

Interrogating the Nigeria Police Force and Its Counter-terrorism Approaches

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Abstract

The paper used a theoretical method to look at how the Nigeria Police are involved in counter-terrorism efforts in Nigeria. It aimed to find out how the police participate, how effective their involvement is, and what can be done to improve their performance in these operations. The structural functionalism theory was adopted to theoretically underpin the study. The outcome of the study reveals that the police force plays a variety of roles which manifest in different forms in the fight against terrorism. These forms are not limited to intelligence gathering, synergy with

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other sister agencies, liaison with community leaders to fish out terrorist enclaves and so on. The study also revealed that the police's regular use of overt force diminishes the effectiveness of their operations, as there is a need to fight the root cause of terrorism. The study recommends that the police should be specially trained on conflict resolution strategy while adopting the principle of community policing. To enhance counter-terrorism operational efficiency, the police should be given adequate and sophisticated equipment and, as well, undergo training and retraining to face the terrorist group.

Keywords: Police, Terrorism, Counter-terrorism, Police Operation, Nigeria

Introduction

The Nigeria Police was established based on the provision of Section 214(1) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and several laws have given it responsibilities and authority (Nwauzi & Ogon, 2018). The force is tasked with the duties of investigating crimes, protecting people and property, and enforcing all laws and regulations. They may also be responsible for traffic control and prosecution in any court in the country. (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2000, as cited in Edet, 2017). The extant and primary law in Nigeria that highlights the specific responsibilities and capabilities of the Nigerian Police is the Police Act (Nwauzi & Ogon, 2018). The Nigeria Police also performs a variety of secondary responsibilities, including providing aid in times of need and managing and regulating highway traffic, among others (Madubuike-Ekwe & Obayemi, 2019). However, given the vast nature of police officers' responsibilities and authority, the preceding list of police officer tasks and powers is not all-inclusive (Nwauzi & Ogon, 2018). The composition, establishment and operational control of the Police Force are clearly stated in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Section 214(1), that "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" (CFRN, 1999). These provisions are reinforced in the Police Act and Regulations of 1990, Chapter 359, which classified the duties of the police to include prevention and detection of crime, apprehension of offenders, preservation of law and order, protection of life and property, enforcement of all laws and regulations with which they are directly charged and the performance of such military duties within or without Nigeria as may be required of them by or under the authority of the Act or any other act.

Nigeria is currently grappling with a myriad of security challenges. The country has been plagued by a plethora of threats, including Boko Haram, herdsmen/farmers conflicts, kidnapping and banditry, ritual killings and cannibalism, cattle rustling, drug and human trafficking, militancy, illicit proliferation of small arms, and violent extremism. These security challenges have had far-reaching consequences, undermining the country's stability, economic growth, and social cohesion (Ezinwa, 2019). For long, the country has, particularly, been battling with the insecurity issue posed by the activities of terrorist groups. Topping the list of these groups is the Boko Haram Sect (BHS) in the northeast of Nigeria. Terrorism is a global phenomenon in the atmosphere of criminality (Aiyesimoju, 2015) and has become a major threat to world peace and order (Abodunrin et al., 2021). The militant actions of Boko Haram have become one of the biggest security risks in Africa, particularly around the region surrounding Lake Chad (Oyewole,

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2015). In Nigeria, the devious and nasty actions of this terrorist organisation cannot be disregarded because of the attacks the organisation has carried out, which have resulted in loss of life, destruction of property worth billions of Naira, serious infrastructure damage, and loss of investment, capital, and income, among other things (Abodunrin et al., 2021). Since 2009, the Boko Haram Sect (BHS) and other terrorist organisations' operations have impeded sustainable development and made the nation hazardous for people to live in, conduct business in, and invest in (Isiaka et al., 2023). We also have the Fulani herders in the northeast, the Delta militants in the south-south, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and Eastern Security Network (ESN) in the southeast, the Amotekun agitators in the southwest and the newly emerged terror group, the Lukarawas, in northwestern Nigeria.

