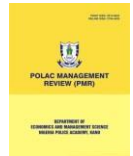




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ASSESSMENT OF POLICING AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Policing is indispensable to maintenance of national security. This is an exploratory and theoretical review of policing and security in Nigeria. Secondary data and associated theories on policing and security were reviewed. Community policing theories were used to understand the security situation in the country. The Broken Window Theory explained the need for shared efforts by the police and community dwellers in addressing policing as well as security concerns in the country. Police reports, newspaper publications and the mass media have highlighted the increasing rate of various forms of crimes in the country. Over the years in Nigeria, due to the activities of armed criminals, residents of villages have been displaced, and this has resulted in the development of Internally Displaced Peoples' camps (IDPs) in many states. Nigeria has also experienced security breaches such as armed robberies and the kidnapping of residents. There is a dire need to take control of ungoverned spaces in the country, especially in rural areas. Recommendation includes government's collaboration with the police, residents and other law enforcement agencies to implement community policing strategies, while creating the enabling environment for all residents to have access to basic needs.

Keywords: Crimes, Community Policing, National Security, Policing, Security.

1. Introduction

Policing is a term which refers to any organised activity, whether by governmental entities or non-governmental groups, that aims at ensuring the maintenance of security, communal order and peace through basics of prevention, investigation of breaches and resolution, deterrence, punishments and compliance enforcement (Akinyetun, 2016). In every society, policing has always been essential for maintaining order, safety and social relationships.

The security and stability of any society is paramount and relies on the enforcement of the law and the maintenance of order in that society. This responsibility lies in the hands of policing agencies as they are tasked with enforcing the law and enhancing security ranging from intra state (internal), inter-state (national) and international depending on their statutory roles as stipulated by the government (Uthman, 2016; Madubuike-Ekwe & Obayemi, 2019; Uzor *et al.*, 2022).

The police force is an entity established by the government with the task of maintaining order and the enforcement of law. Additionally, Nigeria police performs conventional police functions which also includes their responsibility for internal security of the state, rendering support to prison services, custom services and immigration; as well as participation within or outside Nigeria in military duties as directed by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Akinyetun, 2022). Essentially, Nigeria Police are tasked with a variety of responsibilities, including crime prevention and detection, maintenance of order and law, safeguarding lives and assets, enforcement of relevant laws and regulations, and carrying out military duties (Section 4, Nigeria Police Act, 2020).

Incidences of traditional crimes such as vandalism of infrastructures, armed robbery, drug and human trafficking, arson, kidnapping, banditry, murder, rape, cattle rustling, and hired assassinations are notable violent crimes which have been on a steady rise while white collar crimes such as forgery,

advance fee fraud, contract fraud deals, embezzlement and mismanagement of funds in both public and private sectors are notable non-violent crimes which are also on a steady rise. (Akowe & Kayode, 2014; Amehojo *et al.*, 2022; Ocholi *et al.*, 2023; Odalonu, 2023; Rabi, 2024). It is against this backdrop that this paper explores policing and security activities in Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Issues

2.1.1 Concept of Policing

Policing in any society is paramount in enforcement of law, maintenance of order as well as management of national security in human society. The responsibility lies in the hands of policing agencies as they are tasked with enforcing the law and enhancing security ranging from intra state (internal), inter-state (national) and international depending on their statutory roles as stipulated by the government (Collins, 2007). The goal of these statutory roles is to ensure that laws are enforced, order is maintained and a peaceful environmental condition for co-existence is sustained. The relative peace enjoyed in a society corresponds to the level of security and development that occurs in that society. Policing is innate in humans and is performed by all in society. No society can do without policing (Crawford & Evans, 2017).

2.1.2 Concept of Security

The idea of security has been understood from different perspectives. In the normative point of view, security refers to the existence of things in an orderly manner or a condition of safeguarding the environment. In the objective point of view, security deals with the lack of danger to life, freedom, assets and core values. In the subjective sense, security measures the elimination of fear, anxiety, tension or likelihood of losing lives, properties or values. Security is usually regarded as the number one priority of the state as every other sector and even lives become vulnerable without adequate security (United Nations, 2021; United Nations, 2022). Similarly, national security can be defined as the overall security of lives and properties, economy and economic resources of a nation, food and raw materials of the people, the environment, national integrity and preservation of all that a nation

considers important and valuable (United Nations, 2021; United Nations, 2022).

