5. Fugitive Youth and Transnational Terrorism:
The Nigerian/ Cameroonian Perspectives

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Abstract:

Youths are oftentimes regarded as the prospective leaders of their countries. Nevertheless, many youths in sub-Sahara Africa, in Nigeria and Cameroun precisely, are potential absconders from homes of orientation. Some of the responsible variables are mind-body problem, alternative thinking, and poverty to mention a few. These variables are the identified drivers of dimensions of insecurity and/or crises that are witnessed in both countries. Given this, the study demonstrates the role of the fugitive youths in the abating terror attacks at the frontiers and within some regions of Nigeria and Cameroun. Also, the study argues that priority should be accorded to the factors inducing fugitive youths to embrace anti-social/anti-societal behaviours, especially terrorism within the Nigeria and Cameroun. To achieve these objectives, survey interview and desktop research were employed.

Keywords:

Fugitive; Youth; Terrorism; Nigeria; Cameroun; Violence

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Introduction

The child that swears his mother will not sleep must also prepare for a prolonged, sleepless infancy – Yoruba proverb.

Violence is the last refuge of the incompetent – Isaac Asimov

Given that any unresolved local Islamist insurgency has the potential of spiralling into a world problem, this study attempts an exposition of the principal driver of transnational terrorism that has, since 2010, installed macabre fear in the heart of government officials and citizens alike. The terror attacks in both Nigeria and Cameroon compels the search for all time panacea on both the government and researchers. Hence, many a study adduce series of the solution, which range from 'carrot and stick approach' to the military (individual country specific), and multinational military approach. Indeed, security is so important that by uttering "security", as Wæver (1995) explains, state-representative moves a particular development into a specific area, and thereby claims a special right (sort of prerogative) to use whatever means are necessary to block it. This seems the raison d'etre for the numerous attempts at addressing transnational terrorism that has exposed the soft underbelly of the two countries' security frameworks; and still rages, in the form of a suicide bombing in both countries. But such specifications, powerful though they are, cannot in themselves serve as an absolute solution to the challenge of transnational terrorism. This is because as the suggested frameworks are adopted, they leave in their paths some other challenges that might incite future challenges, for instance, extension of arms proliferation and violation of the rights of some citizens. It is in this stead that this study explores the participation of the fugitive youth in the security challenges bedevilling Nigeria and Cameroon.

Really the youths are meant to serve as the engines powering the advancement of countries, but in both states, as the study reveals, many youths are already rendered incapacitated by either the existing governance frameworks of the state or the lack of frameworks therein. This presents the unemployed youths, particularly the fugitive ones, as the 'pool' that mischief makers often times employ in perpetrating their illicit activities against the security and stability of the state.

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The Idea of Youth in Nigeria and Cameroun: A Conceptual Clarification

Given the likelihood of the African youths serving as the drivers of economic prosperity at future dates and even getting to handle responsibilities tangibly, it is oftentimes said that they are the future leaders of their various countries. This claim is because of the realization that the continent possesses the youngest population globally. This endowment, depending on who or what group (government or crime lords) first tap into its energy, could either be a huge asset that could lead the continent out of the doldrums, if well mobilized; or a serious source of instability. Thus, many African youths wonder about who and/or what age bracket constitutes youth in Africa. This is because youths in the decided case study have had to struggle for most of the necessities of life; the necessary societal frameworks or institutions meant for enhancing purposive existence, particularly those meant to enhance the efforts of youths, who through the dint of hard work, privilege or parental decision, are well invigorated to assume the leadership of their societies, are either grossly lacking or non-existent. This is coupled with the continued aspiration of the older generation to be the ones perpetually in-charge of the tangible affairs of the society and government. This 'desire' is not unconnected with the fact that on one count, the older folks assume that they are the embodiment of knowledge and capacity; while on the other, that most of the youths have become seriously irresponsible to have the tangible affairs of their countries committed into their hands.

