
KIDNAPPING: A SECURITY CHALLENGE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract. This article presents a relatively new dimension of kidnapping, known as ritual kidnapping, which has been battling security and polity in Nigeria. The concepts of ritual and ransom kidnapping are explored and analysed within this text through the adoption of a theoretical framework on security with qualitative methods to explain the causes of kidnapping and ritual kidnapping, an overview of security in Nigeria, and a discussion surrounding the challenges regarding implementation of security within Nigeria. Drawing from results acquired during this study, it can be argued that while the concept of security is yet to be agreed on internationally to suit the needs of different states, Nigeria should adopt a hybrid security in addressing issues such as ritual kidnapping and other crimes in the country.

Keywords: kidnapping; security; ritual; youths; Nigeria

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1. Introduction

There is a need for alertness, call to order and an overhaul of security institutions in a country where crime precedes security (Zeman et al. 2018; Teivāns-Treinovskis et al. 2018; Kuril 2018).

This is especially true of Nigeria; there are frequent incidences of particular crimes, such as sectarian violence, ethno-religious conflict, political assassination, ransom kidnapping, campus cultism and electoral thuggery to human rights violations. Thus, insecurity is rife. Oarhe and Aghedo (2010) emphasize this by claiming Nigerian security agencies have largely been ineffective, which has led to a colossal amount of insecurity and violence in the country. Nigerian police avow that as an institution, it has arrested over a thousand kidnapping and armed robbery suspects in 2017. (Akinloye, 2017) Kidnapping as a security discourse is not new in Nigeria and its prevalence alongside the strain on security it brings needs to be investigated thoroughly (Ngwama 2014; Ebohon and Ifeadi, 2012). To an extent, these assertions hold weight. However, it must be noted that the effectiveness of security in the state is a causal effect of the political order. Politicians are not exempt from the ills they have created through kidnapping. The ineffectiveness of Nigerian security leading to the prevalence of crimes such as kidnapping has multi-causal connotations; among these causal variables, corruption is salient in the reasons and explanation of ineffective security. (Oarhe, and Aghedo 2010)

There are many types of kidnapping and reasons behind them, such as being politically or financially motivated – the latter can be referred to as ‘express kidnapping’ – or incidences where animals or brides are taken. Any of these kidnappings can also take place virtually, in that scam artists convince a victim to believe a kidnapping has already happened over the phone, (Threatrate 2017). However, as previously mentioned, ransom kidnapping

and ritual kidnapping will be central to this article; and for this study ritual kidnapping can be understood as kidnapping of human beings for the practice of ritual sacrifice with the belief that the sacrifices provide or generate money for the perpetrators.

According to Abdulkabir (2017) kidnapping rates have ‘geometrically increased’, in that between 2014 – 2017, it was reported that over 2000 people including young Chibok girls, government officials, politicians and kings were subjected to kidnap. Briggs indicates that kidnapping is now a big business motivated by profit rather than principle (Briggs 2001). This is likened to the challenges of the Nigerian security agencies; because when money is used as a motivation for kidnapping the principle behind the process accounts for little or nothing for those instrumental to the act. In order for security agencies in Nigeria to be efficient, there is a need to overhaul the security agencies and institutions, as previously mentioned; not in the sense of repackaging and ‘cosmetic painting’ of a troubled system, but a total overhaul with international standards trainings for staffs, implementation and priority given to all forms of crime in Nigeria. The imbalances of security focus should be addressed because the disjuncture can pose massive threats to national security.

For this reason, this article seeks to address the central questions generated for this study in asking what is the polity opinion on ritual and ransom kidnappings?; are youths willing to engage in ritual and ransom kidnapping when they are deprived of basic features, such as employment for their survival in the country?; will young people be willing to carry out ritual practices in the name of tradition and religion and how is the government tackling the issue of kidnapping in Nigeria?

It has been observed that most articles on the subject of kidnapping lack empirical research and are generally anecdotal and descriptive (Yun 2007). For some, the issue of ritual kidnapping is a myth and the best method to engage with this myth is the qualitative method as it engages with the respondent of the study with discussion in order to retrieve the information needed for the study and eliminating rumors or innuendos while presenting the facts gathered. Therefore, for this study, qualitative methodology that involves 25 in-depth interviews with respondents documented texts and mass-media reports will be used in order to divulge trends and what is likely to be reported. The choice of qualitative methodology helps in engagement with respondent through interviews and discussion. Thereafter, the analysis stage will feature narrative and phenomenological qualitative analysis; issues will be engaged analytically through qualitative discourse of kidnapping by professionals in security studies both in the academics and the local security in Nigeria. The justification for utilizing qualitative methods is to engage personally with the respondents, as the issue concerning rituals and human sacrifice in kidnapping and kidnapping in general in Nigeria needs one-on-one engagement and discussions rather than quantitative and statistical/structured proof which does not give room for dialogue and discussion.

