

## Tackling insurgency through policing strategy and techno driven surveillance: an approach for the North West, Nigeria

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### **Abstract**

*The vast North West's weakly regulated stretch of 1,497km international land border with Sahelian countries; a conduit for proliferation of arms, transnational terrorism, human trafficking drug trafficking, jihadist incursion, has found a nexus with North West region of Nigeria whose poverty indicators, unabated tension between sedentary Hausa farmer and the nomadic Fulani herders. All these are predictors for kidnapping, armed banditry, gang raping, village and markets raids, which are done with reckless abandonment while the already overwhelmed law enforcement agencies battle to no end even as economic diplomacy, peace, socialization and political stability of the country remain extensively threatened and at its lowest ebb. It is in an effort to outthink this overwhelming background that this study sets out to examines, using the state fragility theory, the tackling insurgency through policing strategy and techno driven surveillance as an approach for the North West, Nigeria. The study engaged survey research design and purposive sampling technique to obtain relevant data from law enforcement agencies and civil society involve in prosecuting the war against terror in North West of Nigeria. Findings from the study showed that a change in policing strategy from the present armchair, reactive and combative policing strategy to Intelligence Led policing strategy and deployment of techno driven surveillance has positive and significant effect in tackling insurgency, Jihadism incursions, crime and criminalities in the North West of Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Policing Strategy, Insurgency, Techno Driven Surveillance, The State Fragility Theory

## Introduction

The North West Nigeria has all the trappings of a restless zone endangered by insurgency, proliferation of arms, drug smuggling, human trafficking, transnational terrorism from the four Sahelian countries, unregulated artisanal mining, kidnapping, organised crime, armed banditry, and illicit border crossing. The apparent drivers that encourages all these unsettling violence and other crime and criminalities could be seen in the region's poor poverty indicator status and Human Development Index threatened by high mortality rate, abysmal literacy status, abandoned and ungoverned forestry reserves and climatic change condition which further polarized and pitched the pastoralist Fulani herders and the sedentary Hausa farmers (Human Development Index Report, 2003; National Population Commission (NPC), 2008; NBS, 2012; United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF), 2019). While millions of children those who do not attend school at all are in the poorly resourced and ill-supervised Quranic school system, or *almajiranci*.

Interestingly, many of the North West region states maintain stronger bond; religion, historical, cultural and economical ties with the four Sahelian countries especially Niger and Chad than to their own governments both at State Capital and at Abuja. Their civilization and wealth are more interconnected to transnational border activities. The remoteness of governance in the region has since thrust the peoples' belief and allegiance more towards armed non state actors who are into illicit transnational border activities; arms proliferation, drugs trafficking, insurgency, armed banditry and violent crimes thereby expecting nothing benefiting from their own government far positioned away from them. Worrisome is the fact that, as States demonstrates incapability to ensure security, implement the law or provide public goods, smaller entities such as warlords and other armed non state actors spring up often and assume state actors roles. These conjectures from which warlords, criminal kingpins and insurgents evolve are brazenly displayed at the helplessness of already overwhelmed law enforcement agencies (LEAs).

Moreover, the helplessness of law enforcement agencies combating terror in the region could be seen in the unabated increase in the region's insurgency and violent crime with little or no detection of crime before occurrence (Maigari & Abiri, 2014). Farmers are fleeing from raided spots while few farmers who stayed behind were subjected to taxation by the bandits before accessing their farms with no reprieve from government agencies (WANEP, 2020). The spiraling effects of all these violence in the region could be seen in the dwindling economic diplomacy leverage of the region and the country as a whole as no

investment can be negotiated nor attracted neither can tourism or Durbar funfair be influenced into the region.

The need to reengineer the present age long traditional policing strategy; which awaits complaints of citizens at the station office albeit does not promote crime detection across law enforcement is a concern to this study. The apparent failure of the present traditionally reactive strategy, is sown by the military boot camp training model in which law enforcement agencies are trained, impressed upon and passed out into the society; a model premeditated to create a warrior-like officers and men, ready for battle and antagonism (*bloody civilian mentality*), foreclosing a relationship with the people but ready to pursue orders and rules without question (Balko, 2013). It is same combativeness postures which distance the society from law enforcement agencies especially the Nigeria Police that recently snowball into a national protest by the populace asking for the disbandment of the Special Anti Robbery Squad (SARS), (BBC, 2020). Therefore the realities of policing are; critical thinking, community oriented relationship and decision-making, not sole combativeness, should be a top goal of any training and policing strategy (Rahr & Rice, 2015).

