IN SEARCH FOR A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO THE REFORMATION OF POLICING AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The pervasive internal insecurity in Nigeria underscores the need to question the effectiveness of the current policing and security system. With increasing prevalence and incidence of insecurity in the country, the Nigeria Police has failed in its major assignment of internal security. Against this backdrop, this study focuses on the search for holistic approach to the reformation of Nigeria Police and Security Architecture in the country. In-depth interviews were conducted with forty-five (45) participants from the NPF. From the findings, major challenges affecting policing and the security architecture in the country include lack of effective accountability and monitoring mechanism in the police force, gross misconduct and mismanagement of funds and resources in the police force. Critical recommendations to enhance the reformation process include improved accountability and monitoring mechanism in the police force, adoption of an effective policing model that addresses crime and insecurity and provision of modern equipment, research, science and technology to enable police and security agencies meet the crime and insecurity challenges. The situation calls for a fundamental reformation of the NPF targeted at vision actualization and achievement of its mission and goals of improved internal security.

Key Words: Accountability, Monitoring, Policing System, Reformation, Nigeria, and Security Architecture.

Introduction

Nigerian Police and Criminal Justice officials are currently trying to manage different types of crimes that were unrecognizable decades ago. Due to recent innovations and technological advancement, different types of crimes have emerged and changes in some governmental institutions and organizations can be difficult and challenging. However, policing can no longer rely on reactive management of crime and criminal behaviors. It

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is crucial that the criminal justice system of Nigeria keeps up with these developments (Aliemeka, 2020). The police are state security providers with the primary task of protecting people and property through public assistance, law enforcement, the identification, investigation and prevention of crime and the maintenance of peaceful public order. The police and other law enforcement agencies hold special powers that under specific, legally defined circumstances allow them to temporarily limit the exercise of basic rights, deprive people of their freedom and use force, including lethal force. Because of their powers and proximity to the public, how the police fulfill their duties has direct impacts on the security of individuals and communities, as well as the State. The problem is that presently, the police is under-resourced and work in extremely challenging circumstances. The Police Service Commission was established to foster effective accountability measures, sanction and deter police misconduct; but their mandate was not effectively accomplished. Policing in Nigeria occurs in a context of political instability, weak institutions, ethnic and religious diversity and occasional strife, poverty, and poor infrastructure. Reversing this situation improving policing in Nigeria poses severe challenges.

The political and economic failures contributed to the emergence or aggravation of several manifestations of insecurity like systemic and endemic corruption and financial crimes that weaken state capacity and legitimacy, violent ethnic and religious conflicts, insurgency and terrorism, electoral fraud and violence, robbery, kidnapping, banditry, violent conflicts between farmer and herders, petroleum product theft and pipeline vandalism, violent criminal gangs (cult violence), trafficking in persons and drugs, smuggling and proliferation of arms, counterfeiting of critical products including pharmaceutical drugs and vehicle spare part, which have serious implications for health and safety. The study identifies holistic approaches toward police reformation, identify reasons for police reformation, and identify ways of improving security architecture in Nigeria. The following questions were addressed in this study: what approaches can be adopted for the reformation of police in Nigeria? What strategies should be adopted to improve security architecture? What are the reasons for police reformation and accountability?

**Conceptual Framework and Literature Review**

**The concept of police reformation**

Police reform transforms the values, culture, policies and practices of police organizations so that police can perform their duties with respect for democratic values, human rights and the rule of law (Ratcliffe, 2016). Such reform aims to achieve a professional style of democratic policing that takes a people-centered approach to
security; protects human rights in accordance with national and international law; is responsive to the different security needs of all people regardless of gender, age, class, ethnicity or other characteristic or association; assists all people, in particular those members of the community in need of immediate help; upholds high levels of accountability in its conduct; establishes an effective system of democratic control and oversight over the police and builds a public service that is efficient and effective (Weisburd, and Telep, 2014).

