

**Ethnic Militia Movements and the Crisis of Political Order in
Post-Military Nigeria**

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ABSTRACT Since the birth of the Fourth Republic on May 29 1999, Nigeria is experiencing increasing waves of ethnic conflicts, while its leaders engage in a series of 'dialogue of the deaf'. For now, a great deal of literature has explored the causes of ethnic crisis and unsuitable solutions are being proposed for a wrongly diagnosed structural social malaise. Thus, this article examines the fundamental causes of ethnic violence, being championed by the various ethnic militia movements in post-military Nigeria, by emphasizing the impacts of institutional failure. Hence, it contends that the extreme dissatisfactions of some ethnic nationalities with the Nigerian post-colonial state are clear manifestations of the government failure to provide the necessary infrastructure and enabling environment required to ease the inordinate human degradation, disillusionment, anger, rural decay and high crime wave prevailing in the country. Thus, ethnic violence is created and maintained by militia movements in a vicious circle of frustration and repression as the Nigerian leadership tries to consolidate itself in power while the marginalised categories (ethnic minorities) of the population claim for their fair share in national resources. Finally, the study suggests that for the interest of peace and stability, there is the urgent need for immediate redress to the inherent lapses in Nigeria's inherited federal structure, through a programmed professional participation that would be reflective of its peculiar socio-historical experiences.