

The Nigeria Police Force and Challenges of Crime Management: An Appraisal of Agitation for State Control Police

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ABSTRACT

With the rising incidence of crime in Nigeria, the efforts of the Nigeria Police Force to reduce crime, enforce the law, and maintain criminal justice have come under serious scholarly scrutiny. This study is an attempt to contribute to this discourse. Thus, by examining the Nigeria Police and crime management, this study is poised to carry out an appraisal of agitation for state control police in Nigeria. Anchored on relevant qualitative data drawn from secondary sources and the theory of post-colonial state, this study examined the impact of the centralized command structure of the Nigeria Police Force on crime management in Nigeria. They observe that the centralization of the command structure of the Nigeria Police Force by the Federal Government undermines the efforts of the state government to effectively deal with the incidence of crimes in Nigeria. The study also notes that the relegation of state-control police accounts for the rising incidence of crimes in Nigeria. The study thus submits that the central control structure of the Nigerian Police Force undermines crime management in Nigeria. Among others, the study recommends a structural rejig of Nigerian federalism to allow decentralization of the command structure of the Nigeria Police Force to the federating units so that state governments can effectively deal with the incidence of crimes in their domain.

Keywords: State-Controlled Police, Crime Management, Centralized Command Structure, Post-Colonial State Theory, Decentralization

INTRODUCTION

Crime has been a major subject of concern in many societies across the globe. In as much as no nation exists without crime, it is obvious that making a country safer and more peaceful is imperative for the meaningful progress of any society [1, 2]. The police are saddled with the responsibilities of crime control in all countries of the world. Such duties include crime detection and prevention, apprehension of offenders, the preservation of law and order as well as protection of lives and properties [3, 4]. The police also ensure due enforcement of all laws and regulations in a country. In other words, the provision of adequate security is a social prerequisite for the survival of any society. Every society takes appropriate measures to protect the lives and property of people living within its boundaries because the success of any business or social activity depends on security [5]. In this regard, societies from time immemorial made efforts to police their neighborhoods in order to secure them from criminal victimization. This follows the fact that insecurity impacts negatively on all citizens through losses of property, life, and limb, or loss of confidence from fear of violence. It is against this backdrop that the delivery of safety and security is considered a justifiable public good and the very essence of the state [6]. Thus, the government in every society through the police takes appropriate measures to protect the lives and property of people living within its boundaries. Thus, one function that makes the Nigerian Police Force a dependable part of the Nigerian criminal justice system is crime management. This function is executed largely through effective crime management through the detection, control, and prevention of crime. In Nigeria, the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN) (as amended) empowers the police with statutory powers to investigate crimes, apprehend offenders, interrogate suspects, prosecute suspects, and grant bail to suspects pending completion of investigation or prior to court arraignment, regulate or disperse unlawful processions and assemblies [7]. The Police are also empowered to search and seize properties suspected to be stolen or associated with crime and to take and record for purposes of identification, the biometrics of all suspected persons [8]. The functions of the Nigerian Police Force are stated in the Police Act. The Police Act provides for the organization, discipline, powers, and duties of the Police in Nigeria. There are general duties of the Police which include prevention and detection of crime, apprehension of offenders, preservation of law and order, protection of life and property [8]. Also, the police are involved in the performance of such military duties within or outside Nigeria as may be required of the by the Police Act or any other Act [8]. Security of lives and property is a social pre-requisite for the survival and development in any society. However, Nigeria seems to have witnessed various degrees of crimes that impact negatively on the living conditions of people. Crime management is becoming a serious challenge confronting the Nigeria Police Force. There are indications that the police who are the primary agent in the fight against crime are ineffective probably due to its organizational structure amongst others. This appears to have created problem of ineffective policing and poor crime

management in the country metropolis. For instance, armed robbery, burglary, murder, kidnappings for ransom, internet fraud and Ponzi schemes or investment swindle, among others have created the greatest challenges to the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) [9]. The prevailing incidence of crimes in Nigeria revolve around incidences of burglary, kidnapping, armed robbery, rape, banditry, murder, drug abuse and trafficking as well as cult clashes, among others have remained prevalent in Nigeria. There are indications that these crimes seem to have dwarfed the efforts of police charged with the responsibility to manage crimes in line with section 214 of the 1999 constitution (as amended) [8]. The inability of the Nigeria Police to combat these crimes results in severe hardship and tension among the people. Thus, violent and property crimes are committed on a daily basis without detection and prosecution due to poor crime management. This trajectory seems to have accounted for the increasing crime wave in Nigeria. Most critical is that the security operatives are finding it difficult to maintain peace, detect and prevent crimes, as well as arrest and prosecute the offenders [10]. In a bid to address the increasing wave of crime, the Nigeria Police Force has developed certain strategies such as physical policing, stop-and-search, and criminal investigations amongst others to detect, arrest, and prosecute suspected criminals. The police also engage in beat patrols, escort services, and surveillance to curb crimes. However, despite these efforts, the Nigeria Police Force seems not to have succeeded in reducing the crime rate in the country through effective crime management and this has drawn the attention of scholars [11]. The crime rate has continued to increase from year to year, thus making crime management a daunting challenge in the area. [12], argues that the structure of the Nigeria Police Force is a hurdle for its effective operation, particularly in crime prevention. [13], contends that in the 21st century, the road to the internal security of the nation opens widely when the police organization enhances its functional performance and fulfills its proper role in society using officers and resources that are psychologically and emotionally adequate. [14], observe that a good organizational structure without a human resource development plan cannot guarantee efficiency and performance, particularly in the Nigeria Police Force. While the foregoing scholarly inputs are appreciated, the challenges of the Nigeria Police Force in crime management with a focus on appraisal of agitation for state control police in Nigeria appear not to have been accorded adequate attention. This study intends to fill this knowledge gap.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

- i. How does the command structure of the Nigeria Police Force on crime management in Nigeria?
- ii. Does the relegation of state-control police account for the rising incidence of crimes in Nigeria?

