

Emerging Associational Life Matters for Counter-Insurgency in Zamfara State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigates the emerging associational life as a strategic mechanism for counter-insurgency in Zamfara State, Nigeria. It specifically examines how historical background of associational life in northern Nigeria fosters unity and harmonious relations among plural ethnic groups, as well as the socio-cultural, economic, political, and religious conditions that reinforce collective structures. Drawing from the synthesis of Homans' theory and Balance theory, the study conceptualizes associational life as a network of shared activities, interactions, and sentiments that strengthen group cohesion and resilience against insurgent threats. The study adopts a multidisciplinary approach rooted in the humanities and social sciences, utilising both primary and secondary data sources. The primary data were elicited through unstructured oral interviews conducted in English, Hausa, and Fulani across seven insurgency-vulnerable communities, Dan-sadau, Birnin Magaji, Tsafe, Maru, Kaura Namoda, Talata Mafara, and Anka in Zamfara State. The snowball sampling was employed to identify participants incorporated into community-based counter-insurgency associations (CBCIAL) which consisted of traditional leaders, faith-based representatives, women's groups, youth groups, disability associations, vigilante groups, and transport unions- NURTW among others. These stakeholders' actions involved profound participation in surveillance and information dissemination, enormously assisted in mitigation of insurgency through the early warning system piloted in the rural communities of Zamfara State. In complementation of CBCIAL action plans, the secondary sources that comprised published and unpublished materials from libraries collections, and the CBCIAL records. However, the findings underscored associational life as rooted in historical traditions adapted to contemporary socio-political realities serves, not only as a platform for solidarity and conflict resolution, but also as a locally grounded framework for intelligence sharing, rapid response, and community mobilization against insurgent incursions. The integration of theoretical insight with empirical realities, demonstrated that empowering and formalising CBCIAL initiatives significantly enhances local capacities in counter-insurgency operations, which ultimately contributes to peacebuilding and sustainable security in Zamfara State.

Keywords: *Associational Life, Counter-Insurgency, Stakeholder, Zamfara State*

Introduction

Autochthonous solidarity among complex and variegated Nigeria plural ethnics societies is of antiquity, and has been essentially morphed for proliferation of people's unity for associational life. This is abounded in the historical annal of northern Nigeria people, specifically of the erstwhile intergroup relations that permeated in the three epochal trajectories- pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial. According to Mike Lee,¹ associational life is a short-hand for the web of social relationships through which people can pursue joint endeavours in families, communities, workplace, and religious congregations. Undoubtedly, the achievement of chequered associational life benefits emanates from varied precedence of voluntary associations and organisations in northern Nigeria, which Zamfara State is a component part. In historical retrospection, between 18th and 19th centuries, the phenomenon gained enormous ascendancy in pre-existing socio-cultural, economic and political system which emanated from indigenous guild system.² It is worthy of note that prior to the British Colonial subjugation of northern Nigeria in 1903,³ the distinct independent groups, notably; communities, kingdoms and empires were administered by their autochthonous rulers.⁴ These were monarchical rulers, administratively powerful in nature and also executed complex phenomena through orthodox mean of the association life. This effulgence was also bequeathed of Zamfara kingdom and its subsequent creation of as a State in 1996. Indubitably, the autochthonous rulers overran and wielded considerable influence in northern Nigeria,⁵ and typically manifested in their administrative radiance bolstered by subaltern chiefs through associational life in Zamfara State. As underscored by Whitetaker,⁶ from 1920s to 1945, the spate of Nigeria nationalist's struggles towards decolonisation were stimulated by formation of ideological association, clubs, unions, groups and organisations driven and supported by pre-existing professional and trade guild system.

With visicitude of time and changes, modernised associational life systemically emerged, cutting-across political, socio-cultural, and religious leanings, given births the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), Hisba, Yan-sintiri, Yan-banga and Yan-sakai (local vigilante groups) among others. Besides, Akinjogbin and Osoba⁷ extolled that for many years different groups participated in distinct inter or intra-group relations, that served as the basis for exchanging of valuable ideations and innovations. These flourishing relations impacted positively in formation of people's associational life's trajectory which spawned voluntary trade and commercial guilds⁸ and religious

¹ Report of the United States Congress, Joint Economic Committee, JEC Republican, 15th May, 2017.

² I. A. Akinjogbin and S.A.Osoba (eds), *Topics on Nigerian Economic and Social History*, Ile-Ife University Press, 1981.

³ O. Ikime, *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Heinemann Publication Limited Ibadan, 1982. See also A. Smith, *A Little New Light: Selected Historical Writings of Professor Abdullahi Smith*, Vol. 1, Abdullahi Smith Centre for Historical Research, Zaria, 1987, pp.149-169. O. Ikime, *The Fall of Nigeria: The British Conquest*, London: Heinemann, 1977, p.74.

⁴ M. Crowder, *The Story of Nigeria*, Faber and Faber London, 1978. See also Maier, K, *This House is Fallen: Nigeria in Crisis*, Penguin Books, London, 2000.

⁵ T. Aminu, and A.M. Akanni, "Reflections on Selected Historical Sites of the Sokoto Caliphate: Toward the Development of Islamic Civilization." In K.E.Obasola, O.A. Oderinde, and A.A. Akanni, *Islam's Response to the Quest for Peace and Orderliness and Well-being in Nigeria*, 2020, pp.423-426.

⁶ O. Nnoli, *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria*, Fourth Dimension, Enugu, Nigeria, 1978.

⁷ I. A. Akinjogbin and S.A.Osoba (eds), *Topics on Nigerian Economic and Social History*, Ile-Ife University Press, 1980.

⁸ *Ibid...*

associations.⁹ For instance, in Zamfara State the antiquated traditional reciprocity labours system fondly refers to as *Aikin-Gaya*¹⁰ among Hausa community tremendously boosted agricultural prosperity and communal growth inform of associational life. It is therefore apposite to note that, potential advantages of emerging associational life for counter-insurgency in Zamfara State could be adopted, deployed and appraised to solve the prolong banditry violence insurgencies. This is because the truculent act of banditry activities are product of insurgencies which continued to aggravate the relative peaceful ambience that defied military tactics and diplomatic security mechanisms in Zamfara State since 2012.¹¹ Up till 2024, banditry remained an organized and conventional industry of crime and business perpetrates in Zurmi, Dansadau, Maru, Maradun, Tsafe, Dangulbi, Bindim, and Bingi in Zamfara State.¹²

Since 2011, banditry as an insurgency in operation has been identified to have arises from fundamental fragility of governance and inadequacies, recurrent Hausa-farmers and Fulani-herdsmen squabbles, cattle rustlings, ignorance, porous borders and poor control, excruciating poverty and sophisticated corruptions¹³ in Zamfara State. In fact, the corrosive effects of the deplorable situation has serious consequence in engendering indiscriminate killings, kidnapping for ransom, forceful tax levy, gender based sexual violence (GBSV), proliferation of small and light weapons (SALW) and displacement of persons among others.¹⁴ This fundamentally resorted in re-channelling of governmental policies towards mitigation and management of violent insurgencies. Based on the tapestry, this study adopted the deployment of ‘emerging associational life for counter insurgency in Zamfara State’ for curtailment and containment of insurgencies. However, it is concerned with the establishment of community-based counter insurgency associational life (CBCIAL) in Kaura Namoda, Dansadau, Maru, Maradun, Tsafe, Talata Mafara, Birni Magaji, and Anka in Zamfara State. These CBCIAL in the communities are saddled with potential capacity, aspirations and values to churn out formidable peace and harmonious relations in selected insurgencies prone rural communities of the State. Significantly, associational life is a centripetal force with the synergies for integration of different Stakeholders toward creation of common front and ownership of their communities for extension of the frontier of peace and harmonious relations. Impactfully, it is assuaged to improving on socio-economic and political development as well as the retention of its epithet as ‘farming is our pride’ in Zamfara State, not to lost in oblivion.

