

Counter-Insurgency by Civilian Joint Task Force and the Restoration of Cultural Heritage in Old Kanem Borno Empire

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Abstract

Nigeria returned to democracy in the year 1999. After a decade of the country's return to civil rule, the phenomenon of insecurity erupted in the old Kanem Borno Empire. The uprising of some terrorists affected Nigeria and some parts of the neighboring countries namely, Chad, Niger and Cameroon which constituted the Old Kanem Borno Empire. The activities of these terrorists resulted in the killing of thousands of innocent lives, destruction of property worth billions of Naira and the displacement of most tangible and intangible cultural heritage in the empire. Consequently, some youth arose to complement efforts of government and military Joint Task Force (JTF) towards the restoration of the cultural heritage of the area. The objectives of the study are to: assess the counter-insurgency towards the role of restoration of cultural heritage which *Boko Haram* fights to disrupt and to identify the effects of the activities of Civilian Joint Task Force on restoring affected cultural heritage in Old Kanem Borno Empire. The findings of this study revealed that the rise of CJTF is multifactorial. The study revealed that the factors that precipitated the rise of CJTF vary with time, place, and situation. The key motivating factors were the widespread killings and destruction of property by *Boko Haram* and the counter-attacks and destruction by the military which also adversely affected several tangible and intangible communities. The study recommended that people should be vigilant enough and report any suspicious movement to avoid future reoccurrence of this problem. The government as a matter of urgency should assist and encourage the youths that sacrificed their lives in restoring the cultural heritage with employment, scholarships or money to establish business to sustain themselves.

Keywords: Boko Haram, Counter-insurgency, Civilian JTF, Cultural Heritage and Restoration

Introduction

Societies have norms and these norms are standards of behaviour shared by members of a group or society and defined by common expectations of the group about the type of appropriate behaviour. Durkheim (1952) described the appropriate behaviour as "prescriptive" and "proscriptive" therefore, non-compliance and non-conformity to the standard way of behaviour prescribed or proscribed by society create deviance such as *Boko Haram*, and the presence of deviance necessitates collective reaction of society in the form of social control which manifested in the formation of the youth security volunteer group known as the Civilian JTF. *Boko Haram* seeks to change existing cultural standards and the Civilian JTF on the other hand is resistant to this move. This war on culture change and the resistance to it has been raging on for over a decade now.

Several scholars have attributed the rise of *Boko Haram* to several factors ranging from poverty, corruption, leadership failure, reaction to poor moral behaviour and so on (Thurston, 2016; Campbell, 2014; Adibe, 2013). In as much as these factors exist and influence the rise of *Boko Haram*, many have ignored the underlining factor: *Cultural Heritage* of people of Kanem Borno Empire. A good look at the objectives of *Boko Haram*, its ideologies and what it is fighting against, shows that it intends or hopes to change cultural practices and destroy cultural heritage, which it believes have been adulterated by Western culture. Islamic practices, social life, political life, education, economic life and all aspects of society have been adulterated by the western way of life. It is these corrupt cultural practices in all spheres of social, economic and political life that *Boko Haram* fights to change. Thurston (2016, p.7) argued that *Boko Haram* intends to revert life to the Salafi creed and a strict interpretation of Islamic law on civilians. Thurston (2016:7) stated that *Boko Haram*'s leaders tell a provocative story about what it means to be Muslim in Old Kanem Borno Empire, a story that seeks to activate fears that pious Muslims are losing grounds to the forces of immorality.

The Civilian JTF emerged to complement the efforts of the Military towards countering insurgency and, by the same token, restoring peace in the Old Kanem Borno Empire. The Civilian JTF's fight against *Boko Haram* is an act of restoring and maintaining the long-cherished cultural heritage of peaceful coexistence. Their efforts have helped recapture villages and communities formerly controlled by *Boko Haram* insurgents, ensured that normalcy returned to such communities, helped rescued abducted girls, children and women (Bamidele, 2016). Bamidele (2016) also noted that CJTF has ensured that their communities are safe, and the socio-cultural activities go on unhindered. Without the CJTF, many communities would have been routed from their normal socio-cultural life perhaps into camps or other communities as Internally Displace Persons.