Objectives of the Study

This study has both broad and specific objectives. The broad objective is to examine the impact of the Nigeria Police Force on crime management in Nigeria with specific attention on the appraisal of agitation for state control police in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- i. Ascertain the command structure of the Nigeria Police Force's impact on crime management in Nigeria.
- ii. Find out whether the relegation of state-control police accounts for the rising incidence of crimes in Nigeria

Hypotheses

The study was guided by the following hypotheses:

1. The centralization of the command structure of the Nigeria Police Force by the Federal Government undermines the efforts of the state government to effectively deal with the incidence of crimes in Nigeria.
2. The relegation of state-control police accounts for the rising incidence of crimes in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a longitudinal research design. Longitudinal design involves observing a few variables for sometimes [15]. In a longitudinal study, the same sample is repeatedly observed over a period. In longitudinal surveys, the same respondents are studied at regular intervals. This enables researchers to observe and measure changes in variables over time and associate them with causal factors. This allows for changes in variables to be observed and measured by researchers over time and to relate them to their causal factors.

With longitudinal studies, changes, trends, and patterns in human behavior are easily described and quantified. They also amass stupendous information on a single person or a small group of people. Hence, longitudinal research studies the development, transformation, and course of events. With these advantages, a longitudinal design is regarded as superior to a cross-sectional design. This is because it allows for easy identification of the causes and patterns of changes within and among individuals. Furthermore, longitudinal research is relevant in testing theory, examining causal hypotheses, and studying unique individual cases [16]. [17], contend that longitudinal research design is advantageous because it facilitates the analysis of the duration of a particular phenomenon; it enables survey researchers to get close to the kinds of causal explanations usually attainable only with experiments; it permits the measurement of differences or changes in a variable from one period to another; and finally, it facilitates the prediction of future outcomes based on earlier factors. In applying longitudinal design to our study, our verification of hypotheses shall involve retrospective observation of some relevant dependent and independent variables and ascertaining how they developed and transformed over time. The adoption of a longitudinal design will, therefore, facilitate the gathering of data from the study samples. The analysis of data shall entail eliciting relevant information from the

samples and monitoring them carefully and closely to determine the trends in human behaviour and patterns of behavioural change and their cause(s).

Methods of Data Collection

The study adopted a documentary method of data collection. The documentary method of data collection refers to the analysis of documents that contain information about the phenomenon that the study is set to investigate [18]. The documentary method is the technique used to categorize, investigate, interpret, and identify the limitations of sources, most commonly written documents whether in the private or public domain. Basic to the understanding of the logical adoption of the documentary method is that it tangentially relies on secondary data. The documentary method is relevant to the study because the information or data required for the study are already in the public domain. What is needed is to refine, interpret, evaluate, and analyse them. It is not the kind of information elicited through interviews and questionnaires. The documentary method of data collection will be adopted because it offers access to records of past events that permit analyses of the phenomenon under study, which may be difficult or impossible to obtain through direct personal contact. Similarly, documents are manageable thus, obtaining and analyzing documents is often far more cost-efficient and time-efficient than personal experiments [19]. Also, documents are stable, “non-reactive” data sources; they can be read and reviewed multiple times and can support and strengthen this research. Thus, the data will be mainly secondary data drawn from government publications/official documents. The above-listed institutional and official documents were complemented with secondary data drawn from books, journal articles, conference papers, periodicals, and other articles. Finally, this study utilized materials sourced from the internet that dwell on the same subject matter [20, 21].

Methods of Data Analysis

The study utilised qualitative content analysis rooted in systematic logical deductions. This involved systematic evaluation of texts, interpreting, and making valid inferences. We used content analysis to organize and synthesize the large volumes of qualitative data to be generated during this study, search for patterns discern what is relevant, and on that basis draw our inferences and conclusions. Furthermore, qualitative content analysis was adopted to enable us to holistically sift through the data with relative ease and to systematically reduce them to logical, meaningful, and coherent interpretations that can be communicated to others. This is important to gain a better knowledge of the unit or subject being studied. In this light, the data used in this study was analysed through the instrumentality of qualitative content analysis to arrive at a valid argument and make valuable deductions from available documented data.

