

BETWEEN RIVALRY AND RESPONSIBILITY: NPF–NSCDC RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF SECURITY IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract: This study seeks to investigate the motivating factors that have Inter-Agency, continuously fueled the incessant Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and Nigerian NPF, NS&CDC, Security and Civil Defence Corps' (NSCDC) inter-agency conflicts and the effects Military. on security management in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study was guided by three research questions and three hypotheses. The population of the study was 19,333 for the Nigeria Police Force and 7000 for the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps totaling 26,333. Using Taro Yamane scientific formula, the sample size of 400 was obtained for both NPF and the NSCDC. The data for the study was collected using a self-styled instrument; 'NPF and NSCDC's inter-agency conflicts and security management'. The instrument was measured using Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test Model and 0.82 reliability index was obtained. The research questions were answered using descriptive statistics while Pearson moment correlation coefficient (r) was used to analyzed the hypotheses. The findings revealed that superiority contest, corruption, weak and inept leadership, roles ambiguity, mutual distrust among others is the foundation for the sustained inter-agency conflicts between the two security agencies in Rivers State. Based on the above, it is recommended that among other things; the leadership of both agencies must lead by example, roles should be unambiguously delineated, and provision of adequate welfare should be made for officers among others.

Keywords: Inter-Agency Conflict, Nigeria Police Force (NPF) , Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Security Management, Rivers State.

Introduction

One of the defining characteristics of most developing countries especially in Africa at least in the past two to three decades is violence and destructive conflicts leading to avoidable deaths of thousands of citizens and destruction of properties worth billions of naira. Nigeria and Nigerians have had their own fair share of conflicts in every nook and cranny of the nation. These conflicts range from; banditry, insurgency, unknown gunmen, Boko Haram, Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP), farmers/herders, illegal gold mining, violent agitations, kidnapping for ransom, armed robbery, oil stealing, among others, and these have had profound negative effects on the socio-political, cultural and economic wellbeing of the citizenry (Dickin, 2022). As a result of the above, Nigeria has always been in the news for the wrong reasons.

But what baffles Nigerians is when security agencies saddled with the responsibility of security management rather than emplace strategies to achieving results engage in interagency conflicts. Nigeria first experienced interagency conflict in 1977 in Port Harcourt between the personnel of the military and the police resulting in the death of one soldier and two policemen with different degrees of injuries on both sides and other members of the public (Samuel, 2014). Since then, there have been reported and unreported cases of violent clashes involving personnel of the various security agencies in the country.

In August 17, 2019, three policemen attached to the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Intelligence Response Team (IRT) were attacked and murdered at a military checkpoint by the military personnel. Their offence was that they arrested a kidnap kingpin (Wadume) who was said to be hobnobbing with the military and in July 15, 2020, two policemen were gruesomely murdered by the military, both incidents took place in Taraba State. Eight policemen were ambushed and killed in a reprisal attack after the police was accused to have killed a soldier during inter-agency conflict in Lagos in 2006. Though, the police have also been accused of killing three personnel of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps in Abuja and Lagos. On the 22nd March, 2019, policemen beat up one Inspector Ogar Jumbo to death in the presence of members of his family for violating traffic rule at Gwagwalada, Abuja. On the 25th of March, 2023, Inspectors Gabriel Adaji and Innocent Akegbe were both killed by the policemen at Ikorodu, Lagos State (Okugba, 2024). Though, the Nigeria Police Force has suffered most in the area of inter-agency conflicts as the other security agencies tend to align more with the military than with the police on every occasion (Oparaka, 2019).