Indeed, such view might be correct, but this is not without the take that some, if not most of the youths, particularly because of their being reflexive social agents and producers of culture, who seemingly contribute to the complex negotiations of social life, and are contributing in significant ways to the everyday construction of the social world (Best, 2000; Brown, 1999; Chin, 2001; Corsaro, 1985, 2003; Fine, 1987) are responsible. Also, even those regarded as irresponsible might have made serious attempts at achieving a project or the other; but could have become overwhelmed with the challenges that the prevailing socio-economic and cultural situations within their countries have presented them with.

The foregoing bares the rationale that the youth is mostly a concept that has engendered serious consideration, particularly from those regarded as the elders within particular societies. Thus, France (2007, 1) posits that the concept 'youth' has always been under the microscope and of central concern to adults and the state. Indeed, the youth question by no means enjoys a single simple universal definition. This is so since there is the likelihood of the idea of 'youth' alternating when placed vis-à-vis the wider contextualized developments taking place in societies; and by extension, because of anxiety that over time has consistently shaped the youth question and influenced what could be done about young people (France, 2007).

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Ordinarily, a youth is someone that falls within the age bracket of 18 and 45, and who has immense contribution, if allowed, to make to the advancement of his/her society or who, if s/he cannot join the system gets tempted to destroy it (Ighobor, 2013, 20-21). Some of those interviewed differ on this. For instance, a respondent claimed that a youth is an individual, whose age ranges between15 and 35 or 40 years; even as another interviewee insisted that the age bracket is mostly between 18 and 35, explaining that a youth is someone that is basically young, but above childhood. Abbink (2005) however regards the youth as people belonging to 14-35 years of age category; while Pilcher insists that the concept of youth … is a way of understanding the "growing up" stages in the life course. As such, she insists that youth is best understood as a stage of transition between childhood and adulthood (1995, 58); a transition that varies both from individual to individual and between societies. The African Youth Charter (2006, 3) however regards the youth or young people as every person between the ages of 15 and 35 years. Most of those within this age bracket in Nigeria and Cameroon, in spite of the explicit claims in the Art. 14 of the African Youth Charter (2006, 10-11) that:

> 1. States Parties shall: Recognise the right of young people to a standard of living adequate for their holistic development. 2. Recognise the right of young people to be free from hunger … 3. Recognise the right of every young person to benefit from social security, including social insurance. In this regard, States Parties shall take the necessary measures to achieve the full realisation of these rights in accordance with their national law especially when the security of food tenure, clothing, housing and other basic needs are compromised;

Still languish in oblivion, a situation driven by poverty and un/under-employment. In order to clarify the idea of youth, therefore, this study examines the concept from the standpoint of what youth is in the two countries being considered. The reason for this approach is the need to tangibly nuance 'youth' on the basis of what it means to societies within the two neighbours.

In the countries being considered, the strict age-range does not seem to hold. This is because of some life circumstances, for instance, marriage could impose adulthood on the youth. Even in the historical present, the institution of age grade was tangibly explored by societies within Nigeria; this accounts for, as explained by a respondent, how members of the age-grades accomplished tasks. Through this, members of the youth grade had the opportunity to validate their claims of growing responsibly. More than this, are life tasking occurrences, for instance in the situation of the death of parents, a youth, depending on the age band s/he falls in, could suddenly 'grow up' and start handling serious family responsibilities. While for the youths within the age band of 18-45 years, they are expected to be acting in this stead. For the youths of lesser age, 13-17 years, for instance, less is expected of them. In the face of life's vagaries, therefore, they are compelled to 'grow up' in an instant. This exposes the fact that the fugitive youth is younger than the 18-45 bracket for defining youth in this study. And

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upon getting employed, such a youth is expected to some bills of younger siblings. This inturn impels social adulthood upon them at a very tender age (Robson et. al., 2006, 93-111; Skovdal, 2010).

