

SECURITY SECTOR GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

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Abstract

This study examines security sector governance in Nigeria and its implications for national development. Against a backdrop of persistent security challenges, including insurgency, ethno-religious conflicts, and political instability, the research explores the historical evolution, current state, and future prospects of Nigeria's security sector. The study aims to assess the effectiveness of existing governance structures and identify opportunities for improvement. Findings reveal significant challenges, including corruption, inadequate training, and poor civil-military relations, which hinder the sector's effectiveness and impact national development. The research identifies opportunities for enhancement through policy reforms, capacity building, institutional strengthening, and improved civil-military cooperation. Recommendations include comprehensive security sector reform, addressing root causes of insecurity, prioritizing professionalization, enhancing civil-military relations, and maintaining political will for long-term reforms. The study concludes that while Nigeria's security sector faces substantial challenges, strategic leveraging of identified opportunities can lead to a more effective, accountable, and responsive security sector, contributing to improved national security and fostering an environment conducive to economic growth and social development.

Keywords: Civil-military relations, Corruption, Insurgency, National security, Security sector governance.

Introduction

The security sector is crucial for the governance and development of any nation, including Nigeria. As Africa's most populous country and largest economy, Nigeria's security situation is influenced by historical, political, and socio-economic factors. Since gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria has faced various security challenges like ethnic conflicts, religious tensions, terrorism, and organized crime (Onwudiwe & Berwind-Dart, 2010). These issues have affected Nigeria's development and highlighted the need for effective security sector governance.

Security sector governance involves the structures, processes, values, and attitudes that shape security decisions and their implementation (DCAF, 2015). In Nigeria, this sector includes the military, police, intelligence services, and paramilitary organizations. However, the effectiveness of these institutions in maintaining peace and fostering development is often debated. Issues like human rights abuses, corruption, and lack of accountability have reduced public trust and hindered the sector's ability to address security challenges effectively (Aiyede, 2015).

This research aims to examine the current state of security sector governance in Nigeria and its impact on national development. It will explore the frameworks guiding the Nigerian security sector, assess their effectiveness, and identify areas for improvement. By analyzing the relationship between security sector governance and national development, this research seeks to contribute to the ongoing discussion on security sector reform in Nigeria and provide insights for policy decisions and strategic interventions.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to clarify the relationship between security, governance, and development in Nigeria. As the country continues to face security challenges while striving for sustainable development, understanding the role and impact of security sector governance becomes increasingly important. This research aims to offer valuable insights for policymakers, security practitioners, and scholars, potentially leading to more effective strategies for improving security sector performance and fostering national development in Nigeria.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Pre-Independence Security Structures

Before independence, Nigeria's security structures were shaped by the colonial administration to maintain order and protect British interests. Indigenous societies had their own security systems based on traditional institutions and customs, but these were largely replaced or absorbed by the British as they took control.

The foundation of Nigeria's modern security sector began in the late 19th century when the British formalized their rule. In 1861, after annexing Lagos, the British established the Hausa Constabulary, the precursor to the Nigerian Police Force (Tamuno, 1970). This force, initially made up of 100 men, was responsible for maintaining order in the Lagos Colony and surrounding areas.

As British influence spread northward, more security structures were created. The Royal Niger Company Constabulary was formed in 1888 to protect British commercial interests in the Niger Delta. In the north, the Royal West African Frontier Force (RWAFF) was established in 1900, serving as both a military and police force in the Northern Protectorate (Ukpabi, 1987).

The amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria in 1914 led to efforts to unify these different security forces. The Nigeria Regiment of the RWAFF became the main military force, while various police units were gradually merged. By 1930, the Nigeria Police Force had been established as a national entity, though it remained under British control (Ahire, 1991).

These pre-independence security structures were primarily designed to serve colonial interests rather than the needs of the local population. They were often used to suppress dissent, enforce unpopular policies, and protect British economic assets. This legacy had lasting effects on post-independence security governance in Nigeria, leading to a disconnect between security forces and the people they were meant to serve (Onyeozili, 2005).

As Nigeria neared independence, these colonial-era security structures formed the basis for the country's post-colonial security sector. However, their colonial origins and practices posed significant challenges for the newly independent nation in reforming and reorienting the security sector to serve national interests and support democratic governance.

Post-Independence Security Sector Development

The post-independence era in Nigeria was a critical time for the country's security sector. When Nigeria gained independence in 1960, it inherited security institutions that were largely colonial in structure and orientation. The immediate challenge was to transform these institutions to serve the needs of an independent nation and address the complex security landscape that emerged after colonial rule.

In the early years of independence, the Nigerian government focused on appointing Nigerians to leadership positions in security institutions. The first indigenous Inspector-General of Police, Louis Edet, was appointed in 1964, and the military saw more Nigerian officers taking command positions (Omoigui, 2005). However, this process faced challenges as ethnic and regional considerations often influenced appointments and promotions, causing discord within the security apparatus.

The military, which played a significant role in Nigeria's post-independence politics, underwent substantial expansion and restructuring. The Nigerian Army, Navy, and Air Force were established as separate entities, with efforts made to equip and train them to defend the nation's sovereignty (Adekson, 2019). However, the military's involvement in governance through coups and counter-coups significantly impacted its development and relationship with civilian authorities.

