Security Agencies and Challenges of Election Security in Nigeria: Lessons from Ghana

[1]Stephen Nnaemeka Azom, [2]Grace Oluchi Nwosu and [3]Jude Odigbo
[1]*Department of Political Science, Federal University Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria*
[2]*Chief Administrative Officer Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Nigeria*
[3]*Department of Political Science, Madonna University Okija, Nigeria*

Corresponding Author:
Stephen Nnaemeka Azom
Department of Political Science, Federal University Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria

Abstract: The study examined the nexus between security agencies and challenges of election security in Nigeria. Anchored on the Marxist theory of the state, documentary method and qualitative content analysis, the study ascertained that deployment and control of security personnel, especially the police during elections is done by the Inspector-General of Police, mostly in favour of pre-determined interests. The study further observed that security personnel have paradoxically become a central element of election insecurity, on account of their deployment and partisan roles in election administration, the scenario which primarily derives from low autonomization of the Nigerian State. Drawing from Ghana's experience in election administration, the study posits that all security personnel on election duty are to come under the control and command of the head of electoral commission rather than the Inspector-General of Police or even the President who, at that point, is an interested party. Among others, the study recommends the amendment of the Electoral Act and other legal documents to ensure that the head of electoral commission in Nigeria assumes the control and command of security personnel on the day of election.

INTRODUCTION

Potentials for violence in election period come from political, economic and social dimensions of a society. The security plan for any election, especially in developing economies, therefore, takes into consideration the specific roles of security personnel who safeguard voters, candidates, officials of Election Management Body (EMB), observers and other actors involved in elections on the one hand and ensure the safety of both sensitive and non-sensitive election materials and other technologies used during elections to prevent manipulation on the other. However, although, security personnel have a crucial responsibility to provide proper security during elections, this largely depends on whether they are functionally autonomous of political struggles and class interests in the society. If they are not, then they are less likely to be operationally effective to uphold the constitution and guarantee the credibility of elections. They may even intimidate or dissuade citizens from participating freely in electoral process. Election duties of security personnel are thus an outcome of an inter-play of several political and socio-economic factors.

The role of security agencies in electoral process varies from one country to another, depending on their political history, legal tradition and socio-cultural background. While legal provisions are relatively extensive and precise in some countries, in others, they are rather general, even succinct and supplemented by specific regulations enacted during election periods[1]. In countries of the northern hemisphere, election are a routine and do not entail restrictions on movements or involvement of armed security personnel who could serve the purpose of either checkmating election fraudsters and hoodlums or subverting the electoral process through collusion. On the contrary, election environments are not secured in most African countries and other emerging economies. Thus, deployment and visible presence of fierce looking armed security personnel has become a necessity.

In Nigeria, protection of voters, electoion materials and officials and the preservation of lawful and orderly electoral processes are necessary for free, fair and credible elections. In line with the provisions of the Police Act, the Criminal Code (1990), the Police Service Commission (PSC) guidelines (2003) and the Electoral Act (2010), security agencies, particularly the police are saddled with the constitutional responsibility of providing proper security during elections to enable citizens elect their leaders under a peaceful atmosphere devoid of fraud, fear, coercion, intimidation and violence[2]. While the Police Service Commission guidelines highlight the scope for police involvement in the electoral process, the Electoral Act clearly defines what constitutes electoral offences before, during and after elections and assigns the role of maintaining internal security during elections to the police.

Although, the provisions of the above-stated legal frameworks and allied documents are inarguably elaborate and comprehensive enough to ensure that the police effectively and professionally carry out their electoral functions, reports of actual performance of security agencies during elections indicate rather unfortunately that the police have not only failed to adequately perform their election duties but have themselves become a central element of the security challenges associated with the conduct of elections in Nigeria[3, 4]. As a consequence, election insecurity has become an enduring feature of election administration in Nigeria. The extant analyses on election security such as Ajala and Muller[5], Cummings[6], Mou[7] and USAID[8] among others adequately capture the partisan role of security personnel in election administration as well as the factors and challenges in the deployment of security personnel on election duties but fall short of systematic examination of the nexus between deployment and control of security personnel during elections and election security. Against this backdrop, this study examines the roles of security agencies and how they grapple with the challenges of election security in Nigeria. The remainder of the study is structured as follows: 'Theoretical Perspective' provides the theoretical basis of the paper. 'Conceptual Clarifications' conceptualizes the key concepts in the paper: security agencies and election security. 'Security Agencies and Elections in Nigeria' discusses both the election duties and complicity of the security agencies during elections in Nigeria. 'Deployment of Security Personnel and the Conduct of Elections in Nigeria' captures how deployment and control of police on election day by the Inspector-General of Police in Nigeria compromise their election duties. 'Security Agencies and Election Security: Lessons from Ghana' concludes the paper by drawing from Ghana's experience in deployment and control of security agencies on election day.

