

**THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS AND  
PEACEBUILDING IN THE SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA: 2011-2018**

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**Abstract:** *Civil-military relations (CMR) are the relationships that exist between the civilian authority (CAU) and non-governmental civilian groups (NGCG) versus the military. While peacebuilding is a method of capacity building and reconciliation that is aimed at preventing conflict or the restart of it. The study examines the nature and character of civil-military relations and peace building in South West Nigeria, 2011-2018. The research method adopted for this study is a documentary method, using content analysis to analyze the content of the work. Observation and documentary studies were an instrument of collecting data for the research work. The theory employed for this study is agency theory. Findings revealed that: there is a constitutional provision that provides for the subordination of the military to civilian authority, hence the military willingly accept their subordinate position to the civilian authority or his representatives; Further findings show that; there were conflicts between the non-governmental civilian groups and the military, hence negative peace existed between them; the conflicts between both parties are in the area of harassment and intimidation of the masses. The study recommended that: the National Assembly should enact a law that will make only retired military officers to be appointed as minister of Defence and Police respectively. Again, Independent Monitoring Operation on Military (IMOM) should be set up by the National Assembly from among the non-governmental civilian groups to monitor the movement of soldiers and their activities, with power to sanction and punish soldiers.*

**KEYWORDS:** Civil-military relations, peacebuilding, non-governmental civilian group, civilian authority, working, shirking

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The discourse of civil-military relations (CMR) and peacebuilding is something that is of great interest to God and man from time immemorial. This is because; peace is a pre-condition for a better society. However, CMR and peacebuilding in Nigeria have been sharpened by a number of factors; this can be traced to the long period of military rule among others. The role of the civilian authority (CAU) or it delegates over the military in every society cannot be underestimated. Thus, the type of government that a country practices has a great influence on CMR to a great extent. Nigeria got her independence in 1960 and subsequently became a Republic in 1963. Tinubu (2010) in an opening remark as the Chairman of the Opening Plenary of an International Conference in

Lagos State tagged “Fifty Years of Nationhood: State, Society and Politics in Nigeria (1960-2010)”, says, at independence in 1960, Nigeria had a workable constitution that put in place parliamentary democracy. The system of government ushered in Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa-Balewa as the Prime Minister and Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe as the President. After the first coup of 1966, Nigeria had witnessed several military coups against one civilian regime or the others, until 1999 when there was a transition of power to civilian rule.

However, the long stay of the military in power has had a psychological orientation on the military as the ultimate profession that can do anything at will. Elaigwu observes that:

The schism believes the military in Nigeria has fairly a long history. According to Ahmadu Bello, when he was young, the military of his time was like people infected with leprosy. He said that ‘we did not like the soldiers, they were our people and had conquered us for strangers.....this feeling was very common all over the north. Also, a member of the Federal House of Representative in the First Republic said, “people are jeered at when they want to join the army, the reason being that soldiers are treated no better than laborers ...there is a psychology in this country that when someone is badly paid, that man is inferior (Elaigwu. 1979).

The long history of enmity between the military and non-governmental civilian groups (NGCG) is still around, even until today. When there is enmity between the military and NGCG, it is an indicator of conflict that might later manifest. The CMR of the various military governments before the Fourth Republic did not have respect for human right and the level of impunity as of then was high, hence the call for the military to disengage from a power increase. The need for the military to step down from power has been explained by Ihonvbere when he contends that:

The military disengagement from power is occasion by a number of reasons among which are; the balance of class forces, the character of particular military leadership, and the changing nature of global tolerance for the undemocratic seizure of power. The African military is being forced from power not because it now believes in or values democracy but by a combination of internal and external factors and forces (Ihonvbere, 2008).

It is against this backdrop that General Abdul-Salami Abubakar voluntarily disengaged from power in 1999 to allow a democratic government of the Fourth Republic to take root in Nigeria again. It was by this that General Olusegun Obasanjo was ushered in as the executive presidency in 1999 and left in 2007 after serving his two terms. The influence of CAU on the military cannot be overemphasized.

