

Corruption, Governance Failure and the Proliferation of Kidnapping in Nigeria

Journal of Management and
Social Sciences
© The Author 2024
Reprints and permission
jmseditorial@gmail.com

Sheu, Habeeb A.

Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo, Nigeria

Ogunsola, Babatunde O.

Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo, Nigeria

Abstract

Nigeria, as the largest economy in Africa, wrestles with systemic corruption and governance failure, providing fertile ground for criminal activities like kidnapping for ransom. This study examines the nexus between corruption, governance failure, and the surge in kidnapping, employing a qualitative research method. Using crime data extracted from media reports, the level and pattern of kidnapping is shown in the study. Our observations reveal a notable increase in the commercialisation of kidnapping spurred by various socio-economic and political factors including poverty, unemployment, poor security architecture, poor law enforcement and corruption. The proliferation of ransom kidnappings exacerbates insecurity and pose threats to personal safety and economic stability as the study reveals. The study advocates for holistic reforms to combat corruption and enhance good governance in Nigeria. Strategies recommended among others include the overhauling of the nations' security architecture, bolstering of law enforcement, engagement of traditional rulers in governance and collaboration between governmental bodies and civil societies.

Keywords

Corruption, Governance failure, Kidnapping, Ransom.

Introduction

Kidnapping in Nigeria has recently gained more momentum, with all categories of persons being victims of the malady. It has become a common term, both in public and private discussions, going by its widespread occurrence in the country. A menace previously known in oil rich regions of the Niger Delta, with the target being mostly expatriates and Nigerians in the oil business now cut across all states in Nigeria. The Northern and South Western states of Nigeria are not spared and the downtrodden are fast becoming more victim. The widening scale of kidnapping in Nigeria is a cause for concern as all are affected

Corresponding author:

Habeeb A. Sheu, Department of Political Science Education, Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo, Nigeria
Email: sheuha@eauedoyo.edu.ng

by it. Churches, mosques, markets, schools, homes and the highway, all are susceptible to this menace. The trend of the challenge in the country is better understood against existing evidence that even government officials and traditional rulers are not spared.

Kidnapping is an illegal act where individuals are forcibly taken to an unknown destination, typically to extort ransom from their relatives and associates. The prevalence of this crime has placed the country among the highest in global rankings for such incidents. Succinctly explained, Davidson (2010) explains that a group of criminals, armed with guns, life threatening tools and cell phones, capture unsuspecting victims, drag them to a secluded location, and then start making phone calls to demand a ransom from the victims' contacts.

Many factors account for the ugly development and its prominence, with the most prominent being the pursuit of illegal financial gains, the elimination of political opponents, human sacrifice or ritualistic practices, and, most significantly, corruption and governance failure. Nigeria, as the largest economy in Africa, grapples with systemic corruption and governance failure, providing fertile ground for criminal activities like kidnapping for ransom. Nigerians are fast paying the price of poor governance and systemic corruption that have bedeviled the nation with dim hope at sight.

Corruption and governance failure are severe issues in Nigeria, reflected in the high rates of poverty, disease, unemployment, hunger, infrastructural decay, insecurity, and deficits nationwide (Agbekaku, Hakpe & Okoye, 2016). Explaining the detrimental impact of corruption, Ngwube & Okoli (2013) described it as a plague deeply embedded in Nigeria's political system. It is understood that corruption is prevalent and systematic in both the public and private sectors of Nigeria. This widespread corruption threatens the nation's security and integrity, posing a significant obstacle to development and contributing to the governance failure.

A significant aspect of governance failure, rooted in political and systemic corruption, is the current state and trend of kidnapping in Nigeria. Human protection is highly endangered by various factors, including corruption. This corruption negatively affects safety and impacts everyone due to their interconnectedness (Agbekaku *et al.*, 2016). Mustapha (2015) asserts that corruption has significantly contributed to the persistent crisis of kidnapping and insecurity in Nigeria due to its level and trend. The prevalence of corruption and ongoing kidnappings presents a serious challenge to governance in the country. It is on this premise that this study seeks to establish the nexus between corruption, governance failure, and the surge in kidnapping, employing a qualitative research method. The effect of the national security architecture on kidnapping, the trend and consequences of kidnapping in Nigeria are set objectives examined in the study.