Theoretical perspective: This study is anchored on the Marxist theory of the state. Marxist theorists posit that, as the product as well as a manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms, the state arose from the conflict between classes and as a rule, the state of the most powerful and economically dominant class that also becomes the politically dominant class and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed[9, 10].

The classical Marxist theory of the state has been further developed and applied in the analysis of the peculiarity of the neo-colonial state by scholars such as Ake[11] and others. The major contention of these scholars is that the post-colonial state is a creation of imperialism and as such has followed a developmental trajectory dictated by the interest of imperialism and its local allies. For Ekekwe, for instance, the post-colonial state rests on the foundation of the colonial state whose major pre-occupation was to create conditions under which accumulation of capital by the foreign bourgeoisie in alliance with the ruling elite would take place through the exploitation of local human and other natural resources. Therefore, the post-colonial state that now emerged, though ostensibly independent and sovereign, was no less a creation of imperialism than the colonial state.

One basic feature of the post-colonial state, as articulated by Ake[11], is its limited autonomy. This means that the state is institutionally constituted in such a way that it enjoys limited independence from the social classes, particularly the hegemonic social class and so, is immersed in the class struggles that go on in the society. The post-colonial state is also constituted in such a way that it mainly carters for a narrow range of interests: the interest of the rapacious political elite in comprador and

subordinate relationship with foreign capital. This lack of relative autonomy is one reason why the post-colonial state in Nigeria is incapable of mediating and moderating political struggles[11].

For Ibeanu, political leaders of post-colonial states, due to the peculiar features of these states and their quest for economic survival, engage in brazen manipulation of the electoral process and clientele politics which heighten the struggle for state power. With respect to Nigeria, Ibeanu maintained that the abiding assault on electoral democracy should be located in the character of the Nigerian state as instructions that have continued to undermine democracy are genealogically inscribed in it.

Based on the analysis of Ake[11] the central propositions of the Marxist theory of the state, as it relates to this study, could be synthesised as follows:

• Arbitrary use of the state power to pursue private welfare converts politics into warfare rather than a process of discussion and orderly transfer of political power

• Absolutist nature of the state weakens the institutional mechanisms for moderating political competitions

• Limited autonomy of the state adversely affects the legitimacy of institutions involved in electoral administration and transfer of political power

The use of the state for appropriation of surplus is a defining character of the Nigeria state. It is indeed a primary instrument of accumulation. Thus, state institutions and agencies, policy making and implementation have served the purpose of fostering and advancing the interests of the dominant social forces as against the pursuit of common interests[12].

As a facilitator of the capitalist development process, the Nigerian state is a major owner of the means of production. Buoyed by the expanded oil revenues, the State dominates all aspects of the national political economy[13]. This has made the Nigerian state the biggest spender of resources which in most cases, it allocates to sectional/private interests. This has also made the struggle for state power in Nigeria a do-or-die affair. As noted by Joseph[14], the expansion of petroleum production and the resultant increased revenues heightened "the centrality of the state as the locus of the struggle for resources for personal advancement and group security." Under this circumstance, access to the state is seen as a legitimate platform for primitive accumulation and personal enrichment. Ake[15] captures the immensity and the ubiquity of state power under this situation when he observed that "the state is everywhere and its power appears boundless. There is hardly any aspect of life in which the state does not exercise power and control. That makes the capture of state power singularly important."

This character of the Nigerian state thus, encourages clientele politics. Within this context, politics means more than competition for political power but assumes the character of a desperate struggle "for positions in the bureaucracy or for access to those who have influence over government decisions"[16]. State power does not only represent the license to wealth, it is also "the means to security and the only guarantor of general well-being"[12]. Due to its profitability for primitive accumulation, the struggle for state power is reduced to warfare by factions of the governing elite. It is within the context of the dominant role of the state in political economy that one can explain the desperation of Nigeria's governing elite for state power as evident in the brazen use of security agencies to supervise the manipulation of electoral process.