2. Security overview in Nigeria

Security is a composite of a state. Del Rosso Jr., avows that security has been intimately associated with the state for over four centuries (Del Rosso Jr.1995). It is an important and compulsory service, and the state must provide these rights for its citizens. It could be argued that an insecure state loses its legitimacy to its people and in the eyes of international communities. The absence of security in a state leads to concepts such as failed states, failing states and collapsed states in international relations. Security in its entirety is a vast concept which has many dimensions: national security, international security and human security to mention a few. This prompted scholars such as Del Rosso Jr.(1995), Joseph and Sean (1991) to redefine security, noting security is more than just studying threats and control of militia.

In the midst of the argument of what security is, who it should be for, and how it should be used, Baldwin, took another level in disentangling the concept from the normative and empirical concerns. He asserted that not all dimensions and specifications are used every time one considers the concept of security, because the degree of specificity required varies with the research task at hand. Nonetheless, the dimensions of security can be broadly specified but the utility of the concept does not necessarily increase when this is done (Baldwin 1997). In other words, security should be defined as a policy objective distinguishable from others. Thus, the value

of security can be measured when the prime value approach, the core value approach and the marginal value approach is considered. (Baldwin 1997, 01).

The point of departure after the brief conceptualization of security is the plausible argument of Buzan, who claims that security at the individual level is related to security at the level of the state and the international system (Buzan 2007). It is on this premise that the personal security as it conflicts with kidnapping in Nigeria is *sine qua non* to the analysis and provision of state security. As noted by Forest (2012, 01), kidnapping is a global trend with variations by region and country. The perpetuation of kidnapping in Nigeria is carried out on local citizens and non-citizens, mostly expatriates working at upper-class industries such as oil companies Shell, Total and chevron among others (Donovan 2018). To some, kidnapping is not seen as a capital security issue in the state, but acknowledging that kidnapping is part of terrorist attack which attributes to threats on individuals and to the state should not be dealt in a frivolous manner.

Security is the *summum bonum* of human life in Nigeria. However, since democracy returned in 1999, security in Nigeria has been concerning. Dambazau, outlines other problems Nigeria faces in addition to internal security difficulties, such as ‘the Boko Haram insurgency, the Niger Delta militancy and piracy in the south-south geopolitical zone, comprising Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers; ethno-religious conflicts, resource-based conflicts, trans-border criminal activities and election induced violence’ (Dambazau 2014,01). The security threat scares Nigerian citizens outside the shores of the country because the premonition of those who perpetuate this act is based on the fact that Nigerians outside of the country are rich and wealthy. Therefore, upon their arrival they are targeted for ransom kidnapping, even at the expense of distancing themselves away from their communities and families. Family members within the community are targeted and abducted so that they will be bailed out by their sons or daughters living outside of the country. A prime example is the kidnapping of Mikel Obi’s father, the popular Chelsea club star in England. This pattern also goes for expatriates kidnapped and rescued by ransom payment from their companies. These kinds of kidnappings are attributed to the high net of the individual, as mentioned earlier. The assertion that the security system of Nigeria needs a major overhauling is predicated on the fact that a threat to the security of an individual should be a threat and concern of the state; just as it is upheld in advanced countries where they acknowledge and uphold that a threat to their citizen as a threat to the country. Unfortunately, the security system in Nigeria under the purview of its democratic practices eludes the polity. This does not mean that the Nigerian government is not trying and doing what they can, but trying is not enough, and of course, acknowledging the fact that there is a difference in the way security is implemented effectively by advanced countries calls for the overhaul and provision of better security in a state that is not at war.

3. Security challenges in Nigeria

Kidnapping is a global phenomenon, which can be argued to have been in existence since humans created a coordinated society that provides a coordinated attack on fellow humans. Handrahan (2004) and Menon (2003) point out that the Kyrgyzstan kidnappings were carried out to solidify masculinity and strong ethnic identity. Bridal kidnappings in India are used to reduce women’s social status and the bride’s negotiation power. Moreover, the motive behind kidnapping is based on the culture of different societies. However, there is a clear-cut difference between ritual kidnapping and ransom kidnapping, which this study brings to light.

Kidnapping in Nigeria goes beyond the conventional typology of kidnapping in terms of global trends. Ritual kidnapping is an unconventional type of kidnapping is yet to be fully recognized, but it is persistent within the country. It could be argued that most of the kidnapping in Nigeria stems from the nexus of corruption and unemployment among the youths. This idea is shared by Dambazau, (2014), who inclined with his opinion that lack of decent leadership accompanied with meager governance heavily feature when attempting to outline the problem.

