relational age*—a generational category or age grade (such as those in many societies in east Africa).[17]The histo-geographical and socio-cultural and political variations in the categorization of the youth implies that the western conception based on chronological/calendar age brackets(15-24) may not necessarily apply to the developing world where the youth is disempowered and can only transit this phase when he/she is empowered economically, politically and socio-culturally. Which is why some countries consider the youth age ceiling as between 15-35 years. However, the reality is that, some youth groups have members/leaders in their fifties. Hence, using the youth phase as a stop-gap having transited the childhood stage but cannot fit into the social age of elders for obvious cultural, socio-economic, and political encumbrances. ArgentiN. strengthens this contention thus,"in many parts of Africa, young men were not classified as 'children' as a result of their biological age, but rather because they had not achieved the level of economic importance that would permit them to acquire wives, and become economically viable agents".[18] Youth assumes its meanings culturally and relationally rather than chronologically. Providing more insight, Karen Hansen contends,

> In cultural terms, children are often distinguished from young people by their dependence. This distinction attaches agency to youth, within the societal constraints under which they operate. Still, many young people are dependent, subject to hierarchical and authoritarian gender- and generation-based relationships with parents, guardians, and the larger society.[19]

Security defies a unanimous definition. Both international actors and scholars have been faced with this difficulty to reach an agreement on a single authoritative definition of security that assists the international community in effectively tackling multifarious challenges and threats, including violent conflict, crime, disenfranchisement, economic deprivation, and environmental

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14 cited in UN-Habitat 2012, p. 1.
15 cited in UN-Habitat 2012, p. 1.
16 cited in UN-Habitat 2012, p. 1.
17 cited in UN-Habitat 2012, p. 9.
18 N. Argenti. "Youth in Africa: A Major Resource for Change". In Young Africa: Realizing the Rights of Children and Youth, edited by A. De Waal, and N. Argenti. (Trenton and Asmara: Africa World Press, 2002), p. 123.
19 K. T. Hansen. "Introduction" in Youth and the City in the Global South Tracking Globalization edited by Karen Tranberg Hansen, et.al.(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), p. 8.

degradation.[20]The rather expanded horizon of security was a product of the early 1990s, following the end of the Cold War. "A consensus was reached on the need to broaden and deepen the concept of security, taking account of the political context at end of the Cold War. Stronger collaboration also became possible between development, foreign policy and defence institutions within governments, helping to provide a new basis for North/South relations on these issues".[21]

Granted that security has assumed a comprehensive outlook, strands like human security, social security, economic security, political security and the likes evolve. For instance, human security approach argues that, "threats and challenges to security transcend national defence, and law and order to encompass all political, economic and social issues that guarantee a life free from risk and fear. The focus has shifted from the State to the security of persons; however, these are not mutually exclusive".[22] Thus,

> Security can be thought of as a "public good", responding to the strategic need to support sustainable human development at the same time as promoting national, regional and global peace and stability. The human security approach has also made it clear that any attempt to address security related matters needs to be based on consultation and collaboration with different sets of actors which frequently have different interests, e.g. civilian/military; governmental/non-governmental; local/national/regional/international.[23]

Thus, conceiving security within the purview of public good that the Nigerian Red Cross Society is founded that this paper views security through the lenses human security. When security revolves around humanity, there will be peace, stability, growth and development.

Background to the Nigerian Red Cross Society

Conflict is a form of interaction and inevitable in every human society. The ICRC is the principal international body devoted to developing, implementing, and promoting IHL. The ICRC is generally credited with beginning the development of modern International Humanitarian Law (IHL).The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is made up of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the 185 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. In Nigeria, the three components of the Movement are present, each carrying out its specific mandate: Together, the partners of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement strive to reduce human suffering and protect life and

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20K. Hussein, D. Gnisci& J. Wanjiru. "Security and Human Security: An Overview of Concepts and Initiatives What Implications for West Africa?", p. 11. Sah/d(2004)547 December 2004, or. eng. Accessed 29th August, 2022.
21 K. Hussein, D. Gnisci& J. Wanjiru. "Security and Human... p. 10.
22 K. Hussein, D. Gnisci& J. Wanjiru. "Security and Human... p. 10.
23 K. Hussein, D. Gnisci& J. Wanjiru. "Security and Human... p. 10.

