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IMPLICATIONS FOR STATE POLICE IN DEMOCRATIC NIGERIA: THE OPINIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS IN SELECTED STATES OF SOUTH WEST NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study finds the opinions of South West civilians, non-civilians and politicians (stakeholders), on the security, economic and political implications of introducing state police in Nigeria. From three randomly selected state capitals (Osogbo, Akure and Ado-Ekiti) in South West, Nigeria, stratified random sampling technique was used to sample 814 respondents comprising: 302 civilians, 234 non-civilians and 278 politicians. They were drawn from their clusters at different locations the state capitals. Data were collected using a face-validated, researcher-made questionnaire titled State Police Questionnaire (SPQ). The SPQ has a reliability coefficient of 0.82. Data were analyzed using percentages and ANOVA. Findings reveal the following as most expressed positive implications of State Police in the country: First, it allows broad security coverage of communities; this expressed by 97.4% of the stakeholders; second, it increases job opportunity expressed by 92.6% of the stakeholders; and third, it creates robust democracy, this expressed by 79.7% of the stakeholders. The most expressed negative implications are: rivalry among security agencies, expressed by 58.6% of the stakeholders; expensive to operate by 74.2% of the stakeholders and weakened federalism by 46.9% of the stakeholders. Furthermore, with the ANOVA hypothesis testing, the expressed positive implications were found to be significantly more positive than negative. The statistic, f. value = 12.6 > sig. value = .000, confirms this. Based on the findings it was concluded that Nigerian stakeholders in South West Nigeria believed introducing state police in the country would have positive implications on Nigeria security, economic and political activities. It was therefore recommended that concerned government authorities should perfect their policies for state police, though, without undermining its salient negative implications.

Key Words: State police, Implications, Negative, Positive, Democracy

Introduction

Crime occurs as a result of an imbalance between impulses towards criminal activity and the social or physical controls (e.g. police) that deter it....It is assumed that people act rationally and that given the opportunity, with absence of control like police, everyone would engage in crime (Giddens, 2001).

The above citation suggests that absence of security-oriented physical control mechanisms such as unavailability of policemen, militaries and other law enforcement agents in any society will give room for crimes and misbehaviours, in high proportion. Unfortunately, no nation wants this to happen. Every nation has core interests of coordinating its security policies and personnel for effective performance. Every government strives to achieve secured environment. Democratic governments are particularly formed for the purpose of serving the common good of people. To achieve this, democracies tend to put community-oriented laws in place. For the benefits of all, they most time create institutions to enforce and regulate the laws. In democratic government, such regulations are defined and shared as responsibilities among three tiers of government i.e. among Federal, State and Local Governments. Certainly, each tier has its different weight and spread of power and authority but they interdependently function for safety.

Nigeria practices democratic system of government, particularly the representative form of it. Since 1999, her democracy seems stable and getting more organized. In it, the weight and spread of governance are codified in Exclusive, Concurrent and Residual Constitutional Lists of the 1999 Constitution. The federal tier however exercises greatest of authorities that are contained as Executive List of responsibilities. Second in authority is the State Government. This is followed by Local Governments (LG) authorities. Under each tier of government, duties are carried out via activities of three arms of government, namely Executive arm, Legislature arm, and Judiciary arm. These structures are applicable to the 36 states and 774 Local Government Areas (LGA) of the country. With its central status and authority, the Federal tier regulates almost everything, including security. It solely holds on to issues of national security under which the Nigeria Police functions.

The establishment of Nigeria Police Force (NPF) predates 1960 when the country gained independence. It started during colonial era. However, NPF got footings with Section 194 of the 1979 Constitution. Its operational frameworks are further explicitly described in the 1999 Constitution. In the later, there is the Nigeria Police Act. With this, NPF has exclusively centralized policing power over all the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory. Its power covers every part of the 923,768 km2 miles of the country (Felix & Mustapha, 2009). The Nigeria Police Force is organized under the control of a federally constituted Police Service Commission (PSC). It has a National Police Headquarters at Abuja, 7 Zonal Commands, and one State Command Headquarters in each of the 36 states. There are also series of Divisional Offices across the country. The Zonal Commands are operational grouping of states and the State Commands Headquarters are direct subsidiaries of the National Headquarters; they are not owned or controlled by the state governments.

