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## SOCIAL FORCES MILITATING AGAINST EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE OF SECURITY AGENCIES IN NIGERIA

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### **Abstract**

*This study examined the social forces that hinder the effective performance of security agencies in Nigeria. Using a Social Disorganisation Theory developed by Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay, the study relied on the review of existing literature on the subject matter. It was a library research that identified corruption, inter-agency rivalry, poverty, unemployment, inadequate equipment, insufficient funding, lack of motivation of the security agents, inadequate man-power, political interference, tribal and religious sentiments in recruitment, lack of public trust, militarization policy in a democratic dispensation and insufficient training of security personnel as significant obstacles to effective security performance. The findings suggested that addressing these challenges requires prioritizing funding for security agencies, implementing anti-corruption measures and ensuring political neutrality in security operations. The study contributed to literature in terms of contextualizing these social forces within the Nigerian security landscape, providing a nuanced understanding of their impact and empirical evidence from Nigeria, enriching the existing literature on security sector reform and performance. Further research is needed to analyse how international influence impacts security agencies' decision-making and operations.*

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**Keywords: Social Forces, Militating, Effective Performance, Security Agencies**

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### **Introduction**

The security sector in many countries of the world has peculiar security issues and Nigeria is no exception (Kasali *et al.*, 2021; Adebayo, 2013). Security agencies in Nigeria have faced diverse challenges in an attempt to maintain law and order. These issues include kidnapping, insurgencies, banditry, farmers-herders conflict, ethno-religious conflicts, armed robbery, cultism, murder, fraud, rape, and other violent crimes. Dambazau (2007) averred that the greatest danger to national security is the feeling of insecurity among citizens, a situation that could result in indiscipline, loss of trust in authority, frustration, apathy, desperation, agitation, anarchy, lawlessness. This aptly describes the feelings of many Nigerians and the current situation of insecurity in the country especially when the apparatus of government security agencies seem incapable of tackling the problem.

According to Tanko (2021), Boko Haram is expanding in the North-East of Nigeria, and has claimed the lives of about 350,000 people, properties worth millions of naira destroyed, and many victims are displaced from their homes. There are also frequent cases of kidnapping for ransom and abduction of students from their classrooms and boarding houses. Attacks by bandits have forced thousands of people to flee their homes and seek shelter in other parts of the country. A separatist group called the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the South-East has been clashing with Nigeria's security agencies while enforcing a sit-at-home order. In the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, militants have kidnapped expatriates and attacked security personnel and oil infrastructure, including pipelines (Tanko, 2021).

Successive governments in Nigeria have budgeted huge financial resources for security agencies to reduce crime in the country, for annual recruitment of personnel, and for the procurement of ammunitions

and equipment. Despite these efforts to reduce crime and provide adequate security in the country, security agencies are still facing several challenges in combating crime and maintaining security.

Previous studies have identified corruption (Duke *et al.*, 2019), poor funding (Owonikoko, 2019), inter-agency rivalry Mohammed and Yusuf (2018) and political interference (Elechi *et al.*, 2023), lack of public trust (Ajayi and Longe, 2014), lack of motivation (Susan *et al.*, 2024), lack of equipment (Ukwayi *et al.*, 2018) as significant social forces militating against effective performance of security agencies in Nigeria. This paper aimed to examine the social forces that hinder the effective performance of security agencies in Nigeria. Attention was given to social forces including corruption, inter-agency rivalry, unemployment and poverty, inadequate equipment, insufficient funding, lack of motivation of security personnel, inadequate training of security personnel and inadequate man-power, political interference, tribal and religious sentiments in recruitment, lack of public trust, and militarisation policy in a democratic dispensation.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The Social Disorganisation Theory was developed by Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay in 1942 at Chicago University. The social disorganization theory can provide insights into understanding the social forces militating against the effective performance of security agencies in Nigeria. This theory, often applied in Criminology and Sociology, posits that crime and deviance are more prevalent in communities with weak social ties, low levels of social control, and high levels of social disorganization. In the context of the security agencies in Nigeria, the Social Disorganization Theory can help explain some of the social forces that undermine the effective performance of security agencies in Nigeria. In many communities in Nigeria, weak social cohesion due to factors such as ethnic diversity, rapid urbanization, and economic disparities can hinder cooperation between community members and security agencies. When social bonds are weak, there is less trust, communication, and collaboration, making it difficult for security agencies to gather intelligence and mobilize community support for crime prevention efforts.