The International Terrorism and Security Research (ITSR) alludes to the fact that terrorism is not new and that even though the word has been used since the beginning of recorded history, it can be relatively hard to define. Terrorism, according to the ITSR, has been described variously as both a tactic and strategy, a crime and a holy duty, and a justified reaction to oppression and an inexcusable abomination. The United States Department of Defence (USDD) defines terrorism as "the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological." Within this definition, there are three key elements: violence, fear, and intimidation. Each element produces terror in its victims. The FBI defines terrorism as "the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives." The U.S. Department of State (USDS) defines terrorism as "premeditated politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience." Boko Haram and splinter groups such as JAMBS (presently known as ISWAP) are believed by analysts to be largely a product of widespread socioeconomic and religious insecurities, and their ideology resonates among certain communities because of both historical narratives and modern grievances (Audu & Zakimayu, 2021). It has become increasingly clear that national security agencies can no longer work alone in preventing future attacks. They must work in partnership with other public and private agencies, most importantly with local police.

'Counter-terrorism' means the measures undertaken by a government to defeat terrorism. It integrates and synchronises political, security, legal, economic, developmental and psychological activities to create a holistic approach that aims at weakening the terrorists while bolstering the government's legitimacy in the eyes of the people. Several scholars clarified the meaning of counter-terrorism. For instance, Grey (2012) defined counter-terrorism as a set, or combinations, of diverse and multifaceted activities used in combating any terrorist violence in a given society. Campbell and Weitz (2005) also consider counter-terrorism to refer to all actions, activities, principles and tactics used by regular security groups in waging war against any terrorist group in a given political setting. To clarify it further, the United States Army (2006) defined counter-terrorism as military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological and civic actions taken by government to defeat terrorism. However, the focus of most counter-terrorism measures in this study is centred on the Nigeria Police Force. Police counter-terrorism refers to all forms of conventional combat adopted by the police force and other paramilitary and military forces in combating terrorism in a given political entity. It is a kinetic component of the counter-terrorism

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response to guerrilla warfare. According to Sampson (2015), the main principle of the counter-terrorism strategy is the application of aggressive force involving violent destruction of the enemy force and threatening of the local population to withdraw support for the terrorists. Therefore, counter-terrorism relies on operations that involve the use of aggression, such as detention of suspects, brutal elimination of individual terrorists, disruption of terrorists' support networks, and decapitation of terrorist organisations. To contend with these terrorist activities in Nigeria, the federal government of Nigeria, irrespective of statutory restrictions, still deploys Nigeria police personnel to quell unwholesome loss of life and property from these theatres of terrorism in Nigeria.

Problem Statement

Nigeria is grappling with the pressing issue of terrorism, which has become a leading concern for national security. This menace has sparked intense discussions and varied comments in current national discourse (Aiyesimoju, 2015). Despite the Nigerian government's best efforts, terrorist group activities have continued to grow throughout the northern area, with Boko Haram leading at the forefront, and they pose a severe threat to Nigeria and the region around Lake Chad (Sadau, 2015). Different approaches have been used by the Nigerian government to subdue and curtail the activities and operations of the numerous terrorist groups present in the country. Since terrorism continues to be a threat to Nigeria's stability and peace, these measures, however, have not produced fruitful and beneficial results. The administration has largely focused on using the military strategy rather than alternative non-military ones to calm terrorism operations. Hence, there is the need to examine other non-military approaches, especially the criminal justice system, in the fight against terrorism. The urgent need to combat terrorism and the roles of critical stakeholders in the fight against terrorism have been investigated in literature. For instance, Aiyesimoju (2015) examined the role of the media in containing terrorism by outlining how the activities of the media can be used to aid as well as thwart the activities of terrorism groups in the country. Ike (2018) examined the need to re-conceptualise the role of law in countering terrorism in Nigeria and explained the rationale behind strengthening Nigeria's criminal justice system. However, the emphasis in these studies is on the efficacy of the police operational duties in terms of countering terrorism. Against this background, this study aims to explore the forms of Nigeria Police participation in counter-terrorism operations, the effectiveness of Nigeria Police involvement in counter-terrorism operations and measures that could enhance police performance in counter-terrorism operations in the country.