Statement of the Research Problems/Justification

The study is an inquiry into ‘Emerging Associational Life for Counter Insurgency in Zamfara State.’ What informed such an invaluable investigation are the overwhelming myriads of increasing and incessant challenges of violent insurgencies, notably; the farmers-herdsmen

⁹ T. Falola, *The Context: Christianity and Islam and Inter-religion Relations*, University of Ibadan Press, Ibadan, 1985.

¹⁰ *Op.cit....* I.A, Akinjogbin and S. Osoba (Eds), *Topics on Nigeria Economic....*1980.

¹¹ T. Aminu, and M. Bello, ‘Globalisation Matrix in Exacerbation of Armed Banditry in Nigeria: The Zamfara State Experience, 2011-2020.’ *Ilorin Journal of History and International Studies*, 2020, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 121-141.

¹² *Ibid...*

¹³ S.Y.B. Kura,.....

¹⁴ T. Aminu, M. Bello, Y. A, Jimoh, and T.J, Fadeyi, “International Borders and the Emergence of Terrorism in North-West Nigeria, 2011-2022,” in O. Jegede, B, Sani and R.A, Adimula, *Readings in Diplomacy, Democracy, Peace and Development*, A Festschrift in Honour Professor Ibrahim Agboola Gambari, CFR, Spectrum Books Limited, Ibadan, Nigeria, 2023.

pugnacities, cattle rustlings, unbridled kidnappings, and malaise of banditry among others. Above all, northern Nigeria which Zamfara State is a component part is one of the complex geopolitical areas described as a ‘mystery land’ of varied multi-religious ideologies and distinct ethnic groups. Zamfara State is fundamentally worse-hit by the poverty pandemic, excruciating corruption and lackadaisical attitude in political and administrative bureaucracy which precipitates the overwhelming impasse and violent insurgencies. Albeit, varied studies outside the shore of Nigeria provided apt illustration of associational life indices on how it has impacted positively in establishment of peace and harmonious relations. These included establishment of good governance, provision of enduring policy statements, untrammelled democratic supports and viable market economy system. In addition, associational life have facilitated the mitigation, and countering of insurgency through the established community-based membership’s cooperation. This is highly imperative and healthy in addressing the inherent challenges toward achieving peaceful and harmonious relations in insurgencies prone environments of Tsafe, Talata Mafara, Birni Magaji, Dan-Sadau, Maru, Anka, and Kaura Namoda in Zamfara State.

Besides, the study area has not received the much needed attention on communal associational life directed at addressing insurgencies in Zamfara State which the present study has indulged. Again, evidence abounds illustrated little or non-knowledge of serious studies on the phenomenon with particular reference to associational life. This may be primarily predicated on paucity of materials, relative neglect, poor accessibility, or less or lack of commitments to the phenomenon in question. Though, there are numerous studies on northern Nigeria covering vast expanse of human endeavours, but not on associational life matters in countering insurgency. In northern Nigeria, there are indications of sketchy intellectual submissions merely in passing references on civil and voluntary associations or organisations formation that cut-across social, economy, religious and cultural life. Albeit, from 1960 up to the early 21st century, separate studies adduced apt illustration on how the struggle for socio-cultural identity and ethnic jingoism has spurred strong unifications, as a typology of associational life.

Further to the problem is the nature and complexity of the ungoverned forest spaces and ethnic composition in triggering and escalation of insurgencies in Zamfara State. This outrightly emanated from the sour relations between Hausa and Fulani cultural inclinations that later birthed the precipice that ultimately eroded the firm unity of purposes earlier enjoyed. Based on the prism, this study espouses the creation of community-based counter insurgency associational life (CBCIAL) within the selected communities’ socio-cultural proclivity and guided by uniqueness of monolithic Islam as a unifying factor. This is obviously as a result of government’s dereliction in meeting social infrastructural needs and aspirations of people in Zamfara State. Consequently, these ineptitudes morphed up deeply the inhuman character and behavioural traits that culminated to intense grievances in the study area.

The justification for the study is impregnated with plethora of synthesised factors, primarily centred on ‘Emerging Associational Life in Counter Insurgency in Zamfara State.’ First and foremost, the study is justifiable because of its outstanding values as it refilled the gaps left unexplored by other scholars or researchers especially on associational life matters in Zamfara State. This is very significant in all human ramifications as it prepares people, communities and Zamfara State government for serious engagement and inclusiveness in building a viable society through associational life formation. Normatively, the associational life varied, though they are driven and achieved through civil or voluntary associations and organisations that derived its experiences from the autochthonous pre-colonial guild system. The study justified the historical

precedence of the study area, for instance, not until 19th century, the Hausa as people were noted for associational groupings, while the Fulani are culturally clubbable through their effervescent psycho-cultural belief and inclination. Therefore, the study justification has the potential value and strength to wield considerable influence in spawning a renew hopes for good governance, rule of law, security, and checks and balances on government and bureaucratic activities towards security advancement of the State.

Again, the cosmopolitan justification of associational life also created the idea of people's inclusiveness to democratic ideals. This ensconces the proactive propensity for mitigation, or probably the mortification of the proliferating incessant insurgencies that plagued communities in Zamfara State. It could also be justified that the deplorable condition injected through violence insurgencies has continued to inhibit and skew the achievement of citizens' needs and aspirations. Furthermore, the quintessence justification also hovers on creation of good and sustainable policy statements for the State and Federal legislative organs to fathom viable market economy, democratic dividend, social inclusiveness, and security advancement among others.

Besides, the study has justified the manifestation of how associational life through community-based counter insurgency associational life (CBCIAL) engendered the mitigation violent insurgency through improvement on peaceful and harmonious co-existence in Zamfara State. Most pertinent, the study have garnered human capacity building to suppress the menace of perennial increasing violent insurgencies through community-based committee cooperation in Zamfara State. For example, the established associational life's members possess high-level of social and political synergy with support from constituted authorities for sustainability in Dansadai, Birnin Magaji, Tsafe, Maru, Kaura Namoda, Talata Mafara, and Anka among others.

In addition, the justification of associational life accentuates government's exigency to take proactive and stringent measures for the implementation of viable partnership to create enviable mutual understanding among varied communities CBCIAL in Zamfara State. It is worthy of note that the significance of CBCIAL assisted in holding the State accountable through lobbying, pressurising and influencing them to make more democratic concessions. The associational life created credible and sincere memberships that imposed pertinent constraints on authoritarian impulses within the government to improve human endeavours. Generally, the application of associational life through CBCIAL strategies and tactics has produced the capability for transformation of extant security mechanisms to complement Zamfara State government's efforts. Intellectually, it provided the opportunity and roadmap for other researchers who may be willing to dabble into similar studies on associational life. Lastly, it helped to debunked some misconceived erroneous impressions advanced by Eurocentric scholars on African States lacking the capability unite to form associational life with the potential strength to proliferate socio-cultural, economic, political and religious advancement.