The entire physical system of the policing is headed, mobilized and commanded by an Inspector General of Police (IGP). The IGP is appointed by President, though with inputs from the Police Service Commission and the National Assembly, (Odevemi, & Obayan 2018). Generally, personnel of the Nigeria Police are categorized into Officers, Ranks and Files. In the Officer Cadre are, in order of seniority: the IGP, Deputy IGP, Assistant Inspector General (AIG), Commissioner of Police (CP), Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) and Assistant CP. Others in the Rank and File category are: the Chief Superintendent of Police (CSP), Superintendent of Police (SP), Deputy SP, and Assistant SP; Inspectors, Sergeants Major, Sergeant Corporal and Constables. With about 380,000 sworn personnel (Majid 2016), and a centralized source of order and funding, the Nigeria Police is designed to provide policing to about 180 million people inhabiting cities and villages of its 774 LGAs. By these arrangements, the personnel are deployed to every part of the country with the responsibility of maintaining order, security and engaging in some community services. Typically, the personnel of Nigeria Police carry out intelligence and physical duties all with the motive of deterring, managing, mediating and prosecuting incidences of misbehaviours.

Achieving all these are not without some strains and allegations. Definitely, there have been reports of inadequacies in the country's policing system. There are claims of increase in police deviance that are perpetrated as extortion, extra-judicial actions and killings, negligence of duties, sexual misconducts, illegal duties, obstruction of justice, aiding and abetting criminals and criminalities. There are also reports of outright involvement in armed robbery (Majid 2016; George & Haron 2017; Eze & Woru, 2014). All these shortcomings have brought labels of incompetency and ineptness on the Nigeria Police. Many have even instituted platforms and legal actions to call for restructuring of the system. Aside these, the calls for reforms are energized by recent increase in cases of crimes and insecurity in the country. Many of the calls are coming as a result of need for proper coverage of the ever enlarging population and land mass of Nigeria that has come under the attacks of bandits, armed robbers, kidnappers, murderers, and terrorists (Raman & George, 2015; Oluwole & Mathew 2018).

There are even legislative proposals at states and national levels to decentralize ownership, structure, control and power of Nigeria Police. Majorly, the motive is to enable states and LGAs run their police with little or no interference from the Federal Police (Sheu, Orah, & Basambe 2016). For example, at the Senate plenary session held on 17th April 2019, the Police Reform Bill, 2019 (SB 683) was passed. Though, is yet to get the assent of the President. Core among the objectives of the Bill is to create a police that is decentralized, state oriented and more functional, in term of community policing. Also, in June 2019, a Federal Government panel, the Presidential Panel on SARS Reform, headed by Tony Ojukwu, recommended establishment of state and LG police throughout the country (Abdullahi, 2019). In addition to this, state governors under the auspice of Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF) met on 19th June 2019 at Abuja and agreed to push for establishment of state police. They planned, first, to submit a memo in this regard to the National Assembly Constitution Review Committee (NACRC). Second, they planned to lobby the President, Muhammadu Buhari to give it his support. They also cited among other things, the incessant cases of crimes and insecurity in the country as what motivated their resolution (Gbadejo, 2019).