On the other hand, the NSCDC was established in May, 1967, initially as the Lagos Civil Defence Committee and was meant to sensitize the people

through constant information dissemination about the workings of the enemy (Biafran) forces and also, to protect the civil populace in case of attack. It later metamorphosed into the presentday Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps in 1970 after the war. It was not until 1988, that the Corps have State commands in the thirty-six states with Abuja as their Headquarters. The Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps' Act 3 of 2003, as amended in 2007 and later 2023 has numerous security responsibilities including the following: protection of lives and property, protection of pipelines and other government infrastructure from vandalism and provision of measures against threats and any form of attack or disaster against the nation and its citizenry. Others include; monitor, investigate and take any necessary step to forestall any act of terrorism and report same to the appropriate security agencies, and finally, recommend to the Minister of Interior the registration of private securities and ensure these companies are professionally supervised.

Nigerians living in Rivers State seem to understand when conflicts occur among the civil populace, but to them, what is more worrisome is the inter-agency conflicts among the NPF and other security agencies, especially, the NSCDC that have often left on its trail, the destruction of lives and property including critical infrastructure, disruption of the flow of commercial activities, increased insecurity and displaced citizens, leading to poor security management, pitiable service delivery, and erodes the confidence the citizens have for the two agencies. The enormity of the implications of inter-agency

conflicts can only be appreciated when we consider their constitutional responsibilities as security agencies. There is plethora of studies on inter-agency conflicts especially among the military and the police, police and other security agencies outside the state but there is scanty literature on NPF and NSCDC inter-agency conflicts and security management in Rivers State, hence the present study. In order to successfully carry out the study, the following research questions will be asked to aid the present study.

i. Determine the causes of inter-agency conflicts between the Nigeria Police Force and the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps and its effect on security management. ii. Examine the ways inter-agency conflicts affect security management, and iii. X-ray the strategies employed by government in tackling inter-agency conflicts.

Review of Literature

Human beings including security personnel work to satisfy their basic universal needs. They believe that their employers will pay them well in order for them to satisfy these needs. But if these needs are not holistically satisfied or selectively satisfied because of poor conditions of service, personnel become frustrated leading them to display of high level of aggression to anyone and everyone irrespective of status, age, religion,

creed, etc. including sister security agencies (Samuel, 2014). For instance, Alemika and Chukwuma (1997) in Samuel (2014) have argued that the police are paid to police, secure and ensure compliance with existing laws and conformity with precept of social order. Furthermore, the police are also employed to prevent and reduce crime in society and saddled with the right to protect the citizenry from harm, violations, hence, they seem to be an indispensable agency in social control. Rivers State has certain peculiarities as one of the leading multi-ethnic and insecurity-prone states with diverse tribes. The need therefore for synergistic relationship among the various security agencies cannot be overemphasized.

The security organizations in Nigeria are creations of the state to collectively check the excesses of non-state actors. This is because apart from the provision of security and welfare to the citizens, it is only in environment of peace and tranquility that socio-economic, cultural and political development can thrive. Omigui (2008) in his study found out that some of the reasons for frequent inter-agencies' conflicts include; extortion, complex protection, the desire to avenge dishonor suffered in the past, ambiguous delineation of functions, etc. The police as the lead internal agency constitutionally mandated to perform specific functions most times are being prevented to do so by over jealous personnel of other security agencies. He recommended that the government should ensure the proper recruitment processes when employing new entrants. Adekoye (2023) in his study blamed the federal government's unexplainable quest for establishment of security forces without proper delineating their functions as the foundation for the frequent inter-agency conflicts in Nigeria (Iniobong, 2023). The functions of both the NPF and NSCDC are similar in nature and their performance will always evolve conflicts between the two sister agencies. Though, inter-agency conflict is not a contemporary phenomenon neither it is a Nigeria's problem, but the frequency and the destructive perspective it takes in Nigeria is what baffles the citizens (Punch Newspapers,

19/10/2020, p.10).