Theoretical Framework

Structural functionalism is a sociological theory that explains why society functions the way it does by emphasising the relationships between the various social institutions that make it up. The basic underpinnings of structural functionalism were built by French sociologist Émile Durkheim in the late nineteenth century, at least in part as a response to evolutionary theories of thinkers such as E. B. Tylor (Porth et al., 2015). Durkheim's original goal was to explain social structures as a shared means for individuals in society to meet their own biological needs; he also wanted to explain the worth of cultural and social features in terms of their contribution to the general operation of society and life. Later, structural functionalism's focus shifted to the manner in which social structures in society meet the social requirements of individuals inside that society.

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This theory was adopted as a theoretical framework for the study because of its strengths and strategic importance. The theory placed emphasis on the interdependency and interconnectedness of security formations, including the police force, and the necessity and urgency for them to form a synergy with the local civilian security formation in the host community for harmonious living. It was reported by Stearns (2013) that structural functionalism views society as functioning as an organism with the various social institutions working together as organs in the human body to maintain stability and integration. Radcliffe Brown espoused the interaction or interdependence of human activities in the social institutions that give rise to the cohesion, stability and peaceful coexistence of human society (Mediha, 2013; Palmer, 2013). Seeing the imperativeness of structural functionalism in understanding and explaining the police force as a subset of security organisations that contributes meaningfully to the existence and survival of the whole social system, the theory was found much more relevant to and apt in examining police involvement in community security, with emphasis on counter-terrorism.

Forms of Police Participation in Counter-terrorism Operations

One cannot overemphasise the duties and responsibilities of the police in any given society. The police are recognised members of the society charged with the responsibility of security of lives and property, maintaining law and order and prevention of all crimes, including terrorism. The roles the Nigeria police play are not just confined to the statutory description of their duties and responsibilities. Alongside other primary duties such as crime prevention and investigation, maintenance of law and order, and enforcement of all laws and regulations, the police also have a role to play in countering terrorism in Nigeria. This was confirmed from the above submission but is also partly stated in section 4 of the Police Act under “such military duties within or outside Nigeria as may be required by them by this or any other Act” (The Police Act, Cap [P19]). Nwauzi and Ogon (2018) also stated that the listed duties and powers of police officers are not exhaustive, as the duties and powers of police officers are expansive. The Nigeria Police discharge other specific secondary duties like highway traffic control and management, provision of assistance during disasters and the conduct of prosecution before any court in the country (Madubuike-Ekwe & Obayemi, 2019).

Detailed explanation of some forms of police participation in curbing the menace of terrorism in Nigeria. The forms in which the police manifest in its duty of counter-terrorism include but are not limited to the following: Involvement in intelligence gathering and sharing with other security agencies to buffer counter-terrorism operations; counselling people as well as relevant stakeholders in the country about the need for peace in the society. This is done in a bid to write off the wrong and poisonous orientation people might have received concerning situations in the country; mopping up arms and ammunitions, drugs and narcotic substances in the society; working in synergy with relevant stakeholders, bodies and national institution agencies such as the NDLEA, EFCC, NAFDAC and others; working with other security agencies such as the Nigerian Military, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) to enhance synergy towards countering terrorism; training and re-training of police personnel on recent crime fighting modes in order to effectively engage the terrorist groups; engaging the religious and community leaders in talks about peace and giving proper orientation to their members so as to proactively repel the desire to engage in terrorism; striving to administer and dispense justice to

improve people's trust and confidence in the justice system so that aggression will not set-in on an aggrieved party thereby leading to terrorism.