The Global Peace Index ranked Nigeria 144th in the most peaceful countries in the world and 37th out of 44 countries in Africa (GPI, 2023), signifying that there is a deteriorated condition of insecurity in the nation. Furthermore, Igbini (2022) is of the opinion that the issue of insecurity in the country appears to have surpassed government capacity since efforts put in place by the government has not produced the much needed positive result but rather increasing daily. Scholars such as Adegoke (2014); Val-Ogu (2017); Ozoigbo (2019); Mohammed (2021) and Oranekwu (2023) revealed some factors contributing to the surge in insecurity across Nigeria. They contended that the Nigerian government's response to the crisis of the mass unemployment, poor/weak security apparatus, ethnic/religious intolerance, absence of specialized skills, lack of sources of livelihood, as well as ongoing agitations stem from inefficient system of governances and corruption has contributed to the deterioration of the crime situation in Nigeria. Also, loss of human capital, social dislocation and displacement, decrease in the number of infrastructural facilities have significantly contributed to the high level of insecurity in the country. The consequences of insecurity as revealed by these scholars include among others, underdevelopment in a state or country, hunger, poverty, armed robbery, militancy, insurgency, youth unrest, drug abuse, kidnapping, brain drain and negative image in the global community.

2.1.3 Concept of National Security

The task of enforcing the law and maintaining peace and order in Nigeria as stipulated in the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is the responsibility of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) alongside other policing agencies. The constitution also establishes the enacted responsibility of prevention and detection of crime, apprehending and prosecution of offenders and criminals, protection of lives and assets of citizens on the Nigeria Police Force (NPF).

Although the military as an arm of security is indispensable, they alone are not sufficient for ensuring national security. There are discrepancies

among scholars and authorities in their choice of elements on what constitute national security. Apart from the military aspect of security, the aspects of diplomacy or politics; society; environment; energy and natural resources; and economics are other recognized aspects of national security that should not be neglected.

The fundamental concept of national security focuses on comprehensive protection of a country which includes safeguarding of the country citizens and its resources. According to Alozie (2019), national security encompasses broad and crucial dimensions of life, viz: Food security, Economic security, Health security, Personal security, Political security, Environmental security and Community security.

Political Security

Political security pertains to the stability of the **social order**. Effective governance and political stability are guaranteed by internal security. Social order, the rule of law, as well as the safeguarding of citizens' rights all depend on a safe environment. Effective implementation of development policies and programmes is made possible by a stable political environment (Alozie, 2019). When citizens are in a safe environment where they have the fundamental right to participate in decision-making processes, electoral processes and enjoy freedom of expression, their overall well-being improves (Idoko & Dasuma, 2014).

Economic security

Economic security is arguably as crucial to national security as military security today. Ensuring and safeguarding jobs that address both defense and non-defense needs is essential for national security. Developing countries face greater insecurity due to inadequate employment opportunities for their citizens (Idoko & Dasuma, 2014). To draw in investments and encourage economic growth in a country, a stable and secure internal environment is necessary. In a country with such stability, both domestic and foreign investors are more willing to engage in economic activities. This improves job creation, productivity, and overall economic advancement (Alozie, 2019).

Environmental security

Environmental security addresses issues related to the environment that pose a threat to a country's national security in any way. Transnational environmental issues that threaten a nation's security include global problems like deforestation, climate change as a result of global warming, and loss of biodiversity, etc. (Alozie, 2019). Ideally, environmental or resource-related problems that pose a national security threat would lead to conventional national security risks as primary or secondary outcomes. Such conflicts might involve increased tension or direct conflict over water scarcity as seen in the Middle East, or illegal immigration into the United States due to agricultural failures in Mexico. The 1994 genocide that occurred in Rwanda, partly driven by population growth and reduced farmland availability, illustrates the extreme outcomes that can result from environmental security issues (Boemeken & Schetter, 2017).

Security of energy and natural resources

Natural resources such as water, energy sources, land and minerals are crucial for a nation's industrial and economic development. Countries like Japan has faced significant challenges in increasing its national power due to lack of resources. During the Persian Gulf War of 1991, Iraq invaded Kuwait primarily to gain control of its oil wells, among other motives. Water resources has often lead to conflict between countries, even amongst nuclear powers, India and Pakistan. Nations strive to secure energy and natural resources through means such as force, negotiation and trade (Crawford & Evans, 2017).

Cyber-security

Cybersecurity is the framework of modalities and rules in operation among computer users for the protection of the cyberspace. Cybersecurity is increasingly becoming a critical national security concern. Electronic information systems are essential for maintenance of national security as they facilitate communication and intelligence sharing. Unauthorized access to crucial governmental infrastructures such as the electronic information systems by both state and non-state actors can pose significant risks and adversely affect a nation's economic, political, and military stability (Adegoke,

2020). Cybersecurity attacks during the general elections in 2023 are evidence that these threats have become a reality in more recent times. Nigeria is facing new challenges related to privacy and security, including cybercrime, hacking and online fraud incidents (Aljezeera News, 2023).