The Nigeria Police Force, while retaining much of its colonial structure, saw attempts at reform to adapt to the needs of an independent nation. The Police Act of 1967 provided a new legal framework for policing, although its implementation was hampered by political instability and resource constraints (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2000).

This period also saw new security challenges, including the Biafran Civil War (1967-1970), which had profound implications for the security sector. The war led to a massive expansion of the military and highlighted the need for a more cohesive national security strategy (Atofarati, 1992).

By the 1970s and 1980s, Nigeria's security sector had evolved significantly from its colonial origins, but it faced numerous challenges. These included issues of professionalism, politicization, corruption, and the struggle to effectively address emerging security threats. The sector's development during this period laid the groundwork for future reforms and shaped the complex security landscape that Nigeria continues to navigate today.

The evolution of security policies in Nigeria has been shaped by responses to changing national and international security dynamics. In the immediate post-independence period, Nigeria's security policies focused on protecting its newly gained sovereignty and maintaining internal cohesion. The National Security Agencies Decree of 1986 was a

significant milestone, establishing the framework for Nigeria's intelligence community (Aiyede, 2015).

The 1979 Constitution, which began the Second Republic, aimed to redefine civil-military relations and provide a legal basis for security sector governance. However, subsequent military regimes often operated outside these constitutional provisions, implementing security policies through decrees (Fayemi, 2003).

The return to civilian rule in 1999 brought renewed focus on reforming security policies. The 1999 Constitution reasserted civilian control over the security sector and emphasized the protection of human rights. This period saw the development of more comprehensive security strategies, including the National Defence Policy of 2006, which aimed to address both external and internal security challenges (Onuoha & Ezirim, 2010).

In response to emerging threats, particularly terrorism and insurgency, Nigeria's security policies evolved further. The Terrorism Prevention Act of 2011 (amended in 2013) provided a legal framework for counterterrorism efforts. The National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) was introduced in 2014, emphasizing a whole-of-government approach to addressing security challenges (Sampson & Onuoha, 2011).

More recently, there has been a growing recognition of the need for human security approaches. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Conflict Prevention Framework, adopted in 2008, influenced Nigeria's security thinking, promoting a more holistic approach to security that includes economic, environmental, and social dimensions (Aning & Bah, 2009).

Despite these developments, the implementation of security policies has often been hampered by institutional weaknesses, corruption, and political interference. The ongoing challenges in effectively addressing security threats have led to calls for more comprehensive reforms and a re-evaluation of Nigeria's security architecture (Ikelegbe & Okumu, 2010).

The evolution of Nigeria's security policies reflects the complex relationship between historical legacies, changing threat landscapes, and the country's aspirations for democratic governance and development. As Nigeria continues to face series of security challenges, the further evolution and effective implementation of security policies remains critical to national stability and progress.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN NIGERIA'S SECURITY SECTOR GOVERNANCE: MILESTONES, REFORMS, AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Nigeria's security sector has seen significant changes since independence, marked by key milestones, reforms, and evolving policies.

The National Security Agencies Decree of 1986 was a key milestone, establishing three intelligence agencies: the State Security Service (SSS), National Intelligence Agency (NIA), and Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA). This restructuring aimed to improve intelligence gathering and coordination to address emerging security threats (Oyebode, 2012).

The transition to civilian rule in 1999 was crucial, initiating reforms to democratize the security sector. The 1999 Constitution reaffirmed civilian control over the military and other security agencies. This period saw the development of comprehensive security strategies, including the National Defence Policy of 2006, addressing both external and internal security challenges (Onuoha & Ezirim, 2010).

In response to specific security challenges, key legislations were enacted. The Terrorism (Prevention) Act of 2011, amended in 2013, provided a legal basis for counter-terrorism efforts, including the proscription of terrorist organizations and prosecution of suspects (Sampson, 2016). The Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act of 2011 aimed to curb financial support for criminal and terrorist activities.

The Police Reform Programme of 2008 sought to enhance the Nigeria Police Force's effectiveness and accountability. This included measures to improve training, equipment, and community relations (Hills, 2012). However, implementation challenges limited its impact, leading to ongoing calls for comprehensive police reforms.

The escalation of the Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast led to further security sector reforms. The National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) launched in 2014 emphasized a multi-agency approach to combating terrorism, followed by the establishment of the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) to coordinate counter-terrorism efforts (Ogbonnaya & Ehigiamusoe, 2013).

In response to human rights concerns, the Nigerian military established a Human Rights Desk in 2016 to address allegations of abuses by security forces. This was part of broader efforts to improve civil-military relations and adherence to international humanitarian law (Falode, 2016).

The Cybercrime (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act of 2015 addressed the growing threat of cybercrime, providing a legal framework for investigating and prosecuting cyber-related offenses (Omodunbi et al., 2016).

There is a growing recognition of the need for human security approaches. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Conflict Prevention Framework, adopted in 2008, influenced Nigeria's security thinking, promoting a holistic approach that includes economic, environmental, and social dimensions (Aning & Bah, 2009).

The Police Trust Fund Act of 2019 aimed to address the chronic underfunding of the police force, providing a legal framework for improved funding and equipment for the Nigeria Police Force (Ministry of Interior, n.d.).