Effectiveness of Nigeria Police Involvement in Counter-terrorism Operations

Challenges to the police role in counterterrorism have marred the effectiveness of police involvement in counterterrorism operations. Some challenges facing the police in their fight against terrorism are found as follows: First, there is insufficient training for the officers facing terrorists, and being sent to fight well-trained and equipped terrorists sounds like a suicide mission. Second, there is an allegation of misappropriation of funds allocated for counterterrorism operations. This leaves the police with insufficient funds and resources that, in turn, affects their efficiency and effectiveness in the fight against the terrorist. Third, political interference and corrupt practices among policymakers are also alleged. This kind of interference and corruption can always delay actions against the terrorist, thereby limiting the effectiveness, efficiency and productivity of the police. Fourth, command friction between the police and their military partners in the Joint Task Force. This fourth challenge is to be expected between military and paramilitary agencies whose ranking and protocols are similar but still unique. So the issue of superiors and subordinates in the face of command and order-controlled organisation can always be an issue, especially when there are no laid-down rules of operation and command protocols. Therefore, it becomes necessary to take further study into the rules of engagement of the Joint Task Force in order to find out the cause of this challenge and root it in the bud. The fifth challenge found is the existence of some moles (spies or traitors) in the joint military-police-civilian task force on counter-terrorism, which jeopardises the effectiveness of their operations. These findings support previous research reports (Bamidele, 2016; Nnam et al., 2020), which all agreed that concerted efforts to overcome the odious act of terrorism have been sabotaged and frustrated by some civilians in the host communities, politicians and security personnel, who provide corresponding assistance (such as leaking of security tactics and strategies, intelligence and information) to the terrorists (Nwakanma, 2022).

The effectiveness of the use of force approach adopted by the Nigeria Police counter-terrorism is pointed out, and the heavy-handed approach by Nigeria's security sector against members of terrorist groups exacerbated sentiments of communal insecurity. In an extensive military operation, the Nigerian state destroyed the compound of the group and killed scores of terrorists. Disproportionate force and extrajudicial killings by the statutory security sector cause some terrorist groups to respond with revenge attacks against the institutions of the state. The lack of capacity and capability in Nigeria's law enforcement and military, coupled with a failure to appreciate the importance of community engagement in counter-terrorism, set the state on a collision course with the group and its followers. Samson (2015) asserts that, while assessing the dilemma of counter-terrorism and human rights in Northern Nigeria, he argued that the aggressive approach of the SJTF perpetrated through gross violations of human rights undermined the support of the population. This assertion connotes that the excessive use of brutal force by the police force, alongside other security agencies, serves as a restraint to the effectiveness of police involvement in counter-terrorism operations.

Similarly, Kalid (2021), while being interviewed by the BBC, pointed out the ineffectiveness of using a force approach to terrorism, thus: the over-reliance on a military strategy to confront terrorist groups is at the heart of the state's inability to deal with the threat. That is why, unfortunately, almost 11 or 12 years into the counter-terrorism operation, there seem to be no major successes recorded. The reality is that to address terrorism, you need more than a brutal force operation. You need to address the root causes of the terrorism emergence. Paradoxically, Sampson (2015) also claimed that since its engagement in the counterterrorism, the SJTF, including the police, has become anathema to the local communities in the Northeast. According to him, the indiscriminate use of force and other arbitrary acts have led to an unwarranted loss of life and destruction of valuable property, as well as constituted an extensive humanitarian crisis in the Northeast. He further maintained that, in addition to the direct offensive approach, the operation was reinforced by the adoption of draconian laws like the massive imposition of dusk-to-dawn curfews, restriction of vehicular movement, and bans on the use of communication lines. The overall effects of these measures thus undermined the support of the population for counter-terrorism. This indicates that there can never be a purely forceful solution to violent extremism. There is therefore a need to abandon the conventional force-centric approach as the one and only option for terrorism and other asymmetric conflicts. While not ignoring the importance of using a force approach, stability, political-economic-social development, rule of law, popular well-being, and sustainable peace all depend on effective and legitimate control of the national territory; the force-centric approach must be balanced with a population-centric approach for maximum effectiveness and legitimacy (Jerome, 2015).

