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## The Nigeria Police and Management of Internal Security in Nigeria

By  
Onyemekihian Jude, PhD

### Abstract

Over the years, the relative peace that placed Nigeria among the more secure nations in the West African sub-region has been eroded and the country has suddenly metamorphosed into an abode of serial bombings, hostage-taking, kidnapping, armed robbery, cold-blooded murders and ethno-religious conflicts. The increasing nature of the indices of insecurity in the country is not only disturbing but also questions the effectiveness of the Nigerian security architecture, especially that of the Nigerian Police which is primarily saddled with the responsibility of providing security to the people. This has led to a series of debates and arguments on how best to reform the Nigerian Police in order to reposition it to meet the new wave of security challenges confronting the country. It is against this backdrop with the help of secondary data, this paper attempts a discussion on the level of performance of the Nigerian Police in the management of internal security in the wake of the challenge for the struggle for sustainable peace and the safety of lives and properties in the country. The paper utilized two theories in explaining this work, system theory and human security theory. The paper revealed that the performance of the police, especially with regard to civil relations, is significantly influenced by the colonial legacy of its establishment. Also, that the security agency (the police) is highly centralized making it difficult for swift and dynamic decision-making needed to confront the trajectories of conflict and security challenges. The paper further identified number of challenges hindering the effectiveness of the Nigerian Police which include manpower shortage and elite policing, poor public perception, the issue of politicization, and overly centralized and non-meritocratic leadership. It was however recommended amongst others that there should be adequate funding of the Nigerian police by government at all levels and that government should upgrade the police academy to be more technical for effective internal security management.

**Keywords:** Nigerian Police, Management, Internal Security

### Introduction

The existence of any society and its ability to exploit its natural recourses to the benefit of the generality of the people depends essentially on the amount of security that can be provided for the citizenry. Security has to do with the freedom from danger, fear, anxiety or uncertainty. It is the condition of being protected or not being exposed to danger. A secured state is one that is reasonably free from or not exposed to external and internal sabotage". (Imobighe, 2003).

Every society has its own deviants, persons whose behaviour do not generally conform to the normal accepted norms of the society. Such people constitute security problem to the society. In the pre-colonial situation, every society had a way or devised means of not only policing such people to make them adhere to the basic

norms of the society but also had ways of effecting retribution for such acts. Centuries ago, crime or criminal behaviour was believed to be the result of evil spirits and demons. But now crime is an accepted aspect of society and not peculiar to any society for that matter.

In the colonial period, crime became rampant mainly because of the people's reaction to colonialism law and order, could the colonial government thought it necessary to form a modern police system. This led to a series of events that finally saw the emergence of the Nigeria Police Force. The history of the Nigeria Police Force started when the British began to have firm grip on the affairs of the local people particularly in Lagos, from where they started their operation. Following the annexation of Lagos by the British on 6<sup>th</sup> of August, 1861, the first acting Governor, McCoskry decided to establish "A Police Force" to enable him carryout his consular assignments. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of August 1862, Mr. H.S. Freeman took over a Governor from McCoskry and inherited twenty five constables who were then called "Consular guards" (Tamuno, 1970). He later raised the strength to one hundred and thirteen (113) men comprising a superintendent, four sergeants, eight corporals and one hundred constables. And in February 1863, the colonial office in London authorized him to raise an Armed Police Force of one hundred policemen (mainly Hausas) as part of the Colonial Internal Defense Force. The number rose to one thousand two hundred officers and men in 1866. There was therefore a "Civil Police Force" and an "Armed Police Force" which performed semi-military duties. However, in 1879, these two forces were merged into a constabulary force under the Gold Coast Constabulary, Ordinance No.3 of 1879.

In 1893, the Oil River Protectorate was proclaimed the "Niger Coast Protectorate" and for this reason, the Oil River Constabulary was renamed the "Niger Coast Constabulary in 1894. The Niger Coast Protectorate was later declared the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1900 and by the police proclamation No.4 of 1902, Consul Moor renamed the force as "Southern Nigeria Police" with its Headquarters in Calabar. However, with the amalgamation of Southern Nigeria and the Protectorate of Lagos in 1906, there occurred another reorganization of the force and the capital was moved from Calabar to Lagos. The new force was headed by an Inspector General of Police who was assisted by Commissioners and Assistant Commissioner.