Despite these developments, implementation remains a significant challenge. Issues like overlapping mandates, inadequate resources, and lack of coordination between agencies hinder the effective application of these laws and policies (Ikelegbe & Okumu, 2010).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

SECURITY SECTOR GOVERNANCE THEORY

Security Governance Theory explains how security is no longer provided solely by the state but is shaped by a network of actors, institutions, and processes operating at local, national, and international levels. According to Mark Duffield (2001), modern security governance involves the interaction of state institutions, private actors, civil society, and international organizations in managing security challenges. Similarly, Elke Krahmman (2003) emphasizes that security governance is characterized by decentralization, fragmentation, and collaboration among multiple stakeholders rather than a single centralized authority.

Applying this theory to Nigeria reveals a complex and multi-layered system of security sector governance.

At the state level, Nigeria's formal security architecture includes institutions such as the military, police, and intelligence agencies. These bodies are constitutionally mandated to provide security and are overseen by the executive and legislative arms of government. However, Security Governance Theory highlights that the state does not operate in isolation. In Nigeria, challenges such as insurgency in the Northeast, banditry in the Northwest, and communal conflicts have exposed limitations in state-centric security provision (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2009).

At the non-state level, various actors contribute to security governance. These include private security companies, vigilante groups, and community-based organizations. For example, local vigilante groups in regions like Benue and Borno play significant roles in intelligence gathering and community protection. This reflects the theory's argument that security provision is increasingly pluralized and shared among diverse actors (Krahmann, 2003).

At the regional and international level, Nigeria collaborates with organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) to address transnational security threats like terrorism and human trafficking. Joint operations, such as the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), demonstrate how security governance extends beyond national borders, aligning with the theory's emphasis on global and regional cooperation (Duffield, 2001).

Security Governance Theory also helps explain key governance challenges in Nigeria's security sector. One major issue is fragmentation, where coordination between agencies is weak, leading to inefficiencies and overlaps. Another is accountability, as some security actors particularly informal groups operate with limited oversight, raising concerns about human rights abuses. Additionally, capacity constraints and corruption undermine effective security delivery.

However, the theory also highlights opportunities. By recognizing the role of multiple actors, Nigeria can adopt a more inclusive and collaborative approach to security governance. Strengthening partnerships between state institutions, communities, and regional bodies can improve intelligence sharing, trust, and overall effectiveness.

In conclusion, Security Governance Theory provides a useful framework for understanding Nigeria's security sector governance as a decentralized and multi-actor system. It explains both the strengths such as collaborative security efforts and the weaknesses, including fragmentation and accountability gaps. Ultimately, improving security governance in Nigeria requires better coordination, stronger oversight mechanisms, and inclusive engagement with both state and non-state actors.

It looks like you're outlining the methodology section of a research project. Here's a clear and properly structured explanation you can use or adapt:

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study adopts a qualitative and descriptive research design. The qualitative approach is appropriate because it allows for an in-depth understanding of complex issues such as policies, governance, or social phenomena. It focuses on interpreting meanings, perspectives, and experiences rather than numerical measurement.

The descriptive design is used to systematically describe the characteristics of the subject under study, such as trends, patterns, and relationships within the context being examined. Where necessary, an analytical approach may also be incorporated to critically evaluate existing policies, frameworks, or institutional practices.

SOURCES OF DATA

The study relies primarily on secondary sources of data. These include:

Policy documents (e.g., government reports, national strategies, legislative frameworks)

Academic literature (journals, textbooks, and previous research studies)

Reports from international organizations and NGOs

Official statistics and publications

Secondary data is appropriate for this study because it provides access to existing, credible, and wide-ranging information, especially on topics such as governance, security, or transborder issues.

QUALITY OF THE SECURITY SECTOR GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

Governance Structures and Institutions

Nigeria's security sector governance structures and institutions are crucial in shaping the country's security landscape. At the top is the President, who serves as the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and chairs the National Security Council. This council, which includes key security chiefs and relevant ministers, advises the President on national security matters (Nwolise, 2007).

The National Assembly plays an important oversight role, with powers to legislate on security matters, approve budgets, and investigate security affairs. However, the effectiveness of this oversight is often questioned due to a lack of expertise among legislators and the opaque nature of security budgets (Agbese, 2000).

The Ministry of Defence oversees the armed forces, while the Ministry of Interior is responsible for internal security agencies like the Nigeria Police Force, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, and the Nigeria Immigration Service. These ministries are supposed to provide civilian leadership and policy direction, but their capacity to effectively manage the security sector is debated (Animasawun, 2012).

At the operational level, Nigeria's security sector includes various agencies such as the Armed Forces (Army, Navy, and Air Force), the Nigeria Police Force, the Department of State Services (DSS), and several paramilitary organizations. Each of these institutions has its own command structure and operational procedures, which can sometimes lead to challenges in coordination and information sharing (Onuoha, 2016).

The judicial system, including military tribunals, ensures the rule of law within the security sector. However, judicial oversight is often hampered by delays in the justice system and allegations of corruption (Adeakin, 2016).

While these governance structures and institutions provide a framework for security sector management, their functionality is often questioned. Issues such as overlapping mandates, poor inter-agency coordination, and politicization undermine their effectiveness. Additionally, the centralized nature of Nigeria's security architecture is criticized for not adequately responding to localized security challenges, leading to calls for restructuring and the establishment of state police forces (Obani, 2019).

