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## **SURVEY OF DENTRALIZATION OF POLICE SYSTEM AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The rising spate of insecurity in Nigeria occasioned by incessant killings, kidnappings, cultism, terrorism, armed banditry and police brutality is a reason for the decentralization of police system in Nigeria. Hence, this paper assessed the decentralization of police system and police as panacea for insecurity in Nigeria. The study applied quantitative and qualitative methods; data was obtained from primary and secondary sources. The quantitative data was obtained through administration of 388 questionnaires to the respondents in Borno, Yobe, Benue, Plateau, Lagos and Ogun States representing the 36 states of Nigeria by applying purposive sampling techniques. Findings showed that 208 (53.6%) of the respondents were male while 180 (46.4%) of the respondents were female 235 (60.5%) of the respondents agreed that Decentralizing police system is the panacea to insecurity in Nigeria while 153 (39.4%) disagreed that Decentralizing police system is the panacea to insecurity in Nigeria. The paper recommends decentralization of police system with strict supervision and control of the state governors. This study will be of immense benefits to all tiers of government Nigeria Police Force and the researchers in the field of security and public administration*

**Keywords:** *Decentralization, Police-operation, Capability, Insecurity, Nigeria,*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The Nigeria police Force plays a crucial role in sustaining democratic governance. The development of a nation is reflected by the capability and

combat-readiness of its police. Before the creation of the Nigeria Police Force in 1820, there are a number of constituents units with its autonomous police structure (Obirisagbon & Omagie ,2018).This is attested to by the creation of Lagos Police, in 1930, the Calabar Police and Niger Police, Northern Police. The Nigeria Police Force came to being as a result of the amalgamation of these autonomous units. There is a daily increase in human population of the country and the staff strength of the Nigeria Police Force remains either static or decreasing on the ground of retirement, death while in service, and frequent dismissal.

The current insecurity situation in the country like terrorism, kidnapping, armed-robbery and terrorism is worrisome. Boko Haram terrorists have virtually taken taking over some local government areas in the North-East. Kidnapping is on the increase in the South-West whole herdsmen and armed bandits have made the North-Central insecure and have inflicted hardship on the people.

Decentralization of police system is not new in the global policing. Mexico, United State of America, Canada, Germany, India and Spain have effective decentralized police system. Some people have criticized decentralization of police system and argued that state governors would use it as instrument of oppression and suppression. These arguments have some dependable validity based on some tested hypothesis on abuse of fundamental human rights in the Nigerian states. The reality on the ground is that Nigeria has serious security issues and the Nigeria police that is the principal law enforcement agency is overwhelmed. Hence, this paper assessed that decentralization of police system and police-operational capability is a solution to insecurity challenges in Nigeria. The study was guided by the major research question what are the roles of decentralization of police system on police operational capability in strengthening internal security.

## **CONCEPTUALIZING INSECURITY**

Insecurity is just the opposite of what we have as security. Insecurity like security is often used in a number of ways. Many people would take it to mean lack of safety or the existence of danger; hazard; uncertainty; lack of trust; doubtful; inadequately guarded or protected; lack of stability; disturbed; lack of protection and unsafe (Achumba et al, 2013). Adebajoko & Uguoke (2014)

opine that insecurity is the state of being subject in every respect to terror, threat, risk, molestation, bullying, and harassment.

According to Nwagboso (2012) insecurity is the danger that entrepreneurs and executives of business organizations exercise by relocating their business ventures from an insecure environment to a more secure one. This view is applicable to Igbo and Yoruba business men who relocated to their native lands in the wake of Boko Haram Insurgency, Suileman, (2012), as cited in Adegbami (2013). The view is also applicable to many manufacturing companies that relocated from the Northeast geo-political zone of Nigeria to other countries due to the high level of insecurity occasioned by the Boko Haram Insurgency (Ajodo-Adebanjo and Okorie, 2014).

For Achumba et al. (2013), insecurity is an absence of protection or safety. These scholars argue further that insecurity entails peril; deathtrap; ambiguity; dearth of fortification, and lack of security. They also discuss the problem of insecurity from the following two major perspectives:

Firstly, insecurity is the state of being prone or vulnerable to danger or threat of danger. In this situation, the tendency of experiencing hurt based on insufficient measures against danger is very bright.

Secondly. Insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety. The exposure could be as a result of inadequate measures against insecurity by the state or by a group of people. This usually happens when the law enforcement agents are poorly educated, trained, remunerated and motivated. It could also occur when peoples' basic necessities of life are lacking.

Similarly, (Beland, 2005) views the concept of insecurity as a state of fear or anxiety, due to absence of protection. Also, Ezemonye (2011), cited in Udoh (2015) sees the concept as a state of not being secured, in certain environments (Adegbami, 2013) while Ajodo-Adebanjo and Okorie (2014) view insecurity as a state of being subject to danger or threat. Under this scenario, people state of mind concerning safety could be categorized by self-doubt and defenselessness and such persons could consider themselves targets for harm.