Human Security

Human security can be seen from two different dimensions, first is the protection from threats like oppression, hunger, disease outbreak, and second is shielding against sudden and damaging interruptions to daily routines (Suyatno, Mohammed, Nasa'i, Abd Majid & Abdullah, 2017)

Human security is enshrined on the idea that security should prioritize individuals rather than the government. Women and children are more susceptible to exploitation in the form of forced labour, human trafficking, and gender-based violence when they are insecure (Dambazzau, 2014). These risks are increased by displacement, which frequently disproportionately affects women and children (Nweke & Stephen, 2018).

2.2 Theoretical Framework.

The Broken Window Theory (BWT) first propounded by Wilson and Kelling (1982) and then further developed by Kelling and Coles (1998) is adopted by this paper in the assessment of policing and security in Nigeria. The theory propounds "that there is direct connection between the appearance of disorder and actual crime" (Giddens, 2004:214). Giddens (2004) as well as Haralambos and Holborn (2007) explained that when a single broken window is left unrepaired in a neighborhood, literally when minor offenses like drunkenness, prostitution, pick-pocketing among others are ignored, it sends a message to potential offenders that neither the police nor local residents care about maintaining order in the community. Over time, these neglected offenses lead to more visible signs of disorder, such as vandalism and abandoned vehicles. As minor crimes are continuously overlooked, they can escalate into more serious offenses like rape, fraud, burglary, kidnapping, banditry, and even assassinations.

The Broken Windows theory suggests that if minor disorder is ignored and not addressed, it can result to a reduction in fear of crime and informal

social control, ultimately resulting in an increase in crime. Police departments have embraced this theory on the belief that by managing minor disorders, they can reduce more serious crimes. By incorporating BWT into the concept of policing, the policing and security becomes a collaborative effort because the police and community residents become involved which can help reduce crime rates, especially when both sides view each other as partners in development.

The major proponents of BWT policing hold the perspective that both formal social control and informal social control are essential for effectively managing crime. BWT fosters a collaborative relationship between the police and the community in detection of crime. By maintaining regular contact between police and citizens, both minor and major crime issues can be addressed, leading to a reduction in crime and fear within the community. The theory promotes active involvement from both the public and the police in analyzing crime and disorder and developing strategies to tackle delinquency.

BWT theory will further explain the evolution of crime within the community in a rapidly evolving environment, where the police deal with an epidemic, crime, drugs, gangs, and violence where community and police leaders use intergroup relations to address societal problems. This approach to crime and disorder may improve performance and maximize resources because if residents see that efforts are being made to uphold law and order, they are more likely to report crimes and deter antisocial behavior and incivilities in public areas.

2.3 Policing and National Security

Val-Ogu, Uzoechina and Olorunyomi (2017) explored the crucial role of the Nigeria police force in safeguarding lives and its impact on societal development. The study emphasized that security is a key factor in the advancement of any society. The study defined the concepts of policing, national security and national development, illustrating their interconnections and relevance to the Nigerian society. The structural functionalism theory was employed to explain how the police force's structure influences the state's functionality. Their study identified the causes of Nigeria's national security challenges such as corruption, poverty, injustice,

deteriorating infrastructure, and socio-religious conflicts. Recommendations from the study included proactive government intervention to meet citizen's needs, providing the police with adequate equipment and funding for effectiveness, promotion of religious tolerance, patriotism and citizens engagement, and creating an environment conducive to entrepreneurial development.

Eke Chijioke Chinwoku (2018) in his study explored the relationship existing between the police and private security companies (PSCs) towards prevention of crime in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study generated data through self-administered survey from 1500 randomly selected respondent as well as through purposive in-depth interviews. Descriptive statistics was employed for data analysis. Findings from the study revealed that operational synergy and networking between Private Security Companies and the police during crime-prevention strategies were imperative for reduction of crime in the society. The study revealed that the collaborative relationship between private security companies and the police has positively influenced the reduction of crime but synergy between them was weak. Also highlighted in the study was a need to enhance interagency collaboration and networking; strengthening of partnership between PSCs and the police; and combine technical resources to combat crime in Lagos as well as Nigeria in general.