Despite these challenges, efforts have been made to improve governance structures, including the establishment of the Office of the National Security Adviser to enhance coordination among security agencies. However, the quality of security sector governance in Nigeria continues to be a subject of ongoing reform discussions and debates.

Accountability and Transparency

Accountability and transparency are crucial for effective security sector governance, but they remain significant challenges in Nigeria's security apparatus. The secretive nature of security operations, often justified by national security concerns, limits oversight and public scrutiny (Egbo et al., 2012).

One major issue is the lack of financial transparency. Despite constitutional requirements for legislative approval of budgets, details of security spending are often kept secret. This has led to allegations of misappropriation and corruption, such as the arms procurement scandal in 2015 (Page, 2022).

The effectiveness of civilian oversight mechanisms, like the National Assembly's security committees, is often questioned. These committees can summon security chiefs and conduct investigations, but their impact is limited by a lack of specialized knowledge, political considerations, and sometimes obstruction by security agencies (Onuoha & Oyewole, 2018).

Internal accountability mechanisms within security agencies also face challenges. Structures like the Police Service Commission oversee conduct and discipline, but their effectiveness is hampered by limited resources and lack of independence. The military's internal discipline system is criticized for its secrecy and perceived bias in handling human rights abuse cases (Amnesty International, 2015).

The judiciary's role in ensuring accountability is constrained by prolonged court processes and jurisdictional issues, especially in cases involving military personnel. The trial of soldiers for mutiny during the fight against Boko Haram illustrates the complexities of judicial oversight in security matters (Falode, 2016).

Civil society organizations and the media play a crucial role in promoting accountability, but their efforts are hindered by limited access to information and, in some cases, intimidation. The Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017 was a positive step towards encouraging transparency, but its implementation in the security sector has been limited (Dauda et al., 2020).

Recent initiatives, such as establishing human rights desks in military formations and improving community relations, show a growing recognition of the need for greater accountability. However, translating these initiatives into systemic change remains a challenge. As Nigeria continues to face complex security threats, balancing the need for operational secrecy with democratic accountability and transparency remains critical in security sector governance.

Civil-Military Relations

Civil-military relations in Nigeria have a complex history, affecting security governance. The legacy of military rule still influences these relations today (Ehwarieme, 2011). In 1999, Nigeria transitioned to civilian rule, with the 1999 Constitution placing the military under civilian control. However, this has been challenging to implement. Some military elements still struggle with accepting civilian oversight (Agara, 2006).

Balancing civilian control and military effectiveness is a key issue. Civilian leaders make strategic decisions, but military commanders sometimes hesitate to share operational details, citing security concerns. This tension was evident during early counter-insurgency operations against Boko Haram (Bappah, 2016).

The involvement of the military in internal security operations, particularly in response to insurgencies and communal conflicts, has further complicated civil-military relations. While these deployments are often necessary given the scale of security challenges, they have raised concerns about the militarization of civil spaces and potential human rights abuses. The #EndSARS protests of 2020 and the military's role in their suppression

highlighted the delicate balance between maintaining public order and respecting civil liberties (Animasawun, 2012).

Efforts to professionalize the military and enhance its adherence to democratic norms have yielded mixed results. Training programs on civil-military relations and human rights have been introduced, and there have been attempts to improve the military's public relations. However, incidents of military heavy-handedness in dealing with civilians continue to occur, undermining public trust (Omeni, 2017).

The politicization of military appointments and retirements has been another contentious issue in Nigeria's civil-military relations. Allegations of ethnic or political bias in senior military appointments have sometimes led to tension and resentment within the ranks, potentially affecting morale and operational effectiveness (Adeakin, 2016).

Despite these challenges, there have been positive developments in Nigeria's civil-military relations. The military's generally professional conduct during recent election cycles and its public commitment to democratic principles indicate progress. However, sustaining and deepening these gains remains a crucial task for Nigeria's evolving democracy and its quest for effective security sector governance.

Policy Implementation and Effectiveness

Policy implementation and effectiveness in Nigeria's security sector face significant challenges, despite many initiatives and reforms. The gap between policy creation and effective implementation often hinders achieving security goals and good governance.

One major issue is the lack of coordination among various security agencies. Even with bodies like the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA), inter-agency rivalry and overlapping roles lead to inefficiencies and conflicting approaches. The National Security Strategy of 2019 aimed to provide a comprehensive framework, but its implementation has been inconsistent (Onapajo, 2017).

Resource allocation and management also pose challenges. Although Nigeria spends a lot on security, the impact is often not proportional to the investment. Corruption, misappropriation, and lack of transparency in procurement processes undermine policy effectiveness. The arms procurement scandal for counter-insurgency operations is an example (Onuoha & Oyewole, 2018).

Community-oriented policing policies, a key part of security sector reform, face hurdles due to inadequate training, resistance within the police force, and limited community trust. These factors limit the policy's effectiveness in improving police-community relations and intelligence gathering (Alemika, 2013).

In counter-terrorism, the Terrorism Prevention Act and the National Counter Terrorism Strategy have shown mixed results. While they provide a legal and strategic framework, operational challenges like inadequate intelligence sharing and coordination hamper their effectiveness (Sampson, 2016).

Policies addressing human rights concerns within the security sector also face issues. Despite establishing human rights desks and increasing training, reports of violations by security forces persist, showing gaps in implementation and enforcement (Falode, 2016).