In fact, Sahara Reporter (2007) quoted a CAU, President Obasanjo as saying that, ‘the 2007 General Election is a do or die affair for People Democratic Party (PDP), while addressing elders and stakeholders of the PDP in Abeokuta, Ogun State capital, on 10 February 2007. The threat by the CAU was carried out by deploying the military to monitor the 2007 General Election across the thirty-six states and the Federal Capital Territory. During this period, military humiliate the electorates (non-governmental civilian groups) for the purpose of winning the election for PDP at all cost. In another development, Alaga and Akum assert that:

The fourth republic has not experienced the open disagreements between the military and civil authority (presidential) that had been the case earlier. Civilians, including women, were appointed to key positions in the defense sector. Following the president's agenda and leadership, the military was open and willing to conform to legislative oversight, as evidenced by the attendance of military heads at the National Assembly to answer questions on their operations (Alaga & Akum, 2015). The implication of the foregoing observations by Sahara Reporters, Alaga and Akum are that, there have been cordial relationships between the civilian authority (CAU) and the military on one hand; while, the relationships between the non-governmental civilian group (NGCG) and the military have not been cordial. Therefore, the need to embark on this study is to ascertain the validity of the following; firstly, whether the relationships between CAU and the military have been cordial (2011-2018); secondly, whether the relationships between NGCG and the military have not been cordial (2011-2018). More importantly is the fact that no comparative study has actually been carried out on civil-military relations (CMR) between the military and the totality of civilians, between ex-President Goodluck Jonathan administration (2011 to 2015) & President Muhammadu Buhari administration (2015 to 2019), hence the need while this study is germane. The main objective of this paper is to validate whether civil-military relations between the civilian and the military has been violent free. The sub-objectives of the piece are:

1. To examine how the relationships between the civilian authority and the military promote the creating of peace in South-West Nigeria 2011-2018.
2. To investigate how the relationships between the non-governmental civilian groups and the military enhanced conditions for peace in South-West Nigeria 2011-2018.

In achieving the above objectives, this study intends to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. Do the relationships between the civilian authority and the military promote the creation of peace in South-West Nigeria 2011-2018?
2. Have the relationships between the non-governmental civilian groups and the military enhanced conditions for peace in South-West Nigeria 2011-2018?

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research method adopted for this piece is the documentary method. The research method was adopted because of the belief that it can gather information in the form of words and description from secondary sources like library materials, internet, et cetera. The reason for using the documentary method as an instrument was because of the fact that it is economical and easy to access, though it might not be exactly with the focus of the study. Observation instrument of collecting data was also employed because it helps the researcher to get first-hand information about a particular subject matter.

On the other hand, content analysis was employed to analyze the content of the secondary source of data journals, books, chapter contributions, government publications, conference Papers, and online materials were also content-analyzed over a period of eight-year, from 2011 to 2018. Thus, Aniche and Ofodum (2018) argue that content analysis is a technique for deducing the motives of

the writer through the collation of frequency of certain words, concepts or terms. The researchers' also content-analyzed media reports of civil-military relations and peacebuilding by Sahara Reporters, Punch Newspaper, Daily Trust, Daily Post, Cable News, Pulse Online News, Concise News, and Premium Times over a period of eight years, from 2011 to 2018.

## **CONCEPTUAL ISSUES**

### **Civil-Military Relations (CMR)**

Like every social science concept, the definition of CMR varies depending on the perception of the expert or scholar defining the concept. However, North Atlantic Treaty Organization sees, CMR as activities by NATO Commanders in the war directly concerned with the relationship between allied armed forces and the government, civil population or agencies of non-NATO countries, where such armed forces are stationed, supported or employed (Omoigui, 2015). This definition is a narrowed one in as much as it does not describe in whole, what civil-military relations should mean during peacetime. The scope of civil-military relations has expanded more than mere fighting of war to include nation building. It is in line with this fact that Wogu and Ibietan (2014) describe civil-military relations (CMR) as the relationships between the civil societies as a whole and military organization or organizations established to protect it. The study accepts the above definition because of its broadness.