In addition to the above, a young lad that impregnates or a lady that gets impregnated would be expected to start acting in some 'responsible' ways. As such, Johnson-Hanks (2002) insists that the institution of marriage serves as a via-media for entering adulthood presents a societal definition of youth that can extend way beyond the school-going age.

Beyond this, older folks in Nigeria and Cameroon often times regard the youth in 'my son/daughter' or 'the child of recent times' stereotype, an approach that mostly compels the older persons to regard the youth as having little knowledge of issues, and should always keep quiet when arising matters are being discussed. Thus, the age of the young persons being regarded notwithstanding, the adult generation still relates the word 'youth' to images of less responsible lads that need nurturing. In another stead, a few adults in this generation see the youth more than being 'High School students, gangbangers, couch potatoes, video game addicts, slouches and truants'. For them, the youth has the likelihood of turning out good, perhaps becoming soccer players, software entrepreneurs, environmental activists, and workers in the family business. Either way, how young people are regarded mostly say much about the communities from which the youths belong as about the young people themselves.

Frequently, the adult generations, perhaps because of their consideration of youth as carefree time with few responsibilities, overlook them. Thus, neglecting the fact that the youths are also desirous of what everyone else wants: affiliation, solidarity, respect, success, and opportunity. Such neglect, however, makes young people welcome any offer that satisfies their desires, notwithstanding the source. Latent in the source of satisfaction, however, is short and long-term implications. Thus, we submit that the social capital available to the youth in both countries influences what and how well they learn the odds that they will either present or attend to in the society, whether or not they commit crimes and the likelihood that they will do drugs or commit suicide.

Theoretical Framework

Granted the view that the youths are supposed to manifest and/or serve as the repository of the purest and ultimate cultural and societal values (Einsenstadt, 1963), the Nigerian and Cameroonian youths are most expected, as future leaders, to project the capacity to lead their countries out of the matrix of underdevelopment and poverty. The youths form the major bulge of the population of both countries; hence, Mo Ibrahim (2013, 4) is noted to have perceptibly argued that they can either be a blessing or a curse. This is because, on one hand, their capacities can be harnessed for the furtherance of the levels of development already attained in both countries. On another, if such capacities are not promptly and adequately put to good use, they might serve as the cesspool for

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those intending to stoke crisis of any magnitude. In other words, terrorists and those planning subversive activities against the government can employ the services of fugitive youths to satisfy their heinous intentions.

Nevertheless, most of those gainfully employed amongst the youths in both countries are making immense contributions to the socioeconomic and politico-diplomatic development and growth of their societies; but the existing reality of a growing percentage of those unemployed or underemployed amongst the youths seems to undermine the relevance of such contributions. Youth unemployment rate (for the year range 2011-2015) in Nigeria for instance, is put at 13.6 percent, while that of Cameroon is at 6.7 percent (World Bank Group, 2016). The implication, as Eroke (2014) observed, is that (about) 25 million of Nigeria's youth population are unemployed – a situation that poses a significant threat to the country. The picture is equally gloomy for Cameroon. This is because about 1.5 million youths of its 23, 924,407 million citizens (WPR, 2016) are unemployed. The challenge is aptly explained by Fokwang (2008), who insists that:

> pervasive unemployment and poverty are prolonging the day's youth of most of the citizens who feel their accession to social adulthood is delayed. This is specifically true for many young people, who in their 20s and 30s remain jobless, unmarried and uncertain of their future, but are continuously reminded by the leadership to 'wait for their turn'.

Beyond the foregoing is the approach that both countries have adopted in relating with or handling the affairs of their citizens. Cameroon and Nigeria, acting in their capacities as sovereigns, are known to have been coping with both internal and external challenges in their own ways (Waltz, 1979, 96); hence, the resolve of the ruling elites to govern the mass of their citizens in ways that seem right to them (the elite), and somewhat supportive of the bourgeoisie interests within the societies. Indeed, as maximalist states, both countries are not only indispensable for their citizens' existence but hardly seek to synchronize the differences in the states and individuals interests. This position, thus, reveals that none of them seeks opinion, rather demanding the obedience of or from the citizens.