The dominant role of the Nigerian state in the political economy is compounded by grievances associated with the 'winner take all' syndrome which characterize party politics in Nigeria. This has ensured that losers have limited or no access to state resources. Thus, for many candidates and their supporters, losing an election implies loss of access to state resources; and since state resources is an important asset in the struggle for power, losing an election carries with it the risk of being continuously kept out of power. Unable to mobilize the masses for support due to legitimacy crisis, the dominant ruling class in Nigeria hijack and utilize the security agencies and other institutions of the state to achieve the purpose. The arbitrary use of the state power to pursue private interests thus converts politics into warfare rather than an orderly transfer of political power. This explains the partisan roles and complicity of the security agencies during elections in Nigeria. The study is qualitative and analytical with data drawn from documentary evidence.

Conceptual clarifications: This section offers operational definitions of two key terms, namely: security agencies and election security which constitute the conceptual framework of this paper in relation to their contextual application. This is with a view to illuminating the terms and fostering a shared understanding (Table 1).

Security Agencies and Elections in Nigeria: Security agencies have a duty to ensure that security of lives and property is guaranteed and that there is peace and order before, during and after elections in Nigeria. While other law enforcement agencies such as the military and the

Table 1: Conceptual framework

Term	Operational Definition
Security Agency	Permanent government organization that administers specific functions with a view to protecting lives, properties and Nigeria's interest. Security agencies in Nigeria include: State Security Service, Nigeria Federal Road Safety Commission, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence, the Nigerian Police, among others
Election Security	Protection of election stakeholders, information, facilities, and events against death, damage, or destruction. Broadly, four types of election security exist, namely: physical security, personal security, information, and electoral events[17]

Author's conceptions

Civil Defence are, to a reasonable extent, involved in maintaining law and order during elections, the responsibility of providing security and ensuring peaceful atmosphere during elections in Nigeria is carried by the police. They are indeed indispensable in ensuring the credibility of elections.

The Nigerian Police are primarily saddled with the constitutional responsibility of internal security, including the maintenance of law and order, in line with the provisions of the Police Act. Although, elections are not specifically mentioned by the Act, responsibilities ascribed to the police are expected to be performed at all times. Section 4 of the Police Act bestows on the Nigerian police the following responsibilities: protecting lives and properties; detecting and preventing crimes; apprehending and prosecuting offenders; preserving law and order; enforcing law and regulations. To a very large extent, therefore, the success or failure of any elections is dependent on the conduct and performance of police.

In addition, to the Police Act, a number of other legal documents assign various functions to police during elections. These legal documents include: the Criminal Code (1990), the Police Service Commission (PSC) guidelines (2003) and the Electoral Act (2010).

The Police Service Commission guidelines offer the most elaborate scope for police involvement in the electoral process and particularly hinge the success of elections in the country on the conduct of police officers on election duty. Included in the guideline are seven basic functions that the police ought to play. These functions are:

- Safeguarding the security of persons and their property during the campaign period and voting
- Ensuring the safety of electoral officers before, during and after elections
- Providing security for candidates during the campaigns and elections
- Ensuring and preserving a free, fair, safe and lawful atmosphere for campaigning by all parties and candidates without discrimination, maintaining peaceful conditions, law and order around the polling and counting centres
- Providing security for electoral officials at voting and counting
- Ensuring the security of election materials at voting and counting centres and during their transportation there to (PSC 2003)

Like Police Service Commission guidelines, the Electoral Act clearly defines what constitutes electoral offences and assigns the role of maintaining internal security during elections to the police. The electoral offences as contained in part VIII of the Electoral Act, 2010 are: obstruction of registration of voters, destruction or forging of nomination papers, disorderly behaviour at political meetings, improper use of voters cards, improper use of vehicles, impersonation and voting when not qualified, dereliction of duty, bribery and corruption, voting by unregistered person, disorderly conduct of elections, undue influence, among others.

An important element of the Electoral Act is that it deals with offences before and after actual voting[3]. This is very important because security issues during elections are critical in Nigeria not only during voting but also in the course of campaign and after voting has ended. It is noteworthy, for instance, that the build-up to general elections in Nigeria is characterized more often than not by political violence, including assassination of prominent political figures, attempted murder of political opponents and disruptions of campaign events[18].