Conceptual Clarifications and Theoretical Underpinning

Conceptualising Corruption

Corruption is a major obstacle to growth and the effective operation of the rule of law. Corrupt practices by government officials undermine the legitimacy of offices and institutions. Responsible political leadership cannot flourish in corrupt environments. Economically, corruption diverts capital from its intended purposes, reducing public funds and diminishing the impact of development aid. It also incentivizes the exploitation of natural resources, depleting environmental assets (World Bank, 2014).

Corruption is a malignant affliction, a socio-political, economic, religious, and moral disease that permeates all levels of society (Aluko, 2002). Corruption is widely seen as fraudulent, dishonest, and illegal behaviour, particularly among those in positions of authority. It includes any official conduct executed through a fee, payment in cash, or kind that violates societal standards, rules, values, and expectations. Corruption is value-laden, encompassing immorality, moral debasement, and depravity (Ade, Babatunde & Awoniyi, 2011). Gould (1991) views corruption as an immoral and unethical phenomenon that deviates from societal moral standards, leading to a loss of respect for, and confidence in, duly constituted authority.

According to Salisu (2000), corruption can be succinctly described as the misuse of public resources for personal gain. For instance, public officials might accept bribes in exchange for issuing passports or visas, providing services at ports or airports, awarding contracts, or creating artificial shortages of goods. The Asian Development Bank defines corruption as actions by officials in both public and private sectors that unlawfully enrich themselves or those closely associated with them, or induce others to do so, by abusing their positions. The United Nations Convention against Corruption recognises corruption as a complex and evolving phenomenon, refraining from a strict definition but describing corrupt practices such as embezzlement, fraud, extortion, bribery, favouritism, and nepotism (Stople, 2008).

Transparency International (2008) distinguishes between two forms of corruption: "according to the rules," which involves facilitation payments made to receive preferential treatment for services that the receiver is legally obligated to provide, and "against the rules," where bribes are paid to obtain services that the receiver is prohibited from providing.

Conceptualizing Good Governance and Governance Failure

The Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) was introduced by the World Bank to assess fundamental aspects of good governance (Kaufmann, Kraay and Zoido-Lobato, 1999). However, these indicators have evolved over time. In 2006, political stability and the absence of violence were key indicators of good governance (Kaufmann *et al.*, 2007). By 2008, the indicators were expanded to

include voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption.

Recent researches have questioned the validity of these indicators. Langbein and Knack (2008) argued that the WGI has limited usefulness for policymakers and academic studies on the causes and consequences of good governance. Andrews (2008) criticised the WGI for lacking a clear definition and being ahistorical, failing to account for country-specific challenges and environments. Huther and Shah (2005) attempted to define governance as a multifaceted concept that encompasses all aspects of exercising authority through formal and informal institutions in managing a state's resources. They posited that the quality of governance (or good governance) is determined by how this exercise of power impacts the quality of life enjoyed by its citizens.

While popular definitions of good governance often focus on corruption, it involves much more than merely the absence of corruption, clientelism, nepotism, cronyism, patronage, or discrimination. Good governance, as a concept, has arguably become diluted and overused, sometimes in imprecise and confusing ways. In development literature and studies like ours, it often serves as a euphemism, providing an umbrella for discussing specific issues like corruption or the promotion of democratic practices.

The literatures have explored how the concept of good governance is defined. According to the World Bank, good governance is assessed based on a country's ability to implement governance principles effectively, which in turn establishes a framework for fostering development and growth. Articulating the conception of the World Bank, Mushtaq Khan (2004), expanded the notion of good governance to encompass the state's capacity to drive structural changes across institutional, political, economic, and social domains, aimed at securing sustained economic growth. State capacity is viewed as the ability to implement policies that foster robust institutions conducive to development. It is acknowledged that institutions may have varying impacts over time and across different contexts, necessitating tailored approaches to good governance policies based on the specific countries where they are implemented.