Similarly, the Northern part of the country was also experiencing changes and development of its police force. Following the granting of the Royal Charter to the Royal Niger Company, the Royal Niger constabulary was established with its headquarters in Lokoja. However, in 1900 when Sir Fredrick Lugard proclaimed the protectorate of Northern Nigeria, he formed a Civil Police Force and it became known as the Northern Nigeria Police (Tamuno, 1970). The Southern and the Northern Nigeria Police were amalgamated in 1914, but inspite of this historical development, each part maintained a separate force until 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1930 when the two police forces were merged into what came to be known as the Nigeria Police Force under the control of an Inspector General of Police, assisted by a Deputy Inspector General of Police and two assistant Inspectors General of Police, with Lagos as the force Headquarters. What we have as a Unified Police Force since Independence was

established in line with the 1954 constitution which made Federal and Regional Governments jointly responsible for the maintenance of law and order in their respective areas of jurisdiction. When the country attained a Republican Status on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1963 and with the creation of Mid-West from the Western Region, the force came under five command of levels of Lagos, Northern Region, Western Region, Eastern Region and Mid-West Region with each having a Commissioner of Police and the Inspector General of Police as the overall head of the force at the force headquarters in Lagos.

The statutory functions of the police can be broken into the following components.

- The prevention and detection of crime.
- The apprehension of offenders.
- The protection of life and properties.
- The maintenance of public order and safety.
- The enforcement of all laws and regulation.
- The performance of such military duties within and outside Nigeria as may be required of them. (Police Act, 1990).

The police in contemporary Nigeria are faced with enormous challenges in the discharge of its statutory responsibilities, and this to a very large extent affects its ability to provide impressive and adequate security coverage for the ordinary man in the society. The police in Nigeria is used more as a tool of Government for the provision of security for the regime and as an instrument of coercion than providing a safe and secured environment to live in and do legitimate business (Police Act, 1990). In most cases the various regimes in the country have used the police and indeed the country's security enforcement agencies more as instruments for coercion and terrorizing the people than for protecting and promoting good for the benefit of all." He went ahead to say that, "during the colonial era, for instance, the Nigeria Police Force officered and commanded by the British, operated as a Paramilitary Organization to enforce and perpetuate an alien rule. It is therefore obvious that identifying with the interest and plight of the generality of the Nigerian people was not in the real sense part of the mission of the Nigeria Police when it was set up, and it remained so at independence. Instead of dropping this colonial toga, successive post-colonial regimes simply allowed the police to dress in this oppressive toga for the promotion of their selfish interest. Thus, sixty (60) years after independence, the police is still in the hands of the executive to be used as it chooses. Odekunle, (2004) in his words, "The police simply succumb to its fate for the purpose of job security since the price for resisting executive pressure could mean the loss of job". Therefore, among others the paper attempts to examine the internal security management by the Nigerian Police.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are, to:

- examine the level the management of internal security by the Nigerian Police Force.

- evaluate the level of funding as a major cause of poor management of internal security.
- examine the synergistic relationship between the Nigeria police Force and the Police Community in the management of internal security.
- evaluate the belief that anti-people interest for formation of Nigerian Police Force has affected its performance.

## **Conceptual Clarification**

### **Crime**

Crime is a social problem that is as old as man and cut across societies. Crime is an act done in violation of those duties an individual owes to his community and for the breach of which the law provided that the offender shall make satisfaction to the public. (The Black's Law Dictionary, 2009) expatiates further that, a crime or public offence is an act committed in violation of law forbidding or commanding it, to which it is annexed upon conviction either a combination following; death, imprisonment, fine, removal from office, disqualification to hold and enjoy any office of honour, trust or profit" (Henry, 1979).

### **The Police**

The police refers to the Government department charged with the preservation of public order, and the prevention and detection of crime. (The Black's Law Dictionary, 2009). It equally explain police officer as a member of the force. The Black's Law Dictionary further describes a Police Officer as a peace officer responsible for preserving public order, promoting public safety and preventing and detecting crime.