In addition, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) publishes periodic guidelines for every election. Though not directed at the police, the guidelines vest the responsibility of ensuring order at the polling station on the Presiding Officer and compel police personnel serving at the polling station to take orders from the Presiding Officer[3, 2].

The foregoing legal documents are comprehensive enough to ensure that the security agencies, particularly the police, effectively and professionally carry out their election functions. The reports of actual performance of security agencies during elections indicate rather unfortunately that the police have not only failed to provide adequate security during elections but have themselves become a central element of the security problems associated with the history of elections in Nigeria. Most of the organisations which monitored previous elections generally reported that the security forces, particularly the police were out to collaborate with and protect the ruling party[19-23]. For instance, the 2003 election as captured in the report of the Justice Development and Peace Commission (JDPC), witnessed the complicit role of the security forces. According to the JDPC[24].

In most of the polling stations the security forces did nothing to prevent hijacking of ballot papers by political thugs … Rigging was peacefully done in the form of ballot box stuffing by mainly PDP party agents collaborating with polling officials …the ruling party… with the connivance of some INEC officials and the security officers, unleashed fearsome intimidation against its opponents and succeeded in carrying out massive rigging of elections.

One major disturbing aspect of the complicity of the security forces during elections in Nigeria is aiding and abetting election malpractices. An assessment of election security in Nigeria's democracy since the outset of constitutional rule in 1999 clearly shows that the public is wary of the security personnel, particularly the police because they have turned into small gods aiding and abetting electoral irregularities in the country[25-27]. Truly, the authority and power of the security personnel as well as their access to firearms have been used to intimidate the population and in extreme situations, to disrupt constitutionally protected rights and activities such as opposition campaigns or rallies. Furthermore, security agencies were variously reported to have been overtly forceful in disbanding legally constituted gatherings and engaging in running battles with civil society organizations and party oppositions, curtailing their constitutional right to demonstration, lawful assembly and balloting in the build-up to general elections in Nigeria, since, 2003[29, 30, 6, 5].

The systematic and reciprocal suspicion of the Police by the citizens seriously complicates their involvement in the electoral process. They are perceived by key stakeholders as biased in favour of those in power or some powerful interests. This atmosphere has made the engagement between the police and the entire security forces in the country and majority of stakeholders potentially explosive. This is further compounded by poor skills and irrationality by which the police carry out their assigned functions which often result in loss of life, injuries and destruction of property[26].

Political neutrality is one of the tenets of election security and administration. The security personnel at election venue have the utmost responsibility of maintaining law and order and securing voters and candidates in the process of elections. They are also supposed to ensure the safety of ballot papers and boxes. The contrary, however, appears to be the case in Nigeria, since, the rebirth of civil rule in 1999. As observed by Oni et al.[28], police were not neutral in the 2011 general election in Lagos, Ogun and Oyo states; they were seen supporting candidates in their nefarious act of rigging. They showed open display of unconstitutional support for rigging, victimization and intimidation activities. Corroborating this, NDI[27] posits that there were expression of police bias, denial of permits for

campaign events and outright intimidation of candidates and their supporters. Jega[30] also notes that misuse of security orderlies by politicians, especially incumbents, attacks on opponents, attacks on members of the public, violence at campaigns, intimidation of voters, snatching of election materials, kidnapping and assassination of political opponents characterised the 2011 electoral process despite that the election was acclaimed as the best that Nigeria ever had. Since the 1999 elections, security agencies, particularly the police, have been accused of being involved in the various forms of election rigging in Nigeria. The police are partisan in their election functions. They lack operational independence from the executive and are therefore vulnerable to executive interference. They are also often used by political actors to perpetuate electoral fraud, coerce voters and intimidate opponents.

In the 2007 general elections held in April, the National Human Rights Commission monitored the conduct of security personnel in each of the (6) geopolitical zones and the Federal Capital Territory. In the main, the report, as cited in Shankyula, indicates that in a number of states, some security personnel were indifferent to various electoral offences like multiple voting, under aged voting, impersonation and snatching of ballot boxes. For instance, a police officer watched helplessly while ballot boxes were being stuffed by a party in Rivers State. In Ibadan, Oyo State, men and women of the Nigeria Police Force were reported to have colluded with party agents and electoral officers to rig election and intimidate voters. In one of the polling stations in Anambra State, it was reported also that one Festus Eze of the Nigerian Police Force was seen thumb printing ballot papers in favour of one of the political parties.