Furthermore, combating insurgency in the North west can no longer be approached with reactive and traditional policing strategy, the need to embrace community oriented policing laced with intelligence led strategy cannot be over emphasised as it is these policing strategies that effectively deploy satellite based and techno driven surveillance to unfriendly and unfamiliar terrain with resounding precision in both covert and overt operations (Romaniuk, 2012). This therefore calls for collaborative efforts of all stakeholders; law enforcement agencies (Military, State Service, Nigeria Police, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Nigeria Immigration Service, National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA) along with all telecommunication providers in the country using technology deployment to stay ahead of insurgency and acts of terrorism to the extent of using Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (drones) to execute threats in any parts of the world. An effective policing strategy in the order of Intelligence Led and Community Oriented Policy will sure attract the attention and supports of the international community in tackling the North West region terror.

The main objective of this study is to assess the tackling of insurgency through policing strategy and techno driven surveillance in the North West, Nigeria. Other specific objectives are to;

- i. Examines effect of policing strategy on tackling insurgency in the north west of Nigeria.

- ii. Evaluates effect of techno driven surveillance on tackling insurgency in the north west of Nigeria.

In order to accomplish these stated objectives, this study adopts the following null hypothesis

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Policing strategy has no significant effect on tackling insurgency in the north west of Nigeria.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Techno driven surveillance has no significant effect on tackling insurgency in the north west of Nigeria. The results of this work, underpinned by the state fragility theory, will be of benefits to policy makers, security experts, civil society, academicians and developmental experts in examining how to assist the state in tackling the war of terror, insurgency and social menace in the North West of Nigeria, region.

### **Conceptual Framework**

#### **Community Policing**

Community policing is a a set of principle designed to detect, prevent and control crime by working in partnership with the host community. It is not the answer to all the problems facing modern policing, but rather it deeply involves the community itself in policing. The prevention emphasis of community policing is more proactive than conventional policing strategies (Cordner, 2007). It is widely accepted that community policing increases the perception of safety and decreases the fear of crime. Skogan (2006) argues that there is evidence to suggest that increasing community policing interactions are associated with effectiveness in reducing insurgency (Palmiotto, 2000).

#### **Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP) Deconstructed**

ILP is a product of the new 'businesslike' approach to crime control: a process of rationalisation or a means of managing limited resources in times of increasing demand. The term though ambiguous is frequently applied to proactive 'crime fighting' strategies, it involves crime mapping, pattern analysis and problem-oriented approaches to policing problems (Stockdale, Whitehead & Gresham, 1999). This strategy is seen by Maguire and John (1995) as the 'strategic deployment of resources in order to target "criminally active" individuals, so as to obtain evidence for a successful prosecution. Wilson, Ashton and Sharp (2001), described it as the way in which police plan and target their criminal investigations relying on analysing intelligence and targeting criminals. Stockdale *et al.* (1999) noted that an emphasis on proactivity necessarily 'presupposes that a higher status is afforded to the intelligence function.

## **Predictors for effective change of Policing Strategy Skilled and Retrained Manpower**

The present notion that law enforcement tasks is reserved for dropouts or a job of last resort has not helped LEA in attracting skilled manpower that will supports the transformation of these agencies from reactive to intelligence led policing strategy. The need to enthrone balance training that emphasises; community partnership in policing, data and crime pattern analysis and intelligence led surveillance devoid of civilian brutality cannot be overstated.

## **Supportive Legal Institutional Framework**

A supportive legal institutional framework establishes the roles and responsibilities of all different state actors engaged in designing, administering, delivering, and enforcing social protection systems. The effective functioning of the system serves to avoid overlaps, duplications, multiplications or gaps and it is of paramount significance to the realization of the right to social security. An appropriate legal framework establishes benefits in a clear and transparent way, and will allow persons who are entitled to make claims and get redress in case of a infringement of their rights (Social Protection & Human Rights, 2015).

## **Establishment of Fusion Centres**

Fusion is the process of pooling and analyzing information from many different sources to help identify larger crime trends and emergency management opportunities. It is a collaborative effort of two or more agencies that provide resources, expertise, and information to the center with the goal of maximizing their ability to detect, prevent, investigate and respond to criminal, insurgency and terrorist activities. The centre also turns information and intelligence into actionable knowledge by situational awareness and warnings that are supported by law enforcement intelligence. There are 78 official fusion centers, established across the US which allows private and public sector law enforcement agencies to be connected in a way (Lewandowski, Carter & Campbell, 2017). The existence of fusion centers in Nigeria will herald the enthronement of inter agency collaboration, data analysis and info sharing. A fusion center process looking at terrorist-related activity, may turn up information related to drug trafficking, money laundering, arms proliferation, networks of Jihadists' even illegal activities like local taxes or market revenue being used to fund terrorist groups.

