



## **IMPACT OF POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP ON HUMAN SECURITY IN PLATEAU STATE OF NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*This study underpins by social identity theory examines the impact of police community relationship on human security in Plateau State. The study interrogated food security, economic security and community security as constructs of human security in order to know the extent to which police-community relationship has assisted in achieving human security on the Plateau or it has further widen the gap. This study engages exploratory research design leveraging on content analysis of publicly available archive documents. The study relies solely on secondary data. The research is conducted by examining literature concerning human security and police community relationship. The literature was obtained through searches in publicly available material. Literature from non-serial publications, official reports, and conferences has been included particularly if they have been cited by other references in term of police community relationship and human security. The study submitted that the presence of a weakened or failed police community relationship actually aggravate and worsen food insecurity, economic security and community insecurity in Plateau State. Based on these submissions, the study concludes that a disconnect Police Community Relationship breeds distrust, apathy against the State and evolves ethnic militias as seen of the Berom and Tarok tribes. The study recommends that all tiers of government including the Civil Societies should evolve a policy that inculcate Early Warnings Early Responses into their security architecture so as to bridge the widening gap between the Police and the policed. The study recommends that specialised squad of Agro*

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*Rangers should be engaged by all tiers of government in order to secure the farming communities and stem the palpable fears of food insecurity.*

**Keywords:** *Community Security, Early Warning Early Response, Gap theory. Human Security, Police-Community Relationship*

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## **Introduction**

The plethora of violence as seen displayed in the North Central, Nigeria, particularly the Plateau State is not unconnected with why the former is presently a shadow of her former status, as the tourism centre of the nation, attracting settlement of Whites not only because of good climatic condition but of the peaceful and serenity of Jos town. Plateau State has had a fair share of violence from religious crisis to ethnic violence and now the incessant clashes between herders and farmers. Worrisome now, is the pattern the crisis has taken with evidence of planned attacks of purposeful destruction of farmland, razing down of villages with the assistance of suspected mercenaries. At the centre of all these crises is the vexed issue of sedentary farmers and pastoral Herders.

The unceasing destruction of grown crops, burning of food barns, robbery, ambushes and killing of farmers and community members have become the new normal in some communities in Riyom, Barkin Ladi and Bassa local government areas of the zone despite the presence agencies with armoured personnel carrier (Vanguard, 2021). All these violence, constitute threats that could be pointers to the existence of a widening gap between the communities and security agencies that are meant to protect them and ensure human security. Human security is the absence of fears and freedom from want. It is a departure from the State centric security approach since it is human inclined and not about territorial power and State might. Absence of human security could also signify the existence of disconnects between the people and security agencies and judicial system that are to protect them.

Police community relationship connotes the existence of relationship between the security agencies both formal and informal, and all fragments of the community; from the youths, to the business owners, to the farmers, religious bodies. It is a holistic relationship that put the community under the radar watch of security agencies. Such relationship, when in existence ensures safety of the populace, it signifies the active involvement of civil societies and the existence of an Early Warning Early Response (EWER)

signals between the policed and the police. The absence or weakness of police community relationship could be seen in the formation of informal security group or militias to protect a given community (Mungadi, 2020; International Crisis Group, 2018).

According to Global Peace Index (2021), Nigeria ranked Nigeria 146th out of 163 countries assessed, such that the country occupies same league of least peaceful countries such as Yemen, Syria, South Sudan, Afghanistan, and Iraq. While in Africa, Nigeria came 8th among the least peaceful countries. All these indicators exert direct pressures pressure on the human security of the country particularly on the Nigeria Police as the lead agency for internal security. A good Police-community relationship could trigger cooperation of community stakeholders to provide information about crime in their community. Police-community relationship can further disaggregated into Police-corporate body's relationship, Police-Vigilante relationship, Police-host community relationship and Police-other security agencies relationship. How effective these relationship stands is expected to impact greatly upon human security (Adamu, 2021).