dignity in an independent and impartial manner, in Nigeria and worldwide.[24] The Nigerian Red Cross Society mission is to assist victims of disaster, implement health and social welfare programs and promote humanitarian principles in Nigeria. Its activities range from emergency interventions during outbreaks of violence and disasters providing First Aid and assistance to those displaced to providing long-term programs aimed at improving the situation of the most vulnerable. The NRCS acts as an auxiliary to the Nigerian Government in emergency situations with an extensive network of local branches in every State and over 500'000 volunteers working closely with those needing assistance.[25]

The International Committee of the Red Cross' mission is to protect and assist victims of war and internal violence, and to promote and strengthen humanitarian law. It is present in over 80 countries worldwide. In Nigeria, ICRC is focusing on preventive activities, humanitarian diplomacy and capacity building of the Nigerian Red Cross Society. ICRC works in cooperation with the Nigerian Red Cross Society (NRCS) to provide protection and assistance to people affected by inter-communal clashes, urban riots and political violence. It has established dialogue with political authorities and civil society, so as to promote awareness and implementation of international humanitarian law (IHL) and exchange information on issues of humanitarian concern. It employs 38 local staff and 7expatriate staff in the country.[26]

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies promotes the humanitarian activities of the National Societies. It directs and coordinates international assistance of the Movement to victims of natural and technological disasters, health emergencies, and refugees. IFRC acts as the official representative of its member societies in the international field, promotes cooperation between National Societies, and works to strengthen their capacity to carry out effective disaster preparedness, health and other social programmes.[27]

Given the operational mandate of the Red Cross Society and the inevitability of conflict and the consequential humanitarian concerns, in August 1960, the two Legislative Houses in the country passed the Nigerian Red Cross Society Act, which makes it an auxiliary to government in the area of health, disaster mitigation and social welfare.[28] However, the Act establishing the National Society formally came into operation on January 1, 1961, following which it was recognized by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and was admitted by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) as the 86th member the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement. Six years later, civil war broke out in Nigeria and the Red Cross Movement through the Nigerian Red Cross Society had a major operations caring for the victims and mitigating the effects of the war on the vulnerable groups.[29]

24The Humanitarian 2007.
25The Humanitarian 2007.
26The Humanitarian 2007.
27The Humanitarian 2007.
28 "Strategic Development Plan 2011-2013" p.8.
29"Strategic Development Plan 2011-2013" p.8.

Section 1(2) of the Nigerian Red Cross Society Act provides that: "This Act shall apply throughout the Federation, so however that it shall not have effect in a State unless and until the Governor of the State by notice in the State Gazette declares it shall apply". By this, until the ratification and domestication of this Act in the respective component units, its application is null and void. The NRCS has two arms- the Governance and the Management. The Governance Arm headed by the National President, formulates policies. While the Management Arm, headed by the Secretary General, who is the Chief Executive Officer, implements policies so formulated and sees to the day-today running of the Society. Furthermore, the National Society has its Headquarters in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory, 37 States' Branches (36 States and the Federal Capital) and Divisions in Local Government Areas.[30]

The Mission of the NRCS is to alleviate the difficult situation of the most vulnerable irrespective of location, age, among others. The Vision of the NRCS is,

i. To build a strong National Society that will continue to respond to both conflicts and other emergency situations with required professionalism;

ii. To build a visible and respectable National Society in terms of activities, integrity, accountability, internal and external relations;

iii. To develop focused and strategic systems that will enhance efficient service delivery with the required impact;

iv. To develop the potentials in young people with the aim of mobilizing them for the purpose of service delivery to the vulnerable;

v. To put in place human and material resources for achieving the above visions.[31]

By the philosophical underpinning of the NRCS, the vulnerable who may either be rural or urban dwellers depending on the geographical location of the natural or human disasters, could be children/youth or aged, male or female. These have guided the operations of the NRCS over the years despite the dynamism of conflicts and their related challenges.

