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**POLICING AND CRIME: EXAMINING POLICE
WELFARE IN THE REDUCTION IN THE CRIMES OF
KIDNAPPING AND ARMED ROBBERY IN RIVERS
STATE, NIGERIA (2006-2016)**

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ABSTRACT

Crime is a social problem. The impact of crime has made it a source of concern in all human societies. Over the years, the focus of policing is geared towards crime prevention and reduction, and has extensively reviewed parameters for effective policing in crime reduction. The study is a review of the impact of increased police welfare in as a factor in policing in prevention and reduction of crime, with specific consideration to the crimes of armed robbery and kidnapping in Rivers state. The structural functionalism was adopted as the theoretical framework of the study. The content analyses approach was adopted to review set variables in the study with regards to the crimes of armed robbery and kidnapping. The un-obstructive research method was used to evaluate an objective, systematic and quantitative description of police annual reports of Rivers state Police Command from 2007-2016. The study found that despite policing efforts, the crime of kidnapping is on the increase when compared to the crime of Armed Robbery. A total of 735 cases of Armed robbery and 1,022 cases of kidnapping were recorded from 2007-2016. The study recommended an upward review of emolument/ remuneration of police Officers to bolster police welfare in Rivers State.

KEYWORDS: Policing, Crime, Police welfare, Kidnapping, armed robbery

INTRODUCTION

Crime which is a universal phenomenon exists in all societies, but its prevalence differs. The havoc it wreaks in societies is inestimable, given that it causes mental, social and economic deprivations. Crime has no generally accepted definition but some social, legal and normative definitions exist. Adeboye (2013) defines crime in a legal sense as the breaking of rules or laws for which some governing authority can ultimately prescribe a conviction. Adeboye (2013) also noted that it is an act or omission which attracts sanctions such as fines, imprisonment or death. However, its normative definition expresses a deviant behaviour that violates prevailing norms – cultural standards prescribing how human beings ought to behave. But socially, crime is a behaviour that violates conduct and norms and is punishable under the criminal law of a country (Iwarimie-Jaja, 2015).

Crime has created disorder, fear, apprehension and economic losses (Weisburd and Eck, 1994), and the trauma created in the minds of the victims is evergreen. Routine activities theory have shown that crime takes place when there is a motivated offender, a suitable target and the absence of a capable guardian (Akers, 1994). To prove beyond reasonable doubt that a crime took place the court requires two basic elements (mensrea which is the blameable or guilty intent to commit a crime and an overt act which also is the act done or the physical activity in furtherance of the guilty intent. It holds that crime reduction is essential for societies to flourish.

In ancient Rivers State, people were resident in hamlets. There were less atrocities and crime detection was easy. The homogenous nature of the communities then, helped to reduce crime because virtually everybody knew everybody. The natives in ancient Rivers State also ensured the safety of the lives of their members. Murder was abhorred. When it occurred, the killer was required to atone for the killing or war will be declared on his community to avenge the killing. The fear of inter-communal war in the event of any killing helped to reduce any incident of violence, armed robbery, kidnapping and murder. The natives in ancient Rivers State, had their ways of preventing and controlling crime. They policed themselves, maintained law and order, prevented and detected crimes and administered justice. Though, their methods of crime control varied from one locality to locality or even within a nation, yet much relied on the environment and the peoples belief system. At this time, there were no legal technicalities or persons considered very 'powerful'. Public opinion was 'Court' of a sort and its impact on the behavioural patterns of people helped gauge their actions. Also, the activities of age grades,

cults, gods and ancestral worship checkmated the people and reduced crimes.

For instance, the Etche people in present day Rivers State, had before the formation of the Police Force, a system whereby the elders, titled men and the nobles of the clans, gathered and took decisions. Though, these decisions were oral or verbal yet they had the force of law. In primordial Etche, there was no Police Force, rather, indigenous religion and beliefs kept the clans morally clean. Laws then were an agreed act of customary expectations and prohibitions. Their culture embedded moral sanctity which secured for them goals in harmony, prosperity, peace, security and reduction of crime (Anele, 2009). Acts like stealing were forbidden and offenders were dealt with according to native law and custom. Where theft occurred, young and able bodied natives were sent to go after the offender. As natives who had the requisite local knowledge of their area, they fished out the offender and brought him to the village square with the property stolen (exhibit).