The Global Terrorism Index (2017) ranked Nigeria as one of the five deadliest epicentres in the world impacted by terrorism. Nigeria epicentre of terrorism is the North East where Boko Haram holds sway while insurgency, banditry, Herdsmen-Farmers conflicts, villages-market raiding which abounds in the North West and being overwhelmed has since spilled into the North Central where Plateau State is situated, the State reputedly known for its tourist attractions, is one of the five States that make up the North Central alongside Nasarawa, Plateau, Niger, Kwara and Kogi States. Nigeria Watch reported that, in 2020, Plateau was the state with the second highest number of fatalities (106) due to herders-farmers clashes in the country. It also stated that Plateau State was the one of the states with the highest fatalities (44) due to ethno-communal clashes, although the numbers of fatalities from such clashes decreased in 2020 in comparison to 2019.

Plateau State had been relatively peaceful for approximately 2 years, but tensions are resurfacing due to farmer herder conflicts which are unconnected with the State's grazing space which constitute a crucial cause of clashes between pastoral Fulani herdsmen and sedentary farming communities. Farmers and herders constitute one of the main categories of actors in the theatre of conflicts in Plateau State. Formal security agencies involve in ensuring internal security and remotely human security are the

Operation Safe Haven; a joint task force that was set up in 2010 consists of Service components of Nigerian Army, Navy, Air Force, Police, Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) and Department of State Security (DSS). Whose main task is to maintain peace in Plateau State.

Due to incessant frustration in securing prompt response from regular former security, mostly the farming communities; the Berom and Tarok in Plateau, reportedly formed militias and vigilante groups to repel Fulani herders whose cattle grazed in their fields. These groups on occasions do collaborate with the traditional and national authorities; however, in other cases they attacked herders due to alleged damage to their farms or in order to forcefully keep them away from their areas (Nigeria Watch, 2019; International Crisis Group, 2018).

To the extent of literature review no studies has taken cursory look at the unique combination of the three constructs employed by this present study to measure Police-community relationship on human security in Nigeria and specifically Plateau State. It is by combining all these constructs in a single study subjected to analysis that this study filled the gap that exist in literature and further expand the frontier of knowledge.

This study provides answers to the following research questions;

- i. What is the effect of Police-community relationship on food security in Plateau State?
- ii. How does Police-community relationship affect economic security in Plateau State?
- iii. To what extent does Police-community relationship affect community security in Plateau State?

The significance of this study could be seen by policy makers, top echelons of the military, Nigeria Police Force, Services under the Ministry of Interior, North Central Governors' Forum, Civil Society and the academia in identifying potential human security risks of food security, economic security and community security arising from a disconnected or poor Police-community relationship in North Central particularly in Plateau State. Findings of this study will also further project the importance of participatory policing as against the present reactive and hostile policing approach. The findings may help individual, communities and corporate bodies in Plateau State to be more responsible and committed to an enduring relationship that works in combatting crime alongside the Nigeria Police by

providing information for further processing in the drive towards a stable human security.

While human security has certainly achieved broad recognition, the achievements over the last two decades may be less impressive when one starts to explicate the progress of each of the key elements subsumed under the human security concept. This paper thus sets out to examine the extent to which police community relationship has impacted on human security using the constructs of food security, economic security and community security, as vital elements of human security which to the extent of literature has not been done within the domain of study

The paper is structured into five sections. Following this introduction, section two is concerned with literature review. Section three discussed the methodology adopted for the study; section four discussed the results, while section five provides the conclusion and recommendations.

## **Conceptual Framework**

### **Concept of Police-Community Relationship**

Concept of Police-Community Relationship in this study refers largely to the Nigerian Army, Nigeria Police Force (NPF), National Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Nigeria Customs Service, (NCS), Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) and the intelligence services, all jointly involve in playing roles in assigned capacities in the internal security which directly impact on human security of the study area. It is widely believed that no one agency alone can succeed in reducing crime. This fact is acknowledged by security experts who argue that, ‘any comprehensive strategy to reduce crime must not only include the contribution of the police and the criminal justice system but also the whole range of partnerships between all government security operatives and private/community organisations in addressing crime.