RESULTS

Empirical Verification

The centralization of the command structure of the Nigeria Police Force by the Federal Government and the efforts of state governments to effectively deal with the incidence of crimes in Nigeria

The emergence and consequent establishment of the Nigeria Police Force has its roots in the tactical convergence of commercial, political, and strategic interests of the Europeans who colonized the country. The first police institution was constituted in a 30-person Consular Guard under the authority of the then Governor of British West Africa in October 1861 [22]. Thereafter, a 1,200-member armed paramilitary Hausa Constabulary for the colony of Lagos was formed in 1879 and was established with the appointment of the first commissioner of police in 1896. A similar force, the Niger Coast Constabulary, was formed in Calabar in 1894 under the newly proclaimed Niger Coast Protectorate. In the north, the Royal Niger Company set up the Royal Niger Company Constabulary in 1888. When the protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria were proclaimed in the early 1900s, part of the Royal Niger Company Constabulary became the Northern Nigeria Police, and part of the Niger Coast Constabulary became the Southern Nigeria Police. [22], observed that in both the colony and the protectorates, the police institution was established to advance European colonial, commercial, and strategic interests against those of the “natives”. The above aligns with the earlier assertion by [23] who pointed out that the key role of these police units was to put down organized expressions of “native” discontent; which resulted in the Epe uprising of 1863. Incidentally, by 1900, the Royal Niger Constabulary was split into two units comprising the northern police force and a regiment while allowing the Southern Nigeria Police Force to exist. When the protectorates of the Northern and Southern Nigeria were proclaimed in 1900, the Royal Niger Constabulary was split into the Northern Nigeria police force and the Northern Nigerian Regiment. In the south, the Lagos police force and part of the Niger coast constabulary formed the Southern Nigerian Regiment. The new formations were responsible for dealing with internal disturbances and external aggression in addition to normal police duties. Thus, following the amalgamation in 1914, two different police formations were maintained for both Northern and Southern Nigeria. After the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates in 1914, the two police forces operated separately until April 1930 when they were merged to form the present Nigeria police force under the command of an Inspector General of Police. Subsequently, the colonial government established the Nigeria Police with its headquarters in Lagos and appointed an Inspector-General of Police on April 1, 1930. [23], argued that the core aim of establishing the Nigeria Police Force was to ensure full protection of the British, who held power and control of resources, and not really to “maintain peace and order” in the society.

During the colonial period, most police were associated with local governments (native authorities). In the 1960s, under the First Republic, these forces were first regionalised and then nationalised. The NPF performed conventional police functions and was responsible for internal security generally; for supporting the prison, immigration, and customs services; and for performing military duties within or outside Nigeria as directed [24]. The Nigerian police

force therefore came into being by ordinance No. 3 of 1980, which brought together the various parts of the country. The newly created force was administered on a regional basis under the overall command of an Inspector General of Police with headquarters in Lagos. According to [25], the Force is organized into 37 Commands and the Force Headquarters. Each of the 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory is served by a Command of the Force. The Force Headquarters is the office of the Inspector General of Police. The tasks of the Force are carried out through eight Departments which include: Administration and Finance, Operations, Works, Supply and Logistics, the Force Criminal Investigations Department (FCID), the Force Intelligence Department, Training and Development, Research and Planning; and the ICT department. Each of the Departments is under the leadership of Deputy Inspectors-General of Police. The 37 State Police Commands are further organized into seventeen Zonal Commands. The Zonal commands are under the command of Assistant Inspectors-General, while Commissioners of Police are in charge of State Commands. The entire Force is under the command of the Inspector-General of Police. The Commandants of the Police Staff College, Jos, and Police Academy Wudil, Kano are also Assistant Inspectors-General of Police, while the Police Colleges are commanded by Commissioners of Police, and the Police Training Schools where recruits are trained are under the direction of Assistant Commissioners of Police.

The above scenario seems to have laid the structural foundation for the existence of the Nigeria Police Force. Thus, the colonial legacy of repressive policing has been responsible for the prevailing alienation of the police from the people resulting in widespread deficits in terms of legitimacy. Also, [26] x-rayed the coercive activities of the colonial government which needed a brutal force to deal with the restive natives to facilitate the colonization of the country. The Nigeria Police Force is a product of the nation's extant laws. Thus, by Section 4, Police Act of 1967, Cap 359 of the Laws of the Federation, 1990, power is conferred upon the Force for the maintenance of law and order throughout the Country. The Nigeria Police personnel with an estimated 377,000 employees have a centralized management command and control structure in which the Inspector-General of Police singlehandedly determines both policy and operational matters. As the head of the Force, the Inspector-General of Police is appointed by the President but on the advice of the Nigeria Police Council (NPO) as stated in section 27 of the 1999 constitution of Nigeria as amended. The Inspector General of Police is usually appointed from among some serving top hierarchy of the Force. The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) is designated by Section 194 of the 1979 constitution as the national police with exclusive jurisdiction throughout the country. According to [27], the central objectives of policing are:

- i. To provide security, or at least a social and psychological feeling of security, for a majority of citizens in a majority of places, and for most of the time.
- ii. To prevent, control and combat criminality whatever and by whoever.
- iii. To maintain public order and peace.
- iv. To render assistance and service to all citizens needing or requiring security and,
- v. To favorably symbolize the law and the government by always upholding the rule of law.

According to [28], the police is the principal agency charged with the responsibility of internal peace and security. The 1999 Nigerian Constitution provides for the establishment of the Nigerian Police Force under section 214. This is in line with section 14(2b) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) which states "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government". Section 214 clearly states that:

- a. There shall be a Police Force for Nigeria, which shall be known as the Nigeria Police Force, and subject to the provisions of this section, no other police force shall be established for the Federation or any part thereof. Sub-section
- b. Subject to the provisions of this constitution – a. the Nigeria Police Force shall be organized and administered in accordance with such provisions as may be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly; b. the members of the Nigeria Police Force shall have such powers and duties as may be conferred upon them by law.