### **Peace Building**

According to the United Nations (UN) document "An Agenda for Peace," peacebuilding consists of a wide range of activities associated with capacity building, reconciliation, and societal transformation (Durojaye, Oluwadare & Jarikre, 2013). It is believed that peacebuilding should be aimed at reconciling aggrieved parties or put up a mechanism to make sure that people are not aggrieved or oppressed by another. However, this paper defines peacebuilding as all the processes and methods employed to ensure harmonious relationships among the people in the society, devoid of oppression, extortion, exploitation, absolute poverty and violation of fundamental human rights.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical framework of this paper is hinged on agency theory. Agency theory was propounded in the 1970s, by a number of scholars which include; Mitnick (1973), Jensen & Meckling (1976) among others. Agency theory, a long existing theory which was propounded in Financial Studies and Corporate Governance was adopted and utilized in civil-military relations by Peter Feaver (2003), in his book "Armed servants", he adopted and modified an ambitious theory that treats civil-military relations as a principal-agent relationship, with civilian authority monitoring the actions of military agents, the armed servants of the nation state. At the heart of the theory is the idea that, civil-military relations are basically a form of strategic interactions between civilian masters (principals) and their military servants (agents).

The major assumptions of the theory are;

1. The military will shirk as long as they are not monitored by the polity (principal)
2. The military will work better when the aims of the military and civilians converge

3. The military will work despite not being monitored if they think they will be punished if they get caught shirking (Feaver, 2003).

Feaver (2003) sees shirking, like any behavior that is not in accordance with the civilian leader's intent or not executing that intent to the civilian's satisfaction. He opines that, working is the opposite of shirking and that working is doing something to the satisfaction of the principals. In a nutshell, working is the action taken by the agent that the principal would have taken if he was to do the job. Agency theory is relevant to this study because of the fact that it is the study of the agency relationship and the issues that arise between the principal and agent, just like the relationship between the civilian authority (the principal) and agent (the military). It should be noted that while both parties work towards the same goal; they might not always share the same interests.

### **The relevance of Agency Theory to the study**

All over the world, there have always been relationships between and the organization established to protect her, the military. Leaders and followers are bound to relate and interact in one way or the other, in meeting the needs of society. The need to meet the security need of a community, society, nation or country necessitated the formation of the military to defend the country, society or nation as the case may be against external attack. In the process of discharging the responsibilities of protecting the country against external attack, and even now that the military has been given the new role of providing security for other security agencies of government during elections, the number of people that the military relate with have increased when compared to when compared to their traditional role of fighting war.

Like in every organization where the relationships between the principal or owner and the workers are expected to be cordial, the relationships between the civilian authority and the military are also expected to be cordial, if there must be peace in the society. Observation has it that the military work better to the satisfaction of the military in most cases, as there has not been an open disagreement between the civilian authority and the military. What this means is that the aim of the military and the civilian authority (CAU) converged.

On the other hand, the military seems not to have worked to the satisfaction of the NGCG because the aim of the former and the latter did not converge; obviously, this development is mostly a by-product of the need to satisfy CAU. The new role of the military in contemporary Nigeria has also resulted in their civilian authority providing some welfare packages in the form of motivation to perform up to expectation. This motivation is what is known as economic peacebuilding. In fact, Durojaye, Oluwadare, and Jarikre (2013:111) believe that "economic peacebuilding targets both the micro and macro-level and aims to create economic opportunities and ensure that the basic needs of the population are met".

Consequently, the military who now have more responsibilities like maintaining internal security in a democratic society like Nigeria need to relate with their civilian authority or principal as the case may be. It is believed that the military might not always work to the satisfaction of their principal, CAU if they are not monitored. Feaver (2003) argues that the military will shirk as long

as they are not being monitored by the polity (principal). Shirking means that the military is not working to the satisfaction of the civilian authority to the fullest (Feaver, 2003), hence the need for the military to be monitored. A review on the activities of the military in South-West Nigeria revealed that:

On May 4, 2017, barely two days after men of the Nigerian Army (the soldiers operation under, Operation Safe Delta) engaged militant groups in a shootout at a creek in Ajakpo community, in Ese Odo Local Government Area of Ondo State, the soldiers sent to the area to protect the people have allegedly attacked members of the community, burnt a large number of houses, while unspecified numbers of residents were reportedly killed” (Dada, 2017).