In South Africa for instance, the law allows “partnership policing” with For-Profit or Non-For-Profit organizations. This has yielded tremendous positive results against the rising spate of crime that has been rocking the country since independence (Wisler & Onwudiwe, 2005; Etannibi *et al.*, 2009). In Pakistan, a city deeply affected by crime, violence and fear, partnership policing creates ‘safer spaces’ for humanitarian activities. In the advanced climes of United States of America, law enforcement officers team up with citizens, business, private policing enterprises and other law enforcement

agencies to achieve effective policing. This public-police relationship allows citizens to step beyond their daily law-abiding lives and get involved in projects, programs and other specific efforts to enhance their community's safety (Wroblewski & Hess, 2003).

### **Concept of Human Security**

The UN General Assembly's (2012) resolution 66/290 defines human security as an approach to ensuring "[freedom from want](#)" and "[freedom from fear](#)" for all persons is the best path to tackle the problem of global insecurity. The concept of human security is vital in building the resilience of civilian populations, not only in fragile States but world over, working towards the advancement of security before, during and after a crisis and building stability and peace. Prevention is the core objective of human security, thus it addresses the root causes of human vulnerabilities, by focusing attention on emerging risks and stresses early action. It actually strengthens local capacities to build resilience, and promotes solutions that enhance social cohesion and advance respect for human rights and dignity.

Interestingly, from a narrow perspective human security shields individual from internal violence and vulnerabilities whereas in abroad sense, it protects from fear, hunger, natural disasters, and diseases. Hence, the evolvement of human security which calls for a valuation of human insecurities that is people-centred, context-specific comprehensive, and prevention-oriented (United Nation Human Security Unit, 2014). Concerningly, in failed States, there are several fault lines that are human threats to daily existence of the people, some of these threats include militia herdsman attack, kidnapping, political violence and instabilities, insurgency, terrorism, economic instabilities involving bitter conflicts with loss of lives, prevalence of ethnic militias and dislocations. In turn, these instabilities, lead to failing of states, struggling to defend sovereignty and apparent incapability of guaranteeing human security.

Human security is a flexible approach and can be tailored to different contexts and topics, according to the specific context. No matter which topic is addressed, a guiding principle of the human security approach is that it requires understanding the particular threats experienced by particular groups of people, as well as the participation of those people in the analysis process. Threats to human security can exist at all levels of development. They can emerge slowly and silently or appear suddenly and dramatically.



### **Food security**

Food security according to Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) (2011) exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for active and healthy life. Food security is usually framed in four dimensions food availability, access to food, food use, utilization and food stability (FAO, 2016a). Agbo (2002) defines food security as access by all people at all times to sufficient food for a healthy and productive life. Odey (2002) articulates food security system definition as the availability and accessibility of foodstuff in desired quality to all consumers throughout the year. Food security remain highly threaten in the North Central where there bound incessant herdsmen attacks on farming communities, ethno religious cleansing, climate change, economic wars, social group differentiation.

### **Economic Security**

Economic security or financial security is the condition of having stable income or other resources to support a standard of living now and in the foreseeable future. It includes probable continued solvency, predictability of the future cash flow of a person or other economic entity, such as a country, employment security or job security. Financial security more often refers to individual and family money management and savings. Economic security tends to include the broader effect of a society's production levels and monetary support for non-working citizens.

Economic security is composed of basic social security, defined by access to basic needs infrastructure pertaining to health, education, dwelling, information, and social protection, as well as work-related security.