High levels of poverty and unemployment contribute to social disorganization by weakening social ties and increasing the vulnerability of individuals to recruitment by criminal groups. Economic deprivation can also foster a sense of hopelessness and alienation, leading to distrust of authorities and reluctance to report crimes or cooperate with law enforcement agencies. Nigeria's diverse ethnic and religious landscape can exacerbate social tensions and undermine efforts to maintain security. Ethnic and religious divisions can lead to conflicts and violence, diverting resources and attention away from law enforcement priorities. Additionally, perceptions of bias or favoritism within security agencies based on ethnic or religious affiliations can erode public trust and legitimacy. Corruption within security agencies undermines their effectiveness and erodes public trust. When law enforcement officials engage in corrupt practices such as bribery, extortion, or collusion with criminal networks, it undermines the rule of law and perpetuates a culture of impunity. This erodes confidence in the ability of security agencies to protect citizens and maintain order.

Insufficient access to basic social services such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure significantly contribute to social disorganization by fuelling feelings of marginalization and neglect. When communities lack essential services, they may turn to informal mechanisms of social control or vigilantism, bypassing formal law enforcement channels and exacerbating insecurity.

### **Materials and Methods**

This study examined the social forces that hinder the effective performance of security agencies in Nigeria. It is a library research that gathered information from existing literature such as textbooks, journal articles, monographs, government documents, newspapers, and internet materials which were the sources of information for the study.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

#### **Social Forces**

Social forces refer to the external factors that shape individual behaviour and outcomes, including cultural norms, economic conditions, political institutions, and social structures (Horton, 2018). They can influence individual actions and decisions, often beyond their conscious awareness. Social forces can be

both positive and negative, fostering either social cohesion or conflict. However, in this study, the focus is on the negative social forces.

### **Security Agencies**

Security agencies refer to government institutions responsible for maintaining law and order, protecting citizens, and enforcing national security (Nigeria Police Force, 2020). They include the military, police, intelligence agencies, and other organisations tasked with ensuring public safety and national security. Examples of security agencies in Nigeria and their core duties as identified hereunder, according to Bello and Mela (2023), include:

- i. Department of State Services (DSS) (responsible for domestic intelligence, law enforcement, and protecting senior government officials).
- ii. National Intelligence Agency (NIA) (oversees foreign intelligence and counterintelligence operations).
- iii. Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) (provides military intelligence for the Nigerian Armed Forces and Ministry of Defence).
- iv. Armed Forces (Nigerian Army, Navy, and Air Force) (responsible for defending the state and its interests).
- v. Nigeria Police Force (NPF) (the principal law enforcement agency, responsible for crime prevention, investigation, and more).
- vi. Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) (responsible for customs revenue collection, anti-smuggling, and security activities).
- vii. Nigerian Correctional Service (responsible for the custody and rehabilitation of prisoners).
- viii. Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) (protects lives and properties, and prevents pipeline vandalism).
- ix. Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) (responsible for border security and migration management).
- x. Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC).
- xi. Nigeria Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA).

### **Literature Review**

#### **Corruption**

Corruption is a significant hindrance to the effective performance of security agencies in Nigeria (Duke *et al.*, 2019). It leads to bribery and nepotism, which undermine security agencies' effectiveness. Corruption leads to embezzlement of funds, which denies security agencies the resources they need to perform effectively. Corruption compromises investigations, allowing criminals to escape justice and undermine public trust. It leads to protection of criminal networks, making it harder for security agencies to combat crime. Corruption undermines morale among security personnel, making them less effective in their duties (Duke *et al.*, 2019; (Duke *et al.*, 2027; Ogunsakin, 2019; Transparency International, 2021; Alemika, 2003; Onwuka, 2011).

#### **Inter-Agency Rivalry**

Inter-agency rivalry results in competition for resources, which can lead to inefficiencies and duplication of efforts. It causes lack of coordination and cooperation among security agencies, making it harder to achieve common goals. Inter-agency rivalry prompts lack of information sharing, which can hinder investigations and operations, and can lead to territorialism, where agencies prioritize their own interests over national security. Inter-agency rivalry can lead to public mistrust, as the public may perceive security agencies as ineffective and dysfunctional (Mohammed and Yusuf, 2018; Eme, 2018; Odoma, 2014). Different pursuits and priorities, methods of operation and goals, spark friction and conflict among security agencies.

#### **Unemployment and Poverty**

According to Mukhtar *et al.* (2018), unemployment and poverty lead to an increased crime rate, which overwhelms security agencies. Unemployment and poverty lead to reduced public trust in security agencies, making it harder for them to gather intelligence and provide solutions to crime problems. Unemployment and poverty lead to a brain drain in security agencies, as talented personnel seek better

opportunities elsewhere. Unemployment and poverty lead to reduced morale among security personnel, making them less effective in their duties. Unemployment and poverty make communities more vulnerable to crime and terrorism, which security agencies struggle to address (Mukhtar *et al.*, 2018).