Good governance is the capacity of management and institutional reforms implemented by state policies, which enhance the coordination and delivery of effective public services, ensure accountability of political actors and citizens in shaping development policies, and link sound political institutions and practices to foster development. Anything contrary to the submissions above is governance failure. Governance failure is the inability of the government policies and institutions to enhance coordination and foster a delivery of quality public service for the general welfare and wellbeing of the citizenry. A

government fails when it can provide public service and goods duly to the citizenry for greater comfort, safety and happiness.

Conceptualising Kidnapping for Ransom

Kidnapping for ransom has long been a global issue. Over the past decade, the incidence of such kidnappings has risen dramatically. According to the Control Risk Group, an international risk consultancy, the number of kidnappings involving foreign nationals worldwide has surged by 275%. This alarming trend is evident in high-profile cases like the 2000 kidnappings of tourists by the Abu Sayyaf group in the Philippines' troubled southern region. Each continent has its own regional hotspots for kidnappings (Control Risk Group, n.d.).

While it is believed that a significant number of these kidnappings are carried out by economically motivated crime groups, determining the exact percentage attributed to organised crime remains challenging. The nature of these operations and the clandestine methods employed make precise estimations difficult.

Kidnapping is an illegal act where individuals are forcibly taken to an unknown destination, typically to extort ransom from their relatives and associates. The prevalence of this crime has placed the country among the highest in global rankings for such incidents. Succinctly explained, Davidson (2010) explains that a group of criminals, armed with guns, life threatening tools and cell phones, capture unsuspecting victims, drag them to a secluded location, and then start making phone calls to demand a ransom from the victims' contacts.

According to Uzorma and Nwanegbo-Ben (2014), kidnapping involves the act of seizing, detaining, or transporting an individual by unlawful force or deceit, typically accompanied by a demand for ransom. They explain that this crime occurs when someone is abducted and moved to another location against their will or confined to a controlled space without legal authorization. Additionally, they noted that kidnapping entails forcibly taking a person from their family without consent, with the intention of holding them hostage and extorting a profit from their relatives. Turner (1998) identified primary motivations for kidnapping as kidnapping for financial gain without any political agenda, kidnapping without any financial or political motives, kidnapping for both financial gain and political purposes and kidnapping for political reasons without financial incentives.

Rent-Seeking and State-Capture Theoretical Assumptions

Rent-seeking and state-capture theories provide valuable frameworks for understanding the phenomenon of kidnapping for ransom. They highlight how economic motivations and the manipulation of state institutions contribute to the persistence and prevalence of this crime.

Tullock (1967) introduced the term "Rent-Seeking" to describe the pursuit of economic rents by influencing government policy, regulation, or other legal

mechanisms. Rent-seeking refers to the practice of individuals or groups trying to obtain economic gains without reciprocating any benefits back to society through wealth creation. In Nigeria, rent-seeking activities often lead to wealth concentration among small elite, creating significant economic disparities. These disparities fuel resentment and drive individuals, particularly those from marginalized communities, towards criminal activities, including kidnapping, as a means of survival or retaliation.

Hellman, Jones, and Kaufmann (2000) discuss state-capture as a form of corruption that results in the creation of biased policies and laws that favor specific interests over the general public. The theoretical assumption here is that state-capture leads to a distortion of public policies, resulting in inefficient governance and economic inequality. In Nigeria, state capture undermines the rule of law and state apparatus selectively enforce laws and turn a blind eye to certain illegal activities, including kidnapping. This lack of consistent law enforcement has emboldened criminal networks in Nigeria.

In Nigeria, kidnapping for ransom has become a lucrative criminal enterprise. The lack of effective governance and law enforcement allows criminals to exploit vulnerabilities and target individuals for financial gain. This situation is exacerbated by the corruption and influence exerted by powerful criminal networks, which can ensure that their activities are either overlooked or inadequately addressed by the authorities.

Nigeria Security Architecture and Insecurity

The complex security environment in Nigeria, along with the ineffectiveness of the security apparatus, has become a source of concern and intense intellectual debate among security experts. Security experts widely agree that the Nigerian state has recently encountered significant national security threats, including terrorism, electoral violence, banditry, kidnapping, and religious, ethnic, and communal conflicts (Wahab, 2020). The violent activities of non-state actors within Nigeria's complex security environment underscore the necessity of examining the Nigerian security architecture and network.

