

## Inter-Agency Conflict and its Implication on National Security in Nigeria

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**Abstract.** Violent conflict is gradually becoming one of the defining characteristics of Nigeria. The problem of violence conflict in Nigeria has become more worrisome as the security operatives whose duty is to maintain peace, detect and suppress crimes have themselves become engulfed in violent conflicts, thereby giving criminals opportunity to unleash terror on the citizenry with impunity. Also, unethical conducts are held accountable for inter-agency conflict, superiority struggles, jurisdictional boundaries as well as role conflict arising from operational duties. To this end, repeated violent clashes among these security professionals have consistently alienated them from the public. This situation has further caused loss of confidence and respect from the citizenry. This paper therefore reviews the challenges of inter-agency conflict that negatively impact on national security. The paper adopted exploratory research design and relied on qualitative data, while the population comprised of security agencies particularly the Police and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps operatives as study population. Data collected from secondary sources are relevant books, journals, publications from website of security agencies and internet materials. The paper concluded that there is need for inter-agency collaboration or cooperation in addressing inter-agency conflict as well as promoting national security in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Security, Inter-agency, Conflict, National security, Collaboration.

### 1. Introduction

Inter-agency conflict and its implications on national security in Nigeria have been a reoccurring decimal among security agencies. This explains why it is argued that inter-agency collaboration is a necessity in the maintenance of the national security. Security agencies are to enhance security both internally and internationally as this is partly their statutory roles. The goal is to ensure that peaceful atmospheric

conditions are sustained. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, modern concepts of national security arose during the thirty years of war in Europe and the civil war in England. Shortly, after the war in 1648, the Peace of Westphalia was established and the idea that the nation-state has sovereign control not only of domestic affairs but also of external security.

In global setting, inter-agency collaboration have been encouraged at local and international levels among security agencies, owing to the need to curb violence and crime, and therefore the maintenance of law and order is imperative (Kelleher, 2002; Hamblet and Kline, 2000; Bogdanos, n.d; Hagen, 2006; Arnas, Barry and Oakley, 2005). National security requirements offer opportunity to design criteria, which are closely linked with list of threats. According to Mroz (2012), the most important criteria of national security are strength, size of space, reliability, access to the latest technology, and ability to participate in cooperative security. National security is the keeping of nation as a whole; its highest order of business is the protection of nation and its people from attack and other external dangers by maintaining armed forces and guarding state secrets (Holmes, 2014).

Since the return of democratic system in 1999, Nigeria has witnessed an unprecedented display of bestiality by security operatives which includes Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps versus Nigeria Police Force (NPF), NPF versus Nigeria Army (NA), NA versus Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), and Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) versus Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) Aviation security among others. These occurred in manners that embarrass their respective agencies and the country at large while putting doubts in the minds of the public the competence of these agencies to discharge their constitutional responsibilities of ensuring peace and protecting lives and property. However, the state security apparatus had failed in

the past and have continued to fail over time (Sayne, 2011; Zumve, Ingyoroko and Akva, 2013).

The objectives of this study are to identify the factors responsible for the conflicts between Nigeria Police Force and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps in Nigeria and determine the extent which inter-agency conflicts affect national security in Nigeria.

## 2. Methodology

The study adopted exploratory research design and relied on qualitative data. The population of the study was 52,735 of personnel of Nigeria Police Force and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps from Lagos, Ogun and Oyo States in South-West Nigeria. These security agencies were purposively selected because they are inter-agency conflict ridden. Data were collected from documentaries and reviewed. In addition, (12) twelve senior officers were interviewed to compliment the major sources. Data from interviews were content analyzed.

## 3. Conceptual Review

### 3.1 Security

The concept of security has been defined in so many ways by scholars, security managers, government officials, security agencies and analysts depending on their intellectual predilection and or ideological orientation (Akinyeye, 2001). A careful analysis has shown that all different definitions can be classified into broad categories normally referred to as the traditional and non-traditional school of thought (Akinyemi, 2013). The traditional school of thought focused on the use of military force while the non-traditional school of thought broadened the meaning of security to comprise issues of socio-economic development.