Frequent changes in leadership within security agencies disrupt policy continuity and institutional memory. High turnover rates lead to shifts in priorities, making it hard to sustain long-term initiatives (Ikita, 2014).

Despite these challenges, there have been positive developments. Improvements in election security and increased civil-military cooperation indicate progress in enhancing the professionalism of security forces.

However, while Nigeria has made efforts to develop comprehensive security policies, their implementation and effectiveness remain significant challenges. Improving coordination, resource management, and institutional capacity is crucial for better security sector governance and tangible improvements in Nigeria's security landscape.

STATE OF SECURITY SECTOR GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

Current Security Challenges

Nigeria faces a number of security challenges that have significantly impacted its governance and development. These threats have strained the country's security apparatus and tested the effectiveness of its security sector governance.

One of the most pressing issues is the ongoing insurgency by Boko Haram and its offshoot, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) in the northeast. These groups have carried out numerous attacks on civilians and security forces, leading to thousands of deaths and the displacement of millions (Onuoha & Oyewole, 2018). The insurgency has created a humanitarian crisis and challenged the Nigerian military's capacity to maintain territorial integrity.

Another significant challenge is the escalating farmer-herder conflicts, particularly in the Middle Belt region. These conflicts, often framed in ethno-religious terms, have resulted in widespread violence and displacement, undermining social cohesion and food security (Okoli & Atelhe, 2014).

Banditry and kidnapping have also emerged as major security concerns, especially in the northwest. Armed groups have exploited governance gaps and terrain advantages to carry out attacks on communities and highways, often resulting in mass abductions for ransom (Olaniyan & Yahaya, 2016).

In the Niger Delta, despite a relative temporary period of calm, the threat of militancy persists, with occasional attacks on oil infrastructure impacting Nigeria's economic security (Onapajo, 2017). Additionally, separatist agitations, particularly in the southeast by groups like the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), have led to violent confrontations with security forces (Ibeanu et al., 2016).

Urban crime, cybercrime, and human trafficking continue to challenge law enforcement capabilities across the country. These issues are often exacerbated by high youth unemployment, poverty, and weak institutional capacity (Adepoju, 2005).

These security challenges have exposed weaknesses in Nigeria's security architecture and governance, necessitating a comprehensive review and reform of the security sector.

Institutional Responses

Nigeria's security challenges have led to various institutional responses, mainly through military and paramilitary actions, as well as efforts by the police and civil defence corps. These responses reflect the government's attempts to address the multi-dimensional security threats facing the nation.

Military and Paramilitary Actions:

The Nigerian military has been at the forefront of countering insurgency and terrorism, particularly against Boko Haram and ISWAP in the northeast. Operation Lafiya Dole, launched in 2015 and renamed Operation Hadin Kai in 2021, has been the primary counter-insurgency effort (Bappah, 2016). This operation involves coordinated air and ground assaults, intelligence gathering, and efforts to reclaim territories from insurgents.

The military also addresses other internal security challenges. In the northwest, Operation Hadarin Daji combats banditry and kidnapping (Olaniyan & Yahaya, 2016). Operation Delta Safe in the Niger Delta aims to curb militancy and protect oil infrastructure (Tantua et al., 2018).

Paramilitary organizations, like the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), support these operations. The NSCDC protects critical national infrastructure and provides intelligence to other security agencies (Oyewole, 2016).

However, these actions face criticism. Human rights organizations raise concerns about civilian casualties and abuses during operations (Amnesty International, 2015). Coordination issues between different security agencies sometimes lead to inefficiencies and friendly fire incidents (Omeni, 2017).

Police and Civil Defence:

The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) plays a crucial role in maintaining internal security and law enforcement. In response to current security challenges, the NPF has created specialized units like the Counter Terrorism Unit (CTU) and the Intelligence Response Team (IRT) to address specific threats (Hills, 2014).

Community policing initiatives aim to improve police-community relations and gather local intelligence. The recent approval of Community Policing Committees involves local communities in security efforts (Alemika, 2013).

The NSCDC, while technically a paramilitary organization, works closely with the police in maintaining internal security. The NSCDC's Agro-Rangers unit addresses farmer-herder conflicts (International Centre for Investigative Reporting, 2023).

Despite these efforts, both the police and civil defence face significant challenges. Underfunding, inadequate training, and allegations of corruption hamper their effectiveness (Owen, 2014). The police, in particular, face public trust issues, highlighted by the #EndSARS protests in 2020, which called for comprehensive police reforms (Orjinmo, 2020).

In response to these challenges, there have been attempts at reform. The Nigeria Police Trust Fund Act of 2019 aims to improve funding and equipment for the NPF (Ministry of Interior, n.d.). Efforts to enhance the training and professionalism of both the police and civil defence corps are ongoing.

While these responses show attempts to address Nigeria's security challenges, their effectiveness remains debated. Critics argue that a more comprehensive approach, addressing root causes of insecurity and emphasizing human security, is necessary for sustainable improvements in Nigeria's security situation.

Impact on National Security

The state of security sector governance in Nigeria has profound implications for the country's national security. The complex challenges and institutional responses have created a security landscape with far-reaching consequences for the nation's stability, development, and international standing.