Police Act, Cap P.19, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria (2004) provides under the Constitution and Employment of the Force; the general duties of the police. Section four (4) provides six broad functions for the Nigeria Police Force. They include [29]:

1. Crime Prevention
2. Detection and apprehension of offenders
3. Preservation of law and order
4. Protection of life and property; and,
5. Enforcement of all laws and regulations with which they are directly charged. These include laws and regulations made by federal, state, and local governments.
6. Performance of such military duties within or outside Nigeria as may be required of them by, or under the authority of this or any other Act.

To discharge their numerous functions, police in Nigeria are accorded wide powers by law Nigeria police have the powers:

- To take measures to prevent crime.
- To investigate crime.
- To prosecute suspects.
- To search properties and persons in order to prevent crimes, detect or investigate crimes, apprehend offenders, and collect evidence for prosecution.
- To grant bail to suspects pending investigation or arraignment in court.

- To serve summons.
- To regulate processions and assemblies [27].

The contemporary Nigeria Police Force is a product of the nation's Constitution: the 1999 Constitution [30]. Constitutional provision also exists, however, for the establishment of separate NPF branches "forming part of the armed forces of the Federation or for their protection of harbours, waterways, railways and airfield. Thus, administratively, the NPF was under the general operational and administrative control of an Inspector General (IGP) appointed by the president and responsible for the maintenance of law and order. He was supported at headquarters in Lagos by a Deputy Inspector General (DIG) and in each state by police commissioners. The 1979 constitution provided for a Police Service Commission that was responsible for NPF policy, organization, administration, and finance (except for pensions). In late 1986, the NPF was reorganized nationwide into seven area commands, which superseded a command structure corresponding to each of the States of Nigeria. Each command was under a commissioner of police and was further divided into police provinces and divisions under local officers. NPF headquarters, which was also an area command, supervised and coordinated the other area commands. Later these Area Commands were grouped under Zone Commands as follows:

1. Zone 1. Headquartered Kano, with Kano, Kastina, and Jigawa Commands;
2. Zone 2. Headquartered Lagos, with Lagos, and Ogun commands;
3. Zone 3. Headquartered Yola, with Adamawa, and Gombe Commands [31].

In February 1989, Babangida abolished the Police Service Commission and established the Nigeria Police Council in its stead, under direct presidential control. The new council was chaired by the president; the chief of General Staff, the minister of internal affairs, and the police inspector general were members [25]. The 1999 constitution equally designates the NPF as the national police, with exclusive jurisdiction throughout the country [32]. The structure of the Nigeria Police Force is provided for in sections 214 (2)(a) and 215(2) of the 1999 Constitution. Section 214(2)(a) states "Subject to the provisions of this constitution (a) the Nigeria Police shall be organised and Administered by such provisions as may be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly", while Section 215 (2) reads:

The Nigeria Police Force shall be under the Command of the Inspector-General of Police and any 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

From the provisions above, three different structures in the Police Force can be identified. These are:

- a. Command (Authority) Structure.
- b. Administration structure and
- c. Organisation structure

These structures are patterned to meet the constitutional expectations of the Police.

The Command structure also referred to as the authority structure, of the Police Force, is predicated on the regimental nature of the Force and conducted along the Force badges of ranks. Thus, section 215(2) of the 1999 Constitution and section 6 of the Police Act, 1990 laws provide that "the Force shall be commanded by the Inspector-General of Police". This simply means that orders, directives, and instructions to perform or carry out the duties with which the Police are carried, flow from the Inspector-General of Police, through the chain of Command, to any Officer positioned to implement such order. Disobedience or failure to carry out such instruction, directive, or order, attracts punitive sanctions. According to Section 7 (1) of the Police Act, the next in line to the Inspector General of Police is the Deputy Inspector General of Police. Though this rank is not specially mentioned in the Constitution, it has legal backing, because the Police Act is a law made by the National Assembly by the constitution. According to section 7(1) of the Police Act, the Deputy Inspector General of Police is the second in Command of the Force and shall so act for him in the Inspector-General's absence. Section 5 of the Act makes room for as many DIGs as the Nigeria Police Council considers appropriate. Every other rank below the IG, takes order of Command from him, in the performance of their lawful duties. The Office of the Assistant Inspector-General of Police is provided for by sections 5 and 8 of the Police Act. He shall act for the Inspector-General of Police in the event of the absence of the Inspector-General of Police and Deputy Inspector-General of Police. Section 5 of the Police Act, by the provisions of section 215 (2), of the Nigeria Constitution, provides for the Office and rank of a Commissioner of Police who shall be in Control of contingents of the Police Force stationed in a State. He is subject, however, to the command of the Inspector-General of Police or whoever acts for him, in his absence. Every other rank in the Force is legally provided for by section 5 of the Police Act. The Command structure of the Nigeria Police can be presented in order of hierarchy as in the chain here under.

The Inspector-General of Police, The Deputy Inspector-General of Police, The Asst. Inspector-General of Police, The Commissioner of Police (In charge of contingents in a state), The Deputy Commissioner of Police, The Asst. Commissioner of Police, The Chief Superintendent of Police, The Superintendent of Police, The Deputy Superintendent of Police, The Asst. Superintendent of Police, The Inspector of Police, Sergeant Major, Sergeant, Corporal, Constable

From the foregoing, it is quite evident that the command structure of the Nigeria Police Force is highly centralized despite covering a diverse federal polity. According to [33], while allowing for easier interstate cooperation than in decentralized police systems, the centralized nature of the force also tends to disempower state-level commands, hinder service delivery, create bottlenecks, and distance citizens from "their" police. It can also lead to politicization and a lack

of professionalism. Centralized leadership filters human resources and assets toward the center, leaving many frontline units at the state-level command under-resourced and nominally supervised.