### **Inadequate Equipment**

Ukwayi *et al.* (2018) observed that insufficient equipment is a significant hindrance to the effective performance of security agencies in Nigeria. Security agencies often use out-dated weapons and ammunition, which are ineffective against modern threats. Insufficient forensic tools, such as DNA analysis equipment, hinder security agencies' ability to investigate crimes effectively. Insufficient surveillance systems, including CCTV cameras, hinder security agencies' ability to prevent and investigate crimes. Insufficient communication equipment, including radios and phones, hinders security agencies' ability to respond effectively to threats. Insufficient protective gear, including bulletproof vests and helmets, puts security personnel at risk and hinders their ability to perform effectively (Ukwayi *et al.*, 2018). An external influence of poor network connectivity has of recent added to the already stressed under-equipped security agency systems in Nigeria.

### **Insufficient Funding**

Owonikoko (2019) opined that security agencies receive inadequate funding, which hinders their ability to effectively perform their duties. Insufficient funding leads to a lack of resources, including equipment, vehicles, and technology necessary for effective security operations. Insufficient funding leads to poor infrastructure, including dilapidated buildings and inadequate facilities, which hinders security agencies' performance. Security agencies struggle to pay personnel their entitlement and benefits, leading to demotivation and brain drain. Insufficient funding hinders security agencies' ability to invest in technology, including surveillance systems and forensic tools, necessary for effective crime prevention and investigation (Owonikoko, 2019; Adeyemi, 2020).

### **Lack of Motivation of Security Personnel**

According to Susan *et al.* (2012), lack of motivation among security personnel is a significant hindrance to the effective performance of security agencies in Nigeria. Security personnel are often underpaid, leading to demotivation. Inadequate training and development opportunities leave security personnel feeling unprepared and unmotivated. Security personnel often feel unprepared and unrewarded for their efforts, leading to demotivation. Security personnel often face high risks and trauma, leading to low morale and demotivation (Susan *et al.*, 2012). The security agencies are offered no significant incentives capable of sustaining them and their dependents, even in the face of the harsh Nigerian economy. This sense of neglect by the authorities of the country has fuelled corruption among officers of security agencies in Nigeria.

### **Inadequate Training of Security Personnel and Inadequate Man-power**

Phenson *et al.*, (2014) opined that the personnel of the Nigerian Police Force are known for official corruption arising from prolonged government neglect and inadequate funding. Other security departments such as Customs, Prisons and Immigration Department have not fared better as they suffer from inadequate funding by the Nigerian government except in recent times, due to resurgence in crimes and increased domestic threats arising from ethnic militias that are threatening national cohesion and unity of the country. As a function of effective management, security staff or personnel should be properly organised and directed, adequately budgeted for and security departments should be well staffed. Staffing according to Phenson *et al.*, (2014), is the process by which managers select, train, promote and retire personnel.

The lack of training and inadequate man-power observed amongst these poorly funded and badly motivated security forces have continued to create man-power shortages needed to fight off these security challenges particularly, in the Nigerian Police Force where only 205 policemen are protecting 100,000 citizens as against the UNO or the world acceptable standards of 222 police per 100,000 citizens (Phenson *et al.*, 2014). There is an observed shortage and inadequacy among the Nigerian security departments and these personnel lack proper funding and motivations which negatively affect their performances and invariably impugn on the national security management capabilities (Phenson *et al.*, 2014). Shehu (2023) reported that Nigeria's current police strength 370,000 officers (Shehu, 2023). According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2023), the population of Nigeria was estimated at 216,783,381 comprising

108,350,410 males and 108,432,971 females. This gave rise to the ratio of 586 citizens per police officer. The Nigerian ratio is against the United Nations recommended ratio of a police officer to 450 citizens. Although the actual ratio may vary depending on the location, the urban areas have a higher concentration of police officers than the rural areas.

### **Political Interference**

According to Elechi *et al.* (2023), political leaders often appoint unqualified or inexperienced individuals to head security agencies, prioritising loyalty over competence. Politicians may influence security agencies' decisions, such as arresting or releasing suspects, to serve political interests. Political leaders may manipulate funding for security agencies to advance personal or political agenda. Security agencies may be instructed to shield political allies from investigation or prosecution, undermining the rule of law. Politicians may interfere with investigations, compromising the integrity of security agencies' work (Elechi *et al.*, 2023).