Of course, state police means a police formation that is owned, managed, mobilized and assessed solely by state government and within a geographically defined state locality. It is an approach to policing that removes power of central control from federal government and gives it to state governments. The proponents of state policing often make their points with emphasis on importance of community policing (Roberg, Novak, Cordner & Smith, 2012; Conklin, 2007; Bewaji & Amolegbe, 2015).) Roberg, et al., (2012) writes that beyond ownership, state police promotes close policecommunity relationship, strong community partnerships and a broad view of police responsibility. Some schools of thoughts have also faulted federal police to be more concerned with 'big crimes and 'political/social personality duties'. Perhaps, they focus more on white collar crimes (corruption for example), security of political personnel, deterring crimes such as terrorism, kidnapping, banditry and fraud; all at the expense of 'small crimes' and misbehaviours such as ganging, vandalism, loitering, accosting for money, drug abuse, sexual misbehaviours and minor assaults. Unfortunately, the perceived 'small crimes' are common at community level and are often the beginning points of effrontery for 'big crimes' (Roberg, et al. 2012; Hughes & Kroehler, 2002). Despites these foreign-based expressed implications about state police; one will still want to know the implications that are applicable to Nigerian societies.

Certainly, Nigeria will not be the first to introduce state police. In fact, Conklin (2007) argues that state police is peculiar to federalist states. Buttressing this, Roberg et al. (2012) identify citizen-police, private police and public police as categories of police in the United State of America (USA). The USA's public police consist of federal and state policing system. Also, each of the Argentina's provinces has its own independent police, the same with Mexico which has state police in each of its 31 states. In India, each state and territory has a state police and its own distinct police service (Roberg et al. 2012). This has been the case in many federated nations. Just as in Nigeria, many of the cited countries operate democracy. Roberg et al. (2012) argues that USA has 18,000 public police agencies and that 90% of the public police (i.e. 15,833 agencies) are local police comprising city, town, village, borough, parish and county police.

The research is anchored on Control Theory. Control theory is promoted by the writings of Travis Hirschi and Anthony Giddens. The theory maintains that every human being is potentially capable of committing crime and misbehaviours if there are no functioning social and physical mechanisms to deter the acts (Giddens 2001). The theory opines that irrespective of human intents, it is the presence or absence of deterrence for crime that determines occurrence of crime and misbehaviours. Physical presence of police and their applied policing strategies are examples of deterrence in modern societies. Inferably, when the police are present, effective and adequately mobilized in society, violation of law and order may cease. Emphasizing the assumption of this theory, Hirschi (1969) identifies four kinds of bond that presence of social and physical deterrence must create between people and society before crimes and misbehaviour can be deterred. The bonds are: attachment, commitment, involvement and belief. Anthony Giddens in his writing, (Giddens, 2001), believes that deterrence mechanisms must attach and commit people to the development of society. The mechanisms must also make people feel involved in the affairs of their society. When these are achieved, people would have strong belief for the growth of their society and be unwilling to obstruct the growth with crimes and misbehaviours (Giddens, 2001).

The principles of state police are said to present opportunities to achieve these bonds expressed in control theory (Roberg, et al., 2012). With Control Theory, one can assume that introduction of state police will provide social and physical deterrence. With it, security could be physically present as more local/state personnel would be engaged - involvement, police personnel would work closely with citizens to improve local community standards and civil behaviour – attachment. Also, state police could encourage commitment as engaged personnel would feel the sense of protecting their own state and community. All these could make the personnel believe in the system as what will work. Control Theory promotes the idea of bringing policing closer to people. It suggests need for a decentralized police system. But will the stakeholders in Nigeria share this opinion? Would their opinions of state police emphasize positive or negative implications?

No doubt, agitation for state police is growing in Nigeria and one way to help reaching decisions on this is to find out the opinions of Nigerians on the issue, through research. There is need to find what people believe would be the implications of state police in the country. The country's democracy has come a long way and needs improvement via reforms for growth and development. The reforms become imperative as the population of the country is growing and as cases of insecurity are increasing. This study therefore, finds out what in the opinions of Nigerian stakeholders (civilian citizens, non-civilians and political personnel) are the possible implications of adopting state police in the country.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and answered analytically:

- 1. Will civilians, non-civilians and political personnel agree to enactment of state police in Nigeria?
- 2. What in the opinions of stakeholders are the security implications of state police in Nigeria?
- 3. What in the opinions of stakeholders are the economic implications of state police in Nigeria?
- 4. What in the opinions of stakeholders are the political implications of state police in Nigeria?
- 5. Would stakeholders' expressed opinions for implications of state police in Nigeria be significantly more positive than negative?