Not with standing the NPF's five-tier command structure, too many decisions begin and end on the desk of the NPF's top commander, the Inspector General of Police (IGP). This undercuts responsiveness and customization of police engagements at the community level. The deputy inspectors general who are supposed to work with lieutenants and members of the police management team only nominally function as heads of departments. The offices of the 12 zonal assistant inspectors general, who are expected to give leadership and strategic direction to state-level commissioners, fare even worse in being able to effectively exercise their statutory leadership roles [33]. Aside from the chain of command, accountability is also centralized and largely "upward looking." For example, as opposed to working closely with district commanders and their local citizens and municipal officials, the police leadership is answerable primarily to the presidency (which houses the Ministry of Interior, the Police Service Commission, and the Police Council). An opaque leadership appointment procedure with little regard for merit and performance makes this centralized decision-making even more problematic. For example, in 2012, the perceived illegitimate and undeserved promotion of 7 deputy inspectors general and 13 assistant inspectors general led a large cadre of senior police officers to threaten to quit en masse. In a statement, the group claimed only two of the seven deputies were adequately qualified, and called the remainder of the promotions "strange, ridiculous and suspicious, as [the nominees] are not the most senior officers from their respective geo-political zones [34]. Such behavior has consistently denied the NPF the services of its most competent officers at important leadership levels. The Federal Character Principle, which is aimed at ensuring equity in the representation of ethnic groups in government institutions, has been exploited as a vehicle for nepotism, subjecting the selection process to personal and political connections. More fundamentally, the management mechanisms established for Nigeria's police suffer from bureaucratic overlap and poor implementation of statutory mandates. Three agencies within Nigeria's executive branch are charged with supervision: the Police Service Commission, the Ministry of Interior, and the Police Council. There are also oversight bodies led by the legislative and judicial branches of government [33]. Nigeria's Police Service Commission (PSC) is the main civilian supervisory and oversight body of the NPF. According to the statute, it ought to be one of the most powerful such bodies in the world. It is charged with responsibility for appointments, promotions, and disciplinary action in the NPF. However, a combination of factors—political interference, budgetary constraints, and inability to set up and maintain a functional investigative unit—have affected its disciplinary functions over the NPF, thereby robbing the PSC of its relevance and vibrancy. Indeed, the PSC refers all complaints of extrajudicial killings back to the NPF for investigation. According to [35], quarterly reports to the President are not published and present a dismal chronicle of rubber-stamping decisions taken by the police, coupled with inaction in relation to pressing concerns. A radical overhaul of its procedures and compositions is warranted. The Ministry of Interior (MoI) has a cabinet-level minister charged with directing the IGP. The MoI is responsible for the provision of policy, administration, logistics, and financial management to the Nigeria Police Force. A 2015 restructuring integrated the NPF with other agencies the MoI oversees, such as Immigration Services, Fire Services, the Security Civil Defence Corps, and Prison Services. Yet Ministry supervision of the police has been aimless. It has not defined its vision, determined its scope of responsibility, or announced its intended involvement based on its resources and skills to realize optimal impact. The apex of executive branch management mechanisms is the Police Council, which serves as a "board of directors" comprising the President, the governor of each state, the chairman of the Police Service Commission, and the Inspector General of Police. The Council is meant to organize and administer the NPF, provide general supervision, and advise the President on the appointment of the Inspector General of Police. However, these functions overlap and compete with the mandate of the MoI. Moreover, the absence of the Minister of Interior and the Attorney General from the Police Council effectively fosters parallel command structures. The point being made is that the structural and operational centralization of the Police in Abuja as well as its control by the Federal government has undermined the capacity of state governments to effectively mitigate the incidence of crime in their respective domain. To this end, the first hypothesis of the study is upheld. Thus, the centralization of the command structure of the Nigeria Police Force by the Federal Government undermines the efforts of the state government to effectively deal with the incidence of crimes in Nigeria. What this implies is that the relegation of state-control police accounts for the rising incidence of crimes in Nigeria. We proceed to examine this.

The Relegation of State-Control Police Accounts for the Rising Incidence of Crimes in Nigeria

The police remain a major government institution saddled with the responsibility of maintaining law and order in society [36]. The police play key twin roles of maintenance of law and order in the society. As such, the police tend to uphold and enforce the law impartially and protect life, property, human rights, and dignity of the members of the public [37]. [37], added that the maintenance of law and order in any society is essential for a secure and peaceful environment as well as rapid economic and social development. The police force represents the civil power of government as opposed to military power [27]. Typically, officers of the police force are responsible for maintaining public order and safety, enforcing the law, and preventing, detecting, and investigating criminal activities in a state, and all of these functions are known as policing [28]. In this regard, the roles and responsibilities of the police in any society cannot be over-emphasized. They are charged with the responsibility of prevention and detection of crime, apprehension of offenders, protection of lives and properties, due enforcement of laws and regulations with which they are charged with the performance of military duties within or outside Nigeria as may be required by or under authority. According to [39], intelligence-led policing is sine-qua-non to crime management, and the police must work hard and make Nigeria comfortable, habitable, and a safer place for all. However, there tends to be tension between the