Tamuno (1993) puts it concisely that in long time past days in Nigeria, both human and otherworldly organizations, for instance prophet, and the spirits of departed progenitors should have been effectively associated with the counteractive action of preventing crime. This enchanted link between the dead and living powers both really taking shape in authorization of African laws and traditions before contact with Europeans was of vital significance. The demonstration of infringing upon such law and exclusively pulled in feared discipline by inconspicuous and supposedly great components in customary religion. The dread of these gods turned into a successful crime decrease factor.

Customarily, the Police have favored the law enforcement way to deal with crime control in light of the theory of prevention, which is to a great extent showed through arbitrary watch, crisis reaction, stop and search, investigation, identification and escalated requirement which still rule contemporary policing in present day social orders. In any case, researches by Bitner, (1990), Skogan, (1990) Slapland and vagg, (1990), Fleragag, (2008), and Brodeur, (2010), recommend that these techniques are not successful in crime decrease and in recognizing offenders. Much Police work is receptive and occurrence driven instead of proactive and key. There have been endeavors to move policing towards more compelling and practical approach in crime reduction (Police establishment, 2013), yet very little has been accomplished in the area of crime reduction.

The role and function of the Police is evolving. The Police mission has turned out to be more extensive and more perplexing. These days, the Police is

associated with social administrations, such as giving medicinal services administrations to people in general and giving help materials to crisis casualties in places like inside displaced people camps. This capacity is gone for bringing an interface between the Police and people in general. This interface has bloomed the friendliness of relations between the Police and its open in this way helping in crime reduction. The legitimacy of the police is vital in deciding if individuals are ready to co-operate with the Police as far as revealing occurrences of crime, providing information and acting as witness and whether consenting to the law or not. By being reasonable, just and conscious, the Police will probably anchor that legitimacy and be more viable in crime reduction.

Changing information into knowledge to give a point by point, precise photo of the changing scene and how the Police should react to it will be critical to enhancing the viability of policing. Notwithstanding sheer volume of information, there are main problems concerning information quality and how it is utilized to educate tasking (Fleragag, 2008). The focal point of crime investigations needs to move from following the development of known offenders to recognizing tenacious issues and envisioning (instead of responding to) occurrences of crime. Crime investigators require more modern abilities, better preparing and more assets, on the off chance that they are to accomplish the status and impact policing and Police adequacy in an evolving world (Brodeur, 2010).

Throughout the years, the attention has been on fitting policing towards crime counteractive action and reduction. In an exploration work titled "What can police do to reduce crime, issue and fear?" Weisburd and ECK (1994) proposed that Scholars have progressively scrutinized what has come to be viewed as the standard model of Police hones (Bayley, 1994, Goldstern, 1990, Visher and Weisburd, 1998). These models depend by and large on a "one – measure fit – it – all" utilization of receptive systems to stifle crime and keep on being the prevailing type of Police focal point in the United States. The standard model is based on the assumption that generic strategies for crime reduction can be applied throughout a jurisdiction regardless of level of crime, nature of crime or other variations. Such strategies as increasing the size of Police agencies, random patrol across all parts of the community, rapid response to calls for service, generally applied follow-up investigation and generally applied intensive enforcement and arrest policies are all examples of this standard model of policing (Weisburd, 1998).

Policing which is an art/act of safety measures by a body of men/women under authority to safe-guard an environment from crime, or threat to peace, security, law and order is not done in a vacuum. Antecedent, orientations, belief system, culture, custom, and world-

view complement one another in shaping the policing orientation of a given society whose goals are usually to deter and detect crime, protect life and property, preserve law and order and to enforce all laws and regulations as correlates of the society.