Hypothesis

Only the fourth research question was recast as a null hypothesis and presented as following:

 $\rm H_01$: Stakeholders' expressed opinions for implications of state police in Nigeria would not be significantly more positive than negative.

Methodology

The study surveyed opinions of stakeholders (civilians, non-civilians and political personnel) on the implications of introducing state police in Nigeria. It specifically sought what would be the security, economic and political implications of state police in the country. From the stakeholders' population across three randomly selected state capitals (Osogbo, Ado Ekiti and Akure) in South West Nigeria, stratified random sampling technique was used to sample 814 respondents. They were accessed from the clusters of their population at offices, barracks, stations, commands and political gatherings with the help of research assistants. This sampling procedure yielded 302 civilians, 234 non-civilians (policemen, civil defense corps, custom officers, and immigration and state-owned traffic personnel) and 278 political personnel (counselors, special advisers, party officers, political appointees). The samples were predominantly educated (88.4%), religiously diversified (moderate variation in the percentage of Muslim (52.7%) and Christian (48.3%) participants) and there were representatives of diverse political camps and ideologies among the sample.

Data were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire titled State Police Questionnaire (SPQ). The questionnaire has two sections. Section 'A' elicited respondents' biographical and demographical data i.e. their status (education, political affiliations, profession and residence). Section 'B' elicited responses to items on implications of state policing in Nigeria. Items in Section 'B' are divided into two blocks. The first centers on stakeholders' support for introducing state police, the second asks for their opinions of the security, economic and political implications of introducing state police in the country. For each category of implications, there are 6 items. Three indicate positive implications and the other three indicate negative implications. The response options for each item in Section 'B' are Always True (AT) Sometime True (ST) and Not True (NT). The instrument was face validated and a reliability coefficient of 0.82 was derived for it, using test-re-test approach. Responses leading to answering research questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 were analyzed using frequency count and percentages while responses leading to analysis of the hypothesis was analyzed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). However, at the level of hypothesis testing, only data on AT and ST were summed and analyzed with percentages and ANOVA; this becomes logical since the stated implications were in positive and negative forms.

Results

RQ 1: Will civilians, non-civilians and political personnel agree to enactment of state police in Nigeria?

Stakeholders:	Agreed n	%	Disagree n	%
Civilians	287	95.03	15	4.9
Non-civilians	108	46.5	126	53.8
Political personnel	216	77.6	62	22.3
Total	611	75.5	203	24.9

Table 1: Stakeholders' Agreement/Objection to Introduction of State Police

On Table 1, a substantial percentage of stakeholders 75.5% (made up of civilians 95.03%; non-civilians 46.5% and political personnel 77.6%) would encourage introduction of state police in Nigeria. Only a collective 24.9% of them will not.

RQ 2: What in the opinions of stakeholders are the security implications of state police in Nigeria?

Table 2: Stakeholders' Opinions of Security Implications of State Police in Nigeria

Stakeholders:	Civilians (n=302)		Non- civilians (n=234)		Politicians $(n=278)$		Sum of Stakeholders (n=814)	
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Security Implications	n**	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Disorganized command	57	18.8	218	93.2	111	39.9	386	47.4
Rivalry among agencies	21	6.9	206	88.1	163	58.6	390	47.9
Security laxity and nepotism	34	11.5	74	31.6	62	22.3	170	20.8
Improved commitment	281	93.1	211	90.1	243	87.4	735	90.3
Broad security coverage	299	99.1	224	95.7	271	97.4	794	97.5
Improve security intelligence	243	80.5	183	78.2	209	75.2	635	78.1

** Only data derived from response options AT and ST were summed and analyzed under each stakeholder

As indicated on Table 2, a collective percentage (47.4%) of the sampled stakeholders believed introduction of state police will disorganize chains and hierarchies of security commands in Nigeria, another 47.9% believed it would bring clash and rivalry among the security agencies, and 20.8% believed it would encourage security laxity and nepotism in handling of security cases. However, a substantial percentage, 97.5% believed state police would broaden security coverage in the country, another 90.3% believed it would improve commitment to duties among personnel and 78.1% believed it would improve gathering of security intelligence.