Achumba, Ighomereho & Akpor-Robaro (2013) view it as want of safety, danger, hazard, uncertainty, want of confidence, state of doubt, inadequately guarded or protected, instability, trouble, lack of protection and being unsafe. According to Bavier, a writer who is a frequent visitor to the northern region told CNN that the Federal government has completely lost control of the north-

east, despite deploying thousands of troops and establishing a Joint Task Force. Now, he says, it looks like this insurgency has broken out of the north-east". And what's worrying, he says, is that there's "not a whole lot of visible effort from the federal government to calm things down (Lister, 2012:14).

Under normal situation, it is one of the roles of the state to ensure adequate safety of lives and property and to also make adequate provision for necessities of life, but such vital roles can only be successfully carried out under effective and efficient leaders. Thus, an insecure society could be said to have its political and social control institution malfunctioning which could also cause disequilibrium in other institutions in the society.

## **FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR INTERNAL INSECURITY IN NIGERIA**

Insecurity apart from being the fear of every Nigerian has become the word on the lips of every Nigeria and a discussion topic where two of three Nigerians gather. This phenomenon is a state of being subject to danger or injury. It is the anxiety one experience when one feels vulnerable and insecure. Several armed groups, ethnic militia groups, religious fundamentalist and fanatics, are evidence of insecurity in Nigeria. These have given birth to series of bombings, murder, arson, armed robbery, corruption, injustices. It is clear that happenings are negatively affecting Nigeria politically, religiously and culturally. Religious organizations and other humanitarian agencies are losing confidence on the law enforcement agencies (Udoh, (2015).

There is no doubt that Nigeria has great potential for greatness, particularly with its large population consisting of a dynamic workforce, a growing economy, abundant natural resources, diverse raw materials, huge oil reserves, and intellectual reservoirs. Despite these aspects of greatness, Nigeria continues to be a developing country struggling the most frantically to find its feet among the nations' committees due, among other factors, to the prevalent insurgency and insecurity that have continued to present a challenge to its development and growth. Nweze (2004) cited in (Zubairu, 2020) pointed out some factors responsible for insecurity in Nigeria as follows:

### **The Menace of Unemployment and Poverty.**

It is a fact that unemployment causes poverty and extreme poverty leads to a crime that gives rise to insecurity. Aliyu (1998) characterized poverty as a situation in which people live below a defined standard of living income so that

individuals and nations are classified and identified as poor. While unemployment is defined as when people are not engaged in meaningful work and are lacking the basic needs of life. Every year, tertiary institutions graduated many students who have been unfortunately thrown into the labor market with no hope for job opportunities in sight. Many become frustrated in an effort to keep mind and body together and engage in violent and criminal acts such as lucrative kidnapping, militancy, and armed robbery. Others have been terrorists' victims and are quickly radicalized. Nwagbosa (2012) believes that past governments have failed to put in place actions that will reduce unemployment and poverty rates, which have been the major causes of insecurity in Nigeria.

### **Elite exploitation of Ethnicity and Religious Differences**

It is worth bearing in mind that the country's diverse ethnic make-up is not itself a cause of insecurity in Nigeria; however, political and religious leaders across the nation sometimes use ethnic sentiments to achieve their selfish ambitions. Throughout this way, the elites exploit people's minds to stir up mistrust and resentment among different ethnic groups and among the country's major religions that cause Nigeria's insecurity. In a multi-ethnic country like Nigeria, the relationship should be cordial, without reciprocal distrust, fear, and a propensity to a violent confrontation between members of one ethnic or religious group and another of that ethnicity or religious group. Adagba, et al, (2012); Achumba, et al, (2013), similarly asserted that control of scarce resources, fuel, land, economies, traditional and political offices resulted in mass killings and property destruction communities in various parts of the country. Nigeria's various ethnic groups also draw attention to neglect, racism, dominance, abuse, victimization, injustice, marginalization, nepotism, and intolerance. This often results in ethnic violence and religious conflicts.

### **Corruption**

Nonetheless, corruption was largely responsible for government failure and systemic infrastructure collapse, resulting in large-scale insecurity in Nigeria. The state of insecurity in Nigeria is unquestionably a result of government failure, traceable to widespread corruption. Corruption is poor not because money and profits change hands in an unequal way, and not because of participants' motives, but because it privatizes facets of public life, bypassing representation, discussion and choice processes. Corruption is responsible for

Nigeria's massive unemployment. It is the reason Nigerian youth and businessmen lack electricity to run their businesses. It is the reason many businesses fail. Unemployment and deprivation are the two main causes of Nigeria's insecurity. By creating unemployment and poverty, corruption leads to instability in Nigeria.