Though Nigeria is ethnically and religiously divided, the approach for kidnapping defies ethnocentric methods. It has no ethnic ties; the success of kidnapping in Nigeria is based on information and methods employed. Nevertheless, most kidnapping cases are ethnically situated. The rise of kidnapping in Nigeria between 2005 and

2006, shows that the main causes of kidnapping are ‘politicians, poverty, terrorism, lack of stiffer punishment by government, negligence on the part of the well –to-do in families and quick money... thus, kidnapping is a national social problem that must be solved nationally. (Dodo 2010). Dodo, pointed out some of the causes and remedies of kidnapping, but was not elaborative enough in terms of elucidating the link between ritual kidnapping and ransom kidnapping, (Dodo 2010, 01) in that the former is a precursor to the latter. Ritual kidnapping as a precursor to ransom kidnapping is ancient in Nigeria; the idea of kidnapping humans and using them for rituals to obtain wealth and power has evolved to ransom kidnapping. Thus, in the absence of ritual kidnapping, people need to be kidnapped and sold or traded for money or wealth.

Recorded incidents of the risk of kidnapping (geographically based) between 2014-2016 show that Bayelsa, Rivers, Yobe, Borno, Kogi, Delta, and Lagos have the highest record of kidnapping (Control Risk). Cases of ritual kidnapping have been reported mostly by the media and with little attention in academia (Akure 2017). Thom-Otuya also discusses this concept; her work touches on kidnapper’s motivation, government effort and its effect on Nigeria National Security, focusing more on the Niger Delta region and the kidnapping of oil workers and expatriates. (Thom-Otuya 2010) In contrast to Dodo (2010), Thom-Otuya does not mention cultural and traditional norms associated with kidnapping, but does recommend increasing military and defense budgets. (Thom-Otuya 2010, 14) However, military security does not automatically resolve the issues being discussed here; despite higher military spending over the years (which includes security), ritual and ransom kidnapping has not decreased. To add, ‘security’ is a contested concept that has been debated by realists and neo-realists; it can be compared to an octopus with different tentacles. Baldwin, described the concept of security as a confused or inadequately explicated concept than as a contested one (Baldwin 1997). Perhaps grappling with its definition has pitted the handling of security issues in a holistic view.

Even some religious centers are involved and implicated in ritual kidnapping; money is earned as humans kidnapped and sacrificed generate more income by attracting people to come seeking for solution in such centers. In turn, they are duped directly and indirectly through prophecies and requesting for money in order to solve people’s problems. Edem (2017), supports this by emphasizing the urges that have been made to federal government to find solutions through policies to stop the activities of pastors and churches. Kidnapping within the Niger Delta region has been discussed by authors such as Akpan (2010), Badiora (2015), Jordan (2001) and Gray and Adeakin (2015), concentrated on the Bokoharam kidnappings. Jordan (2001, 02) is among the few who situates and explains that ritual killing is associated with issues of wealth, power and inequality.

Furthermore, the issue concerning kidnapping is articulated by Igwe who reported that: “In Nigeria, the belief in ritual money is very strong and widespread. The belief is entertained both by the educated and the non-educated, by people of all faiths, and by those who indulge in ritual killing and sacrifice of human beings and those who do not. Modern education in science and logic has not succeeded in eradicating the belief. The existence of relevant laws has not stopped people from carrying out money-making rituals. The belief in ritual money, often seen as self-evident has driven people across the country to kidnap, murder and mutilate other human beings including their family members” (Igwe 2013).

Oyewole, was efficient in showcasing a diagram depicting the motivation for ritual kidnapping focused on faith and materialism, which is shown below (Figure 1):