Aliyu (2012) conceived and present security as a state of reduced or contained threats and tension in which the stability of a state is not in an imminent danger of disruption from within and without. Stability is here viewed as the order, regularity and pattern, which characterized the state's condition over an extended period. Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013) argued that the concept of 'security' is a crosscutting, and multi-dimensional concept which has, over the last century, been the subject of great debate. However, long before that, the history of mankind was interspersed by the frenzied search for the best way of ensuring the security of the people, their properties, territories, states and institutions among others.

In all places and countries, security has been considered as a "first order value" worth preserving, the aforementioned notwithstanding, there is no consensus on the definition of security because it is a social phenomenon and it is seen from different perspectives. Mukhtar (2012) argued that the concept of security has always been associated with safety and survival of state and citizens from harm or destruction or from dangerous threats.

Danmadi (2010) defines security as the protection of life and property so that the daily business of life may continue without hindrance. This is corroborated by Efevbokhan (2009) that security represents the absence of threat and/or fear in a social system, to him, and that sector depends on the security in place. Alemika (2010) also posits that security and development are interdependent as neither could be achieved without the other. Aja (2007) reflects that security friendly system frees individuals and group from fear and dangers of loosing such alienable human rights as life, liberty and property. Security, from a non-professional's perspective expressed the term as weapons, other defense mechanisms against threats and presence of a uniformed outfit with the power to arrest and ensure law and order are maintained.

According to Imobighe (1990), human security is "freedom from danger or to a nation's ability to protect and developed itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interests and enhance the well being of its people." Therefore, the need for an effective security apparatus to be put in place cannot be over-emphasized. Various segments of security which include internal security, human security, cyber security, food security, environmental security, economic security, health security, education security, global security, and housing security among others. Therefore, the researcher opined that security of a nation is absolute state of being secured, freedom from apprehension, confident of safety and freedom from danger or risk. Therefore, security is a paramount condition that must be satisfied in order to guarantee a feeling of survival within the world system that is anarchical in nature.

### 3.2 Inter-agency Conflict

Globally, security operatives' clashes among themselves cannot be over-emphasized, however, army/police or police versus other security agencies clashes is not peculiar to Nigeria alone, but there are reported cases of security agencies clashes in some parts of the entire world. For example, in Ouagadougou- Burkina Faso, on 26<sup>th</sup> December, 2006, there was violent clash between the nation's

army and police which led to the death of five security personnel (three soldiers and two policemen) while civilian populace sustained various degree of injuries from stray bullets fired in the shoot-out.

The Pakistan Press (2003) reported army/ police clashes over the use of tinted glass caused the unnecessary tension between the duos, though the organized Pakistan civil society condemned the activities of the security operatives. In a related development, on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2002, at Jakarta-Indonesia a clash was reported between the army and police over arrest of a soldier by local police for drug offence, this led to the death of four policemen when the soldiers bombarded the police post in order to release their colleague (*Indonesia News*, 2002).

The origin of inter-agency conflict in Nigeria started in the mid 1970s, as remarkable by Adekanye (1993), that Nigeria Police Force was the nearest occupational group to Nigeria Army in terms of status, salary and condition of service. An inter-agency conflict among different agencies in Nigeria is a major challenge in the business of effective service delivery to the people. In other words, rather than blowing an 'off-bounds' whistle at the public, it is now unfortunately directed at the umpires. Officers and men of various government agencies particularly security agencies have been involved in one form of conflict due largely to one interest or the other to the detriment of the Nation.

Inter-agency conflicts cut across different parastatals in the country, conflicts do exist between local government security guards and Vigilant groups in the community; local government agencies and federal government agencies, State created agencies and Federal government agencies and intra-conflicts among Federal Government Agencies. However, the major overlap existing between the Nigeria Police and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps remain the battle against vandalism of public properties. The Acts establishing these two agencies stipulate and define their responsibilities to the society, the areas of their duty in the line of curtailing vandalism remains shared and terms of responsibilities unclear (NSCDC Act, 2003 as amended in Act 2007 Sec. 3; Police Act of 1958 as amended in 1967, Sect. 4).

The prevalence of inter-agency rivalry and its implication on national security has brought about the realization of the need for inter-agency collaboration and cooperation. The United States Government Accountability Agency report (GAO) of 2012 defines collaboration as any joint activity that is intended to produce more public value than could be produced

when the agencies act alone. According to London (2012) in his study of *Collaboration Community*, as its Latin roots *com* and *laborare* suggest, collaboration reduced to its simplest definition to mean "to work together."