In the light of the above social factors, police welfare becomes imperative for crime reduction, security, law and order in the society. Criminality exits in Rivers State in various forms and given the different dimensions of crimes in the state, this study is motivated by the need to investigate the impact of police welfare in crime reduction in the crime of kidnapping and armed robbery in Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

This paper utilized both the quantitative and qualitative research approach to gain an insight into the nature of Policing and Crime, with further examination on Police welfare increase in the reduction in the crime of kidnapping and armed robbery in Rivers State, Nigeria. The issue of policing and crime, especially and taking into consideration the importance of police welfare in crime reduction in Nigeria is of serious concern to all stakeholders which has therefore attracted a plethora of public commentary. Based on this, content analyses of Rivers State Police Command annual reports as regards the selected violent crimes of armed robbery and kidnapping within the time frame were made. Content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication (Budd, 1967).

Therefore, the study is using existing statistics on crime rate in Rivers State and police salary. To improve on the reliability and validity of the paper, multiple secondary sources were used to minimize errors.

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL INSIGHTS

In social sciences research, it is important to undertake an academic investigation by examining the conceptual and theoretical underpins of the subject matter of analysis because conceptual and theoretical analyses provide a way forward for deriving meanings and issues of social phenomena. Though, consensus may not be achieved on the validity or otherwise of such enterprise. Nonetheless, it is an exercise worth pursuing if only to sketch the parameters of the subject matter.

The concept of the policing and crime does possess no universally agreed or accepted definition. This makes it a conceptual variable. Policing may be defined however, as an act of safety measures by a body of men/women under authority to safe-guard an environment, preserve law and order and reduce crime. Policing is in various forms such as preventive policing, reactive policing, and passive policing, punitive policing and proactive policing. To Ehindero (1998), the word police is gotten from a Greek word

'polis' implying that piece of non-religious organization doing with security, welfare and request of the state. The Greek *politeira*, implies the specialty of representing and directing the welfare, security needs and request of the city-state in light of a legitimate concern for people in general.

Despite the fact that police is gotten from Greek, it was the Romans who sorted out it from the positions. Amid the Roman Empire, the *politia* was an image of focal specialist. The Roman officials and justices had persons who watched the roads who were law requirement officers. They were set up by Gawis Octavis, the nephew of Julius Ceasar, around 27 BC (Ehinder, 2008). According to Adler et al, (2006), the first salaried police officers came to light around 1750; this was considerate because there was general rebellion in England. This spurred Henry Fielding's official 'cheat takers' while his sibling John Fielding made bow road sprinters. Subsequently the the marine police (River Thames Police) was set up in England in 1798. According to Anele (2009) the systematic unrest and its orderly urbanization brought the issue of the continuous criminal activities. Based on this, in the late eighteenth century, Sir Robert Peel (Bobby) built up the police in Britain in 1829, with the police's standard attached in the ability to satisfy its capacities and obligations of which crime decrease was one. Its need was reliant on open endorsement of its reality, activities and conduct of its individuals and its capacity to serve and keep.

Crime is a behaviour that is considered so harmful that it is banned by a criminal law. Armed robbery and kidnapping involve acts of violence. These crimes constitute the dependent variables of this study. Crime can be classified according to its degree. In this instance some crimes can be classified as violent crime and Savage crime. Iwarimie-Jaja (2012) proposes that "violent crime is a dyadic connection between a guilty party and a casualty in which coercive power is connected by the previous to stifle the later by harming him or her, taking endlessly his or her property and causing his or her demise. In any frame it takes, its outcomes are incredible to the individual-casualty, the family and even the general public or network. On the other classification, savage crime is where power or danger of power is utilized by the culprit to accomplish his point. One who is mentally damaged is a casualty of brutality. Violent crime along these lines is in different ways. The utilization of coercive power from a man to another to slaughter, injure, assault, strike, to demolish property or even to cheat, take, abduct and so on are a few cases of rough crimes.