Objectives of the Study

The broad aim of the study is a didactic exploration on 'Emerging Associational Life for Counter Insurgency in Zamfara State,' while the specific objectives are to:

- i. examines the historical background of associational life in creation of unity and harmonious relations among plural ethnic groups in Zamfara State;
- ii. explores the socio-cultural, economic, political and religious conditions that reinforces associational life in Zamfara State;
- iii. identify and appraise the forces responsible for, and areas of insurgency in Zamfara State;

- iv. initialise the formation of community-based counter insurgency associational life (CBCIAL) towards mitigation, or mortification of insurgency in Zamfara State; and
- v. create synergistic relations with State government towards sustainability of community-based counter insurgencies associational life (CBCIAL) in Zamfara State.

Literature Review

This section of the study explored some related literature for historical construction and re-construction of the Emerging Associational Life for Counter Insurgency in Zamfara State. This constitutes the tact to comprehend the knowledge of existing literature on the subject matter, fundamentally to determine and appraise the extent of work done and the loopholes to be plugged. However, plethora of writings on associational life in northern Nigeria's history vis-a-vis Zamfara State has not been given much attention. Though, there are mere passing references on associational life with significant inferences to outside Nigeria in some available studies.

The study undertaken by Jaulobaeva¹⁵ discusses associational life in Kyrgyzstan and Scotland as a treatise on Tocqueville's work, involving the operation of various political and civil associations. The study emphasised that associational life is not equal to civil society; it upholds civil society as part of the associational life which covers the private and economic aspects of people's lives. The study accentuates that associational life can be based on neighbourhoods,' religious, and social issues that have an ultimate goal to benefit their community, and as well puts individuals' interests at the centre. By and large, the study examined how successful the attempts of donors to create and promote non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Kyrgyzstan and Scotland. It also amplifies how associational life enables society to be self-rule and act as a check and balance on government and their diversity to prevent the majority from devastating the society. This analysis is very pertinent to this study as it helped to understand the fundamental of donors in any association, and its idea is adapted for a viable analysis of the phenomenon in question.

The study by Fernandes¹⁶ addresses sources of associational life and civil engagements with the postulation of a new theory on the origins of associational life. The theory revolves around a comparative historical study of the popular sector- lower-class associations of urban and rural populations in a set of Western European countries during 1870s-2000. These countries included Sweden, Norway, Austria (strong civil society), Germany, Netherlands, Belgium (medium to high associational life); Britain (medium associational life); Italy, France, Spain and Portugal (weak to fragile associational life).¹⁷ It anchored associational life on guilds, religious, and corporate bodies that survive up to the early 21st century. In addition, Fernandez gave three explicit political and institutional factors that have shaped and induced civil society or voluntary association. This deals with the timing of a state building or international States in the 18th and 19th centuries. Again, the State capacity should encapsulate strong State capacities that will deal with voluntary associations through which policies and established goals autonomously are decided by rulers. It accentuates that in the late 19th century, one of the State's main functions was the promotion of economic

¹⁵ K. Jaulobaeva, *The Associational Life: Kyrgyzstan and Scotland*, Edinburgh Working Papers in Sociology, University of Edinburgh, ISBN: 1-900522-33-00, 2008, pp.2-24.

¹⁶ T. Fernandes, "Patterns of Associational Life in Western Europe, 1800-2000: A Comparative and Historical Interpretation," Department of Political and Social Sciences, European University Institute. Being a Thesis submitted for Assessment with the view to obtaining the Degree of Doctor of Political and Social Sciences of European Institute, 2009.

¹⁷ *Ibid...*

development and nationalist mobilisation by establishing a partnership with association. Its functions empowered association through association's resources, legitimacy and public status from the State being the sole recruit of members through the distribution of selective benefits. It added that, since high capacity States can impose a uniform jurisdiction and control over a territory, the association life expands connection to a different geographical area, which is more easily develop to encompasses peak association. It accentuated that, the strength of the degree of democratisation of regime in 1880s and 1930s were determined in proportional by the capability of the associational life. Furthermore, democratisation in relation to associational life is measured by two diversions viz: extension of the right of participation and the degree of parliamentarization of the regime. This study is very germane; it provides a general overview of the operationalisation of associational life dynamism. It is worthy of emulation for current study using the synergy of legislature to build a formidable associational life in countering insurgency in Zamfara State.

The study embarked by Schofer and Longhofer¹⁸ examined the structural sources of associational life with particular reference to factors that culminated to the proliferation and expansion of associational life. The study views association as "bottom-up" creation formed by numbers of individuals with a high level of resources, skills and pro-social values. It argued that the State and the World polity, which have grown tremendously in scope, are critical sources of association in modern societies. It further explained that expanded State institutions provide legitimation and sources for association and as well constitute identities and purposes around which association occurs. Quintessentially, education proves to be apposite predictor of associations, but national wealth and trust do not, which is conversely different in African (Nigeria) where they are pre-requisite. However, the study upholds various structural and institutional factors, notably; democracy and State expansion for voluntary association. It also opined that democracy particularly encourages association, while international influences generate associations whose aims tends to mirror the agenda of the international community.¹⁹ This study's vantage could not be overstated as it provided the leeway for x-raying the structural steps to be taken in the articulation of extant associational life in countering insurgency in Zamfara State.

More significantly, the study by Simone²⁰ explained the straddles divides on associational life in the informal African city setting. The study intensifies on inherent changes in African urban economies and the attrition of public sectors from service provision under the various regimes of economic restructuring as responsible for the growth of new associations. The study is a composition of urban development of non-government organisation (NGOs) in fifteen (15) major African cities. It demonstrated how they worked collectively to establish context- specific platform of dialogue between local community associations and municipal government with selected number of neighbourhoods within each city. The study areas included; Gatati south Mayo (Khartoum) in Sudan, Yopongon II (Abidjan), Soumbédioune (Dakar), among others. In these areas, associational life produced livelihoods, gainful access to opportunities, spent income and organised local production and social support. The study added that the new formalised vehicles of association, most often is community-based and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that

¹⁸ E. Schofer and W. Longhofer, "The Structural Sources of Association Life." *American Journal of Sociology*, Department of Sociology, University of Minnesota,

¹⁹ *Ibid...*

²⁰ A. Simone, "Straddling the Divides: Remaking Associational Life in the Informal African City," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Joint Editor and Blackwell Publishers Ltd, Vol. 25, No.1 March, 2001, pp.103-112,

have proliferated. The study also highlights lack of health care, income, bonds, stability, cohesion and mobility as factors have continued to give rise to many associational life practices which in turn provide jobs, status, earning and security for specific members of the community. It is also garnered that African countries associational life tends to spawn actual or potential conflict mitigation situations generated by differences in capacities that are often derived from collective efforts. The study is highly essential and adopted for current endeavour on the associational life matter in counter-insurgency selected communities in Zamfara State through cooperation with of associations.

The study by Stephen²¹ conceptualises on trust, associational life and economic performances through either of the major channels, notably; micro-economic or macro-political. It expounds that micro-level, social ties and interpersonal trust can reduce transaction costs, enforce contracts, and facilitate credit at the level of individual investors. The study avers that, social cohesion as underlying trusts may strengthen democratic governance through associational life at the micro-level, improving efficiency, honesty of public administration and quality of economic policies. Howbeit, Kenneth,²² bolstered considerable support, and plausibly argued that lack of confidence explains much of the economic backwardness in the World. Above all, individuals in higher-trust societies can spend less to protect themselves from being exploited in economic transactions through associational life matters. The study therefore illustrates that social cohesion (associational life) and trust influence public policies' quality and could be achieved through viable associational life. The two studies are unique exemplary ideations and innovations for the re-construction of associational life in the study area. Most importantly, the studies premised on trust and confidence in the establishment of civil or voluntary associations that will be beneficial to associational life matter for countering insurgency in Zamfara State.