Moreso, the military onslaught in Arepo, Ogun State seems to have assumed another dimension, as a video of an ongoing clash between militants and the military has emerged. Vanguard reported that thirty (30) houses were destroyed and an undisclosed number of lives were also lost around 2016 (Ebuzor, 2016). The implication of the activities of the military that were sent to protect the people of Ondo and Ogun States around May 2017 showed that many residents who the military ought to protect were killed by them and houses burnt. Further implication showed that the military must have acted beyond the orders their CAU gave to them. The reason is simple, there is no way the principal (President or his representatives like Minister of Defence, Minister of State for Defence or any of their representatives) must have deliberately asked the military to kill innocent citizens (NGCG) or burn their houses as the military did in their operations in Ondo and Ogun States respectively. This development and many others have shown that the military will shirk if they are not been monitored.

Thus, the foregoing anti-peace building act might not be with the consent of the civilian authorities, hence the military must have acted beyond their limit granted them by their civilian authorities. Thus, the military has proved to Nigerians that they cannot perform effectively without being monitored. Mitnick (1973) identifies the problems of agency as, policing mechanisms and incentives. Policing mechanisms are mechanisms and incentives intended to limit the agent's discretion, such as surveillance or specifically directed tasks. Mitnick believes in the need to monitor the military operations for effective performance and result.

Agency theory believes that the military will work even when they are not being monitored if they think they will be punished if they get caught shirking. The various military activities that showed that the military did not work to the satisfaction of their principal or civilian authority have a negative effect on the NGCG because innocent citizens were killed and their houses burnt around 2016 and 2017 in Ogun and Ondo State. What this means is that there was no monitoring mechanism to monitor the activities of the military, hence the reason for their behaviours. The activities of the military in some S/W states like Ondo, Oyo, Ogun and Lagos States showed that there were anti-peace building activities against the NGCG, hence there is a conflict of interest between the two parties. Ifesinachi (2009:73) sees conflict as “the pursuit of incompatible interests and goals by different groups”. Conflict is no doubt an anti-peace building act.

## DISCUSSION

### Civilian authority (CAU) versus the military and peace-building

The need to ensure peaceful living in the society has necessitated the establishment of a military organization. All over the world, the power of the military has drastically reduced and the military has since accepted the subordinate role to the civilian authority or leadership. The power of the military has only reduced in ideal democratic societies, where democratic principles have been instituted. Thus, Huntington (1963:794) notes that ex-President Eisenhower in January 1961, in the council of government, warned, “We must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist”. The subordination of the military to the civilian authority (CAU) is a common phenomenon in every democratic society. The foregoing is on the premise that the civilian authority (the President, head of state of a country or any of their representatives) is usually empowered by the constitution to be the Grand Commander of the Military. Hence, it gives CAU the power to reward and punish any military that shirk – a situation when the military refused to carry out the command of CAU.

The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is very clear on the hierarchy of military establishment. Chapter VI, Part1 (a), Section 130 (2) of the Nigerian constitution (1999) affirms that the President shall be the Head of State, the Chief Executive of the Federation and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed forces of the Federation. The constitution of Nigeria provided for the subordination of the military to civilian authority. The question that demands answer at this juncture is whether the relationships between the civilian authority and the military promote the creation of peace in South-West Nigeria (2007-2017)?

Below are the elements of peacebuilding between CAU and the military.