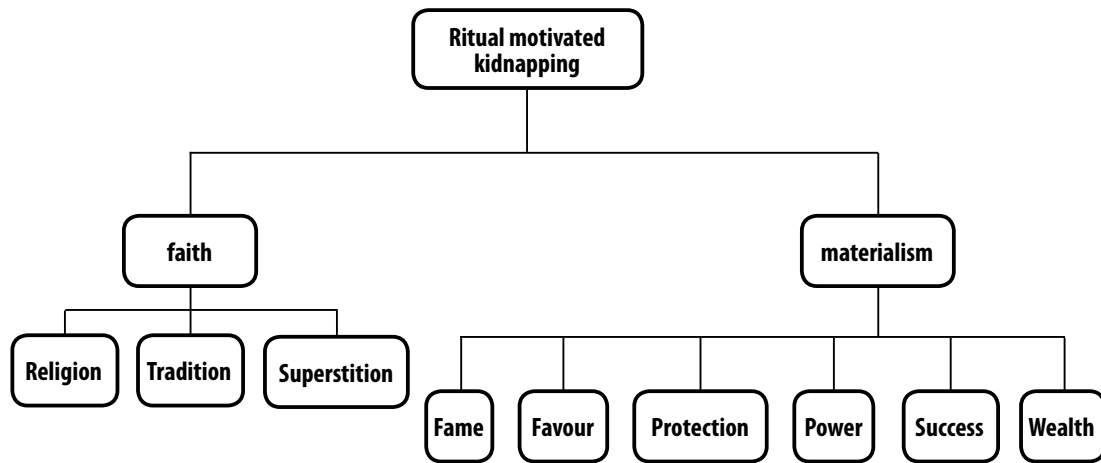


Figure 1. Diagram showing ritual motivated kidnapping adopted from (Oyewole 2016)

This study presents an alternate explanation on the variable of faith as a factor and also focuses on materialism based on the ritual kidnapping model above. Superstitions anchor on materialism, for if there is a belief on killing to become wealthy, materialism becomes the focus, with faith just behind. In regard to religion, if the focus is not on wealth but redemption or protection from the ‘unknown’, then it falls under the category of materialism. For within the concepts of redemption, protection and success, it stands out that there is an acknowledgement of self-saliency and above others in terms of fame, favour, protection, success and wealth, which are all under materialism.

Although individuals’ aspirations and values vary from person to person, it must be acknowledged that –to a greater extent - the aspiration of the Nigerian polity is skewed towards a materialistic lifestyle. Most people wish to be rich which is not inherently a negative thing. The aspiration and struggle which leads to kidnapping plays out in two narratives. Firstly, the aim of kidnapping is not directly focused on being wealthy, but as means to obtain financial liberation where little and very tight opportunity for financial freedom is available for the polity. Secondly, the influence and affluence in society pushes some people aspiring for the social status to engage in devious acts such as ransom and ritual kidnapping. This would be a fast way for people to obtain money required to ascend the social status that they clamor for. At this juncture, it can be deduced that ransom and ritual kidnapping stems from materialism which becomes a security challenge to the state. This is not to say materialism itself is the problem, but it becomes a problem due to the degree of its pursuit by those who employ its usage for their means.

From the political side, Yun, reveals that ‘since mid-1990s, hostage-taking and kidnapping increased as preferred tactics of political terrorist’ (Yun 2007, 01). Apart from the political kidnapping which politicians use as a means to make their opponent give in to their demands, the politicians in Nigeria are highly involved in ritual kidnapping for sacrifice. Usman (2017), claims that a few government officials and politicians have been previously accused of utilizing humans for rituals with the goal of maintaining their affluence and remain in power. Investigations have also revealed that whenever elections are near, people have been known to disappear in addition to ritual killings taking place. Unfortunately, the media rarely cover or publish stories concerning the involvement of politicians in ritual kidnapping and sacrifice due to the fear of being shut down. It can be argued that if media does not publish cases that involve kidnapping and human sacrifice by politicians, then they become party to the crime as well. Nonetheless, understanding the role of the media not taking sides and rarely publishing kidnapping news is another issue based on media ownership. Only few are handled by private owners and it is a very hard venture going against those who influence and control information dissemination for the public. This is expressed by Ali, who notes that many African countries struggle with government controlling broadcast and print media, providing no opportunities for discussing opinions or public debates (Ali 2015). Also, the influence of media ownership has more governmental interference in Africa, especially when compared to countries such as the USA or UK (McQuail 2010). Even so, when such information is

made available to the public, little or nothing is done regarding issues concerning cases of ritual and sacrifice kidnapping when politicians are involved.

Another aspect that exacerbates kidnapping in the country is the issue of resource control and allocation within the country. Yun, claims that 'a globally-integrated capitalism has produced more numbers of people who are alienated and disenfranchised from the prosperity of a globalized economy.' (Yun 2017,01), Therefore, the likelihood and numbers of hostage-takers and predators has increased. Nigeria can be considered a global hotspot for kidnapping. This could be because of the unequal distribution of wealth and pollution produced by the oil industry. Thievery, corruption and channeling of state resources for the 'elite' causes distrust within the various constituents in the Nigerian state (Ebohon and Ifeadi 2012).