### **Policing**

This involves coercive and ideological regimentation of social life, through the activities of the police and sundry state intelligence security forces and through other measures at detecting and suppressing behaviour, actions and orientation that threatens the prevailing social order. (Okoigun, 2000)

### **Security**

The word security has many meanings depending on the context in which it is being used and the orientation of the author. Security is freedom from, or elimination of threat, not only to the physical existence of the state, but also to its ability to protect the generality of its citizenry and provide a congenial environment for their development and enhancement of their general well-being. Imobighe, 2003). While considering what constitutes security, South African White Paper on Defence (1996) sees security is an all-encompassing condition in which individual citizen live in freedom, peace and safety, participate fully in the process of governance. Enjoy the protection of fundamental right, have access to resource and the basic necessities of life, and inhabit an environment which is not determined to their health and will being. This definition presents that security cut across all human existence.

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## Management

This can be seen as the activities of setting the strategy of an organization and coordinating the efforts of its employees (or of volunteers) to accomplish its objectives through the application of available resources, such as financial, natural, technological, and human resources. (Okwori, 1995)

## Theoretical Framework

Two theories are adopted in this paper to mirror the Nigerian Police in the management of internal security in Nigeria, namely, system theory and human security theory. The system theory as advanced by David Easton (1953) and his proponents was interested in finding out the working of mechanism of a set of goals attainment. He assumed that all existing political units interact with one another in some regular and observable pattern of behaviour or relationship. Hence we speak of human being circulatory system in which the parts or sub-systems viz: the veins, arteries, organs and cells must work properly in the larger body system to make the body perform optimally. Any malfunction of any part or organs of the body must destabilize other sub system which may require administration of drugs to bring the body system to order. System theory aids in determining a political system's capacity for maintaining its equilibrium in the face of stress and for adapting to changes that are forced internally and externally.

The system theory is adopted as the framework of analysis, therefore seeing the Nigeria Police Force as a sub system in the entire Nigeria Political System. Be that as it may, the malfunction or ineffectiveness observed in certain aspect of the Nigeria Police Force occasioned by lack of cooperation from members of the public, poor funding and corruption could lead to the malfunction of the entire Nigeria Political System.

Emphatically, for the Nigeria Police to perform optimally to the satisfaction of members of the public, cooperation must flow from the public, the government and other sub-units that make up the Nigeria socio-political and cultural system. This theory emphasized that real systems are open to, and interact with, their environments, and that they can acquire qualitatively new properties through emergence, resulting in continual evolution, rather than reducing an entity. (Akpotor, 2000)

Another theory that is useful to this work, the Nigerian Police and the Management of Internal Security, is Human Security Theory. Human security theory was propounded by N. Jorge (CHS) in its final report in New York on Human Security units in United Nation.

Human Security theory is the theory that speak on the protection of the vital core of all human lives that enhances freedoms and human fulfillment. It emphasises moving away from traditional, state-centric conceptions of security that focused primarily on the safety of states from military aggression, to one that concentrates on the security of the individuals, their protection and empowerment. Human Security Theory demands the creation of political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give the people building blocks of survival,

livelihood and dignity. Human Security Theory (HST) is a theory that has a comprehensive approach that utilizes the wide range of new opportunities to tackle such threats in an integrated manner, because conventional mechanisms alone cannot be used. It acknowledges the linkages and the interdependencies between development, human rights and national security.

Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms, freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situation which affects internal insecurity. The theory focuses on the root causes of insecurity and advance people-centred solutions that are locally driven, comprehensive and sustainable. (Jorge, 2003).