Kidnapping is an organized crime. It is a new trend in criminality. Kidnapping occurs when two or more persons conspires together to abduct a particular individual or group of persons for monetary gain. Kidnapping also occurs when a dissident group wants

to force the Government to change a policy or consent to their wishes. The dissident group will abduct a top government functionary or a member of his/her family to force the Government to oblige them. Kidnapping is the more lucrative way of unlawfully obtaining money from the victim's family or organization. It is less risky and more assuring to the criminals because they are at liberty to negotiate with the victim's family or organization and collect the agreed sum before releasing the victim. In some cases the victim is even killed yet ransom is collected. Some individuals have faked their own kidnap in effort to extort money from their family or organization. Kidnap cut across all sexes, ages, and occupations. In Rivers State even the clergy, women and children have been kidnapped.

In Nigeria, any person who steals anything and at or immediately before or immediately after the time of stealing it, uses or threaten to use actual violence to any person or property in order to obtain or retain the thing stolen or to prevent or overcome resistance to its being stolen or retained is said to be guilty of robbery; and is liable for imprisonment for 21 years. This offence can be committed alone or jointly. When it is jointly, it becomes an organized crime because, there is conspiracy before it was committed. When the accused is armed with any firearms or any offensive weapon or any obnoxious or chemical materials or is in company with any so armed or at or immediately before or immediately after the time of robbery, the accused wounds any person, he is said to have committed the offence of armed robbery and the accused shall upon conviction be sentenced to death by hanging. This is the extant law of robbery and armed robbery in Nigeria. The offence appeared nonexistent till the general elections of 1963 and the after math, violence (Tiv riots etc). Those political thugs, who were armed by the politicians during the elections, retained their arms after the elections. Some of them were abandoned by the politicians and those who could not withstand the temptations, of being in possession of fire arm and being faced with starvation, took to armed robbery. The politicians and the aftermath of the 1963 elections General elections, introduced armed robbery into Nigeria society.

Theoretical insight: The study of policing and crime especially in the field of criminology and police science is replete with theories, and conceptual orientations which help scholars to analyze, explain, apply or adopt a phenomenon. Academic research is a theory-driven exercise, be it social or natural. This study is informed by the theory of structural functionalism. Functionalism is synonymous with organism analogy. It pictures human society as a giant living organism composed of many structures which perform different functions which are integrated for the benefit of the entire organism (Ifeanacho, 2012). In viewing society as an organism, sociologists argue that

the family, education, the economy, politics, religion, police and other institutions constitute different parts of society which perform different functions that are however integrated for the benefit of the society as a whole. Functionalists believe that all societies have internal mechanisms which re-enforce social solidarity. This social solidarity transcends in value consensus which is a functional prerequisite in every society because through value consensus societies arrive at social order.

For instance in studying kidnapping in Rivers state, functionalism is useful for this study because it will seek to know the contributions of various policing techniques, such beat systems as Aberdeen system, Fixed route system, Discretionary system and semi-discretionary system, Aerial surveillance, forensic investigations as a interdependent system found within the police units and force that works in the reduction of crime. The interrelated policing models like the patrol systems, vehicular, foot, aerial surveillance and Nipping points, the intelligence led policing which is concerned with crime data bank and crime analysis and mapping, used by the police institutions, are interrelated strategies that can police the crimes of Armed robbery and Kidnapping.

THE NEXUS BETWEEN POLICE WELFARE AND CRIME PREVENTION

Major yardsticks for measuring successful policing in a social-scientific context, according to Odekunle (2005) are based in the following criteria:

Effectiveness (e.g. fewer or reduced criminal victimization; higher proportion of crimes known to the police cleared by arrest; increased recovery of stolen property; higher rates of arrests which result in conviction; lower traffic accident rates; faster response time to reports/complaints).

Responsiveness (e.g. higher citizen perception of safety from crime; higher citizen ratings of police

performance in general; higher citizen ratings of specific police activities; higher citizen ratings of specific aspects of police conduct such as honesty, integrity, courtesy and fairness).