RQ 3: What in the opinions of stakeholders are the economic implications of state police in Nigeria?

Stakeholders:	Civilians (n=302)		Non- civilians (n=234)		Politicians (n=278)		Sum of Stakeholders (n=814)	
Economic implications	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Expensive to operate	192	63.5	201	85.8	211	75.8	604	74.2
Personnel corruption	63	20.8	84	35.8	79	28.4	226	27.7
Tax pressure on citizens	198	65.5	201	85.8	209	75.2	608	74.6
Improved state revenue	243	80.4	198	84.6	241	86.6	682	83.7
Increased job opportunity	291	96.4	211	90.2	252	90.6	754	92.6
Safe environment for business	255	84.4	206	88.1	247	88.8	708	86.9

Table 3: Stakeholders' Opinions of Economic Implications of State Police in Nigeria

** Only data derived from response options AT and ST were summed and analyzed under each stakeholder

As shown on Table 3, among the respondents, 92.6% believed state police would increase job opportunity, 86.9% said it would create safe environment for business and 83.7% said it would improve revenue generation for states. On the other hand, 74.6% of the respondents believed state police would put tax pressure on citizens, another 74.2% believed the system would be expensive for states to run; but only 27.7% believed it would encourage corruption among the would-be personnel of state police.

RQ 4: What in the opinions of stakeholders are the political implications of state police in Nigeria?

Stakeholders:	Civilians		Non- civilians		Politicians		Sum of Stakeholders	
	(n=302)		(n=234)		(n=278)		(n=814)	
Political	n**	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Implications								
Secession	82	27.2	146	62.4	71	25.5	299	36.7
Weakened	103	34.1	211	90.2	68	24.5	382	46.9
Federalism								
Aid electoral malpractice	51	16.8	29	12.4	48	17.2	128	15.7
Power closer	201	66.5	211	90.2	226	81.3	638	78.4
to people								
Political check	194	64.2	104	44.4	192	69.2	490	60.2
& Balances								
Robust	208	68.8	200	85.4	241	86.6	649	79.7
democracy								

Table 4: Stakeholders' Opinions of Political Implications of State Police in Nigeria

 $\ast\ast$ Only data derived from response options AT and ST were summed and analyzed under each stakeholder

It is shown on Table 4 that 79.7% of sampled stakeholders believed that introduction of state police would make Nigerian democracy more robust, 78.4% believed it would bring political power closer

to people, and 60.2% said it would create check and balances among state and federal governments. However, 46.9% believed it would weaken federalism, 36.7% said it would enable secession among segments of the country but only 15.7% believed it would aid electoral malpractices.

HO₁: Stakeholders' expressed opinions for implications of state police in Nigeria would not be significantly more positive than negative.

Table 5.1 ANOVA Analysis of Significance of Differences in Expressed Negative and Positive Implications

Implications				ANOVA	
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	25508.713	5	5101.743	12.681	.000
Within Groups	19310.989	48	402.312		
Total	44819.701	53			

Significance indicator: f = 12.6 > sig = .000

The ANOVA data (mean score) on Table 5 show that expressed percentages of positive implications, across the categories of stakeholders (81.4%; 82.9%; 84.7%) are higher than expressed percentages of negative implications across the categories (29.4%; 65.03%; 64.1%). Similarly, on Table 5.1, ANOVA data indicate that f. value = 12.6 is higher than sig. value = .000; therefore HO₁ was rejected and it was concluded that Stakeholders' expressed opinions for implications of state police in Nigeria were significantly more positive than negative.