## **Deployment of Technology**

Collaboration between LEA and telecommunication providers will be a major step even in technological deployment to combat terror in North West of Nigeria. The evolvement of working relationship; LEAs. NigComSat and NASRDA, which seeks to maximise usage of earth observation satellites to fight insurgency, crimes and criminalities will be a step in the right direction and such will be further enhanced with a proactive and intelligence led policing strategy. An overwhelmed security agencies in the face of a dwindling budget cannot but embrace technological deployment in surveillance, intel gathering and analysis in order order to combat terror.

## **Empirical Review**

### **Policing strategy and Tackling insurgency in the North West**

Danjuma, Sarki and Amali (2014) thematically examined community policing strategies and counter-insurgency in North-eastern Nigeria. findings from the study revealed that the insurgents blend and carry out their activities within local communities hence community participation in policing becomes imperative to tackle insurgency. The paper submitted that supports to law enforcement agencies will help in tackling insurgency in northeastern states.

Ejiogu (2019) examined community policing and the engagement of pastoral terrorism in West Africa. The thematic study analyzed the broad narratives, advantages, and limitations of adopting community policing for the control of herdsmen terrorism in West Africa. The study established the need for officers and men to be engaged in proactive self-oriented agenda and less time attending to reactionary calls and patrols in order to strengthen intelligence-led policing. The study concluded that community-oriented policing could be gainfully employed to implement the need for resident involvement in setting and maintaining principles of social norm that would discourage terrorist recruitment in local communities.

Ratcliffe (2016) in a thematic analysis examined intelligence policing as an evolving policing culture and approach. The study revealed that policing has moved from investigation-led intelligence to intelligence-led policing as a result of failure of traditional and reactive policing, improvements in information technology, demand gap, pressure for professionalism and the growth of organized crime. The findings of the study concluded that the police in fighting crime have to move away from reactive, crime focused activities to proactive and offender focused policing so as to ensure effectiveness and efficiency.

Audu (2016) engaged a qualitative approach to examine community policing by exploring the police/community relationship for crime control in Nigeria. The

study adopted focus group discussions and individual in-depth interviews. Findings of the study revealed that there exist a relationship gap between the police and community in Nigeria caused by the mistrust in the police by the members of public. Study submitted that there is need for strong and well-coordinated police- community relations.

Henry Jackson Society (2014) investigated insurgency and terrorism in Nigeria. Findings revealed that threats from Boko Haram and Ansaru are complex as terrorists can merge into the civilian populace making identification difficult without better Human Intelligence (HUMINT) network from the populace for counter terrorism operations. Study concluded that despite two assets of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (surveillance drones), the system is still dependent on external imagery intelligence limited by heavy foliage, usual terrain of the terrorists. The study concluded that even though the leaders of Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, Benin and Chad pledged to share intelligence and co-ordinate their activities against Boko Haram, their pledge remains a mirage.

Romaniuk (2012) thematically assessed the significance of the changing nature of the Al Qaeda threat and the threat of transnational terrorism. Findings of the study revealed that deployments of satellites led technology of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (drones) have extensively aided operations many times by the United States to eliminate terrorists; Iranian security chief, Lieutenant General, Qassim Soleimani; Osama Bin Laden; Najmiddin Jalolov and others Study concluded that the use of drones are will expand in the coming years, as one of the most efficient means of surgically eliminating current and rising threats

Daniel (2011) employed system theory to investigate the nexus between the Nigerian police and her policing strategies especially in relation to intelligence-information gathering since independence. The thematic study showed that despite modern and community policing trainings, policing strategy still remain combative and reactive rather than proactive even as investment in policing dwindled in the face of continuous breakdown in law and order in major cities. Study sued for true federalism to be incorporated in the Nigeria policing structure in line with the American model of policing while commitment to investment in police intelligence should be taken serious beyond lip service.

### **Engagement of Techno-Driven Surveillance and Tackling of insurgency in North West, Nigeria**

McKendrick (2019) empirically investigated nexus between artificial intelligence, prediction and counter terrorism. Findings from the study showed that telecommunication providers are stakeholders involved, as a result of

governments demanding them to monitor and exclude terrorist activities on their platforms thus, forcing technology companies employ a mix of human expertise and increasingly sophisticated predictive measures to monitor and disrupt terrorist acts. Study submitted that such collaborative efforts is highly helpful in countering insurgency.

Byman and Saber (2019) deployed qualitative study to examine China's preparedness for global terrorism. Findings from the study showed that Chinese Communist Party (CCP) broadly engaged technological advancements; surveillance cameras equipped with facial recognition, to monitor internment camps, forced labor and Xinjiang residents to clamp down on separatist movements. Study averred that same surveillance technology of curbing terrorism at home is actively marketed oversea and has made China an active stakeholder in international counterterrorism despite criticisms of China's violations on human rights records.