Economic security in Plateau State is threatened along ethnic, religion and demographic line such that it is uncommon to see people residing outside geographical area populated by people of related belief, culture and social affinity. Property values are also measured along same line so also commercial activities are also defined along same line. This could also be a sign of insecurity as attack could be triggered by social, religious and ethnic identity and this greatly constricts economic security

### **Community Security**

Community security sets out to protect people from the loss of traditional relationships and values and from sectarian and ethnic violence. Traditional

communities, particularly minority ethnic groups are often threatened. About half of the world's states have experienced some inter-ethnic strife. Other scholars also equate community security with simply the protection of one's identity. Waever (1995:67) puts identity as the ultimate criterion of societal security as it arises in 'situations in which significant groups within a society feel threatened, feel their identity is endangered by immigration, integration, or cultural imperialism, and try to defend themselves. Threats to security community can come from various forces, including the state. While the state provides security to its people, the people may also require protection from the arbitrary power of the state. By identifying a range of threats to community security, the approaches to achieving community security would necessarily have to be multi-faceted, underscoring the close linkages between human security and human development, peace and democracy.

Threats to community security can come from several factors. These include: discrimination, exclusion, violence from other groups, and threats from the state. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs also defines community security in terms of threats, particularly, 'inter-ethnic, religious and other identity based tensions' (UNOCHA, 2009, p. 7).

Community security programming provides an effective approach that enables the delivery of security as a basic service in a way that builds trust between communities and security agencies and contributes to state legitimacy. The degree of community security perception (i.e. how safe people feel) is an indicator that can be used to assess the impact of security and justice programs at the local level. As an end state, community security is a condition in which the individuals and groups that constitute a community feel relatively safe from real or perceived threats experienced at the community level.

### **Empirical Review**

**Police-Community Relationship and Food Security in Plateau State**  
Amadi and Anokwuru (2017) engaged human security framework to thematically examine agricultural resilience and security vulnerability on both the herdsmen and rural farmers' conflict in both the middle belt and the Eastern Nigeria. The study was of qualitative research design with reliance on related publications. The study submitted that the vulnerability of the farmers calls for policy response on agricultural resilience. The study opine



that the inability of security agencies to arrest the conflicts have divergent implications that may contribute to fatal outcomes including decline in rural agricultural practices , food shortage and loss of human lives.

Dimelu, Salifu and Igbokwe (2016) engaged structured questionnaire to examine the causes of conflict in agrarian communities of Kogi in Nigeria. Study adopted research survey design with structured questionnaire to extract data for analysis from a sampled of 135 crop famers and 72 herdsmen. Data were collected by use of structured interview schedule, focus group discussion and personal observation and analysed using descriptive statistics and factor analysis. Findings from study showed that effective management of conflicts was constrained by inadequate funding and lack of institutional support by government to security agencies which further decrease level of trust on security agencies and all these culminated into low yield of farm produce. Study also established that pastoralists had the problems of insecurity of human and animal lives, displacement and economic losses leading to poor productivity of farming activity.

Agri, Babagario and Eneji (2019) adopted an ex post facto research design to investigate the effects of insecurity on agricultural efficiency in Balanga LGA of Gombe State, Nigeria. The study employed the ordinary least squares method of multiple regression analysis of time series data with agricultural gross domestic product as dependent variable while crime rate as proxied by federal government recurrent expenditures on internal security was used as independent variables. Findings of the study indicated that crime rate and unemployment are negatively related to agricultural productivity. Such that that, a unit increase in federal government recurrent expenditures on internal security will lead to increases in agricultural gross domestic product.

### **Police-Community Relationship and Economic Security in Plateau State**

Eze, Diyoke and Idoko (2019) engaged socio- ecological theory to examine impact of crime reporting as a panacea to crime control in Gwagwalada Area Council Abuja. Study deployed descriptive study that employed interviews and questionnaires on mostly enterprising and business owners to elicit data. Findings from the study showed that there is low crime reportage in Gwagwalada Area Council, study also related that People are more likely to report a crime if they have a positive attitude about the police. However,

many crimes are not reported because the victims believe that the police will not care, that the Police will take bribes and will not act against the perpetrators, or possible they will even get mocked by the perpetrator after coming back from the police station.