Salami *et al.* (2019), examined the effectiveness of community policing on reduction of crime in Suleja, Niger state, Nigeria. They examined the socio-economic characteristics of residents, the factors leading to the introduction of community policing, the strategies implemented, and the effectiveness and impact on crime rates following the establishment of community policing. Multi-stage and systematic sampling methods was adopted in the study to investigate the relationship between crime rates and the effectiveness of community policing. The study revealed that increase in crime wave and police ineffectiveness were major factors for introduction of community policing. The study further revealed a strong significant statistical relationship between community policing and crime rate. They recommended public and government participation in community policing.

Amehojo *et al.* (2022), examined Community policing on crime control in selected communities of Niger State. The study adopted the Broken Window Theory as propounded by Wilson & Kelling (1982) for theoretical analysis. The study utilized the survey and documentary research methods and the study targeted local vigilantes, community leaders, police, military and government official. Data collected from the study found that, community-policing through the activities of the vigilantes Group to some extent reduced the rate of crime in the selected communities in Niger State and that, cooperating with vigilante group in the communities can secure the environment against criminal activities. The study recommended sustenance of already existing strategies in place in the communities in order to eliminate all forms of criminality in the state.

Ndubueze, Siro and Sarki (2022) in their study examined the crucial role of the police in combating crime wave in Jigawa State, Nigeria, spanning the years 2014 to 2016. Their study was elicited by the increase in crime wave in various Nigerian urban centres arising from the general elections in 2015 and economic recession in 2016 which unarguably necessitated the need for enhanced security. In the study, primary data were drawn purposively from public and police divisions across three targeted urban areas of the state. Results indicated that residents often do not report crimes to the police. In the study area, the perception of the police's effectiveness in controlling was relatively high. It was also discovered in the study that the police's ability to control crime was hindered by insufficient personnel and outdated equipment. The study suggested promptly forwarding unresolved cases to court, enhancing police intelligence gathering, and holding more regular meetings with various community groups to improve the public's perception of the police.

Oranekwu and Uzoamaka (2023) in their study examined the impact of insecurity on Nigerian change initiative with special attention to residents of Ezinato in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State from 2015 to 2020. Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels theory of class struggle formed the theoretical framework of the study. The study revealed that the Nigerian Police Force's lack of

accountability significantly reduced their effectiveness in addressing the current security issues in Nigeria, as reported by 86.4% of the respondents. Additionally, 61.4% of the study respondents believe that insecurity is worsened by high poverty and unemployment rates, which they attribute to a loss of accountability among government leaders. The study recommended that the government need to enhance physical security measures nationwide by providing more security facilities and implementing strict penalties for security violations.

Danjuma Izom, Yahuza (2023), evaluated security challenges in connection with the survival of democracy in Nigeria, focusing specifically on the Niger East Senatorial District. Data drawn from study participants' district revealed that severe security issues such as Boko Haram, kidnapping, and Fulani cattle rustlers, are threatening the survival of democracy in Nigeria, particularly in the Niger East senatorial district. It was recommended that government deploy sufficient personnel to ensure public safety and address issues related to diversity, mistrust, and the need for unity. Although the study took a broader perspective as it focused on the issue of kidnapping which is part of national security, specific premium was not placed on the security of national assets domiciled in Niger state.

From the various literature reviewed in this paper, the following assessment can be deduced:

- i) The findings of the paper reveal severe existence of security challenges, posing a significant risk to the survival of democracy in Nigeria and further prove that there existed in the country Boko Haram insurgency, Fulani Cattle Rustlers especially in northern Nigeria, kidnapping, among others.
- ii) The paper revealed that significant rise in crime wave and police ineffectiveness were major factors for introduction of community policing. The researches further revealed a strong and significant statistical relationship

between community policing and crime rates.

- iii) The paper found that, community-policing through the activities of the Vigilante Group to some extent reduced the rate of crime in the selected communities and that, cooperating with vigilante group in the communities can secure the environment against criminal activities.
- iv) Findings from the paper revealed that security challenges halt development of rural communities. It also revealed that poverty, illiteracy, antagonism, aggression, ethnicity, politics, and religion are among the factors contributing to security challenges in Nigeria.

2.4 Conclusion

The study dwelt on policing and its linkage with national security. This review has identified security challenges, increase in crime wave and much needs to be done as regards to increase in the number of security personnel (police) from studies carried out by other scholars. The policing agencies require collaboration, coordination and strong relationships with neighbouring communities they serve for effective fight against crime. The recommendations are made on this basis.

2.5 Recommendations

The study recommends the followings:

- i. The introduction of community policing system throughout the states by incorporating the vigilante groups and community dwellers in policing.
- ii. Improvement in the effectiveness of the Police and synergy between policing agencies in ensuring enhanced national security.

The implementation of these recommendations can further secure the environment against criminal activities.

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