Measures to Enhance Police Performance in Counter-terrorism Operations

Given the complexity of the security situation in Nigeria, blended with the economic, political, and social strife, projects and programs designed to counter terrorism should be built around community resilience, enhance cooperation among law enforcement agencies, and strengthen judicial institutions. Hence, strategy and the importance of collective efforts to counter terrorism in an increasingly interdependent and interconnected Nigeria have become imperative. Hence, some measures that could be used to counter terrorism in Nigeria were extensively examined.

Measures to enhance police performance in counter-terrorism target a different aspect of what Piombo (2007) calls the four “Ds” of fighting terrorism: ‘Defeat terrorists and their organisations; Deny sponsorship, support and sanctuary to terrorists; Diminish the underlying conditions that terrorists seek to exploit, and Defend citizens and interests at home and abroad.’ Another way to consider these programmes’ effectiveness is that they should attempt to fight the supply of terrorists, the demand for terrorist networks, and the ability of terrorists to operate and manoeuvre. Counterterrorism measures are captured in the below headings.

1. The Meghalaya Model

The Meghalaya model is a multi-sector approach involving government, law enforcement, judiciary, and civil society organisations that created a comprehensive framework for combating trafficking in Northeast Asia in 1999 under the five "Ps": prevention, protection, policing, press, and prosecution (Kharbhih, 2010). The Meghalaya Model is designed to track and rescue trafficked children in Northeast Asia; to facilitate rehabilitation; and to make sure that survivors do not get re-trafficked. It also provides families with livelihood alternatives, provides evidence to prosecute offenders, and raises awareness through the media. The process of the Meghalaya Model is the five "Rs": reporting, rescue, rehabilitation, repatriation and re-education. It is believed that these activities that are pillars of the Meghalaya model to counter human trafficking are relevant to counter-terrorism, as they could fight the supply of terrorists, the supply of mercenaries for terrorism, and the demand for terrorist networks. This is imperative because, despite international agreements and a plethora of national laws on counter-terrorism, the issue remains one of the fastest-growing criminal violence in the world. Its proliferation is due to its cross-border nature and thus requires cooperation and collaboration between states if it is to be tackled effectively. However, throughout the world, often counterterrorism initiatives have failed to incorporate all relevant stakeholders. Hence, the Meghalaya Model, though originally designed to track and rescue trafficked children, could be adopted or adapted to counter terrorism in Nigeria, as there are insinuations of mercenaries and conscripted fighters for terrorists. And with the porous nature of Nigerian borders and the rate of human trafficking in the country, these mercenaries and conscripted fighters could be trafficked victims from neighbouring countries. This model is relevant to counter-terrorism in Nigeria because through a collaborative and far-reaching security network of stakeholders in counter-terrorism (security and intelligence agencies, NAPTIP, the media, civil society and NGOs), terrorists, mercenaries and terror suspects are more likely to be arrested and will face prosecution.

2. Countering Terrorism through Public-Private Partnerships (CTPPP)

While combating terrorism is a primary responsibility of nation states, developing partnerships with the private sector can be beneficial, especially in areas where state resources and expertise are limited. The public-private partnerships (PPPs) concept is gaining attention in the business world but at a much slower pace in the security domain. For instance, Jonathan Lucas, Director of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), argues that progress to build partnerships on security matters has been hampered by a lack of legislation to facilitate information exchange between the public and private sectors, as well as the absence of incentives because 'too often no incentives are provided to encourage the private sector to invest in the protection of vulnerable targets, as the private sector usually considers funding of PPP initiatives in security sectors as a cost rather than an investment' (2012, p. 8). However, the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy explicitly encourages such partnerships in capacity-building and information exchange. Hence the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) working group on countering the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes argues how it benefited from private sector expertise in 'the technical and legal aspects on how the Internet could be used to counter terrorist narratives' (2012, p. 8). Russia, for example, has been engaging with Moscow State University and People's Friendship University of Russia to exchange new ideas and expertise in countering terrorism. Because in their view, 'private-public