The Nigerian Youth

In a commingle of traditional education and history, Obar Irom argues that, the Nigerian youth during the colonial period relied on the hindsight of indigenous education which transmitted the collective pasts from generation to generation, formed the foundational background for the formation of the Nigerian Youth

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30 "Strategic Development Plan 2011-2013" p.8.
31 "Strategic Development Plan 2011-2013" p.9.

Movement (NYM).[32]The Nigerian youth have distinguished themselves, in the decolonialization struggle under the auspices of the NYM which resulted in the attainment of self-determination. The likes of Ernest Ikoli, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, J. S. Takar, Margaret Ekpo, Funmilayo Ransom-Kuti, among others have provided generational inspirations for Nigerian youth in the nation-building discourse.

Commenting on the demographic superiority of the youth in the global south and their doggedness, Karen T. Hansen argues

> The world's cities are growing at a tremendous rate, especially in the South, where young people form a huge proportion of the overall population. But in spite of the bearing that youth and the city have on each other, most recent scholarship is trapped in a gulf between youth studies and urban studies that complicates our understanding of ongoing transformations of young people's lives in the era of global capitalism. At issue are demographic and socioeconomic changes that are turning young people in the urban South into lead actors in shaping their countries' futures. For cities are where the action is. Young people make their imprint on them now and will do so in the future, even where life is hard and circumstances are difficult.[33]

Dereck Arubayi's study on the youth in development through the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) "highlights why youth remain a marginal social category within neoliberal Nigerian development discourse".[34] Patrick Odey'sinside-out reflection examines the nexus between corps members' welfare and security and optimum productivity in the national development discourse.[35] Also, Daniel Ntui's contention that "Nation-building is about building a common sense of purpose, a sense of shared destiny, a collective imagination of belonging. It is therefore, about building the tangible and intangible threads that hold a political entity together and gives it a sense of purpose"[36] demonstrates a common thread that is needed to weave the various stakeholders together for a better Nigeria.Thus, these scholars are in consensus on the role of every citizen, irrespective of socio-economic, cultural and political strata. It is on strength of

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32O. A. Irom. "From Nigerian Youth Movement to Militant Youth: Bridging the Gap Between Educational Policy and History in Youth Development" International Journal of HumanitatisTheoreticus5(1), 2021, p. 1.

33K. T. Hansen. "Introduction" in Youth and the... p. 3.

34D. O. Arubayi. "Youth in Development: Understanding the Contributions of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) to Nigeria's National Development". A PhD thesis in the Development Policy and Management in the Faculty of Humanities, School of Environment, Education and Development (SEED), Institute of Development Policy and Management (IDPM), University of Manchester, 2015, p. 16.

35 P. O. Odey. "Improvement in Corps Members' Welfare and Security for Optimal Productivity: Reflections of An Ex-Corp Member" A paper presented at the 67th Conference of the Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN), Abuja 2022. (forthcoming).

36 D. O. Ntui. "The Challenges of Nation-Building in Nigeria" International Journal of Advanced Research, 7(9), p. 566.DOI: 10.21474/IJAR01/9698. Accessed 31st August, 2022.

the foregoing that this paper will examine the Nigerian youth within the context of security consciousness.

The Nigerian Youth and Security Consciousness

The Nigerian National Youth Policy 2019 (edition) provides the following Policy Vision and Mission,

> Develop Nigeria youth with equal opportunities to realise their dreams and aspirations, irrespective of their background and living in a safe and secure environment that would optimise their contributions to National Development. To provide stakeholders in youth development an all-inclusive framework that will ensure the realisation of the full potentials of all Nigerian young men and women irrespective of their ethnic, religious, and socio-economic background.[37]

The government have well planned policy for its youth population towards national development. Very often, the enabling environment is denied these virile population. However, it is important that the youth assert their rightful place in the development discourse of Nigeria.

The Fourth Republic has witnessed several conflicts. The attacks on religious/worship centres by terrorist groups like the 2011 St. Theresa Catholic Church, Madalla Christmas Day bombing, the Owo Pentecost Sunday bombing in June 2022; the kidnapping and killing of clerics, the Chibok and Dapchi Girls' abductions, the Kankara school abduction (February 9, 2021), Kagara abduction (February 24, 2021), the Kaduna-Abuja train abductions (2022), among many other, are wake up calls to the Nigerian youth to be security conscious in protecting their respective communities and religious spaces and by extension the nation at large.