Regarding the constitutional roles of security agencies during elections in Nigeria, corruption and political influence on the security personnel are seen to undermine the effectiveness of the security agents in the provision of security for elections. Chronic corruption within the police organisation makes the police highly susceptible to compromise and bribe-taking from wealthy politicians to influence the outcomes of voting in favour of pre-determined candidates[28]. For instance, a particular case was noted in Borno State where, as reported by Mu'azu, the police colluded with the ruling party and supervised electoral fraud by agents of the party in the 2007 elections. Similarly, in Edo State, electoral violence was carried out by 'big men' (state officials) with their police escort and hired thugs in Etsako East, Benin, Ikpoba-Okha and Akoko Edo, leading to loss of lives and properties[31]. In the same vein, reports from other states overwhelmingly point to the politicization of the police and how this compromised security and the credibility of elections.

Meanwhile, although, the areas in which the police have been considered to have failed in election security are diverse and many, the most frequently cited allegations of police complicity and electoral misconduct, as captured by the report of the Electoral Reform Committee (ERC) set up by the Yar'Adua Administration include: 'partisanship and discrimination against the opposition party; functional ineffectiveness to prevent and contain electoral crime and complicity in fraud through brutality, intimidation, vote snatching, among others'[32]. The report of the EU EOM[33] equally highlights the various dimensions of partisanship of security agents which include: arbitrary arrest and detention of opposition supporters before and during elections without charges; banning of rallies and campaigns mounted by the opposition and inability to checkmate flagrant impunity of violations committed by the members of the ruling party.

Furthermore, it was also reported that security personnel were blatantly involved in deliberate orchestration of election-related violence as a strategy of achieving electoral victory. For instance, prior to any general elections in Nigeria, leaders and members of opposition political parties were reported to have been officially harassed by security agencies. ICG.[34] observes that in the week before the 2007 elections, opposition figures were intimidated and arrested with a view to frightening their supporters and halting their campaigns. The point being made is that the performance of security personnel in relation to their statutory role of ensuring law and order and guaranteeing a credible process of election in Nigeria has been poor and unsatisfactory. The situation progressively keeps getting worse up to a point that the presence of security men at the polling station could hardly be taken to be for the protection of the votes of the masses.

Deployment of security personnel and the conduct of elections in Nigeria: Electoral process and bureaucracy are cumbersome, complex and expensive in Nigeria. Election environments are volatile as well. Organization of elections thus constitutes an ordeal for election managers, political parties and their candidates, the electorates and other important stakeholders. The situation arises due to a number of factors which among others, include: the must-win-at-all-cost attitude of Nigerian politicians, lack of trust among stakeholders, the winner-takes-all political system being practised and poor performance of the elected political leaders.

Given the Nigerian environment, the dominant perspective is that free, fair and credible elections are possible only if security personnel including the military are massively deployed. What fuel this perspective are the overwhelming violence, thuggery and sundry electoral malpractices that had featured consistently and prominently in the conduct of previous elections in Nigeria. In fact, some analysts are of the view that generally, violence, intimidation and electoral malpractices are enduring features of elections in Nigeria. Flowing from the above standpoint is the conclusion that only an adequate deployment of security personnel on the day of elections can secure the election environment.

Inarguably, deployment of security personnel on election day is important. In Nigeria, security personnel are deployed on the day of elections by the Inspector-General of Police/Commissioner of Police. Given that Police is answerable to the executive arm of government and by implication the party in power, such postings are seen to be authorized from the highest political and strategic level to ensure that the police facilitate the victory of either the ruling party or pre-determined candidates. According to Olurode and Hammanga, deployment of security personnel in Nigeria is influenced by several factors which include: power, class and a plethora of social networks. Persistent allegations of underground purchases of deployment are rampant. Security personnel on patrol duties (or those posted to check point) as well as those who are on other assignments are seen to offer inducements to influence their postings. On account of this, there had been cases where security personnel on election duties were found to have colluded to undermine the electoral processes. There were also instances of professional misconduct by security personnel during elections in Nigeria. There were other instances where police and other security operatives openly interfered with the secrecy of the ballot. For instance, it was reported that voters were influenced by police personnel to mark their ballot papers in the open. Police were also widely accused of failing to do enough to protect voters from violence and safeguard the integrity of the process. In Gombe Local Government INEC office during the 2007 elections, for example, it was reported that three police officers watched while PDP agents intimidated an INEC official into changing a result sheet. PDP cabinet member of the state government assaulted a candidate of the ANPP while in a police-station in Deba, Gombe State and the police simply watched[35]. The issue, however, is not that the police do not understand the role they ought to play during elections. The issue rather is that police in Nigeria have merely turned puppets in the hands of moneybags and bigwig politicians and in effect, manipulated at the highest political level to ensure that the police supervise the victory of pre-determined candidates. In sum, deployment and control of security personnel, especially the police during elections in Nigeria is done by the Inspector-General of Police/Commissioner of Police. Desperate politicians have exploited this to manipulate the security personnel to for their personal interests. This indeed has undermined the credibility of elections in Nigeria.