4. A broad approach to security

This section draws from Ken Booth's Theory of World Security (Mutimer 2007), with focus on emancipation as the only means to produce true security. Although Booth does not give us a 'systematic way to think about the state of the world as much as series of ideas than animate a progressive politics' (Mutimer 2007,01) his work is remarkably and important in the analysis of security challenges. Kidnapping is a global phenomenon with varying scales and gradation at which it is executed, and the notion of underdevelopment as a security concern is central in the explanation of ritual kidnapping in Nigeria. In regard to emancipation as it relates to security, Roy noted that countries are extremely attached to the opinions, customs, and even habits which they have been used to (Roy 2000). Thus, the need for a different world-view in the wake of global war is needed when rituals involving human life (such as ritual kidnapping) are part of people's customs and habits in Nigeria. Booth, goes on to assert that internal security needs to be addressed, as external world security is debated, contentious and dependent on the graduation of internal security; because 'it is in the condition of insecurity where the politics of the meaning of security begins.' (Booth 2007, 101)

Borrowing from the notion 'seeing but not seeing' from Booth on convergence of traditional ideas among other factors, which dominate politics, economics and society globally on the way security is being thought of (Booth 2007, 12), Booth was right in terms of traditional ideas. The issue of ritual kidnapping is implemented in some traditions and cultures but does not only take place in Nigeria. It is on this premise that ritual kidnapping and ransom kidnapping are difficult to be hamstrung. In the fight against ritual kidnapping - which poses a security threat on the populace - traditional practices of ritual kidnapping continuing to be upheld by members of society becomes problematic. Those in pretense adopt Christianity and Islam as their religion, thus fusing traditions together, and are found wanton with ritual sacrifices of humans beneath their worship centers and edifices. Therefore, there are cases of religion in Nigeria, mostly in some parts of Sub-Saharan Africa becoming a hybrid religious system.

Security is a concept that has drawn lots of academic attention in terms of trying to find a resolute place in the political realm. Over the years, it has undergone modification each time it is analyzed. This brings about the question, what if the framed security that is being practiced by states is actually something else other than security itself. In attempting to right the wrongs of the framed concept of security which is practiced by states, Connolly (1992) noted that we cannot escape onto-political assumptions. Such assumptions possess ontological and epistemological roots. Coleman and Rosenow, (2016) and Bonditti et. al, (2015) noted that security as a concept is a radical heterogeneous assemblage of knowledge and practices. Therefore, when trying to understand and practice security, it should be decentered and analysed with different perspectives and new approaches.

Decentering security will aid in unlearning what we thought we knew and changing questions we wanted to ask (Coleman 2015a). By doing so, the array of factors enmeshed within security will be understood differently. For example, security can be understood from the state and individual or group approach. The approach to security should not be limited to problems and challenges created by the polity which grants the state the right on the provision of security. For the polity, achieving security sometimes plays out through the struggle over resources

such as jobs; thus, struggle is expressed through a conduct of actions towards a goal which may involve protest when needed and necessary. This kind of struggle aligns with the freedom of want and fear (United Nations 2017).

Security as a good that is provided by the state for the polity should be dealt by identifying the obscurities of individual and group struggle for security. In the height of the challenges battling with the security institutions and structures in Nigeria, the state needs to see security from a different prism, one that involves the analysis of power relations with other competing variables, such as development in the state. Attempting to attune and understand the framework of security in the pre-4th republic of Nigeria would be pointless, as it does not meet with the contemporary trends and challenges on security in Nigeria. Not until recent years, kidnapping posed a minimal security challenge in Nigeria.

In Nigeria, situating security at the state level while acknowledging traditions and customs at the same time will go a long way in addressing insecurity. The Nigerian security operatives and officers are subject to training and upgrading themselves with international practices towards security, yet little is being achieved due to the focus on security as a military or a policing conduct as against other factors, such as development contesting against other variables that makes up security. Again, this leads back to what was mentioned earlier regarding decentralization of security. Decentralization in this context does not imply the typical framework which involves the military and paramilitary (the police and Secret Services), but the recognition of other factors that has not been acknowledged as important variables or factors in addressing insecurity in Nigeria.

In a public lecture on the topic of strategic solutions to emerging security challenges, Etannibi Alemika stated that ‘the effectiveness of police and other security and criminal justice systems will not provide lasting solutions if attention is not paid to the transformation of the political, economic, social and ethno-religious structures and relations that breed crime and criminals in the country’, Akinloye (2017), therefore, reinforcing the notion that other factors apart from brute force need to be implemented to tackle security and thus, kidnapping.