The terrorist activities in the Nigeria's North-East by Boko Haram since 2009, and the proliferation of terrorist cells across the region caused the formation of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Maiduguri in 2013. The CJTF formed a synergy with the Nigerian military to combat the terrorists in their communities and provide security for internally displaced persons' (IDPs) camps. This support group have youth of varied ages responding to the security challenges in their respective communities. The UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba and UNICEF signed an Action Plan with the CJTF to secure threatened childhoods by preventing the recruitment and use of children by the terrorists.[38] The success of the CJTF in the

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[37]Federal Republic of Nigeria. National Youth PolicyEnhancing Youth Development and Participation in the context of Sustainable Development. Abuja: Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development, 2019, p.9.
[38]UNICEF. "Civilian Joint Task Force in Northeast Nigeria signs Action Plan to end Recruitment of Children" 15th September, 2017. unicef.org. Accessed 3rd September, 2022.

North-East called for a replication in the North-West involving the indigenous youths. The national chairman of the CJTF, Dr. Kailani Mohammed notes,

> The Nigerian military's operations against insurgency and kidnapping currently taking place in Kaduna, Niger, Sokoto, Zamfara, and Katsina require a similar approach of military operatives and civilians. The local youths know their communities very well and they are determined to protect their area and family members... These youths have a history of bravery and, if given the chance, many will volunteer to work in the taskforce in order to bring respite to and rid their community from insurgency and banditry.[39]

In the South-West, the youths have demonstrated capacity and commitment in the security of their region. the audacious banditry in the South-West caused the formation of the Western Nigeria Security Network code-named *Amotekun* Corps by the governors of the region. This corps with huge demography is an alternative to the State Police designed to complement the activities of the federal police. Apart from enlisting in the *Amotekun* Corps, the youth in the region have organized protest under the auspices of the Yoruba Self-determination Groups against killings, kidnappings, rape, and destruction of property. This protest was prompted by the Pentecost Sunday bombing at St. Francis Catholic Church, Owo, Ondo State.[40] The success of *Amotekun* is partly due to youth involvement. Their knowledge of their communities makes it easier to combat criminality in the region. Recall the interception and subsequent arrest of two trucks conveying about 151 suspected Fulani invaders around the Sango area of Akure-Ado Expressway by the Ondo State Command of *Amotekun*. These suspects who claimed to have come from Katsina, Kano, and Jigawa States (North-West) were cleverly concealed behind bags of rice and 40 motorbikes, and in their possession were various dangerous charms.[41]

In the South-East, the deplorable security situation in the region worsened by the militarization of the region following the secessionist agitation caused the replication of a regional security outfit like *Amotekun.* In this wise, the five South-East governors established the *Ebubeagu.* Unlike *Amotekun, Ebubeagu* is allegedly complicit in extrajudicial killing of innocent citizens. This alleged aberrant conduct triggered youth protests. The youth under the Coalition of South-East Youth Leaders (COSEYL) alleged that *Ebubeagu*" killed 21 innocent youths returning from a traditional marriage in Awo Ommamma Village in Oru East Local Government Area of Imo State... being bandits whereas the real criminals are left unchecked in the zone".[42] Even the IPOB has accused *Ebubeagu* of being the attack dogs of the governors to frustrate the Igbo agitation for self-determination. The spokesman of IPOB, Emma Powerful in a statement warned

39Daily Trust, 25th July, 2022. dailytrust.com. accessed 3rd September, 2022.
40 R. Agboluaje& M. Salami. "Youths, Elders in Ibadan Protest against Insecurity in South-West" The Guardian, 14th June, 2022. guardian.ng. Accessed 3rd September, 2022.
41 P. Akimbo. "Ondo Amotekun arrests 151 suspected invaders, seizes truck" PUNCH, 6th August, 2022. punchng.com. Accessed 4th September, 2022.
42S. Ochogwu. "Stop Ebubeagu now- Igbo Youths storm streets, protest killings in Southeast" DAILY POST, August 2, 2022. dailypost.ng. Accessed 4th September, 2022.

