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ROLE OF CIVILIAN JOINT TASK FORCE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY IN BORNO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in fight against Boko Haram in Borno State, Nigeria. With specific attention to the nature of its operations and its collaborative relationship with government security agencies. Anchored on the collaborative governance theory, the research explores how community based security initiatives complement formal state security structures in addressing complex insurgency challenges. Using a qualitative research design support by empirical and secondary data, the study that the CJTF's grass root organization, local intelligence networks, and coordinated patrols systems have significantly enhance local security and facilitated the military's counter insurgency efforts. Furthermore, findings reveal that structured collaboration between the CJTF and state security agencies has improved operational effectiveness, intelligence sharing, and community trust, though challenges, such as inadequate training, legal ambiguity and occasional human rights violations. The study concludes that while the CJTF remains instrumental in stabilizing insurgency depends on institutional integration, capacity building, welfare support, and stronger accountability mechanism. The study recommends a formalized legal framework and inclusive governance structures to strengthen collaborative security efforts and promote long-term peace and stability in Borno State.

Keywords: Role, Civilian Joint Task Force, Boko Haram Insurgency, Counter-terrorism, Borno State.

Introduction

The book Haram insurgency, which began in 2009 has devastated Nigeria's northeast, particularly Borno State, the epicenter of violent attack, mass displacement and destruction of livelihood (Adebayo, 2022).

In response to growing insecurity and limited capacity of formal security agencies local communities mobilized to from the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in 2013 as a grass root security initiative to support the Nigerian military in combating insurgents (Sulieman and Bello, 2023). The CJTF has since played a crucial role intelligent gathering, Manning check points, and reclaiming territories formerly under Boko Haram control (Gulyas, 2023). Despite these contribution concerns remains about the group's legal status, accountability and long term integration into the national security architecture (Shittu & Ahmed, 2021). Understanding the CJTF's evolving role is therefore essential for assessing community based

security models and their efforts, peace building models and their implications for counter insurgency efforts, peace building and post conflict recovery in Borno State.

Statement of the Problem

In the heart of Nigeria' Northeast, Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) emerged in Borno State as a volunteer security initiative to aid in the fight against the Boko Haram insurgency by leveraging local knowledge, community, networks and situations awareness to counter terrorism and protect civilians. Despite it's significant expansion and integration into counter insurgency operations, gaps persist regarding its formal role, operational coordination with official security forces capacity limitations, and oversight mechanisms (Gulyas, 2023, Shittu & Ahmed, 2023). On one hand, the CJTF has boosted intelligence gathering, community patrols and support for the military thereby contributing to improved security, outcomes in Borno (Shittu & Ahmed, 2023). On the other hand issues of training deficiencies, ambiguous legal status, limited remunerations and allegations of muse and human rights breaches raise critical concerns (Sulieman & Bello, 2023); Gulyas, 2023,). This duality pose a pressing problem, while the insurgency continues to threaten lives, livelihoods and State stability in Borno State, the exact impact sustainability and accountability of the CJTF remain under-researched. Therefore exploring the challenges and resultant contributions of the CJTF in the fight against Boko Haram insurgency in Borno State becomes imperative for improving policy strategic coordination and the future of civilian military partnership in insurgency affected zones.

Research Questions

The specific questions raised to guide this study are:

1. What is the Nature of the operation carried out by the CJTF in Borno State?
2. What is the Pattern of collaboration between the CJTF and government security agencies?

Objective of the Study

The following are the specific objectives of this study.

i. To study the nature of the operation of CJTF in Borno State.
ii. To determine the pattern of collaboration between CJTF, and the government security agencies.

Hypothesis

Based on the objective of this this study, the following hypotheses are proposed.

Hi The Operations structure and methods of the CJTF significantly enhance local security in Borno State.

Hii Collaboration between the CJTF and government security agencies significantly improves the effectiveness of counter insurgency efforts against Boko Haram in Borno State.

Literature Review

Civilian Task Force in Borno State

Existing literature on the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Borno State emphasizes its emergence as a community driven response to the Boko Haram insurgency and its vital role in enhancing local security, dynamics.

Scholars such as Adebayo, (2022) and Suleiman and Bello (2023) note that the CJTF arose from grass roots mobilization when state security institutions proved inadequate to protect civilian

from insurgency attacks. The group's familiarity with the local terrain and social networks has been instrumental in intelligence gathering apprehending suspects and supporting military operations (Gulyas, 2023) however, research also highlights significant challenges, including inadequate training, limited legal recognition and allegation of human right violations which undermine its legitimacy and sustainability (Shittu and Ahmed, 2021). Recently studies have begun to examine from an informal vigilante group to a semi-formal security actor, raising questions about its integration into Nigeria's broader security architecture and post-conflict peace building strategies (Suleiman & Ahmed, 2023) despite growing scholarship there remains a paucity of empirical research exploring long term implications of CJTF activities on governance, community reactions and human security in Borno State.