centralized structure and operational efficiency of the Nigeria Police Force particularly at the state government level. Hence, the Nigeria Police Force under the control of the Federal Government have been unable to mitigate the incidence of crime. They have also not arrested and prosecuted the perpetrators. This calls to question, the centralization and control of the command structure of the Nigeria Police Force by the Federal Government, especially where state governors are the Chief Security Officers of their states. As a result, some states have created special security outfits that seem not to work very effectively with the Nigeria Police. With the centralization and control of the command structure of the Nigeria Police Force by the Federal Government, the position of governors is nominal, despite that they are the chief security officers of their states. This is because the centralisation of policing in Nigeria has made it difficult for state governments to assume total control of security within their confinements. In fact, the inability of state governments to either assume operational control of police contingents in their respective states or to establish, maintain and control their police formations has adversely affected their ability to reduce crime within their domain. This obviously is the case with respect to the incessant attacks between transhumant pastoralists and crop farmers, rising incidence of kidnapping for ransom, banditry, armed robbery, child trafficking, cultism, rape among others. For instance, in the last three years, Benue State witnessed no fewer than 726 violent attacks on sedentary farmers by herdsmen in 15 of the 23 local government areas of the state resulting in killing over 500 persons (See Figure 1).

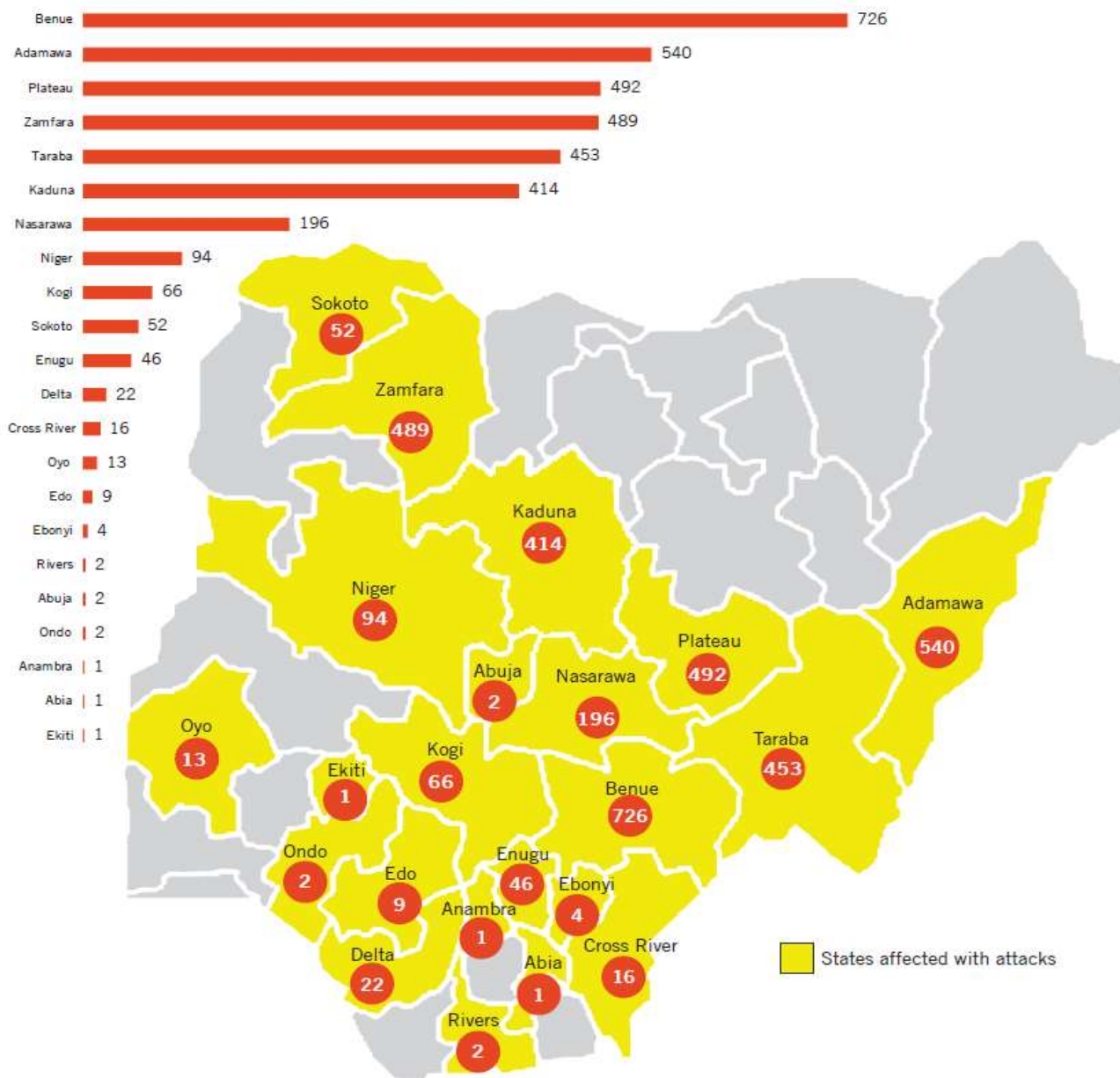


Figure 1: Total number of people killed from January 2016- October 2018.

