

THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIC POLICING: A CASE STUDY OF THE NIGERIA POLICE FORCE**^{1,*}Kingsley Ibe NWACHUKWU, ²Celestine O. NWOSU and ³AHMED IMAM, Usman**¹Department of Political Science and Diplomacy, Faculty of Social Sciences, Veritas University, Bwari, Abuja, Nigeria²Department of Political Science, Abia State University, Uturu, Nigeria³Department of APUDI Institute for Peace Studies & Social Rehabilitation, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Abuja, Nigeria**Received 25th July 2024; Accepted 29th August 2024; Published online 23rd September 2024**

Abstract

Strategic or proactive policing is a critical component of modern policing which aims at predicting, preventing and reducing crimes and criminality in any given society. However, the implementation of strategic or proactive policing in Nigeria has been overwhelmed by several challenges. This paper seeks to examine the challenges faced by the Nigerian police force in implementing the concept which has been faced with multidimensional challenges ranging from corruption, shortage of manpower, trust deficit, inadequate resource allocation, adoption of technology and data-driven policing etcetera. The research also explores the impact of these challenges on the effectiveness of the Nigeria police force in reducing crimes and criminality and improving the safety of the general public.

Keywords: Strategic or Proactive Policing, Nigeria Police, Resource-Based Theory.

INTRODUCTION

The responsibility of the police in any society cannot be overemphasized as their sole responsibility is the maintenance of law and order alongside the implementation of government policies. It is important to note that efforts have been made by successive governments at reforming the Nigeria Police Force to be a true reflection of contemporary policing. The Nigeria Police Force have shown readiness to embrace strategic policing as adopted by advanced countries of the world unlike the situation where the police are alone and treated like strangers by members of the general public. It is disheartening also to note that when the police seek for assistance from members of the public, they either insult such police personnel, refuse to respond or even treat such police with disdain. This should no longer be tolerated in a modern and civilized society where strategic policing would be practice as Nigeria being a member of a global community cannot continue to be indifferent to the strategic shift in policing taking place around the world. No society in the world today can function effectively and with respect for human dignity without the effort of a strategic policing in place. The general public have been clamoring for an ideal police force, the government have been promising an effective and efficient policing but little or nothing is been done to aid the actualization of strategic or proactive policing as the image of the force is deteriorating on daily bases.

Conceptual Review

Strategic policing which is also referred to as proactive approach to policing focuses on predicting, preventing and reducing future likely crimes. This comprises the awareness of the root causes of crimes, criminality and other social vices. Although, several Nigeria police officers have been trained both within and outside the country on the concepts of strategic or proactive policing.

However, the implementation of this concept has been faced with multidimensional challenges ranging from corruption, shortage of manpower, community-police relations and trust deficit, inadequate resource allocation and Infrastructure, adoption of technology and data-driven policing Etcetera. The use of the term "proactivity" developed in the 1960s, and the idea is that the police would be proactive toward crime. The term "proactive policing" was first used by Albert J. who thought that different types of police organization were needed to perform different types of police tasks and activities. According to Reiss (1992), proactive policing is going beyond just responding to and investigating crimes. Instead, it takes a strategic approach to crime problems, which entails planned and targeted policies of police organizations to create efficient crime control. While Apel (2021) asserts that the term "proactive policing" refers to policing tactics that target four main areas in order to avoid or lessen crimes and the areas of emphasis includes persons, addressing particular criminal cases, and community security requirements. According to Weisburd *et al.* (2019), Proactive policing relies on sophisticated computer algorithms to predict changing patterns of future crime, often promising to be able to identify the exact locations where crimes are most likely to occur. Although this approach has the potential to improve on-the-spot approaches to crime prevention, there are not enough empirical studies to draw any firm conclusions about either the effectiveness of crime detection software or the effectiveness of any related police operational tactics. Another technology relevant to improving police capacity for proactive intervention in specific areas is closed-circuit television (CCTV), which can be used either passively or proactively. The results of studies examining the introduction of CCTV cameras show modest results in terms of reducing property crime in high crime areas. Therefore, for the proactive use of video surveillance, no conclusions can be drawn regarding the impact of this strategy on crime and public order and peace, Andresen *et al.* (2018) while Skogan *et al.* (2019) asserted that in the standard model of policing, the primary goal of the police was to identify and detain offenders after committing crimes. But starting from the

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early 1970s, research evidence began to suggest that the police could be more effective if they focused on a relatively small number of professional offenders. These studies have led to innovations in policing based on the logic that crime prevention outcomes can be improved by focusing policing efforts on a small number of offenders who commit the majority of crime. Offender-focused strategies seek to prevent crime in a specific population and enable the police to increase the speed and effectiveness of detecting and prosecuting individuals or criminal groups who commit serious crimes. These strategies try to disable criminals by analyzing and better understanding the dynamics, manners and conditions of committing crime in a specific local community, thus acting both preventively and repressively. Problem-solving strategies, such as problem-oriented policing and third-party policing, use an approach that seeks to identify the causes of the problems that cause crime incidents and relies on innovative solutions to those problems to assess whether the solutions are effective or not. Problem-oriented policing uses a process of problem identification, through analysis, response, assessment and response adjustment (often called the SARA [scan, analysis, response and assessment] model). This approach provides a framework for unveiling the complex mechanisms at play in crime problems and for developing tailored interventions to address the underlying conditions that cause crime problems in specific situations.