Brown (2008) argues that police reformation requires police leadership, governments, independent institutions, and civil society actors to improve policing, maintain human-rights and accountable police practices. Furthermore, promotes cross-sharing and exchange of technical advice and knowledge of comparative best practice in police reform and accountability. The programme will focus on long-term structural change to policing and particularly police accountability systems to improve accountability, transparency, and performance. Ensure that policing laws, structures, and practices conform to internationally recognised human rights standards, domestic constitutional and legal frameworks, and international best practice (Burbeck and Fumham, 2001). The essence of police reform is strong and responsive police accountability. In line with democratic checks and balances, accountability is needed at multiple levels, and from multiple sources. The establishment of independent bodies to oversee the police, and investigate complaints of police misconduct can be done by providing technical expertise and knowledge of policing and reform issues; through a combination of research-based advocacy with governments, police departments and policy makers, legislative and policy analysis, monitoring of accountability bodies, public education, campaigning, civil society networking and working in partnership, and strategic litigation. Sharing of knowledge and analysis locally, regionally and internationally is vital. (Burbeck and Fumham, 2001). Furthermore, Stensaker and Harvey (2011) assert that accountability is the hallmark of modern democratic governance and should be recognised as key changes that police and law enforcement should imbibe in the police system. Brundrett and Rhodes (2011) pointed out that for proper reformation to occur, the function of accountability should be recognized and practiced in the police system. This means that accountability should enhance the integrity of public governance with an aim to safeguard government and the security agencies against the abuse of power, nepotism, corruption and other forms of inappropriate behaviors. Accountability is seen as institutional arrangement that effect democratic control. Accountability improves performance by fostering institutional learning and service delivery. Accountability fosters the assurance of public confidence in the government through transparency, responsiveness and answer ability. Accountability serves as a bridge gaps between the government and the governed,
ensuring public confidence in government. Accountability enables the public to judge the performance of the government by the government giving account in public (Rhodes, 2011).

**Police reformation model**

Brown (2008) asserts, no single model for police reformation, every reform process should reflect its own specific context. However, there are two core goals common to all police reformation efforts that include improving police capacity and effectiveness, and improving the integrity and accountability of the police. Moreover, Skolnick (2000) argues that police reform focuses on elements internal to police organisations and other times on the management, control and oversight of police services within the larger security sector. Internal police reform involve changes to any part of the police organisation and its management structures, for example, organisational structures, chains of command and composition of the police, policies for human resource management, including recruitment, training, promotion and appointments, retirement, benefits, rewards and regulations, systems for control and supervision, codes of ethics and standard operating procedures, development and operationalization of special competences and specialized units, provisions to protect the rights and safety of police personnel, internal control, supervision, investigation and disciplinary procedures, resourcing, budgeting, equipment and training, policies and strategies for public outreach and community engagement (Skolnick, 2000). Sallis (2002) states that police reforms that focus outside the police organization affect police strategies, roles, functions, management, supervision and control, or the legal framework and the modus operandi within which the police work. Skolnick (2000) affirmed, reforms involve updating legal frameworks to reflect international law standards or clarify roles and mandates for law enforcement; changing budget procedures: parliaments and finance ministries can change the way the police budget is allocated and hold the police accountable for efficient use of resources; reorganizing police systems: executive management authorities can change the territorial or jurisdictional responsibilities of police, change national management strategies, reform relevant departments or ministries or implement new national security policies that affect police mandates or operational needs; enhancing external oversight: mandates for independent police complaints authorities or national human rights institutions with responsibility for police oversight are created or updated to enhance accountability.

**Methodology**

The study adopted qualitative methodology. In-depth interviews were conducted with 45 police officers, purposively selected due to their vast knowledge on the topic under study.
The participants included officers from the police crime prevention and investigating policies, criminal intelligence unit, research, planning unit and experts from high institution of learning. Qualitative analysis was used for data analysis and interpretations.

Findings and Discussion

Why police reformation is necessary

Most respondents 75% agreed that the political, legal and social context within which police operate changes. They believed that public security institutions need to be created or adapted to meet changing security needs as well as the expectations of the communities they serve. Most of the respondent 55% pointed out that police reform becomes necessary for various reasons that depend on the local, national and international context. The normal process of responding to changing security requirements, such as changing patterns of crime or new threats to public safety, new or updated legal frameworks, changes in the political direction through elections or new appointments to office, exposure of police malpractice or corruption.

In the opinion of respondent (20) police reformation becomes necessary for peace building, post-conflict reconstruction or transitional justice measures, implementation of a peace agreement, conflict prevention and mediation, social transformation and changing social expectations, such as greater demand for gender equality and establishment of a new political system through democratization.

According to Skolnick (2000) affirmed that police reforms are necessary in order to update legal frameworks that will reflect international law standards or clarify roles and mandates for law enforcement. Also in changing budget procedures: parliaments and finance ministries can change the way the police budget is allocated and hold the police accountable for efficient use of resources. The above author pointed out that reformation will help in reorganising police systems: executive management authorities can change the territorial or jurisdictional responsibilities of police, change national management strategies, reform relevant departments or ministries or implement new national security policies that affect police mandates or operational needs. Reformation enhances external oversight: mandates for independent police complaints authorities or national human rights institutions with responsibility for police oversight are created or updated to enhance accountability (Skolnick, 2000).

Approaches toward reformation of the Police

To reform police system majority of the respondents 70% converged that the police reform process requires coordination among multiple stakeholders. They pointed out that the National government, with relevant local governments, should initiate and actively
support the reform effort and convince other stakeholders also to support the reform. In this regard, respondent (18) opines that oversight institutions, management authorities, civil society organisations and the public need to be consulted and involved directly in the reformation.