Boko Haram

Boko Haram, officially known as Jama'atu Ahlis sunna Lidda'awati wal Jihad, has been one of the most violent extremist groups in sub-sahara Africa, driven by an ideology opposing western education and governance (Akinola, 2022). Scholars trace its origins to the early 2000s under leadership of Mohammed Yusuf, whose teachings radicalized followers and set the foundation for armed rebellion after his death in 2009 (Matfee, 2017) the insurgency has resuited in widespread humanitarian crises, and socio-economic devastation, particularly in Borno State the epicenter of its operations (Okoli & Iortyer, 2021) research also highlights Boko Haram's evolving tactics from guerrilla warfare to suicide bombings and territorial control, as well as its internal fragmentation and affiliation with global jihadist movements such as the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) (Onapayo, 2023). Despite counter insurgency efforts persistent insecurity underscores the complex interplay of poverty, weak governance and ideological extremist sustaining Boko Haram's resilience.

Insurgency

Insurgency, broadly defined as an organized movement aimed at overthrowing or undermining a constituted authority through subversion and armed conflict has been a persistent challenge in many developing states (Kilcullen, 2016). Scholars argue that insurgencies often emerge from a combination of political exclusion, socio economic marginalization, weak governance, and ideological motivations (Fearon & Laitin, 2003), Omede & Ngara, 2021). In the African context, insurgencies has been linked to structural inequalities, corruption, and state failure to address local grievance (Akinola, 2022). Nigeria's Boko Haram exemplifies how insurgent movements exploit governance gaps. Violence and recruit followers (Onapajo, 2023). The literature emphasized that successful counter-insuregncy requires not only military strategies but also political reforms, community engagement, and socio-economic reconstruction to address the root causes of rebellion (Kilcullen, 2016, Omede & Ngara, 2021)

Empirical review

Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) and the fight against insurgency in Nigeria

Empirical studies on the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) and the fight against insurgency in Nigeria provide valuable insights into the dynamics of community participation in counter insurgency and local security governance. Several scholars have examined how the CJTF emerged as a sell organized civilian response to the Boko Haram insurgency in Borno state when formal security institution failed to adequately protect local communities (Adebayp,

2022), Suleiman & Bello, 2023) empirical evidence from field-based research indicates that the (CJTF) has played a significant role in intelligence gathering, identifying insurgents within communities, and supporting the Nigerian military in reclaiming territories occupied by Boko Haram (Shittu and Ahmed, 2021, Gulyas, 2023) for instance, Akinola (2022), found that the CJTF's local knowledge and community trust enhanced the effectiveness of military operations by bridging the gap between civilians and formal security agencies. Similarly Suleiman and Bello (2023) demonstrated that the presence of the CJTF improved civilian confidence in security efforts, leading to better reporting of insurgent activities and reduced attacks in some local government areas of Borno State.

However, empirical studies also reveal major challenges associated with the CJTF's operations. Reports have documented instances of human right abuses, extrajudicial killings and the recruitment of underage fighters, raising concerns about accountability and compliance with humanitarian law (Gulyas, 2023, Okoli & Iorter, 2021). Moreover, research by Shittu and Ahmed (2021) highlights issues of inadequate training, poor remuneration and lack of psychological support for CJTF members, which affect their morale and operational efficiency. Some studies also point to the gender dimension of the CJTF's participation, hurting the involvement of women in intelligence and logistics roles, though often under recognized in formal policy frameworks (Matfess, 2017).

Furthermore, empirical analysis suggest that while the CJTF has been instrumental in short-term stabilization its long-term sustainability remains uncertain without institutional integration and socio-economic reintegration programs for its members (Adebayo, 2022, Onapajo, 2023). The existing empirical evidence underscores that the CJTF has become both a critical security actor and a complex social phenomenon whose successes and shortcomings reflect broader issues of governance, legitimacy, and community resilience in Nigeria's counter insurgency landscape.