Overview of the Nigeria Police Force

The Nigeria Police Force which began with a thirty-member consular guard was established in April 1861 by the British consul to maintain law and order in the colony. In 1896, the Lagos police force was created and armed like the Hausa Constabulary. For the areas now known as Edo, Rivers and Cross River states, a Niger Coast Constabulary, modeled on the Hausa Constabulary was formed. With the proclamation of Northern and Southern protectorates in 1900, the Royal Niger Constabulary was split into the Northern Nigerian Police Force and the Northern Nigeria Regiment which eventually gave birth to Nigerian Army (Igiebor 1986) In 1914, the Southern and Northern protectorate was amalgamated but, the South and North had its own police force until April 1, 1930 when the two separate police from the North and South were merged to form the present Nigeria Police Force (NPF) under the police ordinance No 2 of 1930 with its headquarters in Lagos (Membere, 1982). It is important to note that during the first republic, the Nigeria Police Force was regionalized and later nationalized. The Nigeria Police Force was expected to perform conventional police functions and was responsible for internal security generally which includes but not limited to; supporting the prison, immigration, and customs services; and also, for performing military duties within or outside Nigeria as directed. Plans were announced in mid-1980 to expand the force to 200,000. By 1983, according to the federal budget, the strength of the NPF was almost 152,000 as at that time but as at today, its over four hundred thousand police officers and men. It is believed that the British formed police were an instrument for oppression, suppression, subjugation and exploitation of the African people. Onoge (1993) asserted that the police in the consciousness of the people became the symbol of the dictatorial establishment rather than the protector of the people's rights. He further opined that: "As the people had no checks over the arbitrariness of the police, they either avoided police trouble or mediated inevitable contacts with bribe offerings. During the colonial period, police fright

was a feature of popular consciousness. In Africa and indeed Nigeria, the formal policing organization created by the British was meant to protect their lives and property which was in no way extended to people. Their emergence enabled the "white" to oppress the people and cart away their valued resources. They were instruments of exploitation and violation of the rights of the local people. The police were a weapon in the hand of the rich against the poor and have remained so till now. This is why Kayode (2008) supports that British colonialism in Nigeria was a mixed bag of blessings and curses. Human Rights were certainly not a central feature of the erstwhile colonial administration of the country. Alemika (1993) further stated that understanding the dynamics and history of a police force's evolution is a necessary first step in doing a thorough examination of the issues and difficulties facing that force. A review of the nation's police force history reveals that colonial and post-colonial governments established, organized, and funded the forces primarily for the purpose of maintaining order, which breeds repression and a culture of impunity that includes brutality, corruption, incivility, and a lack of accountability and transparency.

According to Ake, both the police and the colonial administration were totalitarian and arbitrarily in their interactions with their citizens. To sum up, the post-colonial state and its police force continue to be associated with absolutism and arbitrariness, which is a denial of the inhabitants' human rights. Nigeria currently has a federal form of government. This implies that Nigeria is composed fundamentally of several federating entities known as States and the federal government at its core. The Federal Republic of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution, as amended, states in Section 2(2) that "Nigeria shall be a Federation consisting of States and Federal Capital Territory."

Accordingly, Section 214 (1) of the 1999 Constitution provides that: There shall be a Police Force for Nigeria, which shall be known as the Nigerian Police Force, and subject to the provisions of this section no other police force shall be established for the Federation or any part thereof. In this context, That the Nigerian Constitution only allows for one Federal Police Force for the entire nation seems to be a valid point. This argument is further reinforced by section 214(2) of the 1999 Constitution, which states that the Nigeria Police Force must be constituted and operated in compliance with any rules that may be stipulated by an Act of the National Assembly. While the President (under Item K of Part I of the Third Schedule of the 1999 Constitution) is the Chairman of the National Security Council, no such provision was made for the governor. It is within these constitutional and legal provisions that the Nigeria Police derives its power to function as the chief law enforcement agent of the Nigerian State.