According to Charas, (2014) Past governments, both Military and Democratic, had attempted to focus attention on good governance, prudence, transparency, and accountability through a variety of means, including the creation of the Murtala Mohammed Administration Code of Conduct in 1975, the Ethical Revolution of Shehu Shagari Civil Administration in 1979, the War Against Indiscipline and the Corruption of General Muhammadu in 1984 General Ibrahim Babangida's mass mobilization for self-reliance, social justice and economic recovery in 1985, General Sani Abacha's Failed Banks Tribunal in 1994, Olusegun Obasanjo's Anti-Corruption Act in 2000.

### **Weak security apparatus**

Nigeria's security system is seen as very poor in both personnel and equipment. Security officers are poorly and poorly trained and poorly remunerated. As a result, the requisite expertise is not available to meet modern security challenges. The contribution of the security personnel to the Nigerian project of ensuring general safety is equally of serious concern. This weak security system can be due to a number of factors including corruption, insufficient police, and other security agencies funding, lack of modern equipment, poor safety personnel health, and inadequate staff. Nigeria is largely under police jurisdiction and this partially explains the Nigerian Police Force's failure to effectively tackle the country's crimes, corruption, and insecurity. Olorisakin (2008) asserts that the police population ratio in Nigeria is 1:450 which falls below the United Nations standard. This implies that as a country, Nigeria is grossly under-policed and this perhaps explains the police inability to effectively tackle crimes and security challenges.

Many of the soldiers fighting the insurgency in the northeast of the country have been ambushed on some occasions and many have been killed by the rebels at Boko Haram as a result of information leaked to them by those who were supposed to fight them. Again huge sums of money made available for the acquisition of weapons were embezzled and misappropriated or outdated equipment purchased and the offenders were not punished appropriately. The

lack of cooperation between the Security Agencies is also noted. The case of some soldiers who killed three police officers in Taraba State and injured others, who had an official duty to apprehend a kidnapping kingpin not long ago, and also a soldier who shot a Mopol in Maiduguri demonstrated the weak security framework in Nigeria further.

### **Porous border**

The country's unstable frontiers, where human movements are essentially untracked, have led to Nigeria's level of insecurity. There is an unregulated inflow of Small Arms and Light Weapons into the country as a result of the porous borders which has enabled militancy and crime in Nigeria. Edeko (2011) has reported that Nigeria hosts over 70% of about 8 million illegal weapons that have been used to create a security crisis. In addition, the porous condition of both the Nigerian borders has contributed the uncontrollable influx of migrants, predominantly young people, from nearby countries such as the Republic of Niger, Chad and Benin accountable for some of the insecurity promoting criminal activities in Nigeria,(Adeola and Olayemi, 2012).

### **Marginalization and Inequalities in the Country**

Nigeria's current government has been strongly charged with ethnic disparity, and the marginalization of some sections of the country in the provision of basic infrastructure, and these have significantly compounded Nigeria's security (Nwadiolor, 2011). Currently, key political positions were given to people from Northern extraction while the South-East was left in the cold. That may explain the agitation for the Biafra Republic and Shi'a strongly known as the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) and several breaches of security this followed the agitation. Besides, it is quite clear that Nigeria's life chances are extremely disparate. Vast majorities of the public have a sense of deprivation, oppression, marginalization, and this has resulted in dissatisfaction and loss of hope, particularly among the youth. Such young people are now voicing their disillusionment with the state of affairs by any means possible, whether legal or illegal. The consequence of this is growing uncertainty (Onuoha, 2011).

### **Bad governance and poor Leadership**

That fact remains Nigeria's fundamental cause of insecurity from the past till now. Any government anywhere has the primary function of providing basic services such as water, electricity, good road network, quality education, and general infrastructure. Ironically, these basic things are not there in Nigeria and the people, in general, are Frustrated and demoralized. Demoralization and anger logically provide a strong fertile ground for aggression and general insecurity. The scarcity of these basic amenities in Nigeria is embarrassingly not due to a shortage of funds but rather to corruption at the highest level of leadership structure. A reality articulated by Hazen and Horner (2007), of a wealthy nation with poor people in the majority. It is therefore an enormous task to take responsibility for giving leadership direction in such communities or societies in a multi-ethnic and religious society like Nigeria, given the current scenario of the democratic politics in which the nation has been located. To this end, believing that weak leadership, has added more challenges to the uncertainty and causes of insecurity not just in the north but also in Nigeria in general, might not be an unfounded statement According to Charas, Mbaya, and Liberty (2014), a number of violent cultures such as thuggery, indiscipline, corruption, abduction, and bombing, have come in since the arrival of third and fourth republics in 1999 and 2009 respectively, which was just a decade ago after the previous military invasion.