that the formation of a parallel security outfit in the South-East will incur the wrath of the ESN. Powerful asked,

> … . Where were these governors before now? Our people have rejected them and their mode of security. We were easily killed and throughout last year, the people kept asking them for protection, but what did they do? They were busy protecting those killing their people. Now, the IPOB has said no and has formed a security network that is moving into the bushes and villages fishing out terrorists who masquerade as herdsmen and they have come with Ebubeagu. What are they trying to achieve? To come for a challenge? They will be rejected by the people….[43]

The proliferation of non-state actors with various demands have exploited the vulnerability of the youth who are unemployed and/or school dropouts, and those forced out of school by disingenuous government over industrial disharmony in the country's ivory towers. The spate of insecurity in the country is often inflamed by the misguided youths whose energies and intellects are misdirected for societal ruin. Given the agility associated with youthfulness, they are active members of their respective societies. However, "In most conflict situations around the world, the youths are always considered the perpetrators as well as victims. They are either active in the frontline or they are at the receiving end of the aftermath of war".[44]

Insisting on the necessity of a concerted effort in the security discourse, Karim Hussein, Donata Gnisci, and Julia Wanjiru are of the view that,

> Security is no longer only the concern of defence and humanitarian actors. In the aftermath of the Cold War, the security debate has become part of the international development agenda. Traditionally, it had focused on military activities, the control of military hardware, action against armed groups and networks and the reform of state military institutions. Yet increased attention is now being paid to other actors within the "security system" and the softer side of security including governance of security institutions, the links between security and insecurity, access to resources, well-being, poverty, environmental risk and security.[45]

With the tilt from the traditional focus of military and humanitarian activities to the current complexities require a more robust participation in the security dialogue. Hence, the essence of the Nigerian youth's security consciousness.

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43 L. Njoku &C. Ogugbuaja. "Southeast Governors unleash EbubeAgu to tackle rising unrest" The Guardian. 12th April, 2021. guardian.ng. Accessed 8th August, 2022.
44Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports. Nigerian National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security. An Adoption of the (UNSCR 2250) September 2021, p.2.
45 K. Hussein, D. Gnisci& J. Wanjiru. "Security and Human… p. 10.

The rural-urban drift has resulted in the youth bulge in Nigerian urban centres. It is evident that the infrastructural deficits and lack of other opportunities to make life comfortable for the youth, are responsible for this reality. Thus, with urbanization, the influx of various characters is associated with urban vices. However, studies have contested the nexus between youth bulge and urban criminality. Hansen's study of some city youth in some developing countries argues,

> young people tend to be depicted from two angles that leave little scope for agency: from a welfare angle, which views them as dependent and immature, thus in need of "improvement"; and from a problem-oriented angle, which characterizes them as troublesome and therefore prone to problematic behavior that needs controlling and curtailing.[46]

No doubts that the youth constitute the "troubling" and the "troubled" members of the Nigeria. The often generalization linking them to violence deserve appropriate reversal of public outlook. Granted that there are youths who have weathered the deliberately imposed harsh conditions to eke out legitimate likelihood. The #ENDSARS protest was coordinated by the urban youths. These youths (with diaspora collaboration), successful in their respective stations in life protested against police brutality and the inhuman condition of service of the police personnel. The effective deployment of ICT in fundraising and on-the-spot reportage of the protest forced the government to accept, however, grudgingly the cases of police brutality and poor welfare for police personnel. It is the contention of this study that the recently implemented pay rise for the officers and men of the Nigerian Police Force is a product of the October 2020 ENSARS Protest. Whether the 20% pay rise realistically incentivizes the personnel in the face of massive inflationary forces or not, Nigerian youth have a credit in this regard. The success of the Nigerian youth in the protest demonstrates the nexus between welfare/motivation and productivity. By extension, this is a conscious contribution in resolving aspects of the security quagmire in Nigeria. The security implications of an already under-policed country with miserably remunerated and equipped police personnel should rather be imagined than experienced.