The activities of *Boko Haram* over the years have wreaked havoc on the lives, properties and ultimately the culture of the people of Old Kanem Borno Empire. It uprooted villages and heaved them in cities and settlements not familiar to them. It juxtaposed the rural lives with the complex city lives, their peaceful lives with violence, their family structures that once protected them to military protection, and so forth (Thurston, 2016; Campbell, 2014; Salaam, 2013; Walker, 2012). The activities of CJTF have contributed to restoring existing cultural practices that the *Boko Haram* insurgency threatened to erode. The activities of *Boko Haram*, if not contained, may completely erode existing cultural equilibrium and peace may elude the Old Kanem Borno Empire.

Conceptual Clarification Counterinsurgency

Many scholars discuss counterinsurgency in different concept and perspective depending on the nature of the operation against insurgency and geography where the insurgents operate. The conceptualization of the paper would help us to understand and bring out the meaning of counterinsurgency and their plan of operations. Counterinsurgency simply considered as a strategic plan or actions employ by a government to defeat insurgency in many dimension base on efforts and commitment. Northern Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO](2016) doctrine defined counterinsurgency as comprehensive civilian and military efforts made to defeat an insurgency and to address any core grievances. Counterinsurgency requires long term solutions to provide security to the targeted audience and may also determine the sources and reasons of the insurgency in order to avoid reoccurrence in the near future.

However, Galula (1964) described counterinsurgency as a composite of military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency. However, based on these definition, Galula further described four courses of actions that can be used to defeat insurgency: first, direct action on the insurgent leaders, second indirect action on conditions that are favourable to an insurgency, third infiltrate the insurgency and disable it from within, or fourth reinforce the counterinsurgency political machinery. These course of actions are part of operational plan to curtail insurgency around the world despite their magnitude and their distinct ideological beliefs.

Christopher *et al* (2021) on their part examines counterinsurgency as efforts undertaken by a government and its security forces or supporting partners or allies to oppose an insurgency. They further observed the significance of strategic communication in counterinsurgency operation in areas affected which is one of the key aspects of subduing activities of insurgency. Christopher *et al* (2021) argued that in counterinsurgency context, the following tenets are crucial;

- i. First, maintain credibility
- ii. Second minimize the “say-do” gap, the distance between COIN force claims and actions.
- iii. Third prioritize consistency of message
- iv. Fourth continuity of message over time improves credibility,
- v. Fifth ensure that kinetic and non-kinetic messaging is non-contradictory
- vi. Sixth core messages flow from policy goals
- vii. Seventh, ensure there is unity of effort
- viii. Eighth ensure core themes contribute to counterinsurgency operational goals.

Christopher *et al* (2021) believed that strategic communication alone is not a solution but still provide major setback to insurgency especially effective communication monitoring and management that can lead to the defeat of counterinsurgency. Considering the advancement of science and technology in 21st century where most of the insurgents take advantage of available gadgets in perpetrating crime against the state, relevant authorities need to key into monitoring communication gap between them. Whatever the case may be, counterinsurgency require multidimensional method in arresting conflict situation related cases and it is depending on the security architecture, nature of the conflict, geography, region and sociocultural nature of the people.

Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage has a very long history across the globe and if we talk about the heritage of the people, we refer to a legacy of ancestors that was passed on to the next generation. The concept of heritage differs from one particular society to another but has a collective understanding. Therefore, the cultural heritage and the history of the people can be linked to the migration and settlement of the Kanem-Borno people to the Lake Chad region which was traced back centuries. Abubakar (2013) postulated that the people came from the Arabian Peninsula and settled at about 640 kilometres North of the present-day Lake Chad which later emerged as the great Bornu kingdom and later known as the Kanem-Bornu Empire (one of the two greatest empires in the history of Africa). While the other part of the region traced their history to the late 15th century with huge cultural activities especially the people of the Sukur kingdom. David and Sterner (1995) posits that there is limited evidence of Neolithic occupation in Sukur but there is evidence of the

Iron age phase. The Iron age phase is quite clear because there are abundant iron ore-bearing gravels, iron slag and abandoned smelting furnaces which could probably be dated back to the 16th century and served as a regional supplier in the Mandara and Southern Borno region.