### **Disconnect between the People and Government**

Over the years, there has been a growing disconnect between the people and government. Governments, whether military or civilian, have not tried to bridge this chasm, thus creating misunderstanding, mistrust and resentment. Consequently, because the people do not understand government or have a perception that government does not care about their welfare, they become easy prey to centrifugal forces who co-opt/incite them to vent their anger on perceived enemies of the people and sometimes go to the extent of destroying national totems. Frequently, on any given incident, public and government reactions diverge. In such situations, the media has never helped matters. Media practices have always focused on the dramatic and the spectacular view of the given situations. Such reports have always been capitalized on in sophisticated ways by various groups, some of which are violent to incite public clamour for a change and immediate reaction through strategically



provocative violence. The point here is that the approach of media report over the years has contributed to exacerbate insecurity or perception of insecurity in Nigeria. President Jonathan alluded to this situation when he made reference to the popular axiom that the pen is mightier than the sword. In his statement, “the sword is used to kill and destroy but what we use the pen to do is also very critical. When you have a society with these unending political conflicts, it is there on the media whether print, electronic or social media and this brings a lot of insecurity to the system” (Bello and Oyedele, 2012).

### **Loss of Socio-cultural and communal value system**

The traditional value system of the Nigerian society, like most African societies, is characterized by such endearing features as collectivism, loyalty to authority and community, truthfulness, honesty, hard work, tolerance, love for others, mutual harmony and coexistence, and identification of individual with one another (Clifford, 2009). Other distinctive features of Nigerian traditional society are abhorrence for theft and high value for life. Stealing was considered extremely disgraceful and lives were also highly valued. All of these values which made society secured and safe have all gradually been thrown away and lost. New values have taken over their place over the years, with the so called ‘modernity and civilization’. All our endearing values and morals have been traded off for western values. The importance of a people’s value system to their survival was espoused by Obama, when he challenged all societies to go back to their traditional values (Clifford (2009).

### **Rural /Urban Drift**

The migration of jobless youths from rural areas to urban centres is also one of the causes of insecurity in Nigeria (Onuoha, 2011). Nigeria is one of the countries in the world with very high rural/urban drift. Most urban areas in Nigeria have grown beyond their environmental carrying capacities and existing infrastructure and this has resulted to increased poor quality of the living conditions in urban areas in Nigeria (Adedeji and Eziyi, 2010). Out of frustration, these youths are drawn into crime.

### **High rate illiteracy among Nigerians**

The rate of illiteracy is very high in the country, figures from various education departments showed that education in some part of Nigeria has

sustained a progressive decline over the years. The implication is that social, political and economic mobilization policies of the government do not trickle down to the majority of the youths and other agents of peace (Alli 2006, Alphousus 2009, and Suleiman 2008).

### **Interagency Rivalry**

The failure of security agencies such as the police, the military, state security services and paramilitary units to share intelligence information has been identified as one of the factors negating the quick apprehension of culprits (Omede, 2011). Also, the failure of intelligence gathering by the security agencies as well as the near passivity of security operatives in proactively policing the country, coupled with the non-apprehension of culprits, is also a contributory factor to the rising tide of insecurity in Nigeria. Of course, when the armed forces and paramilitary agencies are not well-tooled with modern fighting and security gadgets and their welfare is not given priority attention, they may not want to make any sacrifices for the nation. All of these factors point to a passive national security team that is not really committed to fighting crime or stopping the merchants of violence or terror envoys from having the field day in the country.

### **EFFECTS OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA**

The immediate effects of insecurity are mob actions that lead to massacres and widespread losses of human capital, community leaders, vibrant youths, entrepreneurs, occupational specialist, husbands, wives, and children. There are also devastations of property/houses, farmland and crops, farm equipment, live stocks and vehicles. In additions, there has been increased urban violence coordinated by ethnic militia. The intra-ethnic conflicts have graduated from mere outburst of violence in Lagos, Kaduna, Zaria, Kano, Jos, Suleja and other cities to a near war situation in the South-South.

The security situation in the country has become so precious that hostage taking of oil worked and some government officials, vandalization of oil pipe lines, kidnapping bomb blast of religious places, market and schools are becoming uncontrollable. Presently secessionist movement have emerged such as the movement for the actualization of the sovereign state of Biafra (MASSOB), the “Taliban” and the “Boko Haram” groups in north east, agitating for the reconstruction of Nigeria as an Islamic country and the

abolishment of western culture especially education. There are also volunteer forces in the Nigeria delta demanding control of the oil wealth. All these new rebellions movement constitute threat to the internal security of Nigeria and obstacles against national integration and development. There is also a deployment of government troops, the Nigeria police, mobile police, army, and navy to quell or control some of these internal security threats. Beside the government normally set up commissions of enquiry to examine the remote and immediate causes of these conflicts. All of these activities have led to a diversion of scarce resources, human, material and finance to resolve such conflicts.