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cooperation should not be limited to the business community alone but should also include non-governmental organisations, media, tourism and hotels, youth associations, the academic community and religious leaders' involvement in the security sector' (Yudintsev, 2012).

3. Empowering Youth as Peace-Entrepreneurs and Peace-Seeds

There is growing evidence from the social science literature on the links between youth unemployment and armed conflict, and donors have increasingly used programmes that create jobs for youth as a tool to address armed violence. Many donors now identify addressing youth unemployment as an urgent priority, both in the field of peace building and in efforts to foster economic development (World Bank, 2008; ILO, 2010; UN, 2009). Similarly, the link between job creation and peacebuilding has been affirmed by the UN Secretary General's approval of the 'UN Policy For Post-Conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation And Reintegration' in 2008, as well as by the ILO's 2010 Guidelines on Local Economic Recovery in Post-Conflict (UN, 2009; ILO, 2010). However, studies find that both the theoretical and empirical cases for using youth employment programmes as a 'standalone' tool to reduce violent conflict are extremely weak, because donor interventions have been poorly evaluated and evidence of success typically only demonstrates increases in employment levels, with little effort made to assess the impact on conflict. Hence, evidence on using job creation as part of an integrated or comprehensive armed conflict or Anti Violence Response (AVR) strategy is stronger: some government-led initiatives in countries that experience high levels of armed violence (such as Brazil and South Africa) are positive examples. So, the emphasis on the youth Anti Violence Response (AVR) strategy should be based on holistic, comprehensive, and integrated approaches that go beyond simply addressing a lack of economic opportunities and seek to tackle the more complex array of factors (such as belief systems, religious, political, and ethnic fundamentalism) that turn youth into entrepreneurs of violence rather than peace-seeds. This is imperative because Omale (2013) argues that, if youth involvement in terrorism is becoming a real threat, then the primary step is to try to understand the phenomena systems and phenomenon of increase, and the causes of such criminal deviance. Because in the word increase and words of Socrates, words, 'Fundamentum Omnis Cultus animae' (i.e., the soul of all improvement is the improvement of the soul). For instance, the goal of most national educational curricula in modern times is to produce professionals such as scientists, lawyers, doctors, and engineers for society. How much of our school curriculum includes active citizenship education, youth leadership skills, civil courtesies, and relationship-building communication? The earlier we begin to instill the skills of 'learning to live together' and respect for humanity and society through active citizenship education, the better for our society.

4. Women-Gender Intelligence (WGI)

The innovation of "Women-Gender Intelligence" (WGI), particularly in the events of volatile conflict and endemic suicide bombings in Nigeria, has become imperative. For instance, with the

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continued violent conflict in Jos and the emerging suicide bombings in the country, the “Women for Change and Development Initiative” of the Office of the First Lady of Nigeria orchestrated media campaigns and jingles of “Women: See Something; Say Something!” and “The One that gives life must Protect Life!” The impact of these jingles and campaigns, this author would argue, motivated a rural woman in a village called Haya Biu, Niger State, to assist the State Security Service in Nigeria to unravel the hideout of some Boko Haram extremists on 6th September, 2011, who until then had been hiding there and making IEDs. By this revelation, it could be argued that women can be strong agents of change and development if adequately harnessed. In terms of security and counterterrorism in Nigeria, this paper argues that if women voluntarily and unanimously agree to stop insecurity, they can because there is no terrorist or criminal that does not have a mother, a spouse, or a girlfriend. The Women Gender Intelligence (WGI) is even more relevant in the Nigerian context since it is insinuated that some Boko Haram perpetrators are youth who cannot afford to pay a bride price for a wife and are so brainwashed and recruited to kill so as to be rewarded with seven virgins in Aljena. In this case, therefore, if women are granted protection as whistleblowers, they can be a good source of intelligence on counterterrorism in Nigeria.