Culture of Violence

To understand the culture of violence, which appears to be Boko Haram's favourite method of achieving its goals, it is pertinent to juxtapose it with the culture of peace. This style was adopted by Agbiboa (2015) in his work. Agbiboa first put forward the concept of the culture of peace and then presented the culture of violence which occurs when the culture of peace is eroded. According to Agbiboa (2015),

“peace has been accepted to mean the absence of war, fear, conflict, anxiety, suffering and violence. But this conception has been criticized by many scholars for being inadequate for understanding the meaning and nature of peace. So, two dimensions of peace that can help in clarifying the concept have been distinguished. The first is negative peace which is the absence of direct violence, war, fear and conflict at the individual, national, regional and international levels; and positive peace which describes the absence of unjust structures, unequal relationships, justice and inner peace at the individual level” (Agbiboa, 2015, p.227).

Agbiboa further argued that the concept of the culture of peace was developed by the United Nations (UN) at the end of the second World War. The objective was to construct the defences of peace in the minds of men and women. “The concept of a Culture of Peace was formulated by the International Congress on Peace in the Minds of Men that was held in Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, in 1989. In its declaration, the congress recommended UNESCO to “help construct a new vision of peace by developing a peace culture based on the universal values of respect for life, liberty, justice, solidarity, tolerance, human rights and equality between men and women.” The UN defined the culture of peace as

“an integrated approach to preventing violence and violent conflicts, and an alternative to the culture of war and violence based on education for peace, the promotion of sustainable economic and social development, respect for human rights, equality between women and men, democratic participation, tolerance, the free flow of information and disarmament” (UN cited in Agbiboa, 2015, p.227).

Historical Evolution of Boko Haram Insurgency

The origin of Boko Haram insurgency has been presented in different ways, many trace its origin to the recent past, while others have traced it to the distant past. For some, Boko Haram insurgency is simply a creation of Mohammed Yusuf, to others it is a product of the Salafi movements, which has lasted for decades before Boko Haram insurgency and whose origin could be traced outside Nigeria.

Thurston (2016) noted that in discussing the origin of Boko Haram, there are four myths that gradually developed over time, these factors he argued cannot be supported factually. First, Thurston noted that many believed that the rise of Boko Haram was occasioned by poverty. This implies that it is the high level of poverty in the North that led to the rise of Boko Haram. Poverty alone is not a reasonable factor to explain the rise of Boko Haram. Poverty exists in every part of Nigeria, and yet the Boko Haram type of insurgent group did not arise in many places, but the

North East. The ideological drive of Boko Haram did not show it as a group fighting to eradicate poverty, rather it is aimed at eradicating Western styled culture, civilization and more precisely education. If poverty precipitated the rise of Boko Haram, its major aim would have been to eradicate poverty. Notwithstanding, poverty played its role, especially in supplying the insurgent group with willing foot soldiers.

Second, Thurston (2016) posited that some believed that Boko Haram is a reaction to the 2011 election victory of President Goodluck Jonathan. This myth is a believe that Boko Haram is a Northern creation, by Northern politicians to make Nigeria ungovernable for President Goodluck Jonathan. Before the presidential election of 2011, some politicians in the North had warned against President Goodluck running for the election. They had threatened that dare consequences will follow. Therefore, it is now believed in some quarters, especially political circles, that Boko Haram is a grouped created and sponsored by the Northern political elites to discredit Goodluck and force him out of office. Thurston (2016) argued that the rise of Boko Haram dates back to 2002 and beyond, and this was many years before Goodluck presidential election of 2011. A group already in existence cannot be caused by a later event. Besides, President Goodluck lost the election in 2015, a Northern Muslim, President Muhammadu Buhari came into power, yet the group has continued with its onslaught. If Goodluck presidency was the cause of their existence, they would have downed tools after President Buhari took over office. Notwithstanding, politics may have played its part, in fuelling the activities of Boko Haram, but Boko Haram pre-dated the politics they said originated it.