This is more so since they do not regard themselves as the aggregate of their parts (citizens, nations or societies that are consisted in them). Thus, they have for the most part of their existence legitimately behaved, as Buzan (2007, 53) argues, unresponsive to individual security needs, which definitely covers several sectors. Examples of this demeanour proliferate within the two neighbours, but two instances of these are informative. The first concerns how pre-2009 administrations in Nigeria, military and democratic regimes alike, allowed the oily Niger Delta to degenerate into a chaotic cauldron. While the government in Cameroon had demolished residential buildings and business complexes in its bid to either widen the road or construct structures, sometimes white elephant structures, which some persons in governmental circles feel are relevant to societal

development. In this light, therefore, both countries, in some dimensions pose serious security threats to the continued survival of their citizens (Nfor, 2014; Azonhnwi, 2015; Nsom, 2007).

Granted the foregoing, this study is situated on the frustration-aggression theory, which Gurr (2011, x) presents as a theory of collective violence based on the concept of relative deprivation. At a level, the frustration, while underlined by the already explained improper social structures existing within both countries, compels a percentage of the 'needy' youths to take a flight of their home of orientation. And in the bid to satisfy their hankerings for better living standards, might move in with or join forces with persons, whose orientations work counter to the serenity and security of the two states and the rest of the inhabitants. Really, some youths join such groups simply to settle scores, either with their community or persons that could have hurt them; or as a source of livelihood.

When harnessed, the efforts of the fugitive youth(s) can thus serve to fulfil the inordinate aspirations of the leaders of the enclave that the youths decide to join. Such group can thus unleash undesired aggression against the states, even to the extent of attempting to carve out territories for themselves. Hoselitz and Willner intelligibly explained this by insisting that:

> Unrealized aspirations produce feelings of disappointment, but unrealized expectations result in feelings of deprivation. Disappointment is generally tolerable; deprivation is often intolerable. The deprived individual feels impelled to remedy, by whatever means are available, the material and psychic frustrations produced in him. Whereas disappointment may breed the seeds of incipient revolution, deprivation serves as a catalyst for revolutionary action (Hoselitz & Willner, 1962, 363).

The Drivers of Runaway Youth

Like elsewhere in Africa, Nigeria and Cameroon boast of the robust youthful population. Stating the obvious, William (2012) argues that over 40% (of African population) are under the age of 15, and 20% are between the ages of 15 and 24. Some of those within these age brackets are, particularly regarded as adults because of the constitution that regards 18 years old[1] as an adult. However, some underage youths abscond from their homes of orientation, hence the concern about the factors responsible for such untimely drift. This concern is robust when one considers how such escapee youths would provide for their needs.

Indeed, such persons may engage in menial job(s), but this is not always the case since, on one hand, there is low rate of employment within both countries, a situation that keeps impelling a percentage of adults, literates or otherwise, to get engaged in such menial jobs as sources of livelihood. On the other, some of the 'absconders' might knowingly or unknowingly enter the dragnet of lynchpins within the regions they escape to, hence becoming the recruits -errand boys/girls and/or

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[1] This view is generic, but the age stated in the constitution of each country may differ.

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lieutenants- of such lynchpins. This engenders concern about the survivability of such youth in the face of the vagaries of existence, and even makes one to be more concerned about the security of lives and properties within both countries; since such youths might, after being absorbed into a criminal network, decide to bare their fang on people that never contributed to their pain.

One of the major drivers of this challenge is the mind-body problem. This, according to Wendt (2015, 14) concerns the connections between mental states, which are subjective and brain states, which are objective. The youths concerned are initially mostly tender but often grow tough and rigid as they continue in the process, either under the watch of older persons that grew under the same condition or of their peers, who ordinarily, might be 'toughies'. This informs the assumption that the individuals concerned are initially, mostly subjective in their approach to issues. This is because such persons are mostly naïve, and less expected to be responsible for themselves, much less be focused on serious issues of life. As such, the likelihood of being lured or coerced -depending on perspective and situation- to hit the street is somewhat high. This is applicable to a relatively low number of persons since other youths still remain under the watch of their parents or guardians till the age they are regarded as responsible enough to be alone.