Source: Amnesty International (2018). *Harvest of death: Three years of bloody clashes between farmers and herdsmen in Nigeria*. Abuja:Amnesty International.

The enormity and severity of these attacks notwithstanding, the Benue state government could neither arrest and prosecute the perpetrators nor pro-actively use intelligence gathering to mitigate the conflicts in the state due to the command structure of public security agencies. In Nigeria, the chain of command and accountability of public security agencies rests with the higher federal authority. This has greatly undermined the potential of federating units to effectively combat crime in their domains. The impact of the flagrant complicity and nonchalance of public security agencies on the increasing rate of crime, particularly herder-farmer conflict was also alluded to by Amnesty International in its 2018 report. According to the report, a local Fulani official, confirming the failure to address the impunity gap and the apparent consequences, insisted that:

the lack of arrests after the Shelewol attack on November 20 2017¹²⁰ angered the Fulani and this led to the 4 December 2017 retaliatory attacks on at least seven Numan and Demsa villages in the state. 'No arrest was made, none that I am aware of. If arrests were made, there would have been no reprisals' [40].

The deductions that can be made from the foregoing are one, flagrant complicity and nonchalance of public security agencies, especially the police force controlled by the Federal Government, account for the increasing rate of crime in Nigeria; two, the inability of state governments to effectively control crime within their domain is implicated in the functional and operational centralization of policing in Nigeria.

Furthermore, Nigeria suffers from a high crime rate as one of the continent's largest and most influential nations. The 2023 Africa Organised Crime Index ranks Nigeria second, with Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) topping the continental charts when it comes to the scourge of organised crime [41]. Again, the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime ranks Nigeria 6th in the world, with a crime index of 7.28 (<https://globalinitiative.net/>). In addition, Nigeria is the sixth country most affected by terrorism, based on the Global Terrorism Index. One further serious threat in Nigeria is the risk of mass killing, or genocide. Nigeria is the second country in Africa with the highest risk of genocide and the sixth worldwide. This risk is influenced by a population of over 200 million people, a high child mortality rate, ongoing battle-related deaths, the country's history of mass killing, and its ethnic fractionalization (<https://www.statista.com/topics/7491/crime-in-nigeria/>). Furthermore, Nigeria has recently been included among the countries with the least peace in the world, according to the Global Peace Index. It is the 18th least [42]. In sum, the Nigerian crime scene is defined by political instability, kidnapping for ransom, citizen alienation, and violence, among others. The foregoing indicates that the Nigerian government is grappling with the rising incidence of crime arising from the centralized structure of the Nigeria Police Force. The centralized nature of the force, while allowing for easier inter-state cooperation than in decentralized police systems, tends also to filter human and material resources towards the centre, while many frontline units are underequipped. Again, decision-making concentrated at the central level can also be restrictive in some contexts. For example, the sole broad-based oversight organ is the National Police Service Commission, with powers restricted to recruitment, promotion, discipline, and dismissal, concentrating mainly on senior officers. Worst still, police contingents in the states are strictly under the operational control of the Inspector General, appointed by the President and ratified by the senate, despite that governor, with 'security votes', are the chief security officers of their states. All these account for the rising incidence of crime in Nigeria. Following the weakness of the police force to effectively secure lives and property, state governments have responded variously in this regard. While some have established peace committees to promote dialogue and resolve conflicts, others such as Benue state have passed laws. All these have reinforced the agitations for state-controlled police to effectively mitigate the soaring incidence of crime in Nigeria since crime is local. We proceed now to examine this.

An Appraisal of Agitation for State Control Police

State police refer to policing in a federal system in which the state government employs police officers for the purpose of policing the state. [23], describes state policing as "territorial policing. It is a subnational form of policing in which there is devolution of security operations in the hands of the federating states of regions. State policing operationally when policing and all its operations and logistics are controlled by other tiers of government other than the national or federal government" [43]. A state police is a police formation organized and maintained by a state. However, in the particular case of Nigeria, the state police are a kind of sub-national police formation that is established, organized, maintained, and under the direct control and jurisdiction of a particular state (subnational unit) government [44]. In recent times, agitation for restructuring and practice of state police has intensified in Nigeria. Restructuring in the context of Nigeria is a consistent call and move for political reorganization of Nigeria's federal structure, system of government as well as other aspects desired for constitutional amendment [45]. Due to magnitude and complexity of security challenges in Nigeria and poor performance of the Nigeria Police Force in this respect, some Nigerians have been agitating for setting up of state Police under the control of state governors as Chief Security Officers of their states. Regardless of arguments for or against the establishment of state police, there is the need to investigate the missing link that led to poor performance of the NPF in contemporary time. Particularly shortage of manpower, under funding of the force, political interference and corruption among others. The struggle for state police has continued to gain momentum, it is imperative that the current police structure be well funded and equipped for better service delivery, especially now that the country is facing serious security challenges. In addition to that, whether state police are established or not, there is need for constitutional and police reforms to address leadership crisis and corruption in Nigeria.