The study carried out by Rosenblum²³ extolled the importance of social relations among people in sustaining a free democratic and prosperous society using variety of terms such as civil society, mediating institutions, intermediate association and the more recently popular social capital. In streamline, Cacioppo and Patrick²⁴ explicated that mediating institution provide significant role in giving meaning and purpose to individual lives by making people responsive to the needs of others. For instance, when people lack the meaning and purpose of strong bonds and routine social attachments, they are more prone to alienation and atomization. However, the duo studies seemed to have a similitude of associational life exemplary analysis with emphasis on social relationships, mediating institution and mutual understanding among others. Their ideations and expositions are apt illustration for re-construction that spurs the comprehension of ideals of associational life towards extenuation of insurgency in Zamfara State.

Another pertinent study by Vubo,²⁵ explored the viability of associational life in traditional society and home-based association in some selected regional areas of Cameroun. It is a

²¹ K. Stephen, "Trust, Associational Life and Economic Performance", The paper was prepared for the HRDC-OECD, International Symposium.

²² A. Kenneth, 'Gift and Exchanges,' In *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol.1, No. 4, pp.343-362.

²³ N. Resenblum, *Membership and Morals: The Personnal Uses of Pluralism in America*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1998.

²⁴ J.T, Cacioppo and W. Patrick, *Loneliness: Human Nature and the Needs for Social Connection*, New York, W.W Norton Company, Inc, 2008.

²⁵ E.Y, Vubo, *On the Viability of Associational Life in Traditional Society and Home-Based Associations*, 2008, pp.3-32.

synthesised study on ethnographic method and surveys with data elicited from twenty-three traditional associations (rotating, saving clubs, solidarity union, status societies). Among the ethnic groups studied are; Moghamo, Bayang, Bafaw, Balang, Baromba Bakundu, and the survey pierced through twenty-nine home-based associations representing three distinct ethno-linguistic and geo-cultural zones. It substantiates that associational life has become the central feature of economic, social and political life of the rural communities' development. This indeed remained traditional and as well accelerated the proliferation of ethnic-based associations in urban areas which in many situations has aided security mechanism. It also, accentuates on association with ethnic-base laying claims to development roles or functions, which has been a significant feature of associational life in Cameroun since the colonial times. In a nutshell, the central argument of the study anchored fundamentally on guilds associational life in Cameroun as a pointer to forms of autonomy that are essential to development and nation-building. The study associations offer a road map for self-determination essential to development practice and securing of the area from undermining influence. In its essentiality, associational life is compartmentalised into three strands of epochal periods and trajectories, notably; the pre-colonial were a kind of guild system, in the colonial, an ethno-cultural group with interests in self-autonomy. And in the post-colonial time, it emphasised on rotating savings through membership from a few hundred or a thousand francs CFA. By the large, associational life is lumped together through mobilisation under a broad category in such a way that includes entertainment groups; fraternities or status societies; age set and solidarity groups. Most significantly, it provides valuable facts that aided structural analysis of the trajectory to be adopted for consolidation of associational life for counter insurgency in the study.

The study by Olasupo²⁶ is on women associational life within the Yoruba traditional institution which Kwara State is a component part geopolitically situated in north central Nigeria. It relates civil society as a scion of associational life saddle with similar functions. It began in 1958 and has become the dominant preoccupation between 1980s and 1990s with concentration on ethnic association, among the local government women arising from dereliction of duty. The associational life was meant to assuage collective progress and development, hence was the foremost Abeokuta Ladies Club, formed in 1944 by literate women. In the later years, memberships were extended to non-western educated market women and traders. They were offered access to the literate programme, skills training such as sewing and catering by the club and charity work. This development prepared them for all round security benefits achieved through unity of purpose for collective aspiration. With vicissitude of times and changes, it metamorphosed to associational life as Abeokuta Women's Union. A similitude was the like of late Hajia Gambo Sawaba whose participation in associational life had influenced positively the women's role in politics of northern Nigeria. The study is adopted and idealised for the formation of associational life as supportive role, cultural avidity, ethnic identity, and capital and security formation for counter insurgency in Zamfara State.

²⁶ F.A, Olasupo, "Womens' Associational Life within Traditional Institution in Yoruba States", In *Contesting Nigerian State*, Palgrave, Macmillan, New York, Springer Link, ISBN 978-1-349-45898-1, 2020. See also A. Bolanle, "Women and Politics in Historical Perspective," In A. Bolanle (ed), *Women in Politics in Nigeria*, Ikeja, Lagos, Melthouse Press Limited, 1992.

Of more pertinent to associational life is the study conducted by Danjibo and Ashindorbe.²⁷ It is a treatise on the evolution and pattern of political party formation and search for national integration in Nigeria. The study avowed that leading political parties that emerged in the British colonial and immediate post-colonial times in Nigeria were more of provincial in outlook. They draw their provenance of bond from socio-cultural and ethnic based associations that fitted well into the British colonial philosophy of “divide and rule”. In all, associational life has implicated on every human life formative structures through which human development occurs. For instance, this constitutes what people do together to affects human character, capacities, and deeply held moral commitments. In a nutshell, the vantages of the foregoing literatures reviewed have profusely stimulated the facilitation of understanding and formation of associational life for counter insurgency in Zamfara State.

Conceptual Exposition: Associational Life and Counter-Insurgency

Multivariate concepts exist for the explanation of the term associational life, but most competing expositions contain common elements and commonalities useful for comprehension of this study. Again, the contemporary usage of the concept counter-insurgency produces multitude of clarity which connote the curtailment and containment of conflagration. However, associational life could only be conceptualised within the context of civil society as a strong normative bent, akin to the notion of communitarianism. It stresses solidarity and cohesion within communities based on fundamental moral principles without the help or intrusion of the State.²⁸ In other clime, associational life is views within the ambit of civil society as a sphere, a space or an arena for action by divergent interests, struggling against each other or against the State, or simply engaging in self-contained activities of various kinds. Within this strand, it emphasises the relationship to the State, where various groups try to pressurise the State into taking a certain course of action or adopt a specific policy, or to hold the State accountable for its action or inaction. In actual sense, civil societies are complex associational universes involving a vast array of specific organisational forms and a wide diversity of institutional motivations. In a general, civil society and associational life have been used interchangeably to denote the general phenomenon under discussion. As affirmed by Tvedt,²⁹ associations’ plays spectacular role in urban governance, and often take the form of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), or they are ties to NGOs.

Insurgency is a protracted political-military struggles directed toward subverting or displacing the legitimacy of a constituted government or occupying power and completely or partially controlling the resources of a territory through the use of irregular military forces and illegal political organizations.³⁰ The common denominator for most insurgent groups is their objective of gaining control of a population or a particular territory, and including its resources. It is worth noting that identifying a movement as an insurgency does not convey a normative judgment on the legitimacy of the movement or its cause; the term insurgency is simply a description of the nature of the conflict³¹ or violent. Therefore, this objective differentiates

²⁷ N. Danjibo and K. Ashindorbe, “The Evolution and Pattern of Politics of Political Party Formation and the Search for National Integration in Nigeria,” *Brazilian Journal of African Studies*, Porto Alegre, Vol.3, No.5, June/July, 2018, pp.85-100.

²⁸ A. Etzioni, *The Spirit of Community: The Reinvention of American Society*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1993.

²⁹ T. Tvedt, *Angels of Mercy or Development Diplomats? NGOs and Foreign Aid*, Oxford, James Curry, 1998.

³⁰ S. Sewall, “Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency 2012,” US Government Publications, Retrieved by <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449>, Retrieved in 2012, 1980.