Section 4 of the Police Acts and Regulations lists the duties of the police force to include:

- The prevention and detection of crime.
- The apprehension of offenders.
- The preservation of law and order.
- The protection of life and property.
- The due enforcement of laws and regulations with which they are directly charged.
- The performance of such military duties within and outside Nigeria as may be required of them by or under the authority of the police act or any other act.

The Police Act section 23, has it that: Subject to the provision of sections 174 and 211 of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 which relate to the power of the Attorney- General of the Federation and of a state to institute and undertake, take over and continue or discontinue criminal proceedings against any person before any court of law in Nigeria, any police officer may conduct in person all prosecutions before any court whether or not the information or complaint is laid in his name. Others bordering on the power of the police stated in the Act are: Section 24 power to arrest without warrant power to arrest without having warrant in possession power to summon or serve summons power to bail person arrested without warrant power to search power to detain and search suspected persons power to take fingerprints. The abuse and violations of the fundamental human rights of Nigerians alongside the inability of the police to keep to their responsibility has created strong aversion by the members of the public against the Nigeria Police Force which has battered its image. This is because the police are most evident in the justice system by ensuring that they get rid of crimes and criminality in Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is cumulative research on the challenges of implementing strategic policing in Nigeria. Ikuteyijoet *al.* (2014) argued in their study of the Nigerian police force's image, which drew from the historical precedent of the Nigeria Police Force during the first and second republics, that the force's moral character have not evolved significantly since its founding because it still faces difficulties in repairing its reputation among the Nigerian public. Nonetheless, they asserted that resolving the Nigerian police force's image challenge is essential to elevating the force to the status of a formidable global force. However, there is a gap in this study, as it does not assess the challenges of implementing strategic policing in the Nigeria Police Force. Timbee, (2011) examines the Nigeria Police as an organization saddled with the responsibility of protecting the lives and properties of its citizens. The conclusions of the research work show how the Nigeria Police has underperformed her duties highlighting a number of factors promoting this dismal performance which include a high level of corruption, unethical behavior, impartiality, abuse of fundamental human rights, inadequate funds, and incompatible equipment. This has given birth to animosity between members of the general public and the police thereby disrespecting them. He opined that for the Nigeria Police force to live up to its responsibility, there was need for total overhauling of the system by the federal government for effective service delivery. However, there is a gap in this study, as it does not assess the challenges of implementing strategic policing in the Nigeria Police Force. It is against this seeks to make contributions to this research area.

Theoretical Framework

The challenges of implementing strategic or proactive policing in Nigeria Police are subject of several competing theories in the literature but for the purpose of this research, the Resource-Based Theory would be adopted. Resource-Based

Theory (RBT) was propounded by Penrose (2009) where he proposed a model for the efficient use of resources, diversification tactics and profitable prospects by businesses or an organization. His initial idea was to view a company or an

organisation as a well-organized collection of assets to handle and tackle the ways in which it might accomplish its objectives and strategic conduct. He opined that in order for an organization to attain growth or success and long-term competitive edge, such organization needs to change its strategy. While Porter (1989) opined that an organisation's profit is determined by core variables such as resources and competencies. Therefore, this theory of resource based can be used to analyze the resources required to implement strategic policing, such as personnel, funding and technology. The theory suggests therefore that an organisation's resources are critical to its ability to achieve its goals. The Resources Based Theory is used as the theoretical foundation for this investigation, the precepts explain the challenges of implementing strategic policing in the Nigeria Police Force as a result of the inability of the Nigeria Government to allocate adequate funds to effectively and efficiently predict, prevent and arrest crimes and criminality in the Country.

Challenges of Implementing Strategic Policing

- 1. Shortage of Manpower:** One of the major challenges facing the Nigeria Police Force today is the issue of manpower shortage. It is important to note that the current strength of the Nigeria Police Force today is less than four hundred thousand (400,000.00) personnel to police a country of over two hundred million (200,000,000.00) people which contravene the United Nation recommendation of one to every four hundred (1:400) people. One police officer for every 400 people is now the norm in many western nations (including the United States, Britain, France, and others), which is thought to be reasonable for improving crime control (Clinard and Abott, 1973). It is undisputed, as Okereke (1995), asserted that the Nigerian police force is understaffed. The police personnel at various stations are so busy that concerns are sometimes dismissed with grace, using a staffing shortage as a convenient justification for not being able to act quickly or efficiently. The Nigerian police force is understaffed not just in terms of numbers but also in terms of skilled individuals. This is why in Nigeria today, you hardly can see a police officer that goes on leave while most of them work round the clock without rest.
- 2. Inadequate Resources Allocation:** One of the major barriers that have historically prevented spending on preventing crimes and criminality and also to effectively carry out strategic or proactive policing in Nigeria today is mainly due to inadequate funding. This has compromised the ability of the Nigeria Police Force to fulfill its mandate to the citizens. Funding will be needed, according to Adewusi (1990), "to adapt crime control and preventive strategies to increasingly modern crimes, such as organized and multinational crimes." Furthermore, Odekunle (2004) stated that "resources are needed for criminal investigation and detection. Funds are required in order to recruit, educate, outfit, and activate a sufficient number of criminal investigators. This is because the current practice in Nigeria today is the fact that the complainants sponsor the police to establish his case like paying for opening of case file, once the necessity to visit the crime scene arises, the complainant will be required to provide transportation and also the fueling of police operational vehicle to go effect the arrest of the suspect while the suspect or his relatives takes responsibility for his feeding while on detention and