To this end, [46], considering the rising insecurity in Nigeria in recent times and the centralization of the Nigeria Police Force in a federal state, which is against the principle and practice of true federalism, are of the view that, there is the need to decentralize the force, to ensure that states establish, maintain, and control their police formations. Through this, the level of insecurity in the country would be mitigated. Today, the Force is not properly funded and supervised due to its centralized administrative structure and responsibilities. The two-tier police structure (federal and state police), as is obtainable in America and other developed nations is bound to boost the quality of its performance. Devolving the responsibility for police operations at the grassroots to the states, in addition to giving attention to their welfare, especially the rank and file, would checkmate the security challenges currently facing the nation. Relatedly, [36] opines that the establishment of state police in Nigeria due to the failure of the Nigeria Police Force to address the current security challenges is desirable. This is because the force has performed below expectations. Enforcing law and order in the country is facing a lot of challenges, which include - improper remuneration of officers, faulty recruitment of unqualified men and women, and poor funding, among others. In view of the above, it is imperative that the National Assembly amend the relevant sections of the 1999 constitution (as amended) to provide for state police. To checkmate the possible abuse of the police system in Nigeria (both at Federal and State levels), the National Assembly should through relevant legislative reengineering, transform the police into a strong institution that cannot be misused by the chief executives (president or governors). The agitation for a decentralized police force structure in Nigeria is in line with the principle of federal system of government being practice in the polity. In a working Federalism, states adopt security system that serve their contextual size, population, political, legal, ethnic and cultural identities and developmental levels. This is unlike in Nigeria, where the centralized police structure under the monopoly of the Federal Government has been abused to some extent by the ruling party, particularly for political reasons. It is against this backdrop that demands for state police have grounds despite fear of possible abuse by the state governments. Therefore, it has been contended that there is the need for reform from the present arrangement of strictly federal monopoly of police operations in Nigeria towards less monopolizing structure through the greater involvement of state governments in management of national security [47] believe that it is only a decentralization of the force as obtained in most developed countries that can rescue the nation from the grip of criminal elements. This arrangement is consistent with the principle of true federalism and decentralization of powers and as such would permit the state government to effectively maintain law and order at the state level. Relatedly, [43] argues that the inability of the police to effectively perform its constitutional duties, among other factors, is blamed on the over-centralization of the force in Nigeria. Given the security challenges across the federation and arguments for or against the establishment of state police, the study aligns with the popular view that the establishment of state police is one of the lasting measures to curb the recurring crime problem in the country. With the foregoing qualitative evidence, the second hypothesis of the study is upheld. Hence, the relegation of state-control police accounts for the rising incidence of crimes in Nigeria.

DISCUSSION

This study examined the impact of the Nigeria Police Force in crime management in Nigeria with an appraisal of the agitation for state control police. There is no doubt that crime management has been a major subject of concern in many societies as no society exists without incidences of crime. It is in this regard that the Nigeria Police Force is saddled with the responsibilities of crime management. Such duties include crime detection and prevention, apprehension of offenders, the preservation of law and order as well as protection of lives and properties. The police also ensure due enforcement of all laws and regulations in every part of Nigeria. However, the seemingly abysmal performance of the police in tackling crimes has remained a worrisome trajectory. Thus, the main objective of this study is to examine the impact of the Nigeria Police Force on crime management in Nigeria with specific attention on the appraisal of agitation for state control police in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- i. ascertain the command structure of the Nigeria Police Force's impact on crime management in Nigeria.
- ii. find out whether the relegation of state-control police accounts for the rising incidence of crimes in Nigeria

The theory of post-colonial, popularized by [48-52] and others, was explored as the theoretical framework of analysis. The theory reveals that the functional weakness of the Nigerian state which has found expression in the apparent inability of the police to effectively mediate the incidence of crimes is a result of the centralization of the command structure of the Nigerian Police Force by the Federal Government in Nigeria and this is one of the hangovers of British colonialism which is now exploited by the rapacious ruling elite to foster and advance their private interests. The analytical utility of this framework addressed the objectives of the study and explicated the conceptual and empirical basics of the study.

To achieve the set objectives of the study adopted a longitudinal design that relied on secondary methods of data collection. The data collected were qualitatively analyzed. The followings are the findings of the research:

- i. Findings revealed that there is a rising incidence of crime in Nigeria.
- ii. The study uncovered that the Nigeria Police Force is legally empowered to maintain of law and order in Nigeria through crime dictation, prevention and control.
- iii. The centralization of the command structure of the Nigeria Police Force by the Federal Government undermines the efforts of the state government to effectively deal with the incidence of crimes in Nigeria.
- iv. The delegation of state-control police accounts for the rising incidence of crimes in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

The importance of the roles of the Nigeria Police Force cannot be underestimated in any society. This is because the police are saddled with the responsibilities of crime management the performance of security duties such as crime detection and prevention, apprehension of offenders, the preservation of law and order as well as protection of lives and properties. Nigeria has witnessed crimes of various descriptions that tend to undermine the peace and security of the people and property. However, despite the various strategies adopted by the police as the primary agent for crime management, the menace of crime still bedevils the Nigerian state. The study submits that the centralization of the command structure of the Nigeria Police Force by the Federal Government weakens the efforts of the state government to effectively deal with the incidence of crimes. Thus, the relegation of state control police accounts for the rising incidence of crimes in Nigeria.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study, we make the following recommendations for policy implementation:

- i. Nigerian federalism should be restructured to allow decentralization of the command structure of the Nigeria Police Force to the federating units so that state governments can effectively deal with the incidence of crimes in their domain
- ii. Relevant sections of the extant laws in Nigeria should be amended to introduce state-control police as a panacea to the rising incidence of crimes in Nigeria.
- iii. Efforts should be made by the government to tackle several challenges such as lack of equipment, poor training, and poor funding to ensure effective crime management in Nigeria.

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