Internal Stability:

The protracted insurgency in the Northeast, banditry in the Northwest, and secessionist movements in the Southeast have strained national unity (Onuoha, 2016). These security challenges have led to massive internal displacement, disrupting social and economic activities and putting pressure on other parts of the country (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2020).

Economic Impact:

Insecurity has deterred foreign investment, particularly in agriculture and oil production, which are crucial to Nigeria's economy. Conflict-affected states in Nigeria have higher poverty rates and lower economic growth compared to peaceful states (World Bank, 2021).

The allocation of substantial resources to security has diverted funds from other critical sectors such as education and healthcare, potentially impacting long-term development goals (Page, 2022). This trade-off between security spending and social investment presents a significant challenge for policymakers.

International Reputation:

The security challenges have affected Nigeria's international reputation and regional influence. Once seen as a beacon of stability in West Africa, Nigeria now grapples with cross-border security issues that affect neighboring countries (Aning & Pokoo, 2014).

This impacts Nigeria's leadership role in regional bodies like ECOWAS and its ability to attract international partnerships and support.

Human Rights Concerns:

Human rights concerns arising from security operations have strained Nigeria's relationships with some international partners and organizations (Amnesty International, 2015). These issues have sometimes led to restrictions on military assistance and arms sales, potentially impacting Nigeria's capacity to address security challenges effectively.

In essence, the current state of security sector governance in Nigeria has wide-ranging impacts on national security, affecting not only physical safety but also economic development, social cohesion, and international relations. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that goes beyond military solutions to inclusion of broader governance and development issues.

CHALLENGES, LIMITATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN NIGERIA'S SECURITY SECTOR GOVERNANCE

Nigeria's security sector governance faces series of challenges affecting the effectiveness of stakeholders' efforts, but also presents opportunities for improvement and enhancing the overall effectiveness of the security sector.

One of the primary challenges in Nigeria's security sector governance is the persistent issue of policy inconsistencies. Frequent changes in government often lead to shifts in security priorities and strategies, causing a lack of continuity in addressing security challenges. This is particularly evident in the handling of the Boko Haram insurgency, where approaches have alternated between military force and dialogue without a clear, long-term strategy (Akinola, 2015). The absence of a consistent national security policy results in reactive rather than proactive responses to threats, hindering the development of sustainable solutions to Nigeria's security challenges.

Resource allocation issues present another significant challenge. Despite substantial funds allocated to the security sector, distribution and utilization remain problematic. There is often a mismatch between budget allocations and the actual needs of security agencies. Frontline troops fighting insurgencies frequently complain of inadequate equipment and logistics support, despite significant defense budgets (Page, 2022). The opaque nature of security spending, justified under national security, makes it difficult to track and ensure efficient use of resources. This lack of transparency creates opportunities for misappropriation and hinders effective oversight, ultimately undermining the operational effectiveness of security forces (Egbo et al., 2012).

The centralized nature of Nigeria's security architecture poses challenges in resource distribution and rapid response to localized security threats. State and local governments, often at the forefront of security challenges, lack the resources and authority to respond effectively. This centralization leads to delayed responses and inappropriate resource allocation, not always aligned with regional needs. The debate over the establishment of

state police forces highlights this tension between centralized control and the need for localized security responses (Obani, 2019).

Politicization of security is another critical challenge. Decisions on funding, equipment procurement, and deployment of security personnel are sometimes influenced by political considerations rather than strategic needs. This leads to imbalances in resource distribution and exacerbates regional tensions (Agbibo, 2013). Political interference in the appointment and promotion of security chiefs can undermine professionalism and create loyalty conflicts within security agencies.

Human rights concerns pose a significant challenge to Nigeria's security sector governance. Reports of human rights abuses by security forces, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, and torture, have eroded public trust in security institutions (Amnesty International, 2015). This not only hampers effective community cooperation in addressing security challenges but also strains Nigeria's international relations and potential security partnerships.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons across the country complicates the security landscape. Porous borders and transnational criminal networks facilitate the influx of illegal weapons, empowering non-state armed groups and complicating disarmament efforts (Onwudiwe & Berwind-Dart, 2010). This proliferation exacerbates various forms of armed violence, from insurgency to banditry and communal conflicts, stretching the capacity of security agencies to maintain order.

Nigeria's diverse ethno-religious composition, while a source of cultural richness, also presents challenges for security sector governance. Ethno-religious conflicts, particularly in the Middle Belt region, strain inter-community relations and pose significant challenges to security forces (Okoli & Atelhe, 2014). Balancing the need for diversity in security agency recruitment with maintaining cohesion and avoiding perceptions of bias is an ongoing challenge.

The country's history of military coups and the ongoing influence of the military in politics create a complex civil-military relationship that affects security sector reform efforts. While Nigeria has maintained civilian rule since 1999, the legacy of military involvement in governance continues to shape civil-military relations. This influences decision-making processes, resource allocation, and the overall approach to national security (Ehwarieme, 2011).

The Nigerian security sector is characterized by complex and cumbersome bureaucratic structures that slow decision-making and policy implementation. Overlapping mandates among various security agencies lead to inter-agency rivalries, poor coordination, and sometimes conflicting approaches to handling security challenges (Onwudiwe & Berwind-Dart, 2010). This lack of coordination not only reduces operational effectiveness but also results in wastage of resources and confusion in the chain of command during critical security operations.