Several individuals and groups are worried about the incessant inter-agency conflicts among security agencies and the effects on security management. In finding a lasting solution to this menace, a group known as the Military/Police and Paramilitary Public Relations' Forum (MILPOPPROF) submits that the frequent interagencies' conflicts especially between the police and the military are largely due to the dearth of information about the functions of the various security agencies available to the personnel of these agencies. Dickin (2022) identifies myriads of factors responsible for the inter-agency fracas among public security forces to include; defending a regime's interest, poverty, role ambiguity, poor knowledge of the constitutional provisions for other agencies, and poor welfare

that makes officers unable to satisfy their basic but universal human needs making them display a high level of frustration-induced aggression. This happens especially among the junior ranks. Though, there is no empirical evidence to show that the senior officers of these agencies are also engaged in inter-agency conflicts, but more often than not, their subordinates are shielded from sanctions whenever such occurs.

Methodology

In this study, we adopted the descriptive survey design because it seeks to describe the characteristics of a certain group. It is also because the sample size is drawn from a large population which is aimed at investigating NPF and NSCDC's inter-agency conflicts in Rivers State. The population of the study include; nineteen thousand, three hundred and thirtythree (19,333) for the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and seven thousand (7000) for the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) totaling 26,333. The Taro Yamane scientific formula was used to get a sample size of 394 and upped to 400 for both agencies (NPF and NSCDC). The respondents were selected using stratified random sampling method. Under this method, respondents were selected from their various ranks.

The instrument used in the study was the questionnaire. The adopted instrument was 'Nigeria Police Force and Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps Questionnaire'. The questionnaire has a four-point Likert scale including SA =Strongly Agree (4), A= Agree (3), D=Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1).

Critical Mean is calculated thus: $\frac{4+3+2+1}{4} = 2.5$. In order to ensure that the instrument measure what it ought to measure, it was subjected to content, face, internal and external validity, it was submitted to more knowledgeable scholars including my supervisor for their assessment, corrections, comments and suggestions. In order to measure the internal consistence, the prepared questionnaire was analyzed using Cronbach's Alfa Reliability Test Model which 0.82 reliable index was obtained showing that the instrument adopted for this study is highly reliable. The data for this study was collected using the 'Nigeria Police Force and Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NPFNSCDC) questionnaire'. To ensure adequate monitoring, the researcher and his Assistants (Inspector Theresa for NPF and Inspector John Amadi, NSCDC) distributed the questionnaire to the selected respondents and three hundred and eighty-four copies of questionnaire were retrieved from respondents. The data obtained from the field was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 21). The research questions were analyzed using the descriptive statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation while Pearson moment correlation coefficient was used to analyzed the hypotheses.

Data Analysis/Discussion Question I: What are the causes of inter-Agency conflicts?

Table 1: Causes of inter-Agency conflicts

S/N	causes of inter-Agency conflicts	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Corruption	2.82	1.16
2	Role ambiguity	2.67	1.13
3	Poor training	2.73	1.14
4	Dearth of societal values	2.59	1.12
5	Superiority contest	2.61	1.11
6	inadequate crime fighting equipment	2.78	1.20
	Grand Mean	2.70	1.14

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2024.

From the above table, grand mean rating (2.70 & 1.14) is greater than critical mean (2.5). Hence; corruption, role ambiguity, poor training, dearth of societal values, superiority contest, and inadequate crime fighting equipment are significant causes of inter-agency conflicts

Hypothesis 1: The sources of inter-agency conflicts do not affect security management **Correlations**

		IAC	SM
IAC	Pearson Correlation	1	.231**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	384	384
SM	Pearson Correlation	.231**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	384	384

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the above table, the R-value is 0.231 and p-value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate. This indicates that the sources of inter-agency conflict negatively affect security management.

Question 2: In what ways do inter-agency conflicts affect security management

S/N	causes of inter-Agency conflicts	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Loss of lives and properties including crime fighting equipment and critical infrastructure	2.92	1.19
2	Poor service delivery in area of crime prevention and detection	2.81	1.16

3	Increases insecurity and displace citizen	2.79	1.15
4	Erodes the confidence the people have for the security agencies	2.67	1.13
5	Disruption of socio-economic activities	2.61	1.12
Grand Mean		2.76	1.15

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2024.