The third myth, Thurston (2016) said is the idea that Boko Haram is linked to international terrorist groups. It is believed that they are simply an extension of Al Qaida, they are trained by Al Qaida and sponsored by Al Qaida. Thurston (2016) maintained that though Boko Haram tactics and activities may have similarities with Al Qaida, their goal vary. Boko Haram focus is Nigeria, a lot of its tactics varied from that of Al Qaida, as Thurston (2016, p.8) put it:

...Boko Haram tactics appear self-generated, such as attacking cell phone towers and kidnapping women en-masse. Its massacres of villagers, moreover, duplicate the very tactics that AQIM's predecessor organization was formed to oppose in the context of Algeria's mass violence in the 1990s. Much of Boko Haram's violence seems improvised, rather than directed from abroad. Boko Haram's eventual affiliation with the Islamic State may have represented a formal break with Al-Qaida, but it is more likely that any relationship Boko Haram had with Al-Qaida was patchy, informal, and marginal to its overall development.

Boko Haram may have borrowed some tactics from foreign terrorist group, but it acted almost independently until its affiliation with the Islamic state. This affiliation is a later event and precipitate of the rise of Boko Haram insurgency.

The forth myth Thurston (2016) noted was the idea that Boko Haram is an offshoot of the Maitatsine movement of the early 1980s. Maitatsine movement was a creation of the Cameroon-born preacher Muhammad Marwa (d. 1980), known as "Mai Tatsine (The One Who Curses)," his movement like Boko Haram rejected Western technology, promoted a "Quran only" doctrine, and he also referred to himself as a new prophet. So much Boko Haram activities have followed

some patterns that characterized the Maitatsine movement, such as strategic withdrawal from mainstream society, killing those who are opposed to its ideologies. But Thurston (2016) noted that Boko Haram may have modelled its predecessors, but it has its unique ideologies. Having expounded on the myths surrounding the arguments on the origin of Boko Haram, it is imperative to note that, there are series of conspiracy theories concerning the origin of Boko Haram Insurgency in Kanem Borno Empire.

Origin of Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF)

The Civilian Joint Task Force is both a new concept and an old practice with a new name. There have always been vigilantes, community self-help, especially in a country where the government security operatives are legendary at their failure to tackle security challenges, many communities have had to defend themselves and save themselves whenever the government fails to do so. In the North-Central geo-political zone, vigilantes have been used by many communities to defend themselves against rampaging Fulani herdsmen, in the South East Bakassi boys were once legendary as they rid the South East of notorious armed robbers, ritualists and kidnapers, in the South West, there are the Oduduwa People Congress (OPC). Community self-help or community policing arises when the state fails to secure the lives and property of the citizens. In the Old Kanem Borno Empire where *Boko Haram* has been rampaging, destroying, killing and maiming has witnessed a community counter-response in the face of fleeing security forces, in the glaring incompetence of state security apparatus.

According to the Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN, 2014), the Civilian JTF were originally known as the *yan Gora*, (men with stick) but their bravery and the role played in halting and pushing *Boko Haram* back earned them the new name Civilian Joint Task Force. This formerly brought them to the limelight and also earned them government recognition. IRIN (2014) stated that they are the eyes and ears of the security forces. They are also often the first responders to *Boko Haram* attacks.

Similarly, Bamidele (2016) stated that the Civilian JTF emerged to assist the Special and Joint Task Force in implementing the counter-insurgency policy of the Federal Government. The Civilian JTF is made up of young and old civilians armed with mundane weapons such as bows and arrows, swords, clubs and daggers operating under the supervision of their Civilian JTF sector commanders. Bamidele (2016) argued that Civilian JTF was at first a community effort and later a joint effort with the security forces to help fight the *Boko Haram* insurgency. Their efforts he noted, has helped in bringing Maiduguri city back to normalcy. As a result of the CJTF effort, many of the Boko Haram insurgents have left the city of Maiduguri and other major towns where the CJTF are operating and have withdrawn into the villages, bushes and the neighbouring countries.