### **The History/Emergence of the Nigeria Police**

The establishment of today's Nigeria police came as a result of 30-person consular guard under the authority of the then governor of British West Africa in October 1861. In 1861 governor of Lagos colony, McCoskry, organised and established the nucleus of the first police force- Hausa constabulary of 30 men (Tamuno, 1970; the Nigerian police, 1981). This formation marked the beginnings of the first modern police in the history of Lagos. It was also the first modern police force in the territories later designated Nigeria by the British (Tamuno, 1970). In 1879 there was the establishment of the constabulary of Lagos colony, with the appointment of the first commissioner of police in 1896. There come the royal Niger constabulary in 1886 which was established by the royal Niger Company for the northern territories. The British colonialist established the police institution for the purpose of advancing the European colonial commercial and strategic interests against the natives especially in the colony and the protectorates (Odikalu, 2004). Allure (1991) argue that the emerging ruling class in colonial Nigeria was a foreign and illegitimate one which sought to dominate and exploits the indigenous people in the interests of its own metropolitan (British) economy. The effort of this foreign ruling class to subdue the indigenous people and to impose a careful surveillance over them in order to forestall any popular resection created an obsession with the policing of public order. By 1900 the royal Niger constabulary spitted into two groups, the northern Nigeria police force for the colony and police force and regiment for the protectorate. The force of the colony later emerged with the southern Nigeria police force. 1914 amalgamation had two different police formation for both Northern and Southern Nigeria. In 1930, colonial government established Nigeria Police force headed by an Inspector-General. However, regionalization of police formations remained (Odikalu, 2004).

Furthermore, Section 4 of the police acts of 1967 explains the functions of the Nigerian Police as "the police shall be employed for the prevention and detection of crime, the apprehension of offenders, preservation of law and order, the protection of life and property and the due enforcement of all laws and regulations with which they are directly charged and shall perform such military duties within or outside Nigeria as may be required of them by, or under the authority of this or any other act". Aina (2014) postulate that the duties are stationary and the police owe these duties to the generality of Nigerians and all other persons lawfully living within Nigeria. They

are therefore answerable to the law in performance of their duties. The question then is does Nigeria police perform this duties effectively and effectively as they ought to. Majority of Nigerians are of the opinion that police performance has being below good commendation. What does effectiveness and efficiency mean to police work? Effectiveness means task performance.

Effective organisations are those which meet challenges put to them and satisfy demands for services or solve problems. Also, Efficiency is defined in terms of processing costs. Efficient organisations are those which convert inputs into outputs with less organisational efforts. Efficient organisation gives us more for our money. Etzioni (1964) explain that efficiency is a concept by which we assess the processing activity of organisation, how they go about facing problems, while effectiveness is a concept which denotes their goal matching, their ability to solve substantive problems. Odekunle (2004) posited that effectiveness is the ability of the force to successfully perform its assigned tasks; and by efficiency it is the capacity to perform its functions with the least amount of "waste", in terms of time, material, personnel public good will, and lives. Therefore, efficient police is the one that achieve a level of input- output conversion with less effort on the part of the organisation: fewer men, less equipment, or lower expenditures (Skogan, 1976). In lieu of these, the importance of policing the society and the people's perception of the government which the police represent cannot be overestimated. Odekunle (2004) gives three points that when considered, it will make it becomes clearer.

- Policemen are the government officials most proximate to crime, temporarily and procedurally, and the leading figures in crime prevention or control and in the law enforcement process.
- Policemen's honesty, integrity and observations of procedural laws in handling offenders and non-offenders have deep implications for the citizens' perceptions: fairness and justice and for the degree of respect the average citizen has for the law;
- Being highly visible (compared to courts or prisons) and being the primary or main government authority legally authorized to use force on citizens, policemen's behaviour affect the citizen's opinion about their government.

### **Sources of Insecurity in Nigeria**

Poverty has been identified as one of the factors that have contributed to the rate of insecurity in the country. Aigbakhon (2008) define poverty as a state of long-term deprivation of wellbeing, a situation considered inadequate for decent living. Decent living in this context can be narrow down to mean access to things like qualitative education, safe drinking water, affordable health care and sanitary facilities, nutrition, shelter and clothing. Katsina submit that poverty is a situation where majority members of a country lack access to these indices that make their life distinguishable from that of animals. Poverty is a complex phenomenon with multi-dimensional facts. It is a dynamic process of socio-economic, political or other form of deprivations, which affects the individuals, households, or societies and usually brings back lack of access to basic and elementary requirements of human survival.