From the above table, grand mean rating (2.76 & 1.15) is greater than critical mean (2.5). Therefore; loss of lives and properties including crime fighting equipment and critical infrastructure, poor service delivery in area of crime prevention and detection, increases insecurity and displace citizens, erosion of the confidence the people have for the security agencies and disruption of socio-economic activities are the various ways in which inter-agency conflicts affect security management.

Hypothesis 2: The inter-agency conflicts do not affect security management effectiveness

Correlations

		UTBMT	TBTH
UTBMT	Pearson Correlation	1	.512**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	384	384
TBTH	Pearson Correlation	.512**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	384	384

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above table shows that the R-value is 0.512 and p-value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05. hence, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate. This implies that inter-agency conflicts affect security management in Rivers State.

Question 3: What are the strategies employed by the government in tackling inter-agency conflict.

S/N	Strategies N=384	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Training	2.60	1.12
2	Value orientation	2.65	1.13
3	Joint anti-crime patrol	2.56	1.11

4	Sanctioning erring officers	2.74	1.14
5	Joint sporting activities	2.78	1.13
Grand Mean		2.67	1.23

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2024.

From the above table, grand mean rating of 2.67 & 1.23 is greater than critical Mean of 2.5. Hence; we can deduce that training, value orientation, joint anti-crime patrol, sanctioning erring officers and joint sporting activities are the strategies adopted by the government in tackling inter-agency conflicts. These strategies seem not to be effective and comprehensive, hence the persistence of inter-agency conflict between the NPF and NSCDC in the area of study.

Hypothesis 3: The strategies employed by the government does not produce positive results in security management.

Correlations

		IAC	SM
IAC	Pearson Correlation	1	.058
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.117
	N	384	384
	Pearson Correlation	.058	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.117	
	N	384	384

The above table shows that the R-value is 0.058 and p-value is 0.117. Since the p-value (0.117) of the above table is greater than the 0.05 significant level, we conclude that the strategies employed by the government do not help in reducing the incidences of inter-agency conflicts in Rivers State.

Discussion Causes of inter-Agency conflicts

The findings indicate that inter-agency conflicts among the NPF and NSCDC are significantly influenced by factors such as corruption, role ambiguity, poor training, dearth of societal values, superiority contests, and disparities in crime-fighting equipment. These findings are in line with several studies including; Ahmed (2022) who argued that corruption within security agencies erodes operational integrity and fosters an environment of mistrust and competition, rather than cooperation. According to recent research by Turner et al (2023), role ambiguity often results in conflicting directives and duplicated efforts, which not only waste resources but also hinder coordinated responses to security

threats. A 2023 report by the International Journal of Security Training revealed that inadequate training programs contribute to misunderstandings and operational failures, as personnel from different agencies are not equally prepared to handle complex security scenarios. Johnson and Lee (2022) opined that the erosion of societal values undermines the moral foundation necessary for effective inter-agency cooperation. A study by the Rand Corporation (2023) found that such contests not only distract operatives from collective security goals but also breed animosity and distrust among agencies. Wilson et al., (2023) noted that technological disparities can hinder effective collaboration and create a hierarchical dynamic that impedes equal partnership in security management. The findings of the above-mentioned studies have therefore collaborated with the present study.

Inter-agency conflicts affect security management effectiveness

Based on the findings of the study, it was deduced that inter-agency conflicts significantly undermine the effectiveness of security management, leading to fragmented responses, inefficiencies, needless deaths, destruction of infrastructure, and heightened vulnerability to threats. These conflicts often stem from competition over jurisdiction, resources, and recognition, as well as from differing organizational cultures and operational procedures. This collaborates with the 2023 study by Carter and Hernandez which insisted that inter-agency conflicts result in duplicated efforts and gaps in security coverage, as agencies fail to share information and coordinate their actions effectively. This lack of coordination can lead to delayed responses to emergencies and a failure to address security threats comprehensively. Additionally, a report by the Homeland Security Studies and Analysis

Institute (2022) found that inter-agency conflicts erode trust among personnel, which is crucial for successful joint operations. The friction between agencies often leads to resource wastage, as overlapping responsibilities and competitive behavior divert attention from the primary mission of ensuring public safety. Furthermore, Patel et al (2023) noted that the operational silos created by these conflicts inhibit the development of a unified strategy, resulting in a disjointed security framework that adversaries can exploit. Effective security management requires seamless cooperation, integrated communication, and a shared vision, all of which are hindered by inter-agency conflicts.