People are forced into all lands of criminality because of their poor material existence. This assumption is at the root of at armed robberies, human trafficking drug abuse, prostitution, that have become in recent times. There is also the problem of subversion - a calculated move or series of clandestine activities designed to undermine the nation's governmental set-up. Sabotage/vandalization, the deliberate destructions of an industrial process, including the human and natural resources or public utilities as well as sensitive military, oil installation in order to grind the nations to a halt. Moreover, espionage, smuggling, influx of alien and political assassination constitute real threat to national security. Other effects of insecurity on Nigeria are:

### **Poor image in the international community**

Internal security threat has lowered the image of the country and makes it unattractive in the eyes of the international community. The international community deals with nations with security threat with a lot of deep-seated fear and suspicions. Nigeria is no longer respected globally and many investors are forced to relocate to other West African countries due to threat to lives and properties (Campbell 2009),

### **Underdevelopment of the Country**

Internal security challenges in 1960's is responsible for the ills of Nigeria. It is responsible for poor standard and lack of public utilities such as roads, unstable electing supply, and low standard of schools because of internal security crisis and real threat to providers and facilitators of those facilities.

### **Unemployment**

Large scale eruptions of ethnic religious and other conflicts witness in this nations has discouraged investors especially the private sector. Consequently the teeming youths who graduate from educational institutions remain unemployment and idle in the major cities. These youths engage in anti-social vices such as armed robbery, drug abuse, prostitution, vandalism, and cultism, in order to make ends meet.

### **Low Foreign Direct Investment**

Foreign investors become discouraged in investing in nations that will reduce the investors' competitive advantage due to internal security threat. Nigeria since the intensification of internal security threats has been losing the benefit of the current globalization dividends and phenomenon. It affects the stability of government: loyalties are fragmented by thoughts of fear and improbabilities, thereby destabilizes the institutions of the state. The efficiency and efficacy of institutions of both public and private as decisions-making process is not only slowed down but also is incoherent and often irrational when a nation faces internal security crisis.

### **Flight of Graduates**

Internal security threat causes talented and skilled people to seek employment outside the country rather than stay and engage themselves in productive activities for the nation's development. Out of fear, and threat to lives and properties some Nigerian university graduates prefer to live and work in Europe, America and some Arab countries even with less salaries and loss of dignity.

## **CENTRALIZATION OF POLICE SYSTEM AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA**

The structure of the Nigeria Police and its-sub-national oversight mechanisms are outlined in the 1999 Constitution. Despite the country's federal structure, the police force is essentially a federally controlled structure with little state oversight. Section 215 (2) of the 1999 Constitution states, "the Nigeria police force shall be under the command of the inspector General of police and contingents of the Nigeria Police Force stationed in a state shall, subject to the authority of the Inspector-General of Police, be under the command of the commissioner of police of that state" (Constitution 1999). Though in theory,

state governments should have some influence over the police in their districts, evidence abound on how state Governors in Nigeria, who are elected by their people and dubbed the chief Security Officers of their states, have been reduced to ceremonial chief security officer state governors are helpless as (the Police) are not answerable to the governors but the inspector-general of Police” (Agawanwo, 2014). The Inspector-General of Police (IGP) is appointed by the President, the appointment of the IGP is supposed to be done in consultation with the Nigeria Police Council (NPC), an oversight body that includes 36 governors, however, NPC meets too infrequently to exercise this authority. Further, the responsibility of the president to consult the body is amorphous and poorly defined. Regular civilian oversight has been shuffled through a number of ministries over the years, including the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Police Affair. The shifting and tenuous nature of civilian oversight furthers a culture of impunity and corruption within the police (Awolowo, 1947).

Though overseen and managed by the Federal level, the administrative divisions reflect the federal character of the country. Each of the 36 states has a dedicated state command, overseen by a federally appointed Commissioner of Police; these administrative units are then grouped into 12 zonal commands, overseen by an Assistant Inspector-General of Police. At the sub-state level, there are a number of smaller administrative units. The management and oversight of the police, despite administrative division at the state level, remain with the federal government.

Constitutionally centralizing the police was a means of reducing the potential for sub-national revolt. At the time of independence in the 1960s, the police force was larger than the military, threatening the political class whose power was tied to that of the military. During the country’s bloody Biafran civil war, before the centralization of the police at the federal level, local police were used in the fight against the government. The governments that came after the civil war considered local and state-level police forces a threat to national unity and security. As a result of this mistrust and the ascendancy of powerful military leaders, “the NPF (National Police Force) was chronically underfunded and marginalized,” in addition to being centrally controlled (Nigeria Police Watch n.d.). The return to civilian rule (under General Olusegun Obasanjo), was accompanied by a robust police recruitment campaign to revive the anemic institution. Unfortunately, this growth outpaced the ability to abide by training standards and the result was a bloated and ill-equipped force. The result was an overall weakening of the state’s security apparatus.