According to Bamidele (2016), the Civilian JTF is a necessary tool in combating the Boko Haram's menace. They have helped to address the intelligence failure of the special task force against Boko Haram insurgency in the north-east region. They are an anti-terrorist group fighting opponents who possess sophisticated weapons of mass destruction. The rise of civilian JTF is the decisive factor and a turnaround in the fight against Boko Haram. As part of the mechanisms for combating the menace of Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria, the CJTF represents a veritable example of a citizen-driven communal response to security challenges and an indication of how terrorism can be tackled and prevented (Okereke, 2013). The Civilian JTF has the advantage of the knowledge

of terrain and knowledge of the enemy. According to Okereke (2013), they exploit their knowledge of the communities to identify suspected Boko Haram members or other suspicious individuals.

Methodology

This study is qualitatively inclined, more specifically ethnographic study. It utilised the rapid ethnographic study design. The choice of this design is guided by the impelling fact that the study was conducted in a conflict environment, with a high risk of being caught up in a crossfire between insurgents and the military while collecting data. The study, therefore, required a research design that would not only ensure the quality of data but also be quick enough to get in and out of the study area on time to minimise the risk of being around during an attack. The primary and secondary sources of data were utilized. The primary data were collected from respondents who have first-hand experience and information on the issue of study. The study used three instruments, which are the In-depth Interview (IDI) conducted with 15 Civilian JTF, Focus Group Discussion, (FGD) one session was conducted with ten (10) Civilian JTF and Key Informant Interview (KII) with six (6) leaders, e.g. Civilian JTF, traditional ruler, Police, Military and religious leaders (Islam and Christianity). This gave a total of twenty-one (21) participants. Data generated from the In-Depth Interview (IDI), Key Informant Interview (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were transcribed, sorted and discussed. The analytical process was computer-based and the data obtained was fed into the computer and analysed using the Nvivo qualitative computer data analysis software. Through the use of Nvivo, codes were generated, themes created and patterns evolved to help in explaining the study objectives.

Result of the Findings

This study revealed that the counter-insurgency activities of the Civilian JTF are twofold: Offensive and Defensive counter-insurgency activities. At the onset, their efforts were the offensive armed fight against insurgents. As the findings revealed, they found themselves being killed on two sides, *Boko Haram* from behind and the military officers in front. They were either killed by insurgents or got arrested and in some cases killed by the military who were suspicious of them. In the face of this dilemma, their options for survival were to join one side. And rightly they chose to join the military and fight the insurgents to restore the well-known cultural heritage of the area. In doing this, first they picked up sticks and other local weapons as *Yan Gora*, with which they began their war against insurgency in their communities. They then joined the military in an armed offensive against the insurgents to restore the cultural heritage of the Old Kanem Borno Empire. The CJTF led the way, they showed the paths and they identified the insurgents. The CJTF argued that; *there is no village that we have not visited alongside with the Soldiers, we went, we entered, and we succeeded*. This study and many others have revealed that some of the CJTF in the process had paid the ultimate price.

The findings of the study also revealed that after insurgents have been pushed out of some communities, the people return to their communities to resettle there. This process of returning internally displaced persons (IDPs) to their communities is facilitated with the aid of the CJTF. The CJTF provided escort for returnees, giving them the confidence to stay in the community. They guard everywhere, the worship places, the markets, the schools, healthcare centres and patrolled at night to give people the confidence of their safety. The CJTF assisted the government agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) who came into these communities to give aid, they helped to facilitate and organize the people to ensure orderliness in the process of distribution of aid items to community members.

The findings further revealed that they had the security of their communities in mind when they formed the CJTF. A respondent submitted that the Civilian JTF was formed to protect their people and help the government and its security operatives to restore the lost glory of cultural heritage and achieve their goal of defeating the insurgents. Another respondent argued that *“we joined it to protect the rights of the poor and their lives. If we the youths don’t come together, we will never achieve our objectives and the government too cannot achieve its objectives”* (28th May 2021, Local Government Secretariat). Another respondent Arguing along the same line, stated that *“when something happens in the town, one has to take part. If one is not a member of Boko Haram, one should join hands to defend the people, so we said let us join and defend our country”* (28th May 2021).