Corruption remains a pervasive issue within Nigeria's security sector, significantly undermining its effectiveness and public trust. It manifests in various forms, including

embezzlement of funds, ghost workers on payrolls, extortion by security personnel, and compromised procurement processes (Page, 2022). This diverts critical resources from essential security operations and erodes public confidence in security institutions. The arms procurement scandal of 2015, which revealed significant misappropriation of funds meant for equipping troops fighting Boko Haram, exemplifies the severe impact of corruption on national security efforts (Onuoha & Oyewole, 2018).

Efforts to combat corruption and improve accountability in the security sector have been hampered by weak enforcement mechanisms and a culture of impunity. While anti-corruption agencies exist, their effectiveness in prosecuting high-level corruption within security institutions has been limited. The opaque nature of security budgets, often justified under the guise of national security, further complicates efforts to ensure transparency and accountability (Egbo et al., 2012).

The persistent threat of insecurity and terrorism, particularly the Boko Haram insurgency and its offshoots, continues to strain military resources and expose weaknesses in Nigeria's counter-terrorism strategies. The inability to completely neutralize these groups raises questions about the effectiveness of the security sector's approach (Bappah, 2016). The evolving nature of these threats, including the emergence of Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), presents ongoing challenges to Nigeria's security apparatus.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) play a crucial role in promoting transparency and accountability in the security sector. However, they face several limitations in their efforts. Many CSOs lack the technical expertise to engage effectively on complex security issues and often face funding constraints, limiting their long-term advocacy efforts. The relationship between CSOs and security agencies is sometimes characterized by mutual suspicion, hindering effective collaboration (Ikpe, 2007).

International involvement in Nigeria's security sector reform efforts, while significant, also faces challenges. There is often a lack of coordination among international actors, leading to duplication of efforts and sometimes conflicting approaches. The sustainability of internationally funded programs is a concern, with many initiatives faltering once external support is withdrawn (Nte, 2011).

Despite these challenges and limitations, there are several opportunities for enhancing Nigeria's security sector governance. One significant opportunity lies in developing more comprehensive and integrated security policies. This could involve updating the National Security Strategy to better incorporate human security concepts, focusing on addressing root causes of insecurity such as poverty, unemployment, and social inequality (Kalu et al., 2018).

Enhancing the skills and professionalism of security personnel through modernized training programs presents a significant opportunity. This could include modules on human rights, conflict resolution, and community relations, as well as technical capacity building in areas such as intelligence analysis and cybersecurity (Falode, 2016). Improved training can address issues of human rights abuses and enhance the effectiveness of security operations, particularly in counter-insurgency efforts.

Strengthening key institutions within the security sector, including the judiciary and civilian oversight bodies, could significantly improve accountability and effectiveness. This could involve reforms to expedite the prosecution of security-related cases and enhancing the powers of legislative committees overseeing the security sector (Agara, 2006). Strengthening these institutions can help address issues of impunity and improve public trust in the security apparatus.

Improving civil-military relations presents an opportunity to build trust and improve the responsiveness of security operations to local needs. This could involve developing more structured platforms for civil-military dialogue and expanding community-oriented security initiatives (Omeni, 2017). Enhanced civil-military cooperation can lead to better intelligence gathering and more effective security responses, particularly in addressing localized conflicts and insurgencies.

There is an opportunity to leverage technology to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of security operations. This could include the use of advanced surveillance systems, data analytics for intelligence gathering, and improved communication systems for better coordination among security agencies (Ogedebe & Jacob, 2012). Technological advancements can help address issues of poor inter-agency coordination and enhance the capacity to respond to evolving security threats.

Addressing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons presents another opportunity for improving security. Strengthening border control measures, improving regional cooperation, and implementing more effective disarmament programs could significantly reduce the availability of illegal weapons (Onwudiwe & Berwind-Dart, 2010). This can help in reducing the intensity of armed conflicts and improving overall security.

The ongoing debate about restructuring Nigeria's security architecture, including the potential establishment of state police forces, offers an opportunity to address the limitations of the current centralized system. A more decentralized approach could allow for more rapid and context-specific responses to local security challenges (Obani, 2019). However, this would need to be balanced with measures to ensure national cohesion and prevent the politicization of security at the state level.

Enhancing transparency in security sector spending and procurement processes presents an opportunity to address corruption and improve resource allocation. Implementing more rigorous auditing processes and strengthening whistleblower protection mechanisms could help in uncovering and addressing corruption within the security sector (Dauda et al., 2020).

There is also an opportunity to improve the integration of gender perspectives in security sector governance. Increasing the representation of women in security agencies and incorporating gender-sensitive approaches in security strategies can enhance the effectiveness of security operations, particularly in addressing issues like human trafficking and sexual violence in conflict situations (Nwangwu & Ezeibe, 2019).

Strengthening regional security cooperation, particularly within the framework of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), presents opportunities for addressing transnational security threats. Enhanced intelligence sharing, joint border patrols, and coordinated counter-terrorism efforts can improve Nigeria's capacity to address security challenges that transcend national borders (Aning & Pokoo, 2014).

The growing recognition of the link between climate change and security in Nigeria offers an opportunity to develop more holistic security strategies. Incorporating environmental security considerations into national security planning can help in addressing root causes of conflicts, particularly in relation to resource scarcity and farmer-herder clashes (Onuoha & Ezirim, 2010).