³¹ *Ibid...*

insurgent groups from purely terrorist organizations as evident in banditry operation in Zamfara State. According to Sewall³² counter-insurgency is frequently referred to by the acronym COIN and it is the combination of measures undertaken by a government to defeat an insurgency. Effective counter-insurgency integrates and synchronizes political, security, legal, economic, development, and psychological activities to create a holistic approach aimed at weakening the insurgents, while bolstering the government's legitimacy in the eyes of the population.

Theoretical Constructs

Theoretical constructs are postulations meant to interpret complex phenomenon as an attempt to fathom a simplify solution. In a multidisciplinary study, the adoption and utilisation of theoretical constructs aids and provide ideas questioning reasons for fraternity and formation of a group. In this study, the phenomenon under investigation as 'associational life' is meant objectively to assists in countering insurgency in Zamfara State, Nigeria. However, the study adopted the synthesization of Homan's theory and Balance theory, though there are numbers of theories, but the duo seemed to be more appropriate to the discourse of this paper.

Primarily, the Homans' theory as postulated by George C. Homans contends that the more activities persons share, the more numerous will be their interactions and the stronger will be their shared activities and sentiments: and the more sentiments persons have for one another, the more will be their shared activities and interactions. As a matter fact, the Homans theory has contributed profusely to the comprehension of group formation (associational life), and essentially construed its exposition on three basic strands of concepts, namely; activities, interactions and sentiments that are directly and indispensably related to each other. For instance, the members of a group share activities and interact with one another not just because of physical proximity, but also to accomplish group goals. The key element is interaction because of which they develop common sentiments for one another.³³

Again, the Balance theory as proposed by Theodore Newcomb cited in Olofu, Kanu, and Ugochigborugu³⁴ states that "persons are attracted to one another on the basis of similar attitudes towards commonly relevant objects and goals. Once a relationship is formed, it strives to maintain a symmetrical balance between the attraction and common attitudes. For instance, if an imbalance occurs, attempts are made to restore the balance, and if the balance cannot be restored, the relationship dissolves." It is interesting to note that propinquity and interaction play a role in the balance theory. Thus, the balance theory is additive in nature in the sense that it introduces the factor of 'balance' to the propinquity and interaction factors. There must be a balance in the relationship between the group members for the group to be formed and for its survival. As accentuated by this theory, groups are formed due to some common attitudes and values such as authority, work, life style, religion, politics, and security among others. They tend to strive to maintain a symmetrical or proportional balance between the attraction and the common attitudes.

Albeit, the synthesization of the theoretical constructs discernibly explained, and as well fit into the constituent forces that culminated to formation of community-based counter insurgency

³² *Ibid...*

³³ D.R, Forsyth, *Group Dynamics*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2010.

³⁴ P.A, Olofu, N.O, Kanu, and K.M, Ugochigborugu, K.M, "Understanding the Dynamics of Group Formation and Its Application in Educational Administration in Nigeria: The Perspective of Interaction and Balance Theories", *Benue State University Journal of Education and Management, (BSUJEM)*, Vol. 2, No.1, 2020.

associational life committee (CBCIAL) in Zamfara State. The variant of the theoretical constructs (Homans' and Balance theories) collectively holds key forces that extensively hover around activities, sentiment and common interests. However, the theoretical expositions demystified above seemed to be the major factors adopted for formation of associational life group for this study.

Methodology

Incontrovertibly, the validity of any study lies heavily on research methodology which requires a great deal of ingenuous data collection and its analysis for critical understanding. Its importance is to construe the synthesis of methodology for acquisition of expected performance result on 'Emerging Associational Life for Counter Insurgency in Zamfara State.' However, the study adopted the use of multidisciplinary approaches revolving around humanities and social science patterns of debriefing data and its analysis. The data elicitation encompasses the use of primary and secondary sources as to comprehend the conditions that necessitated the formation, and contributions of community-based counter insurgency associational life (CBCIAL) in the selected areas of Zamfara State, Nigeria. These comprised the selected communities vulnerable to insurgencies, notable; Dan-sadau, Birnin Magaji, Tsafe, Maru, Kaura Namoda, Talata Mafara, and Anka. The study employed the use of published and unpublished materials including; text-books, research projects, theses, dissertations, journals, newspapers, pamphlets, and magazines. These materials were obtained from Federal University Gusau library, Zamfara State library, History and Cultural Bureau library, and Zamfara State library among others. In addition, some private collections of data such as public documents, minutes and reports from the CBCIAL, while others were collected from government, individual, civil and voluntary associations. Note that, all the sources complemented the activities reports of CBCIAL and are shown in the references section of the study. The CBCIAL comprised of members from selected Local Government Areas (LGA); traditional leaders (District head); faith-based representatives; interest-based groups (Women committees or groups); age-based groups (elders and youth); disability groups (people with special needs); road transport union; and mandated service provider groups (vigilantes, law enforcement/security actors, NGOs, CSOs).

To make the study more enduring, efficient, practical and interesting, the methodology adopted included the utilisation of mini-tape recorder for recording of unstructured oral interview on selected communities in Zamfara State, with high confidentiality maintained. The unstructured interviews were conducted on five (5) sub-themes derived from the objectives of the study, particularly on seven (7) selected communities vulnerable to insurgencies, (Dan-sadau, Birnin Magaji, Tsafe, Maru, Kaura Namoda, Talata Mafara, and Anka) in Zamfara State. The interviews were conducted and elicited within the study area through the use of snow-ball technique or samplings. Significantly, English, Hausa, and Fulani languages were employed and adopted for debriefing information on performance appraisal of extant associations and the established CBCIAL. Again, to validate the reliability of data, existing literatures were used to complement, and juxtapose in contraposition with unstructured oral interviews conducted. Albeit, all non-English data collected were translated to English language for proper documentation and comprehension, while qualitative historical data analysis was adopted to validate the reliability of the study.

Performance Appraisal of Community-Based Counter Insurgency Associational Life Committee (CBCIAL) in the vulnerable communities Zamfara State

Lastly, the discussion of the finding hovers on five (5) sub-themes on the selected communities vulnerable to banditry insurgencies, which includes; Dan-sadau, Birnin Magaji, Tsafe, Maru, Kaura Namoda, Talata Mafara, and Anka in Zamfara State.

i. Historical background of associational life in creation of unity and harmonious relations among plural ethnic groups in Zamfara State.

The contemporary Zamfara State was one of the old Hausa city-states, like; Kano, Katsina, Gobir, Kabi and Zazzau. The earliest inhabitants of Zamfara were reported to have been hunters and giants, and established their first settlement at Dutsi which was the first capital of Zamfara. It extends up to the bend of River Rima to the north-west and River Ka in the south-west of Zamfara kingdom established in the 11th century, which flourished up to 16th century as a city-State.³⁵ The modern Zamfara is populated with Hausa and Fulani communities, and its major groups of people are the Zamfarawa mainly located in Anka, Gunmi, Bukkuyum, and Talata Mafara Local Government Areas.³⁶ There is equally in existence of numbers of distinct ethnic groups such as Yoruba, Igbo, Tiv, Idoma, Igbirra, Itshekiri and others in the State that traced their eponymous homes to the southern, western, north-central, and eastern flanks of Nigeria. Zamfara State has an area of 38,418 square kilometres, and bordered in the north by Niger Republic, and to the south by Kaduna State. In the east, it is bordered by Katsina State and to the west by Sokoto and Niger States. It has a population of 3,278,873 according to the 2006 population census, but its population estimation recently is about four (4) million plus.