The concept of Security Architecture pertains to how security controls are strategically positioned to address the specific needs and potential risks of a particular scenario or environment. The historical background and philosophy of Nigeria's state security architecture are perceived as centralized, which contributes significantly to the inefficiency and inadequate delivery of security services in the country. The establishment of the Nigerian police force during colonial times was primarily driven by colonial interests: the repression of natives and the maintenance of law and order to facilitate exploitation. Modeled after the West African Frontier Force, the centralized structure of the Nigeria

Police was oriented towards enforcing compliance with imperial acts of 1807 and 1833, which abolished slavery, and served the colonial strategy of divide and rule. Additionally, they were armed to facilitate the transportation of raw materials from the hinterlands to the metropolis (Jemibewon, 2009; Sheu, 2021).

Several decades after Nigeria gained independence, the security framework remains centralized, which has detrimental effects on the management of crime and security at the grassroots level. Despite calls for community and state policing that could potentially decentralize the security structure, the federal government has shown little to no interest in relinquishing its stronghold over the police and armed forces. Notably, between 1960 and 1967, Nigeria experienced a period of decentralized federating power, allowing the three regions to have jurisdictional control over their respective territories. Each region operated its own police and prison systems tailored to their geographical locations and cultural traditions. However, military interventions disrupted this regional autonomy and the beneficial competitive dynamics that fostered development, including regional policing. The subsequent over-centralization of power at the federal level reinstated a centralized security structure (Sheu, 2021).

Overview of Kidnaping Trend in Contemporary Nigeria

Since the 1980s, kidnaping for various motives has persisted as a significant aspect of criminal victimization in Nigeria. It has been documented as prevalent in the 18th and 19th centuries (Ikime, 2006; Obarisiagbon & Aderinto, 2018). Nigeria has one of the highest rates of kidnap-for-ransom cases in the world. Statistics also rank Nigeria as the third and fifth country globally in reported kidnaping cases (Perlberg, 2013). Kidnaping in Nigeria is previously known of oil rich regions of the Niger Delta with the target being mostly expatriates and Nigerians in the oil business. Many authors agree that kidnaping in Nigeria originated in the Niger-Delta region, where there have been ongoing protests against environmental degradation caused by multinational oil companies' exploration activities (Akpan, 2010), an estimated 200 expatriate oil workers have been kidnapped in the region.

One of the most notable cases of kidnaping in the region was the abduction of nine foreign workers from an oil company. This incident stands out due to its implications and the strategic objectives behind it. The kidnapers, instead of seeking a ransom, aimed to negotiate the release of Mujahid Asari-Dokubo, a prominent leader in the Niger-Delta struggles (Chidi *et al.*, 2015)

Today, kidnaping has spread beyond the Niger-Delta to other parts of Nigeria. The situation is dire, with people of all nationalities and economic statuses at risk of being kidnapped. Alarming statistics reveal that Nigeria records approximately 1,000 kidnaping cases annually, although many incidents go unreported (Ibrahim & Mukhtar, 2017). In 2014, Boko Haram kidnapped 276 schoolgirls from Chibok, drawing international outrage and highlighting the vulnerability of children to kidnappings (Smith, 2014). In 2020, over 300 schoolboys were abducted from their school in Kankara, Katsina State,

by armed groups, further emphasising the trend of mass kidnappings for ransom (Adebayo & Busari, 2020).

The increase in kidnappings appears to be overwhelming, prompting the Nigerian government to adopt additional measures. These include the registration of mobile phone users, the implementation or amendment of anti-kidnapping legislation in some states to impose severe punishments (including the death penalty), the deployment of military task forces, and the demolition of structures or buildings owned or used by kidnappers for their operations, among other actions (Ojo, 2022).

Kidnapping in Nigeria manifests in various forms, including abduction by armed bandits, self-planned kidnappings, incidents involving Fulani herders, actions by Niger-Delta militants, and operations conducted by terrorist groups like Boko Haram and Ansaru. These different forms of kidnapping underscore the diverse motivations and methods employed by different groups involved in such criminal activities across the country.