In addition to the above is the fact of certain persons unconsciously sharing the post-Socratic orientation of the *Stoa* that gives the assurance, some sort of self-confidence, that the highest good could only be attained in or through self-sufficiency. With this be clouded mindset, which is somewhat subjective, particularly at the tender age that the 'absconding youth' is likely to exit the home of orientation, the individual gradually regards himself, somehow in the light of being opposed to the existential reality surrounding him,   as the best of the persons within the locale. The unconscious level cumulate over time, hence forming the intended choice regarded as the best way of life by the intending absconder. Thus, consciousness becomes the indispensable source of intentionality.

Flowing from the above is the fact that many of such youths possess aspirations for which they might, on the basis of unbridled and naïve sentiment, prepare to dare the odds and abscond; hence regarding themselves as self-reliant, neither needing any home of orientation nor the format of relations or friendships that exist within their present milieu. According to Horkheimer (1947, 130), it is clear that such youth's boundless ego radiates the spirit of domination and intensifies the antagonism of the individual to the community and its mores. He remains unclear about the nature of the conflict between his ego and the world, and hence repeatedly falls prey to all kinds of intrigue.

Related to, but distinct from the above-mentioned driver is the capacity for alternative thinking, somewhat an abstraction of thought from the extant orientation within the two countries. Already in existence within both countries are ethics of conduct, thoughts, and relations; though regarded as, but are not supposed to be stereotyped. The 'not-necessarily-uncritical' minds derive their values and beliefs from such extant social practices. Some persons, amongst whom are some of these youths, possess capacities for dialectical thinking; thus opposing the existing formats of conduct. This relates

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to what Herbert Marcuse is observed to have regarded as "negative thinking", which "negates" existing forms of thought and reality from the perspective of higher possibilities (Kellner, 1964/1991). Granted this, being in a home of orientation could be seen as an unnecessary bridle on capacity, hence in protest, the prospective escapee might abscond. And from this, an almost infinite series of consequences might spring. But the immediate fallout is the fact that the creative capacity that should have driven the individual's liberation and/or societal advancement, may become - particularly when the absconder might be impelled to join haters-of-society by the need to survive- a force for ruining the individual or society's destabilization.

Going further, one observes that poverty is another dangerous driver of the fugitive of the youth, which mostly elicits bad conduct from and compels such persons to willingly join hazardous gangs. The socio-economic reality in both countries is in part, the lack of adequate socio-economic infrastructures, particularly at the urban centres, where already, there are congestions. As a result, serious conurbation is growing around the capital cities within the two countries. Adequate provision of infrastructures would enhance the profitability of some small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs), a sector in which several thousands of the poor are engaged.

Another cause of the perennial poverty is unemployment and the heightened rate at which citizens lose their jobs in the two countries; particularly whenever employers find it difficult to pay salaries. More than this, many young ladies, most of whom are unemployed, often get impregnated by young guys, who also might be unemployed or whose businesses are not so lucrative. Granted this, the living conditions of such persons often get worsened. This is because the little fund they barely scraped would, according to an interviewee, be for their sustenance. Better still, the little funding, rather than being used for business purpose, might be channelled towards ensuring that the pregnant lady is comfortable and have a safe delivery. Furthermore, poverty festers in the atmosphere of corruption that the ruling politico-economic and military elites, especially in Nigeria, encourage. Really, some supposed representatives of the people have constituted themselves into an oligarchy that shares the Commonwealth of the people amongst themselves (Nwabughiogu, 2016; Olasanmi, 2016; Okakwu, 2016; Payne & Onuah, 2015). This, in part, drives widespread inequality and lack of economic opportunity, and these twin trends dangerously impact on the economies of, and societies in both countries.