**Table 1: CAU versus Military and Peace Building in South West (S/W) 2011-2018**

Regime	Elements of Peacebuilding	Frequency	Percentage
Ex-President Goodluck Jonathan (2010-2015)	The President as the Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces (Chapter VI, Part1 (a), Section 130 (2) of the Nigerian Constitution, 1999)	2	12.5%
	Appointment of retired military officers like; Rtrd Navy Capt. Caleb Olubolade, Minister of Police Affairs (Sahara Reporters, July 11, 2011)	2	12.5%
	Good welfare packages.	2	
	Total	6	12.5% 37.5%
President Muhamadu Buhari (2015-2018)	The President as the Commander-In-Chief the Armed Forces (Chapter VI, Part1 (a), Section 130 (2) of the Nigerian constitution, 1999)	2	12.5%
	Appointment of retired military officers like: Minister of Interior; Minister of Defence; Director General of Custom (Odunsi, 2018, Africa Practice, 2015)	6	30%
	Good welfare packages.	2	
	Total	10	12.5% 62.5%
Grand Total		16	100%

Source: Authors

Table 1 above, showed that whosoever emerges as Nigerian President is the Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces, of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This constitutional provision makes the civilian President or any of his representatives to be superior to the military. From observation, the duty of maintaining internal security, especially on major high ways and serving as cover for other security agencies during elections in Nigeria has now become part of the role of the military. The military did not shirk in carrying out the instruction of the civilian authority as it pertains to their new role of maintaining internal security; hence there has been positive peace between the two parties. The foregoing development has made the relationships between the civilian authorities and the military to promote the creation of peace-building in Nigeria, and South-West in particular.

### **Non-governmental civilian groups (NGCG) versus the Military and peace-building**

The non-governmental civilian groups as used in this study means, Nigeria citizens who are not political office holders or have no constitutional right or capacity to command the military to behave in a particular direction. However, the people that have the constitutional right to command or give order to the military are the civilian authority elected by the people through election or appointed by Mr. President. Thus, the leadership style of civilian authority has the capacity of influencing the relationship between the military and the non-governmental civilian groups, though the military might sometimes act outside the order given to them by the civilian authority. In reiterating the importance of peacebuilding in living a good life, Luke 3:14 (King James Version) says, "Likewise the soldiers asked him saying, what we shall do? So he said to them, 'do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely and be content with your wages'". Here, the military asked John the Baptist in the scripture on what to do in other to live a good life that God expects of them. The condition is that the military should not intimidate, humiliate or collect money forcefully from people. There is no doubt that the responsibility of the military has increased in recent time, the military now mount roadblock across the country. This has helped in great dimension, especially in the area of securing major roads against terrorist attack, protection of lives and property. From observation, the issue of intimidation and forceful collection of money from vehicles plying major roads in the country has been ongoing by the military for some times now. The foregoing ugly development is capable of causing havoc and break down of law and order if the situation is not urgently arrested.

However, the question of whether the relationships between NGCG and the military have been cordial or not, demands an answer? Below table shows the relationships between the NGCG and the military under President Muhammadu Buhari (2015-18) in comparison to that of President Goodluck Jonathan (as he then was).



**Table 2: NGCG versus the Military and Peace Building exercise in S/W Nigeria 2011-2018**

<b>Regime</b>	<b>Anti-peace building behaviours &amp; Pro-peace building behaviours</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (100)</b>
Ex-President Goodluck Jonathan (2010-2015)	An online newspaper contends that the militarization of election was witnessed in the governorship election of Ekiti State in 2014 when military personnel was deployed to Ekiti, to connive with some People Democratic Party (PDP) chieftains that successfully rigged the election for their party (Sahara Reporters, February 5, 2015).	50	50%
	During the 2014 governorship election in Osun State, it was reported that, “The All Progressive Congress spokesman, Lai Mohammed, in Osogbo, Osun State on Sunday (August 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2014), shortly after he was released, said that he was arrested along with Sunday Dare, the Media Aide to Bola Tinubu; and Afolabi Salisu, Deputy Chief of Staff to Ogun State governor on the 8th of August, 2014” (Tukur, 2014).	50	50%
	<b>Total 100% anti-peace building behaviour</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>
President Muhamadu Buhari (2015-2017)	There was no harassment from the military (soldiers) in the 2018 governorship election in Ekiti State. Armed military men stationed at the road leading to Isan Ekiti in Oye Local Government Area, on a stop and search mission on the vehicles entering the town (Sahara Reporters, 2018, Para. 38-39)	50	50%
	In the words of Tukur Buratai, the Chief of Army Staff, “as the nation moves towards the 2019 General Elections, the Nigeria Army (NA) is conducting Operation SAFE CONDUCT to support other security agencies during the period of elections in the country. The NA activated the Operation on July 14, 2018, during the elections in Ekiti and Osun states and it was a huge success” (Sahara Reporters, 2018, Para. 4-5)	50	50%
	<b>Total 100% Pro-peace building behaviour</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Authors