Kaiser (2011) views it as "a process of joint decision making among key stakeholders of a problem domain about the future of that domain" to the downright esoteric "an interactive process having a shared transmutation purpose". It also means any joint activity by two or more organizations that is intended to produce more public value than could be produced when the organization act alone.

### 3.3 National Security

The global perspective of National security refers to the security of nation state, including its citizens, economy, and institutions, and is regarded as duty of government to secure the citizenry. In the past it was conceived as protection against military attack, but now it is widely understood to include non-military dimensions, including economic security, energy security, environmental security, food security, and cyber security. According to Pogoson (2013) Nigeria's national security rest on the country's National Defence Policy which is framed to protect Nigeria's interest under the ambit of the constitution.

The Reviewed Draft National Defence Policy (2002) states that National Security is an encompassing condition in which citizens can live in freedom, peace and safety; participate fully in the process of governance, enjoy the protection of fundamental human right, have access to resources and necessities of life and inhabit an environment which is conducive to their health and well being. The above two definitions laid a lot of emphasis on what National Security is but failed to mention the people that help to put that in place.

The content of National Defence policy includes promotion of Nigeria's sovereignty, citizens, values, culture, resources and territory against external threats; provision of defense as well as strategic advice and information to government; promotion of security consciousness among Nigerians; responses to request for support for civil authority.

Also, defence policy further included participation in disaster management and humanitarian relief operations both at home and abroad, assistance of government agencies and levels of government in achieving national goals, protection of Nigerians wherever they may reside, ensuring security and stability in West African sub-region through collective security, participation in bilateral and

multi-lateral operations, and contributing to international peace and security.

The Sections 214 and 217 of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria authorized the establishment of a standing Armed Forces and other security agencies, thus: defending Nigeria from external aggression; maintaining its territorial integrity and securing its borders from violation on land, sea, air; suppressing insurrection and acting in aid of civil authorities but subject to such condition as may be prescribed by an Act of National Assembly. Today, the country's nascent democracy is being tested by rampant crimes and an unprecedented campaign of terror such that in the Southern part of the country, civil unrest threatens safety and stability of the region, to the Eastern part of the country; kidnappers who abducts expatriates for ransom are waiting on the roads, in bars, and cities; and to the Northern part of the country, the Islamic terrorist group called Boko Haram is growing both in number and brutality hence the group has posed brazen challenges to the government and issued the ultimatum "leave or die" to Christians living in the Northern Nigeria and confidence that the government can protect the people is at all-time low (Agaptus, 2013).

#### 4. Theoretical Framework

This study adopted Group conflict theory; it has three historical perspectives which include the theory of algebraic equations; the theory of number; and the theory of geometry respectively. However, there are three (3) early researchers in the field of group conflict theory which includes Joseph Louise Lagrange (1777); Hiels Henrik Abel (1799); and Evariste Galois (1846). The group theory originated from France, it is the study of symmetry when dealing with an object that appears symmetric in nature. The group conflict theory presents human beings as fundamentally group-involved beings. According to this theory groups are formed in human communities based on shared interest. This shared interest can best be furthered through collective action (Vold, 1958). New groups are formed as new interests arise, while existing ones may get weakened and fizzle out if they no longer serve their usual purposes.

Groups when formed become effective action unit through the direction and co-ordination of the activities of members by their leaders. Vold (1958) states that society is a network of groups driven by diverse interests. Group consciousness develops through experience gained from participating in regular group activities. Consequently, an emotional

attachment to group activities rather than rational thinking develops. However, inter group conflict begins when their interests and purposes tend to overlap and or encroach on one another, hence their relationship becomes competitive, this competitive conflict engenders members' emotional attachment and loyalty to their various groups.

Odoma and Aderinto (2014) used the group conflict theory to study the power consciousness of security operatives: the bane of inter-agency feud in Nigeria. The theory helps to explain clashes between the personnel of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps and the police in the study. Thus, the strength of this theory is its elaborate explanation of conflicts among groups, which provide insights to this present study.