Implementation of security in a state can be divided into two main categories applicable to the security institution: military or paramilitary and human security. The focus on security in African states is centered on the former; human security is yet to garner a lot of attention. The lack of concentration on human security may be a problem on a broader scale. Utilizing police in the provision of security in Nigeria is a herculean task; the capacity of the police in terms of securing society is low, and being outnumbered plays a role in that. For instance, according to Akinloye, (2017), Lagos has a population of over 22 million with roughly 30,000 police officers but a large number of them are allocated to politicians and citizens who can afford to spend more on security. This is supported by former Inspector General of Police, Ogbonna Onovo, who drew attention to the large amount of (illegal) deployments of police officers and other security personnel to upper-class individuals, most motivated by money (Ebohon and Ifeadi 2012). The police have also been indicted on different occasions due to extortion and corruption which impedes and worsens the fight against kidnapping. So, there is absolutely a need to move from a paradigm that is state-centric to one that focuses on human security (Ebohon and Ifeadi 2012).

As previously mentioned, kidnapping is a product of leadership styles that created anomalies within the structures of the society. These anomalies such as unemployment, unequal distribution of resources within the state, cultures, traditions and religions are variables that are situated and needs to be addressed. Put differently, the use of traditional security on issues such as kidnapping without addressing the root cause of kidnapping is futile.

5. Results and discussion

This study engaged respondents by random selection on geographical locations and purposeful selection of educated youths, comprising of undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate level as well as lesser-educated youths, in order to gather thorough information regarding the kidnapping issues in general. Interviews were conducted on the key respondents are the religious clergies, an African native priest more commonly known as herbalists

(wanting anonymity), academics and scholars in security studies in Nigeria, a major stake holder respondent from the Nigerian Police Force and younger respondents.

The information gathered from the clergies revealed that some ‘men of God’ engage in ritual human sacrifice in order to attract many members to attend their churches. This leads to the generation of lots of money and proceeds during offerings and tithes from their members. Moreover, the process of the human ritual sacrifice is done through abducting or kidnapping the unwary. A respondent avowed that to stop such barbarous and ungodly act, there is the need to build a strong synergy with the security institutions while they keep preaching the good ways for people to change and unlearn what has been learned.

The key respondent from the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) revealed that ritual kidnapping in Nigeria is primordial and keeps occurring mainly for money rituals; it is done either to start the money ritual or as a requirement to appease the gods or deities providing money or to the ritual process. However, he stated that there are consequences associated with such rituals and cited an example of a case of a man who partook in money rituals in Benin City, Nigeria. Using his wife for this purpose, he became wealthy and had lots of properties in the country, but ultimately was subjected to retaliation when the spirit of the wife haunted him and lead to his suicide (Sogbade 2017). On asking the respondent if rituals conducted can be scientifically proven, he noted that it cannot be because it is akin to black magic; he suggested that the only way to strengthen security towards crimes such as kidnapping and ritual kidnapping is by deploying more scientific and contemporary techniques to fight and detect crime. He also mentioned provision of employment opportunities for the youths for who engage and indulge in ritual killings and kidnappings.

Nwolise, a professor of Political Science in Nigeria aids in analysing the general opinion concerning the prevalence of ritual kidnapping in Nigeria from an academic perspective. He claimed that kidnapping in contemporary Nigeria is usually for reasons such as ransom, producing human meat by criminal deviants, harvesting organs for hospital transplants in Asia and Europe as well as for rituals, slave labour and controlled prostitution abroad (Nwolise 2017).

When asked if rituals can be proved scientifically, Nwolise emphatically stated that if science was humble, it would explain it in more depth; it is too proud and pompous over this type of issue and not developed to the point of understanding spiritual force evoked into *jujucraft*.

The causes of kidnapping that emerged from interviewing younger respondents were: poverty, unemployment greediness, peer influence, irresponsibility, vengeful justice, sheer evil, laziness, desperation for riches, religion and illiteracy. All respondents stated they will have nothing to do with kidnapping, and on their perspective on security it was noted that the security agencies are not effective in crime related issues. Moreover, these agencies are also involved in crimes due to the fact that they are also after money; their greediness will not allow them to be effective, and are only effective when an influential person is involved, tally with Akinloye’s (2017) assertion. Being on the pay roll of the corrupt influential people and kidnapper kingpins who are supposed to bring to law was also discussed, as well as lack of patriotism. On the understanding of ritual kidnapping, the youth interviewed avowed that ritual kidnapping is the “kidnapping or people who are killed for the purpose of ritual sacrifices for money purposes” (personal communications, September 18, 2017) 15 respondents made references to many ritual sacrifice cases but most of them cited the relative recent Soka kidnapping ritualist den that happened in Ibadan Oyo state, 2014(Punch 2018), and another ritualist den in Lagos state (Afeez 2017) busted by security operatives where humans are kidnapped and kept for ritual purposes, and the respondents noted that:

“lots of ‘mad’ people are on the loose with the pretense of being mad to conduct ritual kidnapping business in selling human parts”. Correlating to the aforementioned, a police officer in Ibadan, Oyo state, avowed “that many cases relating to fake mad people who indulge in kidnapping and selling human parts have been arrested, but before prosecution, the people in high positions in the government intervene and case is silent and perpetrators release from police custody and they practically have no power to challenge them as these top

people in the government calls the shot” a respondent (personal communication, September 14, 2017); while some respondents mentioned the popular Otokoto kidnapping ritualist case in Owerri the eastern part of Nigeria which was also reported by (Falayi 2018). Both the educated and non-educated younger respondent noted that “the issue of kidnapping is worrisome as no one knows who is out there to kidnap them and this affect the social relations among people that has been existing for a long time” (Respondents personal communication, September 04, 2017). On ritual sacrifices, respondents from the security operatives and also the young people revealed that there are so many cases of “people desecrating the dead graves in search of human parts for ritual purposes” which has been reported by newspapers such as. (Usman 2010 and Nwachukwu 2017). The younger respondents recommended that the best way to tackle kidnapping is provision of good jobs for the youths, good employee remuneration to avoid desperation in search of alternative means for money, and people need to be educated with appropriate justice meted on those found guilty. Additionally, religions encouraging kidnapping should be abolished.

6. Socio-political, economic clarifications and new determinants of kidnapping

The determinant of kidnapping activities carried out by youths is mostly economical and not political. Unlike the kidnapping classification system of control risk groups, India National Crime Records Bureau and other classification and statistical typologies available in different states (Mohamed 2008) Nigeria does not have a special classification of kidnapping system apart from the unclear police reports. As a matter of fact, private organizations and firms working on crime, violence and security such as the IFRA-Nigeria Watch Project on Fatality Trends takes it upon themselves to document issues relating to crime and violence, while a central coordinated information from the federation is elusive. This gesture by the private sectors is welcomed and gives insight on issues concerning security in the country. It undermines accuracy and validity because there are many organizations involved in such gestures, and it begs the question of authenticity when there are variations of database in the country without a central body evaluating documentation process.

To disentangle the blurred line as to where ritual kidnapping can be classified based on motivation or causal variables. It is worthy to note that, ritual kidnapping can be classified under economic, political and religious typology depending on the motive or the needs of the perpetrator. However, the economic and the political is mostly connected for they complement each other in terms of finances and political power. This is buttressed by Turner (1998), who noted that the boundaries between the economic and political causes are irresolute. From another perspective, Tzanzelli, noted the sociological aspect of kidnapping by putting forth that if we see structural problem to the causes of kidnapping in contemporary polities and economies then they we should recast our thought that kidnapping can emulate existing social codes that make socio-economic life function the way it does...he then argues that “the logic of kidnapping is the illegitimate counterpart of a legitimate exploitation system that has been around for centuries: that of capitalist exchange.” Tzanzelli (2006:935)

By implication, kidnapping is situated and common in ‘countries with high levels of crime and corruption, poorly resourced or trained police personnel, a weak judiciary and/ a history of political or social instability’ (Pharoah 2005, 23). This study agrees with Pharaoh (2005) conditions for kidnapping because these conditions are all present in the Nigerian state.

Regarding ritual kidnapping which often leads to human sacrifice (mainly for money), there are shared beliefs by people in Africa (Zimbabweans), their shared processes and meanings based on culture and nation have important implications on meaning, shaping behaviours and for theoretical understanding of a phenomenon. Rödlach, (2006) study informs us that understanding of disease produced by a search for meaning does not necessarily match biomedical explanations, so it is with the same logic that applies to those who use humans kidnapped for rituals or money sacrifices. In the academia, reasons which involves the notion behind kidnapping and ritual kidnapping can be debated while stalling in methods and solutions that needs to be adopted. For instance, Nwolise (2017) presented and urged for the necessity of structures and concepts such as magic and spiritual healing, Strategic Spiritual Intelligence, the involvement of African divinities, and magic and spiritual healing. Spiritual security can be utilized to enhance physical security; there is a need to engage with them

on the “back-stage” behaviour against the “front-stage” behaviour, which is hidden away from public eyes as similarly expressed by Erving (1959), in order to understand the notion associated to issues relating to security vis-a-vis humans kidnapped for rituals or money sacrifices.