In his foreword to a 2016 study -Poverty in a Rising Africa: Africa Poverty Report- the Vice President of the World Bank on Africa Region, Makhtar Diop explained that:

> the share of the African population in extreme poverty did decline—from 56 percent in 1990 to 43 percent in 2012. At the same time, however, Africa's population continued to expand rapidly. As a result, the number of people living in extreme poverty still increased by more than 100 million. These are staggering numbers. Further, it is projected that the worlds extreme poor will be increasingly concentrated in Africa (Diop, 2016, vii).

While this claim seems a correct generalization, one is not in doubt, against the backdrop of Nigeria's colossal population and the type of mind-boggling corruption the country witnessed recently, that Nigerians form the bulk of the said 100 million extremely poor persons; and Cameroun has its fair share of the population of the poor in the continent. Indeed the dimension of poverty witnessed by each family is to a large extent dependent on the earning, and by extension investing capacity of the family. This is not to downplay environmental degradation, which oftentimes is the consequence of the activities of man, particularly the exploration and exploitation activities of multinational companies operating in both countries. This has contributed immensely to the dimension of poverty witnessed by most of the inhabitants of the two states, especially those resident in the oil producing Delta region of Nigeria and Cameroon's Atlantic forest (Shane, 2001), where many persons who formerly depend on traditional sources of income -farming and fishing- have had to turn to other sources of earning, if they had. But one wonders how the people, whose Commonwealth is always syphoned by the politico-economic elites of both countries, would access necessary funding for businesses.

This is more so when the overt misappropriation and subsequent haemorrhaging of the wherewithal that should have been for the purposes of engaging poverty in its entire ramifications, the creation of employment opportunities, and provision of socio-economic infrastructures, which are the supposed framework for sustaining small and medium enterprises (SMEs), keeps sabotaging intentions for such agenda. In the light of this, homes in which poverty fester, and where the basic needs of food, clothing and shelter could hardly be satisfied constitute the breeding confines of ill-disposed aspirations of the youths; most of whom are uncatered for and are likely to abscond in the bid to search for avenues of satisfying some of their cravings.

Another driver of this worrisome phenomenon is the state and its agents. Really, the state is, in many ramifications, of utmost importance to the daily attainments of the development goals of the individual, family and society. Explaining the importance of the state, Gabriel Ben-Dor submits that:

> Seek ye the political kingdom first ... because in the lack of political order, no normal social development is possible. The state cannot replace society, but it must protect society. In the lack of political order, social individual values are meaningless; they cannot be realized nor can they be protected from assault, violence and chaos (Ben-Dor, 1983, 244).

It is in the light of the above that one agrees that the prerogative of the state, and by extension, its agent of government, is to construct legitimate political apparatuses that are empowered to provide order and security within the confines of the law and the territories of the state; frameworks which

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might assist or sustain the genuine aspirations of the citizens. It was along this line that Tunkin explained that:

> (1) all states have a duty to respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of all persons within their territories; (2) states have a duty not to permit discrimination by reason of sex, race, religion or language; and (3) states have a duty to promote universal respect for human rights … (Tunkin, cited in Shaw, 1997, 199).

Nonetheless, the state and its agent, have in many instances, constituted significant threats to the citizens; hence serving as a driver of fugitive of the youth. In particular are the individuals, who in some ways, disagree with the conventional 'one-dimensional societal structure' that exists within the confines of the state, especially as it relates to citizens' unconscious[2] surrender of their will to the directives of the state. These threats are multidimensional, with some emanating from the domestic lawmaking and enforcement; while others take the formats of the political actions of the state directed towards the individuals and/or groups, politico-diplomatic and/or the bureaucratic elites struggles for the control of the machinery of the state, and those from state's external security policies. The government, according to a respondent, had in many instances wielded the enormous range of legal power to expropriate citizens or their properties from areas that the government regards as choice areas meant for developmental projects in the country. Such project could be new road construction, expansion, or housing estates. These acclaimed governmental interests, as time reveals, often derive from sources other than the government; especially when they might be the interests of the elite who explore the state for the advancement of their egotistic cause (Block, 1978, 27). The lad whose parents' properties were demolished for state's/statists' project might read this in a bad light; hence drifting, perhaps with the intention of seeking redress in the future or in order not to burden a disturbed family.