Security agencies and electoral security: Lessons from Ghana: Ghana's elections, like in Nigeria, have always been conducted with security personnel detailed to secure voters, candidates, election materials and officials. At every polling station, there is always at least one security officer to provide security and to maintain law and order. Polling stations noted for violence could even be assigned more than one security officer. The military has always been involved in elections in Ghana. But military officials are not stationed at polling stations but rather patrol their assigned districts and are called in to stations where security officials stationed at polling stations find that they could not handle security challenges at those stations[36].

In Ghana, the police are by law to provide security at all public places and so the electoral laws allow them to be at polling stations on election days. The presence of security personnel prevents voter intimidation. However, on election days in Ghana, all security personnel posted for election duties are under the control and command of the head of the electoral commission and the zonal electoral commissioners who also effect their postings. During their election assignments, the policemen would not be under the command or control of the Commissioner of Police, Inspector-General of Police or even the President who, at that point, is considered partisan. According to a key informant in the Police Headquarter, Accra[37].

No security agent posted for election duties is allowed to carry arms in Ghana. People are free to vote without fear or intimidation from any quarter including the state. This is easier to achieve since everything is done transparently. If an area is suspected to be a flashpoint, armed mobile policemen would be stationed at the divisional headquarters. And, even at that, they can move only with the clear directive of the head of the electoral commission.

Ghana's security bodies include: the military, police, prisons, immigration and fire service[38]. Under Ghana's electoral laws, police personnel and other security bodies are required to perform three main functions which include: escorting election materials to the polling station; keeping order at the polling station and arresting election offenders on the instructions of the Presiding Officer[39]. Except the Bureau of National Investigations (BNI) which is located within the presidency, all the agencies are coordinated by the National Security Council (NSC). The Inspector-General of Police (IGP) heads the National Elections Security Taskforce (NESTF), an ad hoc body comprising all the key security agencies that are responsible for all security matters relating to the management of elections. The NESTF was established by the Ghanaian government to coordinate measures to help maintain peace, law and order before, during and after every election. Specifically, the NESTF is to:

- Provide security at printing houses where the ballot papers were being printed
- Provide security for the transportation of sensitive election materials
- Provide security at the polling centres
- Provide security at the collation centres
- Escort election material on polling day to polling stations
- Escort material on polling day to collation centres[22]

The professional role of the security bodies during the previous elections in Ghana were reported to have witnessed minimal incidences of shooting, ballot box snatching, vandalism of property and other acts of violence[40, 41]. The strategies mounted by the security apparatus, achieved the overall intended goal of peaceful and credible elections. Although, other key players such as the EC, political parties, election observers, media, civil society groups and the general public contributed to the peaceful outcome of the elections, the vigilance, non-partisanship and professional conduct of Ghana's security forces was exceptional. According to a key informant in the Police Headquarter, Accra[37].

Security, particularly in the 2012 elections was structured in three tiers: polling station security, patrol teams and a rapid deployment force. Other security-related activities were underpinned by the installation of a dedicated communications network intended to provide assistance and protection for the security personnel who were deployed on voting day. Throughout the entire country, the police were able to identify more than one thousand flashpoints where violence and other disturbances might erupt… Arrangements in these areas involved increasing security presence to protect the ballot on voting day. They also depended on the evaluation of the level of threat in the area. Patrol teams were upgraded and mobilized to monitor volatile areas while the rapid deployment force was put on standby to curtail any disturbances by individuals or groups.