Literature Review

Corruption, Governance Failure and Kidnapping: Intricate Connections

Governance failure and systemic corruption have been closely linked to the rise of crime. Kidnapping and other crimes reflect a profound failure in governance, primarily driven by political and systemic corruption. The impact of corruption on crime, such as kidnapping, is profound and multifaceted. Corruption weakens law enforcement and judicial institutions, leading to impunity for criminals and a lack of deterrents against illegal activities (Agbekaku *et al.*, 2016). Mustapha (2015) argues that corruption not only facilitates criminal activities but also erodes public trust in government institutions responsible for ensuring security and justice. This breakdown in governance contributes significantly to the persistence and escalation of crime rates, exacerbating societal instability and undermining economic development efforts.

Corruption undermines human security and places everyone at risk, as highlighted by Agbekaku *et al.* (2016). Mustapha (2015) contends that the pervasive corruption significantly fuels crisis of kidnapping and insecurity. The prevalence of corruption and the persistence of kidnappings pose substantial challenges to effective governance.

Several scholars have explored the intricate connections between corruption, governance failure, and kidnapping in Nigeria. Olukotun (2017) highlights how corruption undermines state institutions, thereby exacerbating insecurity and contributing to higher crime rates. Oyedokun (2019) emphasizes the detrimental

impact of corruption on law enforcement capabilities, compromising efforts to prevent and control crimes like kidnapping. Ibrahim (2018) underscores the role of governance failures in fostering criminal activities, including kidnapping, underscoring the urgent need for robust governance reforms. Adesote (2020) discusses systemic factors that sustain corruption and its correlation with rising crime rates, including kidnappings, in Nigerian society. Oluwasegun (2021) provides insights into how corruption and weak governance structures create favorable conditions for various criminal activities across Nigeria. These works collectively illustrate how corruption and governance shortcomings contribute significantly to the prevalence and persistence of kidnapping and other forms of crime particularly in Nigeria.

The Catalysts to Kidnapping in Nigeria

From the observed trend of kidnapping and the various underlying motives behind this crime analyzed above, the following factors can be identified as catalysts for kidnapping in Nigeria. The prevalence of poverty and unemployment in Nigeria significantly contributes to the proliferation of kidnapping incidents, as individuals are driven to desperate measures, such as kidnapping for ransom, to survive. The lack of economic opportunities, coupled with high poverty rates, forces many to resort to criminal activities as a means of making a living.

Nigeria has one of the highest poverty rates in the world, with approximately 40% of its population living below the national poverty line, and an unemployment rate of 33.3%, with youth unemployment at 42.5% (NBS, 2021). This widespread poverty, combined with a lack of job opportunities and stark economic inequality, creates an environment where individuals see kidnapping as a viable option to obtain money quickly and improve their dire living conditions.

Numerous cases illustrate the link between economic hardship and kidnapping in Nigeria. For instance, the notorious kidnapper Evans, whose real name is Chukwudumeme Onwuamadike, admitted that he turned to kidnapping because he was unable to make a decent living through legitimate means. Similarly, many of the young men arrested for kidnapping in the Niger Delta region cited unemployment and poverty as their primary motivations (Vanguard, 2017).

Several decades after Nigeria gained independence, the security framework remains centralized, which has detrimental effects on the management of crime and security at the grassroots level. A centralised security system means that decision-making and resource allocation are concentrated at the national level, often leading to inefficiencies and delays in responding to local security issues. According to Omilusi (2016), the lack of decentralised security operations undermines community policing efforts and local initiatives that could be more effective in preventing and managing crimes such as kidnapping. Local security agencies often lack the autonomy, resources, and flexibility to address specific

security challenges in their communities, resulting in a gap that criminals exploit.

Lax law enforcement in Nigeria serves as a significant catalyst for the prevalence of kidnapping, contributing to a climate where criminals can operate with relative impunity. Lax law enforcement creates a sense of impunity among criminals, including kidnapers, who perceive little risk of apprehension or punishment for their actions. According to Odo *et al.* (2017), the ineffective implementation of laws and weak judicial systems allow criminal networks to operate freely, increasing the incidence of kidnapping as perpetrators exploit gaps in enforcement.

Corruption diverts public funds away from critical infrastructure, including security and law enforcement. The resulting inadequacies in resources and training diminish the capacity of security agencies to respond effectively to kidnapping incidents. This systemic failure exacerbates insecurity and encourages criminal activities such as kidnapping.