Further still, parental/guardian approach and peer pressure also serve as drivers of runaway youths. This opinion contains in the fact that some parents/guardians disposition would pass as a cradle for loss of interest in continued stay under 'parental guide'. Indeed, some parents are overly firm in the grooming of their wards; whereas, in some other climes, children are encouraged to source for revenue for the family. Instances of this proliferate in Northern Nigeria and in Cameroon. In Northern Nigeria, some parents intentionally send their wards out to fend for themselves; and by extension, get some things that the parents themselves might survive on. In Cameroon, the United States Department of Labour's Bureau of International Labour Affairs (USDLBILA) (2011) observed that:

> Children are engaged in the worst forms of child labour, many of them working in dangerous activities in agriculture, including in the production of cocoa. Children also work in the production of bananas, coffee, palm oil, rubber and tea. Many children working on farms, especially in the production of cocoa, handle pesticides and sharp tools, till the soil and transport heavy loads. … children raise livestock, such as cattle, risking injury and exposure

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[2] The mentioned unconsciousness concerns individuals attempting to abide by the unseen tenets of the law.

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to the elements. Children, primarily girls, work as domestic servants. ... children also work in artisanal gold mines and gravel quarries, carrying sand and breaking stones.

While such parental/guardian method may, if at all, serve some positive ends, it mostly complicates, and in some stead, trivializes the essence of parenting; hence the distasteful inclination and/or increase in the number of the youths becoming fugitives.

In another stead, some youths may decide to take a cue from their friends who might have jettisoned every format of parental control; and perhaps, out of illicit activities or hibernation with persons of heinous purposes within the society, are able to access some funding, which they (youths) spend frivolously. Because of the example of, or through, continued association with the escaped youth, the youth still under parental guide, might decide to abscond; hence deepening the danger that the phenomenon of the escapee youth pose, both for the society and government.

While the drivers of the challenge of fugitive youth are not limited to those discussed, the ones examined are tangible enough to cause commotion within both countries, since they are capable of creating pools of youthful recruits whom criminally minded persons within societies can engage as lieutenants for their heinous pursuits that majorly are antithesis of desired socio-economic development.

Criminalization of Runaway Youth: the Linkages between Fugitive Youths and Terrorism

Beyond the discussion of the identified drivers of fugitive amongst the youths, there is the need to discuss the criminalization of the runaway youths. Some, if not most of these persons, as a respondent insists, may not, *ab-initio*, have the intention of becoming criminals, let alone that of terrorizing their countries. Rather, the crave for survival might have encouraged their engagement in illicit 'sources of livelihood'. Though this is a piece of the whole picture. From the pedestal of the above-identified drivers of fugitive, it seems the major account for the participation of the renegade, and the eventual linkage to terrorism, could be the aspiration to, on one hand, hurt their unresponsive countries; and on the other, gain some cheap popularity that comes through the dastard acts of terrorism.

Indeed, the 'youth' is a transitory stage, which should ordinarily culminate in a person becoming a full, adult member of the society. Youth, in this light, is regarded as an important stage in the life cycle, which as Eisenstadt claims, possesses vital functions for society (Eisenstadt, 1963, 24); the availability of a pool of unengaged youths forms a serious *raison d'etre* that drives the different hues that crime is presently assuming. The unnecessary extension of the days of 'youth' in young persons lives, a situation often attributed to the challenge of poverty that confronts too many persons in both countries, seems to be the defining preoccupation for many young people who, without succumbing

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to despair, are continually seeking avenues to make ends meet, even as they aspire to better status in the future.