Adegba, Ugwu & Eme (2012) in Achumba et al (2013) aver that outcome of high level of unemployment and poverty among Nigerians, especially the youths, adversely attracted violent crime. Nwagboso (2012) in the same vein argued that failure of successive administration in Nigeria to address challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequitable distribution of wealth among ethnic nationalities is one the major causes of insecurity in the country. Poverty and unemployment are like Siamese twins. They give support to each other. In Nigeria, unemployment is one of the most enduring social problems (Aigbakhon, 2010). Katsina (2012) argues that employment means the number of people working for wages in cash or kind in public and private enterprises. This includes those that are gainfully employed or engaged. The above stated differences or categories of unemployment can be found in large quantity in Nigeria, this can be blamed upon the government in ability to equip its people with requisite skills that will help them get employment and also the creation of necessary environment for meaningful employment opportunities. The effect of these on Nigeria securities are beyond what we can cover in this paper.

As the saying goes that "the idle hand is the devils workshop". It is a fact that people that are daily recruited by the Boko Haram terrorist group to unleash mayhem on the nation are crop of youths who are not gainfully unemployed vis-a-vis other criminal activities that pose threat to national security. All of these can be directly or in directly link with unemployment situation in the country. For these people to meet up with their demand for livelihood, they resort into illegitimate means. And once they have tasted the handsome reward that come from such illicit engagement to stop it then become a problem. Looking at the age range of those that engage in criminal activities in Nigeria one will see that they are between the ages of 21-40 or there about these is the most productive segment of Nigeria populations. El-Rufai (2011) posits that the labour market is ever expanding with about 3 million people joining annually. Then, if 1 per cent of this group resort into series of criminal activities every year as a result of unemployment will we see that in no distance time Nigeria will be inhabitable and the fact that police inability to contain crime will be out question Border is a boundary that exists between one or more countries and the other or other areas.

The border in Nigeria with other neighbouring countries has been categorised as being porous. It stands as a major boost for the influx of criminal activities into the country which overtime has continued to engender instability and insecurity within the country. Hardly can the one identify any violence or criminal acts that are not directly or indirectly link with the easy way in which armed gangs move in and out of the country. It has been reported overtime that the loose nature of Nigeria border at the north-east region contribute largely to the success of the operation of Boko Haram terrorist group in Nigeria.

### **The Challenges of Nigerian Police towards Effective Performance**

Taking into account the amount of quality protections provided by the Nigeria police for the entire population and the level of confidence and encouragement it enjoys from these people, one cannot but conclude that the Nigeria police performance is far below the expectation many people place on them. There

are several cumulative problems that contribute to the abysmal performance of the Nigeria police. This ranges from material to human and external challenges. Widespread of corruption among the members of the Nigeria police is alarming. This has greatly soiled the image of the police. Alemika (1999) postulated that the police corruption is a serious issue because they are expected to be moral as law enforcement agency.

The issue of police corruption is an undeniable fact with several evidence of their involvement. These among many others are; police connivance with some individuals to help offenders out of police custody after obtaining money from suspects, closure of case files, escorting vehicles loaded with contraband goods and stolen items, stealing from suspects and or accident victims, stealing from crime scenes, supply of police arms and ammunition with police uniforms to criminals for monetary gain etc. Olurotimi (2012). Corrupt and indiscipline socio-economic environment among others are some of the poor salaries.

Furthermore, Odekunle (2004) gave some categories of obstacle that hinder the optimum performance of the Nigeria police thus; Poor police remuneration for both officers and men of police command is another notable factor that has created abysmal performance for police officers in performing their constitutional duties. The issue of police corruption as discussed above does not only occur between the police and the public but also with the strata of police structure. There have being cases whereby senior police officers have deprived other officers especially junior once the right of increment in salary for some time. These people have being alleged to have stacked the money in a fixed deposit out which will yield some interest for them before releasing it fund. Odekunle (2004) argue that the Nigeria police has human problems that not only aggravate its material in sufficiency's, but one also of tremendous adverse import on its general performance from day to day among them is discouraging salaries.

It has been noted that the Nigeria police lack adequate equipment and ammunition that can help in assisting them combating crimes in the society. Abdulkadir (2004) argue that the Nigeria police force lack adequate communication gadgets, vehicles, computers and patrol boats.