Role of Civilian Joint Task Force in Combating insurgency in Borno State

Empirical studies on Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Borno State reveal its crucial role as a community based security mechanism in combating the Boko Haram insurgency. Field investigations indicate that the CJTF emerged as a spontaneous civilian defense group to fill the security vacuum created by the initial weakness of formal security institutions (Adebayo, 2022, Suleiman & Bello, 2023). Empirical findings show that the group's deep understanding of the local terrain and community networks enhanced intelligence gathering, identification of insurgents, and coordination with the Nigeria military in joit operations (Shittu & Ahmed, 2021). According to Gulyas (2023), the CJTF's movement significantly improved the effectiveness of counter insurgency efforts in Maiduguri and surrounding areas contributing to the recapture of territories previously held by Boko Haram. Moreover, studies highlight that the CJTF's presence fostered a sense of communal resilience and restored confidence in local security structures (Akinola, 2022). However, empirical evidence also points to the challenges such as inadequate training, lack of formal recognition, and allegations of legitimacy and long-term sustainability (Okoli & Iortyer, 2021, Suleiman & Bello, 2023). These findings suggest that while the CJTF has been instrumental in mitigating insurgent activities in Borno Stat, institutional reforms, legal frameworks, and reintegration programs are necessary to strengthen its contributions and ensure aligment with national security and human rights standards.

Theoretical Framework

Collaboration Governance Theory

The theoretical foundation of this study is anchored on the collaborative governance theory, which emphasizes cooperation among government institutions, civil society, and community actors in addressing complex public challenges (Ansell & Gash, 2008). This theory is relevant to the study of Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Borno State, as it provide a lens for understanding how state and non state actors jointly engage in counter insurgency and local security management. Collaborative governance underscores the value of shared decision making trust-building and interdependence among divers stakeholders in achieving effective and sustainable policy outcomes (Emerson, Nabatchi & Balogh, 2012) thus this framework helps explain how inclusive participatory approaches can enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of counter insurgency operations in insurgency operations in insurgency affected regions like Borno State.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design adopted for this study is survey. The methods of data collection are both primary and secondary. The primary data were collected using interviews and questionnaires. And secondary data collection method were data gathered from journals, magazines, periodical academic books newspapers, seminar papers, articles and reliable online publications on the role of civilian Joint Task Force in the fight against Boko Haram insurgency in Borno state, Nigeria.

Population, sample size and sampling Techniques

The target population of this study comprise CJTF, security agents, IDPs, non-governmental organizations, traditional rulers and religious leaders, and victims in Borno state Nigeria, with a population of 13,817.

The sample size is calculated and derived by using Taro Yamane formula of (1967) and purposive sampling techniques. In purposive sampling, specific element, which satisfy some predetermined criteria are selected. However, the criteria used are usually a matter of the researcher's judgment. He exercise this judgment in relation to what the researcher thinks that constitute a representative sample with respect to the research objective.

Table 1: Sample Frame of the population

S/N	Categories	Total population	Sample
1	CJTF members	2,554	92
2	Government Security Agencies	5,804	65
3	NGOs	3,000	103
4	IDPs	700	62
5	Traditional Rulers and Religious Leaders	500	46
6	Victims	1,254	32
7	Total	13,812	400

To be able to determine the sample size of the participates from the target 13,812 among the population in Borno state. This study adopted the Taro Yamane formula (1967).

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e^2}$$

Where
N = is the Required Sample Size
e = is the Level of Precision
1= Unit Constant

$$n = \frac{13,812}{1+ 13,812\ (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{13,812}{1+ 157812\ (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{13,812}{34.54}$$

= 399.8
= 400

This study sample size is 400 respondents. The researcher employed the service of research assistant with the distribution of the questionnaires to the participants of this research work. An explanation was made to the understanding of the participants, the purpose of this research work and how the questionnaire would be completed. The questionnaire was distributed on percentages, CJTF, 23% Government security agencies 16.25%, IDPs 25.75% NGO's 15.5% traditional rulers and religious leaders 11.5% and victims 8% respectively.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This section presents analysis and interprets the data gathered in the course of the research. Data were presented in a tabulated form for proper analysis and interpretation providing a clear picture about the questions addressing the research problem. Here is the presentation and analysis of responses collected from 387 respondents out of 400 questionnaires administered is presented in a table bellow;

Table 2: showing the total member of questionnaires distributed and retrieve

Questionnaire Administered	Questionnaire retrieved	Total
4000	387	400

The above showed that 400 questionnaires administered, but only 387 questionnaires were retrieved. This implies that 13 questionnaires not retrieved.

Data Analysis and Results

Table 3

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	111	28%
Agreed	231	59%

Disagreed	25	7%
Strongly Disagreed	20	6%
Total	387	100

The above table clearly shows that, the nature of the operation of the CJTF's role correlate with increased community support in the fight against Boko Haram insurgency in Borno State, Nigeria. This is clearly in line with the first objective of this research work.

Data Analysis and Results

respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	133	34%
Agreed	198	51.1%
Disagreed	36	9.3%
Strongly Disagreed	20	5.2%
Total	387	100

The table above shows clearly that, majority of the respondents agreed with facts of the objective two of this study. That Civilian Joint Task Force has a good pattern of collaboration with the government security agencies.