Faced with such daunting situation, the disposition of individuals might differ. While some persons are easily given to stoicism, others may find it challenging to pass through the quagmire of lack, injustice, inequality and inequity that has become the daily experiences of the citizens of the two countries. Differently put, some youths, perhaps because of personal principles, might decide not to join any anti-society or anti-people organizations; and may not even appreciate any form of connection to dangerous groups. Some other youths may not have the same disposition. In the light of this, criminal organizations, terror groups and their financiers, some of whom are state officials and politicians have a ready pool of recruits for their heinous missions; the services of whom might come handy and cheap.

Indeed the conception of fugitive youths is that of a young person that is on the run; but due to lack of some necessities, such might fall into the enclave of criminals; for whom such youth might become a good recruit. Following on the tangible submission by Carol Thompson that:

> Recruitment of children is considered desirable because of children's energy levels. Second, they are more susceptible to propaganda and, therefore, more readily obey. Third, their moral values are still in formation so they can more easily than an adult suspend moral judgments. Right becomes one with obedience ... Fourth, with fewer skills and less knowledge about the area, they are less likely to escape successfully. Finally, they don't demand pay (Thompson, 1999/2013);

It is thus assumed that young persons are the preferred of terror and organized crime groups. This is not meant to say they are the only group referred to as youth in this study, nor that they are the only group of recruits in the terror groups.

Thus, rather than solely working through or testing the capacities of state-owned security apparatuses, it is observed that addressing issues relating to the inequality and inequity would serve as a better panacea to the dangerous template of terrorism that presently is inchoate. The *raison d'etre* for this submission is the unholy nexus existing between the youths, particularly fugitive youths, and terrorism. Ultimately, this logic leads to the question of whether the financiers of terrorism, can provide their children or siblings with the funds and weapons that they funnel into such heinous activities? Further still, one needs to ask if such financiers can openly bare the sophisticated weapons in the manner the Boko Haram operatives, the suicide bombers inclusive, had acted? It is this orientation that informs the insistence that the challenges confronting the youths, most especially the fugitive youth, are the major determinants of the format of terrorism that both

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Nigeria and Cameroon have witnessed. Indeed, a serious search for a solution to terror attacks in both countries should entail finding a lasting solution to the challenges confronting youths.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is argued that the presence of fugitive youths is majorly responsible for the challenge of insecurity that transnational terrorism poses to both countries, and for which they have both expanded resources, human and financial. This claim is because the availability of funds and weapons do not in themselves cause or deepen the occurrences of terrorism. The gaze then should be fixed on the availability of willing recruits, most of whom are youths, who for reasons best known to them: ideological, religious, monetary; yield themselves to the antics of the financiers of such activities. As such, it is the drivers of the challenges that make youths become fugitives or criminals in their countries that the governments of both countries should focus more of the efforts meant for riding both countries of the attacks of the terrorists. This does not connote the irrelevance of suggestions made elsewhere; rather, combatting the challenges the youth's face would bolster already adopted solutions. Differently put, the already adopted anti-terror military solution has achieved a milestone, and should be sustained. However, in order for this challenge not to rear its ugly head again, an absolute solution should be pursued; and this could be achieved through addressing the challenges bedeviling the youths or those encouraging the fugitive of the youths, and even inciting them to embrace anti-social behaviours that might at future dates impact these countries negatively.

Further more, the governments of the two countries should ensure that the youths are well provided for. They form the future of the two countries, and it is sacrosanct that the governments harvest dividends of demographic buoyancy that the increasing population of the youth proffers to both countries. Really, the terror organization responsible for the obnoxious attacks and the criminal network responsible for recruiting its 'lieutenants' have been reaping from the demographic strength of the two countries. Hence they have successfully offered some of the unemployed youths with things they (the youths and the terrorists) feel are worthwhile to do, even as the activities provide the recruited youths or proselyte with needed funds. The governments as such, need to establish projects that would gainfully engage the energy/intellect of the youths.

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