Table 2 showed that there were intimidations and harassment of people in the 2014 governorship elections that took place in Ekiti and Osun States under the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan (as he then was). This means that there were anti-peace building behaviours displayed by the military towards the civilians. It should be noted that it was a civilian authority without the military background that was the Minister of State for Defence around 2014 that led the military to Ekiti State for the election.

However, the above table also revealed that there was no intimidation or harassment of any type in the 2018 Governorship elections that took place in Ekiti and Osun States under the

administration of President Muhammadu Bukari. This goes to show that, there were pro-peace building behaviours displayed by the military towards the civilians. It should be noted that it is retired military officers that is the Minister of Defence around 2018.

There is no doubt that the influence of the civilian authorities on what the military does is enormous, however, what is doubtful is, if the military does not act beyond the instructions of their civilian authorities. Thus, a study has it that, the professional conduct of our armed forces and police is being questioned by the international community following the accusations of human rights abuses; and our sincerity in fighting terrorism is also being doubted for various reasons”(Dambazau, 2015). The above observation was directed to the military operations in Northern Nigeria, on their fight against terrorism. Corroborating the above was a report that a Lagos man was chained to motorcycle and drag on the street by the military around 2017 (Ojoye, Taiwo & Hanafi, Afeez, 2017). It seems to be anti-peace-building behaviours by the military against NGCG.

Table 1 showed that it was retired military officer that is the Minister of Defence under President Muhammadu Buhari administration, while the Minister of Defence under President Goodluck Jonathan administration was a civilian without knowledge of military background or professionalism of the military. The foregoing must have informed the arbitrary abuse of the military in the 2014 Ekiti and Osun States Governorship elections, by politicians who is a Minister of State Defence.

Finding has shown that there were anti-peace building behaviours under President Goodluck Jonathan (as he then was) administration around 2014 in Ekiti and Osun States governorship elections, while there were pro-peace building behaviours between the military and NGCG in Ekiti and Osun States governorship elections in 2018 under President Muhammadu Buhari.

## **CONCLUSION**

Civil-military relations (CMR) are the relations that exist between the Non-governmental Civilian Groups (NGCG and the military on one hand, and the relationships that exist between the civilian authority (CAU) and the military. The study concludes as follow:

There were good working relationships between CAU and the military in Nigeria, and South West in particular, as a result of the constitutional provision that subordinates the military under the control of CAU, hence the military worked to the satisfaction of CAU between 2011-2018; Again, there were conflicts between NGCG and the military in Ekiti and Osun States 2014 governorship elections, under President Goodluck Jonathan administration, while there was no conflict between NGCG and the military in Ekiti and Osun States 2018 governorship elections under President Muhammadu Buhari administration.

However, were serious conflicts between NGCG and the military, as the latter was involved in intimidating and harassment of NGCG, destruction of properties and killing of innocent citizens

in the course of their internal security operation in S/W Nigeria, 2016-2017 under the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Flowing from the above, the study recommended that: The National Assembly should enact a law that will make only retired military officers to be appointed as Minister of Defence and Police respectively. The suggested solution will further promote professionalism and reduce abuse of power by ministers, who are representatives of civilian authority (CAU).

Independent Monitoring Operation on Military (IMOM) should be set up by the National Assembly from among the non-governmental civilian groups (NGCG) to monitor the movement of soldiers and their activities, with power to sanction and punish soldiers. The suggested solution will checkmate the way military harass and intimidate NGCG.

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