### **Tribal and Religious Sentiments in Recruitment**

Recruitment processes may be influenced by tribal or religious affiliations, leading to unqualified candidates being selected over more qualified ones. Security agencies may lack diversity in their workforce, leading to a lack of understanding and empathy in dealing with diverse communities. Security personnel may exhibit bias in their operations, targeting certain ethnic or religious groups, and neglecting others. Communities may not trust security agencies due to perceived biases, leading to a lack of cooperation and intelligence sharing. Security agencies may fail to effectively address security threats due to tribal and religious sentiments, leading to a breakdown of law and order (Phenson *et al.*, 2014). These exist in spite of the Federal Character principle.

### **Lack of Public Trust**

Security agencies' history of human rights violations has eroded public trust (Amnesty International, 2020; Ajayi and Longe, 2015). Corruption within security agencies has led to a lack of confidence in their ability to provide security (Transparency International, 2020). Security agencies' slow response to crime and inability to solve cases has frustrated the public. Security agencies' selective enforcement of the law, often based on tribal or religious affiliations, has created distrust. Lack of transparency and accountability by Security agencies has further eroded public trust (Ajayi and Longe, 2015).

### **Militarisation Policy in a Democratic Dispensation**

The militarisation of Nigerian security management terrain even under the current democratic dispensation has reduced the Nigerian Police Force to a mere on-looker in the internal security management of Nigeria (Phenson *et al.*, 2014). The above assertion is true due to poor government funding and equipping of the Nigerian Police Force by past military regimes in Nigeria. The long military rule and continued use of the military in security management in Nigeria has contributed to containing domestic crises beyond police capabilities. Also, the continued presence of military personnel in the oil-producing Niger-Delta region has been counterproductive, where their presence in the region, forced the ironically unemployed youths from the oil-rich region, to resort in self-defense to arms struggle and reprisal attacks in retaliation to the brutal and punitive military operations against the genuine protests for development of the long-neglected, oil-producing region, to the detriment of national peace and security in the region (Phenson *et al.*, 2014). Problem of militarization of Nigerian security by military personnel in a democracy tends to develop a culture of brute military force at the expense of public trust and image (Phenson *et al.*, 2014).

### **Findings**

This study has examined the social forces that hinder the effective performance of security agencies in Nigeria. The results of this study showed that corruption, inter-agency rivalry, poverty, unemployment, inadequate equipment, insufficient funding, lack of motivation of the security agents, inadequate manpower, political interference, tribal and religious sentiments in recruitment, lack of public trust, militarization policy in a democratic dispensation and inadequate training of security personnel are significant social forces hindering the effective performance of security agencies in Nigeria

## Conclusion

The study examined the social forces hindering the effective performance of security agencies in Nigeria. Corruption, inter-agency rivalry, poverty, unemployment, inadequate equipment, insufficient funding, lack of motivation of the security agents, inadequate man-power, political interference, tribal and religious sentiments in recruitment, lack of public trust, militarization policy in a democratic dispensation and inadequate training of security personnel were identified as significant social forces that hinder the effective performance of security agencies in Nigeria. These social forces undermined the capacity of security agencies to combat crime and maintain national security.

The study has contributed to literature in terms of contextualizing these social forces within the Nigerian security landscape, providing a nuanced understanding of their impact. It provides empirical evidence from Nigeria, enriching the existing literature on security sector reform and performance. The findings offer practical recommendations for policymakers, security agencies, and civil society organizations to address the identified social forces and enhance security performance in Nigeria. The study advances theoretical understanding by exploring how social forces interact and impact security agencies' effectiveness, contributing to the development of a more comprehensive framework for analysing security sector performance. The research contributes to the growing body of literature on African security studies, providing insights relevant to other African countries facing similar security challenges. Further research is needed to analyse how international influence impacts security agencies' decision-making and operations.

## Recommendations

In this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. The government should ensure proper funding, insure the lives of security personnel, equip the agencies and pay the personnel well to enhance their performance and readiness to serve in the face of rising security challenges in Nigeria.
- ii. Beside the need to adequately fund the military and security forces, the government should enrich the remuneration of her security personnel, provide offices and residential accommodations, provide free official uniforms especially to the police personnel adequately motivate and fund their operations, to improve their performance and enhance their combat readiness in the face of heightened insecurity in Nigeria.
- iii. The Nigerian Police Command structure should be de-centralized for prompt response to emergencies at state and local levels, as well as the introduction of effective community policing and public-private partnership security management approach for grassroots crime combat.
- iv. The government should use conscious, rational and deliberate efforts to co-ordinate, mobilise security group activities, combining and harmonising efforts to achieve both internal and external security objectives.

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