In the opinion of respondent (13) another approach that can enhance the police transformation in peace building or transition contexts, is the international actors, they can support national efforts at police reform but national institutions should lead these reforms. The above respondent pointed out that police reform involves a period of strategic assessment or pre-analysis, design and strategic planning, implementation and evaluation.

Slightly above half of the respondents 55% pointed out that effective reformation of police requires strategic assessment. They concurred that this perspective requires assessing the need for and priorities and a thorough analysis of the police organisation, its personnel and relationships with other institutions, civil society and the public. They pointed out that consultations with various stakeholders from all groups in society and across all ranks within the police will help identify underlying problems within the police, conduct a gender equality audit, determine how different actors perceive existing problems, establish need for reform, test willingness to reform, rally support and resources. They believed that this information will serve as a baseline crucial for evaluating reform progress later on.

Most respondents 65% agreed that police reformation requires strategic planning. They believed there is need for the initial analysis feeds into a detailed reform plan that sets well-defined goals, clear roles and responsibilities and a timeline for achieving them. Respondent (5) states:

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....''Setting of democratic governance goals, focusing on greater accountability with strong control and oversight mechanisms, should be balanced with operational objectives to ensure the feasibility of reform and public support. These are influenced by several factors, including, support from other parts of the security sector, public attitudes and relationship with the police, the existing organizational setting and resources available for reform.''
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All the respondents agreed that implementing a reform plan requires sufficient political support, financial and human resources as well as time. They pointed out that a systematic change management approach and effective internal and external
communication strategies provide clarity on the change process and help generate support. They believed that reformation will only be successful if it makes sense to all police personnel and those who interact with the police. Furthermore, they agreed that establishing a performance management and reward system can cement changes in police values and practices. Respondent (7) asserts that committed leadership from the top is essential. He opined that if there is a change in leadership, political support for reform should be maintained to ensure proper implementation of the reform plan.

In order to monitor the successful implementation of reformation, most of the respondents 60% agreed that evaluation is crucial and should involve gathering data throughout the process and evaluating results against clear and previously established criteria allows success to be measured and identifies areas where implementation efforts need to be adapted. They believed that evaluating progress demonstrates the benefits of reform to political leaders and the population and helps build support for the police and for future improvements. To implement community policing adopted in Nigeria, Davis et al. (2003) pointed out the characteristics of community policing are as follows: decentralization of authority and patrol strategies that intend to promote communication between police and the citizens, commitment to problem-oriented policing, permitting public to participate in setting police priorities and developing tactics, empowering communities to help solve their own problem through sponsorship programme.

According to Scott (2000), community policing can be operationalised together with problem-oriented policing, which allows police to scan the broad array of information sources they have access to, including calls for services, recorded crime, informants, and the community and to reclassify these requests for assistance or action into aggregations not based on bureaucratic categories but instead on items associated with an underlying problem.

**Improving Security Architecture**

Most respondents 70% agreed that improving security architecture of Nigeria requires the adoption of democratic policing, which is a set of values that describe what is expected of police in a democracy. They pointed out that the purpose of the police should be to uphold law and order, prevent crime, protect and respect the rights and freedoms of all persons, provide services and assistance to the public.

The respondent (16) affirms that police in a democracy should uphold the rule of law in performing their duties, demonstrate professionalism and integrity and respect human rights and civil and political rights, be accountable to the public, the State and law should be transparent in their operations, use of resources and communications with the public,
emphasize restrained, proportional and adequate use of force, when it is required. Most of the respondents 45% stated that democratic policing can be adopted with other people-centred policing approaches, such as community policing, problem-oriented policing and intelligence-led policing. The implementation of these approaches should reflect the core values of democratic policing.

To improve the Nigeria security architecture Aliemeka (2020) asserts that there is a need for the provision of effective tools such as knowledge-based policies and decisions; need for appropriate training of personnel of security and law enforcement agencies. There is a need to strengthen the involvement of citizens in conceiving and implementing security policies and services, security sector reform, strengthening the capacity of the security sector, and solving political and economic problems that engender crime and security. The respondent (7) suggested the need for increase external oversight in the Nigeria Police Force. Most respondents 65% believe that new policies and procedures are needed to ensure accountability in the police. They are of the opinion that federal government should create a dedicated federal prosecutorial unit to pursue felonies committed by active duty police officers. This unit should have an investigative capacity separate from the NPF. The unit should be endowed with the power to investigate and prosecute any acts of misconduct and criminal acts by NPF personnel. Also, develop a “duty solicitors” scheme that would place young lawyers completing their national service in police stations to provide representation to detainees as they enter the criminal justice system. Engage students of criminal justice, criminology and security studies in the police services.