Nearly two decades after the adoption of the 1999 constitution it is clear that a federal police force resulted in massive security gaps and fostered a divide

between the state governors and the federal government. Even prior to the transition to democracy, the Nigerian government's security sector had lost a significant portion of its monopoly on the use of force as well as some degree of legitimacy as a security provider, in large part due to the failure of the state to respond to deep-seated issues of social and political exclusion and the lack of capacity of state security institutions to contain the levels of rising crime and unrest which led on several occasions to the use of the army to respond to internal security situations (Dayil, 2016). Much of the mistrust and reputational issues surrounding the Nigeria Police can be traced to the lack of accountability for its officers.

The consequences of the lack of oversight and uncertain positioning within the Nigerian political system are a police force characterized by ineffectiveness and human rights abuses. Nigeria's security sector is ill equipped to grapple with the challenges that the country faces today; counter-insurgency campaigns require not just military force but the ability to 'cut-narrate' their opponents. The police are the country's largest employer; however, those hired are often poorly trained and poorly compensated. A result of this disintegration of professional capacity is a reliance on extrajudicial violence, torture, and executions in the name of 'maintaining order.' This heavy-handedness and failure to abide by the rule of law created a perception that 'police and military officers were not regarded as a source of protection, rather as entities to be feared' (Abegunde, 2013). AfroBarometer latest round of data analysis found that 465 of Nigerians trust the police 'not at all.' The CLEEN Foundation, a civil society group in Nigeria that advocates for police reform, links that the 'militaristic approach to security challenges' taken by the police is a result of the country's history of military rule and the frequency of joint military and police formations (Mustapha, 2013). They argue that this history creates conditions in which the police's heavy-handed responses breed resentment. Such widespread distrust, coupled with the institution's reputation for corruption and predation, suggest that a major reform campaign is necessary for long-term stability in the country.

The Nigeria police occupy an uncomfortable space within the Nigerian political landscape. In the past, their ranks have been inflated. but underfunded; over the course of Nigerian history, the Nigeria Police Force has been considered an ineffective body, a threat to the military, and a predatory institution. Overall, the 'security sector in Nigeria is not people-oriented,' preventing the forces from achieving their mandate (Mustapha, 2013). The frequent security sector abuses, most notably by the Mobile Police Units, Special Anti-robbery Squad (SARS) and the Joint Task Force (JTF), have led to renewal calls for security sector reform. Security reform was attempted

under the Obasanjo administration, with few tangible results. In the mid-2000s, an Armed Forces Transformation Committee consisting of military, civilian, and military officers from within the Ministry of Defence provided a blue-print for security reform (Aiyede, 2013). The current investigations into the misuse of military funds by Sambo Dasuki during his tenure in the National security Agency, estimated to be more than 2 billion dollars, illustrates some of the challenges in implementing reforms regardless of the official funding doctrines.

**ARGUMENTS FOR THE DECENTRALIZATION O POLICE SYSTEM IN NIGERIA**  
**Enhanced Funding:** The current police structure in Nigeria is under-funded, some states like Lagos, Rivers, Akwa-Ibom have enough financial capability to fund decentralized police system in terms of provision of enough money to buy uniforms, safety boots, modern communication gadgets and better salaries for enhanced operational performance.

**Better Knowledge of the Environments.** Most policemen were posted to the remote places; they are ignorant of the local languages and topography of their areas of operations, these shortcomings gave criminals advantages over them especially kidnappers that operate in thick forests (Adegoke, 2014).

**Closed Operational Supervision.** Decentralized police system will enable state government to monitor their activities to avoid abuse of power by the police. A typical example is banning of the Vehicle Inspection Officers from the roads in Lagos by Governor Akinwunmi Ambode on the ground of gross misconduct (Arase, 2013).

**Better Equipped Police.** One of the merits of decentralized police system is that it leads to provision of equipment for police office both soft and hard operational wares will be giving to police officers (Orobator, 1993). These include patrol vehicles, communication devices, and persona lprotective devices like hard caps, bullet proof jackets and serviceable vehicles.

**Employment Opportunities for indigenes.** The current police structure provides employment opportunities but most officers are non-indigenes (Thomas, 2004). However, the current staff strength of the Nigeria police skewed in favour of a particular part of the nation at the expense of other parts of the nation as maintained by Uwa (2013) sighted in (Wegman, et al,2008).