The development of a comprehensive approach to addressing the root causes of insecurity presents a significant opportunity. This involves recognizing that security challenges are often symptoms of deeper socio-economic issues. By focusing on poverty alleviation, educational development, and job creation, particularly in conflict-prone areas, Nigeria can address the underlying factors that fuel insurgency and criminal activities (Ismail, 2013). This approach requires close collaboration between security agencies and other government departments responsible for economic development and social welfare.

There is an opportunity to improve the legal framework governing the security sector. While Nigeria has enacted several laws to address security challenges, such as the Terrorism Prevention Act of 2011 (amended in 2013), there is a need for continuous review and updating of these legal instruments to keep pace with evolving security threats (Sampson, 2016). Strengthening the legal framework can provide clearer guidelines for security operations and enhance accountability.

Enhancing the capacity for strategic communication within the security sector presents another opportunity. Improved communication strategies can help in managing public perceptions, countering extremist narratives, and fostering better relations between security agencies and local communities (Onuoha, 2016). This is particularly crucial in the context of counter-insurgency operations, where winning the "hearts and minds" of the population is as important as military victories.

The ongoing reform of Nigeria's criminal justice system offers an opportunity to address some of the systemic issues affecting security sector governance. Expediting the prosecution of terrorism cases, improving prison conditions, and implementing effective rehabilitation programs for ex-combatants can contribute to overall security improvement (Yusuf, 2013).

There is also an opportunity to leverage Nigeria's influential position in Africa to strengthen regional security mechanisms. As a key player in ECOWAS and the African Union, Nigeria can push for more effective regional responses to transnational security threats, including terrorism, maritime piracy, and cybercrime (Aning & Bah, 2009).

The growing focus on human security in international discourse provides an opportunity for Nigeria to reframe its approach to national security. By adopting a more people-centered security paradigm, Nigeria can address a broader range of threats to individual

and community well-being, including health security, food security, and environmental security (Kalu et al., 2018).

Improving the welfare of security personnel presents another significant opportunity. Addressing issues of low morale, inadequate equipment, and poor living conditions can enhance the effectiveness and professionalism of security forces (Hills, 2012). This includes not only improving salaries and benefits but also providing better healthcare, housing, and educational opportunities for security personnel and their families.

The increasing role of the private sector in security provision offers both challenges and opportunities. While the proliferation of private security companies raises concerns about regulation and accountability, it also presents opportunities for public-private partnerships in areas such as critical infrastructure protection and cybersecurity (Olaniyan, 2018).

There is an opportunity to enhance the role of traditional institutions in security governance. In many parts of Nigeria, traditional rulers and community leaders play crucial roles in conflict resolution and intelligence gathering. Formalizing and strengthening these roles within the broader security architecture can improve local ownership of security initiatives and enhance early warning systems for conflict prevention (Akinola, 2015).

Finally, the growing field of peace and conflict studies in Nigerian universities presents an opportunity to develop a cadre of security professionals with specialized knowledge in conflict analysis, mediation, and peacebuilding. Integrating these academic insights into security sector training and policy formulation can lead to more effective approaches to addressing Nigeria's security challenges (Dada, 2013).

CONCLUSION

The analysis of security sector governance in Nigeria reveals a security landscape characterized by significant challenges but also opportunities for improvement. Nigeria's security sector, shaped by its colonial legacy and post-independence developments, continues to struggle with issues that hinder its effectiveness in addressing the country's multi-dimensional security challenges.

The persistent problems of policy inconsistencies, resource misallocation, centralization, politicization, and human rights concerns have undermined the sector's capacity to effectively respond to threats such as insurgency, banditry, and ethno-religious conflicts. Corruption within the security apparatus remains a pervasive issue, diverting critical resources and eroding public trust. The challenging bureaucratic structures and inter-agency rivalries further complicate efforts to implement cohesive security strategies.

However, amidst these challenges, there are notable opportunities for enhancing Nigeria's security sector governance. The development of more comprehensive and integrated security policies, focusing on human security concepts, presents a pathway for addressing root causes of insecurity. Enhancing the professionalism of security personnel through modernized training programs and leveraging technology for improved operations are promising avenues for reform.

Strengthening civilian oversight mechanisms, improving civil-military relations, and enhancing transparency in security spending can contribute to building public trust and improving the sector's effectiveness. The growing recognition of the link between climate change and security offers an opportunity to develop more holistic security strategies.

Moreover, Nigeria's influential position in regional bodies like ECOWAS provides a platform to strengthen regional security mechanisms and address transnational threats more effectively. The increasing role of civil society organizations and academia in security discourse also offers avenues for introducing fresh perspectives and expertise into security sector reform efforts.

While Nigeria's security sector faces substantial challenges, addressing these challenges and leveraging on the identified opportunities requires sustained political will, a comprehensive approach to reform, and collaborative efforts involving government, security agencies, civil society, and international partners. By doing so, Nigeria can work towards a more effective, accountable, and responsive security sector that not only addresses immediate security threats but also contributes to the country's long-term stability and development.

The path forward for Nigeria's security sector governance lies in embracing a holistic approach that balances robust security measures with respect for human rights, transparency, and accountability. As Nigeria continues to navigate its complex security landscape, the reform and strengthening of its security sector governance remain crucial for the country's peace, stability, and sustainable development.

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