Equity (i.e.with reference to egalitarian distribution of "protection" to all sections of the population).

Efficiency (i.e. with reference to cost-and-benefit analysis of "protection" output relative to monetary, human and material in-put). In the same vein when assessing the major yardsticks to measuring crime, Karimu (2015) notes that deplorable housing, non-existing or inferior medical services, badly maintained weapons, the ragged uniforms and the general poor conditions of service can influence the police ability to fight crime. He further stresses that unless all these are improved, the issue of effectiveness, responsiveness, equity and efficiency of the police will be a thing of dream, for there is no way the police in Nigeria would be able to attract the right sort of people.

Improving the welfare of the police personnel towards improved service delivery also involves utilizing advanced technology and wearing effective safety gear which will ultimately help to enhance street safety. It is worth budgeting for technology that increases an officer’s capacity to remain safe, such as access to real-time data and multi-jurisdictional criminal records while in the field. It ranges from the constable who extorts money from motorists at checkpoints to the senior officers who share from the proceeds of the checkpoints extortion and who also take their subordinates’ allowances. The extent of the problems associated with what might be called the political economy of policing was evident in January 2007, when the head of CID was killed in Abuja, it was rumoured by his own men, that he pocketed most of their allowances (Hill, 2008).

Statistical data of crimes of armed robbery/kidnapping in Rivers State 2007-2016

YEAR	ARMED ROBBERY	KIDNAPPING	TOTAL	REMARK
2007	145	20	165	
2008	122	30	152	Decrease
2009	89	15	94	Decrease
2010	89	112	201	Increase
2011	57	59	116	Decrease
2012	54	82	136	Increase
2013	54	119	173	Increase
2014	91	158	249	Increase
2015	45	299	344	Increase
2016	26	152	178	Decrease

Source: Police annual report Rivers State Command 2007-2016

Table showed a statistical data of crimes of armed robbery and kidnapping in Rivers State from

2007-2016. It showed a decrease in the crimes of armed robbery and kidnapping from 2008-2009, 2011

and 2016. It followed an increase in the crimes of armed robbery and kidnapping from 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015. The agitations for resource control, the emergence of militant groups, have fuelled the increase in kidnapping especially on expatriates' oil workers and the Nigerian Chief executives and

members of their families. The rate of kidnapping in Rivers State became so worrisome that the state Government through the state house of assembly enacted the Rivers State kidnap (prohibition) law No 3 of 2009.

Arrest of Kidnappers, Rescue of victims, Recovery of Arms/Ammunition /cash/vehicles 2007-2016

Year	No of cases reported	No of suspect arrested	No of victim rescued	No of arms recovered	No of ammunition recovered	Cash recovered	No of Vehicle recovered
2007	20	4	11	(a) One (1) pump action (b) Four (4) Locally made pistols	Twenty (2) cartridges	Nil	Nil
2008	30	12	15	(a) Two (2) Ak 47 rifles (b) Five (5) locally made single barrel guns	(a) Two (2) locally Ak 47 magazines (b) Fifteen (15) live cartridges	Nil	Five (5) vehicles
2009	15	11	16	(a) Two AK 47 rifles (b) Four (4) locally made single barrel guns	(a) Two (2) loaded Ak 47 magazines (b) Fifteen(15) live cartridges	Nil	Six (6) vehicles
2010	112	53	70	(a) One (1) locally made pistol (b) Three (3) Locally made revolver pistols (c) Four (4) Ak 47 rifles (d) One (1) pump action	(a) Eleven (11) cartridges (b) Seventeen (17) rounds of 7.62mm.	Four Million, Seventy Thousand Naira. (4,070,000.00)	Fourteen (14) vehicles
2011	59	14	44	One (1) Ak 47 rifle	One (1) full magazine of Ak 47 7.62mm	Nil	Eight (8) vehicles
2012	82	17	64	(a) Two (2) Ak 47 rifles (b) Five (5) pump Actions	(a) Thirty-Two (32) Ak 47 7.62mm (b) Eighteen (18) Cartridges	Nine Hundred and Fifteen Thousand, Six Hundred and Forty Naira.(N915,640.00)	Five (5) vehicles
2013	119	47	64	(a) Two (2) pump Action rifles (b) One (1) locally made pistol	Thirty-four(34) live cartridges	Nil	Two (2) vehicles
2014	158	50	59	(a) Five (5) Ak 47 rifles (b) One (1) locally made pistol	(a) Three (3) live cartridges (b) Three (3) empty shell (c) One) hundred and Nine	Nil	Three (3) vehicle