The strategic and operational roles played by the security forces during elections in Ghana can be categorized into five main areas: constituency and media mapping; public order regulation; protection of key public installations; securing of conflict zones and public education.

Constituency and media mapping is an exercise conducted by the police to ascertain the vulnerability of communities and media platforms to violence. Conducted in every election period, the process received particular attention in the 2012 elections. According to a key informant in the Police Headquarters, Accra[37].

Outlets and networks owned by known politicians were identified and political programs aired on them monitored because such media organizations tend to be

partisan and provocative in their reportage. The police held regular dialogue sessions with such groups on the need to educate the electorate on peaceful conduct before, during and after elections and to avoid broadcasting or publishing provocative or abusive content during the period. Such engagements proved useful, as evidenced in the reduced level of insults during political discussions on various media platforms.

It further explained that during elections in Ghana, police ensured security was adequate for political parties and candidates during the campaign period. Working in cooperation with the parties and other stakeholders, they enforced Public Order Act 1994 (Act 491) as the basis for regulating the conduct of political activities in the country. In particular, no two major political events could be held within the same venue at the same time. This was done to prevent clashes between political groups that could snowball into large-scale violence.

The presidential campaigns of the various political parties were coordinated so that no more than one campaign team and its supporters was allowed to remain in one region or district. Similar regulations were applied at the parliamentary level, except that the localized nature of the parliamentary elections placed more responsibility at the district command levels of the police force. The police assigned a security detail to each of the parties throughout the campaign period and made arrangements to secure rally grounds for each political activity[38].

Special security arrangements were also made to protect critical installations. Printing houses for producing ballots, for instance, received special protection from the security agencies. All election materials were transported under close security protection to and from the EC offices and various destinations such as polling stations, collation centres and police stations in the regions and districts. The carrying of these materials across difficult terrain or to remote areas involved the use of security escorts, including military support. On the polling day, about 30,000 security personnel were deployed to protect about 26,000 polling stations during the voting[37].

The foregoing analysis has shown that in Ghana, the vigilance and professional conduct of Ghana's security personnel has witnessed minimal incidences of ballot box snatching, vandalism of property and other acts of electoral violence. In Ghana, therefore, election security does not pose a formidable challenge. Politicians generally respect electoral institutions and laws and act with less impunity, electoral bureaucracies could also be better trusted and security personnel act professionally. More fundamentally, the police command, during elections, comes under the control of the Chief Electoral Officer. This is why election officials could transport election materials from one point to the other without fear of the materials being snatched by hoodlums or election officials being abducted. Thus, the strategies mounted by security agencies in Ghana have, to a reasonable extent, achieved the overall intended goal of peaceful and credible elections.

This indeed is a big lesson for Nigeria, where the conduct of security personnel in relation to their statutory role of providing adequate security during elections has remained abysmally low and unsatisfactory. In Nigeria, it is common for security personnel to connive with candidates or political parties to rig elections or perpetrate acts of violence. This has profoundly and consistently undermined the credibility of election, as a process of ensuring smooth and orderly transfer of political power in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

The study examined the nexus between security agencies and challenges of election security in Nigeria. The study argued that security personnel have paradoxically become a central element of election insecurity, on account of their deployment and partisan roles in election administration. Security agencies are not functionally autonomous of political struggles and class interests. They operate in a partisan way to foster and advance private interests. Unable to rise above partisan cleavages to guarantee public security during elections, voting is often susceptible to fraud such that the entire electoral process is flawed. Security personnel in Nigeria have, therefore, remained operationally ineffective and publicly unaccountable in a manner that undermines both the credibility of elections and democratic ethos. This is unlike in Ghana, where election security does not pose a formidable challenge because security personnel on election duty come under the control of the Chief Electoral Officer. On account of this, the vigilance as well as the strategic and professional conduct of security personnel has engendered minimal acts of electoral violence. The study thus underscores the fact that to provide adequate security during elections in Nigeria, security agencies need to be operationally and functionally autonomous. Therefore, there is a connection between deployment and control of security personnel during elections by the Inspector-General of Police and partisan roles of security agencies in election administration in Nigeria. Given this unpleasant scenario, there is urgent need to amend the Electoral Act and other legal documents to ensure that the head of the EMB in Nigeria assumes the control and command of security personnel on election duty, like in Ghana, so as to achieve the overall intended goal of peaceful and credible elections.

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