Gumel (2017) thematically studied critical issues facing small business enterprises in Nigeria. The study engaged Lampadarious success factors framework. Findings of the study showed that high rate of crime and criminalities negatively impacted on small business owners and business owners will leave most crimes unreported due to the rigours of going to Police stations and the attending expenses in investigation process which further deny business owners time and resources for other engagement. Study submitted that there is the need for an improved relationship in handling investigation without belabouring the complainants as such armchair investigation processes further endanger the economic security of the people.

Isenring, Mugellini and Killias (2016) investigated the unwillingness of the business sectors to report crime to the police in Australia. The study employed statistical tools of cross-tabulations and Chi-squared for data analysis on extracted data. Findings from the study submitted that that the reasons mostly linked to non-reporting of customer theft were that business owners believed that reporting would not have achieved anything. The same was also found in cases of attempted burglary, which were primarily not often reported because business proprietors usually thought that the police were not interested in resolving the matter. Study emphasised that trust in the security agencies and the perception of the reactions of the police after reporting the crime play an important role in the decision to report a crime or not.

### **Police-Community Relationship and Community Security in Plateau State**

Mu'azu, Ibrahim and Kura (2017) engaged empirical interrogation of civilian and military relationship to evolve peace in Borno State, Nigeria. The data for the qualitative study was drawn extant literature and relevant journal publications. Findings from the study revealed that there exists the urgent need for military and the civilians to relate well in order to have symbiotic relationships that could yield peace in this time of insurgency in Borno State, Nigeria.

Caballero-Anthony (2015) thematically interrogated community security as an element of human security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the international arena using ASEAN as case study. The study engaged qualitative research design approach with reliance on related publications and extant literature. The study submits that the massive gaps in human development, security and democracy hinder progress in promoting community security.

Chambers (2014) employed desk-based review to investigate securing communities and transforming policing cultures in Jamaica. The study relied on reviews of academic, policy and grey literature supplemented by key informant interviews with primary focus on formal government policy and strategy documents, donor evaluations and progress reports of programmes including community policing, non-governmental organisation reports, as well as published perception studies and academic papers. Findings from the study showed that over the decades, the police-community relationship has broken down and an unhealthy mutual distrust prevails, with the frequent cry of “we want justice” coming from citizens.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Social Identity Theory**

Social Identity Theory evolved out of the work of Henri Tajfel (1978) Which attempted to apply cognitive grouping and gestalt phenomena to social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) begins with the premise that individuals define their own identities with regard to social groups and that such identifications work to protect and bolster self-identity. The creation of group identities involves both the categorization of one’s “in-group” with regard to an “out-group” and the tendency to view one’s own group with a positive bias vis-à-vis the out-group. The result is an identification with a collective, depersonalized identity based on group membership and imbued with positive aspects (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987).

### **The Gap Theory**

The gap theory as propounded by George J. Thomson submits that there is a widening ‘gap’ between the police and the community in too many areas. People, corporate entities, trade association including youths who had been mistreated by the Police withdraw from the police and are never eager to help the police and live in resentment of the Police. Until Police officers are taught to care for the people, the ‘gap’ increases (Thomson, 2006). The

hostile dispositions of formal security agencies account for the extent to which the people reclined from these agencies and this afford misfits in the society to leverage on the ‘widening gap’ between the police and the people. However, the better the police treat the people, the safer they feel and the more the ‘gap’ closes. As the ‘gap’ closes, it closes on the criminals and the deviant in the community.