Kidnapping syndicates often benefit from collusion with corrupt officials who provide them with intelligence, protection, or facilitate ransom negotiations. This complicity not only enables kidnapers to evade capture but also perpetuates the cycle of kidnapping as a lucrative criminal enterprise (Iweala, 2017).

Data Presentation and Analysis

The data presented in Table 1 was obtained from various media reports in Nigerian newspapers, providing a snapshot of recent kidnapping cases across the country. These reports highlight the escalating trend of abductions and the large sums of money demanded as ransom. The cases detailed in the table span from 2019 to 2024, showcasing the widespread nature of the crime, with incidents reported across multiple states, including Enugu, Abuja, Imo, Anambra, Ekiti, Lagos, Borno, Sokoto, Ogun, and Kaduna.

Table 1: Recent Cases of Kidnapping in Nigeria

Date	Victim(s)	Location	Ransom Demanded	Medium of Communication
March, 2019	Tochukwu Okeke	Enugu State	700 million Naira	Phone Call
December, 2022	Sixteen (16) Wedding Guests	Abuja	Rice, Spaghetti, drugs and #437,00	Phone Call
May, 2023	Mathias Opara	Imo State	50 million Naira	Phone Call
November, 2023	Enibe Francis	Anambra	5 million Naira	
December, 2023	Omoba De Junbo (Juju Musician) and crew	Kogi State	10 million Naira	Phone Call

January, 2024	A man and six (6) children	Abuja	50 million Naira	Phone Call
January, 2024	Nineteen (19) persons in an estate	Abuja (FCT)	700 million Naira	Phone Call
February, 2024	Three (3) Monarch	Ekiti State	Undisclosed	Phone Call
February, 2024	Five (5) Pupils and Four (4) Teachers	Ekiti State	100 million Naira	Phone Call
February, 2024	Philip Aivoji (Lagos PDP Chairman) and party officials	Lagos-Ibadan Road	100 million Naira	Phone Call
March, 2024	400 Internally Displaced Persons	Borno State	100 million Naira	Phone Call
March, 2024	15 students	Sokoto State	50 million Naira	Phone Call
July, 2024	20 travellers	Ogun State	50 million Naira	Phone Call
July, 2024	Son of a Medical Doctor	Kaduna State	300 million	Phone Call

Source: Compiled by authors from media reports

Each entry includes the victim(s), location, ransom amount demanded, and the communication medium used for the ransom negotiations, which, in all cases listed, was a phone call. This underscores the increasing role of technology, particularly mobile phones, in facilitating kidnapping operations. The use of mobile phones enables kidnapers to coordinate their demands quickly and remotely, while avoiding face-to-face interactions that could lead to their identification or capture. The phone calls serve as a primary tool for both negotiation and intimidation, further complicating the efforts of law enforcement to combat the crime.

Other scholarly works provide valuable insights into the relationship between corruption, crime, and technology in Nigeria. Iweala (2017) argues that kidnapping syndicates often thrive due to collusion with corrupt officials, who provide intelligence, protection, or facilitate ransom negotiations. This complicity not only allows kidnapers to evade capture but also perpetuates the cycle of kidnapping as a lucrative criminal enterprise. Similarly, Ejiogu and Aluko (2020) discuss how economic inequality, unemployment, and political instability have contributed to the growth of kidnapping in Nigeria, making it a well-organized criminal activity that continues to flourish despite the efforts of the government. Adeyemi (2019) contends that the failure of security agencies to effectively address kidnapping is exacerbated by insufficient funding and lack of political will. This is evident in the fact that kidnapers continue to operate with impunity, despite the frequent media coverage of such crimes. The patterns seen in the table reflect a disturbing normalization of this crime across Nigerian states, with large ransom demands indicating the profitability of the act.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, Nigeria's struggle with systemic corruption and governance failure has created an environment ripe for criminal activities such as kidnapping for ransom. This study has underscored the interconnectedness between corruption, governance deficiencies, and the alarming rise in kidnapping

incidents, supported by qualitative research and crime data analysis. The pervasive socio-economic challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inadequate security infrastructure have fueled the commercialization of kidnapping, amplifying threats to personal security and economic prosperity.