In order to foster accountability in the police, most respondents 65% agreed that there is a need to increase the autonomy of the Nigeria Police Force to be more accountable and responsive to the people it serves. They agreed that the NPF should have greater autonomy from political control, coupled with greater internal control and external oversight. They pointed out that in order to foster accountability police officers and management should be held accountable and officers need to be monitored and properly supervised while performing their duties effectively. They affirmed that the Constitution of Nigeria 1999 should be adhered to by the police and security agencies. The two organs for the governance of the country’s police system are the Police Council and the Police Service Commission these organs should perform their duties effectively.

**Recommendations**

The police leadership needs to be accountable and ensure that personnel are adequately monitored and supervised when carrying out their functions, not allowed to take laws into
their hands. A comprehensive reward and punishment system needs to be injected into the police force. Police reform also improves how the police interact with other parts of the security sector, such as the courts and departments of corrections, or executive, parliamentary or independent authorities with management or oversight responsibilities.

The study recommends for the adoption of a holistic approach in the restructuring and reforming of the police. Need for retraining of police officers are crucial. Recruitments of new graduates from higher institutions across Nigeria are recommended to inject fresh ideas and strength into the police services. Need to direct the National Human Rights Commission to monitor cases involving police abuses and report regularly to both the National Assembly and the federal attorney-general.

The Nigeria Government has approved the adoption of community policing in Nigeria. The features of community policing involve the decentralization of authority and patrol strategies that intend to promote communication between police and the citizens, commitment to problem-oriented policing, permitting public to participate in setting police priorities and developing tactics, empowering communities to help solve their own problem through sponsorship programme. The study recommends that community policing be implemented in consonance with the problem oriented policing and intelligence-led policing. The implementers of the model should be given specialised training to understand the conceptual framework of the tenet and how to operationalise the model. The Police Service Commission should exercise its statutory authority to audit, oversee, and investigate the activities of the NPF. In particular, the Police Service Commission should oversee the NPF’s investigation and adjudication of any civilian complaints concerning serious crimes committed by police, including all accusations related to extrajudicial killing, firearms discharge, rape, torture, and civilian deaths in police custody.

The government should establish internal accountability mechanisms that can deter police misconduct and ensure a thorough investigation into allegations of misconduct. The NPF should establish a system for receiving and processing civilian complaints about police misconduct or crime. This system should provide confidential means for reporting police misconduct and guarantee the safety of victims and witnesses.

There is a need to maintain an effective internal affairs unit in the police force that can investigate specific complaints, address police misconduct, use data to identify patterns of misconduct and problem officers. Establish a system to record and track all detainees from the point of arrest until their case is adjudicated. Prohibit the transfer to another jurisdiction of any officer who is the subject of a pending civilian complaint. Promulgate
and rigorously enforce rules governing the maintenance of files and related evidence. The NPF should revise recruiting and vetting processes to ensure that only persons with clean criminal records, adequate experience and preparation, and appropriate temperament are recruited as police officers. NPF should maintain records of all candidates that were rejected during recruitment because of prior criminal conduct and officers who have been disciplined or criminally prosecuted. It will prevent unsuitable candidates from being hired and former officers from being rehired.

The NPF should improve firearms training, including teaching defensive and preventive tactics. Better training in these areas will reduce the likelihood of police drawing their guns unnecessarily, while increasing officer safety. Should conduct a formal review of all NPF firearm discharges. The NPF should ensure that police personnel are adequately trained to use appropriate investigative techniques, including forensics, as an alternative to the current over-reliance on arresting and interrogating suspects. Need to maintain standardised and accurate records concerning arrests, detention, any injuries or deaths in custody, or firearms incidents for all police stations and detention facilities, without exception. These records should be submitted annually to both the National Assembly and the Police Service Commission and should be after that be publicly accessible.

The federal government should review and improve the overall compensation provided to members of the police to reflect the importance of the job and the high expectations invested in every member of the NPF. Should establish pay levels that are tied, in part, to performance in reducing police abuses and addressing crime. Secure adequate group life, health, and disability insurance coverage for employees. Employ social and taxation policy such as lower taxes for police officers and free or subsidized access to public health and education for their children to supplement NPF salaries.

**Conclusion**
The study revealed that policing system and security architecture require total overhauling. In order for an effective reformation of the police, the government needs to improve the welfare packages of the police officers; there is need for re-training of the police officers, which in turn will enhance effective service delivery to the public. Most of the police officers who had suffered stress and post-traumatic disorders should be exposed to counseling and psychological assessments. Police in a democracy should uphold the rule of law in performing their duties, demonstrate professionalism and integrity and respect human rights and civil and political rights, be accountable to the public, the State and law should be transparent in their operations, use of resources and communications with the public, emphasize restrained, proportional and adequate use of
force, when it is required. There is a need to adopt democratic policing with other people-centred policing approaches, such as community policing, problem-oriented policing and intelligence-led policing. The implementation of these approaches should reflect the core values of democratic and modern policing.

References