### **Methodology**

This study engages exploratory research design to examine the impact of police-community relationship on human security in Plateau state of Nigeria. Human security is measured with constructs such as food security, economic security and community security as they relate to police community relationship in Plateau State, Nigeria using content analysis of publicly available archive documents. This study depends solely on secondary data. The research is conducted by examining literature concerning Human security and Police relationship with their host communities in Plateau State particularly the vast farming communities who incessantly are having headlong clashes with pastoral Herders. The literature was obtained through searches in publicly available material. Literature from non-serial publications, official reports, and conferences has been included particularly if they have been cited by other references in term of infrastructure decay and food security.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The finding from objective one of the study shows that absence of police community relationship in Plateau State, Nigeria has a negative effect on food security. It indicates that food insecurity increases due to incessant attacks on farmers who cannot reach out to security agencies and whose early warning of possible attacks has not generated any positive response. This relationship gap will likely translate to reduced efforts in farming, uncared for farming will lead to low farm yields and ultimately reduction of trust and reliance on security agencies that are supposed to protect them. This finding is consistent with the findings in previous works of Agri *et al.* (2019), Amadi and Anokwuru (2017); Dimelu *et al.* (2016).

Content analysis study on the objectives two (2) submits that the worsened police community relationship in Plateau State, Nigeria is aggravating the economic security of the people particularly traders who ply roads and

encounter road blocks that added to the cost of business, the cost of reporting crime along disturbances of going to station Offices are all factors that added cost and increases economic security of host communities. Many investors are leaving the Plateau State closing down their investment and throwing people out of jobs since security agencies are unable to stem the tide of crisis. The rationale for this finding could be that the more business owners are shortchanged by crime and criminality at the helplessness of security agencies and this decreases the confidence and reliance on police community relationship. The finding aligns with findings in the previous works of Eze *et al.* (2019); Gumel (2017); Isenring *et al.* (2016) who found that economic insecurity reduces police community relationship.

The outcome from objectives three (2) shows that a failed and battered police community relationship in Plateau State, Nigeria create disconnect between the people and the security agencies and this ends up aggravating community insecurity. Poor community security exposed the people to crime and criminality, banditry, planned attacks, ethno religious attack which leads to a dwindle confidence, reliance and working police community relationship with security agencies. This also results in community setting up in numbers their own informal security networks to protect their communities. This finding is consistent with the findings in previous works of Mu'azu, Ibrahim and Kura (2017); Caballero-Anthony (2015); Chambers (2014).

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

This study concludes that poor police community relationship in Plateau State is aggravating state of Human security as empirical studies has revealed that food security, economic security and community security are greatly endangered by the widening gulf between the security agencies; Nigeria military, the Nigeria Police, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps who are major actors in the Operation Safe Haven s and in their respective Station Offices across the Plateau. The incessant farmers herders clash, destruction of farmland, planned attacks on Herders livestock; economic insecurity occasion by social demographic stratification of the State where people trade along ethnic and religious lines and community insecurity where villages are attack along ethno religious lines all at the helplessness and poor response of security agencies compound and further deteriorate police community relationship.

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made;

The study recommends that the middle belt Governors Forum particularly the Plateau State government should partner with specialised team of Agro Rangers drawn from all security agencies (as seen established in NSCDC Agro Ranger Squad) should be equipped, motivated and deployed for the protection of Herders and Farmers in order to assist in boosting food production which stands endangered. State government should genuinely mop up all harvests excesses during plenty at harvest time as a way to encourage farmers back into agricultural activities.

The study recommends that security agencies should put in more efforts to close up the gap existing with business owners, moving their goods from point of supplies to point of demands such that the business community would have a sense to willingly assist security agencies with logistics than to see security agencies endangering their economic activities with the business sectors left unprotected or at high cost of securing security. The commitment of security agencies to genuinely ends crime and criminality will surely encourage investors back into the State.

The study recommends that Plateau State Government through her Local Government affairs offices, the Federal Government particularly Office of the National adviser Security adviser, ministry of Interior affairs, the Nigerian Army and ministry of Humanitarian affairs along with association of Civil society should evolve a policy for Early Warning Early responses to be incorporated into the country's security architecture since such interface will encourage the desired relationship that can predicts community security

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