To effectively address the pervasive issue of kidnapping in Nigeria, the government must take the lead in implementing holistic reforms aimed at eradicating corruption and fostering good governance. Corruption, which undermines public trust and weakens institutions, often creates an enabling environment for criminal activities such as kidnapping to thrive. By prioritizing accountability, transparency, and the equitable distribution of resources, the government can strengthen the rule of law and enhance public safety. The holistic reforms should include overhauling the criminal justice system to ensure swift prosecution of offenders, improving the welfare and training of security personnel, and addressing the socio-economic disparities that often drive individuals toward criminal activities. Addressing the issues also demands for the restructuring of security architecture by decentralizing security, strengthening of law enforcement capabilities, promoting transparency, and fostering collaborative governance approaches involving traditional leaders and civil society stakeholders. Effective crime prevention requires active participation from local communities, who are more familiar with their own security terrain. Without such engagement, there remains a disconnect between security agencies and the communities they serve, leading to mistrust and reduced cooperation in combating crimes like kidnapping, hence, the popular call for state and community policing.

References

- Ade, A., Babatunde, M. A. & Awoniyi, M. T. (2011). Ethical considerations in public service management in Nigeria. *International Journal of Public Administration and Management Research (IJPAMR)*, 2(1), 112-122.
- Adesote, A. F. (2020). Systemic corruption and rising crime rates in Nigeria: A critical analysis. *Journal of African Studies and Development*, 12(5), 123-136.
- Adeyemi, A. (2019). The failure of Nigerian security agencies in curbing kidnapping: A critique of government response. *African Journal of Political Science*, 22(2), 134-148.
- Agbekaku, C. O., Hakpe, E. E. & Okoye, P. V. C. (2016). Corruption and its impact on the socio-economic development of Nigeria. *International Journal of Public Administration and Management Research (IJPAMR)*, 4(1), 29-39.

- Akpan, N. S. (2010). Kidnapping in Nigeria's Niger Delta: An exploratory Study. *Journal of Social Science*, 24(1) 33-42
- Aluko, O. M. (2002). Corruption in Africa: A threat to sustainable development. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 37(1), 267-282. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002190960203700118>.
- Andrews, M. (2008). The good governance agenda: Beyond indicators without theory. *Oxford Development Studies*, 36(4), 379-407
- Bello, I., & Mukhtar, J. I. (2017). Media influence on terrorism: Analysis of Boko Haram as a product of postmodernism. *Journal of Terrorism and Political Violence*, 59, 139-147.
- Chidi, I. N., Oloko, S. A., & Ukaegbu, P. A. (2015). Kidnapping in the Niger Delta: An evaluation of its causes and implications. *Journal of Social and Management Sciences*, 10(3), 45-55.
- Control Risks Group. (n.d.). Kidnapping for ransom: A growing global threat. Control Risks.
- Davidson, A. (2010). Kidnapping for ransom: Methods and motivations. *Journal of Criminal Behavior*, 25(3), 112-129.
- Davidson, C. M. (2010). Understanding kidnapping: A global epidemic. *International Journal of Criminology and Sociology*, 9(1), 154-169.
- Ejiogu, S. O. & Aluko, A. (2020). Economic inequality and the rise of kidnapping in Nigeria. *African Journal of Development Studies*, 18(3), 245-263.
- Gould, D. J. (1991). The ethical foundations of managerial capitalism: A critical examination of business ethics. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 10(4), 273-281. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00382545>.
- Hellman, J. S., Jones, G. & Kaufmann, D. (2000). Seize the state, seize the day: State capture, corruption, and influence in transition economies. *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 31(4), 751-773.
- Huther, J. & Shah, A. (2005). A simple measure of good governance. In A. Shah (Ed.), *Public services delivery*, pp. 39-59. The World Bank. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-0-8213-6140-6>.
- Ibrahim, A. B. (2018). Governance failure and the rise of kidnapping in Nigeria. *Journal of Public Administration and Policy Research*, 10(1), 1-10.
- Ikime, O. (2006). *The fall of Nigeria: The British conquest*. Heinemann Educational Books.
- Iweala, C. (2017). *Kidnapping and corruption in Nigeria: Understanding the nexus*. *Journal of African Security Studies*, 10(3), 45-60.
- Jemibewon, D. (2009). *The Nigerian police force: Problems and prospects*. Spectrum Books.
- Kaufmann, D., Kraay, A. & Zoido-Lobato, A. (1999). Governance matters: From measurement to action. *Finance & Development*, 36(2), 10-13.
- Kaufmann, D., Kraay, A. & Mastruzzi, M. (2007). Governance matters VI: Governance indicators for 1996-2006. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 4280. World Bank.