Discussion

State police is a system that diffuses federal government's sole ownership, funding, mobilization and appraisal of police structure and personnel. It is a system common in countries practicing federalism (Roberg, Novak, Cordner & Smith, 2012). In Nigeria, if implemented, it would allow each of the 36 states of the federation run her own police system. With this approach, though as may be stipulated in the country's constitution, the currently operated system of policing will have to be restructured. However, restructuring of a major sector of society like police in a democratic country will require seeking stakeholders' opinion. This is because democratic government strives on the principle of majority rules. Seeking such opinion is the focus of this research. The researchers were able to identify what stakeholders such as civilians, noncivilians and politicians in South West Nigeria thought to be implications of state police in Nigeria.

For example, this research was able to identify in the opinions of sampled stakeholders, that introducing the system would create opportunity for broad security coverage in Nigeria. Substantial percentage of the stakeholders, (97.4%), identified with this positive security implication. They also believed state police would improve personnel's commitment (87.4%) and enhance their access to and usage of security intelligence (75.2%). These positive opinions were so much bought into that only small percentages of the sampled stakeholders, (22.3%) believed that state police would create job laxity or that it would disorganize the chain of command of the current federal police system. Certainly, these identified positive implications have been emphasized in past researches as one of the advantages of decentralizing police system. An example is in Skogan & Hartnett, (1997) who studied decentralization of police in Chicago. Similarly, Frank, Brabdl & Watkins (1997) did a similar study in Cincinnati, USA; and found out that coverage of policing increased with decentralization. In fact in an earlier study by Mastrofski, (1992) it was discovered that decentralizing policing encouraged personnel's commitment to duties. Corroborating these, Roberg, et al. (2012) wrote that decentralization contribute significantly to development of team spirit and functional policing procedures.

The sampled stakeholders in this study also allayed the fear that decentralizing Nigeria federal police would help secessionists achieve their objectives. This fear has been expressed in Kalejaye & Adabata's, (2016) research. However, in this study, the possibility of state police aiding secession was supported by only 36.7% of the sample. In fact, 79.7% of the sample believed state police would rather make Nigeria unity and democracy robust. No doubt, a democratic government should bring governance closer to people. One way to achieve this would be to ensure safety of life and property even at the grassroots level. Unfortunately, over centralized security systems have failed in this area (Horalambos & Heald, 2008; Giddens, 2001). State police is known to encourage community policing that facilitate grassroots safety (Giddens, 2001). In fact 78.4% of the respondents believed state police would bring power closer to people. More findings here also show that civilians, non-civilians and political personnel in the selected state capitals believed that state police would not encourage electoral malpractice contrary to what was also earlier expressed in Kalejaye & Adabata, (2016). In fact only 15.7% of the sample believed this could happen.

However, a good percentage of the respondents (74.2%) agreed that state police would be expensive to run in Nigeria. They, (76.6%) also said it could put tax pressure on citizens. These are parts of the economic implications that the stakeholders expressed. Certainly, state police can be expensive. Roberg, et al. (2012) had stated this in his discourse of impacts of state police in America. This can be true since state police could mean employing more personnel and mobilizing them to interior communities. Certainly, operating state police system would require that state governments are buoyant. But beyond this, state police could increase job opportunity and create safe environment for businesses; these are also in the opinions of the stakeholders, 92.6% and 86.9% respectively. Above all, the respondents (83.7%) believed the system could improve revenue generation in states so the impact of the expenses can be moderated.

Conclusion

Stakeholders in South West Nigeria were optimistic about state police. Their expressed opinions point to the fact that they believe it would bring advantages more than disadvantages to the country's security system. Inferential analysis in the study further confirms this. With ANOVA's f. value of 12.6, the expressed positive implications of state police were found to significantly exceed the expressed negative implications. The input of this is that state police when introduced may have little or no objections in the South West part of the country that the study focused. However, there is need not to ignore some expressed negativities about the system. A democratic government like that of Nigeria is expected to know that no policy can be hundred percent perfect.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following are recommended:

Nigeria government should consider state police system for development of policing in the country.

Efforts to create state police should weigh its negative implications, some of which are identified here, and manage them.

More researches should be conducted with this research interest in the other geopolitical zones of the country.

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