Testing of Hypothesis

The following hypothesis were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis one; states that, the operation structured and methods of the CJTF significantly enhance local security in Borno State.

The table shows correlation coefficient analysis of the nature of the operation of the CJTF role correlate with increased community support in the fight against Boko Haram in Borno State.

Variable	x	r-cal	r-tab	Level of significance	Sign 0.05
CJTF Nature of Operation	2.10				
	2.15	0.58	0.078	Significant	

Df = 668, a = 0.05, Number of Respondents = 387

This table indicate the correlation coefficient of the nature of operation of the CJTF's role correlated with increased community support in the fight against Boko Haram insurgency in Borno State. The analysis of these results shows that the r-table value 0.078 at significant level of 0.05 and 668 as degree of freedom is higher than the table value of 0.078. therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted which means that the nature of the operation of the CJTF's role correlate with increase community support in the fight against Boko Haram insurgency in Borno state.

Hypothesis two states that collaboration between the CJTF and government security agencies significantly improve the effectiveness of counter insurgency efforts against Boko Haram insurgency in Borno State.

Variable	x	v-r-cal	r-tab	Level of significance	Sign 0.05
CJTF collaborate with government security agencies	2.12				
	20.20	0.42	0.078	Significant	

Df = 668, a = 0.05, Number of Respondents = 387

The above indicates the correlation coefficient of CJTF collaboration with government security agencies has significant on reducing the operational capacity of Boko Haram insurgency in Borno State. The analysis of these results showed that the r-table value is 0.078 at significant level of 0.05 and 668 as degree of freedom. Since the calculated value of 0.078. hence the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted which clearly indicates that civilian Joint Task Force has significant collaboration with government security agencies in the fight against Boko Haram insurgency in Borno State.

Findings

Based on the study objectives and hypothesis, two key findings emerge that align with the aims of this research.

- The operational structure and methods of the Civilian Task Force (CJTF) have significantly enhance local security in Borno state.
  Empirical evidence from the field interviews and secondary data indicates that the CJTF's decentralized command structure, community surveillance networks, and intelligence sharing practices have contributed substantially to reduces insurgent attacks and improving neighborhood safety. Their close ties with local communities enable timely identification of threats and rapid response to security incidents, thereby complementing formal security operations (Adebayo, 2022) Shittu & Ahmed, 2021). The finding suggest that the CJTF's grass root based operations fostered a sense of ownership and resilience among residents, strengthening social cohesion and local defense capacities
- Collaboration between the CJTF and government security agencies has significantly improved the effectiveness of counter insurgency efforts against Boko Haram.

The study found out that structured cooperation such as joint patrols, intelligence sharing, and coordinated check points, has enhanced situational awareness and operational efficiency in insurgency prone areas (Suleiman & Bello, 2023) Gulyas, 2023). This collaboration has led to the successful reclaiming of several territories previously occupied by Boko Haram, while also improving communication and trust between civilians and state security actors. However, the finding also reveal that the sustainability of this collaboration depends on continuous government support training and the institutionalization of the CJTF with Nigeria's security framework.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study on the role of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in the fight against Boko Haram Insurgency in Borno State, several recommendations are proposed to strengthen the effectiveness, legitimacy, and sustainability of the group's operations.

I. Institutional integration and legal framework; the Nigeria government should formalize the status of the CJTF through a clear legal and institutional framework that defines its roles responsibilities, and limits insecurity operations. Such integration will enhance

accountability, protect members under the law, and prevent the misuses of power, aligning with best practices in community security governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Suleiman & Bello, 2023).

II. Capacity Building and Professional Training; to improve operational efficiency the CJTF should be provided with structured training in counter insurgency tactics, intelligence management, and human rights standards. This will minimize instances of abuse and strengthen collaboration with formal security agencies (Adebayo, 2022; Shittu & Ahmed, 2021).

III. Strengthening collaborative governance; Drawing from the principles of collaborative governance theory, continues dialogue, trust building, and joint decision –making mechanisms should be institutionalized between the CJTF, military, and other security stakeholders. Such collaboration ensures inclusive participation and enhance the sustainability of counter insurgency initiatives (Emerson, Nabatachi, & Balogh, 2012)

IV. Welfare and Reintegration Programs; the government and humanitarian agencies should establish welfare schemes and psychological support programs for CJTF members, including reintegration plans for those transitioning out of active duty. These initiative will reduce the risk of post conflict unemployment in violence (Gulyas, 2023).

V. Community Engagement and Monitoring Finally, community leaders, civil society organizations and human rights institutions should play active roles in monitoring CJTF operations to ensure adherence to ethical standards and foster transparency. Regular community consultations and independent assessments will promote trust and accountability in local security management (Okoli & Iortyer, 2021).

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