The State contains fourteen (14) Local Government Areas,³⁷ and they are highly inundated with dreadful insurgencies that have defied different conflict mitigation tactics and mechanisms. In addition, Zamfara State is mostly surrounded by forests (with little or no government presence) from where bandits launched their attacks on outlying towns, villages, and highways. The Rugu, Kamara, Kunduma and Sububu forests have become major hideouts for criminals. The consequences of the nasty problem of insecurity situation that lately increased at an alarming rate in some parts of Zamfara State have continued to be in people's memory.³⁸ And, this has also been accelerated by the irregular migration of people and re-direction of government policies toward containment, curtailment, and management of insurgencies in the State.

Retrospectively, there has been formidable unity created from the convivial relationship of the varied ethnic groups prior to the emergence of insurgencies in communities' prone areas since 2011. This relationship was fastened and bolstered by economic viability, socio-cultural homogeneity, and religious proclivity, receptive and accommodative nature of the host communities. The consanguinity relations boosted the indelible marks of unity and strong bond between the Hausa-farmers and Fulani-herds regarded as the aborigine of the area. However, the convivial relationship was subsequently disrupted and devastated by truculent activities and

³⁵ A. Mohammed, "Securing the Victims of Violent Conflicts in Zamfara State," in *Zamfara and the Challenges of Socio-Political Transformation, 1764-2019*, pp. 565-574.

³⁶ K.S, Chafe, "Zamfara State: Its History, Challenges and Prospects in the Nigerian Federation." A Public Lecture at the 20th Anniversary of the Federation of Zamfara State, 2016.

³⁷ *Ibid...*

³⁸ A. Mohammed, "Climate Change and International Security in the Sahel," in I.O, Albert and T, Lawanson, (Eds), *Urban Crises and Management in Africa: A Festschrift in Honour of Professor Akin Mabogunje*, Austin, Texas, USA- Pan-African University, 2019.

operations of bandits from 2011. Based on the uncouth ambience, the present relative peace and harmony enjoyed became sour from the breaking down of mechanism of relations, that later seems to be the major precursor of the contemporary conflagrations. The fascinating effort was the brokering of control, coordination and containment of the conflictive ambience that received support from the extant Miyayati Allah- a socio-political association of Fulbe speakers. This socio-political group flourish between and among distinct Fulani groups, but incapable of mitigating the insidious insurgencies, hence the formation of *Yan-sakai*- a local vigilante groups in the Zamfara State.

The Yan-sakai as local security association became noticeable in countering of insurgencies in the vulnerable communities in Dan-sadau, Birnin Magaji, Tsafe, Maru, Kaura Namoda, Talata Mafara, and Anka in Zamfara State. The manifestation of insurgencies poised for the established local vigilante group- *Yan-sakai* to tenaciously secure the affected areas, but, however lacks formidable mechanisms. Such included the lack of appropriate security knowledge, strategies, conflict resolution approaches and tactics against insurgencies and onslaughts. Affecting the security condition is also the ability of extant local vigilante to have radical and considerable supports of the communities' members in supplies of funds raising, sophisticated weapon, and logistic among others. On 31st December, 2023, the nascent security association of vibrant youths and experienced personnel tagged Community Protection Guards (CPG) was equally inaugurated to complement government security efforts. However, the CPG is bereft of sophisticated arms and ammunitions to fight against insurgencies arising from federal and political might complicity. It is worth nothing that the security issues of the State became trivialised arising from scoundrel conflict and political entrepreneur complicity and some element that subverts all security strategies and tactics for pecuniary and political gains. It is collectively garnered reliably that, there has never been any subsisting associational life, for curtailment and containment of insurgencies. This inadequacy called for the establishment of community-based counter insurgency associational life (CBCIAL) as an alternative strategy to complement existing counter strategies, cardinal to this study. This is to assuage simple tact and strategy, toward containment and curtailment of violent insurgencies through CBCIAL saddled with the objectives to keep surveillance, monitoring, and coordination of insurgencies through diplomatic strategies. Against all odds, to assuage simple tact and strategy, the CBCIAL was subjected to critical study with membership drawn from all communities' stakeholders for effective participation. The membership encompasses representatives of the various stakeholders of the Local Government Areas, notably; the law enforcement agencies, district heads of selected communities, faith-group leaders, NURTW, *Kabu-Kabu* riders (motorcyclists) and *Yan-agbagba-da-buje* (tricycle riders). To effectively achieve the set objectives, the CBCIAL was charged for collective ownership as to have profound involvement, radical control and coordination of activities on counter insurgency.

ii. Socio-cultural, economic, political and religious conditions that reinforces associational life in Zamfara State.

This section of the study deals with responses from community engagements, essentially using the dynamic theories of group formation³⁹ as fit and align into community-based counter insurgency associational life (CBCIAL) in the profoundly insurgencies affected communities. The CBCIAL is a human capacity building endeavour comprises of seven (7) selected communities where insurgencies remained albatross. Historically, insurgencies in the selected mentioned

³⁹ D.R, Forsyth, *Group Dynamics*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2010.

communities have been defying series of conflict resolution tactics and mechanisms in Zamfara State. This largely inundates stakeholders that are deeply conversant with every nook and cranny of the rural areas of Zamfara State, essentially the ecology and natural terrains of the insurgencies areas. The study elicited and revealed that, socio-cultural, economic, political, and religious ill-conditions played crucial roles in reinforcement of the formation associational life of the people. Undoubtedly, the socio-cultural factors created the strong community ties coupled with the shared traditions in stimulation of common collective action and network of supports as exemplified in Homans and Balanced theories.⁴⁰ In fact, the variant of the theoretical constructs (Homans' and Balance theories) collectively holds key forces that extensively hovers around activities, sentiment and common interests of the insurgency.

An inevitable fact reinforcing associational life is the disruption of the obvious socio-cultural bond that permeates between and among the Hausa and Fulani ethnics of the perceived eponymous homes. Again, the extant farming activities that was the major matrix of economic advancement epithet as "farming is our pride" in Zamfara State was extenuated to the barest level of insecurity in food production arising from socio-cultural factor. In addition, this strand of factor triggered instability and emasculated the economic strength and powers of farmers, culminating in hikes of prices, quality and quantity of food productions in Zamfara State. However, the challenges of livelihoods and resource allocation often necessitate cooperative efforts for associational life for survival and economic development. Politically, local governance structures and participation frameworks influence how associations form and operate, often aligning with broader political goals. Religiously, shared faith and moral values has continued to foster unity and mutual support within associations, contributing to their resilience and influence. As a monolithic religion, it served as a unifying force that created the bond for associational life of the people in the study area.

iii. Forces responsible for, and areas of insurgency in Zamfara State.

The insurgencies since 2011 in Zamfara State are primarily a by-product of the various internal and external factors as well as other localized issues in specific areas prone to instability. The main forces responsible for insurgencies include; banditry as a by-product of the exploits of socio-economic exploration, excruciating poverty, unemployment, tampering on the official grazing routes (*Burtali*), and competition over resources like land and illegal mining of mineral resources. Insurgency also stems from governance challenges, including cattle rustlings, inadequate security infrastructure and political instability in the State. Geographically, the areas most affected included the rural communities where banditry thrives due to limited State's presence and law enforcement capacity. The insurgencies scourge affected all the mentioned rural communities, and its wholesome activities has profound effects on Dan-sadau, Birnin Magaji, Tsafe, Maru, Kaura Namoda, Talata Mafara, and Anka in Zamfara State. It is worthy of note that insurgencies activities and operations are equally noticeable in Gusau metropolis through machination by numbers of informants. The causative forces were reported to have been triggered by grievances on encroachment on farmland by Fulani-herders in search of forage and water, while others constitute the Hausa-farmers trampling on *Burtali* (official cattle routes) projected for

⁴⁰ P.A, Olofu, N.O, Kanu, and K.M, Ugochigborugu, K.M, "Understanding the Dynamics of Group Formation and Its Application in Educational Administration in Nigeria: The Perspective of Interaction and Balance Theories", *Benue State University Journal of Education and Management*, (BSUJEM), Vol. 2, No.1, 2020.

animal grazing. The action by the duo constituted the bane of intersectionality leading to racial discrimination, indiscriminate kidnappings, killings, and displacement of communities from their ancestral lands and communities.