- Khan, M. H. (2004). State failure in developing countries and strategies of institutional reform. In B. Tungodden, N. Stern, & I. Kolstad (Eds.), Annual World Bank Conference on Development Economics 2003: Toward pro-poor policies
- Langbein, L. & Knack, S. (2008). The worldwide governance indicators: Six, one, or none? *Journal of Development Studies*, 43(5), 998-1022.
- Mustapha, A. R. (2015a). Corruption, security challenges and development in Nigeria: The political economy dimension. *Journal of Economic and Sustainable Development*, 6(2), 123-131.
- Mustapha, A. R. (2015b). Ethnicity, governance and the containment of kidnapping in Nigeria. *Africa Spectrum*, 50(1), 87-106.
- Ngwube, A. H. & Okoli, C. P. (2013). Corruption and governance in Nigeria: Implications for sustainable development. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research*, 1(1), 89-100.
- Obarisiagbon, E. I. & Aderinto, A. A. (2018). Historical and contemporary perspectives of kidnapping in Nigeria. *African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies*, 11(1), 69-82.
- Odo, C. I., Nwokike, F. O. & Eze, N. O. (2017). Ineffective implementation of laws and its impact on crime: A study of the judicial system in Nigeria. *Journal of Social and Policy Issues*, 14(2), 45-60.
- Ojo, O. (2022). The Nigerian government's response to the rise in kidnappings: Legislative and security measures. *Journal of Nigerian Political Studies*, 22(1), 56-72
- Olukotun, A. (2017). Corruption and insecurity in Nigeria: Implications for sustainable development. *Journal of Peace, Conflict and Development*, 24, 49-67.
- Oluwasegun, B. A. (2021). Corruption, weak governance and crime in Nigeria: A review of recent trends. *Journal of Governance and Regulation*, 10(4), 89-102.
- Omilusi, M. (2016). Centralized security and its impact on crime management in Nigeria. *Journal of Security Studies and Criminology*, 4(2), 45-58.
- Oyedokun, T. (2019). The impact of corruption on law enforcement in Nigeria. *African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies*, 12(1), 83-98.
- Perlberg, H. (2013). Kidnapping for ransom: An overview of trends and developments. *Global Crime*, 14(2-3), 187-213.
- Salisu, M. (2000). *Corruption in Nigeria*. Lancaster university management school working paper series. Retrieved from <https://eprints.lancs.ac.uk>.
- Sheu, A. (2021). The impact of centralized security architecture on crime management in Nigeria. *Journal of African Security Studies*, 7(1), 45-62.
- Smith, H. (2014). The abduction of the Chibok girls: Boko Haram and the fight for Nigeria's future. *The Guardian*.

- Stople, F. (2008). Understanding corruption: From theory to practice. *Public Administration Review*, 68(3), 617-618.
- Transparency International (2008). *Global corruption report 2008*. Cambridge University Press.
- Tullock, G. (1967). The welfare costs of tariffs, monopolies, and theft. *Western Economic Journal*, 5(3), 224-232.
- Turner, R. (1998). Motivations in kidnapping incidents. *Crime Analysis Quarterly*, 15(4), 321-35.
- Uzorma, P. & Nwanegbo-Ben, C. (2014). Understanding kidnapping: Definitions and motivations. *International Journal of Security Studies*, 8(2), 45-62.
- Vanguard. (2017). *Kidnapping in Nigeria: The economic hardships behind the crime*.
- Wahab, G. A. (2020). National security threats and the Nigerian state: A critical analysis. *International Journal of Security Studies*, 14(2), 67-84.
- World Bank (2014). *World development report 2014: Risk and opportunity—Managing risk for development*. World Bank Publications.