Conclusion

The Nigerian youth like elsewhere are both canon fodders and victims of conflict or "troublers and the troubled". Security remains critical for peace and stability that will guarantee growth and development. This paper examines security from the human-centric perspective and suggests the following towards promoting youth consciousness towards a secured Nigeria.The involvement of faith-based youth groups like the Catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria (CYON), the Presbyterian Young People Association of Nigeria (PYPAN),Muslim Youth Organization of Nigeria (MYON), among others is critical in promoting security consciousness in Nigeria. There is no doubt that religion plays a significant role in the lives of Nigerians, taking the advocacy to religious gatherings of youths will go a long way in rescuing potential recruits to criminal gangs. Since

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46 K. T. Hansen. "Introduction" in Youth and the... p. 10.

religious/worship centres have become soft targets, it has become necessary for basic security lessons to be provided by security operatives on best practices in security consciousness and the handling of technologies like the Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV), bomb scanners, etc.

Since pre-colonial times, the youth have been saddled with the responsibility of providing security for their respective families and communities. Thus, this age-related responsibility should continue, especially, with the almost comatose security architecture of the country. The formation of neighbourhood vigilante to form a synergy with state-owned security agencies. The youth are very familiar with their neighbourhood and can further the security spectrum of the security operatives.

There is need for reliable institutions with motivated personnel. Since laws are not self-enforceable, the need for enforcement personnel of proven integrity is critical. Security infractions and suspects are mostly perpetuated by the youth. Thus, the youth have a conscious responsibility to purge themselves of criminal tendencies as a precursor to having a secured society. The youth formed the pool from which the security agencies source their personnel. So, some of the complaints against these agencies are reflective of the society.

The Nigerian Red Cross Society's reactive mandate to violence because of the concomitant humanitarian issues has to be reviewed to incorporate proactive actions. Proactive actions should include grassroots advocacies involving the youth, who are both "troublers and the troubled". Western-styled education should defy the profanities of certification, quality education as a matter of necessity should be pursuit. The recent UNESCO report indicating that out of school children in Nigeria has spiked from 14million to the tune of 20million is a national disgrace. Also, the disingenuousness of the government to the provision of qualitative, accessible, and competitive education at the tertiary levels is indicative of the premium placed on public education by the Nigerian government. The rich can never sleep because the oppressed and exploited poor are awake. Hence, improved budgetary allocation, supervision, and transparent utilization of funds to improve public education in Nigeria. Also, the return of history from a very long sabbatical to our school system should defy the realm of political rhetoric. The convergence of the trinity of learning- the teacher, the learners and the learning environment should be conducive according to best practices for Nigeria to have the desired youth for national development.

Value orientation to promote national unity is a step towards building a secured Nigeria. The insecurity situation in Nigeria has undermined the integrative essence of the compulsory National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). When the youth who are used to foment violence are educated on the need to view our diversities as the sources of our strength as it was before the Fourth Republic, and resist being used by the political gladiators, Nigeria will be secured. The political gladiators remain beneficiaries of a divided Nigeria and must be resisted legitimately, especially, through the ballot. Thus, divisive ethno-religious politics should be discountenanced at all levels and the political turf rid of geriatric politicians and overbearing political godfathers. By resisting the procurement of youth votes (vote selling and buying), corruption is curbed in a way; bad leadership is checked; and the active youth participation deciding the

political future of Nigeria at all levels like their contemporaries in developed Western democracies, is guaranteed. Hence, a secured Nigeria is possible.

By being environmental-friendly. The impact of man's anthropogenic activities has adversely affected the environment. The youth must be involved in climate change advocacy to safe our environment. Campaign for the protection of both the fauna and flora should be have youth volunteering. The protection of the fauna and flora guarantees environmental security, good health; soil fertility leading to increased crop yield and food security; revenue generation form eco-tourism etc. From the foregoing, by the thesis of the "troubling and the troubled", the Nigerian youth have demonstrated their capacity to be mainstreamed in the security discourse of their country and the ability to purge its rank of aberrant behaviours. Thus, human security is critical to national development.