The youths actively joined in the war against the insurgents, they came together, organised themselves, with the aim to protect their people and to help the government and the security operatives achieve their aim of defeating the insurgents. As one respondent noted, *“we are doing it to protect the people of these towns, we have been working in this part of the country before we were brought here, when they are going to the farm, we escort them, when returning we do the same thing”* (20th May 2021, CJTF Office). The response from Magumeri FGD with the Civilian JTF revealed that the youths had the option to run away and abandon their communities, like one of the respondents narrated:

Some parents sold their goats and cows and gave them to their sons to go away, leaving the town alone could not save us, to save our parents, life and property, we decided to pick up the stick. Since one dies but once, let each ward, village and town form its group with its leader, they will guard at night, when they see a stranger, he should be approached or otherwise reported to the authorities (4th May 2021, District Heads Palace).

They youth could have run away, abandon the community and still save their lives. But their love for their communities, their parents and their heritage made them stay, organise and fight back. Members of the Civilian JTF are not just an unwilling group of people forced into a fight they did not want, they are a group of people whose love and passion for their communities led them to commit to its defence. Just like a respondent ended his narrative with the statement *... we are doing it because of the community*. Similarly, another respondent stated *...it was our patriotism that made us pick up the stick, to save the honest from the dishonest;* (4th May 2021, District Heads Palace). This is not a statement of an unwilling actor in the war against terror, they were not just forced by circumstance, they were willing to fight and to defend their people and cultural heritage. The Civilian JTF, as findings revealed, was concerned about the lives of their people, re-establishing peace and harmony, offering protection, restoration of cultural heritage and ensuring that their people live a normal life like they once did. Their focus was to re-establish social order for their communities, in trying to do this, they had to confront that which has disrupted the social order. The key concern of the Civilian JTF was not the insurgents, that is, government concern. Their main concern which led to the emergence of the *Yan Gora* was to secure their communities and to ensure normalcy was re-established. Contrary to most of the studies which focused on explaining the rise of the Civilian JTF as a child of necessity, forced into existence by circumstances beyond society’s control, this study found out that the Civilian JTF also emerged as a premeditated effort to create certain benefits for society. While Bamidele (2016) thought that the

Civilian JTF emerged as a result of government failure to discharge its primary responsibility of safeguarding lives and properties.

This study identified the effects of Civilian JTF on restoring affected cultural heritage in the Old Kanem Borno Empire. Civilian JTF encourages the reopening of markets and economic activities. The findings of this study showed that the Civilian JTF encouraged trading by engaging in trading themselves. They provided security for those engaging in businesses, they secured the markets, searched persons going in and out of public places (marriage and naming, ceremonies) and the community itself, they escorted people to their farms and regulated the time for conducting economic activities for security purposes.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study have revealed that the rise of Civilian JTF is multifactorial, unlike preceding studies that have tried to show a mono-factorial rise of the Civilian JTF. As literature has shown, the dominant theory on the rise of the Civilian JTF is the *Child of necessity theory* which this study also refers to as the *mono-factorial theory of the rise of Civilian JTF*. Sources like CIVIC (2018) had attributed the rise of Civilian JTF to the need to assist the Military to identify members of *Boko Haram* and to rid communities of Old Kanem Borno Empire of *Boko Haram Insurgency*. Several scholars towed this line of the mono-factorial cause of the rise of Civilian JTF. This gave birth to the *Theory of Civilian JTF as a Child of Necessity which is the dominant theory*. CIVIC (2018, p.7) summarised the theory thus:

Civilians felt caught between JAS on one side and the Nigerian state on the other. They felt the Nigerian state was unable to protect them from harm and indeed, much of the time, was the actor perpetrating harm against them. In this context, initiated by an individual, Baba Lawan, people started mobilizing into what became known the Yan Gora or CJTF, so named to demonstrate complementarity with the Joint Taskforce which, at the time, brought together the security agencies operational in Old Kanem Borno Empire.

Similarly, Bamidele (2016, p. 124) was even more precise on the mono-factorial cause of the rise of the Civilian JTF when he explained that amid these security measures, the Civilian Joint Task Force (JTF) emerged, first as a community effort, and later as a joint effort with the security forces to help fight Boko Haram.