### **Challenges of Internal Security Management**

From the mid seventies, Nigeria has been experiencing a phenomenal rise in violent crimes such as murder, armed robbery, burglary, stealing and kidnapping. Criminals are becoming sophisticated in the act of criminality. Cases of armed robbery, kidnapping and car snatching occur in our cities frequently In Edo State, particularly the metropolitan City of Benin. Ekpoma, Auchu and Uromi cases of armed robbery. Bank robbery, car snatching and of recent kidnapping occur frequently leading to a general sense of insecurity among members of the public. The problem of insecurity is further compounded by the lackluster attitude of government in addressing the root cause of crime in the country.

Governments at all levels adopt more of punitive approach to the management of internal security by setting up task forces to deal with the situation rather than dealing with the root causes of crime problem. Government believes more

in traditional or orthodox approach in dealing with internal security problem by resorting to the use of the Military and other Para-Military agencies to constitute task forces to ensure internal security, and at the end internal conflicts, violent or non violent are invariably resolved by the use of force. An integrated security system, the security of the home land becomes the combined function of all the stakeholders in the society and not just the duty of government instruments of security. It involves the government and its security agencies on joining forces with the people, youth movements, vigilante, militants, clerics, traditional rulers, elders and other non — governmental bodies to ensure the peace and security of the nation. Presently there are no reliable programmes and policies by governments for the systematic empowerment of youths and young — graduates after their National Youth Service programme.

Government does not need to wait for crisis before drawing out plans for the engagement of youths and young school leavers as a way of addressing insecurity in the society. For instance, the violence and restiveness in the Niger Delta has greatly abated as result of the Federal Government Amnesty programme that brought about the empowerment and engagement of the youths in many productive areas of the economy of the region some of these youths were sent abroad to learn vocations that are relevant to the economics of the area and this to a very large extent has diverted their attention away from anti social activities. The crisis in the Niger Delta could have been averted if the present programme of engaging the youth in productive ventures both in and outside the country had been put in place years back.

The Police is presently faced with enormous challenges in its efforts to address the security concerns of the people of Edo State which is the focus of this study. Some of the major challenges besetting police operations are discussed hereunder.

### Conclusion

Although, the Nigerian state is being challenged by internal security management, the problem of crime is a worldwide phenomenon that government all over the world have been fighting to either eradicate completely or reduced to a tolerable level. Nigeria has been contending with a phenomenal rise in violent crimes such as murder, armed robbery, burglary and stealing and of recent kidnapping.

The history of the Nigerian Police Force and Policing in the country as seen from the nature of the economic system, obviously the police force is faced with a myriad of problems since the colonial era. These problems are in the area of accountability, effectiveness and efficiency in the detection, prevention and control of crime, apprehension and prosecution of offenders, scrupulous observance of the rule of law and concern for the general welfare of the citizens it protects. Also, the importance of police as either facilitators or inhibitors of pro-poor change initiative is largely dependent on the nature of the inherent society or economic system. The Nigerian Police Force is seen as a reflection of the Nigerian state and this explains why measures in fighting crime often fail. This calls for a restructuring of the force to instil positive values in order to ensure effective service delivery on the part of the police force.

### Recommendations

From all indications, the Police have the potential to do better in handling internal security matters. The following steps are therefore recommended to strengthen the Police in dealing with the challenge of internal security.

- The entry qualification of recruit constable should be up graded in order to enhance the quality of our Police men. This basically has to do with the nation's educational system that has been deteriorating over the years. Most school leavers are products and beneficiary of examination malpractices.
- Training and retaining is an important aspect of human development. Training has the capacity of improving the perception and understanding of the individual. Training should be given priority attention in the Nigerian police for effective and efficient performance.
- Adequate funding of the Nigerian police by government at all levels.
- Government should upgrade the police academy to be more technical for effective internal security management
- It is also very important that all Police station should be allocated with serviceable vehicles for easy movement to crime scenes and quick response to distress calls. A situation whereby Police cannot respond to distress calls due to lack of vehicles.
- The welfare of the Police and motivation should not be seen and treated as a political issue.
- Government should partner with GSM service providers for crime related information for Nigerian Police to aid the internal security management.

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