**Competitive Police.** As explained by Langmang (2011) one merit of decentralized police agenda is that more states will be in positive competition to outperform each others, take for instance, the administration of former Governor Ahmed Bola Tinubu established plat forms like Lagos State Transport Management Authority (LASTMA) which other states like Ogun

established Ogun State Compliance and Enforcement Corps (TRACE) and Oyo and others have emulated.

## **ARGUMENT AGAINST THE DECENTRALIZATION OF POLICE SYSTEM**

### **Decentralization of Police System in Nigeria an Agents of Oppression:**

One demerit of state police is the possibility of abuse of power by the governors to achieve their political interests especially during elections to thwart their political opponents (Buzan, 1991). Power corrupts absolute power corrupts absolutely; the critics of creation of state police have advanced this reason for their actions (Arase, 2018).

**States` Financial Incapacity:** In Nigeria some states are struggling to pay their workers and their retirees. These states may not be able to finance decentralized police effectively. So, decentralization of police will be additional financial burden to those constituents units of the federation (Ugwuoke, 2011).

**National Disparity:** In Crime Control Police is a symbol of national unity, in terms of internal security of life and property (Chan 1997). There is central administration of internal security, decentralization of police system may dismantle this feature and each state may adopt independent structures, this may negatively affect cooperation and collaboration in policing a nation.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.**

This study anchors on the systems theory by Talcott Parsons, The Nigerian state is a system that comprises sub-systems like politics, economy, family, religion and education, if one sub-system is deficient the whole system will be dysfunctional (Armstrong, 2006). Policing a country is a political issue because the principal duty of every government is the security of life and property of the citizens of a country. If a government fails in this regard, other aspects of the system will be negatively affected. The current insecurity in Nigeria has negatively affected other key sectors Akintunde (2002), for example insecurity has sent away foreign investors the result of which is the loss of jobs and tax remittance into government coffers, which in turn creates family crises. Insecurity has adverse effects on religious institutions as well as educational institutions. Religious leaders have been robbed and kidnapped – some killed in the process. In the educational sector, there are many students that were kidnapped examples are the kidnapping of 250 Chibuk girls saga and 100 girls in Dapchi cited in (Ewetan & Urhie, 2014).

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study applied qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative data was obtained through administration of 388 questionnaires on the police



officers serving in the state commands of Borno, Yobe, Benue, Plateau, Lagos and Ogun States. Purposive sampling technique was applied. Secondary data was sourced from textbooks, journals, and internets about functions of police, meanings of police, arguments for and against the decentralization of the police system. The study areas were chosen because of its drive towards the decentralization of police system. The questionnaires were divided into various sections section. Section A is about the demographic dominants of the respondents and section B cover various questions on desirability or otherwise of the decentralization of the police system. The questionnaires were analyzed through frequency distribution tables. The results of both methods were used to draw conclusion.

### FINDINGS/RESULTS

Table 1: Analysis of Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Parameters	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	208	53.6
	Female	180	46.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Age in years</b>	<20	14	3.6
	21-30	69	17.8
	31-40	127	32.7
	41-50	124	32.0
	51-60	53	13.7
	60 and Above	1	0.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Nationality</b>	Nigerian	388	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Academic Qualification</b>	SSCE	69	17.8
	First Degree	237	61.1
	Post Graduate	47	12.1
	Professional	35	9.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Rank/Designation</b>	CSP	13	3.4
	SP	10	2.6
	DSP	14	3.6

	ASP I	11	2.8
	ASP II	94	24.2
	Inspector	54	13.9
	Sergeant	47	12.1
	Corporal	8	2.1
	Constable	24	6.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Working Experience</b>	1 - 10 years	169	43.6
	11 - 20 years	136	35.1
	21 - 30 years	47	12.1
	31 - 35 years	28	7.2
	Retired	8	2.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Researchers' field Survey (2020)*

Table 1 reveals that majority 53.6% of the respondents were male while 46.4% were females. This implied that more males participated in the study than females. Highest percentage 127 respondents representing 32.7% were in the ages of 31-40 years, closely followed by 124 respondents representing 32.0%, 69 respondents representing 17.8% were in the ages of 21-30%, 53 respondents representing 13.7% were in the ages of 51-60 years while 1 respondents representing 0.3% were in the ages of 60 years and above. It reveals that 388 respondents representing 100.0% were Nigeria, which indicated that all respondents participated in this study were Nigeria. The table further revealed that 237 respondents representing 61.1% were First Degree holders, 69 respondents representing 17.8% were SSCE holders as their academic qualification, 47 respondents representing 12.1% were Post Graduate holders, while 9.0% of the respondents were professional. The highest percentage 169 respondents representing 43.6% had 1-10 years working experience, 136 respondents representing 35.1% had 11-20 years working experience, 47 respondents representing 12.1% had 21-30 years working experience, and 28 respondents representing 7.2% had 31-35 years of working experience while 8 respondents representing 2.1% were retirees.