It is apposite to construe that right from *ab initio*; the violent pugnacities leading to insurgency emanated from the above numbers of issues, and thusly aggravated by political and administrative ill-conditions of the State's democratic general election in 2011. It is disclosed that the extent and propensity of insurgencies in the State was foisted by the Sahelian revolutions of the 21st century, leading to irregular migration of distinct ethnic groups into Nigeria, specifically Zamfara State. The revolutions at different periods were composition of Fulani and other ethnic extractions from Mali, Burkina Fasso, Sudan, Libya and Egypt. Consequently, the Fulani seemed to have been the largest immigrant during the revolutions into Nigeria with sophisticated poverty and corruption facilitated by flow of untrammelled of dreadful ideations through the borderless areas. Most significantly, due to porous and unbridled movement, Nigeria ungoverned border areas were inundated with questionable people of distinct social characters and behavioural system. This scourge finds its ways into the extant Fulani-herdsmen and Hausa-farmers squabble that often triggered and accelerated the contemporary conflagrations in Zamfara State since 2012. This uncanny ambience seemed to have been supported by political gladiators that tend to find solace in exploitation of the credulities of recalcitrant party oppositions and personalities in the State. Between 2012 and 2019, there has been spurious possession and utilisation of arms and ammunition supplies through the ungoverned border spaces, hence, the extirpation of relative peace and harmonious relations enjoyed in the State. Besides, the insurgencies were equally compounded by illegal gold mining in Bindim, Maru, Maradun, and Anka among others through the involvement of neglected youths. This action poised for rebranding of armed banditry to a more sophisticated conventional business with tendencies for exploitation of the lackadaisical attitude and ignorance of the unemployed youths that makes their livelihood in the shoddy enterprise.

However, whatever might have been responsible for the predisposing and precipitating forces, banditry in the Zamfara State has made formidable effects that defied all security measures. Hence, the mechanisms toward the attainment of peace and harmonious relations are thwarted by some undesirable elements that subverts government efforts. Psychologically, it has birthed serious discomfiture situations that subjected many people to fear of being kidnapped for ransom, forceful levies, indiscriminate killings, gender-based sexual violence and redirection of government limited resources and policy statements for insurgencies management. Between 2012 and 2023, all efforts and tactics by military and other law enforcement agencies occupations proved abortive, essentially with the inability to attain a viable peace and harmony in Zamfara State. Based on the above rhetoric, the subsequent section discussed the established CBCIAL for initialisation of security through the enhancement of human capacity building for counter-insurgency in the vulnerable insurgence communities of Zamfara State.

iv. Formation of community-based counter insurgency associational life (CBCIAL) towards mitigation, or mortification of insurgency in Zamfara State.

The cardinal objective is the establishment Community-Based Counter Insurgency Associational Life Committee (CBCIAL) as a tactical strategy toward creation of formidable and workable actions to broker control for insurgencies in Zamfara State. This is basically a counter-insurgency operation to de-escalate insurgency as a product of banditry in the prone and ungoverned forest spaces. This is concern with collective and common ownership of the

committees to work in synergy with law enforcement and other, security agencies as well as the selected members of CBCIAL in Zamfara State. Its constitutive members are representatives of vigilante group; faith-based groups; interest-based groups (farmers, businesses, and traders; gender-based groups (Women committee or group); age-based group, enforcements/security actors, and National Union of Roads Transport Workers (NURTW), *Yan-Kabu-kabu*- motorcyclist riders and *Yan-agbagba-da-buje*- tricycles' riders. Reason adduce is that quite a number of these groups credulity are usually utilized to the advantages of banditry, largely due their gross ignorance and lackadaisical attitude. In corroboration of this fact, Olaniyi⁴¹ opined that there are evidences of the growth of township and professional civil associations and organisations which led to the establishment of a common front. This bonded people together in their respective home-town and diaspora community for common goal and aspiration. In addition, Eades⁴² accentuated that most of these associations strengthened common ownership to northern Nigeria through mutual understanding, and economic and political empowerment.

The established associational life is saddled with human capacity building towards identifying with, and surveillance of insurgencies areas. To achieve this, fundamental strategies were adopted through the set objectives of CBCIAL in the selected communities. As part of the initialisation plan for mitigation and mortification of insurgencies, the established Community-Based Counter Insurgency Associational Life Committee (CBCIAL) through its membership worked assiduously on the insurgencies' prone communities in Zamfara State. As a matter of fact, the CBCIAL assisted in mitigation of insurgency through grassroots mobilization and community empowerment projects and programmes. Most significantly, the CBCIAL leverage on local knowledge, networks, and resources to enhance security, mediate conflicts, and provide socio-economic support. In its functionality, the associational life in the various communities was committed for protection, and thus received pertinent security information acquired through local informants and divulged for identification of vulnerable in insurgence area(s). As a matter of fact, they assisted fostering peace through collaborative efforts and sustainable development initiatives of the early warning system on any impending attacks.

It could be emphasised that the memberships cut-across all human endeavours, directly and indirectly hinged on discouragement of mainstreaming of local communities' youths into banditry as mean of livelihood, due to high degree of ignorance. In its operationalisation, the CBCIAL incorporated youths because of their brawn nature and exuberances, and were coordinated by faith leaders of each individual community using didactic sensitisation campaign. Reason adduced for youth is their vulnerability to any chasm and proclivity to embrace peace and harmonious relation through the influence of club ability of associational life matters. In the study communities, associational life tended to be more considerable by strengthening its diverse innovations hovering around the formation of new ideas and ideologies especially for provision of security.

In fact, in implementation of the set objectives, the various selected communities' committees were emplaced under critical surveillance in an organised meeting scheduled to be held every month for the period of six (6) months for performance appraisal. The constitutive members subjected themselves within the framework of ensuring mitigation and mortification of insurgencies which they achieved at a limited degree. At the initial stage of the commencement of

⁴¹ R.O, Olaniyi, "Approaching the Study of Yoruba Diaspora in Northern Nigeria in the 20thCentury." *IFRA Special Research Issue*, Nigeria, 2006.

⁴² J.S, Eades, "Kinship and Entrepreneurship among Yoruba in Northern Ghana." In W.A, Shack and E.P, Skinner, (eds.). *Strangers in African Societies*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1979.

the exercise, the programme gains strong ascendancy, but subsequently minimised arising from complicity, lack of funds for logistics, and as well marred by political interference. Albeit, to a proportional extent, the faith-groups, military and law enforcement agencies, *Yan-kabukabu* (commercial motorcyclist users), and the NURTW orchestrated strong sensitisation campaign for increasing awareness on the implications of insurgencies. Again, from the reports garnered in the insurgencies selected communities, the CBCIAL were constrained to work in synergy through collective mechanism by assuaging the mitigation of bandit's attacks. With intensive commitments, members within the span of six (6) months of appraisal worked as spies with the potential capability to make arrest of informants and elicited relevance information on suspected persons or bandits. In minimisation of the propensity of attacks, members who are acquainted with geography and terrains of the insurgence's social milieus were supported through the synergy of using the local vigilante (*Yan-sakai*) in the exercise. In quick successor, as an early warning system, the CBCIAL through thorough surveillance by local vigilante group and law enforcement agencies identified Anka, Maru, and Maradun communities as the most dangerous zones susceptible to bandit's attacks. Within the specificity of the period of performance appraisal, the CBCIAL articulated considerable knowledge for repositioning and creation of renew hope for tackling security conundrums, unfettered, if articulately utilised. In addition, the CBALC gathered lack of sophisticated weapons which largely contingent on lackadaisical attitude of government and collective connivance of some political disgruntle elements in Zamfara State. Undoubtedly as identified, the local vigilante and law enforcement weapons could not proportionally match with armed bandit's sophisticated and lethal weapons. This action thus led to the eventual subsisting of insurgency actions and operations. It is adduced that complicity from some subversive element made insurgency to reign supreme, principally from the prevailing socio-economic malaise and circumstances that birthed poverty and its extremism.