5. Counter Extremism and De-radicalisation Programmes (CEDP)

Religion and cultural differences are among the most important causes of conflicts and violence in Nigeria. A very worrisome dimension of the role of religion in conflicts is the tendency and frequency with which some politicians and leaders exploit it for selfish reasons, as sometimes public statements on issues of religion tend to ignite or exacerbate conflicts, justifying the need for conflict sensitivity. Our world – as an American sociologist, Peter Berger, notes – is ‘fiercely religious’, and Nigeria has witnessed rising essentialism within all the major religions. For instance, a Muslim cleric was once criticised by the media for publicly preaching to his followers in a mosque in Kano (northern Nigeria) that “Un ka kama Mary ko Chinyere ka chisu” (meaning “if you catch a girl with a name Mary or Chinyere, rape her”). This is hate-based preaching that encourages young Muslim boys to rape girls bearing Christian or South Eastern names in Nigeria. In the same vein, some Neo-Pentecostal and evangelical Christians in Nigeria see themselves (the “born again” brethren) as holier than the ‘Other’. Similarly, crusades that dwell much more on the Biblical verse of Mathew 11:12, which states, “And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffered violence, and the violent takes it by force,” are becoming common citations among youth in Nigeria. Whereas, this Biblical injunction does not encourage violence, perverse interpretations of these religious injunctions, however, have crept into the minds of some people. This radical mindset has created many of the world’s violent outbreaks, both present and past. Lammy (2013) argues in an article written after the May 22nd killing of a Woolwich soldier by a terrorist suspect (Michael Adebolajo) that ‘radical Islamism suffocates conventional Islamic beliefs with a diet of anger, hate and intolerance among young men, who perhaps are already convinced of being outcasts and are intoxicated by teachings that not only entrench this difference further but also demand that they despise the society they leave behind.’ Hence, it is not uncommon for fringe groups of all ideological persuasions to systematically target these men by manipulating their sense of hopelessness and lack of belonging (Lammy, 2013). However, if religion could be used to cause conflict, it could be used to resolve conflict. Because even in this climate of global religious turbulence, religions

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offer the potential for generosity, wisdom and an ethical sense of transcendence capable of creating a strong link between people, beyond their differences. People might have different beliefs and dogmas and adhere to different schools of philosophical and metaphysical thought, but I strongly believe that it is possible to share a pragmatic universal system of ethics that would allow us all to live together. So Counter Extremism and De-radicalisation Programmes (CEDP) can work and could be an effective way of countering the spread of radical-violent ideology and activism, provided that the right conditions for success exist. These include, among others, political will, a vibrant civil society, and a robust developmental and political capacity within the Nigerian state.

6. Security Inter-Operability (SIO)

In every human society there are those that could not be safely contained in the community. Security interoperability that encourages security networking and intelligence sharing could root out the bad eggs in the society. For instance, if the police, SSS, EFCC and NIA work collaboratively, they could unravel the local and international sponsors and financiers of Boko Haram. Similarly, if the Customs, Immigration and the NDLEA work collaboratively, they could unravel the criminal importation of foreign mercenaries, drugs, arms and ammunition that are sustaining the Boko Haram insurgencies. In the same vein, the SSS and police working collaboratively with the Prisons Service could plant pseudo inmates who are fluent in Arabic, Hausa, Fulani and Kanuri in strategic prison cells for intelligence gatherings from detained Boko Haram suspects. The Military Joint Task Forces (MJTF) could as well invest in telemetric security and cable detection technology and use fewer roadblocks. Where these security strategies are done well, the use of the Military Joint Task Forces (MJTF) fire operations would only be the last resort. But if terror attacks do occur, a coordinated and well-equipped MJTF that comprises the military forces, NEMA, the fire service and the Red Cross should be on standby for effective evacuation and other needed humanitarian and relief services. However, in a system like Nigeria where security and law enforcement agencies struggle for supremacy and lay claim to arrests and security breakthroughs (as was the case in Kabiru Sokoto's arrest), interoperability becomes difficult to achieve. Nigeria does not lack the institutions to counter terrorism, but what Nigerian security and law enforcement agencies need to understand is that "success for one is success for all".