CONTEST (2018) empirically assessed the United Kingdom's strategy for countering terror campaign by engaging evolving technology; use of the internet and its add-ons, crypto currencies and stronger encryption. Revelations from the study established that uncoordinated and data dispersal will continue to make it complex to fight terrorism because data will be more dispersed, localized and anonymous, of which developments in artificial intelligence will allow the filtering and identification of crucial information more rapidly making it easier to scrutinize the internet as a means for distributing propaganda, radicalising sympathisers and preparing attacks on target.

Okwudili (2015) adopted survey design to examine impact of the regulatory activities of national communication commission (NCC) on the marketing of telecommunication Services in Nigeria. Findings of the study queried the lack of collaboration between NCC and the nation's security agencies in the fight against the use of ICT in the perpetration of violent crimes; kidnapping, armed banditry and insurgency. The study concluded that commission should put together a data-base of subscribers of all the GSM operators with an established exchange system that would be linked with the networks of the operators.

Zambri (2013) thematically evaluated the foundational weakness upsetting law enforcement counterinsurgency intelligence functions. Findings of the study showed that national, state and local law enforcement agencies should embrace techno-driven intelligence analysis training as a critical module of a successful intelligence functioning. Study submitted that certified intelligence analysis course will nationally address gaps in the finished intelligence product



which grossly affect the productivity and morale of law enforcement intelligence personnel as well as contribute to disparate quality of intelligence products.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **The State Fragility Theory**

The fragile state theory as articulated by Sara (2008) is used for states facing severe developmental challenges such as weak institutional capacity, poor governance, political instability, unemployment, poverty and low level of economic development. The theory describes how extreme poverty is concentrated in a given state, low level of human and social development are linked to weak institutional capacity, governance presence and internal conflict, all of which undermine the capacity of the state to deliver basic enforcement of law and order, social welfare and infrastructural services. More fundamentally, the theory typifies fragile state, as the one that is trapped in a vicious circle of violence, conflict and poverty or suffer from a wasting natural resource. According to Slater (2012), a leading proponent of this theory has observed that a fragile state is significantly susceptible to crisis in one or more of its subsystems. According to him, a fragile state is a state that is particularly vulnerable to internal shocks as well as domestic conflicts. This implies that in a fragile state, institutional arrangement embodies and perhaps preserves the conditions of crisis both in economic and social terms.

## **Methodology**

The study engaged survey research design to examine tackling of insurgency through policing strategy and techno driven surveillance in the north west, Nigeria. The study administered a purposively sampled questionnaire, government reports, extant publications, alongside interviews with government officials, security officials at the federal and state levels, artisanal miners, borderline community leaders and youths, community leaders and representatives of civil society organisations, former bandits and vigilantes, victims of violence and humanitarian workers as stakeholders in the vexed north west region.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Based on empirical literature so reviewed by this study and purposive interview, it is undeniably obvious that the age long traditional policing strategy known of the law enforcement agencies in Nigeria is long overdue for overhauling as it has done more damages than good; polarizing the law enforcement agents against the very people he is to serve, policing that is based

majorly on information, reports, or allegation brought to station office, investigation led policing rather than intelligence led policing, its combative and reactive postures has widely distanced the society from law enforcement agencies Nigeria. The cumulative effect is what has thrown the populace against the government by asking for the disbandment of the combative SARS whose operations are not aided in anyway by intel gathering but emotional and self judgment thus infringing on public privacy. Study avers that a reengineered policing strategy should be seen done from the training camps, retraining and reorientation making the society very central and seen as partners in combating crime. Findings from the study also call on all stakeholders to adopt and deploy technologically driven surveillance; unmanned Aerial Vehicles, collaboration of all telecommunication providers and LEAs, CCTV in combating terror in the North west especially along the vastly ungoverned spaces and the weakly regulated stretch of border communities.

This study thus recommends:

- i. A complete overhaul of the reactive policing strategy to a more robust Intelligence Led Policing (ILP) which entails critical thinking and robust partnership with host communities. The enthronement of ILP strategy will also make policing performance to be measurable in terms of reduction of crime, number of crimes detected and public safety awareness
- ii. Deployment of technology and intelligence resource by law enforcement agencies and related agencies; NigComSat, National Communication Commission, National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA) and all LEAs will boost winning the battle against terror; insurgency, armed banditry, armed non state actors, violent crime and criminalities, in the North West region. The effective deployment of the drones and techno based surveillance with a motivated security agencies cannot but be a game changer.

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