					three (193) 7.62 mm live ammunition		s
2015	299	93	101	(a) Three (3) Ak 47 rifle (b) Two (2) Ak 47 Magazine (c) Four (4) pump Action rifle (d) Ten (10) locally made pistols (e) Two (2) single barrel guns (f) Four (4) Dane guns	(a) One hundred and thirty four (134) 7.62mm Ak 47 (b) sixty -eight (68) cartridges © Four (4) .9mm	Nil	Seven (7) vehicles
2016	152	56	203	Twenty-eight (28) arms of various makes were recovered	Two hundred and Eighty-two (282) differe3nt kinds of ammunitions were recovered	Nil	Nil.

CONCLUSION

A review of the issue of policing and crime requires that Police work demands that officers and men of this profession should be well-equipped and continually so in order to enable them contain the incidence of crime and the sophistry of today’s criminality. And police work requires that officers and men of this noble trade should be well remunerated and continually so in order to insulate them from material temptations that may make them mortgage their honour and integrity (Amadi, 2005). Although Abdulkadir, (2005) mentioned that the Nigeria Police Force manpower is rising steadily, and that promotions that have been stalled for several decades are now going on, however the funds reaching the Police have hardly been enough to ensure effectiveness and efficiency. Exposing the discrepancies in the remuneration and salary of the police personnel in Nigeria, Ibrahim (2015) made an exposure and revealed that when it comes to salary increment, promotion, transfer or any due incentives, one has to ‘moisture the ground’ for those concern before acquiring any of the above entitlements. Police pay money to their superior authorities to be posted where they take bribe. This influences bribery and corruption in the police force. Within the police, protégés are appointed to head the departments they are not qualified to hold, while career-minded officers are posted to police “Siberia” for not “playing ball”. In similar condition Karimu (2015) maintained that the inability of the police in Nigeria to effectively resolved crimes and perform their law enforcement duties efficiently are related to the poor welfare condition which has sapped the morale of the personnel of the agency. The poor reward system has also ensured that the Nigeria police is not able to attract the right sort of recruits because of the poor pay (Hills, 2008).

In another direction and instance, Adebayo (2013) believes that motivation will be a serious factor as far as efficiency in any endeavour is concern. Motivation goes a long way to encourage a worker to work to maximum capacity. There are policemen who have been on the same rank for fifteen (15) years. It is a fact that less than 25% of the policemen in Nigeria have Barrack accommodation. Also a visit to some of the barracks will reveal the sorry state of the barracks. Some of the barracks are in various states of dilapidation and squalor and are in dire need of renovation to make it habitable for decent conditions of living for the policemen. Also, Sulaiman Musa noted in a Saturday column of Weekly Trust, 4-10 March 2006, page 48 that “the Nigeria police cannot be said to be functional. Apart from the fact that they are underfunded and reduced to mere object of degradation with meagre salaries, they also have to operate in less habitable places as offices in addition to poor shelters (barracks)... Our police are demoralized and yet they are the ones assigned the tedious and dangerous jobs of patrolling our highways, chasing armed robbers, fishing out criminals, as well as restoration of peace... And are quick to blame them once they perform below our high expectation; unmindful of the condition under which they have to operate.

It is only when policing comes with the right welfare that crime reduction will be sustained in Nigeria. The following recommendation is made in the light of the findings of the work; it is important that an upward review of emolument/ remuneration of police Officers to bolster police welfare in Rivers State

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