7. Community Policing Approach

In community policing, the community should be the primary objective for the police: its tacit support, its submission to law and order, its consensus, etc. It is therefore necessary to obtain the support of the community not only in the form of sympathy and approval but also in active participation in keeping the society safe. The police must build confidence in the community by conducting themselves professionally and showing the ability to hold volunteered information in the highest secrecy and protect those they have been entrusted to protect at all costs. In community policing, law enforcement agencies share power with residents of a community, and critical decisions need to be made at the neighbourhood level. Establishing and maintaining mutual trust between citizens of a community and the police is the main goal of the first

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component of community policing. In full partnership, law enforcement agencies and a community's residents and business owners are supposed to identify core problems, propose solutions, and implement a solution. For this problem-solving process to operate effectively, the police need to devote time and attention to discovering the community's concerns, and they need to recognise the validity of those concerns. If the police treat suspected terrorists/insurgents using methods and practices outside the law, such as collective punishment or arbitrary detention, this itself undermines the legitimacy of government and can create new grievances, inhibiting the effectiveness of counter-terror or counter-insurgency policies. However, in the real sense and in reality, the counter-terrorism in Nigeria is dominated by security operations (Audu & Zakimayu, 2021).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Young men almost exclusively lead and execute terrorist attacks globally. Nigeria, with its abundant unemployed labour force, exploitative politicians, radical clerics, a population prone to violence, and weakened national and community cohesion, provides a competitive advantage for militant and terrorist organisations, criminal networks, and corrupt political leaders. International experience in countering terrorism has shown that the key to preventing violence against the state and its citizens is policing that establishes government legitimacy and wins public support. In societies where endemic violence poses a threat, we should entrust the responsibility for security to police deployed among the population. Police are the public face of the government. By performing their duties in a professional manner, police build support for the government they represent. Acts committed by terrorists are crimes, which are the responsibility of the police and the criminal justice system. Killing or capturing terrorists when they are engaged in terrorist acts is not an effective solution to insecurity. The solution is to identify would-be terrorists before they commit acts of violence using information provided by citizens to the police. To make this approach work effectively, the police must recognise the importance of collaborating with citizens. The police must also adopt a citizen-oriented approach to policing. Police establish effective relations with the public by being available and easily accessible, by being responsive and acting promptly to requests for assistance from individuals, and by being fair and impartial, treating everyone professionally, respectfully, and empathetically. This approach is based on relationships, attitudes, and values. It requires neither advanced technical skills nor heavy weaponry.

Recommendations

1. The police should be provided with sophisticated equipment, discipline and training (the curricula in police training institutions must reflect present-day challenges, e.g., detailed courses on terrorism/military history, policing, forensics, etc.).
2. It is imperative that police officers undergo regular specialised training and retraining prior to deployment. This will equip them against the well-trained and equipped terrorists.

3. The funding and deployment of police officers for the counterterrorism operations should be depoliticised. The influence of the politicians on the processes of operation of the counterterrorism is affecting the smooth operation of the units if the funds set apart for their operation are misappropriated.
4. There should be a very strict and unbiased screening of the officers deployed into the counterterrorism units. This screening should be done by external bodies outside the government and its agencies. This will help rid the ranks and files of the moles that jeopardise their operations.

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