The theory enables people to understand that there is a high possibility of clashes among groups whose roles are similar or overlap. Nonetheless, the theory failed to state in precise terms the remote causes of such clashes among security agencies. The theory helps to explain clashes between operatives of Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps and the Nigeria Police Force in the study. However, the theory enables people to understand that there is possibility of clashes among groups whose roles are similar or overlaps.

#### 5. The Implications of Inter-Agency Conflicts on National Security

The continuous inter-agency conflict has grave consequence because the citizens will be constantly under security threats of different dimensions. According to (Ajayi and Aderinto, 2008; Odoma, 2011) states that one thing that have remain constant across the nation is that, at the peak of all the security challenges, security operatives are often found helpless, not really knowing what to do. The conflict among security agencies has created loss of confidence from the citizenry coupled with selfish clashes and destroys selves and property with weapons bought by tax payer's money, or maim citizens, their reputations and civil cooperation will continue to dwindle as has been noticed over the years (Danjibo and Adams, 2018).

Today, average Nigerians prefer private security guards to public security agencies (Ajayi and Aderinto, 2008). The danger in this kind of arrangement may eventually lead to possible generation of confusion as it could constitute to several ethnic militias groups. To this end, these militias group have taken laws into their hands in all the part they exist and the security situation has worsened in Nigeria. (Reid, 1996) noted that rather than militias groups controlling crimes rate in the

country, the freedom of creating ethnic militia sub-cultural groups has been manifesting, this have enhanced the generation of more criminals.

## 6. Discussion

There are factors responsible for inter-agency conflicts between Nigeria Police Force and Civil Defence Corps. Studies such as Adekanye, 1993 and Omoigui, 2006 have shown that inter-agency conflict arose as a result of superiority struggles 'stand tall', overlapping other's roles due to ambiguous definition of roles by law, competition over primordial interest, ignorance of the law and indiscipline by the operatives especially among junior officers are some of the factors responsible for the persistent clashes which in essence has been the source of cold war among the forces from which destructive clashes result. Oditia (2011) asserted that experience of the past decades in Nigeria negates expectation of the citizens as these public security operatives have been involved in several violent and destructive feuds. Albert (2001) identified that poor communication and mismanagement of information has been one of the causes of inter-agency conflicts.

The continuous violent clashes among security agencies put the security operatives in serious danger in terms of loss of their own lives and equipment. All the clashes between the Police and the Army in Nigeria for instance, have led to the death of operatives themselves, their properties and operational equipment (Odoma, 2011). However, Omogui (2006) noted that, the cold war between security forces had on several occasions led to unnecessary death of troops during joint operations, all in the name of accidental discharges. This situation is not good for national security of any nation. Over the past five years, inter-agency conflicts had been degenerating to violence with (15) fifteen recorded deaths among various security agencies particularly between Nigeria Police Force and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps.

## 7. Conclusions and Recommendations

In attempt to address inter-agency conflict and its impact on national security among security agencies in Nigeria, the security agencies need to understand that no single agency can do it alone effectively without the joint collaborative efforts of other security agencies in order to enhance national security. More so, all security agencies were established to compliments each other, after all the security agencies are working towards the same goal or objectives. This paper therefore concludes that

there is need for overhauling of security sector reform and principle of synergy or cooperation should be encouraged among security agencies in order to tackle incidences of conflicts and national security in Nigeria.

The following recommendations will go a long way in resolving the conflict among the security agencies in Nigeria:

- All security agencies and stakeholders involved in provision of security must endeavor to sponsor regular interactive forum in order to understand that each other's roles are complimentary. A lecture series should be organized at both senior and junior cadres of the security agencies to discuss issues that usually generate conflicts.
- Seniority and superiority struggles among security agencies should be discouraged because their existence is the product of the 1999 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria.
- There should be provision of secondment period of two years for both senior and junior security operatives to another security agency in order to promote cooperation and synergy.
- The leadership of all security agencies should ensure discipline and sanction any erring security operatives.
- The Ministry of Interior should ensure that there is synergy between the NSCDC and NPF while performing their official assignments to avoid unnecessary conflict between them.
- The Joint Intelligence Board should impress on the security agencies that inter-agency conflict must be stopped and organize inter-agency sporting activities to enhance interrelationship among the operatives.
- The management of each security agency should provide adequate awareness or orientation on the differences and similarities in the security roles played by the NPF and the NSCDC to curb the occurrence of clashes among the security agencies.

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