This mono-factorial theory situates the arguments on the rise of the Civilian JTF for a singular purpose: members of Old Kanem Borno communities formed and joined Civilian JTF out of the necessity to survive the onslaught of *Boko Haram* and the Military.

However, this study has found out that at least the rise of the Civilian JTF had two precipitating factors and several reasons why people joined, thereby giving rise to the *Multi-Factorial Theory of the Rise of the Civilian JTF*. The Civilian JTF was formed in Maiduguri city, out of a necessity for survival, however, the spread and growth of the movement in different locations and communities of Old Kanem Borno was precipitated by other factors. It is pertinent to note that the Civilian JTF is an offshoot of the *Yan Gora* (Youth with Sticks) described by one of the Key Informant as a popular uprising. In his words:

There was a world of difference, between the popular uprising and the so-called CJTF of today. Because as I told you earlier, the popular uprising or popular

revolution against the insurgents was not organized, it was a spontaneous reaction to the cultural heritage of peace and to stop the activities of Boko Haram and at the same time the counter-terror activities of the Nigerian Army which hardly distinguished between the civilian population and the insurgents. People rose and it was effective, it was extremely effective, that before you knew it, the popular mobilization had chased out the entire Boko Haram from Maiduguri. So that movement was very successful in chasing them out of Maiduguri, it did not stop there, they now began to campaign of following them or chasing them into the bush as deep as into the Sambisa forest and some other part of Old Kanem Borno communities (21st October 2021, Maiduguri).

The first motivating factor for the rise of the Civilian JTF was the killings and destruction of cultural heritage, lives and properties by *Boko Haram* and the counter-attacks by the Military which also affected community members. Like the study findings revealed, the people were caught between the anvil and the hammer. The youths of Old Kanem Borno at this stage had no choice but to fight back. They were forced by circumstance to rise and fight, they did not plan for it, they did not prepare for it, they just picked up sticks and fought. This was the first stage in which they were known as *Yan Gora* and it was not an organised system; everyone who could carry sticks and any form of weapon was welcomed to join. The key concern of the Civilian JTF was not counter-insurgency but the restoration of the culture of peace. The main concern which led to the emergence of the *Yan Gora* was to secure their communities and to ensure normalcy was re-established. As they recorded success in one community, members of other communities picked challenge and rose as well against the insurgents. At this stage, the rise of the *Yan Gora* and its subsequent metamorphosis into the Civilian JTF was borne out of the imperative to restore the culture of peace and secure the cultural heritage of the people.

Conclusion

This study has examined counter-insurgency by Civilian Joint Task Force and the restoration of cultural heritage in Old Kanem Borno Empire. The findings of the study reveal that there was no single mono-causal path to the rise of the Civilian JTF as we have it today. The Civilian JTF began as *Yan Gora* and metamorphosed into a state recognised and supported security institution. With its metamorphosis came changes in its operations and perhaps even its effectiveness. The *Yan Gora* was a child of circumstance, it never existed, it was not planned, it was a mass movement of young people who were fed up with devastations going on around them and they decided to pick up whatever weapon they could lay their hands upon to fight back. *Yan Gora* was a child of circumstance, but this cannot be said of the Civilian JTF, the institutionalised version of *Yan Gora*. *Yan Gora* from the finding of this study was a mass movement for survival, as the youths faced death on two fronts; the insurgents from behind and the Military in front. They took sides with the Military and they fought for their survival, restoration of cultural heritage and the survival of their communities. Beyond the formation of the *Yan Gora* by circumstances, in some communities, they formed it to protect their communities from planned attacks by insurgents.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made;

- i. People should be vigilant enough to report any suspicious movement in their various communities to avoid the future reoccurrence of this problem.

- ii. The government as a matter of urgency should assist and encourage these youths that sacrificed their lives in restoring the cultural heritage with employment opportunities, opportunities to further their studies and financial support to establish business to sustain themselves.
- iii. The communities can offer to make contributions to support the families of fallen members of the Civilian JTF so that those still fighting will know that if they pay the supreme price at list their families will not be left to suffer.

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