also pay for the detergent used for washing of the detention facility and the Department Police Officer (DPO) is responsible for the transportation of the accused to prison custody if remanded by the court. This makes it abundantly evident that criminal investigations in Nigeria are underfunded thereby making it difficult if not impossible for the police to adopt strategic or proactive policing in Nigeria.

3. **Corruption and Lack of Integrity/Trust:** Corruption has been a recurring decimal affecting the Nigeria Police Force which can also be an hindrance to the implementation of strategic or proactive policing. The Nigeria Police Force today has lost the trust of members of the general public due to factors like incivility to members of the public, gross abuse of the citizens fundamental human rights etcetera. Elgege (2006) states that a public official's honesty is an essential quality. It establishes guidelines for behavior when carrying out official tasks. The Nigerian Police Force, for example, is said to be dishonest and is said to regularly engage in criminal behavior or work with offenders to demonstrate their lack of professionalism and great unreliability while in most cases, they protect the rich and through bribery, blackmail, and intimidation, they frequently use their status to oppress their fellow citizens. This was also stated by Dauda (2008): "I think Nigerians should be ashamed of the police because of the terrible things they do.
4. **Lack of Adoption of Technology and Data-Driven Policing:** Scholars of data-driven policing strategies asserted that its adoption makes policing more efficient, effective and accountable to addressing challenges faced by the police in combating crimes and criminality in any given society. The Nigeria Police Force has not taken drastic measures to fully utilize technology and data-driven policing, this can be mainly due to lack of sufficient funds to procure modern technology and adequately trained personnel as the lack of data-driving policing has compromise the effectiveness of the Nigeria Police Force in preventing, detecting and investigating crimes as well as compromising public trust and confidence. According to Agarwal (2018), he opined that these new approaches to data-driven policing provide chances to increase operational effectiveness, decision-making accuracy, supervision, regulation, and service delivery, among other aspects of policing.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study critically analyzes the challenges of strategic policing in the Nigeria Police Force. The study identifies the fact that the Nigeria Police force is facing serious challenges in the implementation of strategic or proactive policing in Nigeria due to lack of adequate funds to effectively discharge its constitutional mandate of deterring crime and criminality in the Country and the need for a comprehensive and sustainable approach like sufficient funds allocation to address this malady and improve public safety and reduce crime and criminality in Nigeria.

1. **Immediate Recruitment of Police Personnel:** Shortage of manpower has been one of the major factors militating against effective policing in Nigeria. Little wonder how a population of over Two Hundred Million (200,000,000.00) people being police by less than Four Hundred Thousand

(400,000.00) personnel, this is highly inadequate, therefore in order for the Nigeria Police Force to adequately tackle insecurity bedeviling our Country today, the Nigeria Police Force should immediately commenced the recruitment of over fifty thousand (50,000.00) police personnel as the regular Ten Thousand (10,000.00) yearly recruitment is grossly inadequate to effective police the country.

2. **Adequate Resource Allocation (Increased Funding):** Security in any part of the world today is highly expensive as no country can effectively tackle insecurity without sufficient funds. Adequate budgetary allocation by the National Assembly to the Nigeria Police Force is a critical factor in tacking crimes and criminality in the Country as such funds would be used to procure the necessary tools and capabilities alongside the recruitments of adequate manpower to effectively predict, prevent and respond to crimes and build trust with the community which would aid in reducing corruption to the barest minimum.
3. **Addressing Corruption in Policing:** Corruption has been one of the major problems militating against strategic or proactive policing in Nigeria Police Force. In order to effectively address this malady, a comprehensive approach is required as the Nigeria Police Force is expected to establish an independent oversight body saddled with the responsibility of monitoring and investigating allegations of corruption, providing severe penalties and ensuring that complaints are handled fairly and impartially. Secondly, the Nigeria Police Force should provide regular ethics training for officers and men of the Force to stress the need for integrity, transparency and accountability in the force. All this would remain an illusion without proper and adequate budgetary allocation to procure the necessaries needed to effectively carry out this task.
4. **Procurement of Data-Driven Policing Equipment:** Contemporary policing in the world has gone digital which requires the aid of information technology to fight modern crimes and criminality.

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