**Table 10: Respondents Reaction on the effect of the Centralization of police system on internal security in Nigeria**

Survey items	SA F (%)	A F (%)	D F (%)	PD F (%)	SD F (%)	Mea n	RII	Rankin g
The rises in the level of violent insecurity and the poor	197(50.8)	118(30.4)	32(8.2)	8(2.1)	33(8.5)	4.13	0.83	1st

delivery of Nigeria's security architecture is due to the centralization of security apparatus.								
The structural centralization of security architecture in Nigeria has an adverse effect on the management of crime and insecurity at the grassroots.	146(37.6)	153(39.4)	38(9.8)	9(2.3)	42(10.8)	3.91	0.78	2nd
There should be decentralization of police system in Nigeria	84(25.3)	141(36.3)	44(11.3)	11(2.8)	51(13.1)	3.80	0.76	3rd
State governors should oversee the management of police in each state command.	79(20.4)	173(44.6)	78(20.1)	17(4.4)	1(1.6)	3.60	0.72	4th
Decentralized police system brings resentments among different states	102(26.3)	149(38.4)	63(16.2)	12(3.1)	2(16.0)	3.56	0.71	5th
State governors are incapable of financing state police	88(22.7)	173(44.6)	59(15.2)	9(2.3)	59(15.2)	3.57	0.71	6th
Nigeria is not ripe for state police	111(28.6)	131(33.8)	60(15.5)	16(4.1)	70(18.0)	3.51	0.70	7th
Decentralizing police system is the panacea	84(21.6)	151(38.9)	67(17.3)	11(2.8)	75(19.3)	3.41	0.68	8th

*Source: Researchers' field of Survey (2020)*

Respondents' reaction on option one revealed that 81.2% of the respondents agreed with the position that Nigeria Police Force performance is unsatisfactory; the police are incapacitated, ineffective and inefficient in their job of crime prevention, criminal investigation, and response to distress calls by citizens. While 8.8% of the respondents disagreed with this position. The implication of this analysis is that security agencies were unable to handle security crises in the country due to lack of motivation of their operatives.

Item two on Table 2 revealed that 77% of the respondents agreed that the limiting and frustrating situation evident in the level of poor equipment and the involvement of its personnel in criminal activities affects police performance while 22.9% of the respondents disagreed with this position. The implication is that there was an increase in criminal activities in Nigeria.

Respondents' reaction to option three revealed that 61.6% of the respondents agreed with the option that there should be decentralization of police system in Nigeria, while 38.4% of respondents disagreed with this option. The implication of this is that security agencies will not perform optimally in the discharge of their security duties with the centralization of operational system.

Respondents' reaction on option four revealed that 65% of the respondents agreed with the position that the low level of motivation in terms of salary, accommodation and other necessary allowances affect police performance in Nigeria, while 35% of the respondents disagreed with this option.

Respondents' reaction on option five revealed that 64.7% of the respondents agreed with the position that the rises in the level of violent insecurity and the poor delivery of Nigeria's security architecture is due to the centralization of security apparatus, while 35.1% of the respondents disagreed with this option.

Item six on Table 2 revealed that 67.3% of the respondents agreed that the unhealthy competition brought by social aims and aspirations can lead to a kind of alienation, desperation and crime with an adverse effect on police performance, while 32.7% of the respondents disagreed with this position. The implication of this is that there was less dedication to the duty of internal security in Nigeria.

Respondents' reaction to option seven revealed that 62.4% of the respondents agreed with the option that the rises in the level of violent insecurity and the poor delivery of Nigeria's security architecture is due to the centralization of security apparatus, while 37.6% of the respondents disagreed with the option. The implication of this is that grass-root policing will be ineffective

Respondents' reaction to option eight revealed that 60.5% agreed that decentralizing police system is the panacea to insecurity in Nigeria, while 39.4% of the respondents disagreed with this option. The implication of this analysis is that the law enforcement agencies are unable to cope with security challenges.

## CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

From findings there many operational challenges that confronts policing in Nigeria, findings from both primary and secondary data showed that decentralization of police system in Nigeria is the panacea for police operational capabilities, 61.6 percent of the respondents supported the idea and similarly 38.4% strongly disagreed that current police structure could address internal security crisis Nigeria is passing through more than nineteen years of the country return to democracy. The paper recommends the decentralization of police system with efficient control mechanism to avert state governors using it as means of suppressing political opponents and there should be deployment of modern technology and internet of things like body cameras and CCTV cameras to strategic places to monitor the activities of the police officers ,there should strict disciplinary measures for erring officers through special court. This study will be valuable to all tiers of government and researchers in the social science disciplines.

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