Expressly, it is gainful to aver that associational life is a major contraption to increases the clamour for social identity, club ability and security of Zamfara State. The CBALC initiatives were able to tremendously achieved some landmark development, and thus expected to be cascaded to the State for financial supportive role and other humane actions. This scenario eventually poised for clarion call and strong sensitisation campaign in repositioning and creation of renew hope for the inhabitants.

v. Creation of synergistic relations with State government towards sustainability of community-based counter insurgency associational life (CBCIAL) in Zamfara State.

The established CBCIAL in selected insurgencies affected communities gained considerable unalloyed supports from Zamfara State and Local Government Areas through partnership for sustainability of security project. As part of the objectives, the researchers' configured constant contact and visitation to selected communities, scheduled for end of month evaluation, essentially for progress registered. For the period of six (6) months, the consistence robust interface and interactions at the various selected communities of CBCIAL stimulated the ingenuity to fathom solutions to the inherent insurgency challenges. This raised the alarm for possible proactive action for constant surveillance in preparedness for possible attacks. By this status, the monthly monitoring of CBCIAL activities by researchers birthed the unbridle connections for government's responsiveness for imperative security action, essentially on counter-insurgency. This stride created the synergistic relations with the State government for crucial sustainability of CBCIAL activities in Zamfara State. As a matter of fact, the partnership ensures that CBCIAL received government institutional supports, fundings, logistics, and legal

recognition to effectively carrying out their mandate. These synergies involved aligning CBCIAL activities with State policies, integration into broader security frameworks, and enhancing coordination between local and State authorities. As rightly observed, the sustainability of CBCIAL has the potential capability to contribute to long-term stability by addressing not only the root causes of insurgency, but fostering resilient communities to radically confront security challenges. These were manifested in plethora assistances given by Zamfara State, Local Governments and individual philanthropists, which directly and indirectly affected by the menace of insurgencies. Some of these constitute, notably; solicitation for financial assistance, uninterrupted sensitisation and advocacy programme for reaffirmation of commitments. This is reflected on educational development paradigm through identification of constraints with the objectives to ensconce a renew hopes and aspirations.

In speedy promotion and sustainability of CBCIAL activities towards minimisation of accelerating insurgencies, extant communities' voluntary associations, organisations, individual, and philanthropists assisted immensely. During the sixth (6th) month performance appraisal, funds contributed were significantly used to finance CBCIAL activities within the selected geographical entities. In doing this, financial imprudent were checkmated and controlled through sensible tapestry initiated by collective action of the community members and CBCIAL. However, the committee set objectives and activities were cascaded to Zamfara State level of governance and security for sustainability, and uninterrupted supplies of logistics and funds. In a nutshell, timely advises were also anticipated to improve performances for updates on security development and impending attacks.

Furthermore, the formation of CBCIAL assisted the achievement of minimal feats using diadatic sensitisation campaign and monitoring of the environs toward mitigation of insurgency within the six (6) months of performance in Zamfara State. The members have through their monthly meeting had emplaced the communities' members using variegated stakeholder's. These stakeholders tenaciously through their individual units of professional groups worked towards mitigation of insurgency by enhancing human capacity building in Zamfara State. In stimulating human capacity, security and indicators knowledge of attacks such as brainwashing, surveillance strategies, early warning system, conflict resolution tips and consistent divulging of pertinent security information were introduced to the CBCIAL members. These tips and tactics within the span of six (6) months of performance appraisal garnered pertinent information on cases of insurgencies, hence the ultimate curtailment and containment of potential attacks. These actions bolstered unwavering supports for understanding of the terrains through proactive action and sensitisation strategies emanated from the CBCIAL committees of the selected communities. However, the outcome of performance appraisal in essentiality was directed towards creation of formidable synergistic relations which is expected to improving on established CBCIAL committees after the expiration of the research in Zamfara State.

Concluding Remarks

The study interrogated the 'emerging associational life for countering-insurgency in Zamfara State' with the view to mitigate or de-escalate the degree of banditry insurgencies from the local communities in Zamfara State. Fundamentally, it examined insurgencies in the prone selected rural communities, notably; Dan-sadau, Birnin Magaji, Tsafe, Maru, Kaura Namoda, Talata Mafara, and Anka in Zamfara State. The study revealed six (6) months performance appraisal of the community-based counter insurgency associational life (CBCIAL) through

practical operation in the selected insurgencies vulnerable rural communities. In earnest, within the span period of six (6) months examination, the CBCIAL was responsive for curtailment and mitigation by utilising the surveillance and early warning system. It also underscored the pre-existing historical background of associational life in creation of unity and harmonious relations among plural ethnic groups in Zamfara State. In addition, it illustrated that the need for amiable socio-cultural, economic, political and religious conditions reinforced the formation of associational life in Zamfara State. This is found within the locale of large spectrum from which insurgencies subsist, defied all security mechanisms and as well as approaches which resulted in the emergence of CBCIAL as alternative tact.

The results revealed the forces responsible for, and areas of insurgency in Zamfara State stemming from 2011, and its aggravation to 2023. This hovers around numbers of synthesised external and internal causative forces which includes; ignorance, prolonged Hausa-farmer versus Fulani-herders' squabbles arising from encroachment on the official grazing land and routes (Burtali), and exacerbated by fragility of democratic governance. Others constitute deficit or non-available infrastructural benefits, excruciating poverty, sophisticated corruption, unemployment malaise and radical neglect of youths and women. This was radically worsened by ungoverned forest rural spaces lacking governmental existence and impacts. Also, the performance appraisal deciphered from CBCIAL six (6) months examination, which extolled the external forces which accelerated violent insurgencies in the study area. The factors included the prolonged illegal gold mining activity orchestrated by administrative looseness of Zamfara State, bolstered by illegal indigenous exploitation by expatriates. Others constituted the globalisation changing phenomenon, and the untrammelled Nigeria border menaces that stimulated the migration of people of questionable characters into the State. It is significantly garnered that, externally induced violent pugnacities such as revolutions in the Sahelian regions and States were the culmination of proliferation of small and light weapons (SALW) leading to unending insurgencies since 2011 in Zamfara State.

Lastly, the committee worked intensely in creation of synergistic relations with State government towards sustainability of CBCIAL in Zamfara State. Efforts pertinently made to cascade the committees' activities to Zamfara State government, profusely for security sustainability, and uninterrupted supply of logistics and funds. It is the hopes and aspirations of the selected communities' project that, if the CBCIAL is well-sustain; it has the potential strength to leverage considerably assistance in mitigation of crimes as counter measure. And the strategy for mortification of insurgencies from the grassroots will in the long-run be achieved through relentless efforts of the committees and Zamfara State government.

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