The African native priest, also a member of the Ogboni Confraternity, was asked, ‘why do native doctors that assist ritual kidnappers not make themselves rich, but assist the ritual kidnappers who venture into it?’ Firstly, the native priest explained that it is not every native doctor that engages in such acts; human ritual sacrifices for riches actually works, but there is always a repercussion; that is why he does not enrich himself with the proceeds of human sacrifice. In his words, ‘nothing is free in these types of transactions’ and in most cases, people seek for the negative side of mysticism which is harmful and easily accessible in the country, (African traditional native priest 2018). In terms of curbing the ritual kidnapping and providing security in the country, the native priest stated that kidnapping in general cannot be stopped due to security operatives and some occult groups abetting the crime through different ways. However, there are several ways to reduce insecurity through traditional methods, but he alleged that the government would not allow it. Moreover, the priest explained that only a few people are enlightened and that he knows the success of traditional religious application to security within government institutions. For example, some security personnel who equip themselves with traditional religions, offer support in the fight against crime.

7. Theoretical connections with empirics

The qualitative empiric of this study presented herein in line with Ken’s Booth Theory of world security with a focus on emancipation of security, disentangles the approach on the conventional (world view on security, even when it is debated on) and approached the issue of kidnapping on a regional/state level on how issue concerning kidnapping security issues can be addressed. Based on the findings, beliefs and suggested ways of addressing the challenges of kidnapping from respondents, it shows that, when the International world view of security on traditional/military security does not cover a lot of security issues which has already been argued by human security advocates and scholars; then for Nigerian state, the politics of meaning and security adopted will be fruitful when the political leaders think about security alternatively coupled with the traditions supportive to addressing security in state are consulted and probably with fusion for the best result. Thus, the recommendation presented by the respondent of this study through interview should not be seen as clouded recommendation based on customs, or religions even when majority of the respondent are educated and important persons in the society but should be seen as a means and alternative pathway to address security issues when the military type of security fails.

Issues such as ritual kidnapping and kidnapping in general or rituals ‘may’ have cease to exist in so many part of the developed world, while it undoubtedly present in some undeveloped part of the world remains a challenge in the 21st century coupled with conventional world view of security, then there is need to address kidnapping through collaborative effort.

Arguably, the Nigerian government and it citizens going back to pre-colonial period see and knows how to address situations of kidnapping but probably may not want to bring traditional practices in place due to ‘democracy’ practiced in Nigeria and will cause religious quagmire among its citizens, but even so, an agreement can be reached if the government really want to make curb and the issues of insecurity such as kidnapping and human sacrifice kidnapping. Therefore, for Booths emancipation of security, it fails to point out that there will be issues conforming to an alternative security at the beginning and might even be frowned at internationally unless this emancipation is effective and provides positive results.

Conclusion

The way money is generated through human sacrifice is yet to be ascertained by science. It can be deduced that there is no evidence linking human sacrifices in making anyone rich. Yet, this belief is primordial, and people still engage in such acts, as outlined by respondents in the interviews conducted in this study. Nevertheless,

discrediting this belief and notion which justifies the engagement of people in such acts is what needs to be concentrated on. Kidnappings are situated in tradition and religion, which only continues to be reinforced – despite government interference - due to people occupying government offices that fail to detach themselves from their traditions that encourage ritual or sacrificial killings.

Teachings within Christianity and Islam in Nigeria (and Africa in general) advocate eradicating ritual killing through evangelism and have been doing so since its introduction by missionaries and colonialists. However, religious hybridity still festers within. This is not to say traditional religion is problematic, but there is a need to revisit, transform and drop the involvement of human ritual sacrifices which involve kidnapping and voluntary submission of oneself for ritual purposes, especially after they have been brainwashed for a course through traditional doctrines and dogma.

Until individuals start abandoning traditions and customs involving human sacrifices leading to kidnapping, Nigerian security will continue to struggle. Therefore, one of the best methods that will help security challenges among other factors leading to ransom kidnapping is education. There is the need for people to unlearn what they have learnt and hold dear in regard to ritual killings, sacrifices, and generic harmful spiritual beliefs. This is why more recognition is needed; the truth about kidnapping should be spread as far and wide as possible – starting in academia, progressing to media - in order to reach Nigerian society.

Another entry point in addressing kidnapping that stems from the struggle for financial liberation is diversification in economy generation. In other words, the government in Nigeria should start planning and diversifying in other sectors of the country's natural resources to generate finances needed to govern the country. This is especially relevant in this era that has a large focus on clamoring for alternative or green energy and reduction of oil dependency.

Science has not yet sufficiently explained human sacrifice through ritual kidnapping. However, dissociating spiritual beliefs or traditions does not prove that it does not happen, after all, science has not uncovered or resolved everything in this world; it keeps discovering and that is what science should strive to do, especially with regards to solving issues presented in this study. In the absence of a concrete conceptualization of security that serves as a rudder for security implementation, this study recommends a holistic and hybrid security in other words, the fusion of all forms of useful security avenues - interventions suited for Nigeria and its kidnapping epidemic.

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