The strategies employed by the government

The findings of this study reveal that training, value orientation, joint anti-crime patrol, sanctioning erring officers, and joint sporting activities are not adequate enough in discouraging inter-agency conflicts, thereby negatively affecting security management in Rivers State. Like everything Nigerian, the strategies employed usually face man-made hurdles. Though, Van der Knaap et al (2022) stated that value-based training programs significantly reduce instances of misconduct and improve the decision-making capabilities of security officers. These programs promote ethical conduct and enhance officers' understanding of their role within the broader societal context, leading to a more responsible and effective security force. A recent analysis by Smith and Jones (2023) highlights that joint patrols lead to a noticeable reduction in crime

rates, promote brotherhood among security services and foster a sense of community security. The study also points out that these patrols improve inter-agency communication and cooperation, which

are critical for responding to complex security challenges. Research by Chen and Wilson (2022) underscores the importance of strict and transparent disciplinary measures. Their findings indicate that consistent and fair sanctioning policies not only improve internal discipline but also enhance the credibility and legitimacy of security agencies in the eyes of the public. According to a study by Garcia et al (2023), joint sporting events significantly improve teamwork and morale among security forces. The study found that these activities help break down barriers, reduce inter-agency rivalries, and promote a unified approach to security management. The strategies employed by the government have worked elsewhere but the present study has shown that these strategies are not working here because of several challenges including corruption, inept leadership, ineffective sanction regime, and the culture of impunity, etc.

Conclusion

The study found out that inter-agency conflicts between the NPF and the NSCDC have been a significant issue impacting negatively on security management in Rivers State. These conflicts often arise from jurisdictional overlaps, competition for scarce resources, and differences in operational mandates. Such frictions undermine collaborative efforts essential for effective security management.

The rivalry between the NPF and NSCDC is rooted in the overlapping roles and responsibilities assigned to both agencies. The NPF is primarily responsible for internal security, while the NSCDC focuses on protecting critical national infrastructure and crisis management. However, the boundaries between the two agencies are often blurred, leading to conflicts. These conflicts have resulted in operational inefficiencies, duplication of efforts, and, at times, public confrontations among officers of both agencies. These conflicts erode public trust and hinder coordinated responses to security challenges.

The impact of inter-agency conflicts on security management is profound. These conflicts often lead to a lack of cooperation, poor communication, and mistrust among security personnel thereby undermining the security management in Rivers State. It thus weakens the overall security architecture and creates gaps that criminal elements can exploit. Additionally, the competition for limited resources, such as funding and equipment, further exacerbates tensions, leading to inefficient resource allocation and utilization.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations are made:

- i. The officers of the two security agencies must be reminded that they are constitutionally mandated to perform their roles in ensuring that lives and critical infrastructure are protected in order to achieve a robust security management in Rivers State and that engaging in inter-agency conflicts will not only undermine their functions, but will lead to loss of lives, property, reduced confidence the members of the public have for them and ultimately, compromised the security management in Rivers State. This could be done through lectures, seminars and training programmes.
- ii. Government especially at the centre must ensure proper delineation of functions among agencies, review their curricula, improve the welfare of officers to enable them satisfy their basic needs and avoid shielding officers involved in inter-agency conflicts in Rivers State.
- iii. The federal government must rejig the internal security structure and emplace policies and programmes that will

meet up with international standards. Having strategies and policies in place is not enough, but actually implementing them with a view to building a security management architecture that can stand the test of time.

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